



HM RECEIVES PHONE CALL FROM UK PRIME MINISTER

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a phone call from Keir Starmer, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK). During the phone call, His Majesty the Sultan congratulated Keir Starmer on the occasion of his appointment as a new prime minister in his country. He wished the PM success in performing his duties. The conversation dealt with the strong bonds between the two countries and touched on ways to develop and consolidate bilateral relations in various spheres. His Majesty the Sultan and the British PM exchanged views about a set of regional and international issues of common concern. — **ONA**



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9 KILLED, 28 INJURED IN WADI KABIR SHOOTING

Four Pakistani expats, an Indian and a ROP personnel were killed in the mosque attack



A DIFFICULT DAY BUT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE, SAYS PAKISTAN ENVOY >SEE A2

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In one of the rare cases, six people, including one policeman were killed and 28 others were injured when the attackers opened fire at a mosque in Wadi Kabir in Muscat on Monday night. Oman News Agency said that three attackers were also killed in the incident. The Pakistan Embassy in Oman said that four of its nationals were killed in the mosque attack. The dead have been identified as Ghulam Abbas, Hasan Abbas, Sayyed

Qaisar Abbas and Sulaiman Nawaz, according to the Pakistan Embassy in Oman. In a statement, Oman News Agency said, "The Royal Oman Police (ROP) and the military and security services announced the conclusion of procedures for addressing the shooting incident that occurred on Monday, in the Wadi Al Kabir area of Muscat Governorate." The incident resulted in the death of six people, the martyrdom of a police officer, and the killing of the three perpetrators, in addition

to injury to 28 people of different nationalities. Among the injured were four individuals, including policemen and Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority's personnel, who were performing their national duty. The injured have been transferred to health institutions for treatment. Investigations into the circumstances of the incident are ongoing," the ONA said. ROP offers condolences and sympathies to the families of the deceased, wishing the injured a speedy recovery.

GDP touches OMR9.53bn in first quarter of 2024

MUSCAT: The gross domestic product (GDP) of the Sultanate of Oman at constant prices increased by 1.7 percent to reach (at market price) OMR9,537.0 million at the end of the first quarter of 2024, compared to OMR9,373.9 million at the corresponding period in 2023, according to preliminary data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCST). Crude petroleum activities recorded OMR2,554.9 million (down by 3.3 percent), meanwhile natural gas activities increased by 3 percent to OMR437.1 million. Moreover, non-oil activities increased by 4.5 percent to OMR6,803.3 million by the end of the first quarter of 2024, compared to OMR6,511.7 million at the end of the first quarter of 2023. Industrial activities recorded OMR1,988.1 million compared to OMR1,881.7 million by the end of the first quarter of 2023, while agriculture, forestry and fishing activities recorded OMR219 million, and service activities recorded OMR4,596.2 million. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Mwasalat launches first electric bus

1 Mwasalat launched the first electric bus in the Sultanate of Oman under the slogan "Smart Transportation in Sustainable Cities," in Salalah on Tuesday. >**A2**

OMAN

A harrowing tale of a shooting survivor

2 An eyewitness trapped inside the mosque in Al Wadi Al Kabir during a brutal attack on Monday night speaks to Times of Oman of his ordeal. The horrific assault claimed the lives of nine individuals. >**A3**

WORLD

Flash floods kill 40 in Afghanistan

3 Forty people have been killed and hundreds injured in eastern Afghanistan as of Tuesday, officials said as heavy rains pelted the region. The head of Nangarhar province's disaster management authority, said that 350 people were wounded. >**A7**

GAZA DEATH TOLL as of July 16, 2024



Deaths
38,713
Injured
89,166

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HAWANA SALALAH
OMAN

Mwasalat launches first electric bus to enhance environmental care

Mwasalat signed a cooperation programme with the American company Odis at the conference to develop sustainable self-driving air transport technology

Times News Service

MUSCAT : Mwasalat launched the first electric bus in the Sultanate of Oman under the slogan ‘Smart Transportation in Sustainable Cities,’ in Salalah on Tuesday.

This conference was hosted on Tuesday by the Omani National Transport Company ‘Mwasalat’, one of the Asyad Group companies, at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, in the presence of Engineer Saeed bin Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport and Communications and Information Technology, and a number of their excellencies, and members of the executive management of the International Union of Public Transport.

On the sidelines of the conference, Mwasalat launched the first electric bus in a pioneering step towards enhancing the sustainability of the public transportation system, and an affirmation of Mwasalat’s commitment to achieving sustainability in its operations and seeking to enhance environmental care in accordance with the sustainability strategy developed by the Asyad Group and in support for efforts to achieve the national goal of reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Engineer Badr bin Mohammed Al Nadabi, CEO of Mwasalat, said that the bus has a capacity of 28 passengers, and is electronically adjusted to travel at a speed of 70 to 130 kilometres per hour, making it suitable for use within cities. He said that the bus is 8.94 metres long, 2.42 metres wide and 3.3 metres high.

Al Nadabi added that the bus features an advanced propulsion system that includes a permanent



magnet synchronous motor and a lithium iron phosphate battery with a capacity of 211.43 kWh, which ensures high efficiency in performance and sustainability. The battery complies with the standards of the United Nations Economic Commission in Europe, ensuring a high level of safety

and quality within international specifications.

The conference included four main sessions, the first of which dealt with “enhancing urban sustainability through public transportation in the Middle East and North Africa region,” and focused on the pivotal role of public trans-

portation in achieving environmental sustainability, reducing traffic congestion, and lowering pollution levels, which contributes to building green cities and healthy urban environments.

While the second session focused on “Green Technologies and Pioneering Sustainable Public Transport in the Region,” reviewing the latest innovations in the sector, including electric buses and hydrogen fuel cells, in which Mwasalat had pioneering experience. The third session reviewed “Intelligent Transportation Systems and the major transformations that public transportation networks are witnessing, thanks to smart systems,” and the role of these systems in improving operational efficiency and passenger experience. While the fourth session dealt with “strengthening the public transport structure and integration in the region, in line with global best practices and the latest policies adopted in the sector.”

During the conference, Mwasalat signed a cooperation programme with the American company Odis, with the aim of developing sustainable self-driving air transport technology.

The agreement includes many vital axes, including joint research and development, the exchange of technical knowledge, in addition to developing innovative solutions for drones to serve the sectors of transportation, oil and gas, security, tourism, and health services.

A cooperation programme was also signed with HICAP Middle East to prepare a quality study to remove carbon from the joint transportation fleet in the Sultanate of Oman, determine the cost and infrastructure necessary for it, and develop strategies in line with Mawasalat’s commitment to sustainability and its study of green fuel options and hydrogen in particular.

The conference aimed to en-

hance sustainability at the national and international levels, by opening opportunities to exchange experiences and cooperate to develop sustainable and innovative transportation solutions that help improve the quality of life in the region, in conjunction with Mwasalat taking executive steps to reduce the carbon footprint of its operations, and transforming sustainability plans into tangible actions on the ground.

The 2024 World Transport and Public Transport Union Conference in the Middle East and North Africa discussed ways to benefit from modern technologies and smart systems in the sector and adopt advanced transportation policies, in addition to reviewing visions and experiences on sustainability, green technologies, and electric buses, with the participation of a number of international specialists in the transportation sector.

SHOOTING INCIDENT

A difficult day but could have been worse, says Pakistan envoy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Pakistan Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, Imran Ali, described the events of Monday’s attack in Al Wadi Al Kabir as “a very difficult and disturbing day,” but expressed relief that “the worst is over.”

Speaking to the *Times of Oman* after it was confirmed that four Pakistani expatriates were among the nine killed in the attack, Ambassador Imran Ali said, “It is heartbreaking to see innocent lives lost. Today has been extremely challenging, and we are doing everything we can to support the affected families. It could have been worse, but thanks to the strong and swift actions of the Royal Oman Police and security officials, many lives were saved.”

He continued, “I was greatly relieved to see the majority of worshippers rescued late in the night around 2:15 am. The Pakistan embassy has been on high alert, providing all possible assistance to affected Pakistani citizens. We can confirm the identities of the four Pakistani victims: Ghulam Abbas, Hasan Abbas, Sayyed Qaisar Abbas, and Sulaiman Nawaz. We are working to facilitate the early repatriation of their bodies.”

Ambassador Ali said, “We are in constant contact with Omani



authorities regarding the repatriation of the mortal remains of the Pakistanis who died in the attack. We have also established a helpline to address queries from the community and provide assistance to those in Oman.”

The ambassador visited local hospitals to check on the wellbeing of injured Pakistanis.

Earlier in the day, Ambassador Ali had posted a video message on X, urging citizens to avoid

travelling to Wadi Al Kabir as the area had been cordoned off. In the video, he mentioned that he had visited three to four hospitals to see the injured, noting that “all those injured are relatively safe.” Emergency contact numbers have been provided for those staying in Oman. Any citizen with an injured relative can reach the embassy through the numbers shared on X by the Pakistan embassy.

Ambassador Ali urged Pakistani citizens to cooperate with local authorities and reassured that the embassy was in continuous communication with hospitals and officials.

Meanwhile, the affected area remained cordoned off on Tuesday, with access to the mosque restricted. Most residents preferred to stay indoors, according to a Times of Oman journalist on the scene.

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A night of terror: Harrowing tale of a shooting survivor

Times News Service

MUSCAT: “The hall of the mosque was packed with hundreds of worshippers and the atmosphere was heavy with tension as the sound of panicked, laboured breathing grew louder. The relentless firing of bullets echoed for over an hour, eventually becoming sporadic, but for nearly three hours, death loomed over us.”

These were the harrowing words of an eyewitness trapped inside the mosque in Al Wadi Al Kabir during a brutal attack on Monday night. The horrific assault claimed the lives of nine individuals, including three assailants, making it one of the most terrifying nights for this Pakistani expatriate.

In an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*, he recounted the ordeal on Tuesday afternoon, with the nation still in shock and disbelief.

“It was the night of the ninth day of the Islamic month of Muharram, a time when we gather for rituals on the eve of Ashura. We usually pray during this mourning period. We had con-



An eyewitness recounted his ordeal to Times of Oman while he was trapped inside the mosque during the shooting incident on Monday night

cluded our prayers around 10:30 p.m. and then were planning to proceed to Muttrah for the rest of the night to continue with the mourning rituals,” he said.

“There were nearly 500-600 people in the courtyard when we first heard sounds that resembled fireworks. My friend and I were puzzled, wondering why there would be fireworks. Before we could comprehend the severity of the situation, cries of ‘Bhaago, Bhaago [run, run]’ filled the air.

“We rushed inside the mosque,

cramming ourselves into the hall. People were flooding in from both entrances as the deafening noise of continuous gunfire made it clear these were bullets. In a matter of minutes, I noticed a six-year-old child, injured amidst the hail of bullets fired from a higher position. His father held him tightly, and soon I saw another injured worshipper,” he recalled, his voice trembling.

The eyewitness continued, “The firing went on for more than an hour and a half. If not for the

counter-firing by security officials stationed around the mosque, the tragedy would have been unimaginable. We were instructed to stay silent in the hall. In that moment of despair, I messaged my friend, thinking I might not live to see the dawn. Death seemed imminent. I told my friend to inform my brother in Pakistan if I didn’t survive,” he said, pausing to collect himself.

“The experience was tense, chaotic, and horrific. We felt like hostages for nearly 2-3 hours before Royal Oman Police offi-

ers finally made their way into the building. We were evacuated to the nearby Municipality building around 2:30 a.m.

Queues were formed

“More ROP officials arrived, and we were asked to write down our resident card numbers. Queues were formed, families were united and we were eventually allowed to leave around 4:00am. The ordeal that began around 10:30pm finally came to an end for us.”

Even on Tuesday afternoon when *Times of Oman* met him, the expatriate employee was visibly shaken.

“For me, it feels like a new life. I am grateful that the Royal Oman Police came in time and rescued us. Just imagine if the assailants had managed to enter the mosque; it would have been a massacre, leaving hundreds dead. *Al Humdulillah*, we had a narrow escape. God is great. It’s shocking to witness such an incident in a peaceful nation like Oman, where I have lived for the past five years,” he concluded, his voice filled with a mix of relief and lingering fear.

WADI KABIR SHOOTING

Over 50 health personnel called to treat the injured



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health has activated the Emergency Management Centre and the Medical Response and public health sector following the shooting incident that took place on Monday evening in the Wadi Al Kabir area of Muscat Governorate.

The centre stated that the ministry, through its health institutions and staff, began dealing with the incident in partnership with the University Medical City, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, and private health institutions.

The centre indicated that Khoula Hospital, which was designated as a centre for receiving injuries, was supported by specialised medical teams from the Royal Hospital and the University Medical City, where more than 50 employees from the specialised medical teams were called to deal with injuries.

Development Project

Etlalat Ibri Project in Al Dhahirah Governorate to cost OMR183mn



Times News Service

IBRI: The Governorate of Al Dhahirah has taken necessary steps for the execution of many development projects, including Etlalat Ibri (Ibri View) Project at Al Saleef area in the wilayat of Ibri.

This development project has won the winning award announced by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Najeeb bin Ali Al Rawas, Governor of Al Dhahirah, said that the project bagged this award due to the continuous efforts accorded by the governorate to achieve the sustainable development under its programmes aimed to keep abreast with the targets of Oman Vision 2040.

Social, economic impacts

The project would have appreciable social and economic impacts on society and the local economy, he said, adding that the project would have positive impacts through creation of job opportu-

nities and would enrich the quality of life of residents and visitors.

Etlalat Ibri (Ibri View) Project would boost the identity of Ibri city as a local and regional entertainment and commercial destination, he said, adding that the design of the project has taken into account the environment impact through implementing techniques that contribute to achievement of the balance between quality and sustainability.

These techniques included the use of renewable energy, smart basic structure, green building and sustainable transport.

The total area of the project is two million square metres and the investment value of the project is OMR183 million.

The Ministry of Finance would fund Phase 1 of the project at OMR 10 million, which reflects the keenness of the government for upgrading all elements of basic structure and enhancement of the sustainable economic growth in the governorates.



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Over 50,000 people visit Misfah Al Abriyyin during first half of 2024

MUSCAT, OMAN: Misfah Al Abriyyin village in the Wilayat of Al Hamra in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate attracts a wide range of visitors from both inside and outside Oman. The village is considered one of the most prominent tourist destinations in the wilayat due to its diverse elements of nature, heritage, culture, and other unique features that distinguish it from other tourist villages in Al Hamra.

During the first half of this year, the number of visitors to the village exceeded 50,000, both from within and outside Oman.

The village is famous for its many ancient ruins and heritage landmarks, including the historic Rogan Castle, built during the Persian presence in Oman more than 1,000 years ago; Bait Al Baitain, which remains standing after being constructed 500 years ago; the Misfah Al Abriyyin falaj, notable for its unique engineering that channels water from the valley to irrigate all the farms in the mountainous village; and six inns and guesthouses.

All these historical sites contributed to Misfah Al Abriyyin village receiving the 'Best Tourism Village Award' through the first edition of the United Nation World Tourism Organization's initiative in 2021. This initiative aims to identify villages committed to promoting and preserving their cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Varied features

Sultan Al Mukhmari, Acting Director of the Department of Historic Sites Development at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT), said that the Misfah Al Abriyyin village in the Wilayat of Al Hamra, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, is considered one of the most prominent tourist destinations due to its diverse elements of nature, heritage, culture, and other attributes that distinguish it from other villages in the wilayat. It is renowned for its architectural heritage and traditional agriculture, embodying an Omani oasis. Originally a self-sufficient community relying on ancient falaj irrigation systems for at least 2000 years, the village operates as a cohesive rural unit, self-sustaining and interconnected. It



also plays a vital role in creating a sustainable future for the local community through initiatives led by the MoHT, contributing to Oman Vision 2040.

Traditional irrigation systems and agriculture

Al Mukhmari added that the residents of Misfah Al Abriyyin village maintain traditional irrigation and agriculture systems, and the addition of tourist programs such as various tourism activities and experiences has made it a focal point for tourists from different nationalities. This has contributed to it becoming a place of accommodation for them through heritage inns, offering them a unique experience that combines the past and present. He emphasized that the village stands out for its stunning natural scenery, including palm and lemon farms. Additionally, the village is distinguished by its ancient houses, gates, and roads. The old council of Misfah Al Abriyyin and the old



market in the village, along with the ancient customs and traditions practiced by its residents during religious festivals, allow tourists to learn about these traditions during these occasions.

He also mentioned that Misfah Al Abriyyin village received one of the most important tourism village awards in the world through the World Tourism Organization's initiative in its first edition held in 2021. This initiative aims to identify villages committed to promoting and preserv-



ing their cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Criteria for evaluating tourist villages

Al Mukhmari clarified that tourist villages are assessed based on a set of criteria encompassing nine fundamental areas. These include cultural and natural resources, promotion and preservation of cultural assets, economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, tourism development, integration within the value chain, governance and tourism priorities, as well as infrastructure, communication, health, safety, and security.

Global tourist icon

Husni Al Abri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Misfah Al Abriyyin Civil Company, stated that the Misfah Al Abriyyin village is considered a global tourist icon, where the tourism strategy of the village aims to focus on key aspects, including community col-

laboration and resilience. It aims to develop and enhance leading community cooperatives through Misfah Al Abriyyin Civil Company, implementing tourism-related activities, developing capacities and resilience within the community cooperative for tourism management, achieving a balance between the aspirations of residents and tourists, and shaping and managing visitor expectations.

Collaboration between the ministry and the village

Al Abri added that the areas of cooperation between the MoHT and the residents of Misfah Al Abriyyin village include facilitating all challenges and investments for projects in the village, supporting Misfah Al Abriyyin Civil Company in restoring the main village gate and some old houses for investment purposes, and creating job opportunities for locals. He pointed out that the comprehensive study project conducted by the MoHT with the Archiam Heritage



and Culture Center at the University of Liverpool encompassed artistic, cultural, and social aspects to reconstruct the old village and utilize it as a heritage tourist village. The study serves as a roadmap for any project undertaken in the village to ensure it preserves its unique identity and style.

He also mentioned that there is significant cooperation between the village and various government and private entities to attract tourists throughout the year. This is achieved through organizing recreational activities by tourism companies within and outside the village, which in turn contribute to attracting tourists.

Plans are underway for new project developments

Al Abri affirmed that the village is currently working on several plans to introduce new and unique projects within and around the village to enhance tourist activities and adventure tourism. They are also working on establishing a hotel on the village's frontage as an additional accommodation option. Construction works are ongoing in the village's infrastructure, including parking facilities, in collaboration with various governmental and private entities.

He emphasised that the unique geographical diversity between valleys and mountains facilitates various activities such as mountain climbing and exploring the caves, valleys, and traditional Omani falaj systems that characterize Misfah Al Abriyyin uniquely. He also noted that the village participated in recent meetings alongside other tourist villages worldwide in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, and in the Italian village of San Gimignano to benefit from successful experiences, exchange ideas, and share experiences.

New regional technical centre will serve as SNF’s R&D hub for the GCC

By establishing a dedicated R&D hub in Oman, SNF aims to enhance its capabilities, accelerate product development, and provide tailored solutions that empower clients to navigate complex challenges

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Following the announcement of a \$250 million expansion plan in January 2024, SNF has announced the opening of its new Regional SNF Technical



Centre Oman (RSTC Oman). SNF is the world's leading manufacturer of polyacrylamide with more than 1.5 million tonnes capacity of active content SNF is the foremost global supplier of integrated solutions for chemical enhanced oil recovery (EOR). SNF's R&D hub This new centre will serve as SNF's R&D hub for the entire Gulf region. RSTC Oman reinforces SNF's longstanding presence in the region and heralds a new era of growth and opportunity. By establishing a dedicated research and development (R&D)

hub in Oman, SNF aims to enhance its capabilities, accelerate product development, and provide tailored solutions that empower clients to navigate complex challenges and seize new opportunities in the ever-evolving energy landscape. "The opening of our RSTC Oman underscores our unwavering dedication to delivering superior solutions and services to our esteemed clients in the Gulf Region," remarked Christophe Rivas, Managing Director of Oil and Gas at SNF. "With this state-of-the-art hub, we are poised to spearhead inno-

vation, foster collaboration, and address the evolving needs of the oil and gas industry with precision and agility." **State-of-the-art infrastructure** The RSTC-Oman is a hub of innovation with advanced laboratory equipment and specialised resources for polymer studies. It focuses on high-performance anionic polymers (HPAM) for oil and gas applications. Dedicated engineers and technicians at RSTC-Oman specialise in critical areas, including chemical EOR, water shut-off, hydraulic fracturing,



drilling and cementing, and production chemicals. **Collaboration hub** Proximity to project sites allows for efficient and tailored services throughout the project lifecycle, ensuring success with technical support and troubleshooting. The RSTC-Oman provides knowledge exchange through workshops, seminars, and training sessions, empowering the next generation of EOR practitioners. SNF's investment in RSTC-Oman underscores its commitment to Oman's energy sector. It aims to contribute significantly to sustainable energy production and economic growth. With a focus on in-country value, SNF prioritises local recruitment, academic partnerships, and talent fostering within Oman's

workforce. SNF is a specialty chemical company and an expert in water chemistry. All our products are used to treat, preserve, and recycle water. SNF helps reduce energy needs and carbon intensity while contributing to the responsible extraction of key mineral resources essential to the energy transition. As a global leader in designing and manufacturing water-soluble polymers, SNF continuously improves a range of more than 1,000 products, which helps preserve natural resources, encourages recycling, and improves industrial process efficiencies. In addition, SNF products have several complementary functionalities making them suitable for many applications such as solids-liquid separation, viscosity modification, and friction reduction.

CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY

Oman and Tanzania sign bilateral air services pact

DAR ES SALAAM: Represented by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the Sultanate of Oman today signed in Dar es Salaam the bilateral air services agreement (BASA) with the United Republic of Tanzania. The agreement was signed by Eng. Nayef Ali Al Abri, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Prof. Makame Mbarawa, Minister of Transport in Tanzania. The ceremony was attended by diplomats and officials from the two countries. This agreement was an update of an agreement signed by the governments of the two countries in 1982. The updated agreement, based on the principles of open skies between the two countries, provides for the operation of any number of direct flights between the two friendly countries. It also seeks to organise operational and technical aspects in a manner that serves the two countries' common interests. The agreement consists of 24 articles and a special annex on the schedule of air routes between the two countries. The articles comprise economic provisions to realise operational cooperation that enables



designated airline companies to operate flights for the transport of passengers and freights and enable the two countries to enter into cooperative arrangements and codeshares on flights operated by each other's carriers.

-ONA

FOREIGN MINISTRY

Advice for Omanis travelling to Singapore

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omanis wishing to travel to the Republic of Singapore do not need an entry visa, said the Foreign Ministry. The Foreign Ministry said that it would like to inform all citizens wishing to visit Singapore that they do not need an entry visa to travel to Singapore, and that they need to fill out the entry card via

the website: <https://www.ica.gov.sg/enter-transit-depart/entering-singapore/sg-arrival-card>. Through it, visitors will be granted a Short-Term Visit Permit (STVP), up to 30 days upon arrival. For more details, please visit the official website of the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) of the Republic of Singapore at: www.ica.gov.sg. that lasts until the end of July. Following this, the date harvesting begins and continues until the end of August, after which farmers display their dates in the market. Some of the most famous types on display include Ajwa dates, Safawi dates, Amber dates, Medjool dates, Barni dates, and various other varieties. The Madinah branch of the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture actively monitors the central date market to maintain quality standards. They oversee technical and health requirements, ensuring the products meet the necessary standards. - SPA

SEMI-RIPE DATES HARVEST SEASON

Thriving economic buzz in Madinah’s date market

MADINAH: The central date market in Madinah is experiencing a remarkable economic boom during the rhtab (semi-ripe dates) harvest season, which starts in the first quarter of June each year. 29,000 palm farms in the region supply this bustling market. What sets the date market in Madinah apart is the wide variety of rhtab types available. Madinah and its governorates are renowned for their diverse selection, such as Rotana, Rabbi, Heiliah, and other unique varieties. High temperatures influence the ripening speed of rhtab, initiating the harvesting process



Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Oman Police - Directorate of Public Relations and Security Information – announces a public auction to sell used ROP vehicles at the Auction Yard of Awqad Police Station, Dhofar Police Command, at 4:00 pm on Monday 29 July 2024.

Vehicles can be inspected during official working hours during the period from 21 to 25 July 2024. The successful bidder must abide by the following terms and conditions:

- The buyer must pay the vehicle's value immediately along with the auctioneer fees at 3% by e-payment.
- The buyer must move the vehicle within a period of 3 days from the selling date; otherwise, they shall pay a fine of RO 5/- per each day of delay.
- The buyer must pay the fees of vehicle registration in their name in the traffic system before receiving the vehicle.

TENDER NOTICE



Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender: -

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854/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-96 Recall	Dredging Works at Fishery Harbours & Fish Landing Centers of Sultanate of Oman	Sunday 14/7/2024	Tuesday 23/7/2024	Sunday 4/8/2024	Specialized companies registered with excellent, first, second, third and fourth grades	(150/-) Omani riyals for local companies (30/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
976/2023/MAF-WR/HQ-105 Recall	Supply of Early Detection and surveillance of red palm weevil	Thursday 11/7/2024	Sunday 21/7/2024	Wednesday 31/7/2024	Specialized companies registered with excellent, first, second, third and fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
14/2024/MAF-WR/HQ-3 Recall	Designing a Fire Fighting, Security and Safety System For Fisheries Harbors	Thursday 11/7/2024	Sunday 21/7/2024	Sunday 4/8/2024	Specialized companies registered with first and Second grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs
471/2024/MAF-WR/HQ-37	Technical support services in MAFWR	Wednesday 10/7/2024	Monday 30/7/2024	Tuesday 20/8/2024	Specialized companies registered with excellent, first, second, third and fourth grades	(25/-) Omani riyals for local companies (10/-) Omani riyals for SMEs

- above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration for local companies, and for International company that not have head quarters in the Sultanate of Oman should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender) and addressed to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

JD Vance confirmed as Trump’s running mate in US election

Vance was greeted on the first day of the Republican National Convention (RNC) with a standing ovation, while Trump made his first public appearance since he survived an assassination attempt days earlier

OHIO: The Republican party confirmed on Monday former US President Donald Trump as its candidate for the upcoming US election and Ohio Senator JD Vance as his running mate. Vance was greeted at the first day of the Republican National Convention (RNC) with a standing ovation, while Trump made his first public appearance since he survived an assassination attempt days earlier. “Just overwhelmed with gratitude. What an honour it is to run alongside President Donald J. Trump. He delivered peace and prosperity once, and with your help, he’ll do it again,” Vance said on social media after his nomination. Trump’s rival, US President Joe Biden, condemned the Republi-



cans’ choice of vice presidential candidate. “He’s a clone of Trump on the issues,” Biden told reporters. “I don’t see any difference.”

Who is JD Vance? Vance is a 39-year-old Marine Corps veteran who rose to prominence with his 2016 memoir “Hillbilly Elegy,” that tells of the hardships he faced growing up in Appalachian Kentucky and Ohio. When Trump first ran for president that same year, Vance called him “dangerous” and “unfit for office.” However, Vance was introduced to the Trump family when Donald Trump Jr. became a fan of his book. He eventually met with Trump as president in 2021. Once he was elected as a senator for Ohio in 2023, Vance fiercely defended Trump’s policies and behavior, which he said resonated with voters who felt forgotten by the party. In recent days, Vance attracted controversy for his comments on

the assassination attempt against Trump. “The central premise of the Biden campaign is that President Donald Trump is an authoritarian fascist who must be stopped at all costs,” Vance wrote on social media. “That rhetoric led directly to President Trump’s attempted assassination.” Biden said Monday he had made a mistake by saying Trump should be put in the “bullseye” last week but added that Trump has frequently employed violent rhetoric on the campaign trail. **What are JD Vance’s views?** Ideologically, Vance has been described by the president of the Heritage Foundation as a leading conservative voice on key issues including free market economics, a less interventionist foreign policy and “American culture writ large.” Democrats have called Vance an extremist on issues like abortion. He signaled support for a

nationwide 15-week abortion ban during his senate campaign, but he softened his stance after Ohio voters overwhelmingly backed a 2023 abortion rights amendment. On foreign policy, Vance has followed the so-called America first narrative against Ukraine aid and calling on Europe to step up its defence capabilities. Earlier this year at the Munich Security Conference, Vance argued that the main problem in Ukraine was “that there’s no clear end point,” adding that the US doesn’t manufacture enough weapons and ammunition to back wartime efforts in Europe, the Middle East and “potentially contingency in East Asia.” “Obviously we love our NATO allies and I think we value the NATO alliance, and that’s true across the political spectrum,” Vance said at the event. But, he said, Trump and conservative Republicans want Europe “to be a little bit more self-sufficient” when it comes to defence. —DW

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India and Mauritius review partnership

PORT LOUIS: Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Tuesday called on Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jagnauth in Port Louis and appreciated further broadening of the special and enduring partnership between both the nations. During his two day visit to Mauritius, EAM Jaishankar conveyed the warm greetings of PM Narendra Modi to Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jagnauth. “Honoured to call on PM @KumarJugnauthtoday in Port Louis. Conveyed the warm greetings of PM @narendramodi. Took stock of our special and enduring partnership and appreciated its further broadening. Looking forward to the continued collaboration and strengthening of relations,” Jaishankar said in a post on X.



Gobin called it a ‘momentous day’ as he inaugurated development projects with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar as India extended its support to Mauritius. Gobin said Jaishankar and he inaugurated High Impact Community Development Projects, exchanged MoUs, and handed over OCI cards. This comes around a month after PM Jugnauth visited India for the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with his new cabinet and Council of Ministers. The visit marks one of Jaishankar’s first bilateral engagements following his re-appointment in the PM Modi-led government. Previously, Jaishankar visited Mauritius in February 2021.

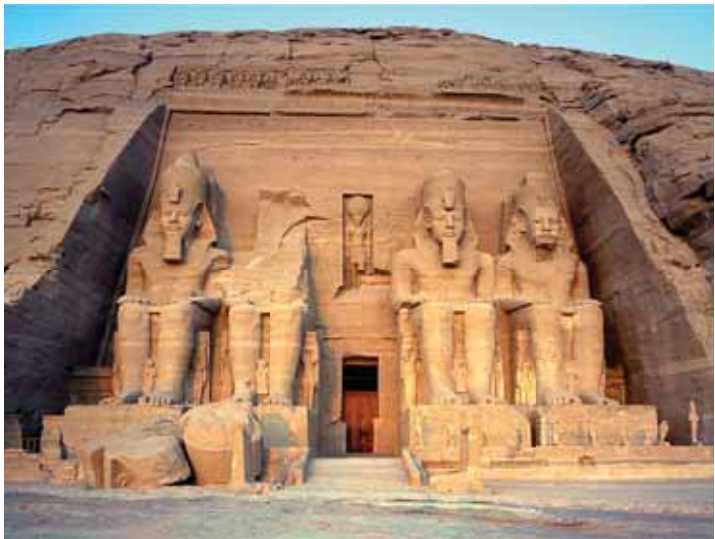
—ANI

GERMAN CITY OF COLOGNE

Opulence of pharaoh Ramses II unveiled at German exhibition

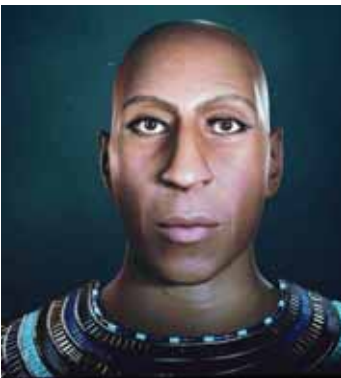
CAIRO: Ramses II is documented as having been quite vain. But you can afford to be vain when you’re a pharaoh, the ruler and protector of Egypt, the intermediary between humans and the gods. After he died, Ramses II was embalmed and preserved for eternity — but that’s not the only reason his legacy was sealed into the memory of future generations. “Ramses was a great king who was a warrior. He made many battles and was the first one to have a peace treaty,” explains Zahi Hawass, a renowned archaeologist and former antiquities minister of Egypt. “And he’s a builder — everywhere you find traces.” Hawass is the curator of the touring exhibition “Ramses and Gold of the Pharaohs,” which recently arrived in the western German city of Cologne following stops in Sydney, Australia and Paris, France. “Our modern world differs greatly from Ancient Egypt. This exhibition allows visitors to dive into Ramses’ world and discover a completely different way of life,” he said.

Ramses the warlord For almost 67 years, Ramses II (1279 to 1213 BC) ruled over the empire on the Nile. At the beginning of his reign, like his father Seti I before him, he had to defend himself against Libyan tribes in the northwest and against the mighty Hittite Empire, which covered roughly the area of Turkey, Syria and Lebanon today. He began learning the art of warfare as a child and, alongside his father, he went into battle against the neighboring peoples as an archer on a chariot. He was 25 years old when he was crowned as pharaoh. One of his most famous campaigns during his reign was the battle for the important trading city of Kadesh. Under his command, some 20,000 warriors marched against the enemy, flanked by 2,000 chariots. It was possibly the largest army a pharaoh had ever assembled, yet he almost nearly suffered a devastating defeat. Ramses was certain of victory, but he was deceived by spies who told him the Hittites were still far away from the camp of his



forces. In reality, they were lying in ambush. Only at the last moment did reinforcements arrive for the Egyptians, and the battle ended in a draw. But that outcome was out of the question for the pharaoh, so he instructed his sculptors to carve temple inscriptions throughout Egypt proclaiming his victory. “I conquered all foreigners, I alone, when my troops and chariot fighters had abandoned me,” he dictated to his scribes. Today, we would probably call that “fake news.” It was only thanks to a Hittite inscription that the truth later came to light. A carved stone ancient Egyptian

sphinx, with a broken stone statue in front of it. Ramses was not only a master of self-promotion; 16 years later, he managed to negotiate the first recorded peace treaty in world history with the Hittites. The erstwhile rivals promised to never attack each other again and even signed a pact of mutual assistance. A copy of the treaty is now on display at United Nations headquarters in New York. **The pharaoh — an ambitious building contractor** Thanks to that alliance, Egypt was able to focus on a cultural and economic upswing — and Ramses II



was able to devote himself entirely to ambitious building projects. Probably no other pharaoh was responsible for so much new construction, including a new capital: Pi-Ramesses (House of Ramses). His gigantic burial palace, the Ramesseum in Western Thebes, near the modern city of Luxor, housed a library with more than 10,000 papyrus scrolls. He also had himself immortalized as a gigantic stone statue weighing 1,000 tons and standing 17 meters high. Ramses’ most famous works include the temples of Karnak, Luxor and Abu Simbel, which was cut into rock. The pharaoh was celebrated for his monumental buildings and quickly became known as “Ramses the Great.” He married eight women, fathering some 100 children. His 66-year reign during the 19th dynasty



is regarded as the pinnacle of the empire’s glory and power. “He has surpassed everything,” he said of himself. **Ramses’ mummy has been abroad only once** Ramses II entered the realm of the dead in 1213 BC, at the age of 90. His mummy has been preserved to this day and only left Egypt once: In 1976, the remains of Ramses II were taken to Paris for preservation because they were in danger of deteriorating. The mummy was received like a high-ranking state guest, with gun salutes thundering into the sky to greet him. Today, it rests in the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization in the Egyptian capital Cairo. At the touring exhibition now in Cologne, visitors can only admire his cedar coffin, which is decorated with hieroglyphs that pay homage to the pharaoh. The coffin has been moved several times over the millennia to protect it from grave robbers, but with little success. “A pharaoh like Ramses — can you imagine how rich he was and what kind of artifacts could be inside? The tomb full of gold and silver,” Hawass told DW. In addition, statues depicting him or his family members, opulent pieces of jewelry, animal mummies and death masks bear witness to a world long gone. Did John Norman, managing director of World Heritage Exhibitions, which organized the show, have nightmares at the thought that something might happen to the original artifacts on their journey to Cologne? “No,” he told DW, “The care that we give these

objects, the way they’re moved, transported, is all like a military operation basically with security.” **Exhibition proceeds support archaeological heritage** Ramses II most likely could never have imagined that his treasures would be shown to people 3,000 years after his death. The funerary objects were meant to accompany him into the afterlife, while valuable works of art were reserved for the upper classes. It is even said that disturbing the peace of the tomb carried a curse. So why is Egypt sending these treasures to be displayed around the world? The reason is simple: “We need money for the conservation,” Zahi Hawass told DW. “There is no civilization that has what Egypt has, with the pharaonic monuments. Not the Greco-Roman, Jewish-Christian (sic), Islamic. All this needs millions to billions for the conservation.” The exhibition, he continues, is also intended to encourage visitors to travel to Egypt themselves one day and to pour money into the state coffers. The Egyptologist also took the opportunity in Cologne to repeat a heartfelt request: “We want Nefertiti back. I am not after other Egypt artifacts; you can keep them in Munich or Berlin. But we want one that is not legally here: Nefertiti.” The exhibition “Ramses and the Gold of the Pharaohs” runs until January 6, 2025 at the Odysseum in Cologne. It is scheduled to open in the Japanese capital Tokyo in the spring of 2025.

—DW

With each evacuation order, Gazans are forced to make impossible choices

UN spokesman condemned the targeting of civilians, noting that the attacks carried out in recent days prove once again that there is no safe place in Gaza Strip

GAZA: UN spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, Stéphane Dujarric, affirmed the continuation of efforts to support the internally displaced persons in the Gaza Strip, saying: “With each new evacuation order, families in Gaza are forced to make impossible choices.”

Dujarric noted at the daily press conference that a team from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has taken action to support displaced



people from northern Gaza to the south.

Dujarric condemned the targeting of civilians, noting that the attacks carried out in recent days prove once again that there is no safe place in Gaza.

Amnesty International said that Palestinian civilians have faced multiple waves of displacement due to Israel’s relentless nine-

month onslaught on the occupied Gaza Strip and the repeated evacuation orders, stating: “Such orders amount to unlawful transfer, a war crime.”

The Israeli occupation forces continued on Tuesday their aggression on the Gaza Strip, by land, sea and air, since October 7, 2023, resulting in the killing of more than 38,664 civilians, mostly

women and children, and the injury of over 89,097 others.

Thousands of victims remain trapped under the rubble or scattered on the roads.

Occupation forces raid Tubas, cause damage to vehicles

Israeli occupation forces on Tuesday dawn stormed the city of Tu-

bas in the northern West Bank.

Local sources said that the occupation forces stormed the city with several military patrols from the Tayaseer military checkpoint, east of the city, while confrontations broke out on its outskirts.

Occupation soldiers

They indicated that the occupation soldiers deployed snipers and infantry troops in several areas of the city during its storming, and raided several citizens’ homes, and detained citizens Mithqal and Fawaz Abu Dawas to pressure their two sons to surrender themselves, before they released them later.

The sources pointed out that the occupation army caused great damage to citizens’ vehicles in the village of Tayasir, east of Tubas, as they passed from the village towards the city of Tubas.

EU imposes sanctions on colonists and Israeli entities for violence against Palestinians

The European Union announced the imposition of sanctions on five extremist colonists and three Israeli organizations for their involvement in violent attacks against Palestinians in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem,

and for preventing humanitarian aid from reaching the Gaza Strip.

According to a statement issued by the European Union, the sanctions stipulated a freeze on assets and a ban on granting visas, explaining that the individuals and entities included in the list are responsible for serious and systematic human rights violations against Palestinians in the West Bank.

The European Union also imposed sanctions on the Israeli organization “Tsav 9” for regularly preventing the entry of humanitarian aid trucks transporting food, water and fuel into Gaza through violence.

During the last four months, the United States, the European Union, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and New Zealand imposed sanctions on colonists and colonial entities in the occupied West Bank, in light of the escalation of terrorist attacks carried out by colonists against citizens and their properties.

Colonialists have escalated their terrorist attacks since October 7, 2023. They have also carried out 1,334 attacks since the beginning of this year in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, which claimed the lives of seven Palestinians.

— WAPA

NANGARHAR PROVINCE

Flash floods kill 40 people in northern Afghanistan

JALALABAD: At least 40 people had been killed and hundreds injured in eastern Afghanistan as of Tuesday, local officials said as heavy rains continued to pelt the region. Saifullah Khalid, head of Nangarhar province’s disaster management authority, said that 350 people were wounded and some 400 homes had also been demolished by the torrent.

Electricity blackouts

Many of the injured were brought to the regional hospital in Nangarhar from Jalalabad, the capital of the province which was suffering from electricity blackouts and impassable roads due to the storms.

The latest tragedy comes after flash floods in May killed hun-

dreds of people and destroyed huge areas of agricultural land where 80% of the population relies on farming to sustain themselves.

Lack of foreign aid agencies

Compounding the issues in Afghanistan is the lack of foreign aid agencies’ presence on the ground. Many organisations left the country due to the instability that has arisen since the Taliban violently took back control in 2021.

Scientists have also warned that Afghanistan, one of the poorest countries in the world, is set to be particularly affected by the ravages of climate breakdown — of the effects of which is extreme weather becoming more common.— DW



SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

Quake strikes Fiji Islands

SUVA: An earthquake measuring 4.6 magnitude on the Richter scale struck on Tuesday the islands of Fiji, located in the South Pacific Ocean.

The epicentre of the earthquake occurred 308.9 km east of Levuka at a depth of 589.8 km, the US Geological Survey reported.

Fiji Islands are located in an area called the Ring of Fire in the Pacific Ocean, which is exposed from time to time to many aftershocks and earthquakes that may be strong.

A notable earthquake in Fiji’s history was one that occurred off the coast of Suva in 1953, as well as the 1979 Taveuni earthquake.

— ONA

WORSENING ECONOMIC CRISIS

Nigerians struggle to make ends meet amid economic crisis

ABUJA: Toyin Ogundeko, a resident of Lagos and a caterer by profession, lives with asthma. Her son has the condition, too.

But medicines have become so expensive in Nigeria that they can’t afford the inhalers they need.

Amid a worsening economic crisis, Ogundeko isn’t sure how they will get by.

“With the way the economy is going, things are really getting tough. You’re struggling to buy foodstuffs, and you’re also trying to stock up on your medication,” she told DW.

“So, for me I can cut down on the inhaler for myself. I won’t cut it for my child,” she said.

What’s causing the crisis?

The worst economic crisis in Nigeria in decades has cost the country the ranking as Africa’s biggest economy. And inflation and a volatile exchange rate are driving the cost of living up in the nation of more than 200 million people.

Higher drug import prices have led to local price hikes and a scarcity of basic medicines. Pharmacist Emmanuel Olaogun Oladeji says Nigerian drug manufacturers simply can’t plug the gap.

“There is a limit to what local manufacturers can do. We are grateful to have the likes of Emzor Pharmaceuticals and some other indigenous manufacturers in the country, but there is a limit to what they can do,” Oladeji told DW.

Why oil-rich Nigeria can still not fuel its economy

Analysts predict that Nigeria could plunge to fourth position on the list of African economies in 2024. Businesses are struggling to stay afloat.

“What caused our problem in Nigeria today is the devaluation of our national currency against the US dollar,” Alhaji Sani Nasidi, a veteran businessman, told DW.



The high cost of essential commodities citizens are facing is a direct result, he said. As a way out of the current crisis, Nasidi suggested that “Nigeria needs to run away from a dollar economy.”

Economic reforms cause hardship

President Bola Tinubu has embarked on a bold set of economic reforms that he argues are necessary and will bear fruit in the

future.

His decision to remove fuel subsidies was seen as abrupt. It led to the doubling of fuel prices, rising food and transport costs and an increase in the price of imported

products.

According to financial analyst and former banker Aminu Philip Yado, the high fuel costs are impacting Nigerians broadly.

“Transportation is one of the major factors that affects the cost of produce in the market,” Yado said. “When you go to the farm and you have to harvest and transport at a very high cost, there is no way you can come to the market and charge low. You would certainly have to charge profitably and sustainably.”

Nigerian labour unions have called several nationwide strikes over salaries that are too low to keep up with inflation.

“The same inflation is what caused companies to run away from Nigeria because they would not be making a profit,” said Alhaji Sani Nasidi, the businessman.

“The quality of goods and services they normally produce would be reduced, and people would not have money to buy it.”

Aminu Philip Yado, the financial analyst, believes that the economy needs innovation.

“What is basically wrong with the economy is that the managers of the economy themselves are not really having the economy at heart. Everybody that gets there struggles for his own and not the Nigerian people,” Yado told DW.

Yado sees a lack of investment in major infrastructure that could grow the economy and create jobs for youth as a key factor in the deepening economic crisis.

“When they talk of borrowing, in fact how much [...] of this borrowing that they want to invest in the Nigerian infrastructure actually goes into investment in that infrastructure in Nigeria?” he asks.

Energy crisis with devastating impact

Nigeria also faces an energy crisis. Tinubu is trying to rejuvenate the national power grid by pouring in public money instead of subsidizing electricity for those who cannot afford to pay.

After he scrapped fuel subsidies, Tinubu did away with a series of electricity subsidies.

“If there is power in Nigeria today, all artisans that depend on power to do their business will go back to doing their business at a cheaper cost than they are doing now,” said Yado.

Most business owners are forced to buy generators to keep operations going. This trend, the financial analyst told DW, is not sustainable.

In the meantime, citizens like Toyin Ogundeko and her son are desperate. “People have all sorts of complicated conditions, and imagine how they’re coping?” she said.

“So, for me it’s a plea to the government: Whatever needs to be done, first find a way to stabilise this economy. Things are getting out of hand.” — DW

SPORTS

Mbappe unveiled in front of 80,000 Real Madrid fans

French star hails move to the ‘club of my dreams’ after leaving PSG

MADRID: Kylian Mbappe was given a glorious unveiling in front of 80,000 Real Madrid fans and their 15 Champions League trophies at the Santiago Bernabeu on Tuesday.

The French superstar beamed as he spoke about joining the ‘club of his dreams’ after being teed up by a performance from Andrea Bocelli, an extended montage of his highlights, and a speech from club president Florentino Perez.

Mbappe, 25, will take the No.9 shirt after sealing his move from Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and ending one of football’s most protracted transfer sagas.

The forward was serenaded as the Bernabeu blasted out their iconic Hala Madrid anthem and paraded in front of fans booting footballs into the baying crowd.

In imitation of Cristiano Ronaldo at his unveiling, he kissed the badge.

His mother broke down in tears as he emerged and spoke of his pride to be joining the ‘biggest club in the history of world football’.

‘My family are so happy. I can see my mum crying. It’s an incredible day for me. I’ve dreamed about this day since I was a kid. Being here today means a lot to me,’ he said in Spanish as the crowd persistently interrupted



his speech with cheers.

‘Now I have another dream - and that’s the dream of living up to this club’s history and Madridistas’ expectations. I can promise that I will give my all for the club and this badge.

‘I’d also like to send a message to all the kids here today. I was once like you. If you have the passion, you’ll achieve your dreams.

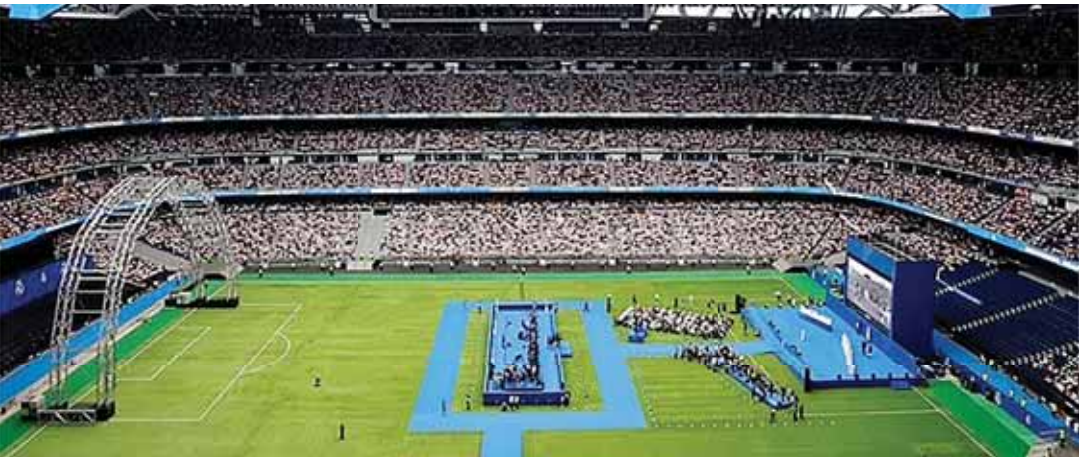
‘I’m very excited and emotional. The fact that I’m talking so much means that it’s very important for

me to be here today. This is the club of my dreams and the biggest club in the history of world football.’

He then counted to three and urged the fans to chant ‘Hala Madrid!’

Mbappe spent seven years in the French capital and was wildly successful, lifting seven Ligue 1 titles, but the Champions League has always eluded him.

He has agreed to take a major pay cut after signing a five-year contract and is due to receive



£12.8million net a season at Madrid, down from the £21.4m net he earned in Paris.

Despite losing out in terms of basic wage Mbappe will be paid a sizeable signing on fee understood to be over £85.6m and will keep an 80 per cent share of image rights on any new commercial deals he signs after becoming a Madrid player. This breaks from the normal 50-50 split the club usually imposes on new players.

Los Blancos announced recent-

ly that he will take the No.9 shirt in his first season at the club, which was vacated by Karim Benzema after the 2022-23 season.

Mbappe wore No.7 for the majority of his Paris Saint-Germain career but that jersey currently belongs to Vinicius Junior at Madrid. Meanwhile, Mbappe was France’s No.10 at Euro 2024 - a number that has been Luka Modric’s at the Bernabeu since 2017.

Madrid had been waiting until Mbappe’s Euros participation

was over before announcing their plans to officially unveil him.

President Perez welcomed him fondly.

He said: “This love that you felt for Real Madrid, and you identifying with this club since your childhood, made it possible for you to be here and to overcome those obstacles on the way to your dream.”

“Today Kylian Mbappe has fulfilled his dream. Kylian, welcome home. Welcome to Real Madrid,” he added. - Agencies

MESSI ON HIS FITNESS

‘Will be back on the pitch again soon’



MIAMI: Argentina’s maestro, Lionel Messi, thanked the fans for supporting them in their triumphant Copa America campaign and gave a fitness update on his injury as well.

In the final against Colombia, Messi left the pitch in tears after Nico Gonzalez came in as a substitute for him in the 66th minute.

In the first half, Messi sustained a heavy knock following a challenge from Arias.

However, the Argentinian maestro got up without any assistance, but there was a slight limp as he resumed the game. His injury aggravated in the second half after he was brought down once again. This led to his substitution, and the emotions got the better of him as he sat on the bench crying.

The eight-time Ballon d’Or winner shared a post on Instagram on Monday to provide an injury update and thank the fans for their support.

“Copa America is over, and firstly, I want to thank everyone for the messages and greetings. I’m doing well, thank God, and hopefully, soon I can be on the pitch again, enjoying what I love doing most. I’m happy, a lot, especially because we achieved the goal we had and Fide [Angel Di Maria] leaves us with another Copa.

“The biggest ones, like him, Ota or me, we live it with special excitement, with other teammates who already have several tournaments and add their experience as well, and with a litter of young people who give their all in every ball.

“We are a team and also a family, a spectacular group. Thanks to everyone who was supporting us, this national team has a lot of present and a lot of future too. Let’s go Argentina,” he wrote in a post on Instagram.

As of now, it is yet to be seen whether Messi will be available for Inter Miami’s clash against Toronto on Thursday. - ANI

EURO FINAL DEFEAT

Southgate quits as England manager

LONDON: England manager Gareth Southgate on Tuesday resigned two days after defeat by Spain in the 2024 European Championship final on Tuesday.

The Three Lions lost 2-1 in Berlin on Sunday - their second consecutive Euros final defeat, having been beaten on penalties by Italy at Wembley three years ago.

Southgate, 53, managed his country for 102 games in eight years in charge. His contract was set to expire later this year.

“As a proud Englishman, it has been the honour of my life to play for England and to manage England,” said Southgate. “It has meant everything to me, and I have given it my all. But it’s time for change, and for a new chapter.”

Football Association (FA) chief executive Mark Bullingham said the process to appoint Southgate’s successor has started and “we aim to have our new manager confirmed as soon as possible”.

He added the FA “have an interim solution in place if it is needed” and will not comment further on the process until a new boss is appointed.

England’s next match is against the Republic of Ireland in the Nations League on 7 September.

Southgate is the only manager bar 1966 World Cup winner Sir Alf Ramsey to lead the England men’s team into a major tournament final.

He managed England at four major tournaments, also reaching the World Cup semi-finals in 2018 and quarter-finals in 2022.

In the major tournaments between 1966 and Southgate taking over in 2016, England won six



knockout games in total. Under Southgate, England won nine such matches, including two penalty shootout victories.

“The squad we took to Germany is full of exciting young talent and they can win the trophy we all dream of,” added Southgate.

“We have the best fans in the world, and their support has meant the world to me. I’m an England fan and I always will be.

“I look forward to watching and celebrating as the players go on to create more special memories and to connect and inspire the nation as we know they can. Thank you, England - for everything.”

The Prince of Wales, who is president of the FA, thanked Southgate for “creating a team that stands shoulder to shoulder with the world’s finest in 2024”.

“Thank you for showing humil-

ity, compassion, and true leadership under the most intense pressure and scrutiny,” he added.

“And thank you for being an all-round class act. You should be incredibly proud of what you’ve achieved.”

England and Arsenal midfielder Declan Rice said: “Thank you gaffer. It’s been a privilege to play for England under your guidance.

“Memories that will stay with me forever. All the best in your next adventure.”

England and Everton goalkeeper Jordan Pickford thanked Southgate for “always believing” in him, adding: “I would like to wish him all the best in his next steps.”

Southgate, who replaced Sam Allardyce after his short-lived spell, won 61 of his 102 games in charge of England, drawing 24 and losing 17.

The former defender, who won 57 caps for England between 1995 and 2004, has been involved in the England set-up since 2013, having managed the under-21s for three years prior to taking the top job.

His only experience in club management was at Middlesbrough from 2006-2009.

Southgate thanked his players and backroom staff, calling assistant Steve Holland “one of the most talented coaches of his generation”.

“I joined the FA in 2011, determined to improve English football,” he added.

“I hope we get behind the players and the team at St George’s Park and the FA who strive every day to improve English football, and understand the power football has to drive positive change.” - Agencies

UEFA XI

Rodri, Yamal among six Spain players in Euro Team of the Tournament

BERLIN: UEFA have announced their Euro 2024 Team of the Tournament, with Rodri and Lamine Yamal among six Spain players named in the star XI.

La Roja claimed their record-breaking fourth European Championship crown on Sunday, as Mikel Oyarzabal’s late strike sealed a 2-1 victory over England in Berlin.

Luis de la Fuente’s side won all

seven of their matches, and their efforts have been recognised in UEFA’s team of the tournament.

Rodri was named Player of the Tournament and Yamal scooped the Young Player award, while team-mate Dani Olmo edged a six-way tie in the race for the Golden Boot having also claimed two assists.

The trio are joined by Nico Williams, who opened the scoring in

the final, along with Marc Cucurella and Fabian Ruiz.

France’s duo of Mike Maignan and William Saliba have been included, as well as England defender Kyle Walker, whose Manchester City team-mate Manuel Akanji also gets the nod, with Germany’s Jamal Musiala completing the line-up.

The team of the tournament was picked by a panel of 12 “technical

observers” including David Moyes, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Rafa Benitez.

Team of the tournament: Mike Maignan (France); Kyle Walker (England); Manuel Akanji (Switzerland); William Saliba (France); Marc Cucurella (Spain); Daniel Olmo (Spain); Rodri (Spain); Fabian Ruiz (Spain); Lamine Yamal (Spain); Jamal Musiala (Germany); Nico Williams (Spain). - Agencies



OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by September 2024 reaching \$83.81, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 77 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$84.58. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,689.88 points, down by 0.07% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.06% at 452.27 points. Global Financial Investments, up 6.67%, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 8.05%, was the top loser.

Abraj commences 2nd drilling rig in Wafra oilfield ahead of schedule

It marks a significant step forward in Abraj's strategic expansion into the Kuwaiti market, further cementing its position as a leading provider of oil and gas services in the region

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Abraj Energy Services announces the successful commencement of operations for its second drilling rig in the Wafra oilfield in Kuwait ahead of schedule. This achievement follows the final acceptance from multiple inspecting authorities. It marks a significant step forward in Abraj's strategic expansion into the Kuwaiti market, further cementing its position as a leading provider of oil and gas services in the region. The new deployment is part of a comprehensive contract with Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) and Saudi Chevron. It reflects Abraj's steadfast commitment to delivering top-notch, efficient drilling services. The recent mobilization of the first rig in March 2024 set a precedent for excellence, and this second rig's early commencement highlights Abraj's



operational superiority and ability to meet the high standards required by its trusted partners. The new rig a 1500 HP fast-moving drilling rig, is equipped with cutting-edge innovative solutions, with AI-drilling technology, making it one of the most advanced rigs in operation today, with an automated Rig package and comprehensive for safe & optimal performance. These features enable Abraj to provide efficient, reliable, and secure drilling opera-

tions, setting a new benchmark in the industry. "We are excited to commence operations with our second rig in Wafra Oil Field ahead of schedule," said Eng. Saif Al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services. "This milestone is a testament to our team's dedication and expertise in providing top-tier drilling services. Our collaboration with KGOC and Saudi Chevron underscores our commitment to operational excellence and our ability to support our clients in achieving

their production goals." The final acceptance of the second rig signifies the culmination of rigorous preparation and collaboration between Abraj and its clients. The successful deployment enhances Abraj's operational footprint in Kuwait and demonstrates its capability to execute complex projects efficiently and safely. The second rig's commencement ahead of the plan mirrors the success of the first rig, highlighting the team's efficiency and dedication.

Abraj Energy Services prides itself on its diverse client portfolio and market leadership across the Middle East. With over 30 rigs in operation, Abraj serves major clients such as Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), OQ, Petrogas Occidental Oman, BP Oman, TotalEnergies, and others, which consistently deliver high-performance drilling solutions. Strategic partnerships and innovative approaches have positioned Abraj as a market leader, contributing to

the energy sector's development in the Gulf region. Abraj Energy Services continues to focus on expanding its operations and leveraging its technical expertise to support the growing demands of the oil and gas industry in the Gulf region. With a strong emphasis on safety, innovation, and client satisfaction, Abraj is well-positioned to contribute significantly to the energy sector's development in Kuwait and beyond.

BY 2030



Cashless payments in Asia-Pacific projected to reach 45% of global payment volume

NEW DELHI: Total cashless payments in the entire Asia-Pacific region are projected to reach almost 45 per cent of global payment volume by the end of this decade - 2030, said S&P Global Market Intelligence. Asia-Pacific's cashless payment volumes, both online and offline, are projected to reach a staggering \$26.7 trillion by 2030, accounting for nearly 45 per cent of the projected \$60.1 trillion in global payments volume, according to 451 Research, part of S&P Global Market Intelligence. In 2023, the region saw \$14 billion in cashless payments, representing 39 per cent of the \$36 billion in global payment volume. Asia-Pacific offers significant growth opportunities for payment fintechs, fuelled by the rise of cashless payments and alternative methods. To succeed, fintechs should adopt local payment preferences, integrate e-wallets and account-to-account transfers, and support QR codes and mobile payments, said the financial information and analytics firm. "Investing in local expertise and forming partnerships is crucial for navigating the diverse market, including securing domestic licenses and complying with varied local regulations," said Sampath Sharma Nariya-

nuri, Senior Fintech Research Analyst at S&P Global Market Intelligence. "Innovations in affordable payment solutions like sound boxes and software point of sale (softPOS) are essential for small and micro merchants. Fintechs should capitalize on cross-border payment opportunities, especially with the resurgence of travel." Additionally, there's significant potential for fintechs to generate lucrative nonpayment revenue from value-added services, such as financial products, and vertical and horizontal software integrations, it suggested. Going ahead, S&P Global Market Intelligence expects more fintech consolidation in the region, partly driven by the growing focus on enabling medium and large merchants to sell through both online and offline channels (omnichannel). In India, a key market in the Asia Pacific, digital payments are rising at never seen before speed. The UPI payment system has become hugely popular for retail digital payments in India, and its adoption is increasing at a rapid pace. UPI is India's mobile-based fast payment system, which facilitates customers to make round-the-clock payments instantly, using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA) created by the customer. - **ANI**

REPORT

Foreign investors remain net buyers of GCC stocks in second quarter of 2024

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Foreign investors, including institutional and retail investors, were net buyers on GCC stock markets during the second quarter (Q2) of 2024 with net buying at \$3.5 billion as compared to \$1.5 billion in net buying during the first quarter of 2024, according to a new report. "The trend remained positive since the start of the year with consecutive buying by foreign investors during the first half of 2024 of the year," Kamco Invest said in its GCC Trading Activity Quarterly Report - Q2-2024. "The biggest buying was seen in Saudi Arabia with a total net buying of \$3.5 billion. UAE was next with Abu Dhabi exchange also seeing consecutive buying by foreigners that reached \$766.6 million in Q2-2024." Meanwhile, foreign investors were the biggest sellers of Qatari stocks with net sales of \$430.7 million during the quarter as compared to \$67.1 million in net buy trades during the previous quarter. Kuwait was next with net sales of \$296 million by foreigners followed by Oman and Dubai exchanges with net sales of \$44.9 million and \$25.4 million, respectively. Data for Bahrain showed net buying at \$43.3 million, the highest level seen in 20 quarters during Q2-2024. That said, the monthly trend showed Saudi Arabia and UAE witnessed net sell trades by foreign investors during April-2024 followed by net buy trades during the remaining two months. On the other hand, Qatar, Kuwait and Oman exchanges witnessed net sales by foreign investors during the quarter. Some of the key factors that affected the flow of foreign money in the region included regional market trends, IPOs, geopolitical issues, economic health of the individual countries and crude oil prices, the Kamco Invest report said. The quarter saw mixed trend



in the equity market and skewed towards decliners as four out of seven exchanges reported declines during Q2-2024. The expectations related to global interest rate changes also steered performance in the region. However, the seasonal selling pressure during the Eid Holidays resulted in a decline in the market during Q2-2024. As a result, local investors were net sellers during the month and these shares were grabbed by foreign investors resulting in broad-based net buy trades by the latter. In terms of month-on-month (m-o-m) performance, net buying value by foreign investors peaked during June-2024 with aggregate monthly net buying at \$3.2 billion. May witnessed a decline with net buying at \$596.5 million while April registered the net selling at \$332.3 million.

Historical trends for trading by foreigners in GCC listed stocks showed declines merely in two quarters over the last five years. Foreigners bought the most stocks during Q1-2022 with net buy transactions of \$11.0 billion, reflecting a steep increase in buying mainly in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Trading by GCC investors (Excluding Bahrain due to unavailability of data) in GCC exchanges showed net buying during Q2-2024. Net buy trades of GCC investors reached \$709.0 million in Q2-2024 compared to a net sale trade of \$414.6 million in Q1-2024. Saudi Exchange witnessed the biggest net buying by GCC investors during Q2-2024 at \$887.5 million followed by UAE exchanges at \$285.8 million. On the other hand, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman exchanges recorded net sales by GCC

investors in Q2-2024 partially offsetting the overall buying by GCC investors. In terms of monthly trend during Q2-2024, aggregate trading activity by GCC Investors on GCC exchanges peaked during June-2024 and hit the lowest trading month in May-2024. In terms of the aggregate trading activity, total GCC volume traded declined by 14 percent quarter-on-quarter (q-o-q) to reach 69.3 billion shares in Q2-2024 as compared to 80.6 billion shares in Q1-2024. All the GCC Exchanges reported a q-o-q decline in volume during the quarter barring Dubai and Bahrain. Dubai topped the list with a gain of 4.1 percent to record 11.7 billion in Q2-2024 compared to 11.3 billion in Q1-2024, followed by Bahrain with 171.6 percent to record 0.5 billion in Q2-2024 vs. 0.18 billion in Q1-2024.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

The trading value yesterday stood at OMR2,605,008, comprising a rise by 18.1 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR2,206,222



MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) yesterday dropped 3.2 points, comprising a decline by 0.07 per cent to close at 4689.88 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4693.09 points. The trading value yesterday stood at OMR2,605,008, comprising a rise by 18.1 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR2,206,222. The report released by MSX

pointed out that the market value went down by 0.050 per cent to reach about OMR24.36 billion. The report added that the value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached OMR353,000, comprising 13.56 per cent. The value of shares sold by non-Omani investors reached OMR95,000, comprising 3.64 per cent. The net non-Omani investment increased by 9.92 per cent to OMR258,000. — ONA

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,700.45	4,686.06	4,689.88	4,693.09	-3.21	-0.07
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,654.95	7,626.96	7,651.40	7,630.82	20.58	0.27
Industry Index	6,007.89	5,959.99	5,959.99	5,957.83	2.16	0.04
Services Index	1,825.17	1,819.53	1,820.92	1,824.56	-3.64	-0.20
MSX Shariah Index	453.34	452.11	452.27	452.55	-0.28	-0.06
MSX TR INDEX	6,529.40	6,509.41	6,514.71	6,519.17	-4.46	-0.07
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,696.81	8,665.01	8,692.78	8,669.40	23.38	0.27
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,931.68	6,876.41	6,876.41	6,873.92	2.49	0.04
SERVICES TR IDX	2,116.65	2,110.11	2,111.72	2,115.94	-4.22	-0.20
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
18,733,183	2,605,008	690	24,358,849,603	14	14	20	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, JULY 16

ISINSECURITY NAMEVOLUMETURNOVERTRADESOPEN PRICEHIGHLOWCLOSE PR.PREV. CLOSEDIFF (RD)DIFF %LAST BIDLAST OFFLAST OFFERPUR VALUEMARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	4,574,173	360,990	162	0.077	0.081	0.076	0.080	0.075	0.005	6.667	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.100	16,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	209,535	62,369	42	0.297	0.299	0.297	0.299	0.295	0.004	1.356	0.299	0.294	0.301	0.100	230,289,800
OM0000004735	SEMOORIP SALALAH	72,287	7,446	6	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.102	0.001	0.980	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.100	86,320,911
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	6,184,218	858,539	53	0.138	0.139	0.137	0.139	0.138	0.001	0.725	0.139	0.130	0.141	0.100	775,237,232
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	51,858	14,991	11	0.288	0.290	0.288	0.290	0.289	0.001	0.346	0.290	0.287	0.290	0.100	188,773,827
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	35,000	3,975	3	0.113	0.115	0.113	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.115	0.112	0.118	0.100	17,250,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	110,000	28,600	4	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.100	422,746,052
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	4,699	1,585	4	0.335	0.343	0.335	0.343	0.343	0.000	0.000	0.343	0.330	0.343	0.100	229,243,341
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	10,000	3,900	2	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.000	0.000	0.390	0.390	0.425	0.100	129,040,357
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	382	306	1	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.800	0.820	0.100	76,000,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,047,563	264,208	36	0.252	0.253	0.252	0.252	0.252	0.000	0.000	0.252	0.252	0.253	0.100	1,891,612,060
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	8,703	3,159	3	0.363	0.363	0.363	0.363	0.363	0.000	0.000	0.363	0.345	0.363	0.100	85,816,830
OM0000004825	ALBATINAH POWER	287,924	21,489	12	0.074	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.074	0.075	0.100	50,618,557
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	230,700	230,719	29	1.011	1.011	1.000	1.000	1.011	-0.011	-1.088	1.000	1.000	1.010	0.100	750,000,000
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	215,120	16,792	15	0.079	0.079	0.078	0.078	0.079	-0.001	-1.266	0.078	0.078	0.080	0.100	13,650,000
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	118,641	8,898	9	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.076	-0.001	-1.316	0.075	0.075	0.076	0.100	53,580,476
OM0000009072	QO GAS NETWORKS	3,753,587	526,527	123	0.141	0.142	0.140	0.140	0.142	-0.002	-1.408	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.100	606,287,349
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	98,000	15,858	6	0.162	0.162	0.161	0.161	0.164	-0.003	-1.829	0.161	0.162	0.161	0.100	35,420,000
OM0000001081	OMAN EMIRATES HO	292,453	23,379	20	0.081	0.081	0.079	0.080	0.083	-0.003	-3.614	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.100	9,750,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	12,100	4,943	5	0.425	0.425	0.400	0.400	0.435	-0.035	-8.046	0.400	0.420	0.400	0.100	48,000,000
Total		20	17,316,943	2,458,651	546											

Parallel Market

OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	11,920	4,420	15	0.375	0.390	0.360	0.370	0.350	0.020	5.714	0.370	0.340	0.370	0.100	30,119,018
OM0000002028	GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	6,822	648	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.090	0.005	5.556	0.095	0.090	0.095	0.100	1,995,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	8,923	1,115	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.120	0.005	4.167	0.125	0.118	0.000	0.100	9,440,250
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	100	11	1	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.101	0.004	3.960	0.105	0.098	0.111	0.100	1,721,381
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	4,928	360	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.001	1.389	0.073	0.073	0.074	0.100	11,355,179
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,027	492	2	0.480	0.480	0.479	0.479	0.473	0.006	1.268	0.479	0.480	0.500	0.100	75,442,500
OM0000009699	JABAL REIF	3,000	297	2	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.098	0.001	1.020	0.099	0.099	0.107	0.100	17,226,000
OM0000004430	BANK NIZWA	15,361	1,603	5	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	234,880,068
OM0000001301	DHOFAIR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	500	40	2	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.081	0.100	15,814,154
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	40,300	3,063	8	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.076	0.079	0.100	16,125,680
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	42,733	6,837	4	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.100	32,477,831
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	81,088	11,433	10	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.000	0.000	0.141	0.130	0.141	0.100	235,386,810
OM0000007290	ARABIA FALCON INSURANCE	5,376	650	1	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.121	0.000	0.000	0.121	0.121	0.000	0.100	12,499,501
OM0000008477	OMAN REIT FUND	455,408	29,146	23	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.000	0.000	0.064	0.063	0.064	0.100	31,413,329
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	2,127	249	1	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	0.000	0.117	0.115	0.117	0.100	59,448,115
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	900	203	1	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.226	-0.001	-0.442	0.225	0.205	0.228	0.100	10,297,305
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	241,000	14,701	9	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.062	-0.001	-1.613	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	89,218,689
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	339,100	38,306	19	0.112	0.115	0.108	0.110	0.113	-0.003	-2.655	0.110	0.110	0.111	0.100	9,350,000
OM0000004689	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	76,933	10,251	4	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.139	-0.004	-2.878	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.100	13,203,282
OM0000001509	DHOFAIR INTERNATIONAL DEV & INV HO	35,000	7,250	16	0.207	0.220	0.207	0.220	0.229	-0.009	-3.830	0.220	0.207	0.220	0.100	96,000,190
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	700	70	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.105	-0.005	-4.762	0.100	0.100	0.105	0.100	5,000,000
Total		21	1,372,206	131,146	128											

BULLION MARKET

Gold prices rise amid optimism regarding US interest rate cuts

SINGAPORE: Gold prices rose yesterday after statements by Chair of the US Federal Reserve, which strengthened the justifications for lowering interest rates in September 2024, while investors await more US economic data for other indicators about monetary policy. Spot gold rose 0.2 percent to \$2,425.69 per ounce. US gold fu-

tures rose 0.1 percent to \$2,431.80. On Monday, gold prices reached their highest level since May 2024, when the metal rose to a record level of \$2,449.89. As for other precious metals, spot silver fell 0.8 percent to \$30.75 per ounce, platinum fell 0.3 percent to \$992.26, and palladium rose 0.4 percent to \$954.18. — ONA



BUSINESS MATTERS

Indo Gulf & Middle East Chamber of Commerce hosts board meeting and networking event



MUSCAT: The Indo Gulf & Middle East Chamber of Commerce (INMECC) recently held the board meeting and members networking event at the state-of-the-art Europcar Oman & Bahrain Headquarters in Muscat. Members from Oman, India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain attended the event. The event took place at Europcar's cutting-edge new corporate office, which boasts a Boardroom with state-of-the-art audio-visual capabilities, an Energize Lounge (a unique gaming centre), a Wellness Lounge with a fully equipped gym and yoga studio and a networking hub for individuals to connect and enjoy a sit-down lunch in luxurious surroundings. In his opening remarks, Davis Kallukaran stated, "The Indo Gulf & Middle East Chamber of Commerce (INMECC) is incorporated in India as a not-for-profit entity and is sponsored in the Sultanate by the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). Today's meeting of the INMECC Oman Chapter is graced by the presence of OCCI Board members Mustafa Salman, Chairman of the Finance and Insurance Committee, Hussain Abdulsalam,

Chairman of the Construction Committee and Iman Al Ghafri, Chairman of the Healthcare Committee of the Oman Chamber. We are extremely thankful to Nitin Sapre and his team for hosting the INMECC meeting and making all the arrangements to ensure smooth and comfortable participation." The board meeting provided an opportunity for key members of the chamber of commerce to come together and discuss important matters related to business, trade, and economic development in the Indo-Gulf and Middle East regions. Following the meeting, members had the chance to network and forge new relationships in Europcar's innovative and dynamic workspace. "We were honoured to host the Indo Gulf & Middle East Chamber of Commerce at our headquarters in Muscat," said Nitin Sapre, CEO of Europcar Oman & Bahrain. "Our aim has always been to provide a collaborative and inspiring environment for business leaders to come together, share ideas, and build valuable connections. We are pleased that the event was a great success and look forward to continuing our partnership

with the Indo Gulf & Middle East Chamber of Commerce." The luncheon provided a perfect setting for members to relax, enjoy a meal, and continue their discussions in a comfortable and elegant setting. The engaging talks, networking opportunities, and luxurious amenities made the event a memorable and productive experience for all attendees. Special thanks to Eng. Mohiuddin Mohamad Ali, President of the INMECC Oman Chapter and Vice Chairman of Galfar, and Davis Kallukaran, Director of the INMECC Oman Chapter and Managing Partner of Crowe, for choosing our facility as the ideal venue for the Oman Chapter's annual meeting. We also extend our gratitude to other distinguished board members, including James Mathew, Vice Chairman of INMECC UAE Chapter and CEO & Managing Partner of UHY James Chartered Accountants, Dr Siddeek Ahmed, Vice Chairman of INMECC Saudi Arabia Chapter and Chairman & Managing Director of Eram Group, and Dr Sureshkumar Madhusudhanan, Secretary General of INMECC and Chief Managing Director of Seagull Group of Companies.

EXPERTS IN

All Kinds of home automation/Integration like Audiovisual, Lighting Control System, CCTV/ Access Control along with product consultation & expert advise on the above being taken care. Also all kinds of

LIFESTYLE

Your gut is teeming with tiny single-celled parasites called Blastocystis. Gross, right? But a new study shows these gut parasites can be linked to a healthy diet.

A study in the journal Cell has found that the presence of Blastocystis in the human gut could be linked with better health outcomes in a sample population from 32 different countries.

“We found that the presence of Blastocystis in the human gut is linked with a better cardio-metabolic profile and lower obesity rates,” said the study’s co-lead, Francesco Asnicar of the University of Trento, Italy.

The study also put 1,124 participants on a Blastocystis-rich diet of less-processed and fiber-rich foods, which “significantly improved the quality of their diet and weight loss,” said Asnicar.

What is Blastocystis? Blastocystis is a type of microscopic, single-cell microbe — microorganisms, such as bacteria — that lives in the guts of humans and non-human animals.

As well as living in the gut, the bacteria can also infect skin and mouths. When they are good, they can play a major role in our being healthy. They make up what’s known as the microbiome.

“So far, [the] research has focused on the bacterial [microbiome], but the role of other microorganisms, including Blastocystis, is largely understudied,” said the study’s other co-lead, Elisa Piperni of the University of Trento, Italy.

Blastocystis is a somewhat controversial group of microorganism because scientists have been unable to agree on whether the parasites are harmful or not.

“Up to now, there was no evidence of any direct role for Blastocystis in promoting health. To be on the safe side, all Blastocystis were categorized as a harmful intestinal parasite,” said Sara Vieira-Silva, a microbiologist at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz in Germany.

Vieira-Silva, who was not part of the University of Trento study, said the new findings helped clear up the debate: It provided “additional support that some Blastocystis subtypes are part of a balanced gut microbiome in healthy individuals.”

A Blastocystis infection is called blastocystosis. It can cause diarrhea, abdominal pain, anal itching and gas, among other symptoms.

Part one of the study: Blastocystis and general health

The researchers analyzed data from nearly 57,000 individuals across 32 countries.

They looked at how Blastocystis levels in the gut related to diet, cardiovascular health, and metabolic factors, such as obesity and diabetes.

Higher gut Blastocystis levels were linked to indicators of better cardiometabolic health — that means lower chances of heart attacks, obesity, and diabetes — whereas lower Blastocystis levels were associated with long-term health issues, including obesity.

The study also found considerable differences in the subtypes of Blastocystis, depending on a person’s age, geography (where they live) and lifestyle.

Newborns, for example, do not have Blastocystis. The microorganisms establish themselves when we get older and start eating complex foods.

Luis Pedro Coelho, a computational biologist at Queensland University of Technology in Australia, said the study’s geographic spread, with data from 32 countries, added weight to the findings.

“It [shows] a complicated picture,” said Coelho. “I would have expected that the Westernized samples would look very similar to each other compared to others, but here, the US and Europe and China are all very different.”

Part two of the study: Six-month Blastocystis diet
During the study, 1,124 healthy people were enrolled in a six-month personalized dietary program bookended by pre- and post-intervention gut microbiome sampling.

An Italian microbiome study found the gut parasite Blastocystis was linked to general good health. The single-cell organism is found in natural diets

The participants followed personalized food-level advice based both on food and person-specific characteristics.

“We found that participants significantly improved their diet quality and lost weight, and we observed a significant increase in Blastocystis [to] a relative abundance,” said Asnicar.

Weight loss average at 1 point of body mass index (BMI). BMI is a way of categorizing an individual’s weight and potential health problems.

It wasn’t possible to pinpoint which specific food items increased the abundance of Blastocystis in the gut. But, overall, individuals who consumed higher quantities of unprocessed, plant-based foods such as avocados, nuts, seeds, legumes, and green vegetables were more likely to have Blastocystis-rich microbiomes.

Maria Vehreschild, a physician-scientist at Frankfurt University Hospital, was not surprised that the diet improved health outcomes.

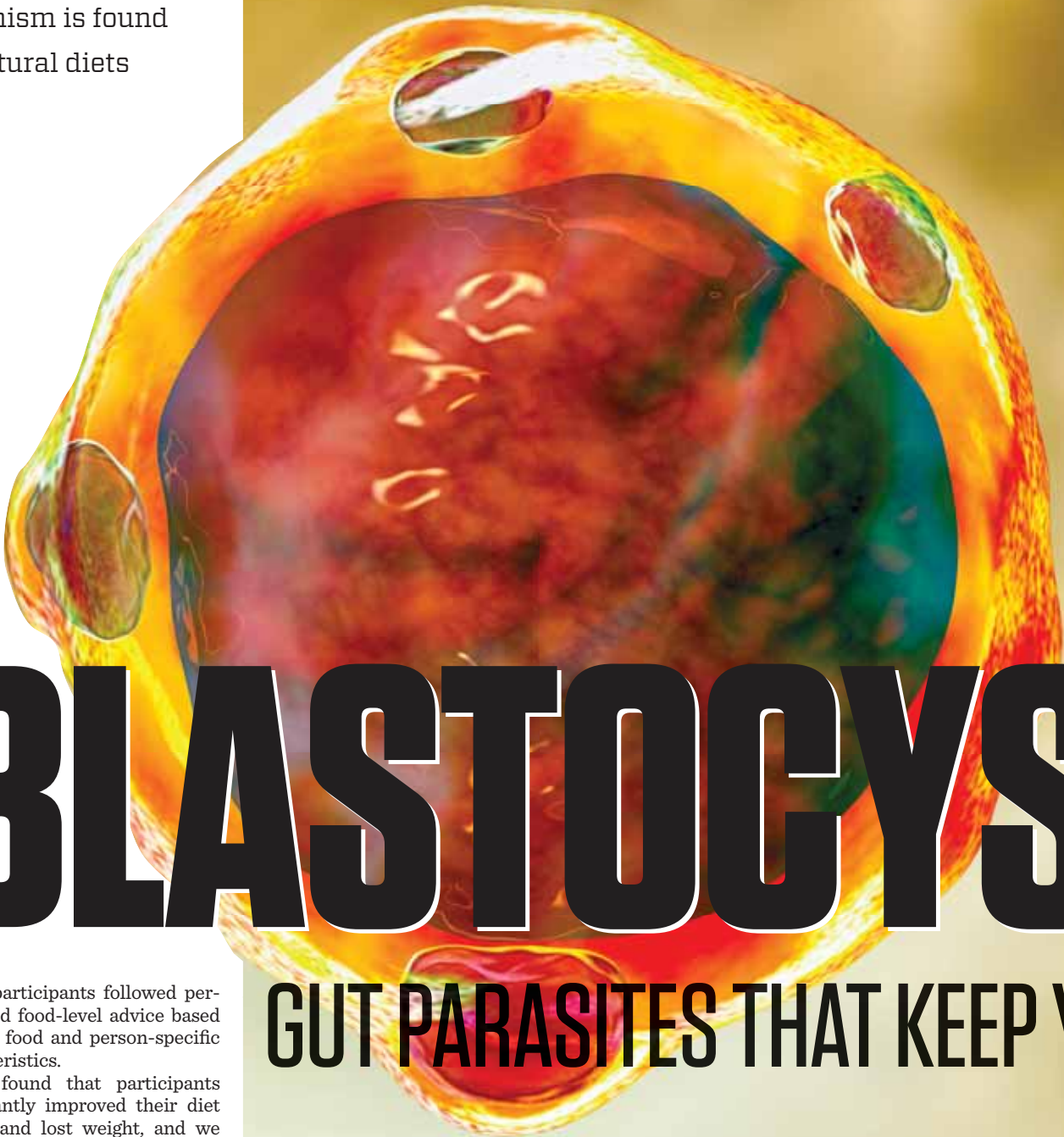
“This has been widely known for a long time. The hard part is to change the eating habits of people. Most of us know what is healthy, but that does not mean that we change our diet accordingly,” said Vehreschild, who was not involved in the study.

Do Blastocystis cause a healthier lifestyle?

It’s not clear from the study whether the presence of Blastocystis directly leads to better health or whether it indicates a healthy lifestyle in general, said Coelho.

“There is no causal evidence that they have a positive effect on health. Particularly, given that they can be predicted by the rest of the (bacterial) microbiome, they could just be indicators of general good health,” he said.

Asnicar raised the same issue, saying that the research team did not yet know what “potential effect” Blastocystis presence had on a person’s health: “Several genetic, genomic, and functional aspects of Blastocystis remain to be elucidated,” he said, adding that further experimental studies were needed. - **ow**



BLASTOCYSTIS

GUT PARASITES THAT KEEP YOU HEALTHY

SPORTS

Copa America: The ‘party that almost became a tragedy’

Crowd trouble, players involved in brawl and overcrowded stadiums highlighted the poor organisation at the 2024 Copa America edition

MIAMI: The 2024 Copa America was supposed to showcase the Americas’ passion for football. But, as Argentine newspaper Ole put it, “this party almost became a tragedy”. Hosted by the United States, in some of the biggest and best stadiums in world sport, the tournament was beset by problems., according to a *BBC Sport* report. It featured poor pitches, half-empty stadiums and crowd trouble before ending in chaotic scenes on Sunday. The final between Argentina and Colombia was delayed by 80 minutes after ticketless fans forced their way into Miami’s Hard Rock Stadium. Arrests were made after clashes with police and security personnel, while several supporters needed treatment from paramedics. It was far from the showpiece the organisers hoped for and raises concerns before the 2026 World Cup, set to be co-hosted by the US, Canada and Mexico. So what went wrong and what can be learned from an event Argentine media outlet Todo Noticias branded a “world-class failure”?
‘A plague of liars’ Problems were apparent in the opening game between Argentina and Canada. Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni and players from both teams complained about the condition of the pitch in Atlanta. Eleven of the 14 host venues were NFL stadiums and six of them had grass pitches installed over an artificial surface. In some cases, the turf was laid just days before. The tournament is organised by Conmebol, South American football’s governing body, which said it carried out tests before and after games that showed pitches were in good condition. But Uruguay coach Marcelo



Bielsa said in a news conference that they were “a plague of liars”, that the training pitches provided “were a disaster”, and that Scaloni and his players had been “threatened” not to speak out. Brazil’s Real Madrid forward Vinicius Jr criticised both the standard of the pitches and refereeing, while the Football Federation of Chile (FFC) asked for referee Wilmar Roldan to be sanctioned for “disastrous conduct” during their final group game. Uruguay players then clashed with Colombia fans after their semi-final defeat, having gone into the stands to protect their families. The Uruguay Football Association (AUF) said there were insufficient security measures in place at the game in Charlotte, where Colombian and Uruguayan fans were not segregated. Most of the games in the knockout stages were sold out, but crowds were significantly below capacity at 50% of the 32 games across the tournament. That was partly because of ticket prices. The average cost was estimated to be about \$200 (£155), although tickets for certain games were far more expensive on US resale sites and because of dynamic ticket pricing.

What happened at the Copa America final? Before Sunday’s final, Colombia coach Nestor Lorenzo had already complained about Colombian popstar Shakira performing a half-time show, meaning the interval would last for 25 minutes rather than 15. Conmebol also issued a statement saying that only ticket holders would be allowed to enter the stadium campus before the 20:00 kick-off (local time). But as the scheduled kick-off time approached, a statement from a stadium spokesperson said that thousands of ticketless fans had “attempted to forcibly enter the stadium”, which has a capacity of 65,000. Footage shows fans breaching the stadium gates, climbing over perimeter walls and fencing, and even through ventilation ducts. A stadium statement later explained that as gates were “closed and re-opened strategically”, some fans “continued to engage in illegal conduct - fighting police officers, breaking down walls and barricades and vandalising the stadium, causing significant damage to the property”. It had become overcrowded outside the stadium, with fans waiting



in 31C heat, and a joint decision was made - for a short period - to allow fans in without scanning tickets “to prevent stampedes and serious injury at the perimeter”. “The gates were then closed once the threat of fans being crushed was alleviated,” the statement added. “At that time, the venue was at capacity and gates were not re-opened.” Players’ families were also involved in the chaos, and Argentina coach Scaloni said afterwards: “We had to start a match without knowing where our family members were. It was very weird.” The game ultimately kicked off more than an hour late. With there being extra time as well as the half-time show, it did not finish until 00:09 local time. A group of Colombia and Argentina fans fall over during overcrowding before the 2024 Copa America final Speaking on Monday, James Reyes, chief of public safety for Miami-Dade County, said more than 800 law enforcement officers were present at the stadium. “Last night our law enforcement teams responded swiftly to handle an extremely challenging, dangerous situation posing life safety

concerns for attendees,” he said. “We are working with the event organisers to conduct a comprehensive review of all safety and security protocols, as we continue to prepare for the World Cup in 2026.” He said 27 arrests were made and 55 people were ejected from the stadium.
Stadium ‘disappointed’ ticket holders left outside Eight of the Copa America venues will also be used for the 2026 World Cup. They include the Hard Rock Stadium, which is set to host seven matches including a quarter-final and the third-place play-off. A stadium statement said that the venue will work with law enforcement to identify those responsible for Sunday’s disorder and review the processes in place “to ensure such an event never happens again”. It added that the number of law enforcement officers and security personnel on site was more than double that for regular sellout events. “We understand there are disappointed ticket holders who were not able to enter the stadium after the perimeter was closed, and we will work in partnership

with Conmebol to address those individual concerns,” the statement read. “Ultimately, there is nothing more important than the health and safety of all guests and staff, and that will always remain our priority.” While Conmebol is responsible for the Copa America, the World Cup is organised by the world governing body FIFA, so the North America-based Independent Supporters Council (ISC) is “confident” the 2026 tournament will welcome fans “safely and adequately”. A statement added: “While Copa America highlighted serious issues that could occur and make people apprehensive about making the journey to North America, we trust that the host cities and planning committees have taken note of those issues and are already anticipating and planning accordingly.” Conmebol said in a statement: “We regret that the acts of violence caused by malicious individuals have tarnished a final that was ready to be a great sports celebration.” Conmebol also said it suggested procedures to stadium security organisers that were “not taken into account”.

MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE

Former All Blacks’ Hewitt dies

CHRISTCHURCH: Former New Zealand rugby union hooker Norm Hewitt, who had been diagnosed with motor neurone disease, has died at the age of 55. Hewitt made 23 appearances for the All Blacks, including nine Test matches, following his debut in 1993. He played for Super Rugby side Wellington and Hawke’s Bay, and Southland at provincial level, before becoming a community activist following his retirement. New Zealand Rugby chief executive Mark Robinson said Hewitt was “uncompromising on the field but always gracious with his time off”. Robinson added: “He was a regular on the sidelines of club rugby,



passionate about the provincial game and a proud All Black and Maori All Black. Our thoughts are with Norm’s family and loved ones at this time.” At a match at Old Trafford in

1997, Hewitt was involved in a famous stand-off with England’s Richard Cockerill during the pre-game performance of the haka, with the two players going nose-to-nose. - Agencies

COPA AMERICA FINAL

Colombia football head arrested

MIAMI: The head of the Colombian Football Federation, Ramón Jesurún, and his son have been arrested, following a brawl at Sunday’s Copa América final in Miami. Mr Jesurún, 71, and Ramón Jamil Jesurún, 43, were held on charges of battery involving an official or an employee, said the Miami-Dade Police Department. The charges relate to the brawl at the stadium after Colombia lost to Argentina 0-1 in extra time. Neither Mr Jesurún nor his son have publicly commented on the issue. In a statement sent to the BBC, the Miami-Dade Police Department said the incident had happened just after the football match ended at the Hard Rock Stadium in the south-eastern US state. Mr Jesurún and his son were



“walking towards the entrance of the field”, it said, but they became “irate and began shouting” at one of the security officers, who was instructed by his management to temporarily delay people from going further. The police said the officer had “placed an open palm” on the chest of Mr Jesurún’s son to guide him back.

Mr Jesurún then pushed the officer, they said, while his son grabbed the officer’s neck and pulled him to the ground, punching him and kicking him in the head. Mr Jesurún’s son also grabbed and pushed a female official who tried to assist, the police said. It added that the two men had also punched a security manager. Mr Jesurún, his son and other family members are believed to have been trying to go on the pitch to take part in the awards ceremony. The Colombian Football Federation made no immediate comment on the issue. The start of the final of the Americas’ most prestigious football tournament was delayed by 80 minutes after ticketless fans forced their way into Miami’s Hard Rock Stadium. - Agencies

NATION’S ALL-TIME LEADING SCORER

Olivier Giroud calls time on his international career with France

NEW DELHI: France’s leading goal scorer, Olivier Giroud, announced his international retirement after the conclusion of Euro 2024. The 37-year-old striker was a part of France’s squad for Euro 2024 but crashed out of the tournament in the semi-final stage. His hopes of ending his international career on a high in his final swansong ended on a bitter note. Spain handed France a 2-1 defeat in a nail-biting thriller to end Les

Bleus’ campaign in the Euro. Before the beginning of the competition, the seasoned striker had stated that the competition would mark his last dance in French colours. The former Arsenal and Chelsea striker leaves the international stage as France’s leading goal-scorer. During his illustrious career, he netted 57 goals in 137 appearances. He is also the country’s third most-capped player after Hugo Lloris and Lillian Thuram. Giroud took to Instagram and

penned a heartfelt note to announce his retirement, which read, “A page is now turning... I am flying towards other adventures. I am becoming, from now on, the first supporter of the Blues. This French team that I served for 13 years will remain forever engraved in my heart. It is my greatest pride and my most beautiful memory.” Giroud made his first appearance for France in 2011 against the United States under Laurent Blanc, who served as the head

coach during that period. He was also a part of France’s squad that won the 2018 World Cup by defeating Croatia in the final. Throughout the tournament in Russia, Giroud failed to net a single goal for Les Bleus. In the 2022 World Cup, Giroud found the back of the net four times as France stormed into the final to face Argentina. However, France failed to defend their title as they conceded defeat on penalties. - ANI



IN PICTURES



2024 Chinatown Festival marked in Vancouver, Canada
A girl attends a lion dance workshop during the 2024 Chinatown Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. *xinhua*



Anant Ambani-Radhika Merchant's Mangal Utsav function
Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani and his daughter Isha Ambani with US TV personality Kim Kardashian during Anant Ambani-Radhika Merchant's Mangal Utsav function, at Jio World Convention Centre, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Tibetan macaques forage near national highway in Sertar County, SW China
Tibetan macaques are seen near a national highway in Sertar County, the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Garze, southwest China's Sichuan Province. *Xinhua*



Sri Lanka Dog Festival held in Colombo
A woman parades her dog during the Sri Lanka Dog Festival at the Viharamahadevi Park in Colombo, Sri Lanka. *xinhua*



Latvia announces national flag bearers for Paris 2024
Participants take group photos during the presentation of "Team Latvia" and the announcement of the national flag bearers of Latvia for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Riga, Latvia. *Xinhua*



Impressions of Monet The Garden exhibition held in Singapore
Tourists view the multi-sensory displays on the opening day of "Impressions of Monet: The Experience" exhibition in the Flower Dome of Singapore's Gardens by the Bay in Singapore. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat clinches Best Digital Bank award

At a grand ceremony held in Dubai, Mohammed bin Sultan Al Habsi, the representative of Bank Muscat’s office in UAE, received the award on behalf of the bank



banking sphere across the region and which stand out in terms of providing customers with innovative banking solutions that aim to enhance customer experience and facilitate their access to various services and facilities. Bank Muscat’s selection came after a robust evaluation process and discussions with experts in the field worldwide. At a grand ceremony held in Dubai, Mohammed bin Sultan Al Habsi, the representative of Bank Muscat’s office in UAE, received the award on behalf of the Bank. The event was attended by officials representing major institutions and companies across the Middle East and the world. Speaking on this honouring

achievement, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager, Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “We are pleased about winning the Excellence Award for the Best Digital Bank in Oman category. This recognition underscores the bank’s commitment to satisfying the current needs of customers. We would like to extend our sincere gratitude and appreciation to MEED for honouring Bank Muscat with this prestigious award. Highlighting the bank’s pioneering role in digital banking, Bank Muscat has set and developed a strategic plan to implement modern technological advancements and global digital trends aiming to foster a digital society and better serve customers

through the launch of innovative projects and initiatives.”

Al Raisi added, “Currently, customers rely on the Bank’s digital platforms, including its Mobile Banking App, that enable seamless, smooth, and rapid access to banking services. Bank Muscat will continue to exert more effort to improve its offerings and facilities to enhance the banking experience of customers, thus, meeting their aspirations and needs. We would like to deliver our thanks to Bank Muscat’s customers for their continuous trust in the digital services and solutions provided to them.”

Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager, Digital Banking, Bank Muscat, commented: “Recognising Bank Muscat with this coveted global award reflects its commitment to strategically implementing technological advancements to serve customers throughout the bank’s digital evolution journey. The bank continuously strives to enhance its suite of banking services and facilities through its digital platforms as well as branch network. Today, the Bank has 184 branches and over 870ATMs, CDMs, and self-service kiosks distributed across the Sultanate and that offer round-the-clock services.”

Dhofar Islamic empowers young with new account

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic Banking window of BankDhofar, introduced its latest offering, the Youth Account, designed to cater to the unique financial needs and aspirations of Oman’s young generation.

Dhofar Islamic encourages young Omanis to embrace Youth Account as a stepping stone to financial literacy and financial independence. With this account, Dhofar Islamic aims to inspire a generation of confident and responsible financial leaders.

The Youth Account is a Sharia compliant savings account (based on Mudarabah principles) specially crafted to cater to the unique needs of youth aged between 18 and 23 years.

It comes with no minimum balance requirement and allows free fund transfers through mobile payment service ensuring that young account holders can enjoy their banking experience without any extra fees.

This innovative youth-centric account is a testament to Dhofar Islamic’s commitment to empowering the youth with convenient and flexible banking solutions that enable financial independence from an early age.



Commenting on the launch of the Youth Account, Amor Said Al Amri, DGM and Head of Retail Banking - Dhofar Islamic said, “Our Youth Account is designed to empower the young generation to learn essential money management skills, take control of their finances and build a strong financial foundation for their future. We are committed to providing them with the tools they need to start their career and achieve their financial goals.”

The Youth Account is available now at all Dhofar Islamic branches.

WORLD YOUTH SKILLS DAY



Alizz Islamic Bank hosts founder & CEO of Wabas Enterprises & Investments

MUSCAT: On the occasion of World Youth Skills Day, Alizz Islamic Bank welcomed Dr. Wail Al Harrasi, founder & CEO of Wabas Enterprises & Investments for an insightful session with the bank staff and students from various colleges and universities to discuss about various important topics including self-discovery, building core values, mastering cutting-edge technologies like Chat GPT, and harnessing the power of Artificial Intelligence in today’s rapidly evolving world.

Throughout the event, attendees had the opportunity to engage in insightful interactive discussions, and thought-provoking presentations that encouraged them to explore their own skills and potentials, and to understand the significance of continuous learning and personal growth.

World Youth Skills Day, observed annually on July 15, promotes youth skills development to tackle unemployment and underemployment. It encourages investment in training and education, aiming to better integrate youth into the workforce. This initiative, declared by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2014, emphasizes the significance of equipping youth with necessary skills to empower them.

Alizz Islamic Bank underlines the importance of the critical role that skill development plays in overcoming challenges and promoting economic growth and aims to bridge the gap between education and employment, promoting economic growth and social inclusion. The bank continuously strives to develop the future

leaders of Oman; placing great importance on education, training and development, empowering future generations and equipping them with the skills and capabilities needed to contribute their creative potential towards serving their communities.

Dr Wail Saif Al Harrasi is the founder & CEO of Wabas Enterprises & Investments, a firm focusing on strategy consultancy in technology with an investment arm in technology and innovation. He is a retired Undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs and a Board member of the Imam Jabir bin Zaid Endowment Foundation. He is also a Member of the Sharia Committee of Al Madina Takaful and a Member of the Board of Trustees of the College of Sharia Sciences.

CULINARY EVENTS

Charm Thai at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC to host exquisite royal feast and pairing menus

MUSCAT: Charm Thai at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC is set to host two extraordinary culinary events this July: A Royal Feast Menu on July 19 and a Grape Pairing Menu on July 25. These special events promise to deliver an unparalleled dining experience, showcasing the finest in Thai cuisine.

Charm Thai at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC is a gastronomic oasis that invites food enthusiasts to embark on an authentic Thai culinary adventure. The award-winning Charm Thai restaurant offers a captivating journey through the rich and diverse flavours of Thailand, promising to immerse foodies in a consummate gastronomic experience.

Royal Feast menu

On July 19, Charm Thai will host a Royal Feast Menu that promises an extraordinary family-style dining experience. Guests will be treated to a variety of traditional Thai dishes, starting with an array of delightful starters. The menu includes Goong Sa-Rong, which features crisp-fried prawns wrapped in yellow noodles, and Jang Ron Pla, red curry marinated ham-mour cakes with coconut flakes. Additionally, Tung Thong offers root vegetable money bags with shiitake mushrooms, Saku Sai Gai provides steamed sago seed with minced chicken, and Nua Yang Nam Jim presents chargrilled beef striploin with e-san sauce.

For the main course, diners can savour Ped Obb Nam Pong, a 24-hour Thai herb marinated and slow-roasted whole duck. This exquisite dish is complemented by several delectable sides, including Chu-Chee Goong Nang, red curry jumbo prawns with Kaffir lime, and Gai Phad Mad Ma-Moung, wok-fried chicken and cashew nuts. Also, on offer are Phad Ka-Na HedHom, stir-fried broccoli and shiitake mushrooms in oyster sauce, Phad Thai GoongYai, stir-fried rice noodles with prawns,



tamarind sauce, and roasted nuts, and Kao Suay, steamed jasmine rice. The meal concludes with a delightful dessert of Thai exotic fruit salad and Thai sticky rice with sweet mango and coconut rice balls.

Grape Pairing menu

On July 25, Charm Thai will offer a sophisticated Grape Pairing Menu, designed to highlight the harmony between exquisite Thai dishes and grapes/beverages. The evening begins with GoongThod Phuket, a crisp-fried jumbo prawn wrapped in rice vermicelli served on a Thai spiced exotic fruit salsa, paired with Spain.

The second course features Aok Ped Yang, char-grilled marinated duck breast served on a bed of King Asparagus and drizzled with Tamarind sauce, paired with New Zealand. This is followed by Gai Tom Kra-Ti, a tender chicken breast stewed in coconut milk and young galangal, paired with Australia.

For the main course, guests can choose between Nua Ko-Rat Yang Prick Thai, char-grilled Angus beef with green curry baby potatoes and Isaan dressing, or PlaThod Prick Gaeng, crisp-fried seabass fillet served with creamy red curry sauce on a bed of som tum. Both dishes are paired with New Zealand.

land. The dessert, Mamuang Nam Dok Mai-Katisod, a brulee’d coconut and mango galette served with coconut gelato, is paired with a refreshing Mango Cooler.

Food tasting event

Charm Thai at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC invited journalists and influencers for an exclusive food tasting event, showcasing their Royal Feast and Grape Pairing menus.

Charm Thai at Crowne Plaza Muscat OCEC is a destination for food lovers, whether they are local residents or visitors. The restaurant tastefully marries tradition with modernity to create an exciting culinary concept. Charm Thai stands out not only for its delectable dishes but also for its enchanting ambiance, inspired by the story of the Golden Princess and her magical home. This fusion of tradition and modernity creates an inviting atmosphere perfect for savouring the authentic Thai cuisine on offer. The upcoming Royal Feast and Grape Pairing Menus are perfect opportunities to experience the vibrant and authentic flavours that Charm Thai has to offer. Embark on this culinary journey and indulge in a dining experience that is both enchanting and unforgettable.



mai alkaline

pH 9.1 to 9.5

Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water

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