



HM SENDS GREETINGS TO JORDAN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to King Abdullah II of Jordan on the anniversary of his accession to the throne. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to King Abdullah II, praying to the Almighty Allah for the return of this and similar occasions on King Abdullah II and the people of Jordan with achievement of further aspirations of progress and prosperity. **-ONA**

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FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE

Assets of Islamic banks and windows rise to OMR7.6bn



MUSCAT: The total assets of banks and Islamic windows surged by an impressive 14.8 percent to OMR7.6 billion by the end of March 2024, compared to the same period last year.

This massive increase accounts for about 17.7 percent of the total assets within the broader banking sector of Oman, highlighting the growing influence and significance of Islamic finance in the country's financial landscape.

Data issued by the Central

Bank of Oman (CBO) showed that the total balance of financing granted by units practicing this activity recorded an increase of 12 percent to reach about OMR6.3 billion.

The report further stated that the deposits at Islamic banks and windows also recorded a significant increase of 18.6 percent reaching about OMR5.8 billion by the end of March 2024 compared to the same period of last year. **-ONA**

OMAN EXPLORES NEW MARKET FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Oman's participation in the forum represents an opportunity for the private sector to open more markets for local products and build partnerships with its foreign counterparts

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman participated in the "St. Petersburg International Economic Forum" to open new markets for its exports and to strengthen economic and trade ties with countries around the world.

Qais bin Muhammad Al-Yousef, Minister of Trade, Industry and Investment Promotion, who headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation to the forum, stressed the keenness of the Omani side, represented by government agencies and the private sector, to discuss all areas of cooperation and open broader areas for trade and investment.

Indicating a serious desire to benefit from the participation in the forum, he said the participation of Oman as a guest of honour at the invitation of the Russian



side, achieves its economic aspirations, and contributes to the development of commercial activity in a number of sectors, and focuses on Oman's unique competitive advantages for trade and investment.

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and in partnership with a number of public and private sector institutions reviewed the business environment and investment opportunities in Oman.

For his part, Hamoud bin Salem Al Tuwaih, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Federal Republic of Russia, said that Oman's participation in this forum comes within the framework of its strategy to strengthen economic ties and promote it as an attractive destination for investments.

He explained that the forum is one of the most prominent platforms for international economic and trade dialogue as it contains more than 130 countries from around the world.

Faisal bin Abdullah Al-Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, stressed that this participation represents an opportunity for the Omani private sector to open more markets for Omani products and build partnerships with counterparts, whether in Russia or the delegations from other countries participating in the forum.

He explained that the chamber focuses during this participation on the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman and the promising opportunities it abounds, enhanced by incentives and initiatives, and there are opportunities for cooperation with the Russian side in many sectors, including

the food security, technology and petrochemical sector, while looking to the Russian market in the tourism sector.

On the sidelines of the forum's activities, the Omani-Russian Forum was organised to promote the investment and commercial environment in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to holding direct bilateral meetings between Omani companies and their Russian counterparts.

One of the Omani companies signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance cooperation in the legal field and support legal practices to serve and support Omani and Russian companies, while an Omani company specialised in the field of information security signed a memorandum of understanding with a Russian company to build joint capabilities in the field of cybersecurity and raise the efficiency of local cadres in this field. **>A2**

TOURISM

'GCC expats should get visa-free travel to Türkiye'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A leading member of the Turkish Parliament (Adana Province), who had served in the Foreign Affairs Committee Member, suggested that GCC expats including those living in Oman should travel to Türkiye visa-free.

Since December 2023, Omani citizens holding ordinary passports have been exempted from visa requirements for their travels for tourism purposes to Türkiye up to 90 days.

Speaking to *Times of Oman*, Bilal Bilici, a member of the



Turkish Parliament, said that as the GCC travellers seek new horizons and enriching experiences, Türkiye stands out as an exceptional destination.

"Its unique blend of history, culture, natural beauty, and warm hospitality offers a multifaceted journey that promises to captivate and inspire. As a public servant with a private sector background, I am a true believer in cultural exchange, person-to-person interaction, and establishing solid experiences free from bias and prejudice. Therefore, I highly welcome and value all kinds of interaction between the peoples and businesses from the GCC countries, including expats and Türkiye. So, I strongly believe that the GCC residents, including those living in Oman should enter

Türkiye either with no visa or visa on arrival to boost the tourism numbers," he said.

Bilal Bilici, who had worked in Dubai, UAE in the petrochemical industry for 3 years, said Türkiye should follow similar procedures like Georgia to increase the tourism arrivals.

"To achieve the goal of 60 million tourists, intense and concrete visa liberalisation practices are required," he opined.

In 2023, the number of visitors increased by 10%, reaching 56.7 million. In 2024, 60 million tourists are expected to visit Türkiye.

See also >A5

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Omani Hajj mission reviews camp facilities

1 The Omani Hajj delegation met with 'Ikram Al-Dif', the company that has got contracts to prepare Mina and Arafat camps for the pilgrims from Oman. During the meeting, the delivery of the 'Nusk Smart Card' to pilgrims was also discussed. **>A2**

OMAN

Oman elected as member of UN panel

2 Oman has been elected as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the United Nations for the period 2025-2028. **>A3**

SPORTS

Afghanistan pull off 84-run win over NZ

3 Spin wizard Rashid Khan and pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi sliced through the New Zealand batting order to help Afghanistan demolish the Blackcaps, registering an 84 runs victory. **>A8**



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Omani Hajj mission reviews facilities for pilgrims in camps

The medical delegation is fully prepared to provide medical services to pilgrims



MUSCAT: The Omani Hajj delegation met with 'Ikram Al-Dif', the company that has got contracts to prepare Mina and Arafat camps for Omani pilgrims. Sultan bin Saeed Al Hinai, head of the Omani Hajj delegation, confirmed that the aim of the meeting is to determine the company's readiness, develop agreed-upon detailed and operational plans, and review the achievement that

has been made so far by the company to prepare the Mina and Arafat camps to receive pilgrims. During the meeting, the delivery of the 'Nusk Smart Card' to pilgrims of Oman, which was added this season for pilgrims of the Holy Mosque, was also discussed. Muhammad bin Ali Al Maskari, head of the delegation supervising Hajj companies, said that the Mina

camp was distributed to 30 Omani Hajj companies. He pointed out that websites designated for companies were distributed electronically for the first time this season before the arrival of pilgrims. The medical delegation confirmed its full readiness to provide medical services to pilgrims coming from the Sultanate of Oman.



Dr. Ali bin Zayed Al Busaidi, head of the medical delegation at the Omani Hajj Mission, said: "On arrival in the Holy Lands, the medical delegation began preparing the clinic at the mission's headquarters in Mecca to receive visitors round the clock to provide all necessary medical services." Al-Busaidi explained that the mission's clinic had developed a

plan to deal with all emergency cases, those with chronic diseases, and those in need of dialysis, pointing out that coordination had been made with the relevant authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to transfer critical cases to hospitals if needed, and to follow up on hospital cases on a daily basis through field visits to hospitals and electronic communication with the competent authorities. He pointed out that the medical clinic uses the Shifa programme and is an integral part of the Omani health institutions, and the programme facilitates access to the medical record and sick history of the Omani pilgrims. The head of the medical delegation stressed the need for pilgrims coming from the Sultanate of Oman to follow preventive measures against heat stress by drinking fluids and avoiding standing for a long time under the sun.

MEETING St. Petersburg global forum

< FROM A1 Oman's participation in the forum provided the opportunity for a number of representatives of government agencies to participate in dialogue sessions, including a session on the importance of the financial sector in supporting strategic partnerships, a session on the logistics sector and enhancing roads and commercial corridors, and a dialogue session to discuss the importance of sustainable city development. In conjunction with this participation, an Omani evening was held by the National Museum in partnership with the Russian State Hermitage Museum, in the context of the "Oman Hall" initiative, to introduce the Sultanate of Oman's ancient history and common ties with Russia. Oman participated in the "St. Petersburg International Economic Forum" in its 27th edition as a guest of honour.

INCREASING THREATS

Oman marks World Oceans Day to raise awareness on sustainable management of marine ecosystem



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority, participated in the celebration of World Oceans Day, which falls on June 8 of each year under the slogan "Stimulating action for our ocean and climate." As oceans are very important for the health of our planet, our future, global efforts should be strengthened to protect them from

increasing threats, such as climate change, pollution and overfishing. This year's celebration is intended to raise public awareness on the impact of human actions on the oceans, and unite the world's population in the project of sustainable management of the world's oceans and protect them from the pollution. The Environment Authority's efforts are to develop programmes to protect the marine environment

in the Sultanate of Oman through the implementation of a project to monitor pollutants in the marine environment. The project is implemented annually, whereby stations are selected along the coastal strip from Musandam Governorate to Dhofar Governorate and samples of water and sediments are collected to measure levels of pollutants in the marine environment (heavy metals and hydrocarbons) and evaluation of results and variables in the marine environment.



This project provides some indicators to measure the extent of marine pollution in the Sultanate, especially in sensitive sites such as industrial ports. The Authority has implemented several projects to protect natural resources in the marine environment, including a project to study the success rate of Al-Rimani turtle nests on the beaches of

Masirah Island, in partnership with international organisations, to identify the sites of relative importance for nesting on different beaches, and to determine the factors that affect the success of nesting and hatching, in addition to identifying spatial planning and beach use control measures to ensure optimal use and management of environmental resources, and a project to track the Arabian Sea humpback whale, a

unique whale that is threatened with extinction. It is worth noting that the Environment Authority seeks to enact laws and legislation to protect the marine environment through the Environmental Protection and Pollution Control Law and the Natural Reserves Law and to oblige companies to adhere to the standards specified in the regulations for discharging liquid waste into the marine environment. -ONA

DEVELOPMENT OF FISHERIES

Dibba Port Development Project to help in diversification of economy



Times News Service

DIBBA: The Dibba Port Development Project in the Wilayat of Dibba is one of the important projects under execution by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, in Musandam Governorate. The project is aimed at diversification of economy and for creating an environment attractive to investments for development of fisheries sector. Ahmed bin Ali Al Shahi, director of the fishing port in the wilayat of Dibba, said that the construction works of the project of Dibba Fishing Port are progressing well and the completion percentage amounted to nearly 75 percent. The project is expected to be complete within two months and is expected to be fully operational during the first quarter of 2025, he added. He also pointed



out to the completion of concrete works and that the port received ships from several neighbouring countries. He said that the project includes four sectors which are the fishing sector, tourism sector, the sea transport services sector and trade sector. The cost of the pro-

ject is OMR 40 million, he added. The project includes two wave breakers. The length of the main wave breaker is 1,550 metres and the secondary one is 500 metres with a dock of 8 metres in depth, an area for boat anchor is 130 metres in length among other facilities and services, he said.

The project has allocated an area of 5,000 sq. metres for hotels, restaurants, tourism services and facilities for transport sector and docks for each sector, internal road works, electricity and lighting works, water network and rainwater drainage works among other services and works. -ONA

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PERIOD 2025-2028

Oman elected to UN panel for removing bias against women

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has been elected as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at the United Nations for the period 2025-2028.

The elections were held on the sidelines of the twenty-third meeting of States Parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The Sultanate of Oman was represented on the committee by Engineer Hamida bint Saloum Al-Shukairiya, Director of the Rural Development Depart-



ment at the Ministry of Agricultural Wealth, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The Sultanate of Oman's election as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women confirms its position

at the international level, its effective role in achieving ways to empower women and provide all types of protection and care for them, and the keenness of member states to be represented on this important, relevant committee.

Duqm offers all services to woo investment

Seven agreements on production of solar, wind energy and green hydrogen have been signed



Times News Service

DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm adopts a strategy to provide all services, including electricity and water to investors for creating an environment attractive to investments.

Abdullah bin Salim Al Hakamani, Director of Technical Affairs Department at the Special Economic Zone, Duqm reaffirmed that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones is exerting tremendous efforts for execution of road projects and services in the areas designated for heavy, medium and light industries, fish industries and industries associated with clean energy.

He said that a network of main and internal roads at the Special Economic Zone, Duqm for the length of 200 kilometres is planned. Construction works of the main roads and sub-roads in the area designated for fish industries would commence following the award of the related tender and the successful bids would be



selected and announced by the end of the current year.

The Special Economic Zone, Duqm is conducting a consultancy study for a detailed plan for the area associated with the industries related to clean energy and green hydrogen.

Seven agreements on production of solar, wind energy and green hydrogen have been so far signed, he said, pointing out that the investment value of these projects amounted to over USD 30 million and the projects are expected to produce 1 million tonnes of hydrogen in 2030, he said.

He said that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones

and Free Zones has awarded the tender for the construction of the main roads and sub-roads of the area designated for medium and light industries for the length of 26 kilometres at the cost of over OMR19.3 million.

He said that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zone, Duqm is currently executing the 'phase 1 of the "National Road 32" Project, for the length of 15 kilometres at the cost of over OMR73 million.

The project includes construction of main roads with three lanes and three flyovers and brigades, he added, pointing to the completion percentage of the project exceeded 47%. -With ONA inputs

GROWTH THROUGH TOURISM

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group) would like to invite competent and experienced companies to participate in the following Tender:

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Tender Submission Closing Date	27 JUNE 2024
Tender Process Details	Please visit: www.omran.om/tenders



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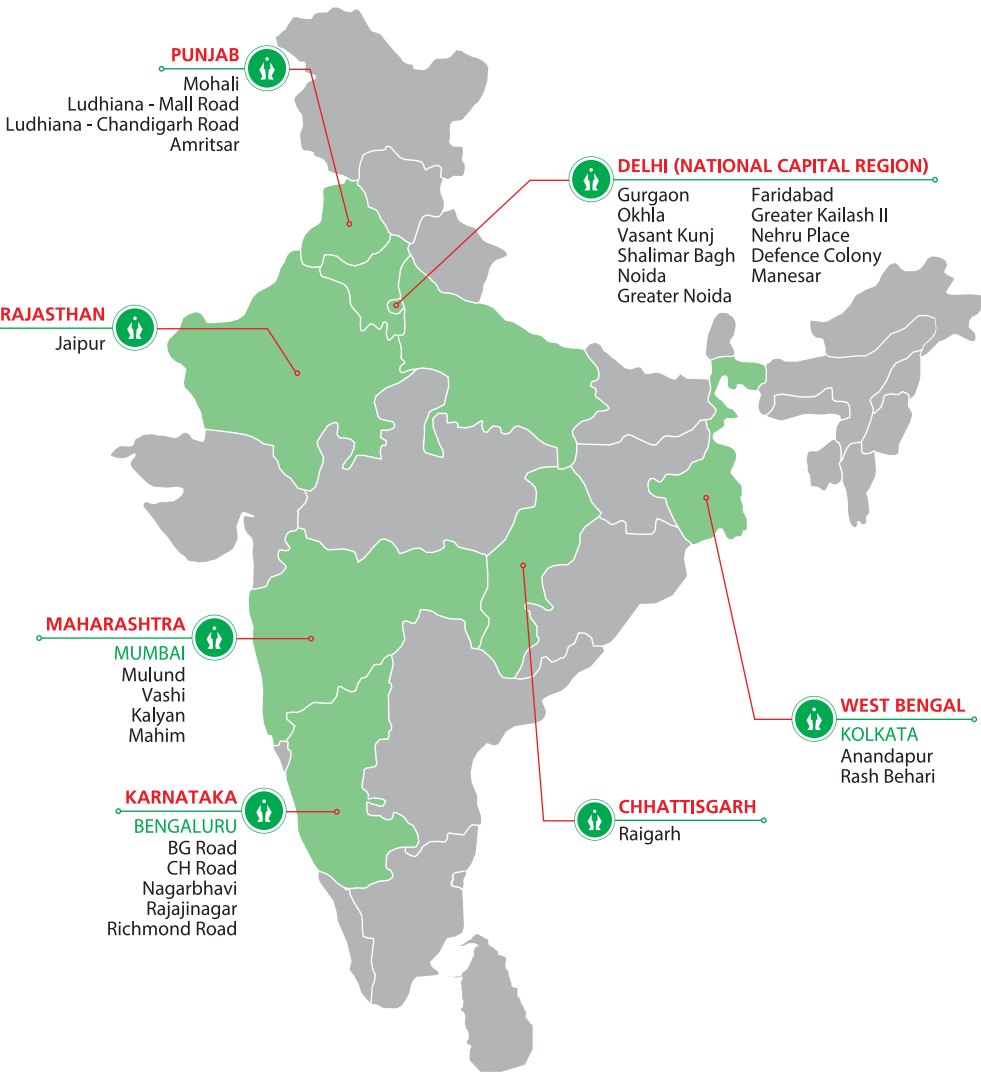
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OMAN



The initiative was taken at Daymaniyat Islands Nature Reserve

MUSCAT: Over 29 divers from Oman Sail, along with volunteers from Omantel, have completed an underwater coral reef clean-up project at the Daymaniyat Islands Nature Reserve to celebrate World Ocean Day. The initiative was supported by Omantel who partnered with Oman Sail and in collaboration with the Environment Authority to promote environmental sustainability and raise further awareness for action to preserve the oceans and minimise negative human impact on the marine environment.

Omani champion diver Omar Al Ghailani, former world's deepest free dive record holder, joined the initiative, lending his considerable experience to reach discarded items lurking out of sight.

Held annually on 8 June, the action theme for this year's World Ocean Day is 'Catalysing Action for Our Ocean & Climate', and the team of divers also cleaned the surface of the water to protect the many species of marine and bird life calling the nature reserve home.

Unfortunately, damage to the coral reefs due to discarded and lost fishing gear have disturbed the patterns of many species and threaten the health of the sea life. Many fish, turtles and birds ingest plastic left in the oceans or get caught in washed up fishing nets.

Saba Said Al Busaidi, Corporate Affairs Senior Manager at Omantel, said, "At Omantel, it is vitally important to raise awareness of the need to protect our marine environment, the oceans provide us with connectivity to more than 120 cities around the world through our submarine cables. Oman is blessed with such diversity that we must maintain and help to thrive. Being able to support this initiative is a great honour and we hope it will inspire visitors to the reefs to be more mindful about the impact they are having on the country and com-



munities that rely on the islands." Khamis Al Anbouri, Oman Sail's Acting Commercial Director, added, "Oman Sail and indeed SeaOman are uniquely placed to witness first hand the disruption to the Daymaniyat Island reefs and it is our duty to lend our expertise to restore a beautiful area of national importance. We are passionate supporters of our oceans and encourage everyone across the nation to do all they can to keep our coastlines clean, for World Ocean Day and every day."

Oman's coastline spans approximately 3,165 kilometres (1,967 miles), more than double the distance between Muscat and Salalah, which makes the nation's marine wildlife especially vulnerable to changes in the climate. Rises in sea levels, increased water temperatures and disruption to the food chains can have disastrous effects on global marine life.

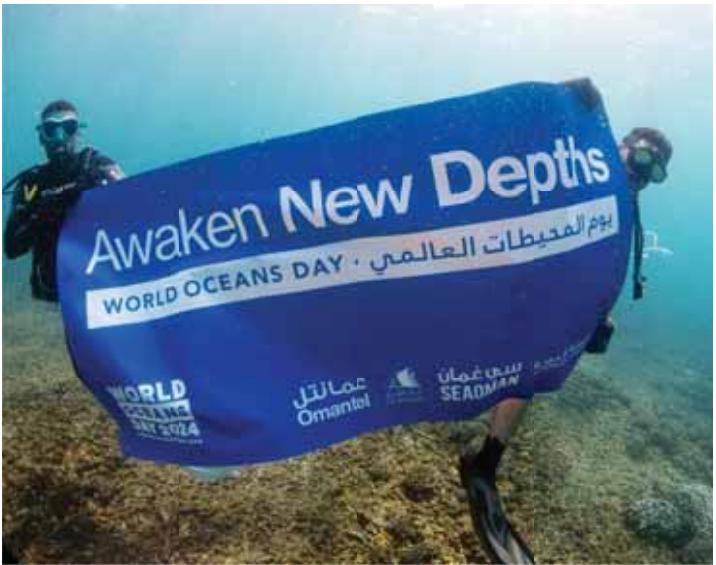
The Daymaniyat Islands is Oman's first marine nature reserve and home to some of the nation's best-developed coral reefs. Over 100 species of coral fish and 579 species of reef fish, as well as globally endangered turtles, whales, sharks and dolphins all visit the islands each year to breed and nest in the warm waters.

The islands have become a hot spot for local and international divers and snorkelers drawn to the area's numerous dive sites.

As a result, the Daymaniyat Islands are an important ecotourism destination for the national economy and forms a key component of the National Strategy for Fisheries 2040 and a key site in maintaining environmental sustainability in line with Oman's Vision 2040.



KHAMIS AL ANBOURI, OMAN SAIL'S ACTING COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR, ADDED, "OMAN SAIL AND INDEED SEAOMAN ARE UNIQUELY PLACED TO WITNESS FIRST HAND THE DISRUPTION TO THE DAYMANIYAT ISLAND REEFS AND IT IS OUR DUTY TO LEND OUR EXPERTISE TO RESTORE A BEAUTIFUL AREA OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE



COMMENTARY

Why not GCC expats travel to Türkiye visa-free?



BILAL BILICI

International tourism reached 97 percent of pre-pandemic levels in the first quarter of 2024. The Middle East saw the strongest relative growth, with international arrivals exceeding pre-pandemic levels by 36 percent in the first quarter of 2024. Europe exceeded pre-pandemic levels for the first time in a quarter, with a one percent increase from first quarter of 2019.

In 2022, approximately 51.4 million tourists visited Türkiye from across the globe. In 2023, the number of visitors increased by 10 percent, reaching 56.7 million. In 2024, 60 million tourists are expected to visit Türkiye.

To achieve the goal of 60 million tourists, intense and concrete visa liberalisation practices are required. For instance, Southeast Asian countries are racing to attract Chinese tourists with visa-free policies. Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore have offered visa waivers for tourists from China since late last year.

Turkish policymakers need to acknowledge that both Chinese and Indian visitors are emerging sources of tourists. This requires courageous steps, similar to those taken by countries like the UAE and other Southeast Asian countries that have waived visas.

In diplomacy, things are handled reciprocally with the mutual national interest of each independent state. However, during times of high expectations for tourism goals and numbers, and considering the economic difficulties of Türkiye, this kind of move can also help the Turkish economy to recover.

Ultimately, China and India are the largest tourism



markets globally. There has been a notable rise in Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) travel from China, especially to the UAE, driving growth across several of our brands. Additionally, Chinese travelers are increasingly undertaking long-haul trips and showing greater interest in luxury hospitality. Similar trends are observed among Indian travelers as well.

Traditionally, Türkiye has also been a popular destination for the travelers from the Gulf region. Among the GCC countries, Saudi Arabia ranks first, with 820,683 tourists visiting Türkiye in 2023, followed by Kuwait (363,070), the UAE (120,819), Oman (96,895), Qatar (70,090), and lastly Bahrain (64,771).

This marks a significant rise in tourist numbers for all GCC countries compared to the modest figures a decade ago. In 2013, 234,220 Saudi tourists visited Türkiye, followed by Kuwait (88,238), the UAE (52,424), Qatar (18,630), Bahrain (16,230), and Oman (8,956).

Although there are more visitors from these countries to Türkiye, the above figures only reflect statistics based on nationality, excluding expatriates and foreigners living in the GCC, as well as transit passengers.

In GCC countries, there are many skilled professionals from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines and many other countries from the Middle-East, Africa and South Asia. There are roughly 27.3 million expats living in GCC countries, primarily from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Egypt.

Across the entire GCC, almost half of the population consists of expats. In certain countries such as the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain, the overwhelming majority of the population are

expats. This diversity not only strengthens the labor force and fosters cultural exchange but also creates harmony, co-existence, and tolerance. Many GCC countries value these principles and benefits.

Turkish decision makers may examine this model and adopt a more comprehensive visa regime towards the GCC region, and try to find a solution for catering towards the Chinese and Indian tourists. Both visitors would diversify the visitor portfolio and add new dynamics to the Turkish tourism industry.

Türkiye should have a more liberal visa regime. Time consuming visa application procedures and bureaucratic burden as well as unavoidable visa fees make potential visitors destined to Türkiye shy away.

Yet, the approach must be based on certain criteria. If someone is an expat, that means they have already met specific requirements in a GCC country and are unlikely to immigrate to Türkiye.

In December 2023, Türkiye lifted the tourism visa requirement for nationals of the United States, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. Tourists from these six countries will no longer need visas.

On the other hand, Turkish people have faced double standards from European countries. Many of my friends, colleagues, relatives, and constituents experience serious difficulties obtaining visas from Schengen countries. The Turkish government should not adopt the same approach as the Schengen countries, as it is counterproductive and would leave a disappointing impression and unhospitable image on potential visitors.

Türkiye's advanced infrastructure makes it an accessible destination for travelers from

the Gulf region. With Turkish Airlines, Oman Air, and Salam Air shuttling between Oman and Türkiye, your journey to this enchanting land is both convenient and comfortable. While Oman Air directly flies to Istanbul and Trabzon, Salam Air flies to Istanbul, Trabzon, and Rize.

Other major regional airlines such as Emirates, Kuwait Airways, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Qatar Airways, Etihad, and budget airlines Air Arabia, Fly Dubai, and Jazeera Airways also frequently fly to Turkish cities.

As GCC travelers seek new horizons and enriching experiences, Türkiye stands out as an exceptional destination. Its unique blend of history, culture, natural beauty, and warm hospitality offers a multifaceted journey that promises to captivate and inspire.

As a public servant with a private sector background, I am a true believer in cultural exchange, person-to-person interaction, and establishing solid experiences free from bias and prejudice. Therefore, I highly welcome and value all kinds of interaction between the peoples and businesses from GCC countries including expats and Türkiye.

Lastly, Eid al-Adha is just around the corner in the second half of June, Muslims prepare to celebrate this festivity, with most families focusing on sharing, creating memories, and enjoying this joyful holiday. A popular destination for many around the world, particularly not only for Muslims around world but to avid travelers is Türkiye.

Türkiye has immense tourism potential, with the number of international visitors constantly rising, making the country one of the top five most popular tourist destinations. This is due to Türkiye offering a wide range of touristic activities along with its historical heritage spread across multiple regions and throughout the entire year, rather than being limited to one season or a particular geography. In order to reach this goal, concrete steps shall be taken sooner rather than later.

The author is a member of the Turkish Parliament

FIRST DAY OF EID AL ADHA



Oman to celebrate Eid on June 17

MUSCAT: The main moon-sighting committee for the month of Dhul-Hijjah 1445 AH announced that the new crescent moon was not sighted and that, accordingly, Saturday, the 8th of June 2024, will be the first day of Dhul-Hijjah 1445 AH and that 17 June 2024 will be the first day of Eid Al Adha.

This was unveiled in a statement issued by the committee, which convened on Thursday evening (6 June 2024).

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Dr.Mohammed Said Al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

The committee comprised the following: Sheikh Dr. Kahl-an Nabhan Al Kharousi, Assistant to the Grand Mufti of the

Sultanate of Oman, Eng. Khalid Hilal Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, Ahmed Saleh Al Rashdi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, and three Supreme Court judges, who were Mohammed Salim Al Akhzami, Abdul Rahman Abdul Sattar Al Kamali and Mohammed Salim Al Nahdi.

On this occasion, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs extended its sincere greetings to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, praying to the Almighty Allah to protect him and bless him with good health and wellbeing. The committee also expressed wishes of progress and prosperity for Omani citizens and all Muslims. — **ONA**

WILAYAT OF AL HAMRA RECEIVES RAIN

Moderate to heavy rains occurred in the Wilayat of Al-Hamra in the Al-Dakhiliyah Governorate on Saturday. Rains in a number of villages led to the overflow of wadis. — **ONA**



MINISTRY OF LABOUR

110 arrested

MUSCAT: The Joint Inspection Team managed to arrest 110 workers in Al Wusta Governorates on charges of violating the labour law, said the Ministry of Labour (MOL).

The Ministry of Labour represented by the Office of the Joint Inspection Team in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah carried out an inspection campaign on private sector establishments and labour gatherings and arrested 110 workers.



INDIAN SCHOOL SUR

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TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited from authorized consultancy companies providing consultancy services related to construction of Multipurpose Hall and 8 classrooms.

Tender document can be collected from the school office against payment of RO 10/- as a non-refundable fee from 9th June 2024 to 12th June 2024 between 8.00am and 1.00pm. The completed tender addressed to "The Principal" should be submitted to the school office

Indian School Sur reserves the right to accept or reject any tender.

Last date of submission: 13/06/2024 before 1.00 pm



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 15/2024

International 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 No.	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date
PRE/23/278	Design & Construction of Dualization of Green Walk at Al Mabellah	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/032	Consultancy Services for Design of Sculpture & Landscaping Works at Al Bustan R/A	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/050 Re-Call 2	Consultancy Services for Outdoor Advertising and Commercial Signboards	17/06/2024	24/06/2024
PRE/24/055	Design & Construction of Al Saeel Park	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/091 Re-Call	Supply of Photograph Devices	17/06/2024	24/06/2024
PRE/24/093 Re-Call	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Roads in AL Khoudh Village	17/06/2024	24/06/2024
PRE/24/103 Re-Call	Supply of Building Materials	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/130	Replacement of Existing Irrigation to Central Control	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/135	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Construction for Upgrading Al Mouj Street and 18th November Street	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/138	Organizing of Health Affairs Conference	21/06/2024	30/06/2024
PRE/24/150	Supply of Food Stuff	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/151	Supply of Labour Furniture	29/06/2024	21/07/2024
PRE/24/153	Maintenance of Pumps at Al Qurum	29/06/2024	21/07/2024

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.
- Clarification and Support:
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 - For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).



Sultanate of Oman
The Supreme Judicial Council
Public Prosecution

TENDER NOTICE

The Public Prosecution invites interested companies to the following tender(s):

Tender Number	Description	Deadline for obtaining tender	Deadline for tender submission	GRADE (Group)	Tender document Cost (Non-refundable)
22/2024	Design & Supply & Install ERP System	19 /06/2024	15/07/2024	specialized	25
23 /2024	Design &Supply & Install Effective Work Force Management Solution	19 /06/2024	15/07/2024	specialized	25

- Companies specialized in such works with 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 above-mentioned website.
- For any inquiries regarding technical support for the e-tender system, you may contact us through this email (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) or the phone number 24402200.
- Public Prosecution is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bid.

Macron hosts Biden on state visit in Paris

A wide range of global challenges and bilateral issues were expected to be discussed by Biden and Macron

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed his US counterpart Joe Biden as a state guest in Paris on Saturday. In contrast to regular working visits, official state visits are accompanied by a special level of pomp and protocol. The two men attended a welcoming ceremony at the iconic Arc de Triomphe ahead of a parade down the Champs-Élysées. They were then due to hold bilateral talks at the French president's official residence, the Élysée Palace, after which Biden and Macron are expected to address the press. A state dinner is planned for the evening, to also be attended by US First Lady Jill Biden.



Biden is currently on a multi-day visit to France. He arrived on Wednesday and on Thursday he took part in the commemorative events in Normandy to mark the D-Day landing of the Allied troops 80 years ago. A wide range of global challenges and bilateral issues were expected to be discussed by Biden and Macron. According to the French government, the presidents will discuss further support for Ukraine in its defense against Russia. They will also prepare for the G7 summit in the Italian city of Bari next week and the NATO summit in the US capital, Washington, in July. US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan told reporters earlier this week that talks between the two men would touch on Russia's war with Ukraine, Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and policy issues ranging from climate change to artificial intelligence to supply chains. The US and French presidents met separately with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris on Friday. Both have pledged their countries' support for Ukraine. Biden hosted Macron as a state guest in Washington in 2022. At the time, the French leader was the first foreign guest to be so honored during Biden's tenure, which started amid the COVID-19 pandemic. — DW

WORLD WEALTH REPORT

Number of millionaires reaches record high

NEW YORK: Last year's bullish stock markets boosted the fortunes of the world's richest, adding more members to the club of dollar millionaires, the World Wealth Report says. The number of people worldwide with investable assets of at least \$1 million ("high net worth individuals," or HNWI) rose by 5.1% last year to an estimated 22.8

million, according to a study by consulting firm Capgemini. This is the highest level since the first annual study was conducted in 1997. The total wealth of the richest rose 4.7% to a record \$86.8 trillion (€79.64 trillion). Their fortunes have risen as stock markets have soared: New York's tech-heavy Nasdaq rose 43% in 2023, while the broad-

based S&P 500 gained 24%. Meanwhile, the Paris CAC 40 rose 16% and the Frankfurt DAX 20%. Despite below-average economic growth, records were also set in Germany, where the wealth of the richest increased by 2.2% to \$6.28 trillion while the club of dollar millionaires grew by 34,000 (2.1%) to 1.65 million members. The wealth of the world's rich-

est as well as the number of global millionaires declined in 2022 amid economic and political uncertainty. "However, 2023 brought economic growth and improved fortunes for major investment sectors to reverse the falloff," the report said. — DW

Full story at timesofoman.com/world



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EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Indian Navy gets first woman pilot

ARAKKONAM: A passing out parade was held on Friday to mark the graduation of the 102nd Helicopter Conversion Course (HCC) and completion of stage I training of the 4th Basic Helicopter Conversion Course (BHCC) at Naval Air Station - INS Rajali, Arakkonam, Tamil Nadu. "21 officers, including three officers from 03 BHCC were awarded the prestigious "Golden Wings" by VAdm Rajesh Pendharkar, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command. Additionally, three Officers of 04 Basic Conversion Course (BCC) successfully completed their Stage - (I) training," the Ministry of Defence stated on Saturday.

Lt Jamyang Tsewang, the first Commissioned Naval Officer from the Union Territory of Ladakh also successfully graduated as a qualified helicopter pilot. The FOCinC, Eastern Naval Command Rolling Trophy for the trainee pilot standing First in Order of Merit in Flying was awarded to Lt Gurkirat Rajput. Sub-Lt Kunte Memorial Book Prize for standing First in Order of Merit in Ground Subjects was awarded to Lt Nitin Sharan Chaturvedi. Governor of Kerala Rolling Trophy for first in overall order of merit was awarded to Lt Deepak Gupta, it added.

Rich heritage
In its rich heritage spanning more than five decades, Helicopter Training School has trained 849 pilots of the Indian Navy, and Coast Guard as well as friendly foreign Nations. The Helicopter Training School is located at INS Rajali, Arakkonam presently commanded by Cmde Kapil Mehta and the Helicopter Training School is commanded by Cdr Archesh. The Squadron's safe and conducive training environment coupled with meticulous planning and execution ensures completion of course 'On time, Every Time'. — ANI

Passing out parade
The Passing out parade marked the successful culmination of an intensive 22-week Training programme encompassing rigorous flying and ground training at the Indian Naval Air Squadron 561, the alma mater of all helicopter pilots of the Indian Navy. Highlighting the Indian Navy's commitment to gender inclusivity and expanding Career opportunities for women, SLt Anamika B Rajeev created history by graduating as the 'First Woman Naval helicopter pilot', the Ministry said.



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EUROPEAN UNION



Bug meat and other fake news inundate EU voters

BRUSSELS: If media campaigns in more than a dozen European countries were to be believed, the European Union (EU) intends to force citizens to eat insects instead of meat. The claim has touched nerves, especially in Italy, where variations of it have been revived and splashed across billboards during European elections to pit Brussels against mama's special sauce. But consumers of this claim are being fed pure nonsense, an example of countless fabrications launched or adopted by candidates seeking political gain at the cost of the truth. The fake insect-food narrative, which first surfaced last year in a number of EU countries, has proven so popular with malign actors both within and outside the bloc that they've brought it back for the European election cycle to try to discredit pro-EU candidates. "This was pushed by some pro-Russian outlets: 'We are forced to eat insects because now we don't have the meat and agricultural products because of the sanctions against Russia,'" explained Tommaso Canetta, fact-checking coordinator for the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO), a hub of 52 fact-checking organizations tracking the increase of disinformation ahead of the vote. Even Canetta was a bit aston-

ished that this seemingly outlandish narrative made it to his own children's school in Milan, Italy, where parents "were actually worried about their hypothesis of having secretly added insects in the food then given to the children," he told DW. "And, of course, this is absolutely false and baseless." But no one should be surprised that malignant actors want to impact Europe's election cycle, with 720 seats up for grabs for the next five-year term in the European Parliament and many national elections taking place simultaneously as part of a record year for elections worldwide. The EDMO reports a record-high amount of disinformation ahead of the vote about universally controversial issues like migration, agricultural policy and climate change, including even the resurrection of fake stories from years past, such as COVID-19 conspiracies. Perhaps most crucially for the Kremlin and its like-minded cronies, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) elected over the next days will help shape policies toward Moscow and aid packages for Ukraine as it fights to expel Russian troops from its territory and become a member of the EU and NATO. Russia's war in Ukraine has included information campaigns against Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy personally, which DW's Fact

Check unit has documented and debunked. "For the current Kremlin leadership, this is an existential battle, and they clearly are trying to win it, not as much on the frontline as much as targeting the support from the West," explained Janis Sarts, director of NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence in Riga. "That's why this political election year is so important for them to promote the narratives, the forces that would be ready to stop this support to Ukraine and undermine the European and transatlantic security." Former Latvian Deputy Prime Minister and EU lawmaker Artis Pabriks says people should not underestimate the European Parliament as an attractive target for political interference. "Even if at first sight the European Parliament doesn't seem to be the most influential legislative body, there are still a lot of people — former prime ministers, former ministers — who can influence different positions also looking from the perspective of strategic communication," he told DW. "So it's only logical that Russians are taking interest and trying to push their narrative through this institution. If I were, a Russian politician or Russian leader, I would definitely do the same." — DW

Full story at timesofoman.com/world

DISTRESSING EVENT

Danish Prime Minister attacked in Copenhagen

COPENHAGEN: Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was assaulted by a man in Copenhagen, according to a statement from her office.

“Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was hit by a man Friday evening on Kultorvet [public square] in Copenhagen. The man was subsequently arrested,” the prime minister’s office said.

In response to the distressing event, Frederiksen’s office said that she “is shocked by the incident”, while refraining from providing further details about any potential injuries sustained during the altercation.

Minister of Environment Magnus Heunicke urged for national unity in the wake of the assault, emphasising the importance of collective responsibility in safeguarding one another, irrespective of “political disagreements, election campaigns.”

“Something like this must not happen in our beautiful, safe and free country,” he said on X. “This is ugly and unacceptable. Let’s show that Denmark is much better.”

“Deeply shocked by the outrageous attack on my colleague and friend, Prime Minister of Denmark Mette Frederiksen,” Latvian Prime Minister Evika Silina said in a post on X.

“All our thoughts are with you and your loved ones. Wishing you a speedy recovery,” she added.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen condemned the attack, calling it a “despicable act, which goes against everything we believe in and fight for in Europe.” She went on to wish the prime minister strength and courage, saying she has plenty of both, CNN reported.

The incident unfolded against the backdrop of Denmark’s upcoming participation in the European Union elections, adding an additional layer of significance to the event. — ANI

Call for supplying electricity generators to Gaza hospitals

Palestinian health authorities warned that if the electricity generators cease to operate, this would lead to the inevitable death of patients and casualties and bring the health services to a complete standstill

GAZA: Palestinian health authorities in the Gaza Strip on Saturday made an urgent call for supplying electricity generators for the Strip hospitals.

The health authorities said in a press statement that they have been relying on generators to supply electricity to the hospitals in the Strip around the clock following the destruction of Gaza’s sole power generation plant.

They warned that if the electricity generators cease to operate, this would lead to the inevitable death of patients and casualties and bring the health services to a complete standstill.

They added that several electricity generators suffered significant irreparable technical malfunctions, and some others were directly destroyed due to Israeli bombardment, and expected that the electricity generators in the remaining hospitals, health centres and medicine warehouses would also cease to operate following the ban on the



entry of spare parts required for maintenance.

They pointed out that the Israeli occupation forces deliberately destroyed the electricity generators at the al-Shifa Medical Complex, the Nasse Medical Complex, the Indonesian Complex and the Kamal Adwan Hospital to take them out of service, while Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital now relies on a sole generator.

They stressed that while they have maintained contacts with international institutions, primarily the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), since the onset of the Israeli aggression to supply new generators and spare parts, but to no avail due to Israel’s intransigence to allow the entry of such indispensable generators.

Miscarriages are increasing among pregnant women due to stress and lack of food

Doctors on one of the only functioning maternity wards left in Gaza have told ActionAid they are seeing rising cases of mis-

carriages, as the lack of food and stress of constant danger and displacement takes a heavy toll on pregnant women, according to an ActionAid International press statement.

Staff at Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat, the only hospital that is currently providing maternity services such as delivery and c-sections in central Gaza, also said that pregnant women are increasingly presenting at the hospital with heavy bleeding and other complications. “A miscarriage can happen for several reasons. Some of which are the exhaustion of the pregnant woman due to displacement... Malnutrition is one of the main reasons,” Raed Al Saudi, Head of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the hospital, which is currently delivering between 40 and 50 babies per day, despite having just 35 beds – said in a video sent to ActionAid.

“We have cases of women coming from their homes with excessive bleeding. Cases of abruptio placentae or placenta previa, or

postpartum haemorrhage may result from malnutrition or cases of anaemia.”

“The bombing causes displacement, forcing people to go from house to house in order to avoid bombing and death. With these factors, it is possible that women can have direct bleeding or suffer from high blood pressure. This can lead to a complete separation of the foetus [Placental abruption] and a miscarriage. We deal with many cases in this situation,” she added.

“There are many women who lost their [unborn babies] as a result of direct exposure to bombing. A woman is pregnant and has an injury. On the second day or the same day, she has bleeding. She is delivered to the operating department. These things happen a lot here,” she went on saying.

The lack of sufficient food – 95% of pregnant and breastfeeding women in Gaza face severe food poverty, according to the WHO – is having a major impact. Yasmine said: “Most children are [born] underweight. We referred many children to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital because they suffer from a lack of oxygen, breathing difficulties or inflammation as a result of the lack of hygiene or the spread of diseases. At the same time, the woman, due to nutritional deficiency, develops anaemia, or general emaciation. So, she is unable to give birth or bear the pressure of childbirth, because she is tired and worn out.”

Riham Jafari, Advocacy and Communications Coordinator at ActionAid Palestine said: “It is heartbreaking but hardly surprising that the number of miscarriages is rising considering the atrocious conditions pregnant women in Gaza are being forced to endure. Not only are they experiencing the constant stress and trauma of living in a warzone, where nowhere is safe, but they have hardly anything to eat.” — WAFSA

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TIMES OF OMAN PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

IMMEDIATE REQUIREMENT

OPERATIONS MANAGER 01 NOS.

Minimum Qualifications: Mechanical / Electrical / Chemical Engineering Graduate from a recognized University.

Minimum Experience: Min 20 to 25 years' experience in Oil & Gas projects and minimum 15 years GCC Experience in Oil and Gas Sector multidisciplinary EPIC projects. Experience including Oil and Gas pipelines, midstream transmission, custody transfer, pump stations, compression stations, Tank Installations and storage facilities within hand experience to execute plant shutdowns independently.

Key Responsibilities

- Project Execution.
- Business Development.
- Overall management of the division.

Personal skills

- Experience should be in project execution in Oil and Gas sector.
- Coordination with client / consultants.
- Overall personnel and administrative management.
- Must have handled all statutory compliance.
- Good leadership skill.
- Excellent communication skill.

Generic Skills:

- Proven estimation experience in large construction and EP projects.
- Qatar driving license will be an added advantage.
- Roles and responsibilities
- Play important role in achieving project profitability.
- Intimate client about time and cost claims and should be able to get them approved.

SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER 02 NOS.

Bachelor degree in Mechanical / Chemical Engineering from a reputed university. PMP Certification preferred, not mandatory.

- Total 20-25 years of experience in Oil and Gas Projects and Minimum 10 Years of experience in oil and gas sector multidisciplinary EPIC projects as Project Manager in GCC.
- Coordination with Consultant and client. Overall personnel and administrative management. Must have handled all Statutory Compliance.
- Good Leadership Skill. Excellent Communication.
- Project Management and Contract Administration
- Main function is to provide technical and administrative services with regard to Project Management including Contract Management and administration, project monitoring and controls.

PLANNING ENGINEER 03 NOS.

Bachelor degree in Mechanical / Electrical from a reputed university.

- Minimum 10 years' to 15 years of work experience with project control and planning, primavera P6 on oil and gas engineering, construction and maintenance activities in an EPC related business and/or a contracting company servicing a petrochemical industry.
- Candidate should have experience large EPC projects is add on advantage.
- Shall be able to build resource activity plans, including ongoing update, change control, progress reporting, etc.
- Good communication skills.

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SPORTS

Afghanistan crush Blackcaps by 84 runs

The NZ were outplayed in all aspects, as the Afghans continue unearthing T20 stars that have the nation daring to dream in the Caribbean

GUYANA: Spin wizard Rashid Khan and pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi sliced through the New Zealand batting order to help Afghanistan demolish the Blackcaps, registering an 84 runs victory in the Group C match of the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup 2024 at the Providence Stadium on Friday (local time).

With two out of two victories, Afghanistan solidified their chances of qualifying from Group C. The Blackcaps were outplayed in all aspects, as the Afghans continue unearthing T20 stars that have the nation daring to dream in the Caribbean.

New Zealand gave away Afghanistan too many lifelines in the field, which backfired on the Kiwis as they paid dearly for it and suffered an uncharacteristic collapse with the bat.

Upsets continue to steal the limelight in the ongoing T20 World Cup with first debutants USA beating Asian giant Pakistan and Canada defeating Ireland.

Defending a target of 160, Farooqi sliced through the top order



with a 3-wicket burst inside the batting powerplay.

Farooqi took out Finn Allen on the very first ball of the innings, and the left-armers then had the wickets of Devon Conway and Daryl Mitchell before the Kiwis could create any momentum.

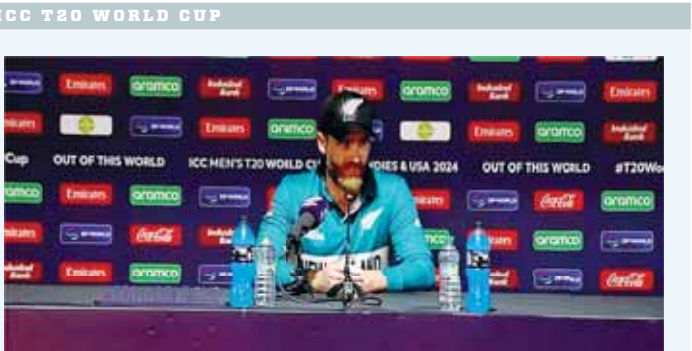
After that, it was Afghanistan spinners, who made the most out of the spin-friendly Guyana pitch. Then it was Rashid's turn to get in on the act and the Afghan captain scalped the prized scalp of Kane Williamson (9 off 13) with his first ball. He took two straight at the start of his next over, as Mitchell Santner had to deal with a hat-trick ball.

In his final over, Rashid removed

Lockie Ferguson, finishing with 17/4 off his four overs. Farooqi in his last over ended New Zealand's resistance at the crease as he removed Matt Henry, bundling out New Zealand for 75 runs in 15.2 overs to wrap up an 84-run victory.

Earlier, Afghanistan was put to bat first, the Afghan openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran took full advantage of numerous fielding fails- a missed stumping and fumbled runout from keeper Devon Conway, along with a dropped catch at deep backward square leg.

The openers took their team past the 50-run mark in under 10 overs. The duo continued to build a solid partnership and Gurbaz



NZ skipper reveals most 'frustrating' part about their crushing defeat

GUYANA: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson revealed that the most frustrating thing about their comprehensive defeat against Afghanistan was their fielding.

It was another upset in the ongoing tournament as New Zealand folded on 75 in 15.2 overs. Afghanistan got off to a flying start. Kiwis dropped a couple of catches, allowing Afghanistan to exercise control in the first innings.

After the game, Williamson expressed his disappointment in their performance in a game where they were completely outplayed.

"Yeah, I think for a start, Afghanistan were outstanding. To execute a performance like that on a tricky surface, I know they were sort of 55-60 at ten overs, but ten wickets in hand meant they had every opportunity to get a very good score. Our fielding didn't help our cause without a doubt. That would be the most frustrating part for me," Williamson said in the post-match press conference.

"It is something we pride ourselves on so that was very disappointing but, that performance from us married up to an outstanding performance from Afghanistan meant that it wasn't

good enough and they showed their skill today and we were outplayed," he added.

In reply, they struggled to put up an effort to chase down the target. Afghanistan captain Rashid Khan inflicted massive damage on the opposition batters.

Williamson felt that Afghanistan's prowess and New Zealand's shortcomings both played a part in their slump in the campaign opener.

"I think a bit of both. I mean certainly, they're not the standards that we expect of ourselves, but take nothing away from Afghanistan they were superb. And they've been building as a group for some time now and we're seeing performances like that from them quite regularly, so I think a bit of both. For us, it's about reviewing our performance and looking to find areas that we can improve on. And like I say, the fielding element for us is important to our team, and it wasn't up to the standard," Williamson noted.

After enduring an unprecedented defeat in the campaign opener, New Zealand will seek a win against the co-hosts West Indies at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad and Tobago. **-ANI**

GRAND PRAIRIE STADIUM



T20 WC: Bangladesh topple Sri Lanka with two-wicket win in nail-biting thriller

DALLAS: The Sri Lanka and Bangladesh rivalry once again lived up to the expectations of the spectators as the Tigers left the Lions dazed with a nail-biting two-wicket win at the Grand Prairie Stadium in the ongoing T20 World Cup on Friday.

It was a clash where anticipation was brimming before every delivery. Momentum changed within the blink of an eye and fans were sitting still at the edge of their seats praying for their team to win.

After restricting Sri Lanka to a paltry score of 124/9, Nuwan Thushara and Dhananjaya de Silva made early inroads and delivered two quick blows to Bangladesh.

Soumya Sarkar fell in the first over for a two-ball duck while Tanazid Hasan (3) was back in the dug-out in the next over.

Litton Das came in and batted sensibly while Towhid Hridoy took up the mantle of scoring at a brisk pace.

Their 63-run stand lifted Bangladesh from 28/3 to 91/4 and

handed them control over the game. But Sri Lanka showed grit and bounced back with skipper Wanindu Hasaranga leading the attack.

Hasaranga removed both set batters to raise hope of an unprecedented victory for the Lions. In the 11th over, Hridoy struck three consecutive towering sixes to remove the scoreboard pressure off Bangladesh's shoulders.

But Hasaranga had the last laugh, he removed Hridoy (40) by deceiving him with variation and trapped him in front of the stumps.

Litton fell similarly after he failed to read through Hasaranga's trickery. In the next couple of overs, Bangladesh's back was up against the wall.

Matheesha Pathirana picked up experienced Shakib Al Hasan's wicket. Nuwan Thushara claimed back-to-back wickets in the 18th over, raising Sri Lanka from the ashes.

With 11 needed off the final two overs, Dasun Shanaka was handed

the task of bowling the penultimate over.

Mahmudullah kept his composure and cleared the ropes on the first ball to make the equation in their favour. He scored the winning runs on the final ball to seal a two-wicket win for his side.

Earlier in the innings, after Bangladesh put Sri Lanka to bat, the duo of Mustafizur Rahman and Rishad Hossain took apart the batting unit.

The duo derailed Sri Lanka's batting order to restrict them to 124/9. They claimed a three-wicket haul each which allowed Bangladesh to exercise control in the first half of the game.

Pathum Nissanka was the sole batter who showed a fight for Sri Lanka with his knock of 47(28).

Brief Score: Sri Lanka 124/8 (Pathum Nissanka 47; Mustafizur 3-17, Rishad Hossain 3-22) vs Bangladesh 125/8 (Towhid Hridoy 40, Litton Das 36; Nuwan Thushara 4-18).

-ANI

NASSAU INTERNATIONAL CRICKET STADIUM

T20 WC 2024: Canada bowlers successfully defend 138 runs against Ireland

NEW YORK: Brilliant bowling performance by Canada bowlers helped the side to successfully defend a mere total of 138 runs against Ireland in the ICC T20 World Cup clash at the Nassau International Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Ireland openers Paul Stirling and Andrew Balbirnie started off the chase carefully. Both of them put on 26 runs before the first wicket fell.

Stirling was sent back to the pavilion at the score of nine when the team score was 26 in 5.4 overs. Following the skipper's departure, the Irish team struggled to score runs.

At the score of 32, the side lost their second wicket. Balbirnie was sent back after scoring 17 runs. He was dismissed by Junaid Siddiqui in the seventh over.

In the eighth over, the Ireland side lost the third wicket. Harry Tector was sent back to the pavilion after scoring seven runs.

The Ireland side completed their fifty in the 10th over as Lorcán Tucker took double. On the last ball of the same over he was dismissed by Saad Bin Zafar.

Inside nine runs, the Ireland team lost their fifth and sixth wicket. The fifth wicket fell at the score of 53 and the sixth wicket fell at the score of 59.

After the fall of six wickets, the Irish team were 59/6 in 12.3 overs with George Dockrell and Mark Adair on the crease.

The team completed the 100-run mark in the 17th over as Adair smashed a maximum on the bowling of Kaleem Sana.

Both the batters built a partnership of 62 runs in 41 balls before Adair was dismissed after playing a good knock of 34 runs from 24 balls with the help of three fours and a six.

In the end, the Irish team fell short by 12 runs as they were able to score just 125 runs with the loss of seven wickets.

Dockrell played an unbeaten innings of 30 runs in 23 balls with two fours and a six in his innings.

For Canada, two wickets each were taken by Jeremy Gordon and Dillon Heyliger in their spells of four overs where they conceded



ed 16 and 18 runs respectively. One wicket each was taken by Junaid Siddiqui and Saad Bin Zafar in their respective spells.

Earlier, the Ireland skipper Paul Stirling won the toss and asked Canada to bat first at the New York stadium.

For Canada, batters Aaron Johnson and Navneet Dhaliwal opened the innings. Both batters were able to put just 12 runs together before Dhaliwal was dismissed by Mark Adair. He could score only six runs.

Right-hand batter Pargat Singh was next on the crease and he and Johnson could add just 16 more runs to the total before the Ireland bowlers struck again.

Following Johnson's dismissal, Dilpreet Bajwa came out to bat in the sixth over when the team score was 28/2.

At the score of 42, Pargat Singh was sent back to the dressing room after he had scored 18 runs. He was out of the bowling of Craig Young in the seventh over.

Nicolas Kiton came out to bat next. The Canadian side completed their fifty on the last ball of the eighth over as Kirton slammed a boundary of the bowling of Barry McCarthy.

On the first ball of the ninth over, Canada lost their fourth wicket when the team score was 53. Bajwa was dismissed after he had scored seven runs.

Soon after Bajwa's departure,

the side's wicketkeeper-batter Shreyas Movva came out to bat.

After 10 overs, Canada were 63/4 with Kirton and Movva unbeaten on the crease.

The Canadian side brought up their 100 in 15.2 overs as Kirton smashed a boundary of the bowling of Young. On the next ball, Kirton took a single to bring up a 50-run partnership with Movva.

In the 19th over bowled by McCarthy, the batting side lost two wickets. On the fourth ball, the side lost the wicket of set batter Kirton who was dismissed after he had scored 49 runs off 35 balls which were laced with three boundaries and two maximums.

On the last ball of the same over, Dillon Heyliger was sent back without opening his account.

Movva played a knock of 37 runs from 36 balls which included three fours in his innings.

The pick of the bowlers for Ireland were Young and McCarthy as they bagged two wickets each in their spells of four overs in which they conceded 32 and 24 runs respectively. One wicket each was taken by Adair and DeLany in their respective spells.

Brief Score: Ireland 125/7 in 20 overs (Mark Adair 34, George Dockrell 30*, Jeremy Gordon 2/18) vs Canada 137/7 in 20 overs (Nicholas Kirton 49, Shreyas Movva 37, Barry McCarthy 2/24) vs Ireland.

-ANI

BANK MUSCAT INKS PACT
Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced its collaboration with Taageer Finance Company, a leading financial services company, to provide its cutting-edge B2B connectivity solutions.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



GOVERNMENT TENDERS
Madayn represented by the Industrial Innovation Academy, has signed a cooperation agreement with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board to link government tenders with local products, aiming to boost the industrial sector and enhance local content in government projects, contracts and procurement.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Oman makes significant cut in public debt to OMR14.5 billion



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has paid OMR700 million (\$1.8 billion) towards its maturing international sukuk bonds, cutting down the volume of public debt from OMR15.3 billion by the end of 2023 to OMR14.5 billion now.

This contributed to a decline in the ratio of public debt to gross domestic product (GDP) from 36.5 percent at the end of 2023 to 33.9 percent during the first half of 2024.

The Ministry of Finance said that the Sultanate of Oman's financial obligations were managed through the repayment of external loans and the issuance of govern-

ment development bonds, as part of Oman's prompt settlement of financial obligations and its continuous review of related financing costs.

The ministry pointed out that the repayment of foreign debts during 2024 reflected in the distribution of risks associated with the public debt portfolio.

As a result, the ratio of external debt to the total volume of public debt declined from 74 percent at the end of 2023 to 71 percent during the first half of 2024, the ministry explained.

The ministry added that this pro-

cess is consistent with the government's efforts to bring down public debt and support the local debt market through a lower risk rate. The ministry affirmed that financial surpluses achieved are redirected to enhance social spending, stimulate economic growth, manage financial obligations, reduce public debt and build reserve buffers to manage financial obligations.

The government strives to strengthen Oman's fiscal position, reduce the burden of public debt, minimise public debt risks and enhance creditworthiness by improving credit rating indicators. -**ONA**

Market capitalisation of Oman bourse tops OMR24.38 billion

The week's trading was characterised by caution by investors after the rises recorded by stocks in the past weeks and it is expected that the state of caution among individual investors will continue during the coming period



MUSCAT: The market capitalisation (cap) of securities traded during the week on Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) week recorded losses of OMR95 million and fell to OMR24.38 billion.

The week's trading was characterised by caution by investors after the rises recorded by stocks in the past weeks and it is expected that the state of caution among individual investors will continue during the coming period, awaiting any positive expectations regarding the financial results for the first half of the current year, which will be announced after about 5 weeks.

Trading data issued by the Muscat Stock Exchange showed that local individual investors tended to sell during the week, with their sales accounting for 28.1 percent of the total trading value, compared to purchases accounting for 25.6 percent of the total trading.

The trading value, which declined last week to OMR14.3 million, compared to OMR30.3 million in the previous week, reflected the state of caution among investors. Last week witnessed a 23 percent decline in the number of deals

executed, which fell from 4,066 deals to 3,118 deals.

In last week's trading, investors focused on the shares of Bank Muscat, Galfar Engineering and Contracting, and Voltamp Energy, which came at the top of the most traded companies in terms of trading value. Bank Muscat shares witnessed trades worth OMR2.7 million, representing 18.8 percent of the total trading value. Galfar Engineering and Contracting, saw trades worth about OMR2.3 million, representing 15.9 percent of the total trading value, while Voltamp Energy shares witnessed trading worth OMR1.9 million, representing 13.4 percent of the total trading value. Oman Cables Industry saw trade value at OMR1.4 million, while the following Sohar International Bank saw trading value worth OMR1.1 million.

In corporate news, the National Biscuit Manufacturing Company invited its shareholders to attend the annual ordinary general assembly meeting to be held on June 24, during which the company's financial reports will be studied, in addition to discussing a proposal to distribute cash dividends to shareholders in the amount of 250 baisas per share for the financial year ending on March 31. During the meeting, a new Board of Directors will be elected.

Al Anwar Investments Company also invited its shareholders to at-

tend the annual ordinary general assembly meeting, which will be held on June 26, and will discuss the distribution of cash dividends of 5 percent, i.e. 5 baisas per share, and the distribution of bonus shares of 3 percent, i.e. 3 shares, for every share owned by the shareholder on the date of the assembly's approval of this proposal.

This June also witnesses a meeting of the annual ordinary general assembly of Al Madina Investment Holding Company, which will be held on June 27, during which reports on the company's activity and financial position in the fiscal year ending on March 31 will be studied. The company is preparing to transform from a public joint stock company to a closed joint stock company. However, it said last week that the extraordinary general assembly meeting dedicated to discussing the proposal to convert from a public joint stock company to a closed joint stock company will be postponed until the rest of the relevant procedures are completed.

The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange declined last week by 74 points after a series of increases over a period of 3 weeks that led it to record its best level in 14 months.

The index ended last week's trading at 4,771 points after it failed to gain support from banks, energy companies, and financial

Omani stock market declines in weekly trading

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market experienced a negative performance this week, declining by 1.54 percent, which erased the gains accumulated over the past three weeks, according to an analyst.

"This downturn ends a series of continuous weekly advances that began two months ago. The OPEC+ meeting decision, coupled with a drop in oil prices, significantly influenced the overall market conditions," said George Khoury, Global Head of Education and Research at CFI.

"The market may undergo further corrections next week as investors might look to take profits before the holiday period," he further added.

The banking sector was predominantly negative this week, diverging from the generally positive trends observed in the regional markets. Notably, Bank Muscat's shares fell by 2.32 percent, Sohar International Bank decreased by 0.71 percent, and Bank Nizwa declined by 1.79 percent. This sector's downturn contributed significantly to the market's overall negative performance,

with the financial sector's losses reaching 1.77 percent.

The services sector also faced losses, down by 0.72 percent. Within this sector, Al Suwadi and Al Batinah Power saw significant declines of over 5 percent, while telecommunications stocks such as Oman Telecom dropped by 0.19 percent. Arab Energy Services decreased by 0.34 percent and OQ Gas Networks declined 0.70 percent.

In contrast, the industrial sector showed positive momentum, with Voltamp Energy

leading the gains by 7.56 percent, continuing its upward trend. Additionally, Galfar Engineering and Contracting rose by 3.05 percent.

"Despite this week's performance, several optimistic macroeconomic indicators were reported this week, enhancing the 2024 economic outlook for Oman," said George Khoury.

"The first quarter of the year saw a 12.8 percent annual increase in Oman's foreign exchange reserves, bolstered by a significant trade surplus primarily from heightened oil exports," he added.

Furthermore, there was a notable reduction in public debt, decreasing from OMR 15.3 billion at the end of 2023 to OMR 14.5 billion. The Oman Investment Authority (OIA) also reported a healthy growth in its total assets, estimated at a 7.4 percent year-on-year increase, with a return on investment for 2023 at 9.95 percent, said George Khoury.

"These improvements are crucial for reinforcing economic growth and stability in Oman and could enhance investor sentiment toward the Omani economy and its financial markets," he further added.

STATISTICS

Electricity, water production increases

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's total electricity generation recorded an increase of 7 percent to reach 8,152.3 gigawatts per hour by the end of March 2024 compared to 7,619.6 gigawatts per hour in the same period during 2023.

This massive growth underscores the country's ongoing efforts to bolster its energy infrastructure and meet the rising demands of its populace.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah recorded a total generation of 5,049.8 gigawatts per hour.

Total electricity generation in Muscat Governorate increased by 30.9 percent to reach 29.8 gigawatts per hour, while in Dhofar Governorate it increased by 17.2 percent to reach 1,103.7 gigawatts per hour.



Total generation of electricity in North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah Governorates also increased by 15.3 percent to reach 1,853.6 gigawatts per hour, while total electricity generation in Al Wusta Governorate decreased by 52.4 percent to reach 29.5 gigawatts per hour, and in Musandam Governorate, total electricity generation increased by 7.2 percent, recording 76.7 gigawatts per hour.

NCSI data further indicated that Oman's net electricity generation until the end of March 2024 rose by 6.8 percent to reach 7,879.6

gigawatts per hour. On the other hand, statistics showed that the total amount of water produced in Oman amounted to about 122.11 million cubic metres by the end of March 2024, compared to 122.13 million cubic meters in the same period of 2023. -**ONA**

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SBI RESEARCH REPORT

Expect repo rate cut in October RBI meeting

NEW DELHI: As widely expected, monetary policy committee of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to keep repo rate unchanged at 6.50 percent, eighth-time in a row, though not unanimously. Two of the members voted to reduce the policy repo rates by 25 basis points (100 basis points is equal to 1 percentage point).

Soon after the RBI policy decision, SBI Research in a report asserted that RBI will continue the hold the rates in coming policy (in August) as well and will revisit the stance in the second half of 2024-25.

The report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, SBI's Group Chief Economic Adviser, expects first repo rate cut in October meeting. The repo rate is the rate of interest at which the RBI lends to other

banks. "Overall, RBI will continue the hold the rates in coming policy as well and will revisit the stance in H2 of FY25. We expect first cut in October 2024," the report read.

All in all, the SBI Research report noted that the June monetary policy was mixed bag as it happened in the midst of political transition. "While the direction of policy is more or less decided, RBI has adopted more cautious stance to observe new government moves," the report argued.

RBI has been consistently focusing on ensuring that inflation progressively aligns to the 4 percent target, while supporting economic growth. RBI retained its inflation projection for 2024-25 at 4.5 percent with Q1 at 4.9 percent, Q2 at 3.8 percent, Q3 at 4.6 percent, and Q4 at 4.5 percent. -**ANI**

MARKET

Pact signed to link government tenders with local products

This agreement seeks to link government tenders directly with local products, aiming to invigorate the industrial sector and enhance the presence of Omani products in government projects, contracts, and procurement processes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), through its Industrial Innovation Academy, has entered into a pivotal cooperation agreement with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board.

This agreement seeks to link government tenders directly with local products, aiming to invigorate the industrial sector and enhance the

presence of Omani products in government projects, contracts, and procurement processes.

This was signed by Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan AlDheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, Eng. Dawood bin Salim Al Hadabi, CEO of Madayn, and Eng. Badr bin Salim Al Maamari, Secretary General of the Tender Board.

As per the cooperation agreement, the government tenders



will be linked with local products through “Rabt Platform”, which is founded by the Industrial Innovation Academy as a unified smart

data platform to connect existing industries in the industrial cities, special economic zones, and free zones with government tenders.

The platform ensures that local products and services are listed in tender documents (by integrating them with the Bill of Quantities)

and government procurement processes, prioritising them as preferred products for use, purchase, and supply in projects. The platform also analyses products and services offered by companies in the industrial sector, aiming to study their potential and establish connections with other businesses and sectors.

The platform aims at empowering growth in the industrial sector and maximising local content within the Sultanate of Oman; implementing and managing a Decision Support System (DSS) for awarding government tenders; adopting an innovation-based Omani local content accreditation system; and enhancing the Sultanate of Oman’s ranking in the Global Competitiveness Index. Moreover, the platform lists a variety of services including identifying new investment opportunities, facilitating commercial networking among factories, linking local products with government tenders and procurement, and calculating ICV contribution rate.

ASSET MANAGEMENT

Renaissance Services signs agreement for smart solutions



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Renaissance Services, the leading accommodation, services solutions, and Integrated Facilities Management (IFM) company in the Sultanate of Oman, has signed an agreement with Onsor Technologies, a pioneering artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) solutions provider in Oman.

The agreement, which was signed at the Deals Hub of Comex 2024, is a major milestone for Renaissance’s asset management and the digital transformation of its accommodation facilities into smart buildings.

Speaking on the occasion, Ste-

phen R Thomas, CEO, Renaissance Services, said, “We are delighted to partner with Onsor Technologies in line with our commitment to leveraging digitalisation and IT-enabled services to offer meaningful innovation to our business customers. This partnership will sharpen our focus on customer satisfaction, while leading the way in digital transformation of IFM in Oman.”

The seamless integration of IoT devices and sensors across various assets along with Onsor’s smart solutions will offer a comprehensive view of assets within a single, user-friendly interface. It will empower

facility managers, maintenance teams and other stakeholders to make informed decisions in real-time. Users will be able to access critical information, monitor performance and optimise resource allocation from within a single dashboard. By leveraging IoT data, the solution will also enable predictive alerts and automated workflows that will not only prevent costly downtime but also extend asset lifespan. The partnership will thus enable the transformation of Renaissance accommodation facilities into smart buildings, thereby contributing to sustainability.

Maadh Al Hinaai, CEO, Onsor

Technologies, said, “We are thrilled to announce our collaboration with Renaissance Services on pioneering IoT solutions for asset and smart building management. Our advanced system offers a comprehensive view of assets through a unified interface, seamlessly integrated with their existing operations. Additionally, we will provide a range of computing devices to support their diverse needs. This partnership is a testament to our commitment to innovation and empowerment, and we are confident it will provide Renaissance Services with unparalleled control and comprehensive management of their assets.”

EXPERTS IN

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STRATEGIC

Bank Muscat collaborates with Taageer Finance to enhance efficiency of transactions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced its collaboration with Taageer Finance Company, a leading financial services company, to provide its cutting-edge B2B connectivity solutions.

This strategic partnership aims to streamline financial operations and enhance the efficiency of Taageer Finance’s transactional processes. The collaboration was formally announced in Comex 2024 in presence of Sheikh Khalil Al Harthy, Chairman of Taageer Finance, Shahin Al Balushi, CEO of Taageer Finance, Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat and Wafa Ibrahim Al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager - Transaction & Government Banking, Bank Muscat, and a number of officials.

The B2B connectivity solution provided by Bank Muscat will enable seamless integration of Taageer Finance’s financial systems with the bank’s infrastructure, integrating its financial systems with bank’s systems offers bundle of benefits to the finance companies like Taageer Finance.

It enhances efficiency by enabling real-time data synchronisation, which reduces manual data entry and minimises errors. Improved cash flow management is achieved through direct access to up-to-date account information, allowing for timely adjustments and effective cash management strategies. This integration also reduces operational costs by automating financial processes, leading to labour and administrative savings.

Furthermore, faster transaction processing through Host-to-Host connectivity ensures that transactions are handled quickly and efficiently, resulting in enriched customer satisfaction.

Ilham Murtadha Al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate



Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “we are dedicated to driving financial innovation and empowering our customers to thrive in the digital era. Our partnership with Taageer Finance highlights our commitment to delivering cutting edge digital solutions that address the unique requirements of finance companies. We are thrilled to partner with Taageer Finance to deliver our innovative financial solutions that meet the dynamic needs of their business. This partnership with Taageer Finance underscores our dedication to supporting the growth and success of our customers through the state-of-the-art technology and bespoke financial services.”

From his side, Fahad Khamis Al Bulushi, Chief Operating Officer of Taageer Finance, commented, “Partnering with Bank Muscat marks a significant milestone in our journey to enhance our financial operations. These collaborations will not only streamline our processes but also provide our customers with faster and more efficient services. B2B connectivity solution offered by Bank Muscat will revolutionize our financial operations contributing to our company’s growth and success. We are excited about the opportunities these advanced solutions will bring.”

In a concurrent development, Taageer Finance is also working closely with Bank Muscat to

integrate its systems with the Bank’s API Banking services and streamlining the collection process through Direct Debit services. This move is set to revolutionize Taageer Finance’s financial interactions, offering innovative solutions that leverage the latest in banking technology.

The API Banking services will enable Taageer Finance to access various banking functionalities directly through their own systems, thereby ensuring more secure, efficient, and customizable financial services. With the real-time data access, automated transactions and robust security protocols Taageer Finance can optimize their cash flow management and offer innovative solutions to their clients.

Direct Debit solution provides additional benefits by automating the collection of instalments and dues of Taageer Finance.

This reduces the likelihood of missed or late payments, ensuring a predictable and steady cash flow essential for financial stability and cost involved in warehousing of cheques. Bank Muscat’s Direct Debit solution has an intuitive and user-friendly interface, which simplify collections of dues. The automation of collections improves customer experience by offering a convenient, reliable payment method, leading to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.



Researchers used AI to predict 800,000 potential antibiotic agents. Observers said the fight against antimicrobial resistance is gaining momentum.

Antimicrobial resistant infections kill millions every year. They have the potential to take us back to the dark ages, when common infections like urinary tract infections (UTIs) or pneumonia were lethal and untreatable.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when the germs that cause infections — bacteria, viruses, or fungi — develop ways to evade the drugs used to treat them.

Over-use of antibiotics in places like chicken farms and healthcare clinics has become a leading driver of AMR.

The good news is that a major scientific push is making significant progress in the fight against AMR.

“Antibiotic resistance is still far from solved, but there has been a lot of progress in both better understanding and better practices for discovering new antibiotics [which overcome antimicrobial resistance],” said Luis Pedro Coelho, a computational biologist at Queensland University of Technology in Australia.

Coelho led a new study published in the journal *Cell*, which presents a huge database of nearly one million potential antibiotic compounds.

The study is proof we can be optimistic about AMR, said Sebastian Hiller, a structural biologist at the University of Basel in Switzerland, who was not involved in the research: “This is just one example of ongoing research showing our scientific capabilities to fight superbugs are huge,” Hiller told DW.

Using AI to discover new antibiotics

The study used machine learning to search for potential antibiotic agents in a huge database of microbes which live in environments such as soil, the ocean, and human and animal guts.

“Bacteria fight against each other constantly in these environments, using warfare tools called peptides which are shot against other bacteria to kill them. The researchers mined this space for antibiotic peptides and found some hidden gems,” Hiller said.

The algorithm sifted through billions of potential protein sequences and narrowed it down to the top candidates with predicted antimicrobial actions.

In total, 863,498 new antimicrobial peptides were predicted, more than 90% of which had never been described before.

Coelho said all the peptides had the same general mechanism of action for killing bacteria — by disrupting the cell membranes which protect bacteria from the environment.

“We also see that some peptides are more effective against certain bacterial strains than others, but we cannot yet predict exactly why, or [say] which peptide will work against which bacterium,” Coelho told DW.

Peptide antibiotics effective against bacterial infections

To find out which of these peptides could be useful as antibiotics, the researchers synthesized 100 peptides and tested them against 11 disease-causing bacterial strains in laboratory dishes.

They found that 79 peptides disrupted bacterial membranes and 63 peptides specifically targeted antibiotic-resistant bacteria, such as *Escherichia coli* (E.coli) and *Staphylococcus aureus*.

The researchers also tested the compounds in mice with infected skin abscesses, but only three of the peptides showed antimicrobial effects in vivo (in a living organism).

“This indicates that their efficacy may be limited in vivo. Still, this is a remarkable result, and the compounds might circumvent severe toxicity side effects of last-resort antibiotics like polymyxins,” said Seyed Majed Modaresi at the University of Basel in Switzerland, who was also not involved in the study.

Are these reasons to be optimistic about the fight against AMR?

The authors published their dataset with open access, which allows other scientists to review the 863,498 peptides and develop antibiotic drugs with specific uses in mind.

For example, scientists could tailor antibiotic properties to minimize effects on “friendly” bacteria in the human gut. Many antibiotics in use are known to destroy beneficial gut microbiota, which can lead to health issues and potentially deadly pathogens to take over.

Scientist could also use the dataset to create antibiotics against which bacteria do not develop resistances, greatly helping in the long-term fight against AMR.

Modaresi said the new study shows that artificial intelligence has become instrumental in the scientific fight against AMR and that “the application of machine learning has accelerated the process of discovering new antibiotics.”

He added that the type of peptides discovered in this latest study were just one type of many antimicrobial agents out there, and that the same techniques could be used to discover many other types of antibiotics, including bacteriophages.

Hiller said that while there are reasons to be optimistic about the scientific fight against AMR, the next major challenge is creating new antibiotic agents which are commercially viable.

“We only use new antibiotics when the old ones don’t work anymore. This is good as it prevents bacteria from developing resistances to them but means they’re not financially viable,” said Hiller.

Hiller said health organizations and governments were working on ways to make antibiotic commercialization more viable so that they can draw from the huge pools of potential antibiotics that scientists have discovered. —**mw**

ARE SCIENTISTS FINALLY BEATING ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE?



Alcaraz to meet Zverev in final

The 21-year-old Spaniard produced moments of magic to wrap up a 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory against Sinner at the Philippe-Chatrier court

PARIS: World No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz produced one of his most resilient and aggressive performances against Jannik Sinner to script an epic comeback victory against the Italian in a Paris semi-final thriller to reach the final of the French Open 2024.

In one of the most anticipated matches of the year, the 21-year-old Spaniard produced moments of magic to wrap up a 2-6, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory against Sinner at the Philippe-Chatrier court.

In the match, both players struggled to find their best level in the opening two sets. With the match all square at one set all, Al-



caraz looked to gain control when Sinner suffered with hand cramp at 2-2 in the third set. The Italian regularly shook out his hand between points and although his service speed dropped in the game, he saved four break points to survive on serve before he received treatment at 3-2.

Sinner came out firing on the resumption to break Alcaraz immediately and held firm on serve to move ahead. Alcaraz refused to surrender in the fourth, though, with both players striking the ball with clean and ef-



fortless timing. With little to separate them, the World No. 3 Alcaraz found more quality and intensity in his play at the end of the fourth set to win it and force a decider.

"You have to find the joy of suffering. That is the key, even more here on clay at Roland Garros. Long rallies, four-hour matches, five sets. You have to fight, you have to suffer but as I told my team, you have to enjoy suffering," Alcaraz said as quoted by ATP.

The 21-year-old then produced moments of magic in an absorb-

ing fifth set, breaking Sinner's serve early with a fierce forehand winner. Alcaraz put his foot down from that moment and refused to let Sinner back in, sealing a mammoth victory on his third match point after four hours and 10 minutes. Alcaraz, who struck 65 winners to Sinner's 39, raised his arms in the air and embraced the roar from the crowd after sealing his win.

"The toughest matches that I have played in my short career have been against Jannik. The US Open in 2022, this one. Jannik is a great player. The team he has as well and the great work he puts in every day and I hope to play him many, many more matches like this against him. One of the toughest matches that I have played for sure," Alcaraz said.

Alcaraz will face Alexander Zverev in Sunday's championship match, hoping to capture his third major title and extend his Grand Slam record to 3-0. The winner of the 2021 Next Gen ATP Finals presented by went on to win the US Open in 2022 and Wimbledon in 2023.

The 21-year-old is the youngest player to reach a major final on all three surfaces, and the second-youngest Roland Garros men's singles finalist since 2000. Rafael Nadal reached the final match in 2005, 2006, and 2007 when he was 19-21 years old. -ANI

FOOTBALL

HIGH-VOLTAGE CLASH

Real Madrid is the best team in the world: Lionel Messi



NEW DELHI : Legendary footballer Lionel Messi on Friday said that 15-time UEFA Champions League (UCL) winner Real Madrid is the best club in the world.

Messi's comment came days after the Los Blancos won their whopping 15th UCL title after beating Borussia Dortmund at the iconic Wembley Stadium on Sunday.

In an interview with InfoBae, Messi believed that Carlo Ancelotti's men won the Champions League this season for which they are the best team.

"Real Madrid is the best team in the world, they have won the Champions League," Messi was quoted by Goal.com as saying.

Summarizing the match between Real Madrid and Dortmund, the first half of the final match stayed goalless as both sides played a tactical game. However, in the second half, the Los Blancos showed why they came into the match as the favourites to win the prestigious title.

The second half was dominated by the Los Blancos after they scored the two goals within nine minutes. The Whites struggled in the first half, but with Nacho and Rudiger on their backline, they managed to keep the scoreline untouched. Dani Carvajal and Vinicius Junior's goal helped Los Blancos win their 15th UCL.

The Los Blancos were in their

red-hot form this season even after facing injury problems. In La Liga, Real finished the league with 95 points from 38 matches and won their 36th title this season.

Jude Bellingham's presence helped the Whites a lot as he was the top scorer for Real with 19 goals. Brazilian superstar Vinicius Junior finished with 16 goals and five assists.

Meanwhile, the Argentine World Cup winner Lionel Messi scored 12 goals for his club Inter Miami after playing 12 matches for the Major League Soccer (MLS) club. The eighth-time Ballon d'Or winner joined the Miami-based club in 2023 after a shocking move from Paris Saint-Germain. -ANI

Need to win game against India: Inzamam sends message to Pakistan team

NEW DELHI: Former captain Inzamam-ul-Haq wants Pakistan players to keep everything aside and focus on their upcoming clash against their bitter rival India in New York in the ongoing T20 World Cup.

The Babar Azam-led team have struggled to tap into their rich vein of form. They have struggled to string up results in their favour since their 2-0 T20I series defeat against England.

They were looking to gain some momentum against the co-hosts, the USA, before the high-voltage clash against arch-rival India at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

But it ended up backfiring with the USA managing to pull off an upset win in a nail-biting Super Over thriller.

Ahead of the marquee clash, Inzamam stated that the players should try to be the matchwinner for Pakistan and they should step into the stadium with confidence.

"To win fans back, Pakistan need to win the game against India. It's not like Pakistan cannot defeat India, they should keep everything aside and focus the game on Sunday. Everybody should believe that they can win the match. Everybody should try to win the game for Pakistan. Your body language and belief changes when you have confidence," Inzamam said on his YouTube channel.

In the last edition of the World Cup, Pakistan were one of the top-ranked teams in the tournament. However, in the ongoing edition, Pakistan have walked in as the seventh-ranked T20I



team following their slump in the performance.

The reason for their downfall has been majorly due to constant changes in the management and an unsettled line-up.

Pakistan's middle-order has been one of its weak points. Shadab Khan has been a crucial cog in their batting set-up, but his recent form hasn't helped the team's cause. He managed to put up just three runs in two matches against England.

His charm with the ball has also faded away. In the second T20I, he registered his worst bowling figures in the T20I format. He went wicketless and gave 75 runs

in 7 overs across both matches.

Amid his struggling form, Inzamam feels that Abrar Ahmed should be given a chance in the team.

"Abrar should be given a chance, if six batters don't score then the seventh one can't save the game for you. Shadab is struggling with the ball," he added.

Pakistan T20 WC squad: Babar Azam (c), Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Usman Khan. -ANI

THRILLING GAMES

Magnus Carlsen, Ju Wenjun clinch Norway Chess 2024 titles

STAVANGER [NORWAY]: The final round of Norway Chess 2024 began with several scenarios that could play out to determine the winner of both the main event and the women's tournament. The final round of the Norway Chess 2024 led to several thrilling games played to fight for the coveted title in Stavanger on Friday.

Magnus Carlsen and Fabiano Caruana drew their classical game, and the winner was decided with an Armageddon tie-breaker. It was Carlsen who got the better of Caruana, and with this win, the Norwegian secured at least a share of first place in the tournament, having to wait for the result of the game between Hikaru Nakamura and Praggananandhaa R.

Nakamura was in a must-win situation to finish on top, but

the game ended in a draw. The 18-year-old chess prodigy Praggananandhaa then won the tiebreak game, capping off his debut outing at Norway Chess in third place behind Nakamura.

The game between Alireza Firouzja and Ding Liren also ended in a draw, with the former winning the Armageddon.

With these results, Carlsen has clinched his sixth Norway Chess title. This is a huge victory for the home country hero, as he had not played many classical tournaments in the recent past.

In the Women's competition, Ju Wenjun scripted history as she clinched the title in the inaugural edition of the tournament. She defeated her compatriot from China and the World Championship Challenger Lei Tingjie in a classical game.

In another game, Anna Muzychuk and Koneru Humpy drew their game, which meant that Muzychuk's chances of winning



the tournament disappeared. However, Muzychuk managed to win in the Armageddon to bag crucial 1.5 points to finish second in the tournament.

The last game of the tournament was between the young Indian talent Vaishali R and the legendary Pia Cramling. While Vaishali obtained a winning position at some point, it was Cramling who was pushing for a win in the endgame, but the game ended peacefully. Vaishali went down in the tie-break game, finishing fourth in the tournament.

As the tournaments have come to an end, Norway Chess congratulate the winners of both tournaments - Magnus Carlsen and Ju Wenjun on their well-deserved win. This year, Norway Chess was bigger than ever, attracting a stellar lineup of competitors and delivering high-stakes excitement from start to finish.

The addition of the Norway Chess Women tournament

marked a significant milestone, highlighting the event's growth and commitment to inclusivity in the sport.

Final Standings

Norway Chess 2024 Main Event

1. Magnus Carlsen - 17.5 points
2. Hikaru Nakamura - 15.5 points
3. Praggananandhaa R - 14.5 points
4. Alireza Firouzja - 13.5 points
5. Fabiano Caruana - 11.5 points
6. Ding Liren - 7 points

Norway Chess 2024 Women's Tournament

1. Ju Wenjun - 19 points
2. Anna Muzychuk - 16 points
3. Lei Tingjie - 14.5 points
4. Vaishali R - 12.5 points
5. Koneru Humpy - 10 points
6. Pia Cramling - 8 points.

-ANI

IN PICTURES



Summer Night Concert 2024 staged in Vienna
This picture shows the Summer Night Concert presented by the Vienna Philharmonic at the park of Schoenbrunn Palace in Vienna, Austria. *Xinhua*



Exhibition on motorcycles kicks off in Toronto
People look at custom motorcycles during the Moto Craft: Where Speed Meets Art show in Toronto, Canada. The 3-day event features a massive collection of motorcycles from the Haas Moto Museum in Dallas, US, and private collections. *Xinhua*



Farhan Akhtar and Zoya Akhtar at the inauguration of the iconic PVR Lido
Bollywood actors Farhan Akhtar and Zoya Akhtar pose for a picture at the inauguration of the iconic PVR Lido and announcement of the Zoya Retrospective, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Baby hawksbill sea turtles released to sea in Indonesia
Children hold baby hawksbill sea turtles before releasing them to the sea on the occasion of World Environment Day in Donggala regency, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



Dragon boat championship of Russia held in Moscow
Teams compete during the dragon boat championship of Russia in Moscow, Russia. *Xinhua*



World Oceans Day marked across China
People visit an aquarium in Shenyang, northeast China's Liaoning Province, to mark the World Oceans Day. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co. achieves ISO 9001:2015 certification

This achievement highlights MARH's steadfast commitment to quality management and customer satisfaction, reinforcing its role as a community-focused leader

MUSCAT: Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co. (MARH), a pioneer in automotive and industrial services, announced the attainment of the ISO 9001:2015 certification. This achievement highlights MARH's steadfast commitment to quality management and custom-



er satisfaction, reinforcing its role as a community-focused leader. The ISO 9001:2015 certification is recognised internationally as the benchmark for quality management systems. It guarantees that organisations consistently deliver superior performance, top-quality products, and services, and comply with regulatory standards — all while striving for continual

improvement. The standards covered by the certification focus on various aspects of quality management, ensuring best practices across the board. “We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our collaborative employees, whose relentless efforts and comprehensive understanding of our operational intricacies has been crucial to this achieve-

ment. Their hard work ensures that MARH adheres to the highest standards, maintaining a great working environment and exceeding customer expectations,” stated Majid Al Yaqoubi, Head of HR & Admin Department at MARH. Talal Al Syabi from Business development department added, “This certification not only attests to our robust quality management

system but also reflects our collective spirit and the meticulous efforts of our employees who grasp every detail of our operations.” MARH is committed to continuous evolution for the betterment of the community and its employees. The company provides excellent working conditions and training opportunities, fostering a culture of growth and development. This

environment enables MARH to offer unmatched services while promoting professional advancement among its team. This certification marks a significant milestone in MARH's ongoing journey of excellence and growth. We look forward to building on this achievement as we continue to enhance our services and offer unparalleled value to our customers.

ANNUAL EVENT



Europcar sponsors third edition of Nations Cup Tennis Tournament

MUSCAT: Europcar Oman & Bahrain, a leading mobility services company concluded its sponsorship of the prestigious 3rd edition of the Nations Cup Tennis Tournament held recently at the Diplomatic Club in Muscat. This exclusive annual event, a highlight of the diplomatic calendar saw participation from 12 teams representing various embassies in Oman. The tournament format featured both singles & doubles competitions amongst the diplomatic community. The event culminated in a prestigious prize distribution cer-

emony attended by Ambassador Youssef Issa Al-Zadjali, Head of Human Resources at the Oman Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His presence underscored the importance of the tournament in strengthening international relations and fostering a spirit of sportsmanship amongst diplomats. The Omani team emerged victorious in both the singles and doubles competitions showcasing their exceptional talent and dedication on the court. Notably, India the defending champions for the past 2 years emerged as the well-deserved runner up team.

MUZN ISLAMIC BANKING

Transform Eidiyah into long-term savings through Kids Wakala Account

MUSCAT: Continuing its commitment to enhancing customer lives, National Bank of Oman (NBO) Muzn Islamic Banking empowers parents to lay a stable foundation for their children's prosperity through the Kids Wakala Account for children up to the age of 18. The Kids Wakala Account offers them a dedicated solution to conveniently save their Eidiya money. Salima Al Marzoqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Muzn, said, “As the Eid Al Adha celebrations draw to a close, we recognise that the children often receive generous Eidiya from family and relatives. With the Kids Wakala account, parents can seize the opportunity to save Kids Eidiya and embark on the journey of ensuring a prosperous future for their children. By instilling the habit of saving from a young age, parents



can lay the foundation for their children's financial well-being and empower them to achieve their dreams with confidence. We therefore encourage all parents to open a Kids Wakala Account and take the first step towards securing their children's tomorrow.” This account stands out for its unparalleled combination of convenience, security, and future-

focused benefits. The competitive rates ensure an expected return of 3.5% per annum, credited monthly into the account. It also offers Life Takaful and permanent disability risk coverage, providing peace of mind in the face of unforeseen circumstances. The double deposit benefit of up to OMR75,000 further reinforces the account's commitment to safeguarding the financial well-being of the next generation. This signifies that in the event of a claim, the Takaful Insurance Company will provide an additional sum equal to the deposited amount. Therefore, the greater the deposit, the greater the security. NBO's Islamic Banking Window Muzn prioritises an unparalleled banking experience for its customers through a comprehensive suite of Sharia-compliant services accessible to all.

SPECIALLY CURATED ACTIVITIES

Celebrate ‘Summer of Fun’ with games and giveaways at City Centre Malls

MUSCAT: Majid Al Futtaim, the leading shopping malls, communities, retail, and leisure pioneer across the Middle East, announces the comeback of City Centre malls’ ‘Summer of Fun’ in Oman. Featuring an array of specially curated activities, the malls are set to transform into vibrant hubs of excitement and lasting memories during the warm summer months. Elevating the shopping experience, City Centre Muscat, City Centre Qurum and My City Centre Sur are offering guests the chance to Win BIG when making a purchase, ensuring that every receipt is a potential ticket to victory. Starting now until July 21, customers who spend a minimum amount, specified for each location, will be entered into a bi-weekly draw, reflecting the malls' commitment to consistently providing exceptional value to guests. At City Centre Qurum, families



are invited to enrol their children in an exciting, learning-packed Summer Bootcamp. Running from June 22 to August 29, this program offers a blend of entertainment and skill development in a dynamic environment for children aged 6 to 16 years. The camp culminates

in a two-day souq, where participants can showcase and sell the products they have created during the program, reinforcing the practical application of the Bootcamp's business and marketing education. From July 7 to July 20, children can interact with The Smurfs, the

beloved blue characters, and enjoy a series of Smurf-themed games at City Centre Muscat. Embracing innovation and creativity, Majid Al Futtaim presents a thrilling gaming event at City Centre Sohar. From June 16 to July 31, families and gaming enthusiasts can immerse themselves in a gaming zone experience that seamlessly blends virtual entertainment with traditional board and card games, catering to visitors of all ages. As City Centre malls continue to cultivate wonderlands of both family fun and learning, the malls are becoming more than just shopping destinations; they are community hubs where unforgettable memories are made. Majid Al Futtaim invites everyone to partake in these vibrant summer activities, where each visit to City Centre malls promises delights and discoveries.

OMAN ARAB BANK

OAB launches direct debit service for seamless payment automation

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) continues its commitment to pioneering innovative and secure banking solutions with the introduction of its latest product, Direct Debit. Tailored for both individual and corporate customers, this new service simplifies digital payments by automating recurring bill payments, offering unparalleled convenience in banking transactions. Aligned with the Central Bank of Oman's latest direct debit system, this service promises to streamline and automate transactions while enhancing payment security standards. By offering numerous benefits to businesses of all sizes and sectors, it effectively addresses the recurring payment needs of customers. Khalid Al Amri, Chief Retail Banking Officer at OAB, said, “By



investing in the latest financial technologies, we are aligning with Oman's digitisation efforts in financial services, and ensuring that our secure and convenient payment solutions are tailored to meet our customers' evolving needs. The direct debit system not only streamlines financial operations but also prioritises customer satisfaction by reducing the risks of debts and enhancing fraud protection measures, thus

ensuring a seamless and reliable banking experience.” Customers can easily set up their direct debit through the OAB mobile app or Internet banking platform, eliminating the need for branch visits. Once the direct debit authorization form is completed, payment experience will be processed automatically from their accounts on predetermined dates. This new service eliminates the need for writing checks or manually managing bill payments, offering a more convenient and efficient payment solution. This innovative service is part of OAB's commitment to providing cutting-edge banking solutions, accessible 24/7 through electronic platforms and the mobile app. From account openings to loan applications and inquiries, customers can enjoy safe and fast banking at their convenience.



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