

NEERAJ CHOPRA CAPTURES INDIA'S FIRST-EVER WORLD ATHLETICS GOLD

India's Olympic medalist Neeraj Chopra made history on Sunday, capturing his country's first-ever gold medal at the World Athletics Championships and edging out Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem by less than a metre at the final of men's javelin throw event in Budapest. **>B6**



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OMANI INNOVATORS TAKE PART IN DIGITAL SUSTAINABILITY HACKATHON

The Digital Sustainability Hackathon organised by OQ, the global integrated energy group, brought together more than 100 young Omani innovators who competed to find innovative solutions for societal and organisational challenges in the fields of energy, health, safety, decarbonisation and environment conservation. **>A5**



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OMAN

Oman Air reduces onboard plastic use

1 As part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability, Oman Air has replaced the plastic used to wrap blankets and mattresses in its premium cabins with an eco-friendlier paper-based alternative. All duvets and mattresses across the airline's fleet will now be presented to the guests with slim, branded paper bands. **>A3**

WORLD

ISRO to launch Aditya-L1 mission

2 Indian Space Research Organisation announced that it will launch the Aditya-L1 Solar Mission, the first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun on September 2, 2023. The launch of the solar mission will take place on September 2, 11:50 am from Sriharikota. Aditya L1 shall be the first space-based Indian mission to study the Sun. **>A6**

MARKET

Oman exports fish worth OMR140mn

3 The total fish exports of the Sultanate of Oman by the end of 2022 stood at about 281,601 tonnes, generating OMR140,089,300 and posting a rise of 15.8 percent compared to 2021. The figures issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated that Omani fish exports to the GCC stood at about 74,323 tonnes at the end of last year. **>B1**

WORKSHOP



Focus on boosting Omanisation in the logistics sector

MUSCAT: The team tasked with National Employment Programme (NEP) organised on Monday a workshop in Muscat on devising a strategy for Omanisation in the logistics sector.

Held in cooperation with various government and private sector establishments, the workshop was aimed at enhancing Omanisation opportunities, addressing the challenges and forging appropriate solutions in line with the priorities of Oman Vision 2040.

Competency framework

Eng. Azhar Ahmed Al Kindi, Technical Director of the NEP, said that the workshop comprised one of the initiatives that the NEP is undertaking in conjunction with a group of partners, including "Wabas

Enterprises and Investments" company, to draft a competency framework for professions in the logistics sector.

The Omanisation strategy was outlined during a presentation at the workshop. Emphasis was laid on empowering youth through the establishment of a specialized training centre, providing an opportunity to finance new projects in this sector and developing mechanisms to evaluate all businesses in a systematic manner.

A timeframe set for the strategy was reviewed during the workshop, which also elaborated on the importance of analysing data and deficiencies, formulating objectives and discussing laws and legislation that will enable young people to join the sector.

OVER 780,000 STUDENTS JOIN NEW ACADEMIC SESSION FROM TODAY

Education ministry continues to prepare a qualitative training programme for teachers to enhance their professional skills

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the start of the new academic year 2023/2024, 782,818 students will be attending schools from today in the various educational directorates across the Sultanate of Oman.

The total number of students in grades (1-4) reached 304,913, while the total number of students in grades (5-8) was 261,804, and the number of students in grades (9-12) reached 120,101.

While the number of new students in the first grade was 76,724, the number of special education students reached 1,769. These students will be attending 1,270 schools, including: 356 schools for the first cycle, 68 schools for the second cycle, 121 schools in grades (9-12), and 25 schools in grades 11-12, and 700 schools operating in the morning and evening shifts. The total number of schools operating in the evening shifts reached 133 while the total number of new schools reached 29.

The total number of teachers in government schools for this academic year 2023/2024 reached 60,840, while the numbers of administrators and technicians are 11,509. The number of teachers in special education schools reached 284 teachers, and the total number of administrators in special education schools reached 65.

Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaihani, Minister of Education, delivered a speech on this occasion, in which she said: "I am honoured to raise to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, on behalf of the children, students, their parents, members of the educational staff and employees of the Ministry,



istry, the highest of gratitude and the greatest expressions of praise for the special care and attention given to the school education sector. I am also pleased to extend my warmest congratulations to our students, and members of the educational staff, wishing them success this academic year. We also welcome the teachers who have joined the education system to contribute to building Oman and society, and we welcome teachers from sister countries

who share this educational message with the Sultanate of Oman, wishing everyone success."

Dr. Madiha stated: "In the pursuit of the Ministry to improve education to meet the requirements of the next stage, the Ministry was able to appoint more than 5,700 teachers, with an increase rate up to 41 percent compared to previous years, bringing the number of Omani teachers to approximately 14,000 during the first three years of the tenth five-year plan." **>A4**

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Ministry adopts local content policy in heritage, tourism sectors

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has adopted a policy designed to promote the local content in the heritage and tourism sectors.

The policy aims at achieving the goals of sustainability and local content in the heritage and tourism sectors through a set of programmes and initiatives focusing on the continuity of growth in the heritage and tourism sectors and maintaining sustainability of the elements of tourism attraction, as well as maximising the economic value to enhance the local content.

Ruqaya Said Al Habsi, Director of Quality and Sustainability Department at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that the tourism development

plan includes many programmes pertaining to quality, sustainability, competitiveness and the local content in line with goals of Oman Vision 2040.

She added that the application of local content contributes to the development of economic sectors, including the heritage and tourism sector, the promotion and sustainability of local development through the Omanisation of jobs, increasing local purchases and services and developing local companies to raise economic development in the sector, as well as developing the converting sector by increasing local manufacturing opportunities, enhancing the purchasing power of the national product and raising the efficiency



of national cadres, in addition to creating job opportunities for citizens and investing in assets.

She explained that the concept of sustainability has evolved from

being limited to the environment and maintaining the continuity of life depending on natural resources to cover the concept of sustainability for humans, which is defined

as a set of operations carried out by people in order to ensure the continuity of generations through the development of means of growth and exploitation of resources.

She further said that sustainable tourism is defined in the tourism sector, according to the World Tourism Organization as tourism that considers its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, and meets the needs of visitors, industry, the environment and host communities.

She pointed out that the local content means the total expenditure that contributes to strengthening the national economy. It is used to develop local companies and national human resources.

With ONA inputs

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Kerala expats gear up for Onam

From supermarkets and shopping centres, to restaurants and jewellery shops, hundreds of commercial outlets, mainly those catering to the Indian community, have come up with various Onam offers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Expatriates from the South Indian state of Kerala, one of the largest Indian expatriate communities in Oman, are fully geared up to celebrate their harvest festival, Onam which falls on Tuesday.



Onam is celebrated in the Chingam month, which marks the beginning of the Malayalam calendar. Onam is celebrated to mark the homecoming of King Mahabali, during whose reign the state was said to have witnessed the golden era. People from Kerala have flooded the stores to make last minute purchases for the festival which is celebrated by all members of the

community irrespective of their religion. From supermarkets and shopping centres, to restaurants and jewellery shops, hundreds of commercial outlets, mainly those catering to the Indian community, have come up with various Onam offers and plans. “The shopping malls are all crowded as people are making their last minute Onam shopping

and thronging the hypermarkets,” said Madhu B Nambiar, a long-time resident of Oman. Janardhan, another expat from Kannur, working for the last 10 years in Muscat said, “During the Onam festival, people usually wear traditional kasavu sarees and mundu (dhoti). It is a time when family members and friends gather and exchange gifts like new dresses.”



“During Onam, unique food items are prepared at home and distributed to others. One of the highlights of the Onam celebrations is the preparation of Onasadya, a special vegetarian feast,” he further added. **The Onam story** The 10-day Onam celebrations in Kerala started with the Atham celebrations on August 20. It is a fes-

tival that honours King Mahabali and Vamana. People of Kerala welcome the king in a symbolic way by arranging flower carpets and with traditional dances and games so as to give him the impression that they are happy as in his time. Floral carpets are made by women dressed in traditional saris. They assemble and sing a well-known song in honour of the occasion.

INDIAN SCHOOL AL MAABELA

Stage is set for STAI2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Science, Technology and Innovation (STAI), the mega event which is conducted under the aegis of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman for the Academic Year 2023-24, will be hosted by Indian School Al Maabela in a blended form. It is a platform for young brains to explore their talents and to apply their ingenious skills.

STAI 2023 is a platform for young brains to explore their talents and to apply their ingenious skills. The event attempts to spread an interest, develop the curiosity and kindle the young minds to think beyond the horizons and to feel the euphoria as they progress in inventions in the field of Mathematics, Science and IT.

A press meet in this connection was organised on 28 August at the Board Conference Room. Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman,



Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman who chaired the press meet shared the details of STAI 2023. Dr. Sivakumar Manickam in his address to the media appreciated the efforts and time put in by the administrators, teachers and students of all the participating schools and highlighted the importance of science and technology in children's life. Chairman thanked the Princi-

pal, President and the members of the Management committee of Indian School Al Maabela for the relentless support and guidance given to make STAI a resounding success. He also thanked the School Coordinators, Principals and SMCs of all Indian Schools across the Sultanate for encouraging massive participation from their respective schools in the various events organised as part of STAI 2023.

COMMERCE MINISTRY

Discussion on developing the exhibition sector held

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion organised a workshop in Muscat on Monday to discuss proposals for developing the exhibition sector.

The workshop saw the participation of government departments and companies specialised in the exhibition sector. The workshop discussed the stages of amending the bylaw on organising and managing exhibitions and related ministerial decisions.

It made an overview of exhibitions organised between 2021 and 2023.

The workshop explored new types of expos like specialised, virtual and innovative exhibitions, in addition to similar events showcasing GCC products and



industries. The workshop also dealt with terms and conditions for obtaining license to engage in the exhibition industry.

It underscored the significance of activating e-payment and high-

lighted the economic impact of the exhibition sector.

A discussion session held during the workshop evolved around common challenges posed to the exhibition sector and means of finding solutions to them. -ONA

OMAN VISION 2040

Social responsibility and sustainability forum new addition to Khareef Dhofar

SALALAH: Activities of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Partners Forum 2023 kicked off in Salalah on Monday.

Titled “Principles of the UN Global Accord: Responsibility and Sustainable Development”, the two-day forum is organised by *Al Roya* newspaper and the Regional Network for Social Responsibility.

The event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar. It was attended by experts, specialists and representatives of UN offices in the Middle East.

HH Sayyid Marwan said that the forum constitutes a worthwhile addition to Khareef Dhofar events this year. He added that the



forum's themes are in line with the priorities and goals of Oman Vision 2040. Speeches during the forum focused on the significance of companies and institutions' observing the principles of the

UN global accord on sustainable development, grooming a generation that is capable of thinking and resolving problems and granting companies an opportunity to develop their competitive

advantages. The participants also outlined a number of social responsibility projects.

The first day of the forum elaborated on two themes. The first theme dealt with practical standards to advance UN principles in the responsibility and sustainability sector, while the second theme evolved around the role of partners of social responsibility and sustainability.

The forum seeks to introduce sustainable practices that reinforce the principle of corporate citizenship so that the business sector becomes part of solutions aimed at realising permanent sustainability that aligns with future visions and plans. -ONA

FIRE DOUSED IN MUSCAT

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has doused a fire that broke out at a warehouse and workers' housing in the Wilayat of Muttrah. “Firefighting teams of the CDAA in the Governorate of Muscat were able to put out a fire that broke out in a warehouse and workers' housing in the Wadi Kabir area in the Wilayat of Muttrah, without any injuries recorded,” the CDAA said in a statement.



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COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Oman Air continues to reduce onboard use of plastic

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of its ongoing commitment to sustainability, Oman Air has replaced the plastic used to wrap blankets and mattresses in its premium cabins with an eco-friendlier paper-based alternative.

All duvets and mattresses across the airline's fleet will now be presented to the guests with slim, branded paper bands, resulting in the reduction of up to 216 tonnes of plastic per year. The initiative is the latest step for Oman Air as it continues to work towards phasing out the use of single-use plastics on board.

Captain Nasser bin Ahmed Salmi, Acting Chief Executive Officer at Oman Air, said: "In a concerted effort guided by our in-house experts and bolstered by collaborations with partners and vendors, we have successfully achieved another milestone in our sustainability efforts. This pivotal step aligns seamlessly with our corporate strategy to reduce waste and choose more environmentally friendly products, reflecting our commitment to national sustainability goals."



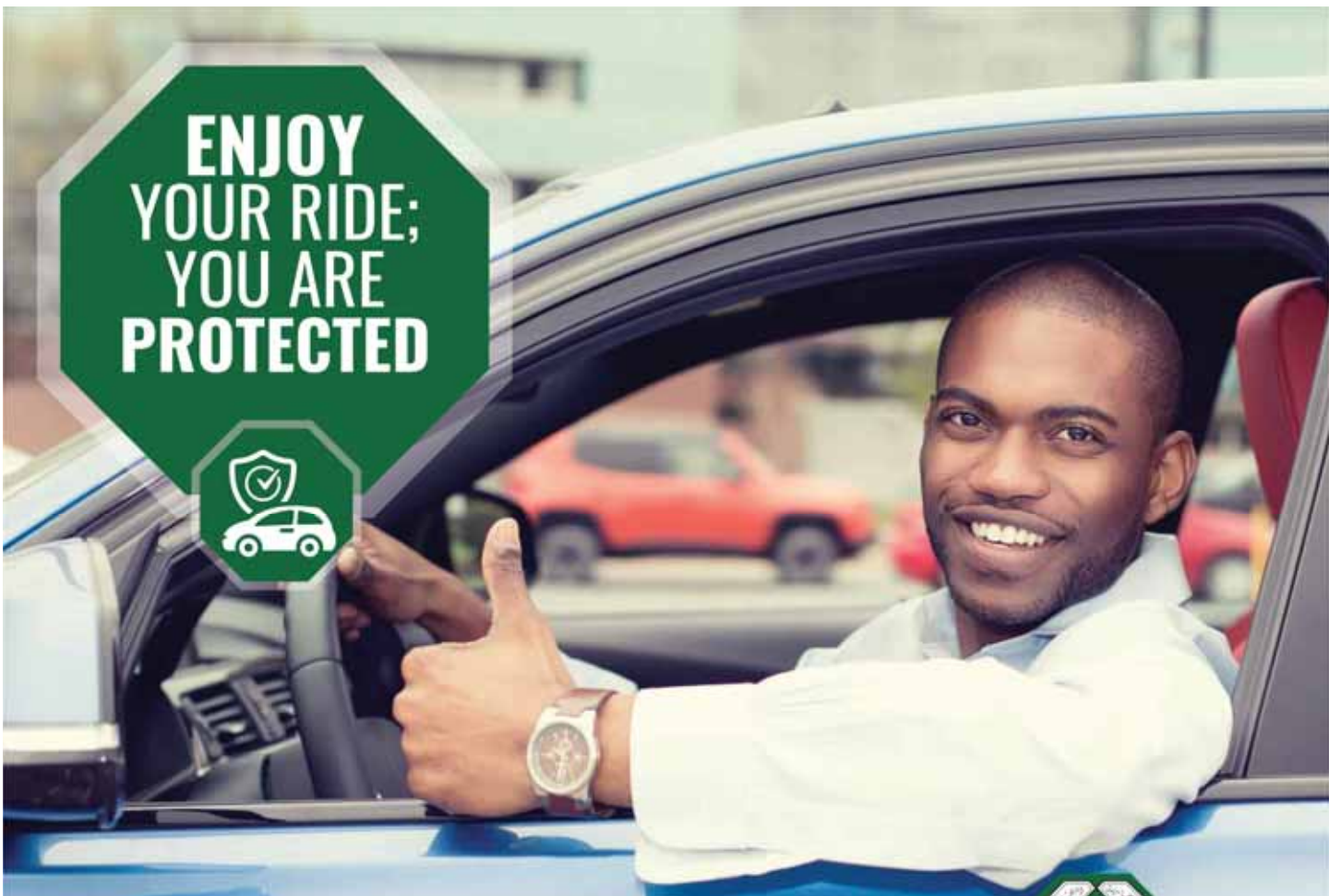
Oman Air has been making steadfast strides in reducing its onboard plastic consumption over the last few years, including removing the plastic sleeves used to load cutlery and reducing plastic water bottles and cuplets by up to 50 percent on certain routes.

This year, it has also replaced 80 percent of its in-flight service carts with lightweight alternatives, providing a considerable boost to fuel efficiency.

Meanwhile, Oman Air's continual efforts to minimise its environmental impact is demonstrated through a range of initiatives that underscore its dedication to promoting sustainable aviation practices.

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Taste of Shangri-La: A month of culinary excellence unveiled in Oman



Embark on a remarkable gastronomic adventure as Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn proudly introduce the eagerly awaited 'Taste of Shangri-La', an extraordinary month-long culinary celebration set to indulge discerning palates from the 1st to the 30th of September. Within just a 15-minute drive from the city of Muscat, this exceptional event promises an unparalleled journey through an array of expertly crafted set menus, curated across the hotels' five distinct specialty restaurants.

"We are delighted to present the Taste of Shangri-La, an event that truly encapsulates the pinnacle of culinary prowess showcased at our resorts. This annual celebration not only pays homage to the diverse tapestry of cultures but also provides our esteemed guests with an exceptional dining experience at an incredible value," enthused Rene D. Egle, Area General Manager of Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn, Muscat.

For a limited period, diners are invited to savour daily tasting menus comprising a minimum of six courses at each of the five

signature dining venues, including Chow Mee, Capri Court, Bait Al Bahr, Aangan by Rohit Ghai, and Sultanah. All this comes at an exceptional set price of just OMR 19 in each venue. The selected dining venue's welcome beverage will be extended to all patrons, as our accomplished Chefs guide them through a delectable culinary odyssey.

A Magnificent Feast Unveiled
Embark on a journey of flavours at Bait Al Bahr, where the art of seafood comes alive. From live tuna roll preparation to the mastery of Omani seafood soup, diners can relish the likes of oven-baked seabream fillet and grilled fish steak adorned with a fragrant parsley sauce. The grand finale comes in the form of a delightful burnt Basque cheesecake.

Italian enthusiasts will find their culinary aspirations fulfilled at Capri Court, indulging in highlights like grilled scallops with tomato tartar, ricotta and spinach dumplings enhanced by shaved truffle, and homemade chitarra pasta accompanied by prawn tartare and cheese fondue. The gastronomic journey culminates with the renowned 'Il Branzino' - a seabass masterpiece. The

delightful Affogato dessert offers a fitting end to the Italian soiree.

At Chow Mee, Chef Ida unfolds an Asian culinary show, treating guests to delights such as Thai deep-fried breaded prawn cake, Indonesian-style Wagyu baby short ribs, and Thai wok-fried seafood rice noodles with peanut. The journey continues with iconic dishes like Nasi Goreng and concludes on a sweet note with mango sticky rice and vanilla ice cream.

Sultanah beckons with its exceptional offerings, including Omani tuna crudo, braised octopus with beetroot couscous, and the beloved Omani lobster bisque elevated with a touch of caviar and cauliflower foam. Main courses feature pan-seared seabass with fennel cream, smoked Frankincense-infused chicken, and a captivating lemon meringue with passion fruit crud and basil-infused yogurt ice cream.

A Michelin-Star Affair

The pièce de résistance arrives with Aangan by Rohit Ghai. The internationally acclaimed Chef will guide patrons through an unforgettable culinary journey. From Aloo Tikki to prawn Ma-



labar, each dish is a masterpiece, including Keema pao, pan-seared fish moilee, and chicken fenu-greek. The experience crescendos with the explosive flavours of chocolate orange, complete with doughnut, jam, and meringue.

Meet the Maestro

Diners are encouraged to book their seats early for an intimate rendezvous with Chef Rohit Ghai



from 19th to 24th September. The Michelin-starred Chef will present his new A la Carte menu filled with flavours, personally host guests, and contribute his unique touch to the exceptional culinary journey. As part of this exclusive week activation, Chef Ghai invites diners to experience a 6-course tasting menu, at the same value of OMR 19 per person, featuring the signature highlights

of Aangan's menu for this new season.

Vegan Delights

Embracing the growing trend of veganism, Taste of Shangri-La extends a warm welcome to guests pursuing a plant-based lifestyle. With one of Oman's most extensive vegan selections, the festivity offers creative and tasteful options at an inclusive price of OMR 17 per person. From truffle-scented vichyssoise soup to vegan tempura and mushroom risotto, these dishes celebrate the essence of cruelty-free dining.

Under the leadership of Executive Chef Paolo Pelosi, the culinary team has orchestrated an exquisite gastronomic voyage that reflects Shangri-La's unwavering commitment to dining excellence. Each dish, a masterpiece, has been meticulously crafted to transport guests on an unforgettable gastronomic expedition.

For Reservations

For reservations: +968 2477 6565 or WhatsApp +968 7926 9247

The Taste of Shangri-La is not merely a culinary event; it's an invitation to embark on an odyssey of flavours, cultures, and memories.



NEW SESSION

< FROM A1 Ministry of Education trains teachers to enhance their skills

“Believing in the importance of professional development of teachers, and its connection to the professional path plans for members of the teaching staff, the Ministry continues to prepare a qualitative training programme for teachers to enhance their professional competencies, and to enable them to perform their duties efficiently and competently,” said Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education.

She also referred to the issuance of the Royal Decree on the School Education Law, saying: “In continuation of the support enjoyed by the education sector in the Sultanate of Oman in all its aspects, and to strengthen the governance of the educational system and develop the legislative and organisational structure that guarantees a stimulating and supportive educational environment at the technical and administrative levels, Royal Decree No. 31/2023 came through with issuing the School Education Law to serve as a legislative framework, and an educational and legal document that organises rights, duties and responsibilities related to the educational process.”

On developing the education system and starting to implement technical and vocational education, she said: “In implementation of the royal directives of His Majesty to develop the school education system, the Ministry will start during this academic year, applying vocational and technical education in accordance with the best international standards and educational practices in business administration and information technology in the eleventh grade in four schools, two schools for boys and two schools for girls in the governorates of Muscat and North Al Batinah.

“The Ministry also intends to offer a number of engineering and industrial specialisations in specific schools in the governorates of Muscat and North Al Batinah at the beginning of the next academic year 2024/2025, in partnership with the energy sector.

“In continuation of this approach, the Ministry will gradually expand the application of vocational and technical education by establishing similar partnerships with the rest of the economic sectors, and increase the number of students, majors, and governorates during the coming academic years.”

She emphasised the Ministry’s interest in developing all academic curricula, saying: “The Ministry has given great attention to the development of all academic curricula, especially Science, Mathematics, English and Information Technology subjects, due to its direct connection with the fields of scientific and technical development and innovation that the world is witnessing. Therefore, this academic year, the Ministry will complete the implementation of the final phase of the science and mathematics series project for grade 12, and it will continue to apply the English language and information technology series for grades 3 and 4. This year will also witness the opening of more than 20 school buildings distributed across Oman with the aim of replacing the old school buildings to accommodate the rising number of students. The Ministry also continues to construct more school buildings according to the approved plans, in addition to intensifying its efforts to improve the educational environment.”

She also talked about the Ministry’s performance system in providing educational services, saying: “The Ministry has completed the implementation of the re-engineering procedures stage for all administrative and educational processes in accordance with the best international standards, and will continue during the current academic year the digitisation of its comprehensive services, with the aim of introducing a new electronic system during the next stage. The Ministry is also closely following the global transformation in the use of artificial intelligence applications in its various fields and in line with these developments, the Ministry began to lay the foundations to take advantage of the optimal use of artificial intelligence, and to prepare an executive programme that includes many procedures and initiatives in line with the privacy of the Omani society.”

he minister appreciated the efforts made in caring for cultural, scientific and sports activities in the last academic year, saying: “We affirm the continued efforts in caring for cultural, scientific,



The Ministry of Education will launch this year, in cooperation with the Omani Indian Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO), the “OMIFCO Award for School Creativity,” and the launch of the “Excellence Award for the Omani Teacher” in its second edition to motivate teachers to launch their educational initiatives and projects

and sports activities inside and outside the school environment due to its importance in building the integrated personality of students, highlighting their talents and developing their abilities, and investing their time in a way that benefits them, and protect them from harmful influences. We also praise the role of the educational directorates in supporting the efforts of their schools and students, hoping to benefit from what is provided by innovation centres and scientific clubs, and incubators of cultural and artistic activities in terms of educational capabilities and facilities, and employing what was included in the strategy of the Omani School Sports Association of contents and foundations in refining students’ skills, empowering, and preparing them to compete at the local and international levels in various fields.” She also appreciated the sincere efforts made by school administrations in co-operation with the teachers and students’ parents to participate in the international study to measure reading skills and the success of the electronic application of the international study in mathematics and science for the fourth and eighth grades, and the international study to measure computer and informatics skills for the eighth grade, which the Ministry implemented last academic year.

She also referred to the tangible role played by the parents of students, saying: “We appreciate the pivotal role that you play in sharing your opinions and suggestions in improving educational work, following up on the levels of achievement of your children, giving them more care and attention, directing them to preserve their identity and heritage, instilling a love of loyalty and belonging to their homeland. In consolidating the existing partnership between the home and the school, the ministry will carry out meetings and panel discussions that bring you together with the educational body as essential partners in the educational system.”

Prof. Dr. Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, said in his speech on this occasion: “The Ministry seeks to im-

plement a number of educational goals, the most important of which are: continuing to update and develop school curricula in line with the requirements of sustainable development and global trends, the achieving of Oman Vision 2040, and empowering new teachers in the teaching and learning processes through the implementation of the strategic training programme for them, establishment of the third forum for school administrations, and the second supervisory forum. The Ministry will launch this year, in cooperation with the Omani Indian Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO), the “OMIFCO Award for School Creativity,” and the launch of the “Excellence Award for the Omani Teacher” in its second edition to motivate teachers to launch their educational initiatives and projects.”

The Undersecretary referred to the Ministry’s development of the executive regulations for the school education law, and its issuance on the specified date, and the advancement to adopt and develop the parents’ councils’ regulation, and the updates in the student affairs regulation, in line with the school education law. Strategies have also been prepared in the education sector, including: the strategy for discovering gifted students in school education and taking care of them, which will be launched during this year, and the adult education strategy, in addition to the issuance of a guide for requirements for school buildings for private schools, a guide for security and safety in them, and an investment exhibition in this type of education (EDVvest 2023) will be implemented.

At the end of his speech, the Undersecretary confirmed that “the Ministry will implement many activities, programmes, and competitions for students, including holding a school theatre festival, a public speaking competition in classical Arabic, implementing the health-promoting schools initiative, and preparing a guide for vocational guidance services for beneficiaries. Innovation and Science Olympiad will implement various programmes and events with the aim of building students’ creative and innovative skills that qualify them to compete in national, re-

gional and international scientific events and refine them, in addition to implementing decentralised forums for scouts in the educational directorates within one day to develop future skills, enhance their Omani national identity, and establish scout and guide camps, in cooperation with the Oman Challenge Foundation.”

Majid bin Said Al-Bahri, Undersecretary of the Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs, stated, in his speech on this occasion: “The total external transfer requests from the faculty and related positions submitted for the academic year 2023/2024 amounted to 5,229, and the total number of transfers reached 2,416 of the total applications, and the Ministry completed the procedures for appointing 5,693 teachers, with a rate of (88%) of the total appointment. 39 integrated school buildings have been implemented, and 9 school buildings have been put into operation at the beginning of the first semester, 23 school buildings at the beginning of the second semester, and the rest will be operated as soon as they are ready. A total of OMR2,300,000 have been allocated to education directorates in order to renovate their schools, the volume of financial liquidity for spending on development projects has been increased by an additional OMR11 million and an allocation of OMR23 million to replace 92,000 air-conditioners during the tenth five-year plan. The Ministry increased spending on school advances by an additional amount of OMR2 million and allocated an additional OMR5 million to provide 800 new buses.”

He indicated that the Ministry continues to digitise the curricula, start the trial operation of the electronic preparation platform for teachers, equip education directorates with integrated educational studios, re-engineer procedures for the Ministry’s services, develop the educational indicators system, operate the electronic platform of the Specialised Institute for Vocational Training for Teachers, the supervisory job system, and the alternative guard system.

The Ministry has begun to replace more than 40,000 computers for computer laboratories, learning resource centers and school

management devices, and it will start in the second phase of the process of replacing devices in science laboratories and vocational guidance centers.

Khamis bin Mubarak Al-Hadidi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Projects and Services at the Ministry said: “The Ministry formed committees from the various educational directorates in order to examine the current school transportation means, the contracts of 18,989 school transportation vehicles were renewed, and the Ministry pumped in the item of school transportation means for the year 2023/2024 approximately OMR88 million provided 800 additional school transportation means of an amount of OMR4,800,000. The Ministry stipulates in the technical specifications that the means of transport be equipped with an (automated system) related to road safety, which is characterised by its tracking of the transportation means, the presence of internal and external surveillance cameras, and motion sensors. The Ministry also coordinated with a number of private sector institutions to implement awareness programmes and fund a preventive driving course for school transport drivers in cooperation with the Royal Oman Police, the latest of which is the coordination of training 500 school transport drivers funded by the Petroleum Development Oman.”

Dr. Sana bint Salem Al-Sanani, Assistant Director-General for Curriculum Affairs at the Directorate-General of Curriculum Development in the Ministry, referred to the most important developments in the school curricula, saying: “17 new curricula have been authored, developed, and harmonised, such as completing the harmonisation of global series in science and mathematics subjects for grade 12, and completing the application of international chains in the subjects of English language and information technology for grades 3 and 4, writing and developing 15 new books in Islamic education, school sports and musical skills for grade 7, Arabic language subjects, social studies and life skills for grade 5, and plastic arts for the first and second grades. The Ministry was also keen to print and supply

all the textbooks for this year, so that the textbooks would be in the hands of the students at the beginning of this academic year, as 260 textbooks were printed, 15 new textbooks, and 62 books for international chains for science, mathematics, English language, and information technology subjects, and 183 reprinted books. The Directorate-General of Curriculum Development in the Ministry has also taken upon itself the responsibility of printing 290 enlarged books for the two semesters, 220 books printed in Braille for the two semesters as well, for the visually impaired and blind students.”

Regarding the digital educational contents that support the curricula, Al-Sanani said: “The “Omani Curriculum Library” is one of the digital tools that help students and their teachers in the educational process. It will be available for viewing and downloading via the link: <https://ict.moe.gov.om/book>. On the “Educational Mawred” channel on (YouTube) a number of 7,221 educational clips have been uploaded for grades (1-4), as well as all educational pictured lessons have been made available for grades (5-12), and placed within the general classification instead of the special one. As for the school laboratories, they have been developed and provided with the latest modern technologies, such as the use of sensors in scientific experiments, the mobile laboratory, and providing them with interactive whiteboards.”

On the readiness of the Ministry to apply vocational and technical education for business administration and information technology majors, Dr. Atom bint Muhammad Al-Khatiri, Assistant Director of the Office of the Project for the Development and Structuring of the Educational Ladder at the Ministry, said: “Construction work and school maintenance have been completed, and classrooms have been prepared with the necessary materials and requirements to implement vocational and technical education in the business administration and information technology programs, as suitable furniture, laptop computers, and smart screens were provided for students, in accordance with the required international standards. A contract was also signed with the Modern College of Commerce and Science to provide specialized and internationally licensed lecturers to teach specialised subjects for business administration and information technology majors, who were chosen according to approved international principles and standards, while the basic subjects are taught by the ministry’s teachers. The study and time plan for teaching business administration and information technology majors has also been developed, in line with the study and time plan in public schools.”

Dr. Waleed bin Talib Al-Hashemi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education in North Al Batinah Governorate, said: “The Directorate is preparing to welcome this new academic year, the (BTEC) programme in the vocational and technical tracks, in two schools: Halima Al-Saadiya School in the Wilayat of Suwaiq, and Kaab Bin Barsha School in the Wilayat of Saham, as the information management and information technology majors were added to the students’ options in grade XI, and they will be taught in the English language in cooperation with the Modern College of Business and Science. This program allows students to study a variety of specialized subjects, including specialised English language subjects, introduction to business, commercial marketing, business decision-making, training for the business world, and other subjects that contribute to building strong base of knowledge and skills.”

He added: “The BTEC programme is a distinguished option for students who seek to enter directly into the labour market after completing their studies and provides them with the opportunity to compete in standard admission to complete higher education. The certificate awarded by the programme is internationally recognised, which provides wider opportunities for students, and the Directorate always strives to achieve the goals of the Ministry of Education in order to provide quality education, by contributing to the development of an integrated educational system with resources that serve the future of students and contribute to achieving the Ministry’s vision and its national and educational mission alike.”



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Over 100 Omani innovators take part in digital sustainability hackathon

The hackathon was organised as part of OQ’s endeavours to meld the potential of modern technology with the passion of forward-thinking innovators

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Digital Sustainability hackathon organised by OQ, the global integrated energy



group, brought together more than 100 young Omani innovators who competed to find innovative solutions for societal and organisational challenges in the fields of energy, health, safety, decarbonisation and environment conservation. Those innovators employed

modern technologies, waste management techniques, energy consumption optimisation, eco-friendly transportation and construction, in addition to safety uniforms leveraging the Internet of Things (IoT). The hackathon was organised as part of OQ’s endeavours to meld



the potential of modern technology with the passion of forward-thinking innovators, producing solutions that champion sustainability and resilience in line with Oman’s Vision 2040. It embodies OQ’s commitment to the broader goals of the Sultanate, seeking to address environmental challenges

while promoting economic and social prosperity. Engineer Khalid Al-Asmi, Acting Managing Director - OQ Salalah Cluster, said: “The Digital Sustainability Hackathon is more than just a competition. We view it as a beacon, drawing inspiration from the guiding principles of Vi-

sion 2040. It is our open call to all visionaries, prompting them to ideate and create digital strategies that resonate with Oman’s overarching ambitions.” He added: “This platform also spurs a paradigm shift in how we interact, as a society, with sustainability. By facilitating this integration of creativity and purpose, we aim to empower a generation of young problem solvers who work towards promoting diversity, sustainability and prosperity in Oman in the years to come.” It is worth noting that the Hackathon is a competition-based event for 48 hours to innovate solutions for specified challenges. It seeks to build an effective and innovative society, in addition to empowering the youth in innovation and sustainability. The hackathon also aims to generate innovative ideas to address the current challenges in the sustainable energy sector.

From souqs to skyscrapers: A modern Odyssey in Oman



BHAVNA BATRA



Michael had always been a curious traveler, seeking out destinations that blended history and modernity seamlessly. When he heard about the Sultanate of Oman’s unique charm, he knew he had found his next adventure. Little did he know that his journey from souks to skyscrapers would lead to a deep appreciation for Oman’s beauty and the incredible creations that adorned its landscapes. As he landed in Muscat, Michael was greeted by the warm embrace of the Arabian sun. The air was filled with the promise of adventure, and he was eager to begin his exploration of this enchanting land. His first stop was Muttrah Souk, where the bustling alleyways painted a vivid picture of Oman’s cultural richness. The aroma of spices, the vibrant textiles, and the intricate jewellery all contributed to the sensory symphony that unfolded before him. Wandering through the souk, Michael couldn’t help but strike up conversations with the friendly locals. Their stories wove together the tapestry of Oman’s history and traditions. He marveled at the way ancient customs seamlessly coexisted with modern life, evident in the traditional attire worn by many and the smartphones they used with equal ease. As he ventured deeper into the souk, Michael’s eyes were drawn to a mesmerising array of Omani handicrafts. He stopped at a stall where a skilled artisan was diligently working on a delicate silver piece. The artisan’s hands moved with precision, carrying forward a craft that had been passed down through genera-

tions. Michael realized that in these souks, he was not just witnessing a marketplace, but an ancient legacy preserved in the hands of its people. Leaving the souk behind, Michael’s journey led him to the heart of Muscat’s modernity – the Royal Opera House. This architectural masterpiece stood as a harmonious blend of Arabian elegance and contemporary design. As he walked through its corridors, he was transported to a world of artistic grandeur. The auditorium, with its intricate details and world-class acoustics, left him in awe. Here, he witnessed the fusion of Omani pride and global creativity, an emblem of the country’s commitment to the arts. Yet, Michael’s odyssey was far from over. The journey took him to Nizwa, where the formidable Nizwa Fort stood as a sentinel to the past. Climbing its ancient ramparts, he gazed across the landscape that had borne witness to the rise and fall of empires. The fort’s intricate architecture and defensive ingenuity spoke volumes about Oman’s historical resilience. As he looked around, he couldn’t help but wonder about the stories these walls held within their ancient stones. The next chapter of his adventure led Michael into the heart of the desert – the Wahiba Sands. The landscape stretched before him, an undulating sea of golden dunes. He embarked on a dune bashing adventure, feeling the rush of adrenaline as the modern 4x4 vehicle navigated the ever-shifting sands. As night fell, he found himself in a traditional Bedouin camp, where the echoes of ancient nomadic life mingled with the modernity of a starlit sky.

The modern odyssey extended to Salalah, where the Khareef – the monsoon season – transformed the arid land into a lush paradise. Amidst the greenery, Michael discovered the Al Balad Archaeological Park. Ancient ruins spoke of Oman’s maritime history and the civilizations that once thrived on its shores. Standing amidst the remains, he felt a profound connection to the generations that had shaped this land. Returning to Muscat, Michael stood before the towering Oman Investment Fund Tower. Its reflective façade captured the changing skyline, reflecting both Oman’s heritage and its aspirations for the future. As he ascended to the observation deck, the panorama revealed Oman’s grand narrative – a tale of tradition interwoven with innovation. Standing on the shores of the Arabian Sea, Michael reflected on his journey. From the bustling souks to the towering skyscrapers, Oman had revealed itself as a land of contrasts, where the past and present danced harmoniously. The beauty of Oman’s landscapes, the warmth of its people, and the brilliance of its creations had left an indelible mark on him. As he looked out at the horizon, he realized that his odyssey through Oman had been more than just a travel experience – it had been a transformative journey of discovery and wonder. About the author, besides being a dynamic entrepreneur, Bhavna is an HR Expert, writer, Intuitive Energy Healer, Reiki Master, Miracle Coach, Motivational Speaker, and a life fighter. She is the Founder & CEO of SYNERGIE in Oman, a leading company that specialises in event management and consulting.

Documentary wins award

MUSCAT: Oman TV’s “Bawabat Al Jumaa (Friday Gate) won the Best Documentary Award in joint Arab-European TV production programme titled Between the Banks. The film, authored by director Abeer Nasser Al Hajri, topped the productions of 13 Arab and European TV organisations. The documentary saw the participation of cameraman Mus’ab Al Rawahi, assistant director Asaad Al Busaidi, aerial photographer Mohammed Al Hadhrami and editor Alya Al Braiki. Abeer said that the film focused on events at Souq Nizwa (Nizwa marketplace) on a Friday.

— ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialize companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tender in Dhofar Governorate.

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DISC/2023/126	11 KV & LV NETWORK IMPROVEMENT WORKS- 2023 (Lot-03)	12/09/2023	20/09/2023	RO. 105.000
DISC/2023/147	11 KV & LV NETWORK IMPROVEMENT WORKS- 2023 (Lot-04)	12/09/2023	20/09/2023	RO. 105.000

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SOLAR MISSION

ISRO to launch Aditya-L1 mission on September 2 to study Sun

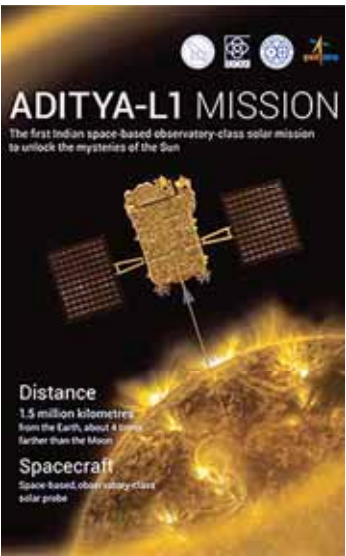
BENGALURU: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Monday announced that it will launch the Aditya-L1 Solar Mission, the first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun on September 2, 2023.

The launch of the solar mission will take place on September 2, 2023, at 11:50 am from Sriharikota.

Taking to X (former Twitter), ISRO said, "The launch of Aditya-L1, the first space-based Indian observatory to study the Sun, is scheduled for September 2, 2023, at 11:50 Hrs IST from Sriharikota. Citizens are invited to witness the launch from the Launch View Gallery at Sriharikota."

Aditya L1 shall be the first space-based Indian mission to study the Sun. The spacecraft shall be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) of the Sun-Earth system, which is about 1.5 million km from the Earth.

A satellite placed in the halo



orbit around the L1 point has the major advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any occultation/eclipses. This will provide a greater advantage in observ-

ing solar activities and their effect on space weather in real-time.

Seven payloads

The spacecraft carries seven payloads to observe the photosphere, chromosphere and the outermost layers of the Sun (the corona) using electromagnetic particle and magnetic field detectors.

ISRO also mentioned the objectives of Aditya-L1 mission.

"Study of Solar upper atmospheric (chromosphere and corona) dynamics. Study of chromospheric and coronal heating, physics of the partially ionised plasma, initiation of the coronal mass ejections, and flares. Observe the in-situ particle and plasma environment providing data for the study of particle dynamics from the Sun," an official statement issued by ISRO said.

"Physics of solar corona and its heating mechanism. Diagnostics of the coronal and coronal loops plasma: Temperature, velocity and

density. Development, dynamics and origin of CMEs."

"Identify the sequence of processes that occur at multiple layers (chromosphere, base and extended corona) which eventually leads to solar eruptive events."

"Magnetic field topology and magnetic field measurements in the solar corona. Drivers for space weather (origin, composition and dynamics of solar wind," it further added.

Earlier India took a giant leap on September 23 evening as the Chandrayaan-3 lander module successfully landed on the moon's South Pole, making it the first country to have achieved the historic feat and bringing to an end the disappointment over the crash landing of the Chandrayaan-2, four years ago.

Overall, India became the fourth country - after the US, China, and Russia - to have successfully landed on the moon's surface. - ANI

NIGER

French ambassador to stay despite ultimatum

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday that France's ambassador to Niger will stay in the West African country.

The comments come after the military junta in Niamey at ordered French ambassador Sylvian Itte to leave Niger.

Macron also reiterated Paris' support for ousted President Mohammed Bazoum, who was overthrown by Niger's military leadership on July 26.

Bazoum has been detained along with his family at Niger's presidential palace since his government was toppled. The junta leadership has been urged by Western countries and the West African bloc ECOWAS to reinstate the ousted president.

Macron hails Bazoum's 'courage'

"I think our policy is the right one. It's based on the courage of President Bazoum, and on the commitments of our ambassador on the ground who is remaining despite all the pressure, despite all the declarations made by the illegitimate authorities," Macron said.

"Our policy is clear: we do not recognize the putschists," he said.

"France and its diplomats have faced particularly difficult situations in some countries in recent months, from Sudan, where France has been exemplary, to Niger at this very moment and I applaud your colleague and your colleagues who are listening from their posts," he added.



tions that it said were "contrary to the interests of Niger."

Other developments in Niger

On Saturday, tens of thousands of people rallied in the Nigerien capital Niamey in support of the coup.

Those demonstrating gathered at the Seyni Kountche stadium, which was covered in Nigerien, Algerian and Russian flags. Protesters called for the withdrawal of French troops from the West African country.

France still has 1,500 soldiers in Niger, which had been helping Bazoum's government fight against an insurgency. - DW

Full story @ timesofoman.com/world



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BRIEFS

'S-400 will be delivered on time': Denis Alipov



NEW DELHI: Russian ambassador to India Denis Alipov said that the delivery of the S-400 anti-aircraft missile system to India is going on track and it will be delivered as per the scheduled time. He said, "As far as the S 400 deliveries are concerned, they have been going on track and the chiefs of the Russian companies involved in those supplies have come on record confirming the supplies will be concluded in time and according to the schedule mutually agreed with our Indian partners. We are speaking about the completion of deliveries by the end of next year."

Japan postpones lunar mission due to weather

TOKYO: Japan's space agency on Monday postponed the launch of its "Moon Sniper" lunar mission due to poor weather, making it the third postponement for the mission. The H2-A rocket was also carrying a research satellite developed with NASA and the European Space Agency. It was meant to launch from Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)'s Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan at 9:26am local time (0026GMT) on Monday.

Over 700 Afghan refugees return home from Iran

KABUL: The Taliban-led Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations of Afghanistan has said that more than 700 Afghan refugees have returned from Iran, Afghanistan-based Khaama Press reported. The Taliban-led Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations on Monday in a post shared on X, formerly known as Twitter, said that around 774 Afghan refugees arrived in Afghanistan through the Islam Qala border crossing in Herat province. Out of the 774 returnees, around 622 people have been referred to the IOM office. - Agencies



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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2023 reaching \$86.82, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 43 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$86.39. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,769.35 points, down by 0.06 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.42 per cent at 473.65 points. Shell Oman Marketing, up 4.05 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Batinah Power, down 3.85 per cent, was the top loser.

Resilient lending growth in GCC despite decades high rates

Aggregate gross loans for GCC-listed banks reached a new high of \$1.9 trillion at the end of the second quarter of 2023



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The GCC banking sector witnessed continued growth in lending during the second quarter of 2023 despite interest rates reaching decades-high levels following rate hikes in the US, according to a new report.

“Aggregate outstanding credit facilities in almost all the countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) showed sequential growth during the quarter mainly led by a robust projects market pipeline as well as government efforts to reduce the impact of higher interest rates,” Kamco Invest said in its latest report titled ‘GCC Banking Sector Report-Q2-2023 August-2023’.

“Moreover, several new big-ticket projects and reform initiatives were announced in the GCC giving a further boost to corporate lending,” the report further added.

Aggregate gross loans for GCC-listed banks reached a new record

high of \$1.9 trillion at the end of the second quarter of 2023. The quarter-on-quarter (q-o-q) growth stood at 1.9 percent or \$36.3 billion backed by growth in all markets in the GCC. Similarly, aggregate net loans showed a slightly smaller growth of 1.7 percent during the quarter to reach \$1.8 trillion.

“On the liquidity front, customer deposits increased at a smaller rate of one percent q-o-q to reach \$2.3 trillion after a decline in customer deposits in Qatar and Kuwait was more than offset by higher deposits in the rest of the markets,” the Kamco Invest report said. The net impact of faster growth in gross loans against customer deposits was a slight growth in the aggregate loan-to-deposit ratio for the GCC which reached 79 percent at the end of the second quarter of 2023.

Total net income reached \$13.7 billion with a q-o-q increase of 3.5 percent supported by both higher net interest income and non-interest income during the

quarter. Higher interest rates supported net interest income during the quarter. A decline in loan loss provisions from \$3 billion to \$2.7 billion also supported bottom-line performance.

“Meanwhile, rising interest rates had a twin impact on banks globally. On one hand, higher interest rates affected lending, especially in the mortgage market and at the same time higher interest rates affected banks’ bond holding value resulting in the failure of some banks in the US and Europe as investors became alert,” the report said.

“However, differences in economic fundamentals also played a role in delineating differing impacts in the West versus Asian markets. Asia’s two biggest economies, India and China, followed a different path. India’s central banks more recently paused rate hikes to avoid economic slowdown while China implemented rate cuts as several sectors witnessed a severe slowdown including real estate,”

Liquidity risks managed well by regional banks

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Customer deposits in GCC banks showed a smaller growth in the last few quarters resulting in a small and gradual increase in the loan-to-deposit ratio. Since core customer deposits form the backbone for funding for GCC banks, recent reports have pointed out liquidity issues with banks in some GCC countries, the Kamco Invest report said.

However, almost all central banks in the GCC have recently affirmed adequate liquidity in the banking sector and have reiterated continued support to the sector.

An S&P report also pointed to the strong and stable funding profile of banks in the region in the form of customer deposits as well as reliance



on external funding in case of stress on the liquidity front.

Recently, the governor of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) highlighted the strong liquidity and capitalisation of banks in the Kingdom and stressed that lending risks remained moderate in the Kingdom and all the precautionary ratios for the banking system have exceeded the requirements as per the Basel norms.

Central bank data shows resilient lending despite higher interest rates credit growth in the GCC remained strong during the second quarter of 2023 despite higher interest rates, indicating strong economic activity and business confidence in the region.

Manufacturing activity data from Bloomberg (Markit Whole Economy Surveys) showed PMI figures stayed strong during the quarter above the growth mark of 50 for Dubai, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE. The manufacturing activity in Saudi Arabia remained robust with PMI at 59.6 points during June-2023 and remained elevated during July-2023 at a slightly lower mark of 57.7. UAE and Qatar also boasted strong PMI figures of 56.9 and 53.8 during June 2023.

NCSI DATA



Oman exports fish worth OMR140 million in 2022

MUSCAT: The total fish exports of Oman by the end of 2022 stood at about 281,601 tonnes, generating OMR140,089,300 and posting a rise of 15.8 per cent compared to 2021.

The figures issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicated that Omani fish exports to the GCC countries stood at about 74,323 tonnes

at the end of last year.

As many as 2372 tonnes of fish were exported to Europe, 18,996 tonnes to America and 185,909 to other countries.

The Sultanate of Oman’s fish exports varied between fresh fish (64,545 tonnes), frozen fish (200,763 tonnes), crustaceans and molluscs (15,240 tonnes) and other fish (1052 tonnes). -**ONA**

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR23mn

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR23 million by way of allotting treasury bills.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR2 million, for a maturity period of 28 days.

The average accepted price reached OMR99.660 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.660 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.43214 per cent and 4.44726 per cent, respectively.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR21 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.709 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.705 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.17704 per cent and 5.24474 per cent, respectively.

The treasury bills are short-term



highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready li-

quidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

The interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 6.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.50 per cent.

Furthermore, the treasury bills

promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -**ONA**

NATIONAL AIR TRAFFIC SERVICE

Flights to UK disrupted due to ‘technical issue’

LONDON: The UK’s air traffic control service on Monday said that because of a “technical issue” it had been forced to slow takeoffs and landings across the UK.

The National Air Traffic Service (NATS) also said that Britain’s airspace was not closed, despite the disruptions.

“We are continuing to work hard to resolve the technical issue,” NATS wrote in an update to its initial statement on Monday. “To clarify, UK airspace is not closed, we have had to apply traffic flow restrictions which ensures we can maintain safety.”

It didn’t elaborate on the nature of the fault, possible causes, or the estimated time it might take to resolve.

Passengers told to check with airlines about departures

Earlier, NATS had advised passengers to “check with your airline on the status of your flight.” Delays started to become apparent immediately, airports in the UK and beyond warned passengers to reckon with potential cancellations.

The disruption came on a busy



travel day, with Monday a public holiday in much of the UK that also falls near the end of school summer holidays. Passengers in several European countries looking to fly back to Britain posted news of delays on social media. News agency Reuters cited one traveler in Budapest hoping to fly to Britain as saying that he had been told to reckon with a wait of 8-12 hours.

Delays over Europe

AirNav Ireland, the Republic of Ireland’s air traffic control service, said the issue was resulting in “significant delays for flights across Europe that are travelling to, from

or through UK airspace.”

The European equivalent Euro-control warned of “very high” delays because of a “flight data processing failure in the UK.”

A spokesperson for Heathrow, London and western Europe’s busiest airport, said Heathrow was working with NATS and other airport partners to try to minimize the impact on passengers. London’s other major hub Gatwick warned that cancellations were likely.

Scottish airline Loganair had earlier said in a post on the social media site commonly known as Twitter and recently rebranded as

X that there had been a network-wide failure of UK air traffic control computer systems.

Although Frankfurt Airport, Germany’s busiest, did not immediately comment on the situation on Monday afternoon, its live arrivals board showed two of the next three planes scheduled to fly in from Heathrow as cancelled at the time of publication.

Similarly, Cologne/Bonn Airport’s arrivals website showed a series of canceled or delayed planes from the UK, including flights from Edinburgh, Heathrow, London Stansted, and even one from Dublin in Ireland. -**DW**

OIL PRICES



Oil marginally lower as global economic concerns loom

SINGAPORE: Oil prices were marginally lower on Monday as investors stayed fretful over the pace of economic growth in China, and the prospect of further US interest rate hikes that could dampen fuel demand.

Brent crude fell 8 cents, or 0.1 per cent, to \$84.40 a barrel by 0330 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$79.78 a barrel, down 5 cents, also 0.1 per

cent, Reuters reported.

Brent and WTI posted a second week of losses on Friday after Fed Chair Jerome Powell said the US central bank may need to raise rates further to cool still-too-high inflation. Oil rose in early Asian trade before paring gains, as China’s move to halve stamp duty on stock trading to boost struggling markets temporarily pushed up prices. -**BNA**

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Shell Oman Marketing, up 4.05 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Batinah Power, down 3.85 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,769.35 points, down by 0.06 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.42 per cent at 473.65 points. Shell Oman Marketing, up 4.05 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Batinah Power, down 3.85 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Phoenix Power were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 602 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR3.6 million, with more than 15.87 million shares changing hands. Out of 50 traded securities, 8 advanced, 18 declined, and 24 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR21,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR19,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR2,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,771.45 points, down 0.33 per cent. Prices of Global Financial Investments, National Bank

Oman were up by 1.72 per cent, 1.36 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman United Insurance, Al Sharqia Investment, Oman Arab Bank, Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment were up by 3.57 per cent, 2.78 per cent, 2.69 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.24 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,959.37 points, down 0.76 per cent. Prices of Oman Chromite were up by 0.98 per cent respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Oman Refreshment, Raysut Cement, Jazeera Steel Products, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 3.13 per cent, 2.37 per cent, 1.90 per cent, 1.47 per cent, 1.33 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.21 per cent before closing at 1,654.94 points. Prices of Shell Oman Marketing, Sharqiyah Desalination, Renaissance Services were up by 4.05 per cent, 1.52 per cent, 0.49 per cent respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Sembcorp Salalah, Muscat Gases, Oman Telecom were up by 2.86 per cent, 0.98 per cent, 0.81 per cent, 0.29 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,779.64	4,762.84	4,769.35	4,772.13	-2.77	-0.06
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,807.86	7,751.52	7,771.45	7,796.85	-25.40	-0.33
Industry Index	6,006.28	5,959.37	5,959.37	6,004.92	-45.54	-0.76
Services Index	1,659.44	1,650.98	1,654.94	1,651.52	3.42	0.21
MSX Shariah Index	474.22	471.96	473.65	471.67	1.99	0.42
MSX TR INDEX	6,289.91	6,267.80	6,276.37	6,280.02	-3.65	-0.06
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,519.81	8,458.33	8,480.08	8,507.80	-27.72	-0.33
SERVICES TR IDX	1,831.82	1,822.47	1,826.85	1,823.08	3.77	0.21
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,416.21	6,366.09	6,366.09	6,414.74	-48.65	-0.76

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
15,878,428	3,600,679	602	23,807,005,638	8	18	24	50

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 28

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PRPREV. CLOSEDIFF (RD)DIFF %LAST PRLAST BRLAST OFFERPAR VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

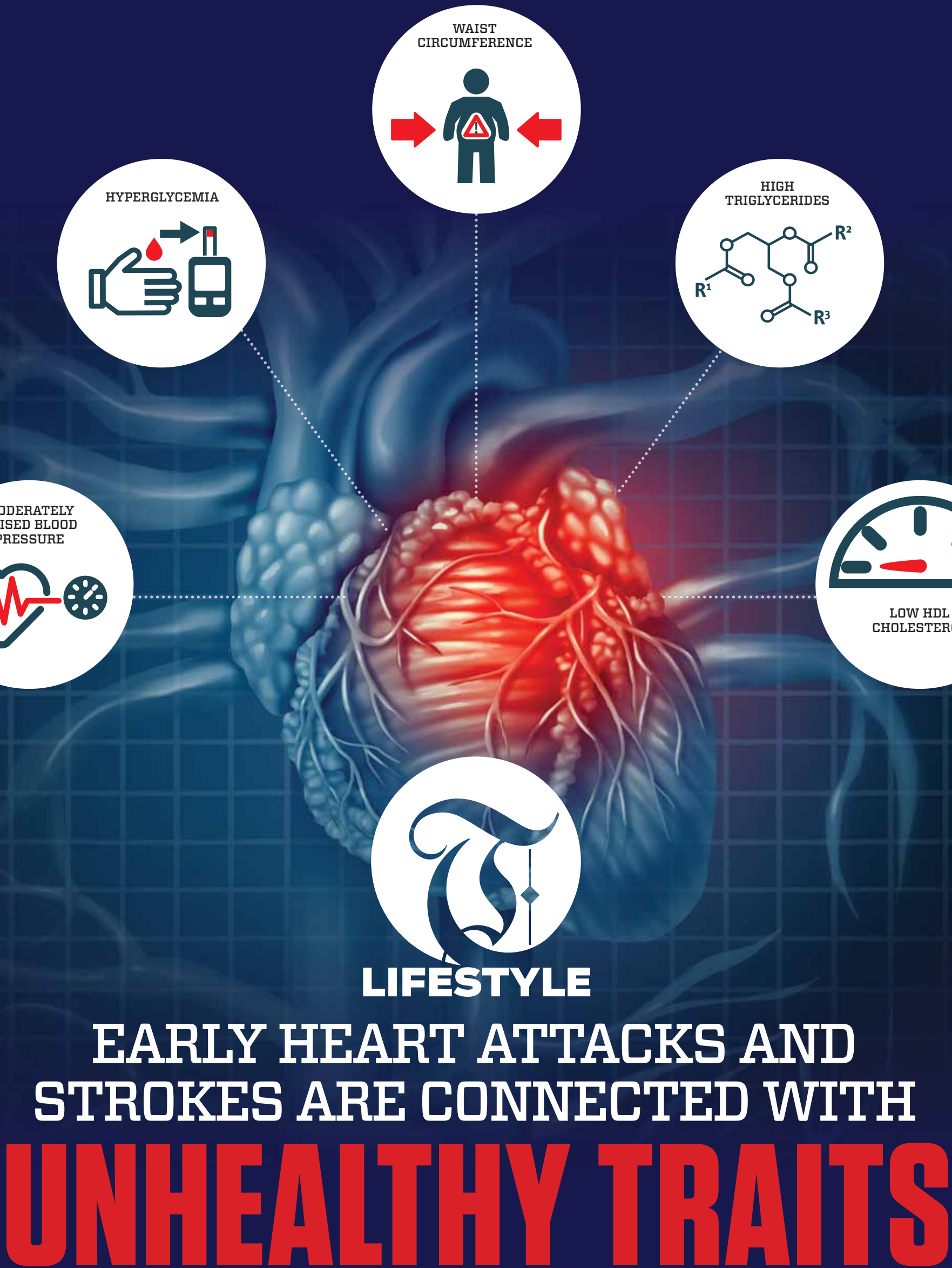
OM0000000325	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	10,000	590	1	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.001	1.724	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	111,000	33,078	5	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.294	0.004	1.361	0.298	0.292	0.298	0.100	484,532,014
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	795,940	329,335	47	0.412	0.414	0.412	0.414	0.412	0.002	0.485	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.100	97,873,740
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	298,372	31,355	17	0.105	0.106	0.105	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.000	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.100	15,900,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	24,603	8,611	2	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.350	0.353	0.100	115,805,449
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	217,980	13,079	11	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.058	0.060	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,365,345	674,059	59	0.285	0.285	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.000	0.000	0.284	0.284	0.285	0.100	2,131,816,786
OM0000003800	AL MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	200	202	1	1.010	1.010	1.010	1.012	1.012	0.000	0.000	1.010	1.010	1.010	0.100	69,828,000
OM0000003968	QOREDOO	1,270,040	490,691	38	0.387	0.387	0.385	0.386	0.386	0.000	0.000	0.385	0.385	0.386	0.100	251,264,473
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	115,849	9,847	8	0.086	0.086	0.084	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.084	0.085	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	2,257	643	2	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.000	0.000	0.285	0.285	0.287	0.100	15,675,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	795,953	807,804	42	1.020	1.020	1.010	1.017	1.020	-0.003	-0.294	1.017	1.017	1.017	0.100	762,750,000
OM0000001530	OMINVEST	383,672	149,590	14	0.389	0.392	0.389	0.390	0.392	-0.002	-0.510	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.100	260,662,516
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,227,980	130,173	15	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.107	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.106	0.106	0.107	0.100	579,596,181
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	18,447	4,095	4	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.222	0.225	-0.003	-1.333	0.222	0.222	0.235	0.100	48,840,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	19,000	5,094	4	0.272	0.272	0.268	0.268	0.272	-0.004	-1.471	0.268	0.265	0.268	0.100	33,477,653
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	217,780	15,290	22	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.070	0.072	-0.002	-2.778	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	3,300,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	447,630	30,186	42	0.069	0.069	0.067	0.068	0.070	-0.002	-2.857	0.068	0.067	0.068	0.100	13,575,221
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	45,100	12,227	7	0.279	0.279	0.270	0.270	0.280	-0.010	-3.571	0.270	0.270	0.274	0.100	27,000,000
Total	19	8,367,148	2,745,949	341												

Parallel Market

OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	50	45	2	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.865	0.035	4.046	0.900	0.900	0.000	0.100	85,500,000
OM0000004689	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	65,482	8,537	4	0.130	0.135	0.130	0.134	0.132	0.002	1.515	0.134	0.134	0.136	0.100	3,105,489
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	14,700	75,697	3	5.100	5.150	5.100	5.150	5.100	0.050	0.980	5.150	5.100	5.150	1.000	15,450,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	15,932	1,466	7	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.092	0.094	0.100	7,820,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	900	495	1	0.550	0.550	0.550	0.570	0.570	0.000	0.000	0.550	0.513	0.550	0.100	85,775,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	5,106	10,210	2	1.999	2.000	1.999	2.000	2.000	0.000	0.000	2.000	0.990	2.000	0.100	179,400,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	9,500	1,017	3	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.100	9,630,000
OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	369	200	1	0.542	0.542	0.542	0.542	0.542	0.000	0.000	0.542	0.490	0.542	0.100	38,757,792
OM0000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	1,000	90	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.088	0.094	0.100	23,745,133
OM0000003681	VOLTAMP ENERGY	100	12	1	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.126	0.120	0.126	0.100	10,236,747
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,433,907	141,954	70	0.099	0.099	0.098	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	67,202	3,360	8	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.049	0.053	0.100	12,500,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	155,500	3,888	6	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.024	0.027	0.100	17,860,159
OM0000005965	PHOENIX POWER	3,924,135	235,461	12	0.062	0.062	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.062	0.100	87,750,088
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	10,000	1,039	2	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.000	0.000	0.103	0.098	0.103	0.100	20,600,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	66,000	8,580	6	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.125	0.130	0.100	9,817,860
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	153,397	45,750	28	0.297	0.299	0.297	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.000	0.298	0.298	0.305	0.100	229,519,600
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	100	12	1	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.124	-0.001	-0.806	0.123	0.000	0.124	0.100	3,680,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	1,350	136	1	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.095	0.101	0.100	96,411,767
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	243,550	19,488	21	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.081	-0.001	-1.235	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	16,480,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	793,700	123,311	23	0.158	0.158	0.155	0.155	0.158	-0.003	-1.899	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.100	31,000,000
OM0000001406	OMAN REFRESHMENT	500	825	1	1.650	1.650	1.650	1.650	1.650	0.000	0.000	1.650	0.000	1.650	0.100	82,500,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	34,100	1,330	10	0.039	0.040	0.039	0.039	0.040	-0.001	-2.500	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.100	3,315,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	123,062	17,608	10	0.143	0.145	0.143	0.145	0.149	-0.004	-2.685	0.145	0.143	0.145	0.100	242,064,450
OM0000003821	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	206,917	32,296	17	0.160	0.160	0.155	0.155	0.160	-0.005	-3.125	0.158	0.156	0.158	0.100	31,462,899
OM0000004955	ALBATINAH POWER	35,960	649	4	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.026	-0.001	-3.846	0.025	0.024	0.025	0.100	16,872,186
Total	26	7,352,509	733,447	245												

CONSTRUCTION

Innovation drives stable growth of China's machinery industry



EARLY HEART ATTACKS AND STROKES ARE CONNECTED WITH UNHEALTHY TRAITS

STUDY

ACCORDING to data presented at the ESC Congress 2023, middle-aged people who have three or more risk factors—such as moderately raised blood pressure, cholesterol, hyperglycemia, and waist circumference—experience heart attacks and strokes two years earlier than their peers.

“Many people in their 40s and 50s have a bit of fat around the middle and marginally elevated blood pressure, cholesterol or glucose but feel generally well, are unaware of the risks and do not seek medical advice,” said study author Dr Lena Lönnberg of Västmanland County Hospital, Västerås, Sweden. “This scenario, called metabolic syndrome, is a growing problem in Western populations where people are unknowingly storing up problems for later in life. This is a huge missed opportunity to intervene before heart attacks and strokes that could have been avoided occur.”

It is estimated that up to 31 per cent of people globally have metabolic syndrome. Research

from the past has shown that people with metabolic syndrome are more susceptible to diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and early death. This study investigated the association between midlife asymptomatic metabolic syndrome and cardiovascular disease and death up to three decades later.

The study enrolled 34,269 adults in their 40s and 50s who attended a cardiovascular screening programme from 1990 to 1999 in the Swedish county of Västmanland. Participants went to their primary health care centre for a clinical examination by a nurse, which included measurements of height, weight, blood pressure, total cholesterol, blood glucose, and waist and hip circumference. They also completed a questionnaire about lifestyle habits, previous history of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and socioeconomic factors such as education.

Participants with metabolic

- Individuals were classified as having metabolic syndrome if they had three or more of the following:
1. Waist circumference of 102 cm or above for men and 88 cm or above for women.
 2. Total cholesterol 6.1 mmol/l or above.
 3. 130 mmHg or higher systolic blood pressure and/or 85 mm Hg or higher diastolic blood pressure.
 4. Fasting plasma glucose 5.6 mmol/l or higher.

syndrome were matched for age, sex and date of health examination to two individuals without metabolic syndrome who served as controls. Data on cardiovascular events (myocardial infarction and stroke) and death were collected from national and local registers. The researchers analysed the associations between midlife metabolic syndrome and nonfatal cardiovascular events and all-cause mortality after adjusting for age, sex, smoking, physical inactivity, education level, body mass index, hip circumference and living alone or with family.

A total of 5,084 individuals (15 per cent) met the criteria for

metabolic syndrome and a control group of 10,168 individuals without metabolic syndrome was identified. Some 47 per cent of participants were women. During a median follow-up of 27 years, 1,317 (26 per cent) participants with metabolic syndrome died compared with 1,904 (19 per cent) controls – meaning that those with metabolic syndrome were 30 per cent more likely to die during follow-up than their counterparts without metabolic syndrome.

Non-fatal cardiovascular events (myocardial infarction and/or stroke) occurred in 1,645 (32 per cent) participants with metabolic syndrome and 2,321 (22 per cent) controls – corresponding to a 35 per cent greater risk of heart attack and stroke in the metabolic syndrome group. The median time to the first non-fatal heart attack or stroke was 16.8 years in the metabolic syndrome group and 19.1 years in the control group – a 2.3 year difference.

Dr Lönnberg said: “As metabolic syndrome is a cluster of risk factors, the level of each individual component does not have to be severely raised. In fact, most people live with slightly raised levels for many years before having symptoms that lead them to seek health care. In our study, middle-aged adults with metabolic syndrome had a heart attack or stroke 2.3 years earlier than those without the collection of unhealthy traits. Blood pressure was the riskiest component, particularly for women in their 40s, highlighting the value of keeping it under control.”

She concluded, “The results underline the importance of early detection of risk factors through health screening programmes so that preventive actions can be taken to prevent heart attack, stroke and premature death. As a general rule of thumb, even if you feel well, check your blood pressure every year, avoid smoking, keep an eye on your waist circumference and last, but definitely not least, be physically active every day.” -ANI

Chopra becomes first Indian to claim gold at athletics worlds

The Olympic champ's best effort of 88.17m fetches him the title in the men's javelin throw event, Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem takes silver

BUDAPEST: India's Neeraj Chopra, once again, hauled himself into the history books by winning the gold medal in the men's javelin throw event at the World Athletics Championships 2023 in Budapest, Hungary, on Sunday.

With a best throw of 88.17m, Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian athlete to win a gold medal at the senior world championships and added yet another noteworthy entry to his list of many firsts.

The medal completed a very special set for Neeraj Chopra, who has now won every major title possible in his sport. Besides his Olympic and world championship golds and the Diamond League title, Neeraj Chopra is also an Asian Athletics Championships (2017), Asian Games (2018) and Commonwealth Games (2018) champion.

Heading into Budapest 23, Neeraj Chopra was already the first Indian track and field athlete to win a gold medal at the Olympics (Tokyo 2020), the Diamond League title (2022) and the junior world championships (2016).

"This was great," Neeraj Chopra said. "After the Olympic gold I really wanted to win the world championships. I just wanted to throw further. This is brilliant for



the national team but it was my dream to win gold at the world championships.

"This has been a great championships for India and I am proud to bring another title to my country," the Indian ace continued. "I don't think I am the

best thrower here. I wanted to throw more tonight. I wanted to throw more than 90m tonight but it needs all parts of the puzzle to be there. I couldn't put it all together this evening. Maybe next time."

Neeraj Chopra, who holds the



men's javelin national record of 89.94m, also won the silver medal at last year's world championships in Oregon. It was India's first-ever silver medal at the global track and field showpiece and the country's second medal ever after Anju Bobby George won the women's long

jump bronze at Paris 2003.

After fouling his first attempt, Neeraj Chopra hurled 88.17m to take the top spot and stayed there for the remainder of the final.

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, the reigning Commonwealth Games champion, took the silver with a

season's best of 87.82m while the Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch won bronze with 86.67m.

The other two Indian athletes in the 12-man javelin throw finals at Budapest also logged impressive results. Kishore Jena finished fifth with a personal best haul of 84.77m while DP Manu was sixth with 84.14m.

In the other action, Norwegian standout Jakob Ingebrigtsen retained his men's 5,000m title on the final day. The 22-year-old Ingebrigtsen made a powerful surge in the last 100m, finishing first with a season-best time of 13:11.30. He edged out Mohamed Katir of Spain by 0.14 seconds. Kenyan athlete Jacob Krop claimed the bronze with a time of 13:12.28.

"This title means a lot to me after losing again in the 1,500m. I haven't been at my best but I had the motivation and I had great support," said Ingebrigtsen, the 1,500m Olympic champion.

In the tournament's concluding event, newly-crowned 400m hurdles world champion Femke Bol steered the Netherlands to a win in the women's 4x400m relay, marking this year's world-leading time of 3:20.72. Jamaica and Britain trailed, recording times of 3:20.88 and 3:21.04, respectively.

The US relay team achieved the year's fastest time, winning the men's 4x400m relay race in 2:57.31. This victory wrapped up their performance at the Championships with a tally of 29 medals, including 12 golds. The French team secured silver in 2:58.45, while Britain took bronze in 2:58.71.

In other Sunday finals, Mary Moraa of Kenya clinched the women's 800m race with her personal-best time of 1:56.03. Yaroslava Mahuchikh of Ukraine, an Olympic bronze medalist, won the women's high jump, clearing 2.01m. Winfred Mutile Yavi earned the women's 3,000m gold for Bahrain, finishing in 8:54.29. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Nunez seals dramatic victory for Liverpool



LONDON: Liverpool, despite being a man down after Virgil Van Dijk's red card, clinched a thrilling 2-1 victory against Newcastle in a Premier League match at St James' Park on Sunday.

Anthony Gordon had initially given Newcastle the lead in the 20th minute, capitalising on a blunder from Trent Alexander Arnold. The situation worsened for Liverpool when Van Dijk received a red card for a harsh tackle on Alexander Isak. Yet, the 24-year-old Darwin Nunez changed the narrative, netting a goal nine minutes from the final whistle, and then scoring the winner in stoppage time after a brilliant assist from Mohamed Salah.

Liverpool were a goal down

when Nunez entered the fray with 13 minutes of normal time remaining. It was strike one for Nunez four minutes after his introduction, taking Diogo Jota's pass in his stride to send a low, unerring finish past Newcastle keeper Nick Pope into the far corner.

Newcastle and St James' Park were collectively stunned as a victory that seemed theirs for the taking was in danger of being snatched away after their domination of a Liverpool side at a numerical disadvantage saw Miguel Almiron denied by keeper Alisson's miraculous first-half save, turning his drive on to the woodwork with the score 1-0, the same player striking the post after break. - Agencies

LA LIGA

Barcelona prevail in 7-goal thriller against Villarreal

MADRID: Barcelona clinched a dramatic 4-3 victory against Villarreal on Sunday evening, thanks to a remarkable performance from 16-year-old winger Lamine Yamal.

Barcelona seemed firmly in the driver's seat when Gavi netted in the 15th minute, followed by Frenkie de Jong's goal three minutes later, establishing a 2-0 lead.

However, Villarreal mounted a spirited comeback. Juan Foyth's commanding header in the 26th minute and Alexander Sorloth's exquisite finish in the 40th minute equalized the scores.

Four minutes into the second half, Alex Baena's curveball went past Marc Andre Ter Stegen, placing Villarreal in the lead.

In the 67th minute, Lamine crafted an assist for Ferran Torres to even the score for Barca. Shortly after, Robert Lewandowski sealed the victory with a close-range shot, rebounding from Lamine's initial effort that hit the post.

In other matches, Osasuna halted Valencia's flawless season start with a 2-1 victory at the Mestalla Stadium, gearing up for their Thursday's Conference League clash in Bruges.



Nacho Vidal's last-minute goal in the 95th minute secured the win for Pamplona, just after it seemed Hugo Duro's 80th-minute strike would save Valencia a point. This followed Aimar Oroz's earlier penalty goal.

Athletic Bilbao displayed resilience, coming back from a 2-0 deficit against Betis at home. Wilian Jose and Isco's early goals for Betis were counteracted by two Bilbao penalties converted by Mikel Vesga and a Gorka Gu-

ruzeta score, leading 3-2 at half-time. Bilbao continued their dominance in the second half, with young talent Unai Gomez rounding off a 4-2 win.

Earlier on Saturday, Jude Bellingham netted his fourth goal in three matches, providing Real Madrid a slender 1-0 victory against Celta Vigo.

Real Madrid's woes deepened with a potential hamstring injury to Vinicius Jr, possibly sidelining him for a few weeks. - Xinhua

NEW ROLE



Italy's Mancini named coach of Saudi Arabia

RIYADH: Roberto Mancini has been appointed as the head coach of the Saudi Arabian national football team, the Saudi Arabia Football Federation confirmed on Monday, days after the Italian resigned from the Azzurri.

It is reported that the 58-year-old has signed a four-year contract which is worth US\$27 million per year.

"I am excited to announce that I am joining the Saudi Arabia Football Federation as Head Coach of the National Team," wrote Mancini on social media.

Having coached Lazio, Inter Milan, Manchester City and many other clubs, Mancini took over the Azzurri in 2018 and helped them win the Euro 2020 championship. But Italy failed to qualify for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. - Xinhua

BUNDESLIGA



Kane scores twice as Bayern down Augsburg

BERLIN: Harry Kane's double was instrumental in Bayern Munich's 3-1 win over a tenacious Augsburg at the culmination of the Bundesliga's second round on Sunday.

Playing in front of their home fans, the German heavyweights dominated possession but initially found it hard to penetrate Augsburg's disciplined defense.

Surprisingly, Bayern's first goal came with a little help from Augsburg's Felix Uduokhai, who inadvertently redirected a blocked shot from Leroy Sane into his own net around the 30-minute mark.

In a further twist, Augsburg inadvertently set up Bayern's second. Niklas Dorsch committed a handball in the box, presenting Kane with an opportunity. The Englishman confidently converted the 40th-minute penalty.

Kane, quite active throughout, could have extended the lead to three just four minutes into the second half, but he shot over the

bar from a favorable position.

Bayern's pressing continued. Finn Dahmen thwarted Serge Gnabry's threatening header, and shortly after, Dayot Upamecano's close-range attempt was cleared off the line by Elvis Rexhebecaj.

The game's outcome became certain in the 69th minute. Bayern's recent signing Kane delicately chipped the ball over Dahmen, capitalizing on Alphonso Davies' precisely delivered through ball.

Augsburg, however, remained

defiant. They narrowed the margin to 3-1, courtesy of a spontaneous goal by Dion Drena Beljo.

"Really good win, first league win in our stadium. We created a couple of chances that could have been a few more. We go away happy. I have been here a few weeks now and I love the chemistry we created already," Kane remarked.

"Great and deserved result. We started a little bit nervous and needed an own goal and penalty to get things going. We played OK in

the second half. We had chances to extend the lead but instead, we conceded a goal. We can't be too critical," shared Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel.

With this triumph, Bayern ascended to second place, trailing leaders Union Berlin only on goal difference.

In other action, a 10-player Eintracht Frankfurt capitalised on Mainz's inefficiency, with Omar Marmoush's late strike ensuring a road draw. - Xinhua

Experience excitement of ‘Back to School’ season at Mall of Muscat

The captivating in-mall activation promotion aims to captivate the hearts of both parents and children, further enriching the shopping extravaganza

MUSCAT: It is time to celebrate the enchanting flavour of new beginnings and the thrill of learning with ‘Back to School’ season at Oman’s leading/preferred shopping destination, Mall of Muscat, the ultimate destination to kick-start the new school year is bursting with excitement.

Join the mall in embracing the boundless possibilities of knowledge and growth with its exclusive ‘Back to School’ promotion, a tribute to the pursuit of education.

The captivating in-mall activation promotion aims to captivate the hearts of both parents and children, further enriching the shopping extravaganza. At Mall of Muscat, a realm of imaginative

incentives awaits discovery, promising to kindle curiosity and transform the shopping experience into an unforgettable journey.

Amidst the excitement of shopping for school essentials at great prices, an immersive activation centre awaits visitors at the main atrium on the ground floor of Mall of Muscat till August 31. Delighting both parents and children, this hub of engagement promises an array of activities from 4 pm to 10 pm daily, making each moment a memory to cherish.

Additionally, the weekends come alive with captivating performances including enchanting magic shows, delightful clown performances, and mesmerising bal-



loon twisting games that are sure to leave all spellbound.

Further elevating the campaign brands including Matalan, Skechers, Children International Centre, and Centrepont are exclusively showcasing their captivating ‘backtoschool’ merchandise at a special promotional space.

Taking it up another notch, Mall

of Muscat has introduced a Kids Discount Card. With this card in hand, young visitors partaking in the mall’s immersive activities can receive exclusive benefits at Aquarium, Charley’s Grilled Subs, Cinnabon, Tjewins, Fabyland, and Xtreme Zone.

A spokesperson for Mall of Muscat said, “We invite everyone to

engage, and relish every moment, as Mall of Muscat transforms shopping into a captivating experience for all. ‘Backtoschool’ season marks a significant milestone for students as well as parents across Oman. In the spirit of this occasion, we are thrilled to host the highly anticipated ‘back to school’ promotion. Through this initiative, our aim is to

instill the upcoming academic year with an extra dose of excitement while providing families with valuable opportunities to save and shop. It is a wonderful chance for families to gather all the essentials for the forthcoming school year, and we sincerely hope they embrace the savings and the exhilarating atmosphere that this campaign brings. As we embark on this exhilarating ‘backto school’ journey, our vision covers a seamless fusion of shopping, winning, and pure delight for each of our esteemed shoppers.”

Incorporating an expanse of approximately 200,000 square meters and providing more than 3000 parking spaces, the Mall boasts a substantial area. Beyond its shopping allure, Mall of Muscat presents a host of family-centric attractions, including a cinema, an entertainment zone, and other engaging features. Remarkably, it also hosts the Oman Aquarium, the largest and only public aquarium within the Sultanate of Oman. With an impressive array of 240+ brands spanning across fashion, lifestyle, sports, and electronics, Mall of Muscat offers an unparalleled luxurious experience.

EXTRAORDINARY VEHICLE

INEOS’s hydrogen Grenadier Demonstrator debuts at Goodwood Festival of Speed



MUSCAT: INEOS Automotive’s hydrogen-fuelled Grenadier Demonstrator made its global debut at this year’s Goodwood Festival of Speed. The 4X4 emits nothing but water vapour and demonstrates INEOS’s belief that hydrogen is a key fuel of the future.

The hydrogen Grenadier Demonstrator is identical to the production Grenadier apart from a bonnet power bulge to accommodate the additional height of the fuel cell, but this would not be present in a production model.

Lynn Calder, CEO of INEOS Automotive, says: “The hydrogen-powered Grenadier Demonstrator is an extraordinary vehicle, capable of doing everything a conventionally powered Grenadier can do but with zero emissions. It shows INEOS’s determination to make supremely capable cars that will help us reach net zero.”

The project to develop a hydrogen-fuelled Grenadier began in June 2022, when the business partnered with Austrian engineering supplier/powertrain consul-

tancy AVL, to develop the current vehicle with a clear ambition - zero emissions with no compromise to the 4X4 experience.

The 4X4 uses BMW Group’s latest hydrogen fuel cell, zero-emissions powertrain, considered the most advanced and powerful in the automotive sector.

The flexibility of the Grenadier platform allowed INEOS Automotive engineers to integrate the zero-emissions powertrain by modifying the ladder frame and rear axle, accommodating the electric drive

units to deliver true torque vectoring drive control to each rear wheel. The capabilities of torque vectoring result in what INEOS calls ‘gecko capability’ - outstanding control and manoeuvrability in all off-road conditions, as well as a tighter turning circle and enhanced on-road driving dynamics.

Lynn Calder, CEO of INEOS Automotive, says: “The hydrogen-powered Grenadier Demonstrator along with our all-electric model due in 2026, shows INEOS commitment to net zero.”

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ROUND-UP

ahlibank organises summer camp for employees' children

This is in line with the bank's efforts to engage its staff and their families in joyous and meaningful activities, thereby keeping them motivated

MUSCAT: As part of its endeavours to support a healthy work-life balance for its employees, ahlibank held a summer camp initiative for its employees' children. This is in line with the bank's efforts to engage its staff and their families in joyous and meaningful activities, thereby keeping them motivated. Recognising the need to utilise the summer school holidays effectively, ahlibank implemented such initiatives - like the summer camp - to provide engaging fun and educational activities for employees' children. Such summer camps aim to offer a chance for children to stay active in safe environments, urge them to be creative, as well as engage and spend quality time with their parents. Such initiatives fall in line with



the bank's commitment to nurturing a positive and stress-free environment for its employees. Most parents look for productive ways to keep their children busy during long holidays and by offering them the option of a summer camp

at work, ahlibank has gone a step ahead in maintaining a stress-free and highly driven environment for its employees who are parents. ahlibank's summer camp targeted children of different ages, with plenty of edutainment ac-

tivities. While it is fun, it is also project-based and about collaborative effort. It offered a wide array of activities that children took part in. It taught skills that are useful to enhance children's knowledge of savings, inspiring them to find so-

lutions to problems by action. ahlibank's people engagement initiatives have always been inclusive of its employees. This unique and transformative initiative by ahlibank underscores its unwavering commitment to fostering holistic growth and development in the communities it serves. The bank remains committed to supporting individuals, and creating a healthy environment for growth while keeping its employees at the heart of it.

CUSTOMERS' MEET

Isuzu customers in Salalah bond over brand's contribution to their operational success

MUSCAT: Owners of Isuzu trucks in Salalah turned out in sizable numbers for a 'Customer Meet' that underscored the robust popularity of the globally renowned commercial vehicle brand in the city. Organised by OTE Group, exclusive distributors of Isuzu trucks in the Sultanate of Oman, the event drew representatives from a wide cross section of companies operating in the transport, retail, consumer and distribution sectors. It was held at a prestigious city hotel against the backdrop of Salalah's festive khareef holiday season. While the attendees received OTE Group's unstinting kudos for their staunch patronage of Isuzu trucks, special praise was reserved for a local contracting firm for its outstanding support to the brand. Salalah-based Alpha Electric & Contracting Co. had recently purchased 19 Isuzu D-Max pickup trucks in a robust demonstration of its faith in the iconic brand. An excellent-grade contractor for OETC, the national power transmission operator, among other players in the electricity sector, Alpha Electric & Contracting's operational performance is predicated on, among other factors, the availability of sturdy, dependable and efficient pickup trucks to haul personnel and hardware to remote sites across inhospitable terrain. Speaking at the event, Eng. Mousa Al Aqtash, Chief Engineer - Alpha Electric & Contracting Co, said the company was extremely pleased with its decision to acquire an all D-Max fleet to bolster its transportation capabilities. With its stylish design, sturdy build and leading-edge safety features, it is the vehicle of choice for businesses seeking a combination of power and efficiency, he noted. The attendees were also invited to participate in an ongoing raffle scheme, offering Isuzu customers the opportunity to win from an exciting array of prizes, including a Hyundai Accent and LG LED TV sets. OTE executives also shared insights on the latest offerings from Isuzu D-Max and the popular N-Series of trucks, representative models of which were on display at the venue. From its trademark durability to



powerful performance, the all-new Isuzu D-Max is more capable than ever before - the result of the brand's unparalleled experience in creating the world's finest commercial vehicles. Just as popular are Isuzu's N Series trucks, which come in an unequalled number of variants, including crew cabs, tippers and 4x4s. Isuzu trucks are marketed in Oman by OTE Group, well-known for its industry-leading sales and after-sales service support, which is underpinned by its nationwide service network.

FUEL-EFFICIENT



Make city drives fun with compact SUV Kia Sonet

MUSCAT: Kia Sonet raises the bar on exciting city drives with its compact size, space, power, fuel-efficiency and features. The Sonet SUV makes daily driving fun especially with family with its powerful and fuel-efficient 1.5L engine that is paired to a CVT transmission offering an exceptional mileage of 17.5 kmpl. The Sonet makes journeys fun with its impressive interior environment that is well laid-out along with an intuitive infotainment and cluster interface which is in place to enhance the end user's experience. The Sonet is available with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay feature, Audio Remote Control, Bluetooth, USB charger. Harbouring functional qualities in every inch of its ergonomic space. Highlighting the Sonet's SUV stance are a range of features including including body colour outside mirror, 2-tone bumper, power outside mirror, body colour door handles, side repeater lamps in outside mirror, 16" alloy wheels, chrome radiator grille, rear fog lamps, LED front fog lamps, roof rack, LED headlamps, LED daytime running lamps and more. For families looking forward to light moments on the road, the Sonet is equipped with an 8" Audio Display along with other smart features such as remote engine start, auto cruise control and more. Adding to increased levels of convenience are features like keyless entry system, smart key with button start, central door lock and more. Kia has ensured that every drive with the Sonet is as hassle free and safe as possible, thanks to a rigorous set of measures created in line with Kia's pillars of safety. Among the Sonet's key safety features are driver and front passenger airbags, ABS (anti-lock braking system), ESC (Electronic Stability Control), Rear parking assist system, Rear view camera, tyre pressure monitoring system (TPMS) and ISOFIX child-seat anchoring points. Reliable International Automotive, the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers.





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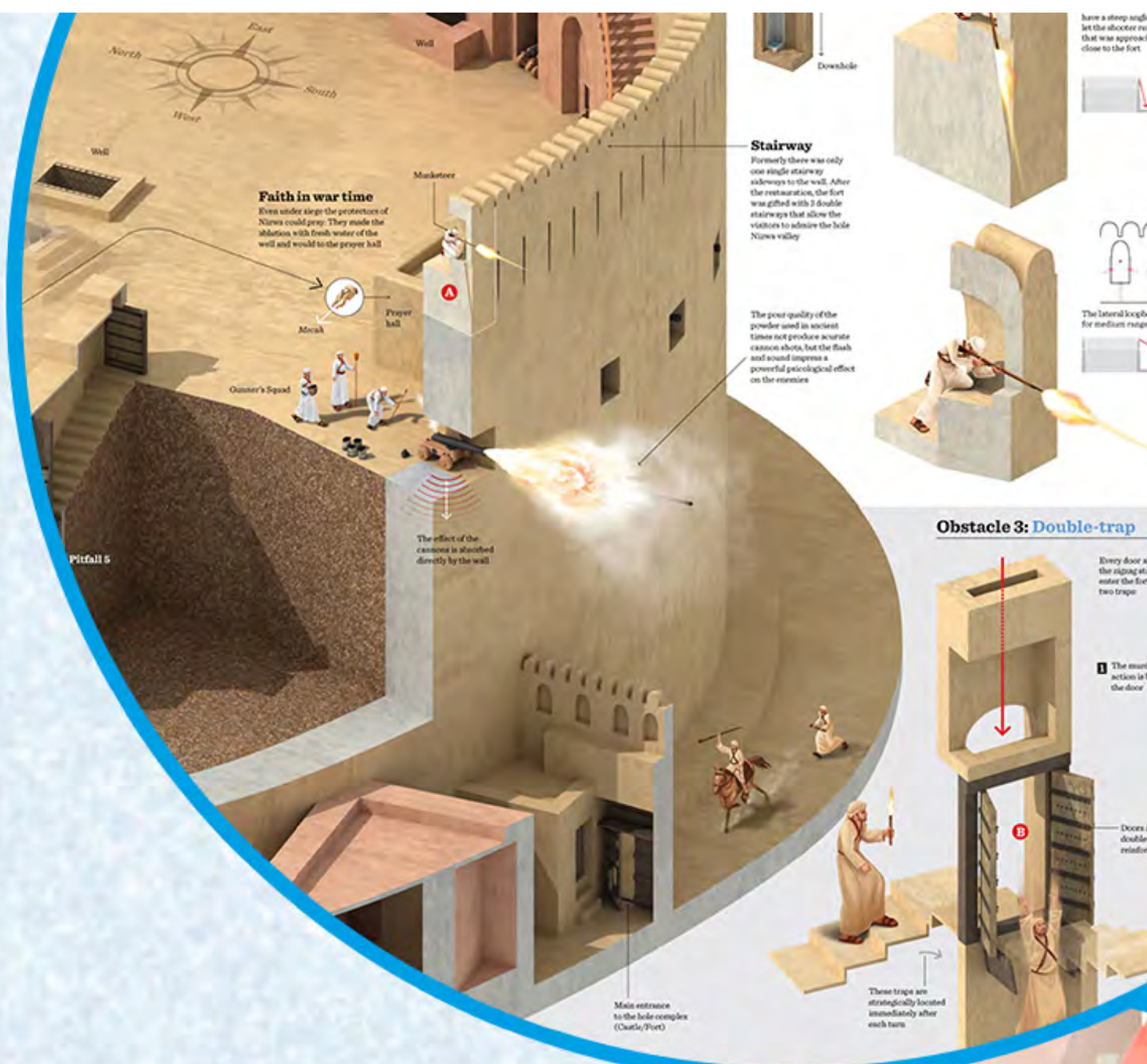
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