

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN SENDS GREETINGS TO SEYCHELLES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of greetings to Wavel Ramkalawan, the President of the Republic of Seychelles on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Wavel and the friendly people of his country. -ONA



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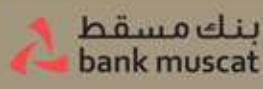
HM SENDS GREETINGS TO ICELAND

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sent a cable of greetings to Dr. Guðni Jóhannesson, the President of the Republic of Iceland on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to the president and progress and prosperity to the friendly people. -ONA



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OMANISATION IN INSURANCE SECTOR GETS A BIG BOOST

The Omanisation percentage at the administrative and technical job levels until the middle of this year reached 83.36 percent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) endeavour to provide qualified Omanis in the insurance sector has reaped a rich reward with a growing number of Omanisation in specialised jobs. Employing the 'Tamkeen' policy, the CMA hopes to make Omanisation ratio in the insurance sector consistent with the government's plans related to the national cadres. With the 'Tamkeen' initiative, the insurance sector has seen the hiring of qualified Omani human resources. The Omanisation percentage at the administrative and techni-



cal job levels until the middle of this year reached 83.36 percent. It represented 59.73 percent at senior levels, while in the middle administrative jobs it reached 78.13 percent, while it reached 90.18 percent in the operational jobs. Until the middle of this year, the 'Tamkeen' initiative was able to implement approximately 88 specialised training programmes in various technical and administrative fields in the insurance sector, in cooperation with various insurance training institutes and centres, and enabled more than 2,400 employees in the same sector.

The national initiative of 'Tamkeen' was announced in 2015. The CMA has adopted this initiative to empower and train Omani youth in the technical aspects of the insurance sector and motivate them to develop their skills and capabilities by joining training programmes and following up on the training programmes provided by companies for their employees. The initiative comes as a studied methodology for carrying out replacements in technical positions, senior, middle and operational managements with qualified Omani cadres who are able

to lead and develop it to suit the needs of the local market, and enhance the competitiveness of the Sultanate of Oman in the financial and investment sector. The 'Tamkeen' initiative provides an attractive environment to attract qualified national cadres in light of the competition in the labour market and help build specialised national cadres in the sector. In order to raise the competitive edge of Omani youth, the initiative aims to sharpen their skills, ensure that quality of national cadres is attracted to the sector by ensuring the efficiency of departments specialised in human resources, and choose training programmes that meet the needs of the labour market. The authority referred to the continuous efforts in implementing the 'Tamkeen' plan for the year 2023 to enhance specialised jobs for qualified Omani employees with high qualifications through the implementation of a number of professional certificates, including the Insurance Institute of Law, the Certificate of Associate in Risk Management, and the Certificate of the Third Level of Professional Certificates. It has also contributed to building national expertise specialised in the sector through retention of national cadres and avoiding skills drain.

HAJJ MISSION

Omani Hajj team leaves for Medina to monitor services

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A team from the Omani Hajj mission headed to Medina on Saturday to provide services to the Omani pilgrims visiting the city. The team, headed by Abdulaziz bin Masoud Al-Ghafri, deputy head of the mission, said: "The mission on its arrival in Medina will provide guidance and health services, and supervise the Hajj companies by carry out field visits to check whether the Omani pilgrims arriving in Medina are getting all the services in accordance with the terms of the contract between them and the Hajj companies."



Abdulaziz bin Masoud Al-Ghafri indicated that the team will stay from the 28th day of Dhul Qadah while most of the pilgrims will head to Makkah Al-Mukarramah to perform the rituals of Hajj. >A2

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Information Minister greets award winners

1 The excellent performance of Oman at the 23rd edition of the Festival won praise from Dr. Abdullah Nasser Khalifa Al Harrasi, the Minister of Information, who emphasised that the success indicated the quality of the Omani media. >A3

WORLD

41 killed in Uganda school attack

2 41 people were killed and eight injured after a school in western Uganda was attacked by armed rebels from the Allied Democratic Force. >A6

SPORTS

Bangladesh secure 546-run victory

3 Bangladesh secured a 546-run win against Afghanistan, creating a record that would most likely stay untouched for years. >A8



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Asr.....	3:31pm
Maghrib.....	7:00pm
Isha.....	8:23pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:53am

H A J J

< FROM A1 Omani pilgrims to visit Medina

He said that more than 60 percent of the pilgrims coming from Oman will go to Medina to visit the Prophet's Mosque, before heading to Makkah Al-Mukarramah for

Haji. The mission team in Medina will provide integrated services, as it has been formed from all service delegations, and includes Fatwa and Religious Guidance delega-

tion, delegation supervising Hajj firms, medical delegation, Royal Oman Police delegation, administrative and financial delegation, and scout delegation. -ONA

Guidelines for Omanis on India trip for medicare



The consulate urged citizens willing to go for treatment to India and those accompanying them to follow the given instructions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Consulate of the Sultanate of Oman in Mumbai has issued a list of instructions and guidelines for Omani citizens wishing to travel to the Republic of India for medical treatment, in order to avoid any violation of rules or fines.

The consulate urged citizens willing to go for treatment to India and those accompanying them to follow the instructions announced, and the need to obtain a medical visa from the office licenced by the Indian Embassy in Muscat.

The Consulate General of Oman in India - Mumbai said:

"Important instructions for citizens of the Sultanate of Oman coming to the Republic of India for treatment and those accompanying them:

- It is mandatory to obtain a medical visa for the patient and his/her companion through the office licensed by the Indian Embassy in Muscat, as it is the legal visa that allows its holder to receive treatment in India.

- The medical visa can be extended by the Department of Immigration of India provided that there are reasons for continuing treatment from the approved hospitals.
- The Indian tourist visa is not extendable under any circumstances, and it is necessary to leave before the expiry of its validity period in order to avoid travel bans and financial penalties.

- It is preferable to communicate directly with accredited hospitals and specialised doctors through their websites or visit them directly without an intermediary. Hospitals and doctors must also be assured not to include any intermediary in their records, and send recent medical reports of the patient in English directly to the hospital for review.
- Make sure to obtain an official letter and an invitation from the hospital stating its consent to receive the patient, an initial deter-

mination of the treatment plan, expected duration, and estimated costs, and to include that invitation for the procedures for obtaining a medical visa.

- Beware of dealing with intermediaries such as medical coordination offices that are not licensed by the Ministry of Health, taxi owners, translators, medical treatment brokers, and others, in order to avoid those parties getting a financial commission ranging from 30 percent to 40 percent of the treatment bill.

- Beware of people who promote hospitals, clinics, and medical clinics through social media and internet sites.

- Do not transfer money to intermediaries and unknown persons.

- Ensure that the prescription is carried upon departure, and check the expiration date of the medicines.

- In emergency cases or deaths, only the escort must communicate directly with the consulate to take the necessary procedures.

The Consulate General in Mumbai wishes safety and recovery for all, stressing the importance and need to adhere to the above-mentioned guidelines, and constant communication and joint cooperation with it to ensure better and more effective services to citizens.

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Minister greets award winners of Tunis event

Dr. Abdullah Nasser Khalifa Al Harrasi affirmed the commitment of the ministry on developing the media landscape



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman won a total of 11 awards at the recently-concluded Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) Radio and Television Festival that concluded in Tunis.

The excellent performance of Oman at the 23rd edition of the Festival won praise from Dr. Abdullah Nasser Khalifa Al Harrasi, the Minister of Information, who emphasised that the success indicated the high level of competence and quality produced by the Omani media.

In a statement to ONA, Dr. Al Harrasi said: "The awards included in radio for podcasts, children's programmes, youth competition, music tracks and songs, environmental and interactive programmes. In television, the awards won were in films, documentary programmes, natural reserves documentary and news exchange and programme competitions."

Dr Al Harrasi added that "the achievement in various fields of media reflects the progress made by the radio and television production industry, and the media

in general in Oman. The awards are sort of an international certification to the continuous efforts of the various public and private media establishments made in Oman."

The Minister of Information affirmed the commitment of the ministry on developing the media landscape in Oman by implementing comprehensive plans which encourages creation, innovation, and enhance media culture, skills of the interviewers through training.

He added: "These prestigious awards that Oman won will push us to further enhance our production and adopt modern technologies to boost the quality of our media products."

Dr. Al Harrasi extended his greetings to all the winners at the ASBU Radio and Television Festival. It may be mentioned that Oman won 11 awards in Tunis.

The Sultanate of Oman Radio won the first prize in the radio competitions for podcast programmes and the first prize for children's programmes (scout activities) "Safron", and in the youth initiatives competition it also won the second prize with

"And Cooperate". The Sultanate of Oman Radio also won the gold award in the musical composition category for the piece "Wahaj", and the silver award in the song category for the song "Ayyanaak".

"Hala FM Radio" won the second prize in environmental programmes for "Hala Box". Al Wisal Radio won the second prize in the interactive programmes for "Al-Wesal Forum".

The documentary film, "House of Wonders and the Age of Caravans between the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar" won the first prize in the category of general films and documentaries.

Sultanate of Oman TV won the first prize for the programme "Al-Sarb: Wildlife and Natural Reserves in Dhofar Governorate" in the category of the competition "Across the Arab World: Natural Reserves in the Arab World", and also won the first prize for the programme "Athar: Engraving Rock Art and Ancient Writings".

Oman also won in the category of the "Documentary Programme: The Art of Architecture in the Arab World" competition, for news and programme exchange competitions. -With ONA inputs



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MOH NO: 187/23

DHUL-HIJJAH

Moon sighting panel to meet today

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The main committee to sight the crescent of the month of Dhul-Hijjah for the year 1444 AH will meet on Sunday evening at the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.

The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs called on citizens and residents to watch for the crescent, in cooperation with field teams in the wilyats, or to communicate with sub-committees in the offices of their excellencies of the governors.



It is worth noting that if the sighting of the crescent of the month of Dhul-Hijjah is confirmed, then the first day of Eid al-Adha will fall on Wednesday, June 28, 2023.

RAINS IN WILAYAT OF RUSTAQ

Accompanied by active winds, the Wilayat of Rustaq in the Governorate of South Al Batinah witnessed rains that ranged between heavy and medium. Rains also led to the overflow of a number of wadis. -ONA





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PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED TO TAP OMAN’S TOURISM POTENTIALS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has launched a promotional campaign to tap the heritage and tourism potentials during summer season under the slogan ‘change weather’ which will continue till the end of August.

The campaign aims to activate the local tourism movement during summer season and introduce heritage and tourism locations and strengthen tourism movement throughout the year, which will benefit partners in the tourism sector.

The promotional campaign includes visits to closed venues such as museums, commercial and entertainment centres, moderate temperature venues such as Jabal Shams, Al Jabal Al Akhdar, South Al Sharqiyah Governorate beaches and Al Wusta Governorate as well as marine activities and activities that can be practiced in areas of moderate temperature.

Offers also include marine trips, adventure tours, camping, visits to entertainment centres, shopping

38%
WAS THE OCCUPANCY PERCENTAGE
OF THE HOTELS IN THE SULTANATE
DURING THE FIRST QUARTER
OF THE CURRENT YEAR

and restaurants.

Statistics issued by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism showed that the number of visitors coming to the Sultanate of Oman during the first quarter of the current year reached about 956,600 of which 322,400 came from the GCC states.

The statistics also pointed out that the occupancy percentage of the hotels in the Sultanate during the first quarter of the current year reached 38%. -ONA





Sur Industrial City investments surpass OMR2bn



The city also saw eight localised projects worth OMR30 million from January 2022 until June 2023

SUR: The number of localised projects in Sur Industrial City reached 127 with a total investment worth OMR2.3 billion and has contributed in the employment of 1,514 nationals from a total of 2,656 workers.

Speaking to Oman News Agency, Eng. Abdul Qadir Salim Al Balushi, Director General of Sur Industrial City, pointed out that the total area of the industrial city is 36 million square metres of which 23 million square metres are for rent.

He further said that Sur Industrial City witnessed a remarkable development from January 2022 until June 2023 as eight projects with an investment of OMR30 million were approved.

The focus of these projects are on attracting value-added as well as sustainable projects that coincide with the trend towards the blue economy of Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

Also, these projects helped in contributing in transfer of technology to the Sultanate of Oman.

These localised projects are include generators, turbines, furniture, perfumes and aluminium industry, shipping industry, fish storage and other projects.

Eng. Abdul Qadir Salim Al Balushi, Director General of Sur Industrial City, stated that the industrial city currently consists of a number of main projects such as liquid natural gas (LNG), chemicals, fertilizers and a number of small and medium projects in diverse sectors, besides a number of projects in the service sector.



He pointed out that Sur Industrial City is characterised by a waterfront of 8km overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. He further explained that one of the most important strategic projects currently planned is the international port, which will contribute in opening huge prospects for attracting investments in the industrial city and providing job opportunities.

He also added that coordination and working with the developer is continuing and more contracts are expected to be announced soon.

He further affirmed that Sur Industrial City endeavours to increase the efficiency of the basic services at its end for the development of 2 million square metres,

including roads, water and sewerage networks. The work currently is undergoing on executing the sewerage water treatment plant at a cost of OMR950,000 and the work is undergoing on another project to improve rain water drainage and valley crossings inside the industrial city at a cost of OMR350,000.

Eng. Abdul Qadir Salim Al Balushi, Director General of Sur Industrial City, said that the work is currently going on executing the first stage of the Green Belt project at a cost of OMR250,000 including afforestation works, green spaces, walking paths and other facilities. The project will contribute to achieving the environmental balance inside the Industrial City.

With respect to the security system, he added that the work is currently going on executing the first stage of the security system, which include the installation of the security fence, and tender documents are under preparation for the second stage to include surveillance cameras installation.

He emphasised that Sur Industrial City continues to improve investment environment as work is going on for preparing a number of investment opportunities, which will be floated to the private sector within the coming period, which will offer support services. — ONA

IN PANAMA

Five teams qualify for World Robot Olympiad

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Five teams qualified for the World Robot Olympiad in Panama. A statement issued by ONA said that five teams have qualified for the World Robot Olympiad, to be held in November of this year in Panama, which is one of the most important international robotics competitions that are held annually.

The final qualifiers were held on Saturday with the participation of 30 teams from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman within the National Robotics Competition, which is organised by the Robotics Education Centre (Roboticktick).

In the robot category, 3 teams qualified: "Oman Tech", "Bin Hamed" team, and "Lado team".

While in the sports robot category, the Sultan Qaboos School team qualified, and in the starting stage, the New World International School team qualified.

The global competition in-

cludes four main categories: mission robots, future innovators, future engineers, and sports robots. The team consists of two to three people under the supervision of a coach to guide them.

The World Robot Olympiad national competition aims to inspire future generations and improve their competencies in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, and it combines artificial intelligence and robotics. The competition also focuses on youth creativity and skills in various categories, through competitions in robotics and artificial intelligence. It is held annually with mathematical and technical challenges, with an annual theme of innovation in problems facing the world.

The International Robot Olympiad is a global competition aimed at showing the creativity of young people of different ages in the fields of robotics, artificial intelligence, and STEM programming.

JUNE 17 OF EACH YEAR

Oman celebrates World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

SALALAH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority, celebrated the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, which falls on June 17 of each year.

To give focus on women's rights to have own land, the slogan for this year is "Women's land, their rights".

On this occasion, the Environment Authority, represented by the Directorate General of Environment in Dhofar Governorate, implemented an initiative titled 'Desert Shadows', which is part of the national initiative to plant 10 million wild trees in the Sultanate of Oman.

The initiative aims to develop

an action plan to make the best use of the places near artesian wells, by revitalising the tourism and economic aspects of those areas, in addition to planting them with wild trees that suit the nature of the desert such as Ghaf, Sidr, and Cactus; for their multiple uses and benefits to the environment. It will help increase green areas and reduce temperatures and carbon emissions. The Assistant Director General of Environment in Dhofar, said: "The initiative comes within the first phase of the director's plan targeting a number of areas in Najd and desert."

He added that the current stage of the initiative came in cooperation with the offices of their ex-

cellencies the governors and the private sector, and the wilayats of Thumrait and Muqshin.

A senior specialist at the General Directorate of Environment in Dhofar Governorate and head of the Desert Shadows Initiative team, explained that the idea of the campaign came from the Environment Authority, represented by the General Directorate of Environment in Dhofar, sensing the importance of cultivating remotely Areas located in Najd and the Dhofar desert.

The plan is to provide places of shade near artesian wells and take advantage of these places to make them attractive to citizens and tourists. — Times News Service

Diwan of Royal Court

Tender Notice (2)

Diwan of Royal Court, Sultanate of Oman, Muscat announces the following Tenders:

Diwan of Royal Court sultanate of Oman, Muscat, announces the following tenders :

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Document Value	Last date of purchasing Tenders	Last date of submitting Tenders
15/2023	Annual requirements for pharmaceutical items	150	2/8/2023	7/8/2023
16/2023	Annual requirements for Dental items	25	2/8/2023	7/8/2023
17/2023	Annual requirements for Surgical, Medical and X ray items	25	2/8/2023	7/8/2023
18/2023	Annual requirements for Laboratories items	25	2/8/2023	7/8/2023

- Qualified Companies with previous experience in similar works can obtain the Tender Documents from the Directorate General of Administrative , Financial Affairs and Human Resources (Treasury Department), Diwan of Royal Court, AlKhawair, ground Floor, from 7:30 am till 12:00 pm right from the date of post by paying the document value.
- Each company's tender should be accompanied by a Tender Bond in the form of bank guarantee or certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount of (1%) of the Tender Value valid for (90) days from the date of submission. Any Bid not accompanied with the full Tender Bond will be excluded.
- The Tender Committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all of the offers.
- Bids must be submitted in an envelope sealed with red wax addressed to His Excellency, the Chairman of the Tender Committee. The Tender name and number should be written on the envelope. Nothing should be written on the envelope to display the identity of the bidder or what refers to him.
- The bids should be deposited in the Tender Box, Seventh floor, Diwan of Royal Court (Purchases Department), Ghala and no bids will be accepted after 12:00pm.
- No Bids will be accepted after the last date of submission shown in the above table.
- The Tender Committee will award the tender to the company that has the largest percentage of Omanisation and possible purchases of national products.

Diwan of Royal Court is not obliged to award the tender to the lowest or any other offer.

For any further clarification and assistance, you may contact the following numbers:

99616715 - 24213059 - 24026308 - 24026307 – 24026309



Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Health DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTHSERVICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

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MOH / NH / 1 / 2285 / 2023	Supply of Furniture for the Al-Nahdha Hospital	25 / June / 2023	11 / July / 2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25.000 Per set

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> .
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender .
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200 ,Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

WORLD

TECHNICAL FAILURE

Spanish start-up company aborts its rocket test launch

HUELVA: Spanish start-up company PLD Space called off an anticipated test launch of its rocket Miura-1 on Saturday.

The launch of the reusable aircraft from Huelva in southwestern Spain was canned at the very last minute, after the countdown to liftoff hit zero and smokes and flames appeared briefly on the launchpad.

Had it been successful, the test flight would have put Spain's first privately developed rocket into space. The company hopes to start commercial activity in 2025.

Co-founder of the company and CEO Raul Torres said in a statement: "99.9% of all processes have been successful. Launching a



rocket is very difficult, but we are getting closer and closer. We will try harder again."

The company said the launch was called off after a technical failure. The suborbital test flight would have been the first of its kind in Western Europe.

The Miura-1 rocket stands as tall as a three-story building and is

capable of carrying cargo up to 100 kg or 220 pounds. It can be used for zero-gravity experiments.

PLD Space was previously meant to conduct a suborbital flight of Miura-1 in May, but that was postponed due to strong high-altitude winds.

Europe is hoping to make its mark in the space launch business, but it has experienced setbacks.

Virgin Orbit, the rocket company founded by Richard Branson, filed for bankruptcy in April after a failed orbital launch in January.

A day ago, French venture Arianespace, said it was pushing back the launch of the Ariane 5 rocket from Europe's Spaceport in Kourou in French Guiana.

SEARING TEMPERATURES

Nepal struggles with blistering heat wave

KATHMANDU: Shanti Bohara is a street vendor in Dhanga-dhi, a city in Nepal's southern Terai region. She says the past few weeks have been extremely tough due to the searing temperatures.

The scorching heat means the fresh vegetables she wants to sell wilt and spoil within a few hours.

"In the past, during summers, we could do business in the mornings and evenings, avoiding the hot afternoon hours," she told DW. "But this year, even mornings and evenings are unbearable, posing a threat to our livelihoods."

A brutal heat wave has gripped large swathes of the South Asian nation this month, with temperatures topping 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) for days. In certain cities, for example Nepalgunj and Nawalpur, in the country's southwest, they even reached as high as 44 degrees Celsius.

Nepal's meteorological department has warned that the extreme temperatures are likely to persist until mid-July.

How has the heat affected people?

The hot weather has compounded hardships faced by many Nepali people.

Kundan Aryal, a professor at Tribhuvan University in Kirtipur, said that poor and underprivileged communities were being hit the hardest.

"A section of society is largely untouched by the extreme weather conditions as they have access to cooling facilities such as fans, coolers, air conditioners," he pointed out, adding: "But people in low-income groups are bearing the brunt."

"I've seen many daily-wage labourers, rickshaw pullers and construction workers continuing to work in the scorching heat, putting their health at risk." — DW

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PM MODI'S VISIT TO US

Indian Tricolour flies high outside the White House

WASHINGTON: Ahead of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the United States, the Indian Tricolour was seen waving outside the White House, Washington D.C.

Talking about the Indian flag waving outside the White House, an Indian national residing in New Jersey, Jesal Nar, said, "It's really honour and pride to see the tricolour. I go across the United States for my work purpose carrying a tricolour."

"But seeing the tricolour in front of the White House waving freely and benching marks the coming of our honourable prime minister Narendra Modi in Washington DC for the new generation, engines and everything. So it would be a great honour to see more technological advancement in India," he said.

PM Modi is all set for his first state visit to the US next week. From June 20-24, PM Modi will address the Joint Sitting of the US Congress and will also meet a number of American politicians, prominent citizens as well as noted personalities from the diaspora.

Meanwhile, on the South Lawn of the White House, the practice for the ceremonial welcome of



PM Modi is underway.

PM Modi is visiting the US at the invitation of US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden. The visit will commence in New York where the Prime Minister will lead the celebrations of the International Day of Yoga at the United Nations Headquarters on June 21.

The prime minister will then travel to Washington D.C., where he will receive a ceremonial welcome at the White House on June 22, and meet President Biden to continue their high-level dialogue. President Biden and First Lady Jill Biden will host a State Dinner in honour of the Prime Minister the same evening, according to a release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). — ANI

Sultanate of Oman
The Supreme Judicial Council
Public Prosecution

TENDER NOTICE

The Public Prosecution invites interested companies to the following tender:

Tender Number	Description	Deadline for obtaining tender	Deadline for tender submission	GRADE (Group)	Tender document Cost (Non-refundable)
08/2023	SUPPLY OF TONER CARTRIDGES	22/06/2023	03/07/2023	Specialized	25

- Companies that are specialized in such works and who have a valid registration certificate from the Tender Board can participate and obtain technical specifications and tender documents from the website: <https://etending.tenderboard.gov.om>
- The bidder shall submit their offers electronically via the mentioned website.
- To help the contestants contact the technical support center at **24402200** and email: reg@tenderboard.gov.om
- Public Prosecution is not bound to consent the lowest bid or any other tenders.

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At least 41 dead after attack on Ugandan school



A dormitory was burnt and a food store looted. So far 25 bodies have been recovered from the school and transferred to Bwera Hospital

KAMPALA: At least 41 people have been killed and eight injured after a school in western Uganda was attacked by armed rebels from the Allied Democratic Force, Uganda's police said on Saturday, according to media report.

Armed rebels of the ADF, which has ties to ISIS, attacked the Lhubirira secondary school in Mpondwe, along the country's border with the Democratic Republic of Congo on Friday night, the police said.

Uganda Police Force Spokesperson Fred Enanga wrote on Twitter: "A dormitory was burnt and a food store looted. So far 25 bodies have been recovered from

the school and transferred to Bwera Hospital."

A further eight people remain in critical condition at Bwera Hospital, he added, as per CNN.

The spokesperson said that Ugandan Police and the Uganda People's Defence Force were in "hot pursuit" of the suspects.

Some students reportedly taken hostage

The Daily Monitor cited a senior military official as saying that some of the students had been abducted.

The military official said the boys had been locked into one dormitory, which was set

ablaze, while the girls were hacked with machetes in another dormitory. Some of the victims were shot dead.

In an earlier tweet, police described how they had retrieved 25 bodies, and that eight people were in a critical condition in the hospital.

Ugandan forces were pursuing the attackers who fled towards Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo, police said.

The ADF found a foothold in eastern DRC in the 1990s. It has since been accused of killing thousands of civilians.

The group has long opposed the rule of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, a US security ally who has been in power since 1986.

A Ugandan military assault later forced the ADF into eastern Congo, where many rebel groups are able to operate because the central government has limited control there.

In April, the ADF attacked a village in eastern DRC, leaving at least 20 people dead.



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أخصائية الأطفال و حديثى الولادة



د. عبد الرزاق
أخصائي الأطفال و حديثى الولادة

Dr. Abdul Razziq
Pediatrician

UN REPORT

Systematic discrimination seen against women in Afghanistan

KABUL: United Nations special rapporteur for Afghanistan Richard Bennett's report highlighted the discrimination against women and girls and said that there is a "systematic discrimination to which women and girls in Afghanistan are subjected," TOLONews reported.

According to the report, between September 2021 and May 2023 over 50 edicts were issued regarding women and girls by the Islamic Emirate, which has "deprived Afghan women of the right to education, work, and participation in social and political life." The systematic discrimination against women and girls in Afghanistan today is the relentless issuance of edicts, decrees, declarations and directives restricting their rights, including their freedom of movement, attire and behaviour, and their access to education, work, health and justice," read the report.

Among the topics covered in this report are the issue of education, suicides, depression, forced marriages, and the sale of children in Afghanistan.

— ANI

HOSPITALISATION

President of Nepal Paudel hospitalised

KATHMANDU: Nepal President Ram Chandra Paudel was admitted to the hospital on Saturday morning after complaining of chest pain. This is his second hospitalisation within a week.

As per the President's Personal Secretary, the president has been admitted to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital and is under a

doctor's observation. "He has been admitted at Manmohan Cardiothoracic Vascular and Transplant Centre in Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital earlier this morning after he complained of chest pain. His health condition is normal," the President's Personal Secretary Chiranjibi Adhikari confirmed over the phone. — ANI

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Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link:
(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Tender Description	Tender Fee	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date	Grade
PRE/22/070 2022/MM/QS-38 Re-Call	RFP for Muscat Contact Center Solution	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/073 2023/MM/HQ-25	Construction of Storm Water Drainage System in Al Khuwair at Boshier	50 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Excellent
PRE/23/098 2023/MM/QS-43	Shifting Abandoned Vehicles	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/112 2023/MM/QS-44	Painting of Muscat Municipality vehicles	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/126 2023/MM/QS-45	Construction of Proposed Solutions to Resolve Water Stagnation at Qurum	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Forth
PRE/23/127 2023/MM/QS-46	Maintenance of Muscat Municipality Lifts	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/133 2023/MM/QS-47	Supply of ACs, Water Coolers & Refrigerators	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/134 2023/MM/QS-48	Supply of MyQ	25 Rials	08/07/2023	30/07/2023	Specialist

1. Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2. Clarification and Support:

- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

SPORTS

Bangladesh steer to record Test win over Afghanistan

Taskin Ahmed grabs four as the hosts register a 546-run victory, the biggest margin of runs by an Asian team

MIRPUR: Hosts Bangladesh registered a record 546-run win over Afghanistan on the fourth day of their one-off Test at Mirpur on Saturday.

It was the third-biggest by the margin of runs for a Test nation, and the biggest win by the margin of runs in this century. This is also the biggest win in such a manner for an Asian side.

England have the biggest margin (by runs) in a victory. They won against Australia in 1928 by 675 runs. Australia, who registered a 562-run win against England in 1934, have the second biggest margin.

Bangladesh did not put a foot wrong after being asked to bat first at Mirpur on day one of the Test by Afghanistan skipper Hashmatullah Shahidi. A big century from Najmul Hossain Shanto (146) led their charge in the first innings, as the Tigers posted 382 in their first innings.

In response, Afghanistan could muster merely 146, with Afsar Zazai's 36 being the highest score. Bangladesh pacers Ebadot Hossain (4/47) and Shoriful Islam



(2/28) took crucial top-order wickets.

Bangladesh's aggressive batting in their second dig furthered the advantage of the 236-run lead. Shanto (124), Mominul Haque (121 unbeaten), Zakir Hasan (71) and Litton Das (66 unbeaten) helped their team declare at 425/4 in merely 80 overs.

With this, they set their opponents a mammoth target of 662 runs.

Afghanistan were even worse in their second effort with the bat and were bowled out for merely 115. Bangladesh's charge was led by their pacers, Taskin Ahmed (4/37) and Islam (3/28), once more.

The visitors' last man Zahir Khan took a blow to the elbow and retired hurt during an extended morning session on the fourth day, thus leaving the hosts with only nine second-innings wickets to take to complete the win.

Some drama also took place just before that, as Bangladesh neared victory. Zahir was given out caught behind off the ball of the 33rd over, with Taskin Ahmed taking off to celebrate what he thought was his first five-for in Tests, only for the batter to overturn the decision on review, as replays showed the ball had missed the bat by an inch.

The delivery immediately after, Taskin bowled Zahir, only for

the ball to be deemed as an above-waist full toss, and thus a no-ball. Then three legal balls after that, Taskin crashed one into Zahir's elbow, thus rendering him unable to bat. After a few minutes of discussion and medical attention, Zahir walked off. That confirmed a massive win for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh's fast bowlers combined to take 14 wickets in the match, the most for them in a Test.

The hosts entered the fourth day requiring eight wickets to seal the win, which they duly did inside 22 overs although eventually they had to take one wicket lesser.

Brief scores: Bangladesh 382 (Shanto 146, Mahmudul 76, Masood 5-79) and 425 for 4 decl (Shanto 124, Mominul 121*, Zahir 2-112) beat Afghanistan 146 (Zazai 36, Ebadot 4-47, Tajjul 2-7) and 115 (Rahmat 30, Taskin 4-37, Shoriful 3-28) by 546 runs. (icc-cricket.com)

PAKISTAN SQUAD

Afridi returns for Lanka tour



LAHORE: Pakistan have named a 16-member squad for their upcoming two-match Test series against Sri Lanka expected to be held in July.

The squad is headlined by the return of star pacer Shaheen Afridi, who last featured in the longest format in July 2022 when he suffered a knee injury in a Test against Sri Lanka.

Pakistan have also decided to include two uncapped players in the squad, with batter Mohammad Huraire and all-rounder Aamir Jamal getting call-ups.

Squad: Babar Azam (c), Mohammad Rizwan (vc & wk), Aamir Jamal, Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Hasan Ali, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Huraire, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Noman Ali, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk), Saud Shakeel, Shaheen Afridi and Shan Masood.

FIRST ASHES TEST

Root's masterclass puts England in driver's seat

BIRMINGHAM: Top order might have lost their wickets early in the day but Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow scored briskly as England scripted a fiery fightback to help hosts declare their first innings at 393/8 runs after Nathan Lyon and Josh Hazlewood dominated Three Lions on Day one in the ongoing first Test of Ashes series at Edgbaston on Friday.

At stumps, Australia were 14/0 -trailing by 379 runs with David Warner (8) and Usman Khawaja (4) at the crease.

Bairstow and Root stitched a solid 100-run partnership and kept the scoreboard ticking for England.

The right-handed Bairstow played a counter-attacking knock, however, his 78-run knock finally came to an end in the 61st over after being dismissed by Nathan Lyon.

England then lost Moeen Ali quickly for 18 after the all-rounder was included following his reversal from Test retirement for Ashes.

The Three Lions' innings went further into a slump after Stuart Broad (16) was sent back to the pavilion by Green.

Despite being in pressure, Root kept Australian bowlers on their toes while whacking the loose



balls on offer. In the 76th over of the game, Root brought up his 30th Test century.

Surprisingly England declared their innings at the score of 393/8, with Root (118) and Ollie Robinson (17) unbeaten.

Earlier, at the tea break, Eng-

land's score read 240/5 as the duo of Root (66*) and Bairstow (33*) fought back after Australia delivered early blows in the session. In the second session, England scored 116 runs while losing two wickets.

Root and Harry Brook managed

to gather runs to take their team's total beyond the 150-run mark. Brook was the aggressor of the batting pair, smashing boundaries regularly.

Brook displayed great resilience and determination as he brought up a 50-run partnership with Root

in the 36th over of the game.

Brook's aggressive stint at the crease was cut short as he was dismissed by Lyon for 32 in the 38th over of the match. England captain Ben Stokes failed to leave a mark in their innings as he was removed by Hazlewood for one digit in the 39th over.

Earlier, England won the toss and opted to bat first. The hosts started their innings with Zak Crawley cracking four off the very first ball of the match in Pat Cummins' over. However, the other opening batter Ben Duckett lost his wicket to Hazlewood in the fourth over of the match. Ollie Pope then came out to bat. The duo of Pope and Crawley maintained a fine partnership. Lyon

Broke the solid partnership when he got the better of Pope in the 18th over of the match.

Crawley scored briskly to stand tall in front of the Aussie attack as he kept stealing boundaries at regular intervals. After scoring a brisk 61 runs off 73 Crawley was dismissed on the stroke of lunch by Scott Boland.

Brief scores: England 393/8 decl (Joe Root 118*, Jonny Bairstow 78*, Nathan Lyon 4-149) vs Australia 14/0 (David Warner 8*, Usman Khawaja 4*). -ANI

OMAN CAPTAIN ZEESHAN MAQSOOD SPEAKS

'Looking forward to playing highest order of competitive cricket'

MUSCAT: A day before the start of the ICC Men's ODI Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 in Zimbabwe, captains of the ten participating nations came together to experience the local wildlife on Saturday. The World Cup Qualifier will be played in Harare and Bulawayo from June 18-July 9.

Oman will begin their campaign on June 19 with a match against Ireland in a Group B match. Another World Cup winning outfit in the group is 1996 champions Sri Lanka, which kick off proceedings in Bulawayo against the UAE on Monday. The other team in Group B is Scotland.

Each team has played two warm-up fixtures, with Oman going down fighting to hosts Zimbabwe and Nepal respectively.

Speaking to the media at the official photoshoot at Wild is Life sanctuary on Satur-



day, Oman captain Zeeshan Maqsood said: "We have been preparing well to acclimatise and adapt to the conditions in

Zimbabwe. We certainly are looking forward to playing the highest order of competitive cricket at this marquee event and

will make our country proud. "The Qualifier is certainly a platform for us as well to inspire the sport of cricket in Oman."

High stakes

Each match will be high stakes, with teams contesting for two places at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India that gives the two victors nine guaranteed matches at ODI global showpiece.

While the players will be the main attraction when the Qualifier begins on Sunday, the captains were keen spectators at the official photoshoot at Wild is Life sanctuary.

The sanctuary is home to rescued animal orphans, including elephants, giraffes and lions and aims to rehabilitate these animals back into the wild.

The cricket will take centre stage as Group A gets underway on Sunday, with a full-house expected when hosts Zimbabwe take on Nepal at Harare Sports Club. Also on the opening matchday, two-time champi-

ons West Indies face neighbours United States at Takashinga.

The top three sides in each group will advance to the Super Six stage, with the bottom two sides in each group playing off to decide the seventh to 10th placings.

At the Super Six stage, the teams will play the three qualifiers from the other group, with the two results against teams from their own group carrying forward from the group stage. The Super Six stage will commence on 29 June and for the first time in this tournament, DRS will be used for all matches from this stage onwards.

The top two teams after the Super Six stage will be able to book their tickets to India as the two qualifiers for the Cricket World Cup 2023.

They will also play off to be crowned Qualifiers champion in the final on July 9.

CREDIT GRANTED RISES

The total balance of credit granted by the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 6.3 percent to reach OMR30 billion at the end of April 2023. The credit granted to the private sector recorded a growth of 6.8 percent to reach OMR25.2 billion at the end of April 2023.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



CBO REPO RATE AT 5.75%

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has decided to keep its repo rate for local banks fixed at 5.75 per cent, following the US Federal Reserve's decision to leave its key policy rate unchanged at the range of (5.00 per cent - 5.25 per cent).

SOHAR FREEZONE



Partnership formed to establish chemical manufacturing plant

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Freezone, a leading industrial hub in the region, announced a strategic partnership with Nasim Chemicals SFZ, a prominent player in the chemical industry.

This collaboration will witness the establishment of a dioctyl phthalate and dioctyl terephthalate plant within the Sohar Freezone, aimed at catering to the growing demand for high-quality chemical products in the GCC, India and African markets.

With a total investment of \$10.4 million, the plant covers an area of 5,000 sqm and will boast a production capacity of 30,000 tonnes, reinforcing the region's industrial capabilities. The partnership will significantly boost the logistics movement and elevate the throughput levels with more than 2000 TEUs annually.

Commenting on this agreement, Fayaz Hameedi, Co-Shareholder of Nasim Chemicals SFZ, said, "We are excited about this joint venture with Sohar Freezone and the opportunities it presents. Our partnership signifies our confidence in the region's potential and our commitment to providing high-quality chemical products to the market. By leveraging the strategic advantages offered by Sohar Freezone and its proximity to key markets, we aim to establish ourselves as a leading player in the industry."

Significant

Omar Al Mahrizi, CEO of Sohar Freezone, DCEO Sohar Port said: "We are thrilled to partner with Nasim Chemicals SFZ in this significant agreement. The establishment of the dioctyl phthalate and dioctyl terephthalate plant further strengthens Sohar

Freezone's position as a key industrial player for business and innovation in the region. This collaboration aligns perfectly with our vision of fostering economic growth and attracting strategic investments to Oman."

The plant will create downstream opportunities including the production of PVC products such as plastic film and sheets, wire and cable insulation, and flooring and wall coverings. It will be developed in two phases, with construction commencing by the end of this year. Production is estimated to commence by the end of 2024.

Sohar Freezone reaffirms its position as an integrated logistics and industrial hub, leveraging the latest global technologies and adhering to the highest sustainability standards across its diverse activities. The collaboration aligns with the objectives outlined in Oman Vision 2040."

مجلس تجارة وصناعة عمان
Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry
فرع الفرقة بمحافظة شمال الباطنة



Tender

Oman chamber of commerce and industry in Al Batinah North Governorate would like to announce the following public tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (irrevocable)	Specialized companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender submission
1/ 2023	Organizing and Managing Sohar Investment Forum	25 OMR	Companies specialized in managing and organizing international conferences and exhibitions	06 July 2023	16 July 2023

Companies specialized in managing and organizing conferences may obtain the tender documents from the Administration Department at the first Floor of the chamber's branch Al Batinah North Governorate, during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms:

- Provide valued CR, OCCI membership, Tender Board membership and taxation certificate.
- Interested companies should enclose their bids a 1% Bank guarantee/ certified cheque of proposal value issued by one of the banks operating in Oman valid for 90 days from the deadline of submitting the bids addressed in the name of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The bids without this temporary guarantee will not be considered.
- The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to -Procurement Committee, OCCI, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.
- Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept at the Administration Department in the first floor of OCCI Al Batinah North Governorate branch.

OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons.

Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm on 16/07/2023.

For further details, you may call

92620613 - 91964531
dawood.reesi@omanchamber.om

OCCI_BN

ALIZZ ISLAMIC BANK

Alizz Islamic Bank introduces 'Alizz Jr' – offering parents financial solutions to secure their children's future

MUSCAT: As part of its efforts to constantly provide exceptional product & services, Alizz Islamic Bank recently introduced the 'Alizz Jr' value proposition for parents with children under the age of 15. This comprehensive program offers a wide range of attractive benefits and services designed to meet the unique needs of today's parents, while also promoting a culture of saving. With a focus on securing a brighter future for the children. Parents/guardians can conveniently visit any branch of Alizz Islamic Bank in order to avail the program's benefits.

'Alizz Jr' offers parents the opportunity to earn attractive profits on the amount they deposit in a savings plan that can be used for education/higher studies or for future savings of the child. This will provide parents with flexible options for deposits and standing instructions, allowing them to

choose between weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual contributions. This aims to support the children's higher education studies, enabling them to continue their journey at an affordable finance rate with easy and flexible procedures in future.

Additionally, 'Alizz Jr' has no minimum balance requirement for savings accounts, allowing individuals to open an account without the need for a specific minimum amount. It also includes unlimited local funds transfers via the Mobile Payment Service (MPS / Wallet to Wallet fund transfer) through the Alizz Islamic Bank mobile banking application.

It is worth noting that Alizz Islamic Bank has adopted a comprehensive strategy to offer services and products that cater to the diverse segments of society, ensuring that the offerings are tailored to meet their needs.



MARKET

Muscat bourse up for second week in a row

The stock market was again driven this week by the banking sector which recorded a positive performance and the current direction of interest rates could help banks maintain strong profits

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's benchmark Muscat Securities Exchange (MSX) main index has been able to rebound since the beginning of June and remains above this year's lows, it could come under some pressure if traders move to secure their gain while the market maintains a bearish trend for the last couple of months, according to an analyst.

"Traders monitored the developments in monetary policies in major economies in search of guidelines," said Mazen Salhab - Chief Market Strategist MENA in BDSwiss.



"Three major central bank meetings were scheduled this week, which affected global markets and fuelled some volatility. The Federal Reserve was closely monitored in particular due to its importance to the Omani market. The US central bank kept interest rates unchanged as expected but raised its interest rate target for this year," he further added.

The Omani central bank followed suit and maintained interest rates at their current level. While interest rates could rise again this year, the current pause could provide some relief to the Omani economy and the local stock market as companies see more stable financing costs and risk appetite could improve.

"The stock market was again driven this week by the banking sector which recorded a positive performance. The current direction of interest rates could help banks maintain strong profits. Meanwhile, the race toward con-



solidation in the sector continued with Bank Dhofar bidding for Ahli Bank," Mazen Salhab said.

Last week, the MSX index witnessed good performance for the main index and the financial sector index. The main index consolidated its gains, rising for the second week in a row, and closed at the end of Thursday's trading at 4,681 points, up by 22 points. The financial sector index rose by 65 points, and other sectoral indices recorded slight declines.

Other stock markets in the region recorded mixed performances with traders erring toward caution in some cases. While some were able to record more gains thanks to strong local fundamentals and improving risk appetite, others were however impacted by the volatility and uncertainty in energy markets.

Despite their high volatility and this week's rebound, energy markets remained at relatively low levels and were unable to provide strong sup-

port to the Omani stock market, he said. "In this regard, energy markets could continue to see some volatility while traders consider the changes in the balance between supply and demand," he added.

In this regard, hopes of improving economic conditions in China could provide some support for oil prices in particular. Weaker-than-expected recovery in China has significantly affected expectations until now. The Chinese central bank has moved to reduce some borrowing costs to help stimulate the economy and could continue to do so, potentially improving demand for energy products in the process.

"Several Federal Reserve board members are expected to speak next week. They could provide some indications regarding the next steps in monetary policy which could affect trader's expectations locally and globally. The Swiss and British central banks are also expected to decide on their interest rate levels," Mazen Salhab said.

CBO REPORT



Credit granted by banking sector rises by 6.3% to reach OMR30 billion

MUSCAT: The total balance of credit granted by the banking sector in Oman increased by 6.3 percent to reach OMR30 billion at the end of April 2023.

The report issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) shows that credit granted to the private sector recorded a growth of 6.8 percent to reach OMR25.2 billion at the end of April 2023.

The data related to its distribution among various sectors indicated that non-financial companies acquired the largest share, which amounted to 46.3 percent, followed by the individual sector at 44.4 percent, while the remaining percentage was distributed to the financial companies sector at 5.6 percent and other sectors at 3.7 percent.

Total deposits with the banking sector recorded a growth of 5.5 percent to reach OMR27.2 billion at the end of April 2023. Within this total, private sector deposits with the banking system increased by 3.7 percent to reach OMR17.9 billion.

When looking at the distribution of the total deposit base of the private sector over various sectors, figures show that the individual sector acquired the largest share, amounting to about 52.3 percent, followed by the non-financial companies sector and the financial companies sector with a share of 28.2 percent and 16.6 percent, respectively, while the remaining percentage is 2.9 percent distributed to other sectors. - ONA

NCSI DATA

Inflation in Oman reaches 0.91%

MUSCAT: The annual inflation rate in Oman reached 0.91 percent at the end of May 2023, according to the monthly consumer price survey data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The inflation rate was driven by the increase in most of the main groups that make up the consumer price index (CPI), led by restaurants and hotels by 3.69 percent, and furniture, fixtures, household equipment and routine household maintenance by 3.14 percent.

The prices of the food and non-alcoholic beverages group increased by 2.73 percent, which was due to the increase in the prices of all components of the group, led by milk, cheese and eggs by 9.55 percent, oils and fats by 5.78 percent, fish and seafood by 4.62 percent, non-alcoholic beverages by 4.39 percent, and other food materials



by 3.75 percent, sugar, jam, honey and sweets by 3.72 percent, bread and cereals by 3.09 percent, meat by 2.47 percent, fruits by 1.17 percent, while the prices of vegetables decreased by 7 percent.

The prices of the various goods and services groups increased by 2.17 percent, tobacco by 1.76 per-

cent, culture and entertainment by 1.43 percent, health by 1.28 percent, clothing and shoes by 0.76 percent, education by 0.05 percent, and housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels by 0.02 percent. Transport group prices decreased by 1.32 percent, and communications by 0.17 percent. - ONA

POLICY RATE

CBO keeps repo rate at 5.75%

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has decided to keep its repo rate for local banks fixed at 5.75 per cent, following the US Federal Reserve's decision to leave its key policy rate unchanged at the range of (5.00 per cent - 5.25 per cent).

The CBO's monetary policy target is to sustain and maintain its fixed exchange rate. This policy is aligned with the structure and nature of the Omani economy.

There are a number of advantages for Oman that are derived from this policy among which are the following: Stability of the Omani Rial; mitigation of capital outflow; promoting certainty among investors by removing exchange rate risk. - ONA

CMA PARTICIPATION

Bangkok meet discusses virtual assets and fintech

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman represented by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) participated in the 48th annual meeting of the International Organisation of Securities Commission (IOSCO) held in Bangkok, Thailand by an official delegation chaired by Sheikh Abdullah bin Salim Al Salmi, Executive President and senior officials of the CMA.

The meeting discussed the key issues in global financial markets in the regulatory and supervisory arenas related to the securities industry. The CMA also participates in the meetings of the subcommittees on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the IOSCO such as the Africa and Middle East Regional

Committee (AMERC) and the meeting of the Growth and Emerging Markets Committee.

AFMERC's meeting discussed a number of issues related to the developments in the securities markets in the region including financial sustainability, which is a key issue in the region to create a sustainable investment environment. The meeting also discussed virtual assets and fintech and their challenges in regulation.

The meeting discussed the multilateral memorandum of understanding between the members of IOSCO. The Growth and Emerging Markets Committee's meeting discussed several issues of concern for the markets such as capacity building in the regulatory authorities as well as investor protection.

REPORT

Oil prices to gain on hopes of US rate pause, China stimulus

Times News Service

MUSCAT: There was several positive news in the market that reversed the course of crude oil from further fall, according to a new report.

"This included the hopes of moderating inflation in the US and an expected rate pause by the US Fed which may support oil demand besides China's plan for economic stimulus," the Kuwait-based Kamco Invest said in its Oil Market Monthly Report June 2023 report.

Consistent decline in crude oil prices since the start of the year and further declines during June-2023 pushed prices to the lowest point since December-2021 by the second week of June-2023.

The declines came after several data points pointed to a slowdown in demand in the near term especially in China, the US and Euro Area," Kamco Invest report.

The US government's tender to purchase 3 million barrels of oil to refill its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) and an additional 12 million barrels of planned purchases for this year also supported prices of sour oil in the US. On the other hand, China is reportedly planning an economic stimulus to boost consumption.

POTENTIAL OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Microsoft hosts event to advance digital transformation and innovation in Qatar

Times News Service

DOHA: Microsoft, in collaboration with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), hosted the exclusive 'From Imagination to Reality: Rise with Microsoft AI' event in Qatar.

Under the patronage of Mohammed bin Ali Al Mannai, Qatar's Minister of Communications and Information Technology, and in the presence Abdulaziz bin Nasser bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, President of the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, the event aimed to showcase the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) to help people and organisations in Qatar be more productive, innovate groundbreaking solutions, solve society's most pressing problems, and ultimately advance Qatar's digital economy.

The event brought together government officials, decision-makers, leading ICT professionals, developers, startups and policymakers to explore how Microsoft AI is empowering organisations of all sizes and across all industries to augment the way they work and free up time for more creative and fulfilling tasks.

The event showcased the experiences of the Microsoft 365 Copilot and raised the topic of cybersecurity and its importance in the age of AI, highlighting how products such as Microsoft Security



Copilot can enable organisations and companies to improve their security levels and better protect their customers' data.

To accelerate the digital transformation of various sectors in Qatar, the event included the signing of several memorandums of understanding (MoUs), the first of which was between Sprinklr and Microsoft and will empower the Civil Service and Government Development Bureau's Sharek platform with the GPT capabilities of Azure Open AI Service. Microsoft also signed an MoU with Vodafone aimed at leveraging the power of Microsoft Digital Contact Center Technologies to revolutionise their customer experience.

Speaking during the event, Hassan Jassim Al Sayed, Advisor to the Minister and Chairman of the Artificial Intelligence Committee at the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, said, "Microsoft's

event comes as part of the efforts of the State of Qatar, represented by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, to leverage AI technologies in all aspects of life, business and governance. These efforts will build a stimulating environment for research and innovation in the field of Artificial Intelligence, and make Qatar an advanced model to be followed in the smooth transition to an AI-empowered future."

The event comes at an opportune time, as economies across the Middle East witness AI innovations come out of the research lab and into the mainstream. From offices to schools to hospitals, AI tools have become essential companions, empowering users across sectors and driving advancements in research, development, and productivity. Research by PwC estimates that AI could contribute \$320 billion to the Middle East economy in 2030 equivalent to 11 per cent of GDP.

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From Amitabh Bachchan to Shah Rukh Khan: Take a look at Bollywood's COOLEST DADS

Father's Day holds a significant place in the hearts of people around the world, including Bollywood. The Indian film industry is a melting pot of fathers with diverse backgrounds, ages, and life experiences.

Father's Day holds a significant place in the hearts of people around the world, including Bollywood. The Indian film industry is a melting pot of fathers with diverse backgrounds, ages, and life experiences. The B-town dads exemplify love and affection in different ways, be it nurturing their children's aspirations or cherishing invaluable moments spent together. Now, let's delve into the realm of Bollywood and celebrate some of the coolest dads in the industry. Shah Rukh Khan, often referred to as the King of Bollywood, is known for his unwavering support for his children's ventures. Whether it's promoting his daughter Suhana's talent or cheering on his son Aryan's aspirations, SRK has been a cool and sup-

portive father to his three children, Aryan, Suhana, and Abram. His dedication, love, and support make him a role model for many, not just as an actor but also as a father who values his relationship with his children.

SHAHID KAPOOR

Shahid Kapoor, another cutest Bollywood dad, has been seen spending quality time with his children, Zain and Misha. Through lovely outings and sharing adorable moments on social media, giving fans a sneak peek into their joyful moments together. Shahid's presence as a cool dad, combined with his stylish looks and charming personality, adds to the appeal of his family's celebrations shared on social media. It allows fans to feel a part of their special moments and cherish the love and happiness that he brings to his role as a father.

SAIF ALI KHAN

The father of the adorable Taimur Ali Khan, Sara Ali Khan, Ibrahim Ali Khan and Jehangir Ali Khan, is known for being a chilled-out and loving father. Saif Ali Khan, along with his wife Kareena Kapoor Khan and their son Taimur, has been seen enjoying their family time and making the most of their trips. The father-son duo has often been spotted spending quality time together and has created a close bond. Saif's affectionate bond with his children is evident through the way he inter-

acts with them. Whether it's playful moments or heartwarming gestures, Saif Ali Khan cherishes and nurtures their relationship.

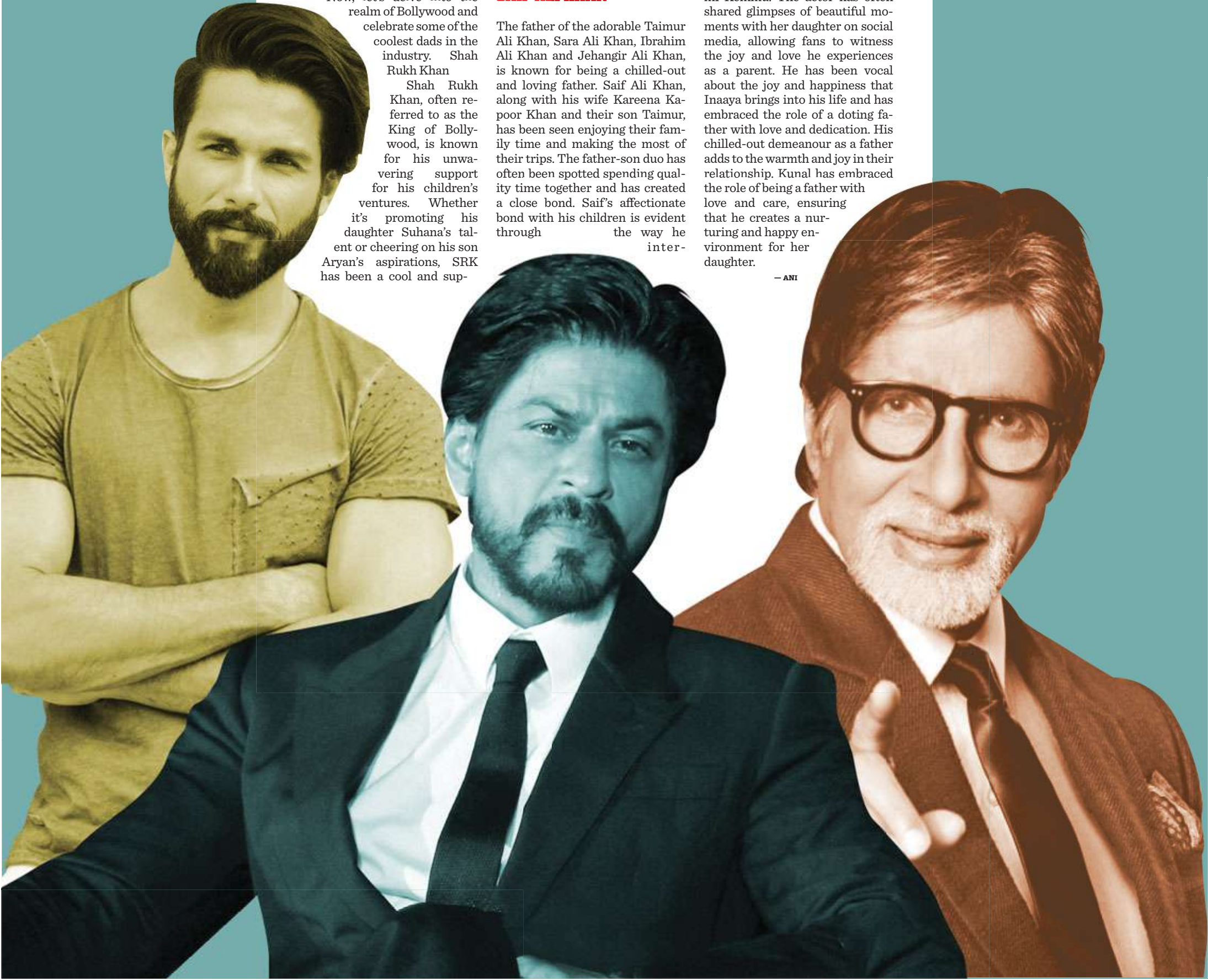
AMITABH BACHCHAN

Amitabh Bachchan has two children, Abhishek Bachchan and Shweta Bachchan-Nanda. Amitabh's cool dad image stems from his ability to adapt to changing times and connect with the younger generation. He is active on social media and frequently posts about his family members. This engagement showcases his openness and approachability, making him relatable to younger audiences. He continues to inspire and entertain not only his children but also millions of fans across the globe.

KUNAL KEMMU

Kunal Kemmu is a proud father to his daughter Inaaya Nau-mi Kemmu. The actor has often shared glimpses of beautiful moments with her daughter on social media, allowing fans to witness the joy and love he experiences as a parent. He has been vocal about the joy and happiness that Inaaya brings into his life and has embraced the role of a doting father with love and dedication. His chilled-out demeanour as a father adds to the warmth and joy in their relationship. Kunal has embraced the role of being a father with love and care, ensuring that he creates a nurturing and happy environment for her daughter.

— ANI



SPORTS

England cruise to win in Malta

Southgate's men
 romp to 4-0 victory;
 Armenia stun Wales,
 easy for France in
 Euro qualifiers

ATTARD: England continued their perfect record in Euro 2024 qualifying with a comfortable 4-0 win at Malta on Friday. Liverpool full-back Trent Alexander-Arnold - who started in central midfield - scored a fine 25-yard strike between an own goal, and two penalties from Harry Kane and Callum Wilson. Gareth Southgate's side had little trouble dispatching the side 172nd in the FIFA rankings. The Three Lions are next in action against North Macedonia on Monday. Their qualifying campaign to reach Germany next summer is going to plan with nine points from three games - six ahead of Ukraine, North Macedonia and reigning champions Italy. The three points at Ta'Qali National Stadium were sealed inside the first 31 minutes as Ferdinando Apap turned past his own goalkeeper before Alexander-Arnold's impressive strike. Just 96 seconds after Alexander-Arnold's goal, Kane made it 3-0 from the penalty spot after being fouled by Matthew Guillaumier. It was his 50th competitive England goal, and means he has now scored in 11 straight Euro qualifiers. Kane was replaced in the second half, allowing Wilson the chance to score from the spot when his cross was handled by Malta captain Steve Borg and a



penalty was awarded by VAR. Crystal Palace midfielder Eberechi Eze made his long-awaited debut two years after he was denied a place in the provisional Euro 2020 squad by a major Achilles tendon injury.



Kingsley Coman's cross for his 54th France goal. Mbappe doubled their lead with a penalty following a handball - and his cross was deflected in by Aymen Mouelhi for an own goal. Congo-born goalkeeper Brice

embarrassing and damaging defeats in recent memory as they lost 4-2 at home to Armenia in a chaotic and foul-tempered Euro 2024 qualifier. The hosts seemed to be on course for a comfortable evening when Daniel James fired them in front from Brennan Johnson's low cross, but the home crowd were soon silenced by an exquisite volley from Armenia's Lucas Zelaryan. There were then gasps of disbelief as Grant-Leon Ranos was given the freedom of the Cardiff City Stadium to head the visitors - 71 places below Wales in the world rankings - into a first-half lead which was as deserved as it was shocking. Wales had several chances to equalise but their wasteful finishing was punished after the break as Ranos hit a fine first-time shot from the edge of the area to send Armenia's small contingent of travelling fans into raptures. Harry Wilson pulled a goal back for Wales with a little under 20 minutes remaining, only for Zelaryan to curl in a superb second to restore Armenia's two-goal advantage. Any hopes Wales had of salvaging something from this game were then dealt another blow when striker Kieffer Moore was sent off for an off-the-ball clash with Armenian goalkeeper Ognjen Chancharevich. That final calamity set the seal on a nightmarish evening for Wales, who squandered the chance to go top of Group D with previous leaders Croatia instead in Nations League action.
Other results: Group C: North Macedonia 2 Ukraine 3; **Group D:** Latvia 2 Turkiye 3; **Group H:** Denmark 1 Northern Ireland 0, Finland 2 Slovenia 0, San Marino 0 Kazakhstan 3; **Group I:** Andorra 1 Switzerland 2, Belarus 1 Israel 2, Kosovo 0 Romania 0. - Agencies

NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM

Berhalter returns as US head coach



NEW YORK: Gregg Berhalter has been reappointed head coach of the United States national football team, six months after his contract expired while an investigation into his past conduct was ongoing. The 49-year-old was four years into the role when he admitted kicking his wife when they were teenagers. He was investigated by US Soccer, which subsequently found it had "no legal impediment to employing him". Berhalter will lead the side to the 2026 World Cup, co-hosted by the US. Berhalter led the US to the last 16 of the World Cup in Qatar last year, where they were beaten

by the Netherlands. The allegation against him was made in December, with his original contract expiring at the end of that month. He released a statement, co-signed by his wife Rosalind, sharing details of the 1992 incident, adding there was "zero excuse" for his actions. BJ Callaghan then took over as interim coach. Speaking about his reappointment, Berhalter said: "I'm grateful to have the opportunity to build on our achievements at the World Cup and to contribute to this exciting time for soccer in our country. We look forward to continuing our journey together to make our fans and our nation proud."

ROYAL LIVERPOOL TO HOST

Recovering Woods to miss the Open Championship

LONDON: Former world No. 1 Tiger Woods will not compete in next month's Open Championship at Royal Liverpool. Injury forced the 47-year-old, who claimed the third of his three Open wins at Hoylake in 2006, to withdraw from the Masters third round in April. Woods, a 15-time major winner, then had fusion surgery on a bone in his ankle to address post-traumatic arthritis from a previous fracture in the joint. That ruled the American out of the PGA Championship and this week's US Open. Woods had hoped to be fit enough to compete at Hoylake where, 17 years ago, he won his first tournament since the death of father Earl two months earlier. However, an R&A spokesman told the PA news agency: "We have been advised that Tiger won't be playing at Royal Liverpool. We wish him all the best with his recovery." Woods feared his leg would have to be amputated because of the serious injuries he suffered in a car accident in Los Angeles in February 2021. He managed to return to action 14 months later and finished 47th in the 2022 Masters, but then missed the cut in the 150th Open



at St Andrews and has since kept a limited competition schedule. The Open Championship will be played from July 20-23 at

APPOINTMENT



Enzo Maresca appointed Leicester boss

LONDON: Leicester City have appointed treble-winning Manchester City assistant coach Enzo Maresca as their manager on a deal which runs until 2026. The 43-year-old Italian joins the Foxes just six days after Manchester City's Champions League final win. He replaces interim boss Dean Smith, who oversaw just two victories from eight games in a failed attempt to keep the Foxes in the Premier League. "We have a big season ahead of us," Maresca said following his appointment. "At the beginning, the target is to play in the best way we can. From there, we can build, day by day, our idea and our philosophy, and the most important thing is to try to win games. First of all, we're going to give 100%, absolutely, because the club deserves this. It's our job, our duty to do that. Then, as I said, day by day, step by step, absolutely we're going to improve."

FRIENDSHIP TRAINING

Ten clubs hold joint karate training camp

MUSCAT: In a first of its kind initiative, ten private clubs joined hands to hold a joint training programme titled "Friendship Training" recently. A total of 90 players were given training by 15 coaches from 10 clubs and the camp was organised by Karate Pioneers Academy and Lyft Gym in Al Khoud under the supervision of Ahmed bin Saeed Al Zakwani. Al Zakwani, Karate Pioneers Academy president said that this was the first time that a camp was held in cooperation with ten leading private clubs. Ali bin Mohammad Al Raisi presented the basics of kata development while Youssef bin Musal-



lam Al Siyabi taught techniques and skills to improve strength of muscles. Said bin Nasser Al Batrani presented kumite skills while Ahmed Balidi presented kicks techniques.

The clubs that participated are: Pioneers Karate Academy, Shoto-kan Karate Centre, Golden Karate Group, Muscat International Karate Do Academy, Al Qudra Karate Club, Karate Champions Club, Al Suwaiq Karate Club Acad-

emy, Buraimi Karate Academy, Samail Karate Champions Club, and Freedom Karate Team. Later, Said bin Salem Al Busaidi, Chairman of Lyft Gym, presented certificates of thanks and appreciation to the participating clubs.

MUSCAT CRICKET COMMUNITY

Cricket group formed to serve community

MUSCAT: Boasting of nearly 3,000 members, who have one thing in common: love for cricket - a new group named Muscat Cricket Community (MCC) was launched recently. The online social group has brought together players, coaches, umpires, local team owners, parents and cricket lovers on a common platform with a goal to serve the community on all fronts. According to Pranav Mehta, the brainchild behind this community campaign, "the main objective is to help and support the less privileged." He said: "In

case of major accident or medical emergency or sudden death of an individual, the community will come together to arrange funds to reduce the financial impact on the affected family. The community will also provide services like free psychological and medical consultations by senior doctors." The community also aims to organise a series of cricket tournaments, along with few other entertainment events to generate funds for this noble cause. Interested people can join the community by messaging 'ADD ME' to 92470544.

The latest El Nino climate phenomenon has arrived, threatening floods in some areas of the world and droughts in others. Previous disruptive weather patterns cost the global economy trillions and stoked inflation

El nino, a natural climate phenomenon that alters global weather patterns, has officially returned after four years, threatening to exacerbate already elevated food inflation.

Last week, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Climate Prediction Centre said that El Nino conditions are already present and are expected to "gradually strengthen" over the next six to nine months, bringing a new period of extreme weather to much of the planet.

"There is a rather high probability [of another strong El Nino period]," said Harald Kunstmann, a professor at Germany's Institute of Meteorology and Climate Research (IMK-IFU) based at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology. "If it happens, we can expect the same climate extremes and anomalies that are usually associated with this phenomenon."

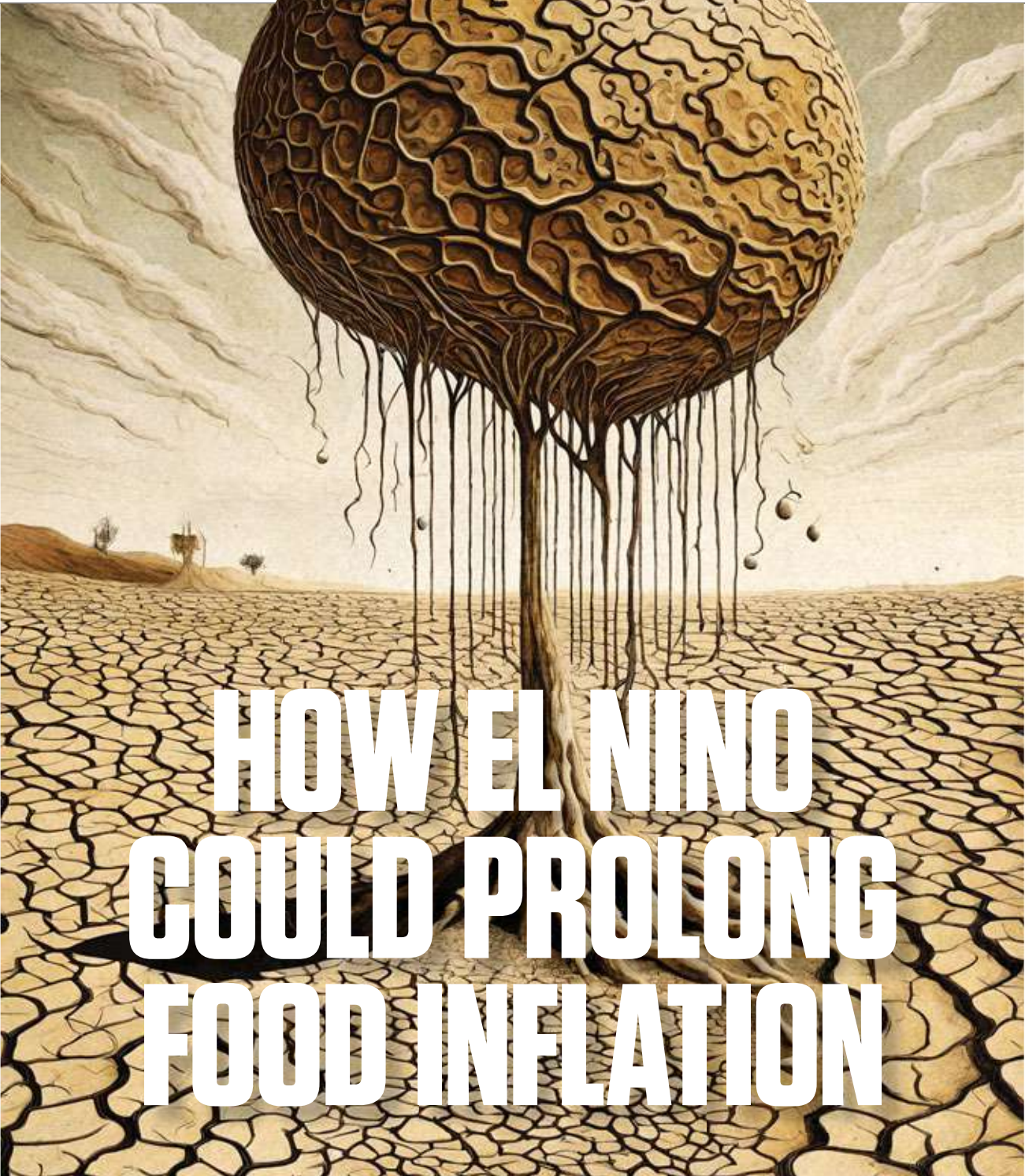
El Nino, which is Spanish for "Little Boy", is marked by warmer-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean near the equator.

It fuels flooding to the Americas, tropical storms to the Pacific and brings droughts to many other parts of the world, including southern Africa.

These effects cause severe disruption to fishing, agriculture and other sectors of the economy and are also known to be exacerbating the effects of climate change.

In 2016, El Nino contributed to the hottest year ever recorded, and scientists are concerned it could cause new record-high global temperatures.

Earlier this month, researchers at the EU's Copernicus earth observation unit saw global surface air temperatures rise 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels for the



first time.

This is the limit that world leaders agreed to put on global warming at the 2015 Paris climate summit.

"It is quite unusual to approach the 1.5-degree Celsius temperature limit in June," Kunstmann told DW. "It is therefore likely that we will soon exceed this limit, not only for a few weeks but for a longer period of time."

Trillions of dollars in economic losses

The economic impacts of previous El

Nino seasons have often continued even after the most extreme weather conditions have passed.

Following El Nino in 1982-83, the financial effects were felt for another half decade, totaling some \$4.1 trillion (€3.7 trillion), according to research from Dartmouth College in the United States.

In a paper for the US journal Science, researchers said after the 1997-98 El Nino season, the damage to global economic growth was \$5.7 trillion.

"We can say with certainty that societies and economies absolutely do not just take a hit and recover," said Christopher Callahan, a PhD student in Dartmouth College's Ecology, Evolution, Ecosystems, and Society program, adding that growth could be impacted for up to 14 years after El Nino, possibly longer.

The Dartmouth researchers found that the 1982-83 and 1997-98 El Nino events steered US gross domestic product (GDP) lower by some 3% in 1988 and

2003. Countries like Peru and Indonesia — where agriculture is responsible for up to 15% of GDP — bled by more than 10% in 2003.

The Dartmouth researchers estimated the negative economic effects from the latest El Nino season could reach \$3 trillion between now and 2029.

"The economic impact starts with the fishing industry, which suffers tremendously because of the higher ocean temperatures," Kunstmann told DW. "Then it hits the big agricultural regions of Africa, South America and even several regions of North America. Then, if harvests are poor and infrastructure is damaged by storms, the insurance sector will also suffer."

Food, energy inflation spikes

Modelling by Bloomberg Economics published this week found that previous periods of El Nino added nearly 4 percentage points to non-energy commodity prices and 3.5 points to oil prices, weakening global food security.

Bloomberg found that inflation was around 0.75 percentage points higher in Argentina and Brazil and half a percentage point higher in the Philippines and India,

With fears that the latest El Nino phase could be the warmest and costliest ever, analysts think it also has the potential to prolong high food inflation.

The peak of post-COVID, post-stimulus price rises may have passed, but it could be several years until the return of the 2% inflation target set by the US and European central banks.

Growing warnings about El Nino have already helped coffee, sugar and cocoa prices to rise sharply in recent weeks, Germany's biggest private lender, Deutsche Bank, said in a research note last week. Other food commodities are expected to follow as harvests get impacted by severe weather events.

"[Rising prices] could have a particularly negative effect on emerging markets, where it's regularly the case that food makes up at least a third of consumer expenditure. Their geographic position also leaves them more exposed to climatic changes such as flooding, which an El Nino event makes more likely," Deutsche Bank analysts wrote.

In India, where agriculture is a cornerstone of the economy and the annual monsoon is crucial to food output, policymakers have spoken of the need to stay vigilant.

"Close and continued vigil ... is absolutely necessary, especially as the monsoon outlook and the impact of El Nino remain uncertain," Reserve Bank of India chief Shaktikanta Das said recently. -BW

UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD STUDY

Gentle cleansers kill viruses just like harsh soaps: Research

A RECENT study by scientists at the University of Sheffield revealed that gentle cleansers are just as effective as harsh soaps in removing viruses, including coronavirus.

Health care professionals often substitute harsh soaps or alcohol-based hand sanitisers with skin-friendly cleansers in order to treat or prevent irritant contact dermatitis - a common skin disease which causes red and swollen skin with a dry and damaged surface. During the COVID-19 pandemic, incidence and severity of the disease amongst healthcare professionals increased from 20 per cent to 80 per cent.

Despite the widespread use of gentle cleansing products for handwashing, there has been limited evidence to show the antiviral efficacy of the products to prevent the spread of viruses such as human coronavirus, herpes simplex virus, norovirus and influenza.

Scientists from the University of Sheffield's Sheffield Dermatology Research (SDR) group tested multiple handwash products as part of the study. These included antibacterial soap, natural soap, foam cleansers and bath wash products, with the team investigating their ability to kill both enveloped viruses; such as human coronavirus and influenza, which have an additional layer of structural protection; compared to non-enveloped viruses, such as norovirus and adenovirus.

The findings, published in the journal Frontiers in Virology, show gentle cleansers were effective in killing enveloped viruses, but non-enveloped viruses displayed resistance against skin-friendly cleansers, as well as harsh soaps.

Lead author of the study, Dr Munitta Muthana from the University of Sheffield's Department of Oncology and Metabolism, said: "Washing our hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds was a fundamental message advocated in the UK to help stop the spread of COVID-19. But for healthcare professionals, who can



wash their hands as many as 100 times during a 12 hour shift, this may cause unintended adverse effects. "Not only does irritant contact dermatitis cause the skin to become inflamed, blister and crack, which increases transmission of bacteria and viruses, it can also lead to less compliance with personal protective equipment (PPE) and inadequate hand washing for fear of making symptoms worse. The disease can also significantly impact workplace productivity.

"For the first time, our study has shown substituting harsh soaps with milder wash products such as gentle cleansers is effective in fighting against enveloped viruses, including human coronavirus, which is very encouraging - especially for those in jobs in which irritant contact dermatitis is an occupational hazard. We also found that using additional agents such as moisturisers to help protect the skin didn't prevent the products' antiviral activity, which means we don't have to use very harsh products on our skin in order to kill viruses."

Importantly, the study also

found non-enveloped viruses demonstrated greater resistance across all types of hand washing products tested, including harsh chemical substances and milder solutions. Norovirus - known as the winter vomiting bug - was the most resilient.

First author of the study, Natalie Winder, PhD Researcher at the University of Sheffield's Department of Oncology and Metabolism, said: "Even when we increased the exposure of norovirus to the handwashing products from 20 seconds to one minute, the virus wasn't disrupted. Bleach was the only agent which affected the virus - however bleach-based hand washes are not a feasible option due to its corrosivity, which would be extremely harmful to the skin. "Norovirus can spread very easily - it takes just 18 norovirus particles to infect another person, as opposed to 1,000 coronavirus particles needed to spread the infection. Our findings show that although good hand hygiene practices are important to preventing the spread of many viruses, they are insufficient at controlling the norovirus. -ANI

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ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat organises seminar for Najahi customers in Sohar

The seminar focused on ways to develop business projects and was presented by Butrus Said, a Corporate Consultant and Certified Guideine-Commerce

MUSCAT: In line with the growing importance of Micro, Small and Medium-sized (MSME) businesses in contributing to Oman's economic growth and development, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, recently organised a seminar titled 'How to grow your own business'.

The seminar focused on ways to develop business projects and was presented by Butrus Said, a Corporate Consultant and Certified Guideine-Commerce.

Several customers of the bank, including entrepreneurs, and representatives of MSMEs attended the seminar, which was held in the presence of Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat and a number of bank officials.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are pleased to organise these events continuously for our Najahi customers. MSMEs have always been an area of focus for Bank Muscat, which is keen to provide these businesses with various financial services and facilities. In addition, the bank ensures that it keeps organising such training and seminars on topics relevant to the requirements of MSMEs. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the bank's customers for their confidence in the services and facilities provided by Bank Muscat. The bank will continue to organise such events to provide the best options for customers."

In her opening speech on this occasion, Raya Habib Al Shukaili, Senior Regional Manager, Bank Muscat said: "The current phase requires all of us to work hand in hand to enhance the role of this important sector and invest in the development of various services that will provide incentives, benefits and facilities for entrepreneurs. I take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to all the attendees for their participation in the success of today's seminar. I wish all success to entrepreneurs



in the development of their own respective businesses."

Bank Muscat's Najahi has received excellent customer praise for the financial services and facilities it provides as it enables

MSMEs to develop and expand their businesses in line with the development goals of the Sultanate to contribute to diversifying income sources and supporting Omani youth. Najahi was designed

to meet the requirements of entrepreneurs and MSMEs by providing the necessary support during their initial stages. It offers a range of benefits like POS devices, debit and credit cards, online bank-

ing services and collateral-free financial facilities. Bank Muscat is proud of all the positive results achieved by the programme and the high demand it receives from institutions and entrepreneurs to

benefit from these facilities. Business projects supported by Najahi represent a range of sectors including retail, hospitality, industry, tourism, mining and agriculture sectors.

NEW COLLECTION OF TILES

Danube Home: Your go-to destination for world-class tiles



MUSCAT: Danube Home, the region's leading home improvement and furniture retailer recently added a new collection of tiling solutions to cater to the growing demand for superior quality tiles in the region. As a special introductory offer, Danube Home is running a Tiles Festival during which customers can avail the lowest prices ever on the tiles of one's choice.

Danube Home has always held the title of the one-stop-shopping destination for all home needs with an exhaustive selection of over 50,000 products across a host of categories like indoor and outdoor furniture, furnishing, décor, flooring, curtains, carpets and rugs, sani-

itary ware, and so much more.

The brand is re-establishing itself as the one-stop-shopping destination for tiles with over 1000 designs, surfaces, textures, patterns and formats of tiles all available in Danube Home showrooms across the GCC.

"Danube Home takes pride in the fact that we have a stellar selection of Milano tiles that are of the best quality and finish. Each and every tile we sell goes through a stringent 36-point quality check at our own Milano Quality Check lab in Dubai to ensure that our customers are getting the best product at the best prices. We are the only distributor in the GCC to

have such a facility. Our Milano iSlabz is the largest manmade tile and is one of our bestsellers due to the seamless luxurious finish it imparts to a space. Our iSlabz tiles brings the latest innovations in surfaces be it the dry granula effects, metallic surface effects, etc.

"We have tiles available in several sizes, designs, textures, and patterns to suit the walls, the floors and every area in your home, even your swimming pool," said Venkat, Executive Vice President Business Development, Danube group.

"When you walk into a Danube Home showroom to purchase tiles, you are greeted by friendly, helpful staff. Danube Home also

offers free interior designing service which means you get to see a 3D render of how the tiles you choose will look in your home before buying," he added.

The Milano tiles collection is sourced from Italy, Spain, and India and are available at the best price points in the market. The brand has a huge stock of tiles at different price points; from the Milano iSlabz, to premium kitchenstone tiles and even tiles that look like wood.

Danube Home also provides free speedy delivery and installation supervision for larger tile formats making shopping for tiles at Danube Home a hassle-free experience.



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