



HM CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT OF MOLDOVA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Maia Sandu of the Republic of Moldova on re-electing her for a new presidential term. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to President Sandu in leading the people of Moldova and achieving their aspirations. His Majesty also wished the cooperation relations between Oman and Moldova further progress and growth. — **ONA**

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NATIONWIDE SURVEY TO GAUGE SATISFACTION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES



The NCSI survey is expected to guide policymakers in further refining public services

MUSCAT: In a bid to improve the quality of public services and better align them with citizens' needs, the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) has launched a comprehensive survey to gauge public satisfaction with government services across Oman.

Open until November 21, the survey will gather critical insights into how Oman's citizens perceive and engage with essential services - from local government communications to municipal opera-

tions - while evaluating their experience over time.

With a focus on transparency and responsiveness, the initiative aims to assess how effectively government entities communicate with the public, address rumours, and respond to citizen feedback.

The findings are expected to guide policymakers in refining public services and creating a more citizen-focused approach to governance. By collecting real-time feedback, the survey will inform both local and national leadership, ensuring that government programmes evolve to meet shifting public needs.

The survey will evaluate the effectiveness of government communication, emphasising transparency and the timely delivery of accurate information.

Through this measure, the government aims to solidify its role as a reliable source of information, instilling confidence in Omanis regarding official communication channels.

Beyond communication, the

survey will explore citizens' experiences with municipal and electronic services, providing insights into satisfaction levels with service accessibility, speed, and quality.

The focus on the practical aspects of service delivery reflects a broader objective to streamline government interactions, making services more efficient and accessible to the public.

Additionally, the survey will enable policymakers to track satisfaction trends across Oman's diverse governorates, offering a clearer picture of regional variations and shifts in public sentiment over time. By analysing these patterns, NCSI will equip government authorities with data to inform regional strategies, allowing for solutions tailored to meet each area's unique needs and ensure consistent service quality nationwide.

The insights gathered from this survey will be crucial for shaping policies that enhance service quality and responsiveness to citizens' needs. **>A6**

OMAN MEDICAL SPECIALTY BOARD

Panel reviews ways to raise Omanisation in health sector

MUSCAT: The Health Sector's Recruitment Governance Committee on Tuesday held a meeting during which it reviewed proposed mechanisms to upgrade Omanisation indicators in the sector.

The committee also discussed the role of 'Tawteen' (localisation) platform in achieving employment goals in the sector.

Held at Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB), the meeting was chaired by Dr. Fatima Mohammed Al Ajmi, OMSB Executive President, Chairperson of the Health Sector Recruitment Governance Committee.

During the meeting, the committee approved the announcement of 16 jobs for Omani dentists in the government sector.

The committee stressed the need to endorse a mechanism for activating self-employment in



various areas of the health sector. The Ministry of Health in Oman has reported a substantial investment in the healthcare sector for 2023, with expenditures surpassing OMR1 billion.

It represents a 24.6 percent increase from the previous year, underscoring the government's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure and services across the Sultanate, according to the Ministry's annual health report 2023.

In addition to the financial investment, the Ministry conducted a total of 86,955 surgical operations throughout the year, with 39,976 surgeries performed on males and 46,979 on females.

The Ministry's 2023 annual health report revealed that the number of hospitals in Oman increased to 92, providing 7,691 hospitalisation beds. This increase improved the bed-to-population ratio to 14.9 beds per 10,000 people, up from 14.7 in 2022. — **ONA**

OMAN Initiative for tour guides announced

1 The 'Freelancer Registry' initiative for those working as tour guides profession was launched on Tuesday. The new initiative aims to support and regulate the tour guiding sector in the Sultanate of Oman. **>A2**



OMAN Activities of sectoral committees reviewed

2 Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) in a meeting held on Tuesday reviewed the tasks entrusted to various sectoral committees during the current year (2024). **>A3**

WORLD US polls open after heated campaign

3 Polls have opened in the US election 2024 after a heated presidential campaign ended on Monday night. Millions of voters are registered to cast their ballots across the United States. **>A7**

GAZA DEATH TOLL as of November 5, 2024



Deaths
43,391
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102,347



BUSINESS LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

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HAITHAM SALIM AL SALMI NAMED TIMES BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR - CAPITAL MARKETS

Haitham Salim Al Salmi, CEO of the Muscat Stock Exchange, has been honoured with the prestigious Times 'Business Leader of the Year - Capital Markets' award at the recent Times Business Leadership Summit held at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat. With over 21 years of executive experience in the capital markets and securities industry, Al Salmi, who is also the chairman of Muscat Clearing and Depository, has played a pivotal role in leading financial market institutions, including financial market infrastructure organisations, intermediaries, and investment banks. His Excellency Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, presented the award to Al Salmi during a glittering ceremony, recognising his significant contributions to the sector.



NATIONAL BISCUIT INDUSTRIES WINS TIMES COMPANY OF THE YEAR IN SNACK FOOD MANUFACTURING

National Biscuit Industries was recognised as the Times Company of the Year in Snack Food Manufacturing at the Times Business Leadership Summit, held at The St. Regis Al Mouj Muscat, recently. For over four decades, National Biscuit Industries has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to quality, innovation, and sustainability within the snack food sector. The company boasts a robust portfolio of market-leading brands and has consistently delivered products that resonate with consumers while maintaining high standards of manufacturing excellence, making them a leader not only in Oman but also in the international market. His Excellency Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, presented the award to Aiman Hamed Khalfan Al Hadhrami, Director - Regulatory Affairs of the company for their outstanding achievements.



OMAN

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UPON HM DIRECTIVES

State Council to open 2nd annual sitting on 10 November

MUSCAT: Based on the Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the State Council will open the second regular sitting of the eighth term (2023-2027) on Sunday, 10 November 2024, in accordance with the provisions of Article (38) of the Council of Oman Law.

The State Council undertakes a prominent role in approving or amending draft laws and discussing development plans and the State's general budget.

Domestic development

Serving as a major partner in domestic development, the State Council seeks to achieve this role through various activities that it performs during its regular or joint sessions or the meetings of its main bureau (State Council Office) or its permanent committees, sub-committees and special committees. — **ONA**

Freelancer Registry initiative for tourist guides in Oman announced

The initiative provides tour guides with a supportive environment in enhancing the quality of tour operators in line with the tourism aspirations of the Sultanate of Oman

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in collaboration with the National Employment Programme and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, on Tuesday launched the 'Freelancer Registry' initiative for those working in the tour guiding profession.

The initiative was inaugurated by Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, in the presence of officials from both the public and private sectors at the Ministry's headquarters. The initiative aims to support and regulate the tour guiding sector in the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally, the Registry facilitates procedures for independent workers in this field and provides them with a supportive environment, enhancing the quality of tour guiding services in line with the tourism aspirations of the Sultanate of Oman.

The Freelancer Registry provides a legal and regulatory framework for tour guides, contributing to the improvement of service levels for visitors and supporting practitioners by offering training and development opportunities.

Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, said "The crucial role played by tour guides in the tourism industry, by showcasing the bright image of tourist attractions, leaves a positive impression on tourists during their visits. The likelihood of a tourist returning for another visit largely depends on the guide's character, the authenticity of the information they share, and the engaging storytelling used during group tours."

Al Busaidi highlighted that obtaining a tour guide license after completing the required training period is one of the steps set by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to reinforce the concept of quality in the practice of tour guiding. This is in addition to raising awareness among workers in this field, motivating them to enhance their competitiveness locally, and encouraging them to adhere to the quality standards established for continuous improvement and development, as well as ensuring ongoing training and development for human resources engaged in the profession.

He further noted that the number of Omani tour guides holding valid licenses reached 906 as of the end of September this year.

He emphasised that the launch of the Freelancer Registry initiative for the tour guiding profession aims to highlight the importance of practicing the profession, recognise the valuable contributions of tour guides to the tourism industry in the Sultanate of Oman, and encourage those interested and studying in the tourism sector to pursue a career in tour guiding. This will generate job opportunities for citizens in this vital field. Additionally, the initiative outlines the benefits of registering in the Freelancer Registry, the facilities provided, and the advantages of contracting with freelancers. — **ONA**

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Meeting explores ways to enhance skill development

The lecture, organised by Muttrah Wali Office on Tuesday aims to boost administrative efficiency and the employees' skills

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Muttrah Wali Office on Tuesday organised a lecture on 'Decision Making Skills' in the presence of Dr Hamad Al Mamari, Wali of Muttrah, and several governorate's employees and the Muttrah people.

The lecture aims to enhance administrative efficiency and the employees' skills.

The lecture was presented by Dr Hamad bin Hamoud Al Ghafri, Lecturer of Educational Psychology and Self-Learning at the Arab Open University.

He discussed the decision-making concept and the right decision making to achieve the desired purposes.

He explained the seven steps



for ideal decision-making, indicating how to apply these steps to reach the best possible solutions.

The lecture discussed the Weighted Decision-Making Criteria Matrix, which helps to evaluate different choices for decision-making on an objective and thoughtful basis.

The lecture included interaction among the attendants, who exchanged views and dialogues on ways to improve decision-making skills in various fields.

This lecture is within initia-

tives and lectures organised by the Muttrah Wali Office to enhance awareness and the administrative abilities of employees and the Muttrah people. Thus, it improves performance and the administrative work efficiency in institutions.

At the lecture conclusion, the wali highlighted the importance of lectures and courses. These that aim to enable human resources to make effective decisions that will positively reflect on the development in Oman.

FOR 2024/2025 ACADEMIC YEAR



Bausher govt schools report increase in expat students

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Parents' Council in Bausher held its first meeting for the 2024/2025 academic year on Tuesday. Ahmed bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Wali of Bausher and Chairman of the Parents' Council chaired the meeting.

The meeting started by reviewing the previous meeting recommendations, where these recommendations' implementation,

the topics included in this year's agenda were discussed.

The plans of the council and the various committees for the current academic year was discussed, highlighting the cooperative work between all sides to achieve the desired aims.

During the meeting, the ceremony preparations to honour excellent students and discussed organisational and logistical sides to ensure the ceremony suc-

cess, which inspires students to continue their educational excellence was discussed.

The notable increase in expatriate students who registered in government schools in Bausher, and its effects in terms of the educational and administrative support. The Council confirmed the necessity of this issue following up to ensure that educational services' offer to all students.



OCCI discusses tasks entrusted to various sectoral committees

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Tuesday reviewed the tasks entrusted to sectoral committees during the current year (2024).

The discussion took place during a meeting held under the chairmanship of Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of OCCI Board of Directors, in the presence of the Second Deputy Chairman of the OCCI, members of the Board of Directors, heads of sectoral committees and the CEO of the Chamber.

The meeting included a pres-

entation featuring the progress made in the sectoral committees' achievement of their plans, the performance of the OCCI and the extent to which this performance met the aspirations of the private sector.

Number of topics covered

The meeting covered a number of topics undertaken by the sectoral committees and the challenges facing the growth and sustainability of businesses in the Sultanate of Oman, including low demand.

The participants looked into

mechanisms and initiatives that influence demand and the growth of consumption in the Sultanate of Oman. Emphasis was laid on the significance of developing innovative products that keep pace with the government's approach to upgrade local content.

In this context, the meeting reviewed an initiative introduced by the National Programme for Investment and Exports Development (Nazdaher) and mechanisms for supporting entrepreneurs and startups across various economic sectors. — **ONA**



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WADI AL SHWAIMIYAH IS A HAVEN FOR EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS



The wadi accommodates Ain Gharir - a spring that is considered as one of the landmarks of the region

SHALEEM AND AL HALANI-YAT Islands: Wadi Al Shwaimiyah runs amidst the mountains of the Wilayat of Shaleem and Al Halaniyat Islands in Dhofar Governorate. It is located 52 kilometres from the wilayat and 12 kilometres from the centre of the Niyabat of Al Shwaimiyah.

A big part of this wadi falls within the Reserve of Jabal Samhan, which makes it a haven for explorers and lovers of nature.

Suhail bin Mohammed Al Meshaihi, eco-systems specialist at the reserve of Jabal Samhan, stressed the environmental significance of Wadi Al Shwaimiyah and described it as the natural

treasure in the area, thanks to its fascinating topography and caves which makes it a unique tourism destination.

He said that the wadi accommodates Ain Gharir, the spring considered as one of the landmarks of the region favoured by adventurers and explorers.

Ain Gharir, which flows from the top of the mountains, forms a lake surrounded by date palm trees.

The presence of wadi helps in the growth of wild animals, birds and reptiles, he said, adding that it is also famous for its caves that attract visitors, adventure lovers and rock climbers.



Exciting technological experiments continue at Oman Science Festival

The second day of the event included the implementation of interactive workshops where students applied the scientific concepts in their lives for learning

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Science Festival 2024 activities continued at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in the midst of crowds of students, teachers, and science geeks. The second day events were full of exciting scientific experiments allowing visitors to discover modern scientific and technological innovations. The event included the implementation of interac-



tive workshops where students applied the scientific concepts in their lives for learning. These workshops consist of many fields: Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy, AI, and Modern Technology. Omaria Theatre, Oman Environmental Services Holding Company “be’ah” presented a competition titled “Environmental Champions”, which enjoyed a great appreciation among students visiting the festival. Ibn Omaira Theatre also presented a play titled “Suns of Knowledge”, that shed light on the great role played by Muslim scientists in enriching scientific devel-

opments. The 4D Frame Company delivered interactive performances on the role of Artificial Intelligence in life. These performances gave interactive educational experiences that included simulations of AI that enhanced human creativity. The evening events on Tuesday continued with an atmosphere filled with excitement and enjoyment among the audience. The Mishkat interactive exhibition presented “Future Explorers” with the aim of spreading awareness of renewable energy and focused on the Saudi Arabia role in the energy field. The Fuel Company gave an in-

teractive performance titled “Fuel Story” which told a success story of an Omani fuel factory that was able to produce biodiesel from used cooking oil to decrease waste and environment pollution. Many health and academic national and private institutions participated in the current edition of the festival in the health and life corner. During the festival, these institutions offered various workshops and events targeting visitors of various age and educational groups, where they can identify and see the most prominent modern technologies in diagnosing and treating diseases as well as earning a set



of healthy skills and knowledge. The pillar includes various activities, workshops, interactive competitions, and displays of various techniques in the medical field that provide awareness and health culture in various fields in ways that suit all age groups. The corner of vibrant energies includes scientific activities and workshops and use of solar energy, wind energy, hydrogen energy, electric energy in addition to nanotechnology, and reviewing some experiments of peaceful nuclear technology. The corner also showcases thermal insulation simulation models, and the experiences of the Fisher

Technic tools. The visitors of all ages enjoyed enriching experimental trips through specialised space science and its various fields, seeing innovations and sciences for exploring the world of aviation and space. Innovative simulation experiences, interactive design challenges, as well as simulator tours, and a high-speed virtual race are also in the corner of the festival. It also provides a miniature astronomical dome in which visitors can recognise the astronomical components in an interactive manner that allows them to expand their perceptions and attract their interest in modern science.

RNO COMMANDER

Korean military official received

MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Saif Nassir Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received in his office at Al Murtafaa Garrison on Tuesday Brigadier General Taekyu Park, Commander of the 8th Combat Training Group, Republic of Korea, and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on areas of naval cooperation between Oman

and Korea. The meeting was attended by some senior RNO officers and the Military Attaché at the Korean Embassy in Muscat. Meanwhile, the Korean military official and his accompanying delegation visited the Marine Security Centre (MSC). They were greeted upon their arrival by the acting head of the MSC. — **DNA**



WORK ENVIRONMENT

OHRC reviews labour services in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) reviewed the labour services and care offered to workers in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, observing adherence to protection standards, an appropriate work environment, and general compliance of facilities with occupational safety, health, and international standards for worker accommodations. The Commission expressed its satisfaction after a field visit conducted by a delegation chaired by Prof. Rashid bin Hamad Al Balushi, Chairman of the Commission, to the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

The visit included examining worker communities, accommodations, and interacting with employees in the area. The delegation's field visits included the labour camp at Ras Markaz managed by the Oman Tank Terminal Company, Al Nahda labour village accommodations, and Karwa Motors' labour camp.

The delegation assessed the services provided to the workers, monitored their health and environmental conditions, and ensured the security and safety services meet international human rights standards.

During the visit, the delegation met with several workers, listened to their perspectives, discussed various topics concerning their rights, introduced them to the Commission's work, monitoring mechanisms, complaint procedures, and communication channels available to citizens and residents alike.

The delegation concluded the visit by meeting with Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, CEO of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, reviewing the area's master plan and future development plans.



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3.	SCIENCE Qualification : B.Sc. / M.Sc., B.Ed – Minimum Experience : 3 yrs in CBSE Curriculum	01
4.	HOME ROOM TEACHER (Class 1 & 2) Qualification : Graduation in any discipline (except from regional languages), TTC, D.Ed or B.Ed Minimum Experience: 3 yrs in CBSE Curriculum at Primary Level.	01
5.	ICT LAB TECHNICIAN Qualification: B.Tech / M.Tech / MCA – Minimum 3 yrs Experience of Assembling and Testing, Hardware and software installation, Configuration & Networking, Repair and Maintenance.	01
6.	SPECIAL EDUCATOR Qualification : Bachelor's Degree, B.Ed in Special Education (PGDSE) Minimum Experience : 3 yrs in CBSE Curriculum	01
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MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

Tender No.	Project Category	Tender	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
36/2024	Constriction & maintenance	STRUCTURAL RECTIFICATIONS AND ALLIED CIVIL AND MEP WORKS IN AL AMAL CLUB	19/11/2024	16/12/2024
37/2024	Constriction & maintenance	DESIGN AND BUILD FACILITIES AT ALWUSTA CLUB - HAIMA	19/11/2024	16/12/2024
38/2024	Constriction & maintenance	CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL FACILITIES AND MAINTENANCE WORK AT BASHAYER SPORTS CLUB	19/11/2024	16/12/2024
39/2024	Services	CONSTRUCTION OF SYNTHETIC TURF FOOTBALL PITCH AT SUR SPORTS CENTER	19/11/2024	16/12/2024
40/2024	Consulting Offices	MASTER PLAN, CONCEPT DESIGN AND DETAILED DESIGN AT AL DUQM	19/11/2024	16/12/2024
41/2024	Consulting Offices	MASTER PLAN, CONCEPT DESIGN, DETAILED DESIGN AND RESIDENTIAL SUPERVISION FOR SPORTS HALL AT IBRI SPORTS COMPLEX	19/11/2024	16/12/2024

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om

FEDERAL SUPREME COURT

UAE judicial delegation visits Oman

MUSCAT: A judicial delegation from the Federal Supreme Court in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Tuesday visited the Supreme Judicial Council in Muscat where it had a close look at Council's experience in developing the judicial and justice systems.

The visit was part of a programme to explore the functions of GCC supreme courts and courts of cassation.

Sayyid Khalifa bin Said Al Bussaidi, Chairman of the Supreme Court, and Falah Shaya Al Hajri, Judge at the UAE Federal Supreme Court (who headed the vis-



iting delegation) held a meeting that dealt with various aspects of judicial cooperation.

The two sides commended the depth of bilateral relations and cordial bonds binding the peoples

of Oman and UAE.

The UAE delegation later went on tour of the facilities of the Supreme Court and listened to a briefing about procedures of lawsuits.

Issa Hamad Al Azri, Secretary-General of the Supreme Judicial Council, also held a meeting with the UAE delegation about areas of judicial and legislative cooperation. The UAE delegation watched a presentation about the Supreme Judicial Council's strategic plan and its role in achieving prompt justice and consolidating the rule of law. — ONA

NCSIOPINION POLL

Survey expected to address current gaps

< FROM A1 Equipped with a deeper understanding of public expectations, government departments can refine their approaches, improving communication, accessibility, and reliability. This

data-driven strategy is expected to address current gaps and support long-term plans that align with Oman's vision for a modern, efficient public service sector.

Targeting a representative sample of 1,500 Omani citizens aged 18

and above, the survey ensures demographic inclusivity, reflecting diverse age groups, genders, and education levels.

The broad representation is intended to provide a comprehensive view of public sentiment,

enabling decision-makers to consider a wide range of perspectives when planning future initiatives. By undertaking this initiative, Oman reaffirms its commitment to transparent, citizen-centered governance.

INDONESIA

Rescuers comb debris after deadly eruption

JAKARTA: Rescue workers on the remote Indonesian island of Flores were searching for survivors on Tuesday, a day after a volcanic eruption covered the island in ash, debris, and thick mud.

At least nine people were killed after Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki spewed thick brownish ash as high as 2,000 meters (6,500 feet) into the air, covering nearby villages and towns and forcing residents to flee.

Some 61 people have so far been brought to local hospitals, with at least 31 victims in serious condition.

Smoldering debris and mudslides caused by the ash mixing with rain had caused a power blackout and was hampering relief efforts, said Kensius Didimus, a local disaster agency chief.

Alert level remains high
About 2,400 villagers were

cramped onto the island's emergency shelters on Tuesday, as officials urged residents not to return to their homes in case the volcano erupted again.

However, many residents worried about their livestock still made the dangerous journey home.

Priatin Hadi Wijaya, who heads Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Disaster Mitigation warned that "hot ash and debris could

tumble down from the crater due to heavy rains" even after the eruptions stop.

This is the second time Mount Lewotobi Laki Laki has erupted this year. In January, however, all evacuees were able to get to safety in time.

Lewotobi Laki Laki is one of the 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which sits on the semi-circle of seismic fault lines in the Pacific Ocean known as the "Ring of Fire." —DOW

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Global Carrier Community Meeting kicks off in Muscat

MUSCAT: Omantel (the leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in the Sultanate of Oman) and Zain Omantel International 'ZOI' (the Middle East premier wholesale provider) are jointly holding the 11th annual Global Carrier Community Meeting in Muscat on 5 and 6 November 2024.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Azzan bin Qais Al Said.

As many as 900 decision-makers and representatives of more than 200 telecom and technology companies from 70 countries are taking part in the event, which kicked off at Al Bustan Palace Hotel.

The event spotlights Salalah's rapid development as a major connectivity hub in the Middle East, driven by its strategic geographical location and Omantel's ongoing investments in cutting-edge technology infrastructure.

A key highlight is the inauguration of the "SN1 Carrier Neutral Data Centre", which will play a major role in positioning Salalah



as a digital bridge between Asia, Africa, Australia, and Europe.

Ghassan bin Khamis Al Hashar, Chief Financial Officer at Omantel, said that the conference is an opportunity to highlight the great achievements made by the company in wholesale business, notably those taking place in the city of Salalah, which will become the second most connected city by submarine cables in the region during the coming year.

Al Hashar pointed out that the

company's strategy is based on investments in subsea cables, neutral data centres, partnerships with leading service providers and attraction of foreign direct investments in the technology sector.

For his part, Eng. Yasser Al Lawati, Director of Marketing & Domestic at ZOI, said that the meeting constitutes a valuable opportunity to contribute to the development of the telecommunications sector worldwide. "Through its participation in this meeting,



ZOI affirms its continuous efforts to reshape the international wholesale scene," Al Lawati further added.

The first day of the conference included two specialised sessions. The first, run by Google, focused focus on how the global Internet works from the perspective of submarine cable technology and its impact on global communication.

The second session, run by Amazon, dealt with cloud computing services and artificial in-

telligence (AI).

The event, which aligns with the goals of Oman Vision 2040, highlights the Sultanate's aspiration to become a global leader in telecommunications technology and digital infrastructure.

Omantel continues to invest heavily in emerging technologies, including AI, cloud solutions and cybersecurity. The overall aim is to offer a state-of-the-art ICT solution that will drive Oman's future. — ONA

Last set of disengagement between India, China ends, says Jaishankar

S Jaishankar was holding a joint presser with his Australian Counterpart Penny



australian Counterpart Penny Wong in Canberra.

Being asked about the recent disengagement between India and China, Jaishankar said, "On October 21st we concluded the last lot of disengagement agree-

ments, we had done some earlier. These are currently in the process of being implemented. The last agreement was primarily around patrolling rights of the two sides. So we think all in all it's a positive development."

The EAM said that Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have agreed for meetings between the national security advisors and foreign ministers of the two countries.

"The fact that with that, once it's done the disengagement process is completed, we have other challenges to address including de-escalation of forces but at Kazan on the sidelines of the BRICS meeting Prime Minister Modi and President Xi had a meeting.

It was agreed that the foreign ministers and the national security advisors would meet, so we will have to look at further building on this," he added.

PM Modi and Chinese President Xi held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit in Kazan, Russia. Prime Minister Modi stated that ties between the two nations are important for the people of India and China and for regional and global peace and

stability.

The sentiment was also reiterated by India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who last week said, "At some areas along the LAC, discussions have been ongoing between India and China at both diplomatic and military levels to resolve conflicts. Following recent talks, there has been a broad consensus to restore the ground situation. This consensus has developed on the basis of equal and mutual security. The agreement includes rights related to patrolling and grazing in traditional areas".

He added, "Based on this consensus, the disengagement process is nearly complete. We will strive to move beyond just disengagement, but for that, we will need to wait a little longer."

This came after both India and China confirmed that an agreement had been reached between the two nations regarding patrolling arrangements along the Line

of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas.

The border standoff between India and China began in eastern Ladakh along the LAC in 2020, sparked by Chinese military actions.

This incident led to prolonged tensions between the two nations, significantly straining their relations.

Earlier in the day, the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in India announced on the social media platform, X, "The Chinese and Indian troops are implementing the resolutions that the two sides reached on issues concerning the border area, which is going smoothly at the moment".

Chinese Ambassador to India Xu Feihong had also earlier said that he hoped the bilateral ties would move forward smoothly and ties between both countries would not be restricted or interrupted by specific disagreements. —ANI

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THREE-DAY EVENT



Oman participates in World Travel Market in London

LONDON: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is taking part in activities of the World Travel Market London 2024, which began in London on Tuesday.

Oman's delegation in the three-

day event is headed by Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

As many as 32 representatives of Omani travel, tourism and hotel institutions are taking part in the event.

— ONA

Polls open in additional 9 US states, including Arizona and Wisconsin

Rivals Kamala Harris and Donald Trump visited the most important battleground state on the last day of campaigning before Tuesday’s vote

PENNSYLVANIA: Polling locations for the US presidential elections have now opened in another nine states, including two swing states of Arizona and Wisconsin, CNN reported on Tuesday.

Other states include the states of Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota (municipalities with fewer than 500 registered voters can open polling places as late as 11 am local time), South Dakota (some polls open at 6 am local time depending on the time zone), North Dakota (polls can open between 8 and 11 am local time), Oklahoma, and Texas (polling locations in CT open at 8 am local time and locations in MT open at 9 am local time).



Polling has now opened across 34 states in the US in what is termed to be one of their most consequential elections, which will decide the direction of not just the US but also have an influence on global geopolitics for the next four years.

According to CNN, earlier polls had been opened across 25 states, including Alabama, Delaware, Washington DC, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Connecticut,

Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, Vermont and New Hampshire, among which Georgia, Michigan and Pennsylvania are swing states.

The polling hours will vary across the states, but most locations will vote between 6 am and 8 pm on Tuesday. The first polls will close at around 7 pm ET (5:30 am IST) in six states, including Georgia. The final polls will close in the blue state of Hawaii and in the red state of Alaska at 12 am ET (10:30 am IST). Total votes will close by 1 pm ET (11:30 am IST), following

House after a bitter exit in 2020. Notably, if Trump wins, it will be the first instance in over 100 years of a president serving two non-consecutive terms in the White House.

Most of the polls have predicted a very close race between Trump and Harris, with all the leads projected within the margin of error.

Both Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and former Republican President Donald Trump were campaigning in the key swing state of Pennsylvania on the final day before the election on November 5.

With 19 electoral votes, Pennsylvania is the biggest prize among the seven key swing state states that could flip one way or the other. Either Trump or Harris will need at least 270 electoral votes to become the next US president.

Vice President Kamala Harris said she was “feeling good” as she boarded a plane from Michigan to Pennsylvania to attend a flurry of rallies peppered with celebrity appearances.

Kamala Harris confident of victory in last rally at Philadelphia

US Democratic presidential candidate Harris spent the last day of campaigning in Philadelphia, where she expressed confidence she would win.

“The momentum is on our

side. We will win,” Harris told the crowd.

“Just one more day in the most consequential election of our lifetimes and the momentum is one our side,” she added. “This could be one of the closest races in history — every single vote matters.”

Harris, 60, spoke at the famous steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, where the movie “Rocky” was shot. She called herself the underdog like Rocky and said she was ready to “climb to victory.”

The event consisted of A-list celebrities such as Lady Gaga, Oprah Winfrey and Jon Bon Jovi. Gaga sang “God Bless America,” and Winfrey came to the stage with some first-time voters.

Also on the last day of campaigning, Harris’ rally in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, saw celebrities like Cedric the Entertainer, Katy Perry and Andra Day.

Trump calls for death penalty to migrants who kill US citizens, police

On the last day of the presidential election campaign, Trump called for the death penalty for migrants who kill US citizens or law enforcement officers.

“I am hereby calling for the death penalty for any migrant that kills an American citizen or a law enforcement officer,” he told a crowd in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

-Agencies

US ELECTIONS 2024

Indian-American voters express divergent views as polling begins

NEW YORK: As the voting for the US presidential election commenced on Tuesday the Indian-American voters are expressing divided views, with some supporting Donald Trump for his economic and immigration policies while others are standing behind Kamala Harris, attracted by her leadership style.

Ajay Patel, an Indian-American from New York, expressed his support for Donald Trump, citing shared values such as hard work and economic independence. He believes immigration should be limited and the needs of Americans should be prioritized.

“I support Trump because he believes in some of the values I have. If we work hard, I want to keep my money, I don’t want to take care of other people of the country who are entering the country illegally,” Ajay Patel told ANI.

“We should not have people starving on the streets of Amer-



ica while we worry about people across the world who don’t care about America or the values that America has so that’s why the Trump group has started to resonate more with Indians. This time around I feel more Indians are in lines with the views of President Trump holds and we support him that the reason,” Ajay Patel added.

Kumar, an Indian-American from New York, expressed mixed feelings about Kamala Harris, stating that she has done a tremendous job and resonated with the people; however, she has not been able to “fully introduce” herself to America.

“What she (Kamala Harris) has done is, put together a phenomenal campaign in the last 90 days... she has done tremendous job, she

has resonated the people...she has unfortunately not been able to completely introduce herself to America,” Kumar told ANI.

Ajay Bhutoria, a member of Kamala Harris’s presidential campaign National Finance Committee, affirmed confidence in Harris’ victory and urged people not to be ‘misled’ by Trump’s false statements.

“I am so excited...tomorrow will be a historic day where the country gets to choose the first Indian-American, first black woman, first woman commander-in-chief of our country...please don’t fall into the traps of misleading statements made by Trump...she will work hard...we are going to win,” Bhutoria told ANI.

The United States presidential elections have commenced in the US on Tuesday. The first ballot has been cast in New Hampshire’s small township of Dixville Notch, a township located along the US-Canada border. -ANI

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

First ballot cast in New Hampshire

NEW HAMPSHIRE: The first ballot has been cast in the US for the 2024 Presidential elections in New Hampshire’s small township of Dixville Notch.

Dixville Notch becomes the first place in the US to cast a ballot as the country goes into elections on November 5 and November 6.

The township is located along the US-Canada border and sits at the northern tip of New Hampshire. It opened and closed its poll just after midnight ET in a tradition that dates back to 1960, CNN reported.

The place saw a split decision, recording three votes for Kamala Harris and three for former US President Donald Trump. This is in line with the national trends predicted for the two leaders through various polls in the country.

There are a total of 538 electoral votes in the college; 435 House of Representatives, 100 Senate seats and 3 seats from Washington DC.

A candidate needs a minimum of 270 votes to become the President. Every state has a certain number of electoral votes. California has the maximum number of seats with 54, followed by Texas (40) and Florida (30). On the other hand, states like North Dakota, South Dakota, Delaware, and Vermont have a minimum number of 3 seats.

The two leaders are facing cut-throat competition in the swing states too.

The swing states are seven battleground states, which don’t follow a fixed trend, keep changing and eventually also play the deciding role in selecting the winner. There are mainly seven swing states -- Nevada (6), Arizona (11), North Carolina (16), Georgia (16), Wisconsin (10), Michigan (15), Pennsylvania (19).

Despite the presence of many other parties, the US race is between the Democratic and Republican parties. -ANI

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

What happens on US election day? And after that?

NEW YORK: Voters have cast ballots not only to determine the future president but also most members of Congress.

The presidential race is tight between Democratic nominee Kamala Harris and Republican Donald Trump.

DW has the answers to the most important questions about the US electoral process.

Who votes?

About 244 million people aged 18 and older are eligible to vote.

Many formerly incarcerated people are excluded from voting in some US states.

Citizens, including military personnel, living outside the United States can cast absentee ballots to participate in the election.

Who is elected?

The president and 469 members of Congress — the entirety of the 435-seat House of Representatives and just over one-third of the 100-member Senate — will be elected.

Can convicted felons run?

Yes, in contrast to the right to vote, people with criminal records are allowed to run for office and be elected in the United States. No federal laws exist to prevent this.

The most prominent example is Donald Trump, who can still run for president despite 34 criminal convictions.



What is the election procedure?

Voters can either cast their ballot by mail, by early voting or by showing up at a polling station on Election Day itself.

Virginia kicked off early voting on September 20, followed by California (October 7), Texas (October 21) and Florida (October 26).

Throughout October, 47 states allow early voting.

In some states, it was even possible to vote by post before that. North Carolina has accepted mail-in ballots since September 6.

What is the voter turnout?

What turnout has increased in recent years in the United States. While only 59% of eligible voters

went to the polls in the 2016 presidential election, four years later it was 66%.

According to the Pew Research Center, this was the highest voter turnout in a nationwide election since 1900.

When do polls close?

While most polling places close between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. local time, some, such as in Kentucky, close at 6 p.m., and others, such as in New York, stay open until 9 p.m.

As the United States spans six time zones, by the time voting ends in Hawaii and Alaska, it’s already midnight on the US East Coast and initial projections have been announced.

What happens after the polls close?

As soon as the polling stations shut on Election Day, the votes are counted by poll workers in thousands of districts across the country.

If the polling place uses paper ballots, each ballot box is sealed and delivered to a vote-counting center.

If digital voting machines are used, election officials send the voter data to the counting center.

The rules for processing and counting vote-by-mail ballots vary from state to state.

In 16 states and Washington, D.C., processing of absentee ballots is not allowed until Election Day.

In 10 states, absentee ballots

may be processed and counted before Election Day, but the results are not published until after the polls close.

How many votes does a presidential candidate need to win?

In the US, a majority of the popular vote is not enough to win. Instead, the future head of state needs to have a majority in the Electoral College, or 270 of the 538 possible electoral votes. Only this number counts in deciding who will serve as president and vice president.

For all but two of 50 states, majority voting system applies.

Even if there is only a wafer-thin majority for a candidate in a state, the winner there receives all the state’s electoral votes.

Therefore, a candidate could win more popular support than their opponent but still lose. This has happened four times in the history of the United States, most recently in the Democrats’ losses in 2000 and 2016.

Hillary Clinton had almost 3 million more votes than Trump in 2016, but Trump had the majority in the Electoral College.

What is the role of swing states?

Swing states play a decisive role in the presidential elections. Swing states are US states that are neither firmly in the hands of the

Democrats nor the Republicans.

The key swing states this year are Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. In 2020, Arizona, Wisconsin, Georgia and Michigan went to current President Joe Biden. Trump won North Carolina in the 2020 election.

What if no one wins an Electoral College majority?

In the event that both presidential candidates are tied with 269 electoral votes each, it would be up to the House of Representatives to choose the winner. Each state delegation would receive one vote, and a majority (26) would be required to win.

This has not happened to date.

When is the result officially announced?

In a head-to-head race, the announcement of the final official result may take some time. According to electoral law, any discrepancies in states must be resolved by December 11.

On December 17, the electors will meet in their state capitals to formally cast their votes for president and vice president.

On January 6, 2025, Congress will convene in Washington to count the electoral votes and officially confirm the winner of the election. On January 20, the inauguration ceremony for the president takes place in Washington. -DW

SPORTS

Two-in-a-row for Oman with big victory over Netherlands

Host spinners, led by Shakeel Ahmed's four-wicket haul, along with a captain's knock from Jatinder Singh, sealed the win for Duleep Mendis' men at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Tuesday



MUSCAT: Oman's spinners first worked their magic to restrict the Netherlands to a modest total, and then a skipper's knock of 58 by Jatinder Singh powered the hosts to an emphatic eight-wicket win in the Cricket World Cup (CWC) League 2 at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Tuesday.

The commanding performance marked Oman's second consecutive victory in the ongoing tri-series, following an equally impressive win over the UAE on Friday.

The host spinners set the tone early, limiting the Netherlands to a modest 132 as the slow left-arm orthodox trio of Shakeel Ahmed, Aamir Kaleem, and Wasim Ali weaved their magic. Ahmed was the standout, finishing with 4/26, including two maidens, while Kaleem (2/27) and Ali (1/18) backed him up effectively. Leg-spinner Samay Shrivastav, who had shone in the UAE match, also contributed with 2/36.

After winning the toss, Oman skipper's decision to bowl first proved wise as the spinners capi-

talised on the conditions, taking nine wickets, with Aryan Dutt being run-out. Ahmed struck early, dismissing openers Max O'Dowd and Vikramjit Singh, and Aamir Kaleem soon added to the pressure by taking the wicket of Dutch captain Scott Edwards. The Netherlands stumbled to 22/3, struggling to build any momentum.

Bas de Leede offered some resistance with a gritty 51 off 89 balls, while Noah Croes added a fighting 29 off 43. Their 40-run stand briefly revived the Dutch innings, but it was short-lived as Wasim Ali removed Croes, and Ahmed returned to remove both Shariz Ahmad and de Leede, leaving the Netherlands in tatters at 114/6. The tail offered little, with Roelof van der Merwe falling to Kaleem and Shrivastav finishing off the lower order to wrap up the Dutch innings at 132 in 40.2 overs.

Chasing 133, Oman's openers Jatinder Singh and Ashish Odedara put on a solid 81-run partnership in 20 overs, setting the plat-

Oman now have two more games at home in this tri-series and, with continued success, could rise to third or fourth in the standings

form for a comfortable chase.

Odedara, the player of the match in the UAE game, scored 27 off 57 balls with three boundaries and a six before falling to Dutt. Jatinder, demonstrating patience and poise, reached his half-century and took Oman close to the target, adding another 33 runs with Wasim Ali before being bowled by van der Merwe for 58 off 95 balls, including three boundaries.

Wasim Ali (24 not out) and Ham-mad Mirza completed the chase in 34.1 overs.

Ahmed's four-wicket haul earned him the player of the match award.

Tuesday's win added two more points to Oman's League 2 standings, bringing them level with Namibia on 10 points, though they trail on net run rate. Oman now have two more games at home in this tri-series and, with continued success, could rise to third or fourth in the standings by the end of the tri-series. Currently, the USA are on top with 16 points from 12 games, followed by Canada (16 points), Scotland (14 points), and the Netherlands (12 points).

Brief scores: Netherlands 132 in 40.2 overs (Bas de Leede 51, Noah Croes 29; Shakeel Ahmed 4/26, Aamir Kaleem 2/27, Samay Shrivastav 2/36) lost to Oman 133/2 in 34.1 overs (Jatinder Singh 58, Ashish Odedara 27, Wasim Ali 24 not out; Aryan Dutt 1/35, Roelof van der Merwe 1/43).



اكتشف مفاجآت نهاية العام مع كيا!
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الخدمة*
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1,000 كم

على طرازات مختارة*

اكتشف مفاجأة نهاية العام مع كيا... واكتشف تشكيلةها الجديدة من السيارات التي تمثل مزيجاً فريداً من الوظائف والحدائق. تفضل بزيارة صالات عرض كيا اليوم لتستقبل مفاجآت نهاية العام والمزيد! مدة الحملة: من ٣ نوفمبر ٢٠٢٤ إلى ١ يناير ٢٠٢٥

شركة الاعتماد الدولية للسيارات ش.م.م. رقم السجل التجاري: ١٧.٧١٨٣. الوطنية: ٠٧٧٩٨٤٦٠٤٧/٢٤٥٧٩٨٤٦. الموالج: ٩٩٤٧٣١٧٤، بركاء: ١٣٤٧، نزوي: ٩٩٨٧٤٣٦٠، صحرار: ٩٢٨٣٧٧٢٢، صور: ٤٣٦٠-٩٣٢/٧٩٣٢، الريستاق: ٩٢٨٦٩٤٤٩، صلالة: ٩٢٨٨٤٢٧/٩٩٨٨٤٢٧، ٢٣٢١٤٦٠

ستكون صالات العرض مفتوحة في مسقط والموالج وبركاء وصحار وصلالة يوم السبت (٩ صياحاً - ١ ظهرًا)

الخدمة: - ٥ سنوات (أو) - ١٠٠ كم/سنة (أيهما أسوأ) على طرازات محددة التي تعمل بالبنزين و- ١٠٠ كم/سنة على طرازات السيارات الكهربائية التسجيل على كافة الطرازات سنة الموديل • عرض فئاسي للتأمين الشامل لمدة سنة واحدة على طرازات مختارة التأمين سيكون للحد الساري على السيارات الخاصة فقط، إذا كان ذلك محتملاً. يجب على المشتري دفع مبلغ إضافي حسب معايير التأمين بالنسبة للطرازات التي يتم تقديم التأمين فيها كحد أقصى. يمكن تحميل الاستفادة من حدية نقدية إضافية بدلاً من التأمين ٩ تطبيق حدية التأمين على طرازات ١١١ من سيراتو، وسيراتو ٣٨ طرازات ١١٥ من بيكانو، وفريغان، وسيراتو بيكانو، كوراجو الخلفية سعة ٢ لتر. سيتم تقديم حدية مضمونة وهي حصار أيفون ١٩ (١٩٢ جيتا/بيت) لجميع عملاء السيارات الكهربائية. جميع المزايا المدفوعة أثناء تسجل على مشتريات الوزارات وأساطيل الشركات والمؤسسات وشركات تأجير السيارات. قد تتضمن الدفقات أيضاً على التسميات مزودة بمعرفة الوكيل المصور والألون لعرض التوضيح. وأبرزه من التتأمين بريق التتأمين بركة ألوب صالة عرض كيا.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased with prices for delivery by January 2025 reaching \$74.05, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 63 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$73.42. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,722.25 points, up by 0.09% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.13% at 432.18 points. Al Jazeera Services, up 9.96%, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 7.14%, was the top loser.

Raysut Cement launches initiative to use industrial waste as green fuel

This programme supports government efforts to reduce carbon emissions, aligning with Oman's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, Acting CEO of the company Dr. Hilal bin Saif Al-Dhamri said



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Raysut Cement Company has launched an initiative to recycle industrial waste for use as green fuel in cement production and electricity generation. Dr. Hilal bin Saif Al-Dhamri, Acting CEO of Raysut Cement, stated that this programme supports government efforts to reduce carbon emissions, aligning with Oman's goal of net-zero emissions by 2050.

He explained that Raysut Cement has introduced new technologies in its factories in Oman and abroad, enabling the recycling of industrial waste to generate electricity and fuel cement production, reducing reliance on gas. This reduces carbon emissions and enhances resource efficiency, providing clean energy for operations. Dr. Hilal further elaborated: "We use secondary industrial materials resulting from production



processes across various industries. These are recycled in cement manufacturing and are categorized into two types: one that can be reused as an alternative fuel in factories, the other issued as a partial replacement to the main raw materials leveraged for cement production." The recycled materials include waste from the Sohar Aluminum smelter, marble and granite industries, oil well drilling, and the

Sohar Oil Refinery. Dr. Al-Dhamri provided further details about the recycling program accomplishment saying: "We implemented a project to reuse hot air emissions and transform them into electrical energy at the Raysut Cement factory in Salalah. This innovative approach permits the plant to generate approximately 30% of its electrical energy, by reducing around 50,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually. As a

result, the Salalah Raysut Cement factory stands out as environmentally friendly, distinguished by its capability to provide clean energy for cement production." He also noted that the industrial waste recycling program enabled Raysut to enhance the efficiency of its Salalah factory by reducing the clinker content while improving the performance of cement in concrete. This has contributed to an approximately 18% reduction in carbon di-

oxide emissions compared to ordinary cement without compromising quality and efficiency. The program also contributed to the improvement of the production efficiency of the Sohar Cement factory, one of several factories owned by the Raysut Cement Group. Daily production has gone from 2,000 tons to 5,000 tons, with reduced electricity consumption of approximately 24%. In the UAE, the Pioneer Cement factory, a subsidiary of Raysut Cement Group, has also scored 20% more efficiency after adopting an alternative fuel scheme. Dr. Hilal bin Saif Al-Dhamri, Acting CEO of Raysut Cement, concluded his statement by affirming that there are many other initiatives the company is considering in collaboration with relevant government authorities, such as recycling household and municipal waste and using it as an alternative fuel to gas. Dr. Hilal is recognized as an Omani expert in the field of circular economy. He has previously achieved scientific accomplishments in the reuse of unwanted industrial waste and materials in cement manufacturing. He has also worked on creating industrial integration between the cement industry and other sectors such as oil well drilling, oil refineries, and aluminum smelters.

ROADS AND SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM



Tender for infrastructure works at Al Dhahirah economic zone issued

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has announced the launch of a tender for the main roads, protection channels, and surface water drainage System at The Zone Economic at Al Dhahirah (EZAD), along with the accompanying services. The tender, which is funded by the Saudi Fund for Development, includes the construction of a 14.8-kilometre one-way main road, a 2-kilometre two-way road, the creation of two roundabouts on the existing national road (N10), and five roundabouts on the main road. The works will also include the construction of dedicated entrances to the roundabouts and the necessary sidewalks, along with essential excavation works, the construction of surface water drainage System, protection works, parking facilities, traffic signs, road markings, and other related services. The tender also includes the construction of a 6.3km long and 250-metre-wide channel for the wadi, aimed at protecting the area from flood risks. This will include excavation for leveling, construction of protective dams, and box culverts that cross the existing national road (N10). As part of the Integrated The Zone Economic at Al Dhahirah (EZAD), the tender also covers the rebuilding of part of the existing national road at the proposed wadi crossing, including the paving of the dirt road, road protection, installation of traffic signals and road markings, as well as the protection of the existing gas pipeline according to the approved

plan and necessary approvals. OPAZ has invited experienced Omani and Saudi consortiums to submit their bids through the electronic bidding platform "Isnad". The deadline for purchasing the tender documents is set for November 18, 2024, while the deadline for bid submission is January 2, 2025. Engineer Ibrahim bin Yusuf bin Said Al Zadjali, Project Manager for the The Zone Economic at Al Dhahirah (EZAD), confirmed that the project is part of the OPAZ's plan to develop the zone near the Oman-Saudi border. It is being developed in collaboration with the Saudi side to enhance bilateral trade between the two countries. He also noted that the tender follows the recent awarding of the consultancy services contract for the design and supervision of the infrastructure facilities for the first phase of the Integrated Economic Zone to a consortium of an Omani company and a Saudi company. The Zone Economic at Al Dhahirah (EZAD), spans 388 square kilometres and is located 20 kilometres from the Empty Quarter border crossing. The creation of the zone aims to stimulate intra-regional trade, promote development and economic diversification efforts, and open new prospects for both the Omani and Gulf economies in general, taking advantage of the region's competitive advantages and attractive geographical location. OPAZ will gradually launch additional tender packages for the remaining phases related to the implementation of infrastructure facilities for the Integrated The Zone Economic at Al Dhahirah (EZAD).

THIRD QUARTER

ahlibank's net profit increases by 5.3%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ahlibank recently reported its performance for the third quarter ending 30 September 2024, in which the bank's net profit increased by 5.3% reaching OMR30.83 million, in comparison to OMR29.29 million during the same period in 2023. Key Performance Indicators for the third quarter ending September 30, 2024, reflected impressive growth, with total assets surging by 10.0%, reaching OMR 3,468.8 million; an increase in customer deposits by 12.7%, to OMR 2,672.1 million; the net loans, advances, and financing increased by 8.4%, to OMR 2,892.2 million, compared to the same period in 2023. The Bank's operating income showed strong growth of 5.4%, reaching OMR 77.65 million for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2024 compared to OMR 73.67 million during the same period in 2023. Commenting on the impressive results of the third quarter of 2024, Said Abdullah Al Hatmi, CEO of ahlibank, said, "These positive achieved results strengthen ahlibank's standing as a leading financial institution in the Sultanate of



Oman, reinforcing our commitment to pursuing excellence. "The Bank's making steady progress with various achievements that actively contribute to realizing the goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040." "The Bank continues to successfully deliver advanced banking solutions that meet the evolving needs of our expanding customer base while setting new standards for excellence in the banking sector. "This, in turn, strengthened the Bank's commitment to continuous innovation to achieve its strategic goals and contributed to the advancement of the banking landscape within the Sultanate," he added. Al Hatmi stressed that, in addition to the positive financial indicators, the achievements of ahlibank during the first nine months of 2024 included many aspects that support the Bank's mission as a "Partner in Excellence", and highlight its core values of innovation, integrity, responsibility and sustainability. Shedding the spotlight on this regard is ahli islamic having opened its latest branch in Al Khoudh 6 in the Wilayat of Seeb, with the aim of bringing Sharia-compliant banking products and services closer to its growing customer base. Al Hatmi stated that ahlibank has been consistently recognized for its achievements. Recently it has received two prestigious awards at the Alam Al Iktisaad Awards 2024: "Excellence in Corporate Banking & Innovative Solutions" and "Best Performing Company - Large Cap." ahli islamic, received the "Excellence in Retail Islamic Banking" award for its cutting-edge Shariah-compliant products. Additionally, ahlibank added to its accolades the "Excellence in Digital Banking" award at the OER

Live DX Awards Oman, organized by the Oman Economic Review (OER) magazine in recognition of its innovative contributions to the digital banking landscape. Al Hatmi said that ahlibank has implemented many initiatives and programs aimed at serving the community as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). CSR is deeply rooted in the Bank's values and identity. Moreover, the CEO stressed that ahlibank is moving forward in its journey as a responsible and socially conscious entity, one that is committed to serving the community and enabling positive and sustainable societal changes. Said Al Hatmi concluded by emphasizing that the bank is making significant progress toward achieving even greater successes in the future. Supported by its holistic portfolio of digital products and services, ahlibank is forever keen to put the requirements of its customers and employees at the forefront of its operations, thereby adopting an innovative approach committed to service excellence. The Bank ensures customers an exceptional banking experience, and is constantly contributing to the development of society.

STATISTICS

Gasoline production in Oman down by 30%

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's production of gasoline recorded a decline of 30.2% in September 2024 compared to August 2024, according to preliminary statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Meanwhile, the total production of refineries and petroleum fell by 8.4% until the end of September 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. The production of regular gasoline (M-91) fell by 18.6% to reach 10,015,900 barrels, and its sales reached 10,502,400 barrels. The production of premium gasoline (M-95) also fell by 3.4%, reaching 9,154,300 barrels. Its sales reached 9,964,700 barrels till the end of September 2024. The production of diesel fuel (gas oil) fell by 12.3%, reaching 23,311,800 barrels, with sales amounting to 10,544,300 barrels. Furthermore, the production of aviation fuel oil rose by 4.4%, reaching 8,450,800 barrels, with sales of 3,043,100 barrels. The production of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) reached 6,477,800



barrels, and its sales reached 7,365,400 barrels. Regarding petrochemicals, the production of benzene increased by 10.5%, reaching 130,900 MT, while the production of paraxylene reached 431,400 MT, representing a growth of 8.4%. The production of polypropylene dropped by 33.4%, amounting to 137,200 MT

until the end of September 2024. The Sultanate of Oman's exports of gasoline (M-91) rose by 72.1% to reach 2,102,200 barrels, and the exports of premium gasoline (M-95) also rose by 57.3%, reaching 912,700 barrels. The exports of diesel fuel (gas oil) reached 12,633,100 barrels, and the exports of aviation fuel

oil reached 5,244,900 barrels. Additionally, the exports of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) reached 306,700 barrels. The exports of paraxylene reached 433,900 MT, and the exports of benzene and polypropylene reached 129,500 MT and 105,800 MT, respectively, until the end of September 2024. - **ONA**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Al Jazeera Services, up 9.96%, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 7.14%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,722.25 points, up by 0.09% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.13% at 432.18 points. Al Jazeera Services, up 9.96%, was the top gainer while Dhofar Generating, down 7.14%, was the top loser. Shares of OQEP were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 2988 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 9.24 million, with more than 26.97 million shares changing hands. Out of 49 traded securities, 11 advanced, 21 declined, and 17 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for RO 1018K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 1018K, followed by GCC & Arab investors for RO 0K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,865.51 points, up 0.35%. Prices of Sohar International Bank, Bank Muscat, Bank Nizwa, Oman Arab Bank were up by 1.47%,

1.18%, 0.98%, 0.68% respectively. Prices of Al Omaniya Financial Services, Oman United Insurance, DIDIC, Global Financial Investments, OMINVEST were down by 8.13%, 4.00%, 3.70%, 1.19%, 0.28% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,401.93 points, down 0.32%. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Oman Cement were up by 1.33%, 1.05% respectively. Services Index was down by 0.66% before closing at 1,802.27 points. Prices of Al Jazeera Services, Oman Education & Training, Shell Oman Marketing were up by 9.96%, 9.42%, 0.14% respectively. Prices of Dhofar Generating, National Gas, Oman National Engineering, Phoenix Power, Barka Water & Power Company were down by 7.14%, 3.80%, 2.50%, 1.72%, 1.72% respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,724.48	4,697.04	4,722.25	4,718.17	4.07	0.09
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,912.75	7,831.99	7,865.51	7,838.00	27.52	0.35
Industry Index	5,420.02	5,388.11	5,401.93	5,419.03	-17.10	-0.32
Services Index	1,814.22	1,793.94	1,802.27	1,814.22	-11.95	-0.66
MSX Shariah Index	432.18	430.44	432.18	431.62	0.56	0.13
MSX TR INDEX	6,599.81	6,561.47	6,596.68	6,590.99	5.69	0.09
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,989.70	8,897.94	8,936.03	8,904.77	31.26	0.35
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,253.41	6,216.60	6,232.55	6,252.28	-19.73	-0.32
SERVICES TR IDX	2,134.97	2,111.10	2,120.91	2,134.97	-14.06	-0.66
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,066.88	1,066.88	1,066.88	1,066.88	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
26,972,691	9,242,253	2,988	27,348,442,168	11	21	17	49

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PR.PREV. CLOSEDIFF BD.DIFF %LAST PR.LAST BD.LAST OFFERPREV. VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,048,397	142,897	44	0.136	0.138	0.136	0.138	0.002	1.471	0.138	0.138	0.138	0.100	769,650,985	
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	973,933	249,381	19	0.255	0.258	0.254	0.257	0.254	0.003	1.181	0.257	0.256	0.257	0.100	1,929,144,045
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	68,574	25,791	14	0.380	0.384	0.375	0.384	0.380	0.004	1.053	0.384	0.375	0.384	0.100	127,055,121
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	380	278	1	0.731	0.731	0.731	0.731	0.730	0.001	0.137	0.731	0.731	0.801	0.100	69,445,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	73,855	4,206	3	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.000	0.057	0.056	0.060	0.100	20,298,256
OM0000002224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	110,476	42,119	22	0.384	0.384	0.381	0.384	0.384	0.000	0.384	0.383	0.384	0.100	90,781,440	
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	8,940	2,456	3	0.273	0.275	0.270	0.275	0.275	0.000	0.000	0.275	0.271	0.275	0.100	179,009,663
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	30,700	2,405	4	0.079	0.079	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.077	0.083	0.100	13,650,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	46,500	3,813	5	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.081	0.088	0.100	58,581,320
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	221,933	218,025	20	0.985	0.985	0.982	0.983	0.985	-0.002	-0.203	0.983	0.981	0.983	0.100	737,250,000
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	7,613	6,273	5	0.357	0.357	0.356	0.356	0.357	-0.001	-0.280	0.356	0.354	0.356	0.100	237,938,092
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	820,375	112,148	147	0.138	0.138	0.136	0.137	0.138	-0.001	-0.725	0.137	0.135	0.137	0.100	593,295,477
OM0000004735	SEMOBOP SALALAH	166,001	16,756	20	0.101	0.102	0.100	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.100	96,411,767
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	302,190	86,433	40	0.288	0.288	0.285	0.285	0.288	-0.003	-1.042	0.285	0.285	0.296	0.100	219,507,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	90,467	7,512	9	0.083	0.084	0.083	0.083	0.084	-0.001	-1.190	0.083	0.079	0.083	0.100	15,800,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	113,423	9,259	10	0.082	0.083	0.081	0.082	0.083	-0.001	-1.205	0.082	0.081	0.082	0.100	55,340,769
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	63,039	7,702	7	0.123	0.123	0.122	0.122	0.124	-0.002	-1.613	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.100	26,840,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	3,241	379	1	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.120	-0.003	-2.500	0.117	0.117	0.120	0.100	17,550,000
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	2,000	480	1	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.250	-0.010	-4.000	0.240	0.241	0.245	0.100	24,000,000
Total	19	4,162,037	938,312	375												

Parallel Market

OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	200	51	1	0.254	0.254	0.254	0.254	0.231	0.023	9.957	0.254	0.208	0.254	0.100	10,882,120	
OM0000002580	OMAN EDUCATION & TRAINING INVESTMENTS	1,690	1,338	4	0.794	0.794	0.790	0.790	0.722	0.068	9.418	0.790	0.790	0.794	0.100	55,300,000	
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	97,390	6,205	7	0.227	0.228	0.227	0.228	0.225	0.003	1.333	0.228	0.227	0.229	0.100	10,434,602	
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	45,590	4,682	9	0.103	0.103	0.101	0.103	0.102	0.001	0.980	0.103	0.102	0.104	0.100	230,405,162	
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	6,686	996	2	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.148	0.001	0.676	0.149	0.148	0.149	0.100	248,742,090	
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	210,960	9,282	4	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.044	0.043	0.044	0.100	13,514,438	
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	77,000	5,621	7	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.000	0.000	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.100	15,489,140	
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	12,041	1,886	3	0.154	0.154	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.150	0.155	0.100	352,448,630	
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	9,000	396	1	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.044	0.043	0.044	0.100	11,000,000	
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	10,296	721	4	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.068	0.070	0.100	1,888,528	
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	224,424	15,015	10	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.063	0.067	0.100	34,078,297	
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	93,354	11,482	12	0.121	0.125	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.000	0.000	0.121	0.118	0.121	0.100	9,138,162	
OM0000009759	OQ EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION	20,292	590	7,279,127	2,437	0.360	0.361	0.358	0.360	0.361	-0.001	-0.277	0.360	0.360	0.360	0.100	1,012,880,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	9,094	23,563	3	2.599	2.599	2.590	2.590	2.599	-0.009	-0.346	2.590	0.000	2.599	0.100	232,323,000	
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	21,744	8,701	13	0.403	0.403	0.400	0.400	0.403	-0.003	-0.744	0.400	0.400	0.420	0.100	32,561,100	
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	34,558	2,501	9	0.074	0.074	0.072	0.072	0.073	-0.001	-1.370	0.072	0.072	0.074	0.100	1,512,000	
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	14,000	3,985	2	0.284	0.285	0.284	0.285	0.280	-0.005	-1.724	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	45,000,000	
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	17,343	4,023	11	0.057	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.056	-0.001	-1.754	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.100	83,368,283	
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	7,500	3,363	4	0.450	0.450	0.440	0.440	0.450	-0.010	-2.222	0.440	0.440	0.450	0.100	69,300,000	
OM0000001509	DHOFAH INTERNATIONAL DEV. & INV. HO.	10,348	2,152	1	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.208	0.216	-0.008	-3.704	0.208	0.208	0.219	0.100	85,123,234	
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	504,970	38,444	34	0.078	0.078	0.076	0.076	0.079	-0.003	-3.797	0.076	0.074	0.076	0.100	6,460,000	
OM0000007407	DHOFAH GENERATING	845	55	1	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.070	-0.005	-7.143	0.065	0.065	0.076	0.100	14,445,600	
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	11	2	1	0.147	0.147	0.147	0.147	0.160	-0.013	-8.125	0.147	0.147	0.176	0.100	46,366,299	
Total	23	21,625,343	7,423,592	2,580													

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Demand for solar panels boost local manufacturing in India

NEW DELHI: The increasing demand for solar panels and related technology is boosting local manufacturing, and thriving economic growth in the small industries, Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy Pralhad Joshi said.

New technologies are significantly enhancing the efficiency of solar panels, the minister said,

addressing the third edition of the High-level Conference on New Technologies for Clean Energy Transition in the national capital. “This conference has brought together policymakers, experts, industry leaders, and leaders, highlighting our global awareness. Our goal is to drive real-world change and make significant progress towards achieving the climate

targets through collaboration, innovation and knowledge sharing,” he said.

He stressed storage technologies stating them as “very critical”. “Innovations in battery storage allow the excess energy generated to be stored fully used to fully used during the cloud detail or at night.”

Prashant Kumar, Secretary, of

the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, highlighted that solar energy is increasingly becoming the least-cost option for the power sector. “Traditional silicon-based photovoltaic panels have been a backbone of solar power for decades. However, recent innovations like the perovskite solar cells are changing



BIOMARKER MAY PREDICT RESPONSE TO IMMUNOTHERAPY IN LIVER CANCER: STUDY

The work, published on October 17 in *Molecular Cell*, sheds fresh light on a pair of proteins known as p62 and NBR1, and their conflicting roles in regulating the interferon response in hepatic stellate cells

According to a preclinical study conducted by Weill Cornell Medicine researchers, it may soon be feasible to detect whether individuals with hepatocellular carcinoma, a kind of liver cancer, may benefit from immunotherapy.

The work, published on October 17 in *Molecular Cell*, sheds fresh light on a pair of proteins known as p62 and NBR1, and their conflicting roles in regulating the interferon response in hepatic stellate cells, an important immunological component in the liver's fight against tumours.

The study shows that high amounts of the immune-suppressing NBR1 in these specialised cells can help identify patients who are unlikely to respond to immunotherapies. It also reveals that NBR1-lowering techniques can decrease tumours in animal models, indicating a potential new therapy option for the subgroup of patients who do not.

"p62 and NBR1 are yin and yang," said the study's co-principal investigator Dr. Jorge Moscat, the Homer T. Hirst III Professor of Oncology in Pathology and a member of the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medicine. "In contrast to NBR1, if p62 is high in hepatic stellate cells, a patient is protected from cancer, but if it is low, the immune system is knocked down. If NBR1 is high, the immune system is impaired, but if NBR1 is low, the immune response increases."

Until recently, patients with hepatocellular carcinoma had few treatment options, and those that were available extended life by only a few months. Immunotherapy has offered a new alternative for these patients and may extend their lives for up to two years.

"The liver is an organ that is tremendously immune suppressed," said co-principal investigator Dr. Maria Diaz-Meco, the Homer T. Hirst Professor of Oncology in Pathology and a member of the Meyer Cancer Center at Weill Cornell Medicine. "Reactivating the immune system is a very attractive approach that is now bearing fruit."

However, not all patients respond to immunotherapy, and only a small percentage achieve long-term remission. Clinicians cannot currently predict which patients would benefit. "We need biomarkers to identify which patients will respond and who will achieve long-term survival," she said.

Drs. Moscat and Diaz-Meco worked with co-first authors Dr. Sadaaki Nishimura and Dr. Juan F. Linares, a postdoctoral associate and an instructor, respectively, in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Weill Cornell Medicine, and Dr. Antoine L'Hermite, formerly of Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute, on the study.

The investigators aimed to identify biomarkers and potential therapeutic targets by studying what goes wrong in the liver's healing mechanisms that leads to cancer. Prior research has found that levels of the tumor-suppressing protein p62 are irreversibly depressed in patients who develop hepatocellular carcinoma. The new study shows that, usually, p62 helps promote an immune response by activating a protein called STING, which pushes NBR1 out of the way, triggering an immune response that destroys

tumor cells. NBR1, by contrast, promotes the breakdown of STING and blocks the immune response. Deleting NBR1 from hepatic stellate cells in mice with hepatocellular carcinoma rescues the immune response and shrinks tumours even when p62 levels remain low.

The team is now investigating how they can develop a therapy that would degrade NBR1 in patients and block it from interacting with STING. The goal is to reactivate the immune system and help increase the effectiveness of immunotherapy. Drugs that activate STING are also in development and might provide another approach to help boost the immune response in patients with hepatocellular carcinoma. The team will also study whether knocking down NBR1 might help prevent the metastasis of many types of cancer or prevent tumors from becoming resistant to therapy.

Dr. Moscat and Dr. Diaz-Meco plan to continue their studies of the pathways that regulate the immune response in the liver.

"If we don't fully comprehend the molecular mechanisms regulating these processes, immunotherapy will not progress, and we won't be able to understand why it works in some patients and not others," Dr. Diaz-Meco said. -ANI

Djokovic pulls out of ATP Finals

The Serbian star, whose sole title in 2024 came at the Olympics, finished sixth in the ATP's Race to Turin this season

TURIN: Defending champion Novak Djokovic on Tuesday pulled out of the ATP Finals in the Italian city of Turin because of an "ongoing injury".

The 37-year-old Serb, who has won a record seven titles at the event, had already qualified as the sixth best player on the ATP Tour this season.

"I was really looking forward to being there, but due to ongoing injury I won't be playing next week," Djokovic wrote on social media.

"Apologies to those who were planning to see me. Wishing all the players a great tournament. See you soon."

Djokovic, who has won a record 24 Grand Slam men's singles ti-



ties, indicated last month that competing in the tour's year-end finals was not a priority.

"I am not chasing ATP Finals, I am not chasing the rankings," Djokovic, who beat the current world number one Jannik Sinner to win last year's title, told Serbian reporters.

The former world No.1 reiterated

ed he wants to focus on the Grand Slams as he looks to prolong his career.

It means his next tournament is likely to be the Australian Open, which starts on 12 January.

In Melbourne, Djokovic will be aiming for an all-time record 25th major singles title - putting him clear of Australia's

Margaret Court - and a 100th tour-level trophy.

His withdrawal from the ATP Finals means the eight-man field for the Turin tournament is set.

Norway's Casper Ruud, Australia's Alex de Minaur and Russia's Andrey Rublev, who looked set for an exciting battle this week for the final two places, have quali-

fied as a result.

Italy's Jannik Sinner, Spain's Carlos Alcaraz, Germany's Alexander Zverev, Russia's Daniil Medvedev and Taylor Fritz of the United States had already clinched their spots.

The tournament takes place in the Italian city between November 10-17. - Agencies

Neymar plays down injury concern



RIYADH: Neymar has played down concerns after picking up a fresh injury in his second appearance for Al Hilal following a year out.

The 32-year-old Brazil striker was substituted 86 minutes into the Saudi Arabian club's 3-0 win against Iranian side Esteghlal in the Asian Champions League Elite on Monday.

"It felt like a cramp, only very strong. I'm going to have some tests and I hope it's nothing too serious," the Brazilian said on Instagram.

"It's normal for this to happen after a year. The doctors had already warned me, so I have to be careful and play more minutes."

Neymar had a prolonged spell on the sidelines after rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament during Brazil's World Cup qualifier against Uruguay in October 2023.

He has played only seven matches for Al Hilal since his move from Paris Saint-Germain in August 2023. - Agencies

Sabalenka in semis but Rybakina exits

RIYADH: Aryna Sabalenka became the first player to secure a semi-final spot at the WTA Finals as she defeated a resilient Jasmine Paolini in straight sets on Monday.

Top seed Sabalenka won 6-3, 7-5 in a victory that also confirmed Elena Rybakina's elimination from the season-ending tournament in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Earlier on Monday, Kazakhstan's Rybakina was beaten 7-6 (7-4), 3-6, 6-1 by Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen for her second defeat at the Finals, and required a Paolini victory to keep her hopes alive.

But a gritty win over the Italian - which saw her save two set points - put Sabalenka one step closer to sealing a maiden WTA Finals title, as well as the year-end world No.1 ranking.

Should she defeat Rybakina in her final Purple Group match on Wednesday, the Belarusian will remain top of the standings into 2025, out of the



reach of Iga Swiatek.

"I'm proud of myself. Not only myself, my team," said Sabalenka, 26. "We were able to overcome a lot of things. To be able to show such great tennis and become world No.1. It's teamwork, it's not only me. "Nobody sees the behind-the-scenes work. But they do a lot for me. I really appreciate them for everything they do for me. This is motivation for me to keep winning on this court."

In the Orange Group, Jessica Pegula will face Barbora Krejickova before defending champion Swiatek plays Coco Gauff. - Agencies

Wilson helps Fulham upset Brentford

LONDON: Substitute Harry Wilson stunned Brentford with two injury-time goals as Fulham came from behind to snatch the points with a 2-1 win at Craven Cottage on Monday.

Brentford's Vitaly Janelt had earlier scored a superb opener worthy of winning any match, powering his shot in from 25 yards in the first half.

But Wilson came on with eight minutes remaining and acrobatically flicked the ball with the outside of his boot over goalkeeper Mark Flekken to score his first, before stooping low to head in the shock winner in the 97th minute.

Fulham had deserved something from the game for their performance, starting strongly to peg back the Bees, who have become renowned for being quick out of the blocks this season.

Cottagers winger Reiss Nelson, named in the starting XI for the first time in the Premier League, had two shots saved by Flekken in quick succession before Emile Smith Rowe also tested the keeper.

Brentford were struggling for possession, before Christian Norgaard rolled the ball to Janelt out-



side the box and the midfielder smashed the ball low into the corner to give the away team the lead with their first shot.

The match fell into the same pattern in the second half, with Fulham pinning Brentford back before the late drama.

Alex Iwobi, Kenny Tete and Andreas Pereira all had efforts on goal but the hosts could not find a breakthrough before Wilson looped the ball over Flekken from

Adama Traore's cross.

With time running out Antonee Robinson clipped in a cross and Wilson stooped down and headed the ball high into the net, sparking wild scenes around the stadium.

Coming into this match Brentford had dropped more points from winning positions than any team in the league, and that tendency repeated itself in brutal fashion as they left Craven Cottage empty handed.

Fulham had not lost any of their previous five London derbies but it looked as though that record was about to be ended before Wilson's heroics.

It would be hard to argue that Fulham did not deserve the win as they dominated possession with 26 shots to the Bees' five.

Midfielder Pereira had created the most chances of any player in the Premier League coming into this match but it was after he left the field that Fulham looked the most likely to score.

Marco Silva threw on Traore, match-winner Wilson and Rodrigo Muniz as the home side chased a way back into the match.

Fulham had relentlessly put balls into the box and it was that tactic which paid off with Wilson getting on the end of two crosses to score late on with impressive finishes.

The win moves the Cottagers up to ninth place and in touch with the sides in the European places.

Brentford, 12th in the league, have had a solid start to the season but will need to sort their defensive issues if they want to get higher than mid-table. - Agencies

Edu leaves role as Arsenal sporting director

LONDON: Edu has resigned from his role as Arsenal's sporting director.

The Brazilian rejoined the Gunners as technical director in summer 2019 before being promoted to sporting director in November 2022. Edu, 46, played for Arsenal between 2001 and 2005 and won two league titles, with one coming as part of the 'Invincibles' team of 2003-04.

"This was an incredibly hard decision to make," Edu said on Monday.

"Now it is time to pursue a different challenge. Arsenal will always remain in my heart. I wish the club and its supporters only good things and all the very best."

The former midfielder was heavily involved in bringing manager Mikel Arteta to the club, with



Arsenal winning the FA Cup at the end of Arteta's first season in charge.

While major silverware has eluded them since, working alongside the Spaniard, Edu has been widely credited with helping to transform the club back into genu-

ine title challengers.

Edu added: "Arsenal has given me the opportunity to work with so many amazing people and the chance to be a part of something so special in the club's history.

"I've loved working with so many great colleagues across our

men's, women's and academy teams, especially Mikel, who has become a great friend."

Arsenal co-chair Josh Kroenke said: "We respect Edu's decision and thank him for his immense contribution and dedication to drive the club forward.

"Change and evolution is a part of our club. We remain focused on our strategy and winning major trophies. Our succession plan will reflect this continued ambition."

There has been movement off the field at Arsenal in recent times, with Richard Garlick taking up the role as managing director at the beginning of this season after CEO Vinai Venkatesham left at the end of the last campaign.

The Gunners are also set to appoint James King as director of football operations. - Agencies

Forest owner loses appeal

LONDON: Nottingham Forest owner Evangelos Marinakis has lost his appeal against a five-game stadium ban on Monday.

The 57-year-old was found guilty of improper conduct for spitting on the floor as the match officials walked past following Forest's 1-0 Premier League defeat by Fulham at the City Ground on 28 September.

In publishing its written reasons behind the decision, the commission said there was "no excuse" for such an "an egregious display of disrespectful behaviour" that could "fuel disrespect towards match officials".

Marinakis, who has already served three games of the ban, denied the charge.

"An Appeal Board has dismissed an appeal by Nottingham Forest's Evangelos Marinakis in relation

to misconduct at their Premier League fixture on Saturday, 28 September against Fulham," said the Football Association.

"It was alleged that the behaviour of Evangelos Marinakis around the tunnel area after full-time of that match was improper. He denied this charge, but it was found proven by an independent Regulatory Commission, and a five-match stadium/ground suspension was imposed."

The incident occurred after Forest, who are third in the Premier League, lost to Fulham following a VAR-awarded penalty.

The punishment came after boss Nuno Espirito Santo was given a three-game touchline ban for his reaction to Morgan Gibbs-White's red card at Brighton in October. - Agencies

MEN AND WOMEN WINNERS

Nageeye, Chepkirui win at New York Marathon

NEW YORK: Abdi Nageeye of the Netherlands and Kenya's Sheila Chepkirui won the men's and women's races respectively at the New York City Marathon on Monday.

Britain's David Weir was second in the men's wheelchair race, won by American favourite Daniel Romanchuk.

Romanchuk, who was also victorious in 2018 and 2019, finished in one hour 36 minutes

31 seconds - five seconds clear of Weir, with Japan's Tomoko Suzuki eight seconds further back in third.

Switzerland's Marcel Hug, the winner of 16 straight marathons and bidding for a fourth consecutive victory in New York, was fourth.

Susannah Scaroni won the women's wheelchair race for the second time, finishing more than 10 minutes clear of fellow

American and five-time champion Tatyana McFadden. Switzerland's Manuela Schar was third.

Nageeye finished strongly, surging past Kenyan Evans Chebet, the 2022 champion, in the final stretch to clock 2:07.39. Kenya's Albert Korir was third.

"I was so focused. When I reached the finish, the emotion was not there. It felt like I was dreaming," said Nageeye, a silver medallist at the 2020 Olympics.

Chepkirui triumphed in 2:24.35 to claim her first world marathon major win.

She finished 14 seconds clear of 2023 winner Hellen Obiri, with Vivian Cheruiyot completing an all-Kenyan podium.

"This means a lot to me," said Chepkirui.

"I had to really dig in and it was really hard. I pushed myself to the limit and I am so happy," added the Kenyan runner. - Agencies



TWO LOST MEDIEVAL SILK ROAD CITIES MAPPED IN CENTRAL ASIA



Tugunbulak and Tashbulak, in the mountains of Uzbekistan, were bustling medieval centres of Silk Road trade between China, Arabia and Europe. Researchers have now mapped the cities using drone-borne LiDAR.

IN A MOUNTAIN-TOP market-place in Uzbekistan, a trader sells Chinese silks, pots of gunpowder and jade dragon amulets, teeth-bared and grinning. Imams and Buddhist monks saunter past. The air is filled with the fine fragrance of teas, peppers and nutmeg, while breezes waft away acrid black smoke from smithies smelting steel.

A thousand years ago, inhabitants of two mountain-top cities in modern-day Uzbekistan experienced these and other impressions in their daily lives

A new study published October 23 in the journal Nature has revealed that the two cities – Tugunbulak and Tashbulak – were major urban centres that lay on medieval Silk Road trading routes.

Drone-borne scanning equipment captured images of unexpectedly large settlements ringed with watchtowers, fortresses, plazas, and homes for tens of thousands of people.

The researchers suggest that cities located high up in the mountains may have been more important in the exchange of goods and knowledge along the medieval trade routes between East and West than previously thought.

Two medieval cities: Tugunbulak and Tashbulak

US and Uzbekistan-based researchers used drone-based LiDAR – Light Detection and Ranging – to map the archaeological sites of the two recently discovered sites in Uzbekistan, which dated back to the era between 1000-1400 CE.

The two cities, Tugunbulak and Tashbulak, are located in the Malguzar mountain range, about 2,100 meters (7,500 feet) above sea level. Urban centres are rarely located over 2,000m above sea level, with only 3% of the planet’s population living at or above that altitude.

The smaller city, Tashbulak,

which covered about 12 hectares, is located five kilometers (3.1 miles) away from the larger city of Tugunbulak, which covered 120 hectares. The authors say Tugunbulak was one of the largest cities in central Asia during the early-medieval period.

“These would have been important urban hubs in central Asia, especially as you moved out of lowland oases and into more challenging high-altitude settings,” said Michael Frachetti, an archaeologist at Washington University in St. Louis, US, who led the research.

The two cities were likely important trading centres and fortresses protecting merchants traveling along the Silk Road, the authors say.

“While typically seen as barriers to Silk Road trade and movement, the mountains actually were host to major centres for interaction. Animals, ores, and other precious resources likely drove their prosperity,” Frachetti said in a press statement.

LiDAR allowed creation of archaeological maps

This was the first-ever use of cutting-edge drone-based LiDAR in Central Asia. LiDAR is a detection method that uses light pulses to measure distances to the earth, in this case from a drone.

The pulses generate 3D maps of the landscape beneath, including buildings and evidence of settlement, with very high accuracy at the centimetre-level scale.

“These are some of the highest resolution LiDAR images of archaeological sites ever published,” Frachetti said.

The scans created detailed views of plazas, fortifications, roads and houses that shaped the lives and economies of highland communities, traders and travelers.

The maps have been cross ana-



lyzed with archaeological findings from the two cities, providing clues about their importance as industrial and economic hubs in central Asia.

Preliminary digging at one of the fortified structures at Tugunbulak suggests that the fortress might have been a factory where local metalsmiths turned rich deposits of iron ore into steel.

The researchers also suggest the city’s proximity to large forests indicates it could have been an important centre for trading fuel.

Frachetti hopes to use the same combination of on-the-ground detective work and drone-based LiDAR to gather evidence of other

high-altitude settlements along the Silk Road and beyond.

“We could really change the map of urban development in medieval Asia,” he said.

What are the Silk Roads?

The cities were thought to have been constructed around 1000 CE during the time of the Qarakhanid Empire. The cities went into decline and disappeared sometime before Genghis Khan’s Mongol forces conquered the region around 1220 CE.

“Major political forces were at play in Central Asia. The complex heart of the network was also a driver of innovation,” Frachetti said.



Tashbulak and Tugunbulak were up in the mountains, away from the main overland routes of the Silk Roads, which passed by the lowlands near Samarkand. But the researchers argue the highland cities were not remote backwaters, but important trading centres in their own right.

The Silk Road is credited with bringing advanced technologies like gunpowder, paper, and silk from China to the Middle East and Europe. The trade routes also acted as conduits for religions like Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, as well as for artistic influences in sculpture, handicrafts and painting.

But some scholars say the im-

pact of overland Silk Road routes has been overestimated – in part because ships along maritime routes from India could carry more goods than Silk Road carts and could also travel faster.

In his new book The Golden Road, historian William Dalrymple argues that ancient India has been overlooked as a centre of ideas and technologies that transformed cultures around the world.

Dalrymple credits ancient India with spreading the first universities, the mathematical sign for zero and the other numbers generally called ‘Arabic numerals’, as well as games like chess and ideas of theoretical science. -aw

ROUND-UP

Bahar rewards its loyal customers with Oman’s first-ever Tesla

The highlight of the prize distribution event was the announcement of the grand prize winner of a Tesla Model Y, marking a significant first for Oman, alongside 75 additional high value prizes for Bahar customers

MUSCAT: Bahar, the flagship brand of National Detergent Company (NDC), held an exciting prize distribution event for its “Buy Bahar Own Your Dream Tesla” campaign at Oman Avenues Mall recently. The highlight of the event was the announcement of the grand prize



winner of a Tesla Model Y, marking a significant first for Oman, alongside 75 additional high value prizes for Bahar customers. Running from July 25 to October 7, the “Buy Bahar Own Your

Dream Tesla” campaign encouraged customers to purchase any product from Bahar, No.1, Pinex, Farah, or Spark for as little as 3 OMR, making the promotion accessible to a broad audience. By

simply entering their details, participants had the chance to win the grand prize of a Tesla Model Y and an array of valuable gifts, including gift vouchers, washing machines, iPhones, and Samsung Galaxy

phones. This campaign stands out as the first of its kind in Oman to offer a Tesla as a prize, adding a unique allure to the promotion. Mohamad Abdul Hussain Bhacker, Chairman of National

Detergent Company, commented on the campaign’s impact: “This campaign has been a testament to our dedication to rewarding our customers in extraordinary ways. We are thrilled to present Oman’s first-ever Tesla prize in a promotion, and witnessing the excitement from our customers has been incredibly fulfilling. Our aim has always been to create great moments and lasting memories, and today we achieved exactly that.” Murali Sundar, CEO of NDC, added, “The success of the ‘Buy Bahar Own Your Dream Tesla’ campaign has been unprecedented. The level of engagement and excitement from our customers has exceeded our expectations. Seeing the joy on the winner’s face as she received her Tesla is a highlight we’ll cherish. This campaign strengthens our commitment to offering more innovative promotions that resonate deeply with the community.” As a leading supplier of home and personal care products in the region, Bahar, a 100% Omani brand, remains dedicated to delivering outstanding value and quality to customers across the Sultanate. The company is devoted to introducing engaging campaigns and quality products that enhance everyday life, fostering a deeper connection with customers and making a tangible difference.

OMAN SCIENCE FESTIVAL



Bank Muscat’s exhibit attracts impressive turnout

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat’s stall at the Oman Science Festival, currently being held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC), has drawn big turnout from students and visitors who commended the Bank’s commitment to spread awareness about financial literacy and its active role in fostering this concept across various segments of society. This participation is part of a larger event featuring 2,500 participants from 120 institutions, with over 500 events spread across the OCEC. The Bank’s participation includes interactive, state-of-the-art screens that provide a unique educational experience for all ages. These screens enable visitors to engage with content on financial planning, money management. There are also series of competitions and activities, including quizzes on financial literacy and money management, designed to enhance financial skills in an engaging way. Speaking on the occasion, Hamza bin Abbas al Ajmi, Deputy General Manager – Credit, Bank Muscat, expressed the Bank’s dedication to participating in key events that reflect Oman’s progress across various fields. “Oman Science Festival is an important event, which draws a broad audience interested in creativity and innovation. Financial literacy is a core focus for the Bank, especially among students, as it represents a foundational skill essential to achieving sus-

tainable financial health and planning for a secure future. Talib bin Saif Al Makhmari, Head of Community & Media Relations, reiterated the Bank’s commitment to raising awareness of financial literacy and its importance. He highlighted that Bank Muscat’s participation includes diverse interactive and educational activities that enrich knowledge in financial management. “We are really impressed with the strong turnout, especially among students eager to build their financial skills, and we invite everyone to visit the Bank’s booth to explore these topics in more detail. Omar bin Jamal Al Mammari, a student at Sheikh Saeed bin Ahmed Al Kindi School, said, “The Oman Science Festival is a great opportunity for us to get acquainted with the latest innovations in the field of Science and technology, and interact with useful and purposeful projects. Also, the interactive screen in Bank Muscat’s stall is enriching and useful because we got to know many financial concepts in a fun way. The Bank Muscat team present at the stall explained to us how to differentiate between basics and luxuries and how to plan to spend money correctly and thoughtfully. Fajr bint Yousuf Al Balushiya, a student at Al Mouj Private School, expressed her admiration for the idea of teaching visitors how to financial planning through discussions with the Bank Muscat team.

SEDAN 1.6L

All-new Kia K3: A new companion for your journey

MUSCAT: The all-new Kia K3 is the latest progressive sedan that is set to make a mark in the evolving consumer market. Adhering to Kia’s brand ethos ‘Movement that Inspires’, with the K3, Kia has tapped into the demands of buyers seeking all-rounder vehicles that deliver hi-tech, design and advanced safety features at par with the global trends. The brand-new Kia K3 features a futuristic sleek style with a 4-door fastback profile. Set to elevate your journey, Kia has embodied a modernized outlook with bold side character lines, black cladding, LED Daytime Running Lights (D.R.L), and the 16-inch alloy wheels complimenting the traditional tiger nose grille in its design. In the rear, the horizontal rear lamp emphasizes wideness and star-map signature graphics provide stunning depth. The Kia K3 has a 1.6-litre 4-cylinder engine producing 120 HP at 6,300 rpm mated to a 6-speed automatic transmission. The sedan delivers excellent fuel efficiency at



16.8 litres/100 km while minimizing CO2 emissions into the atmosphere. Built for the trendsetter and the go-getters, the Kia’s K3 is a dreamy mix of striking looks and interiors that ensure a smooth driving experience with utmost passenger comfort and safety. For a sedan of its league, the K3 provides a massive 544 litres of rear storage capacity, a smart key with a button start system that saves time and easy access, an 8-inch audio display screen integrated with Apple Car Play and Android Auto and a

Bluetooth voice recognition functionality that sets a benchmark for seamless connectivity. In the K3, experience comfortable longer drives. Turn on Cruise Control while the rear seat passengers can enjoy convenience features such as rear AC vents, 60:40 split back seats, armrests, and cupholders. The sedan demonstrates Kia’s vision of safety and increased driver’s awareness while navigating busy highways or cramped city spaces. Kia ensures high-level safety of its passengers and pe-

destrians high-tech security systems include: Hill-Assist Control, Engine Immobilizer, Rear View Camera, Manual Speed Limit Assist, Driver and Front Passenger Airbags, Anti-lock Braking System (ABS), Electronic Stability Program (ESP), Tyre Pressure Monitoring System (TPMS). Moreover, Kia offers the best car service facilities. Ensure smooth running by getting your car serviced by professionals, and spare parts are easily available. The Kia K3 is impressive on all fronts offering the latest technologies and convenience features for passengers. Invest in a Kia K3 to get the benefit of space and easy manoeuvrability across cityscapes. At Kia, we believe it’s all about you and we transform ideas into spaces for people from all walks of life. The all-new Kia K3 is now available at your nearest Kia showroom for an experience. Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers.

FINANCIAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL INSIGHTS

NBO empowers young minds at its Youth Event

MUSCAT: As part of its dedication to nurture the skillsets and capabilities of our local youth, the National Bank of Oman (NBO) organized the NBO Youth Event at its Head Office in Muscat. The event provided a platform to equip younger minds with necessary financial and entrepreneurial insights and concepts while inspiring them to connect, learn, grow and become independent. A number of activities took place during the Youth Event, including the “Finance to Freedom” workshop, which aimed to develop professional and personal skills among participants, alongside other engaging sessions designed to empower young minds. Additionally, the event featured the Financial Planning for Future Entre-



preneurs Panel Discussion, which highlighted key strategies and considerations for young entrepreneurs. This discussion offered practical advice and inspiration, encouraging youth to view financial planning as an integral part of their entrepreneurial journey.

Commenting on the event, Ali Mustafa Al Lawati, Head of Private Banking at NBO, said: “At NBO, we are committed to foster a generation of financially literate and empowered youth. Events like these provide an invaluable opportunity for young individuals to

gain knowledge, develop skills, and build networks. We aim to support their ambitions, guiding them towards a secure financial future.” Beyond the finance-focused sessions, attendees participated in interactive activities, including a phone photography workshop focused on enhancing personal branding skills. They also enjoyed recreational activities such as a game night featuring Oman Board Games and a ceramic painting session, blending learning with leisure to create a well-rounded experience. By combining educational content with fun, engaging activities, NBO provided a platform for young attendees to connect with their peers and establish lasting relationships.





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