

COMMERCE MINISTRY GRANTS TWO PATENTS

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has granted two patents for devices as part of the ministry's endeavour to support the national workforce system. **>A4**



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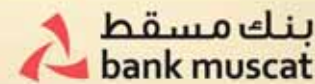
HM SENDS CABLE OF CONGRATULATIONS

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, Chairman of the Transitional Military Council of the Republic of Chad, on the occasion of his country's independence anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere congratulations and best wishes to Mahamat Idriss and the friendly Chadian people. - **ONA**



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DUBAI MERCANTILE EXCHANGE

Oman oil nears \$90 a barrel

Times News Service

MUSCAT: While crude prices have been rising since the beginning of July, Oman oil price continued its rise approaching towards \$90 a barrel.

Oman oil (October delivery 2023) reached \$89.03 on Thursday, the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) said. This comprised a rise by \$1.17 from the price on Wednesday which stood at \$87.86. "The average price of Oman oil (August delivery 2023) has stabilised at \$74.78 per barrel, thus 16 cents per barrel lower than July delivery 2023."

As a result, global and Omani oil prices could remain on an up-trend over the short to medium term but could be confronted with some volatility as economic



conditions continue to change, Denys Peleshok, Head of Asia at CPT Markets, said in an exclusive interview to *Times of Oman*.

"The uncertainty around how monetary policies in the major economic areas could change and how they might impact local

economies could also remain a source of risks over the medium to long term," he further added.

Both oil producers have announced that they would extend their production cuts to include September which could result in tighter supply over the medium term and could maintain and widen these measures if necessary. "As a result, we could see oil prices continuing their ascension and with them, the Omani oil benchmark potentially pushing towards the 90 dollar mark over the short term," he added.

Oil prices have been rising since the beginning of July after a period of sideways trading and volatility. While prices remain at lower levels than those seen last year, they could maintain an up-trend as conditions could remain favourable. **>A2**

OVER 396,000 VISIT KHAREEF DHOFAR

The number of visitors to Khareef Dhofar season (monsoon) from 21 June to 31 July 2023 stood at 396,108, posting an increase of 12.8 percent compared to 2022. **>A2**



HOUSING RENTS IN OMAN REMAIN AFFORDABLE AMID AMPLE SUPPLY

Real estate developers in Oman believe that the realty market is on the recovery path but rents are not rising due to abundant supply

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The recent Financial Stability Report 2023 of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has underlined the resurgence of economic activities leading to a recovery in the real estate market and added that housing rents remain affordable due to abundant supply.



Reacting to the report, one of the leading real estate developers in Oman, Syed Fayyaz Group (SFG) Chairman Sheikh Fayyaz Ali Shah said, "Housing rents in Oman remain to be one of the most

affordable given the quality of life the Sultanate of Oman offers. There has been an uptick in the demand but with large availability, the rents remain affordable."

SFG has been developing and

managing real estate in Oman since 1976. The group currently manages approximately 700 residential units in Muscat, along with various other types of properties.

Shah said: "Rents in Muscat



when compared to other cities in the region are much more affordable. Muscat provides greater opportunities for individuals to save money and maintain a positive work-life balance. Traditionally, real estate ownership has been an excellent platform to preserve wealth and generate cash flow. Although rents are considered affordable in Muscat, I find this to be reflected in the valuation of lands. Thus, as a real estate developer, I am very pleased with the returns that our rental portfolio generates." **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Nama's environment awareness drive

1 Reinforcing its dedication to enhancing sustainability and community engagement, Nama Dhofar Services successfully concluded its 'Nama Week' campaign activities in Dhofar. **>A5**

WORLD 80 killed in wildfires on Hawaii's Maui island

2 Hawaii's Attorney General, Anne Lopez, said on Saturday her office is launching an examination into the authorities' response to the wildfires that have killed 80 people. **>A7**

MARKET Sohar Port and Freezone signs pacts

3 Sohar Port and Freezone signed three agreements with a number of firms operating in the field of sea transport for the provision of maritime services for ships which anchor at the port. **>B2**

AT THE SULTAN QABOOS PORT

World's first liquefied hydrogen carrier to arrive in Oman on August 14

MUSCAT: The world's first liquefied hydrogen carrier, Suiso Frontier, will moor at the Sultan Qaboos Port in Muscat on August 14.

According to an official of Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI), the manufacturer of the giant Japanese ship, this is the first visit of Suiso Frontier to the Sultanate of Oman. Suiso means hydrogen in Japanese.

Innovative technologies have been used by KHI in building the carrier and with Oman government's focus on hydrogen production as part of its plans to become global leader in the clean hydrogen production and export sector, the visit assumes significance for the growth of clean energy sector.

The ship-build was completed in 2020, designed and built using the technical knowledge of Kawasaki Heavy Industries, a founding member of the Hydrogen Council.

The ship's main mission is to introduce Japanese technology that will pave the way for nations to use hydrogen (clean energy), seek cooperation to transport large quantities of hydrogen and to establish global supply chains on a large-scale, fully commercial using it as a preferred carrier. The ship was built and developed with the support of the Japanese government to transport large quantities of liquefied hydrogen by sea.

It is 116 metres long, 19 metres wide, and carries a double tank with a capacity of 1,250 cubic metres to retain hydrogen and maintain it at a temperature of -253 degrees Celsius. The ship's arrival comes within the framework of Oman's consistent efforts to stimulate the green hydrogen economy. Suiso Frontier made a landmark successful shipment



and transportation of liquefied hydrogen from Australia to Japan in February 2022.

The 8,000 tonnes ship can transport large quantities of LH2 over long distances by sea.

At the end of January, Australia's

Victoria's Port of Hastings marked the Suiso Frontier's arrival from Japan to Australia. Before that, in December, the world's first liquid hydrogen carrier left Japan to pick up its first cargo in Australia.

The major milestone in the

US\$355 million Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain (HESC) project is the first in the world to extract, liquefy and transport LH2 by sea to an international market.

The Suiso Frontier transported the super-cooled LH2 from Port Hastings to Kobe, Japan. The goal was to demonstrate the technical viability of such an international hydrogen supply chain and aim for commercialisation targeting early 2030s. KHI built the first LNG carriers in Japan and Asia in 1981 and has since become a leader in refrigerated technology for marine transportation. More than 40 years later, it built the world's first liquefied hydrogen carrier, with an upgraded system to contain pressurised refrigerated cargo specifically for LH2, and a carrier design based on safety requirements approved by the International Maritime Organisation. **>A3**

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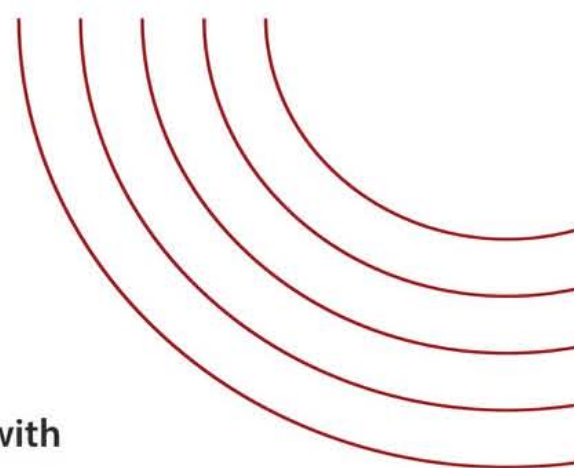


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8. Negotiate and close sales.

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Khareef Dhofar season attracts close to 400,000 visitors this year

As many as 59,555 visitors from other GCC states showed up at Khareef Dhofar season this year, compared to 52,807 during the corresponding period in 2022

SALALAH: The number of visitors to Khareef Dhofar season (monsoon) from 21 June to 31 July 2023 stood at 396,108, posting an increase of 12.8 percent compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

This was unveiled by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), whose figures put the visitors in three categories: Omani visitors, Gulf Co-



operation Council (GCC) visitors and tourists belonging to other nationalities.

According to the NCSI, the number of Omani visitors to Khareef Dhofar during the abovementioned period grew by 13 percent

to 296,135.

As many as 59,555 visitors from other GCC states showed up at Khareef Dhofar season this year, compared to 52,807 during the

corresponding period in 2022.

The number of visitors belonging to other nationalities rose from 35,874 to 40,418 this season, said the NCSI.

A summary of data issued by the



PHOTO BYSHADI ELHABIBI



PHOTO BYSHADI ELHABIBI

NCSI indicates that 305,350 visitors arrived via land checkpoints, while the number of air travelers who arrived in Dhofar stood at 90,758 visitors, registering an increase of 16 percent over the fig-

ures of this segment last year.

Month-wise, 95 percent of the monsoon season visitors arrived in July (375,362), while 20,746 visitors arrived in the governorate between 21 and 30 June. **ona**

Royal Oman Police continues to ensure visitors safety

Times News Service

MUSCAT: For a Khareef season free of accidents and obstacles, the efforts of the Royal Oman Police (ROP) have continued to ensure the safety of Khareef Dhofar visitors, according to an integrated plan for all sites.

The Dhofar Governorate Police Command has undertaken field supervision of police support and efforts during the Khareef Dhofar season, in addition to coordinating security and humanitarian work to achieve the highest levels of safety and direct response to all events.

Major Akef bin Muhammad Al-Rawas, Assistant Director of Dhofar Operations, stated: "With the increase in the number of visitors and tourists to the Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season, the Royal Oman Police, in cooperation with the concerned authorities, has worked to provide all means and capabilities to create a tourism



season free of accidents and obstacles, according to an integrated plan for all sites that includes publishing points, security and patrols on all tracks in order to respond quickly and provide assistance to those in need.

He added: "The Police Operations Department, led by the Dhofar Governorate Police, plays a tangible role in receiving various reports throughout the governorate to study the observations received, and evaluate them daily to find out the reasons for the recurrence of some of the reports in certain places. There is continuous coordination as well as meetings with all

concerned government agencies to improve observations and try to find appropriate solutions.

Al-Rawas added: "Wadi Harit Police Station is a reception gate for visitors and gives advice and guidance to vehicle drivers to adhere to traffic safety standards while driving for Dhofar Governorate. It also works to facilitate traffic movement, which sometimes becomes dangerous due to lack of horizontal visibility as a result of thick fog, in addition to regulating vehicle movement with caution. This comes in the form of turning on directional lights, leaving sufficient safety distance, driving at low speeds,

and instructions to not use mobile phones, as well as not having children lean out of the windows of the vehicle while it is driving, in order to ensure their safety."

Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed bin Khalifa Al Shukaili, Director of the Salalah Traffic Department, said: "The concentration of traffic density in the governorate during the fall season is on the roads leading to tourist places and event sites, in the evening period. It is dealt with by intensifying patrols and deploying them on various roads to monitor and regulate traffic. With many reports, especially of accidents on the Aqabat Al-Yasmeen road, drivers are advised to use the left lane of the road leading to and from Salalah and leave the right lane for heavy trucks, as the road is vital and has a lot of commercial traffic, and the crossing of heavy trucks whose movement is slow, in addition to the decrease in horizontal visibility due to fog.

He noted that drivers who want to document their moments through social media platforms must stand outside the road during filming and shooting photos, in order to preserve their lives and the lives of others.

Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed Al Shukaili also touched on some wrong behaviors from some people, such as showing off vehicles in green areas, stressing that the ROP dealt firmly with these behaviors.

Major Alawi bin Hafeez Al-Haddad, Director of the Coast Guard Police Department in Dhofar, referred to the efforts of the Coast Guard Police in the governorate through readiness to ensure the safety of visitors, provide advice and guidance to them, and intensify marine rescue patrols deployed at sites frequented by visitors, such as Al-Mughassil Beach, Al-Dahreez and Al-Haffa, to ensure a rapid and immediate response for all reports and incidents.

Captain Rashid bin Muhammad Al-Balushi, officer of the Aten Mobile Police Station, said: "The Aten Mobile Police Station provides comprehensive security coverage in the Aten area and secures visitors at the events held there, in addition to regulating traffic on the roads leading to the plain in cooperation with relevant authorities such as the Dhofar Municipality through continuous coordination. This centre is an extension of the rest of the security points located in the sites of events held within the Khareef Dhofar season."

Captain Al-Balushi thanked all the visitors for their adherence, general commitment, and cooperation with the police, urging parents to monitor their children and follow their movements in order to avoid losing them or exposing them to danger, to stand in designated places, not to obstruct traffic, and to adhere to public safety requirements.

OIL MARKET

Demand for crude oil could continue to outstrip supply

<FROM A1 "Last year, oil prices went above 130 dollars while historically they have surpassed 146 dollars in 2008 but remained below 88 dollars until now this year," Denys Peleshok said.

While concerns about the global economy and a weaker-than-expected Chinese economic recovery have created some doubts about the strength of the demand for oil, OPEC+ members have moved in to support the market. "The organisation has reined in production levels with Saudi Arabia and Russia implementing voluntary cuts to their production levels," he further added.

The Ukrainian conflict could also continue to pose some risks for oil supplies as Russian exports could be targeted in the black sea. Incidents in the area could push crude prices even further to the upside while the conflict shows no signs of abating. With supplies already tightening, reduced export volumes from Russia could strongly boost prices.

"On the other hand, demand for oil could continue to outstrip supply levels and could help crude prices maintain their current trend. Oil consumption was fuelled by stronger air travel and Chinese demand despite the



Denys Peleshok, Head of Asia at CPT Markets. — Supplied picture

weaker-than-expected economic recovery," Denys Peleshok said. However, demand levels could remain exposed to the development of the global economy and Chinese growth in particular due to the large amounts of oil imports the country commands, he added.

International Energy Agency said in its August Oil Market Report 2023 that world oil demand is scaling record highs, boosted by strong summer air travel, increased oil use in power generation and surging Chinese petrochemical activity. Global oil demand is set to expand by 2.2mb/d to 102.2 mb/d in 2023.

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COMMENTARY

Unique encounter in the park



MOHAMMED ANWAR AL BALUSHI

As my family and I entered Al Mawaleh Park, memories flooded back from a conversation I had with my son back in 2008 at Al Khoudh Park. Amidst the excited laughter and playfulness of the other children, my son appeared disinterested. Taking a moment to connect, I invited him into a conversation.

"Can we talk, son?" I inquired, sensing his lack of enthusiasm for the park. "Is something bothering you? You don't seem to be enjoying yourself," I asked gently.

"I'm just not a fan of places like this," he responded without hesitation. Curious, he turned the question back to me. "Do you like them?"

"Yes, I do," I affirmed, explaining, "I find joy in places like these because they showcase nature's beauty, offer fresh air, and allow us to appreciate the wonders of creation."

Curious about his perspective, I probed further. "What makes you prefer places created by humans over natural spots?" I asked.

His reply was straightforward. "I'm more drawn to places where people have crafted and invented things. I find man-made creations like technology and machinery fascinating."



Certainly, malls have their unique allure, and the pleasure of sipping black coffee or cappuccino. On the flip side, natural parks hold a distinct charm. My visit to Al Mawaleh Park wasn't my first; I've lost count of how many times I've been there. This visit, however, stood out as a "Family Day," as the evening was abuzz with families. Parents carried their children on their shoulders, sharing in the joy.

To my right, the kids' play-

ground caught my eye—swings, slides, climbing frames, and see-saws were bustling with activity. The children immersed themselves in other play equipment as well, like jungle gyms, sandboxes, merry-go-rounds, and monkey bars.

Continuing our stroll, I spotted families enjoying a picnic area—a scene that epitomized leisure. The diversity of nationalities present was another highlight of the park, showcasing Omanis, Indians, Nepalis, Filipinos, Pakistanis, and more,

contributing to the park's vibrant ambiance.

"Let's take a break on that bench," my spouse suggested. Seated, we observed a couple jogging; the design of the jogging path intrigued me.

At the heart of the park stood a charming miniature palace, reminiscent of the Taj Mahal. Crowded with visitors, the scene exuded its own splendor. A horse was afoot, carrying a child while her father watched from a distance—a heartwarming tableau.

MADAYN



Samail Industrial City localises 15 projects in first half of this year

SAMAIL: Samail Industrial City, affiliated to the Public Authority for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has achieved a significant growth in performance indicators during the first six months of 2023, where Samail Industrial City has signed 15 contracts to localise projects over a total area of 100,000 square metres with investments of OMR13.5 million.

The total number of localised projects at Samail Industrial City stood at 156 including 94 projects at the stage of production, 43 under construction and 19 projects at the stage of preparation of the plans and drawings, where the total investment in these projects amounted to OMR150 million on a total area of 2.2 million square metres.

Yasser bin Ibrahim Al Ajmi, Acting Director General of Samail Industrial City said that the Public Authority for Industrial Estates (Madayn) continues with execution of vital projects at the City including the project for building examination of physical fitness, the percentage of completion of which amounted to 90 percent, work progress of the complementary works of the industrial city including the dual road leading to the city with completion percentage of 98 percent



among other works. He said that Madayn has divided Samail Industrial City into several sectors including the food sector, logistics sector, building material sector, steel and wood sector, plastic and paper works sector, marble sector and the entrepreneurs sector among other sectors.

He said that Samail Industrial City has started cooperation with partners by marketing the services building centre at a total area of 16,000 square metres and rent space of over 12,000 square metres. The centre is an investment outlet aimed to facilitate the procedures for approvals, permits and licences required by investors' projects, he further added. — OMA

LIQUEFIED HYDROGEN CARRIER



Oman committed to Net Zero 2050

< FROM A1 Kawasaki's endeavours in the hydrogen industry started in 2010. By exploiting the synergy of Kawasaki Group technologies, the company is developing technologies and products needed for hydrogen energy supply chain- from production to transportation, storage and utilisation, together with many partner companies.

To stably transport cryogenic liquefied hydrogen, maintaining the temperature during voyage, the cargo tank adopts a vacuum-insulated double-wall structure. The technologies for the high

thermal insulation performance are grounded in Kawasaki's decades-long history in maritime transportation of liquefied natural gas as well as over 30 years of experience in handling cryogenic liquefied hydrogen as rocket fuel.

Hydrogen is an attractive export for countries such as Oman who are aiming for decarbonisation and are committed to Net Zero 2050.

Suiso Frontier's trip is a significant milestone in the path to the establishment of commercially viable supply chains for the hydrogen market, which is expected to expand in the future.

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Ministry grants two patents to support the national workforce system

Two patents, one on tracking the locations and tracks of fishermen’s boats and the other on remotely controlling for operating the loop linkage unit, have been granted by MoCIIP

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has granted two patents on devices as part of the ministry’s endeavour to support the national workforce system.

These devices include one tracking the locations and tracks of fishermen’s boats, fishing vessels, and calculating the quantity of caught fish and another one for a remotely controlling device for operating loop linkage unit.

MoCIIP emphasised that the effective system of intellectual property and patents in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the strategic directions of Oman Vision 2040, contributes to achieve the objectives related to the performance and provision of high-quality government services.

It also contributes to create a competitive business environment that, promotes economic growth and diversification, and empowers the sector. In order to enhance the attraction of investments, as well as contributes to create a possible tool for companies and projects based on innovating new technologies, that are convertible into assets that, can be utilised commercially and industrially.

Nidaa bint Yaqoub Al-Tamimiyya, Head of the Patents and Industrial Designs Department in the National Intellectual Property Office at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said: “The Ministry plays a major role in spreading knowledge of intellectual property rights and providing many services related to encouraging, facilitating and registering patent applications.”

“The Ministry also focuses on the technical inventions that address the challenges of meeting the needs of changing markets and technological progress, which contributes to providing high-quality products and services and holding lectures and seminars on motivating researchers and workers in scientific and research institutions, inventors and other beneficiaries, in order to present and implement creative ideas and projects through services that provided by the Ministry.”

She further added that MoCIIP has the capability of conducting the initial research for the idea of the inventor and providing him/her with the results of the research so that the inventor can know the strength of his/her idea and the possibility of protecting it, by searching in documents and databases that similar or close to the idea, in order to save effort, money and time of the owner of the idea, that helps to reduce repeated ideas, promoting a focus on new and qualitative ideas.

Nidaa stressed that the ministry provides technical advice to inventors in terms of the opportunities to benefit from the databases and the technical information of patents, as it contains scientific additions, which can contribute to



developing local patents, facilitating the transfer of the technology of these inventions and the possibility to use it locally.

The Head of the Patents and Industrial Designs Department clarified that the number of national applications registered in all fields of intellectual property, particularly, applications related to patents (national and international patents) in 2022 reached 85 national applications, while their number till the first half of 2023, reached to 32 national applications.

She pointed out that, this number is a result of the role played by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in spreading awareness through many workshops and awareness lectures that conducted by the inspectors at the National Office for Intellectual Property, which targeted several sectors, including the educational, academic sectors and small and medium-enterprises.

Nidaa further said, “The owner

of the patent may sell his/her patent or licence for others to use it or dispose of it, as the patent has a financial value, while the patent can be bought and sold, and the usufruct right can be decided on it as well, where it is permissible to licence to others to exploit it.”

Suleiman bin Khamis Al-Khawaldi and Shaima bint Taher Al-Saadiya, the owners of the invention of the devices for tracking locations and tracks of fishermen’s boats, fishing vessels and calculating the quantity of caught fish, clarified that their invention is an electronic device with assembled and programmed parts.

They pointed out that the device is divided into two parts, the first one is to be installed in boats, ships, trucks, or any other place in order to collect information, then to be installed on a radio to transfer the collected data, while the device is equipped with a weight sensor, theft sensor, a temperature and humidity sensor, a location sensor, and a small screen to display data. The device is linked

with a rechargeable solar cell, where other services can be added whenever needed.

As for the second part of the device, it is a 7-inch screen that runs on an operating system. The screen contains a special map that its designed based on the needs of users, in addition to an interactive map, where the user can obtain all the required data, directions and voice alerts to inform the fisherman about the fishing areas and the restricted areas, as well as alerting him whenever he leave the territorial waters, informing him of the places of throwing nets and other services that the user needs, in addition to knowing the boats near him.

Al-Khawaldi and Al-Saadiya also pointed out that, the reduction of fees for students, job seekers and small enterprises has become a motive for innovators to register their innovations and protect them from infringement, while patent specialists play a major role in introducing innovators to how to formulate a patent dur-



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The Ministry plays a major role in spreading knowledge of intellectual property rights and providing many services related to patent applications



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The device is divided into two parts, the first one is to be installed in boats, ships, trucks, or any other place in order to collect information



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The invention is a device that can replace the engineer who operates the loop linkage units in switching the status of the keys of the equipment



“

The screen contains a special map that its designed based on the needs of users, in addition to an interactive map

ing the submission of applications for registering in the National Intellectual Property Office at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

On his part, Badr bin Sulayem al-Muqbali, the owner of the invention of the Remotely controlling device for operating the loop linkage unit, said: “The invention is a device that can replace the engineer who operates the loop linkage units in switching the status of the keys of the equipment in terms of performing the opening, closing, and grounding functions, while this device can also be controlled remotely via a wireless remote control. The device is also con-

nected to a rechargeable battery as a powerhouse.”

Badr Al-Muqbali further added, “I became acquainted with patent registration through seminars implemented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and social networks.”

He further emphasised that the economic point of view on the importance of obtaining a patent, stresses the possibility of strengthening the status of the patent holder in the market and the protection of the invention again theft, while the registration of a patent guarantees the owner of the idea and the investment return of his invention.”

IN SALALAH

Data processing and cryptocurrency mining centre to open

MUSCAT: Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information

Technology will launch the Centre for Hosting, Data Processing and Mining of Cryptocurrencies at the Salalah Free Zone on Sunday.

The centre is set up by Exahertz International, a subsidiary of Afaaq Advanced Technologies, and the facility has been supported by the ministry in line with the government’s efforts to promote digital investment and localise advanced technologies.

Jad Kharma, founder of Afaaq

Advanced Technologies and CEO of Exahertz International, thanked the Ministry, as well as the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), and other government agencies for their support in the development of the basic infrastructure based on blockchain and modern technologies, Artificial Intelligence, digital mining, cyber security, and others, designed to ensure that Oman keeps pace with global technological trends.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, he stressed that the company provides a comprehensive



set of services that contribute to enhancing the performance of local companies and achieving the highest levels of operational excel-

lence through the development of national cadres and talents.

Sam Verduis, representative of Moonwalk Systems and strategic

partner at Exahertz, said: “The Sultanate of Oman attaches importance to attracting digital investment as a key factor for innovation, growth and improvement of the economic environment. Digitalisation places Oman among the ranks of developed countries in this industry, and creates job opportunities in the field of modern technology, while supporting knowledge transfer as well.”

Haitham bin Youssef al Zadjali, Chief Financial Officer, said: “The new center is the first project

of its kind in terms of imported technological devices that the company attracted in the field of hosting, data processing, blockchain applications and financial technologies, pointing to the success of the first phase of establishing and operating the center, which took place in a record period at the lowest cost.”

“For three months, the company has been continuing its efforts to achieve a positive impact on the local market, and to enhance its vital role in advancing economic development, he added. — OMA

Nama Group’s campaign creates major awareness on environment

The campaign witnessed a great turnout of audience, where individuals participated in various entertainment activities and competitions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Reinforcing its dedication to enhancing sustainability and community engagement, Nama Dhofar Services successfully concluded its ‘Nama Week’ campaign activities in Dhofar. As part of the sustainability plan of Nama Group, this campaign was launched to strengthen the public awareness on maintaining the environmental balance, as well as engaging the community to adopt the best practice for sustainability. On its last day, an awareness session was held for the Omani Women association’s members in Wilayat of Taqah. In addition, the campaign also

included multi-environmental and social initiatives during the week. The campaign witnessed a great turnout of audience, where individuals participated in various entertainment activities and competitions. Said Salim Al-Kathiri, General Manager Customer Services at Nama Dhofar Services said, “Practising sustainability approach depends on ensuring to balance economic, environmental and social aspects for the future generations. It is of the utmost importance for companies to adopt sustainability practices in their main operations, causing a positive impact on the environment and developing the socio-economic landscape in Oman. This campaign



reflects Nama Group’s commitment in promoting sustainability and community engagement through conducting a wide array of thoughtful social and environmental initiatives, contributing to achieve the national agenda.” Positioning itself as a key enabler of driving sustainability, Nama Group relentlessly endeavours to promote the best sustainability practices in the community. The successful edition of ‘Nama Week’ campaign comes as part of the Group’s sustainability plan 2023.



IN SOHAR

Exchange house taps Oman’s booming market

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In order to improve accessibility, convenience, and ease of payment across the globe, Gulf Overseas Exchange continues to expand its network. Catering to the people to Sohar, Gulf Overseas Exchange inaugurated their 15th Branch at Falaj Al Qabail, Sohar, recently. The branch was inaugurated by Iftakher Chowdhury CEO of Gulf Overseas Exchange. The branch offers a one-stop-shop solution to their customers for all their personal and corporate remittance and forex requirements. In his remarks at the opening of the new branch in Sohar, Iftakher Chowdhury said: “We

are proud to expand our network in line with the fast-paced growth of the Oman economy and its emergence as a global hub of commerce and travel. The opening of our new branch is a testament to our commitment to our customers with the best possible services and with greater convenience and accessibility.” Operating since 1985, Gulf Overseas Exchange is the leading provider of money transfer and currency exchange services in the Sultanate of Oman. “We offer a variety of remittance services and solutions both in our branches and on our mobile App. We are proud to consistently provide our valued customer with the best rates across the Sultanate,” Iftakher Chowdhury said.



NCSI DATA

Value of real estate deals in Oman rise 18.9% to OMR1.4bn

MUSCAT: The total value real estate in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 18.9 percent to OMR1.40 billion at end of June 2023 compared to OMR1.17 billion during the same period in 2022. The data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the fees collected against all legal acts amounted to OMR33.4 million, an increase of 10.3 percent compared to end of June 2022. The value of sales contracts stood at OMR545.7 million for 32,907 contracts, a decrease of 11.1

percent in value and 8.5 percent in the number of contracts. The value of mortgage contracts increased by 52.6 percent to OMR852.1 million for 12,062 contracts, while the swap contracts amounted to 732 at a total value of OMR4.8 million. The title deeds issued at end of June 2023 amounted to 117,870, an increase of 1.3 percent, while the number of title deeds issued for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) citizens amounted to 633, an increase of 79.3 percent.

— ONA

REAL ESTATE SECTOR

Rents in Muscat will gradually increase with rise in population

<FROM A1 He added: “We are blessed to have an average occupancy of over 90 percent over the past five years, despite many challenges such as the pandemic. I feel that this is because there is still a lack of professionally managed buildings, where tenants can feel comfortable to stay over many years. Our aim is to develop high quality living and maintain affordable rents.” Shah said: “With a rise in population over the next decade, rents in Muscat will gradually increase. There has also been greater awareness of Oman across the globe as a peace-loving nation and we do get regular inquiries from overseas to settle or relocate in Muscat. I am grateful to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Government of Oman for shaping the country with its distinctive identity. Oman’s lifestyle remains truly unique, despite going through significant growth and diversification as we work towards Vision 2040.” Another real estate developer of a leading gated community in Muscat said: “What the properties offer and the rent sought is very balanced and affordable when we compare to other major cities around the region. The return of expatriates’ workers after the pandemic was controlled has certainly played a significant role in our upward revision of rents. Still, the housing rents are far more affordable in Oman.” The CBO report also attributed the rise in the expatriate population to pre-pandemic levels as one of the main reasons for the real estate recovery. The CBO noted: “The real estate market in Oman began to pick up in 2022 amid the im-



provement in economic conditions. The recent recovery in the population profile from the pandemic has eased some segments of the Omani real estate market, reviving the demand for real estate properties.” It added: “The expatriate population, a major user of rental residential properties, rose by 8 percent in 2022 compared to the beginning of the pandemic year 2020. The resumption of commercial activities after the pandemic and the increase in the number of Omanis joining the workforce has resulted in the recovery of economic activities, and rebooted the demand for property.” As per the CBO estimates, residential property prices inched up on average by 7 percent during 2022, with the residential real estate index recovering from its lows in 2021. “The resurgence of economic activities following the pandemic, coupled with favourable oil prices, has led to a gradual uptick in property prices. This can be attributed, to some extent, to a recovery in the labour market, where the demand for work-

ers has increased, resulting in a higher number of expatriates employed in Oman,” added the CBO report. “However, despite these developments, housing rents still remain affordable due to abundant supply,” the central bank added. The property transactions (value of the traded property) that experienced a sharp decline at the onset of the pandemic gradually recovered in the latter part of 2021, and this positive trend persisted throughout 2022, the CBO said. “Overall, the property market in Oman appears to be recovering amid the resurgence of economic activity. Hence, we do not foresee any imminent correction in the real estate prices,” the central bank noted. **Real estate exposure remains low** CBO has also recently authorised finance and leasing companies to lend for commercial real estate projects, besides lending to real estate developers. This additional source of financing will further bolster the real estate sector in Oman.



Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					small and Medium companies	local companies
263/2023	Supplying prosthetic and assistive devices for people with disabilities in the North and South Al Batinah Governorates and Musandam Governorate	Companies specialized in the field of supplying medical supplies and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree.	Friday 1-9-2023 02:00 PM	Thursday 21-9-2023 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
264/2023	Supplying prosthetic and assistive devices for people with disabilities in Al-Dakhiliyah and Al-Wusta governorates					
265/2023	Supplying prosthetic and assistive devices for persons with disabilities in the governorates of South and North Al Sharqiyah					
266/2023	Supplying prosthetic and assistive devices for people with disabilities in Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi governorates					
267/2023	Supplying prosthetic and assistive devices for people with disabilities in Muscat Governorate					
268/2023	Supplying prosthetic and assistive devices for people with disabilities in Dhofar Governorate					

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), On Sunday 13/8/2023

❖ For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

* The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry*

www.mosd.gov.om

Anwar-ul-Haq becomes caretaker Pakistan PM

Senator Kakar, a lawmaker from Balochistan, would be the caretaker PM as their final round of consultation concluded on Saturday

ISLAMABAD: Senator Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has been picked as caretaker Prime Minister, Geo News reported citing opposition leader Raja Riaz and the PM's office.

After much deliberation, finally, Pakistan decided that Senator Kakar, a lawmaker from Balochistan, would be the caretaker PM as their final round of consultation concluded on Saturday.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Riaz said: "We decided that the interim prime minister would be from a smaller province".



This decision came after President Arif Alvi approved on Wednesday night's dissolved the National Assembly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif forwarded a summary to him for dissolution of the lower house of the Parliament.

Before the meeting, President Alvi wrote a letter to the PM, reminding him and the opposition leader to suggest a "suitable person" for the interim premier by August 12 (Saturday), according to Geo News. In a letter to both PM Shehbaz and Riaz, the president informed them that under Article 224A they are supposed to propose a name for interim prime minister within three days

of the dissolution of the National Assembly.

As per the country's Constitution, if the prime minister and the NA opposition leader fail to agree on the name within three days, the matter goes to the parliamentary committee for the appointment of a caretaker PM.

As per the law, the premier and the opposition leader will send their respective preferences for the coveted post to the parliamentary delegation, as per Geo News.

The parliamentary committee will then have to finalise the name of the caretaker prime minister within three days.

However, if the committee also fails to reach a consensus on the

name, then the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will pick the caretaker prime minister within two days from the names proposed by the opposition and the government, Geo News reported.

Court directive

Islamabad High Court, on Saturday, asked the Attock jail to provide Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan with "appropriate medical facilities" and allow him to have meetings with friends and family, Dawn reported.

Notably, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chief was arrested on August 5 after a court found him guilty of "corrupt practices" in the Toshakhana case and sentenced him to three years in prison.

The court directed the jail authorities that the PTI chairman should be provided with a prayer mat and a copy of the English version of the Holy Quran, as well as "appropriate medical facilities to cater for his health and wellbeing".

"He (the former prime minister) may also be provided with the prayer mat and English version of the Holy Quran," the court said.

After Khan's lawyers claimed that he was being kept in "distressing conditions" and was provided "C-Class jail facilities". **ANI**



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SOS MEDITERRANEE

Mediterranean vessel saves migrants: NGO

PARIS: French NGO SOS Mediterranee said on Friday that its Ocean Viking vessel saved over 600 migrants trapped at sea over the last two days.

The rescue comes amid increasing reports of boats carrying people to Europe that have sunk or gone missing, with unknown numbers of casualties.

The rescue group said 623 people had been brought in on "unseaworthy small boats." Among those rescued were nationals of countries such as Sudan, Guinea and Bangladesh.

Sudan in particular is witnessing armed conflict which has driven thousands of refugees out of the country.

The majority of the migrants

were picked up by the ship on the sea route between the Italian island of Lampedusa and the Tunisian city of Sfax.

Lampedusa is a common landing point for people seeking entry to Europe, whereas Sfax serves as a launching port for migrants from other African countries to begin their risky sea journeys northward. In another case, two migrants — including a baby — died and five disappeared after a shipwreck off the Tunisian coast.

Once the migrants reach southern Europe, they sometimes head for wealthier countries such as Germany and the UK. The migrants may also take a dangerous journey from France to Britain. **APW**

ELECTION SUBVERSION CASE

US judge warns Trump over 'inflammatory' remarks

WASHINGTON: The judge overseeing Donald Trump's 2020 election subversion case, issued a warning on Friday.

US District Judge Tanya Chutkan cautioned the former US president to avoid making "inflammatory" statements and stressed her commitment to maintaining a respectful environment during the upcoming trial.

She issued the warning while ruling on Trump's lawyers request for fewer restrictions over how much evidence in the case he can share with the public.

Prosecutors working for the special counsel, Jack Smith, expressed concern Trump might try to use details of the confidential evidence to intimidate witnesses.

"Your client's defense is supposed to happen in this courtroom, not on the internet," Chutkan told Trump's lawyers.

She drew attention to a post on Trump's Truth Social platform, in



which he proclaimed, "If you go after me, I'm coming after you!"

The judge said that the more anyone makes "inflammatory" statements about the case, the greater her urgency will be to move the case more quickly to trial to prevent the contamination of the jury pool.

Chutkan however ruled that the prosecution had not met its

burden to show why all of the evidence should be subject to a "protective order."

She said Trump would be allowed to review sensitive materials such as witness interviews and transcripts of grand jury proceedings without his legal team present but he cannot photograph or reproduce them.

DW

IN NEW DELHI

Australian PM to visit India to participate in G20 Summit

CANBERRA: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has confirmed his participation in the upcoming G20 summit to be held in New Delhi next month.

Albanese will be among leaders of G-20 nations who are scheduled to attend the G-20 summit under India's presidency in New Delhi this September.

The G20 is the world's preeminent forum for global economic cooperation. Leaders will focus on navigating the global economy back to strong, sustainable and resilient growth, according to a statement by the Australian PM's office.

"Deepening Australia's engagement with Southeast Asia is a key priority for my Government. Our futures are intertwined — so it's essential that we work together to achieve a peaceful, stable and prosperous region," a press statement from the Australian Prime Minister's office said quoting Albanese.

"It is more important than ever that Australia works closely with international partners, including through multilateral economic forums like the G20, to address shared challenges and opportunities," Albanese said.

"Australia is invested in and committed to the Indo-Pacific to enhance growth and prosperity, stability and respect for sovereignty and lasting peace," he said.

Albanese said that Australia



is proud to be hosting a Special Summit to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the ASEAN-Australia Dialogue Relations in 2024.

"I look forward to welcoming ASEAN leaders to Australia in March next year," he said.

Albanese will travel to Indonesia, the Philippines and India in September to meet with regional leaders to discuss global challenges and advance Australia's economic, security and climate agenda.

The Australian Prime Minister will attend the 3rd Annual ASEAN-Australia Summit and the 18th East Asia Summit in Jakarta from September 6-7. Australia's close partnership with ASEAN and its members is critical to achieving mutual prosperity, security and peace in the region.

As part of the Australian Government's upgrade of relation-

ships with countries of Southeast Asia, Albanese will travel to Manila, the first Australian Prime Minister to undertake a bilateral visit to the Philippines since the year 2003.

The Prime Minister's meeting on September 8 with Philippines President Ferdinand R Marcos Jr will focus on strengthening cooperation on defence and maritime security, development and education.

"Our partnership with the Philippines is built on close defence and security cooperation, increasing economic relations and warm personal ties, including through the vibrant Filipino-Australian community. I look forward to visiting Manila to meet with President Marcos and affirm our partnership," Albanese said.

India assumed the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022. **ANI**

Ministry of Defence

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Defence invites MOD registered suppliers to participate in The following tender:

Subject	Tender Number	Last Date for Inquiries	Last Date To Submit The Tender	Tender Document Price
PROVIDING LAUNDRY SERVICES FOR MINISTRY OF DEFENSE	21/2023	04/09/2023	11/05/2023	784 OMR

- Tenders documents and terms may be obtained on payment from the office of the Secretary of the Tender Committee, gate No. 14 of MAM Camp between 0900 to 1300 hrs on the working days.
- Payment of Tender documents to be made by using of any Visa Electron Cards or "Visa credit" Cards or through Smart Card issued from all the banks are operated in oman.

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80 killed in wildfires on Hawaii’s Maui island, Attorney General to investigate

Residents of the devastated city of Lahain returned home to take stock of the damage

HAWAII: Hawaii’s Attorney General, Anne Lopez, said on Saturday her office is launching an examination into the authorities’ response to the wildfires that have killed 80 people.

The death toll was revised several times as more bodies were found, making it the deadliest natural disaster in the state’s history. It surpassed a tsunami that killed 61 people on the Big Island of Hawaii in 1960, a year after Hawaii joined the United States.

“My Department is committed to understanding the decisions that were made before and during the wildfires and to sharing with the public the results of this review,” Lopez said. “As we continue to support all aspects of the ongoing relief effort, now is the time to begin this process of understanding.”

The death toll was likely to climb further as rescuers, as-



sisted by cadaver dogs, combed the town’s charred ruins. Officials said firefighters continued to battle the blaze, which has not yet been fully contained.

There are six shelters for displaced people on the island, and officials said they are preparing a plan to house the new homeless in hotels and tourist rental properties. Maui County officials said 1,418 people were at emergency evacuation shelters. Survivors assess damage

Meanwhile, Lahaina residents were allowed to return home for the first time to assess the damage on Friday afternoon.

Anthony La Puente said the shock of finding his home burned to nothing was profound.

“It sucks not being able to find the things you grew up with, or the things you remember,” he said of the house he had lived in for 16 years.

Officials warned residents in Lahaina and the neighbouring town of Kula who have running water that it may be contaminated and that they should not drink it.

They also recommended taking

only short, lukewarm showers “in a well-ventilated room” to avoid exposure to possible chemical vapors.

A deadly tsunami on the Big Island in 1946 prompted the development of a Hawaiian emergency system with sirens to warn of natural disasters and other threats.

However, many fire survivors said that they didn’t hear any sirens or receive a warning that gave them enough time to prepare. Some witnesses described their terror when the blaze consumed Lahaina in what seemed a

Oprah Winfrey spotted helping residents of Maui

HAWAII: Veteran talk show host Oprah Winfrey has come forward to show support for the island of Maui amid the current wave of deadly wildfires.

She was recently spotted at shelters on Maui visiting with people displaced by the wildfires and bringing much-needed supplies, CNN reported.

Local non-profit group Kāko’o Haleakalā posted a video on Instagram in which Winfrey is seen carrying pillows through crowds of people on cots and folding chairs. Winfrey owns property on the island, and her

spokesperson confirmed to the outlet that she has been volunteering at emergency shelters.

“Oprah has been to several local shelters to ask firsthand what was most needed. She then went to Walmart and Costco to shop for the items and brought them back. It is heart-breaking devastation,” Oprah’s spokesperson said.

It’s not the first time Winfrey has helped out in times of wildfires. In 2019, she opened a private road on her property in Maui to help people quickly escape a brush fire that broke out. -ANI

JOINT EXERCISES

Japan-Australia defence pact to take effect from today

TOKYO: The Japanese government announced that a pact with Australia that will enable joint exercises and improve security cooperation will go into force on Sunday, the *Japan Times* reported.

Similar to Tokyo’s current Status of Forces Agreement with the United States, the Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement will make it easier for Australian Defence Force and Japanese Self-Defence Force personnel to deploy more quickly.

The deal, signed in January 2022 as Japan’s first RAA, will also ease restrictions on the transportation of weapons and supplies for joint exercises and disaster relief operations, *The Japan Times* reported.

The move came after the Japanese parliament in April approved legislation for the pact, along with one with Britain, to complete its domestic approval processes.

Through the security agreements, Japan aims to boost security ties with the United States and other like-minded countries



FACT: The Japan-Australia Reciprocal Access Agreement will make it easier for Australian Defence Force and Japanese Self-Defence Force personnel to deploy more quickly.

to enhance deterrence against Beijing, which has become more militarily assertive in the Indo-Pacific region, *The Japan Times* reported.

Agreeing to start talks on the RAA in 2014, Japan and Australia reached a broad agreement in November 2020. However, Japan’s adherence to the death penalty system delayed finalization, as Canberra, having abolished capital punishment, urges other countries to do the same.

An appendix to the accord allows Australia the discretion to refuse the transfer of its soldiers accused of crimes in Japan, thereby preventing potential death sentences, *The Japan Times* reported.

Japan and Britain concluded an RAA in January this year, but London has yet to finish its domestic procedures for its implementation. -ANI

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

Young need to be equipped with skills for green economy

GENEVA: On International Youth Day, ILO Director-General, Gilbert F Houngbo, said young people need to be equipped with skills for the green economy, so they can find decent jobs and make the world a better place for people and planet.

In celebration of the United Nations International Youth Day, with the theme of Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World, this event will highlight the role of young people in coming together to amplify engagement and leadership in all areas of decision-making and action, especially in creating an environmentally sustainable and climate-friendly world.

“On International Youth Day, I join the global community in celebrating the commitment and actions of young people who are trying to make the world a better place for both people and the planet. Many young people aspire to careers that make a positive impact on the environment and foster social justice,” he said in a statement on the Day, which is marked on 12th August every year.



FACT: As the world moves towards a low-carbon economy, the implementation of just transition policies could create more than eight million additional jobs for young people by 2030.

“As the world moves towards a low-carbon economy, the implementation of just transition policies could create more than eight million additional jobs for young people by 2030. Equipping them with skills for the green economy, including digital skills, will prepare them for these jobs.

The ILO-led Global Initiative on

Decent Jobs for Youth works with and for youth, so we can make this happen, he added.

“It brings together the resources and expertise of multiple partners committed to scaling up actions that will increase youth employment. Join us in building a more sustainable future for the generations to come.” -ANI/WAM

SUPERTANKER

UN successfully transfers oil from ageing Yemeni vessel

NEW YORK: The United Nations has said that it has successfully completed a complex operation to transfer more than a million barrels of oil from an ageing super-tanker off Yemen’s Red Sea coast onto a salvage vessel, averting a potential environmental catastrophe, Voice of America (VOA) reported.

“We have, I think against many odds, managed to complete an operation that many talked about for years,” UN Development Program Administrator Achim Steiner told reporters in a video call on Friday.

“Many were concerned it couldn’t really be done. Many questioned why it took the UN [so] long to implement it,” he added.

The planning, fundraising and obtaining permissions from the local authorities took years. The actual transfer of the oil took 18 days of around-the-clock pumping, VOA reported.

Steiner noted that when the United Nations was asked to undertake the operation, there was no one else ready or prepared to do it.

The UN has raised about USD 121 million of the USD 143 million needed to purchase a large crude carrier, retain a global salvage company, enlist experts, insure a

dangerous operation in a war zone and carry out complicated logistics, VOA reported.

The tanker was the subject of more than three years of appeals from the UN and environmental organizations who warned that a lack of maintenance during Yemen’s civil war meant the nearly 50-year-old vessel was at risk of spilling four times as much oil as happened in the 1989 disaster involving the Exxon Valdez off the coast of Alaska.

Experts said if the tanker leaked or exploded, the environmental and economic damage could have cost USD 20 billion.

The Safer was moored in an area controlled by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, who have been at war with the Saudi-backed internationally recognized Yemeni government for eight years. The UN had sought access to the vessel for several years, but the Houthis withheld the necessary permissions and security guarantees until last year.

Raising the money for the USD 143 million operation further delayed it.

The United States welcomed the successful transfer operation, to which Washington contributed USD 10 million. It is one of 23



countries that have contributed to financing the operation. Funding has also come from the private sector and a crowdfunding campaign, VOA reported.

“This operation serves as a strong model for future international coordination and cooperation to proactively prevent crises before they occur,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

“We commend the UN and the Yemeni parties who came together to avert an environmental, economic and humanitarian

disaster,” he added.

Experts delicately handled the 47-year-old vessel, called the FSO Safer, working to remove the crude without the tanker falling apart, the oil exploding, or a massive spill taking place, CNN reported.

UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Yemen David Gressly said that the operation utilised the skills of SMIT, the dredging and offshore contractor who assisted in removing the Ever Given ship, which blocked the Suez Canal for nearly a week in 2021, VOA reported.

The team pumped between 4,000 and 5,000 barrels of oil every hour.

Bab el-Mandeb strait

However, who gets the oil remains a controversial matter, CNN reported. The Red Sea is a vital strategic waterway for global trade. At its southern end lies the Bab el-Mandeb strait, where nearly 9 per cent of total seaborne-traded petroleum passes. And at its north is the Suez Canal that separates Africa from Asia.

The majority of petroleum and

natural gas exports from the Persian Gulf that transit the Suez Canal pass through the Bab el-Mandeb, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

The sea is also a popular diving hotspot that boasts an impressive underwater ecosystem. In places, its banks are dotted with tourist resorts, and its eastern shore is the site of ambitious Saudi development projects worth hundreds of billions of dollars, VOA reported.

However, who gets to keep the oil is a question hanging all along. The tanker issue remains a point of dispute between the Houthi rebels that control the north of Yemen and the internationally recognised government, the two main warring sides in the country’s civil conflict.

While the war, which saw hundreds of thousands of people killed or injured, and Yemen left in ruins is far from resolved.

The ship had been abandoned in the Red Sea since 2015. The FSO Safer held four times the amount of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez off Alaska in 1989 which resulted in a slick that covered 1,300 miles of coastline. A potential spill from this vessel would have been enough to make it the fifth largest oil spill from a tanker in history, a UN website said. -ONA

SPORTS

Saka strikes in Gunners victory



The Premiership game was delayed by 30 minutes because of an e-ticketing system issue at the Emirates Stadium

LONDON: Bukayo Saka's superb first-half strike helped Arsenal begin their English Premier League campaign with a 2-1 win over Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

The 21-year-old England forward added to Eddie Nketiah's 26th minute opener with a curling effort from outside the area that nestled itself into the top left corner of the Forest net, well past the reach of former Gunners keeper Matt Turner.

But last season's Premier League runners-up had to survive a late charge by Forest after substitute Taiwo Awoniyi clawed a goal back in the 83rd minute.

The game had been delayed by 30 minutes because of an e-ticketing system issue that meant the majority of fans were still outside Emirates Stadium at the scheduled kick-off time of 12:30 BST.

When play did eventually get un-



Man City open title defence in style

Earlier on Friday, Erling Haaland's devastating display saw Manchester City open the defence of their Premier League title with a comfortable 3-0 victory at Burnley.

The goalscoring phenomenon, who hit 52 goals as City won the Treble of Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League last season, took only 185 seconds to open his account for the new campaign, striking a blow from which the newly promoted Clarets never recovered.

Haaland pounced in the area when Rodri headed down Kevin de Bruyne's cross, then curled in a magnificent left-foot strike into the top corner beyond Burnley keeper James Trafford after 36 minutes to effectively end the contest.

City's control grew more emphatic as the game went on, Rodri turning home the third with 15 minutes left after the home defence failed to clear a free-kick.

It all ended comfortably for City, their night only marred by another injury for De Bruyne, who limped off after only 23 minutes to be replaced by Mateo Kovacic. Burnley had Anass Zaroury sent off in injury time, for a dangerous lunge on Kyle Walker.

Saturday's other results:

Bournemouth 1 West Ham United 1, Brighton 4 Luton Town 1, Everton 0 Fulham 1, Sheffield United 0 Crystal Palace 1. - Agencies

THRILLING HOCKEY FINAL

India edge Malaysia to clinch record fourth Asian Champions Trophy title



CHENNAI: Indian men's hockey team rallied from two goals down to edge Malaysia 4-3 in a thrilling final of the Asian Champions Trophy 2023 final at the Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium in Chennai on Saturday. With this victory, India became the most successful team in the Asian Champions Trophy, ahead of three-time champions Pakistan.

Jugraj Singh (9'), Harmanpreet Singh (45'), Gurjant Singh (45') and Akashdeep Singh (56') got on the scoresheet for India while Abu Kamal Azrai (14'), Razie Rahim (18'), Aminudin Mu-

hammad (28') netted for Malaysia.

India had topped the league stage earlier with four wins and a draw. They got better of Japan 5-0 in the semi-finals. Malaysia finished second in the league and beat the previous champions, South Korea, 6-2 in the semi-final.

Contested by Asia's top six sides biennially, the trophy was previously won by India in 2011 and 2016. They shared the trophy with Pakistan in 2018 after rain played spoilsport in Muscat.

Japan beat Korea 5-3 for bronze on Saturday while Pakistan defeated China 6-1 on Friday to finish fifth.

ODI ASIA CUP AND WORLD CUP

Shakib Al Hasan returns as Bangladesh captain

DHAKA: Shakib Al Hasan has been appointed Bangladesh ODI captain once again, and will lead them in the Asia Cup and World Cup. Shakib takes over following Tamim Iqbal's resignation on August 3 after he was ruled out of the Asia Cup because of a back injury.

Shakib takes over at a critical time for Bangladesh, with the Asia Cup followed by a home ODI series against New Zealand in September, before they travel to India for the ODI World Cup starting on October 5.

He last led Bangladesh in an ODI in 2017, and is now their captain in all three formats

Bangladesh also announced the ODI side for the Asia Cup with 22-year-old Tanzid Hasan gaining a maiden call up.

Batter Shamim Hossain, all-rounder Mahedi Hasan and left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed were recalled to the 17-man squad for the Asia Cup.

Squad: Shakib Al Hasan (capt), Litton Das, Tanjid Hasan Tamim, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Towhid Hridoy, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mamhud, Mahedi Hasan, Nasum Ahmed, Shamim Hossain, Afif Hossain, Shoriful Islam, Ebadot Hossain, Mohammad Naim. - Agencies



INTRODUCING ALL-NEW

CROWN

TIMELESS LEGACY



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MARKET

Telecom shares attracted investors' attention in MSX weekly trading

The benchmark index of Muscat Stock Exchange recorded a decline of 26 points and closed the week at 4,757 points

MUSCAT: Telecom shares attracted investors in last week's trading on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), accounting for 45 per cent of the total trading value witnessed by the stock exchange during the week.

This turnout came in conjunction with Omantel's announcement on Thursday of its preliminary financial results for the first half of this year, which indicated the stability of its profits in the local market at the levels of the same period last year. Omantel said that the net profits of local



operations for the first half of this year amounted to OMR39.8 million compared to OMR40.2 million in the same period last year. The company said that despite the intense competition in both the mobile and fixed sectors, Omantel maintained the level of net profit at levels similar to the previous

year as a result of the continuous growth in revenues from postpaid and fixed broadband services as well as lower financing costs.

The trading value of Omantel shares last week amounted to OMR3.32 million, representing 33.9 percent of the total trading value. The company's share rose in

Thursday's trading to OMR1.110, but it reduced its gains at the end of the session and concluded the weekly trading at one riyal, up by one baisa during the week. On Thursday, Omantel said that its board of directors decided to distribute interim dividends of 5 baidas per share to shareholders as

of August 31, as mandated by the annual ordinary general meeting held in late March.

Ooredoo shares witnessed transactions worth OMR1.10 million, representing 11.1 percent of the total value of trading witnessed by the stock exchange last week compared to OMR9.7 million in the same period last year. The company attributed this decline to higher costs related to hardware sales and IT sales.

Last week's trading was marked by the focus of investors on the shares of Omantel, Ooredoo, Bank Muscat, Abraj Energy Services, and Bank Muscat's first-class permanent bonds. The five securities accounted for 79 percent of the total trading value witnessed by the stock exchange last week.

The weekly trading data issued by the Muscat Stock Exchange showed a 35 percent decline in the value of trading last week, falling to OMR 9.8 million, compared to OMR15.1 million in the previous week, and the number of transactions executed decreased by 15 percent from 1,881 transactions to 1,598.

These declines came at a time when local investment institutions

reduced their purchases during the past week to OMR7.4 million, compared to purchases worth OMR12.2 million in the previous week.

Last week, the main index of the Stock Exchange recorded a decline of 26 points and closed at 4,757 points. The financial sector index recorded the highest losses, declining by about 94 points, the industrial sector index fell by 27 points while the services sector index rose by 7 points. The Sharia index recorded an increase of five points.

The past week witnessed an increase in the prices of 14 securities, led by Shell Oman Marketing, Al Suwadi Energy and Oman Chrome, and 26 securities recorded a decline, most notably Majan College, Al Ahli Bank and Taajeer Finance, while 17 securities remained unchanged at their previous levels.

Last week, the Muscat Stock Exchange recorded gains in its market capitalisation and reached OMR29.5 million, benefiting from the increase in the market value of the companies listed in the parallel market, which recorded remarkable increases. -OANA

EMPOWERING SMES

Sohar Port signs agreements for provision of maritime services for ships

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and the Freezone signed three agreements with a number of companies operating in the field of sea transport for the provision of maritime services for ships which anchor at the port. The agreement's signing is a step to empower the sustainable growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and to further boost entrepreneurship.

The agreements were signed with Al Risiah Shipping and Trading Services; Gulf Global Land and Sea Services and National Marine Services. According to the agreements, the three companies will offer ship cleaning services, underwater surveys and underwater repair among other services.

This cooperation opens horizons for the achievement of in-country value (ICV) and provides SMEs with the opportunity to offer high-quality services for ships with low maintenance costs and reaffirms the commitment of Sohar Port and the Freezone to the enhancement of the sea transport industry.

Batti Al Shibli, Harbour Master at Sohar Port and Freezone said



that the agreements come within the vision of the port on the creation of an integrated maritime system through the empowerment of the local companies. It also aimed to boost the growth of SMEs and

sustainable shipping and cargo practices, he added.

Is'haq Al Shukaili, Assistant Vice President of the Authority for SMEs Development who is also the head of the Department of In-

Country Value at the Authority for SMEs Development said that this strategic cooperation is promising in terms of boosting the sea transport sector and the Sultanate's economic development.

REFINTIV DATA

Asian companies earnings estimates get boost from consumption hopes

TOKYO: Analysts are raising earnings estimates for Asian companies for the first time in four months as easing price pressures boost consumption while receding fears of a recession in developed markets is expected to help to lift export revenues.

Equity analysts have upgraded Asian companies' forward 12-month net profits by 2.3 per cent over the past month, based on Refintiv data. That compares with a meagre 0.7 per cent increase in global companies' profit estimates in the past month, Reuters reported.

"The Asian profit picture is improving slowly but surely," said Manishi Raychaudhuri, Asia-Pacific head of equity research at BNP Paribas. Some of the key drivers are domestic consumption, a likely capital spending cycle, and hopes of a policy stimulus in China, Raychaudhuri said.

Also helping to lift estimates was strong earnings performance by Asian companies in the second quarter so far. Half of the region's companies have reported their March-June quarter earnings, with 56 per cent of them beating consensus estimates.

In most markets, margin expansion has been playing a major role in driving overall earnings growth, HSBC analysts said.

Across sectors, consumer discretionary led with 2.8 per cent of earnings upgrades over the past month, while utilities and financials sectors also got an upward revision of 2.5 per cent and 1.4 per cent, respectively.

China's tortuous post-pandemic recovery has cast a shadow across the world, with firms ranging from automakers to machinery makers warning of slowing earnings in the world's second-biggest economy. -BNA

MOMENTOUS OCCASION

Revived Sohar Steel roars back to life at full capacity in record time

MUSCAT: Sohar Steel celebrated a momentous occasion on August 7, officially marking its revival under the ownership of Jindal Group and Vulcan Investments.

After an extensive three-year hiatus, the steel melting shop with a capacity of 700,000 tonnes per annum was re-commissioned, and more than 150 locals were re-employed to operate the plant. The successful acquisition represents a pivotal juncture in the steel industry, underscoring Jindal Group's commitment to fostering social sustainability and economic growth and supporting the nation's vision for economic diversification.

The official inauguration ceremony was attended by esteemed personages, including representatives from the Jindal Group and Sohar Steel employees, who were overjoyed by the much-awaited revitalisation of the plant. Harssha Shetty, Senior Official from the Jindal Group, expressed his elation: "The successful acquisition of Sohar Steel represents an extraordinary stride forward for Jindal Group, cementing our position as a prominent leader in the steel industry. This strategic move aligns harmoniously with our steadfast dedication to Oman's socio-economic growth, reflecting our resolve to progress Oman's industrial landscape."

The acquisition brings fresh



air to the local community and renews hope for over 150 re-employed talents at Sohar Steel. Hamed Al Farsi, HR and Admin GM of Sohar Steel emphasised the company's commitment to nurturing and developing its employees, saying, "We deeply empathise with the challenges faced by the individuals affected by the work stoppage and their subsequent joy upon learning about Vulcan International's acquisition of Sohar Steel. In response, we have taken the necessary steps to nurture and develop our workforce by providing them with on-the-job training and assigning them to various departments within the company."

The acquisition of Sohar Steel aligns with the Sultanate's aspirations for a prosperous and diversified economy, a vision shared

by the Jindal Group. The Group's unyielding dedication to empowering the local workforce is evident through its initiatives to enable the re-employed individuals to develop their skills, advance professionally, and experience social mobility. This commitment bolsters the Sultanate's human capital, empowering its citizens to contribute significantly to the nation's progress.

Harssha said: "We also thank the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef and the esteemed members of the Competition Protection and Monopoly Prevention Centre who played a crucial role in ensuring the smooth and fair completion of the acquisition process. Their dedication and commitment to upholding fair

practices have made this landmark deal a reality."

As Sohar Steel enters this new chapter under the stewardship of Jindal Group and Vulcan Investments, it embarks on a journey marked by cutting-edge innovations, community-centric values, and a profound commitment to social sustainability and environmental stewardship. Together, they are poised to drive groundbreaking initiatives, creating promising employment prospects and contributing to the realisation of Oman's vision for a thriving and sustainable future.

Jindal Group is an industrial powerhouse with a global steel presence and a leading player in the global steel sector. It bolsters its commitment to the Sultanate of Oman by undertaking several strategic investments to foster socio-economic growth and support the nation's transition to a green, circular economy.

Working in tandem with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's Vision 2040 plan to reduce the country's dependency on the oil and gas sector while diversifying into non-oil-based manufacturing, the group is flying the flag high. These investments under the Vulcan International Holding Company include Jindal Shaded Iron and Steel, Sohar Steel, and Vulcan Pelletising Plant in Sohar and Duqm Vulcan Green Steel.

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CANINE FRIENDS CAN CAUSE DISTRACTED DRIVING

HERE'S HOW TO STAY SAFE

Summer road trip season is heating up. Whether your vacation plans include national parks, sandy beaches or major metropolises, you may be thinking of bringing the entire family along, even your four-legged companions.

While we love having them near, dogs aren't always safe passengers. A recent poll commissioned by Selective Insurance, a leading home, auto and business insurance carrier, found that in the past 12 months, dogs caused a majority of drivers to be distracted on U.S. roadways.

The study, conducted online by The Harris Poll, found that of licensed drivers who recently

(over the last 12 months) drove with their dogs, 91% admitted to interacting with them while driving, including interactions requiring the driver to take their hands off the wheel or eyes off the road, and 48% acknowledged that they are more distracted when their dog is in the vehicle than when it is not.

"We love our dogs. However, some of their behaviours in the car, such as sitting on drivers' laps, jumping between seats, or sticking their heads out the window, divert drivers' attention from operating a vehicle," said Scott Smith, vice president and director of Safety Management at Selective Insurance. "To help keep our roads safe, drivers need

to minimize distractions. That means our beloved pet passengers should be restrained in the back seat, and if they need tending, drivers should first pull over to a safe place."

Some of the more hazardous behaviors that drivers engaged in while recently on the road with their dog include giving them food/treats/water (36%), taking a photo/video of their dog (27%) or holding them in place (23%) while driving. In addition, 40% of drivers who have ever driven with their dog confessed to various reckless driving behaviors as a direct result of having their dog in the vehicle, including swerving out of the lane (11%) and hard braking (13%).

This summer, as you head out with your dog on journeys near and far, help minimize driving distractions in your vehicle with these tips from Selective Insurance:

- Have your dog ride in the back seat and consider using a partition between the front and back seats.

Use a dog seatbelt, safety harness or anchored crate to prevent distractions and provide your dog with some protection if there is an accident. A significant 70% of licensed drivers who recently drove with their dogs say their dogs were unrestrained in the vehicle. Yet, 82% of drivers who recently drove with their dogs agree that having an unrestrained dog in a moving vehicle can distract the driver. Not using a restraint is risky and could put you in violation of the law. Some states have animal restraint laws for vehicles to help keep drivers safe and focused. However, only 24% of licensed drivers who recently drove with their dogs say they are very familiar with such laws in their state. That's compared to 34% who say they didn't know these laws existed.

- Plan ahead and identify rest stops along your route so you and your dog can take a break. If



LIFESTYLE

you need to make an unplanned stop, avoid the side of the road and instead look for a quiet parking lot. Use these occasions to give your dog food, a little exercise and most importantly in summer, plenty of water.

For additional survey findings, along with tips to keep roads safe and K-9 companions secure, visit [Selective.com](https://selective.com). For survey methodology, visit selective.com.

"More pets in homes, especially with the introduction of the pandemic puppy, means more Americans than ever may be hitting the roads with their pooch on road trips this summer. Drivers should understand the risks associated with taking them along for the ride," said Smith. — StatePoint

“We love our dogs. However, some of their behaviours in the car, such as sitting on drivers' laps, jumping between seats, or sticking their heads out the window, divert drivers' attention from operating a vehicle,” said Scott Smith, vice president and director of Safety Management at Selective Insurance



SPORTS

England set up semi-final date with Australia on August 16



The Lionesses defeat Colombia 2-1 while the Matildas edge past France in a penalty shootout

SYDNEY: England set-up a 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup semi-final with co-hosts Australia after overcoming a dangerous Colombia side 2-1 on Saturday. Earlier on Saturday, Australia reached the semi-finals for the first time, sending a sell-out crowd in Brisbane into ecstasy, with an incredible 7-6 penalty shootout victory over France. The co-host had played in the quarterfinals on three previous occasions but had never made it beyond the last eight. Cortnee Vine, the 20th penalty taker in the shootout, sealed victory, securing a win on penalties. In Sydney, the European champions, favourites to go all the way in Australia, have not played their best football in the tournament but this was a much more rounded display in front of a hostile crowd in Sydney. Largely composed in defence and hard-working in attack, the Lionesses were rewarded with two slices of luck which they capitalised on, after goalkeeper Mary Earps had been beaten by a quick-thinking lob in the first half.

Lauren Hemp poked in the equaliser, just seven minutes after Leicy Santos had caught out Earps, when Colombia goalkeeper Catalina Perez spilled a routine gather in the six-yard area under pressure from Alessia Russo. Arsenal striker Russo, who had only scored once in four World Cup matches prior to Saturday's quarter-final, worked tirelessly out of possession, earning her opportunity when she pounced on a kind deflection to drill in England's second. Earps was called into action later, tipping Lorena Durango Bedoya's effort over the bar, while England were put under further pressure by Colombia's talented attacking line-up, which included Real Madrid's teenage sensation Linda Caicedo. The Lionesses, who had to deal with a crowd of 75,784 who were largely backing Colombia, face co-hosts Australia next on August 16. Colombia, ranked 21 places lower than England, had already proven their worth in Australia, seeing off Euro 2022 finalists Germany in the group stages and progressing in style. Their attacking line-up caused England problems and they pushed desperately late on for an equaliser, testing the Lionesses' back five. However, spearheaded by the centre-back trio of Millie Bright, Alex Greenwood and Jess Carter, England held their own against the physicality and tenacity of the Colombians.

Incredible penalty shoot-out
Following a goalless 120 minutes, the Matildas triumphed 7-6 in a shoot-out which defied belief with

its dramatic twists. Cortnee Vine scored the winning spot-kick for Australia, after Vicki Becho had struck the post for France. Australia keeper Mackenzie Arnold made a total of four saves in the shoot-out - including twice from Kenza Dali, having moved off the line for the first stop, leading to a retake. Arnold herself had the opportunity to score the winning penalty as the fifth taker for Australia, after saving from Eve Perisset, but struck the post as nearly 50,000 Australians inside the stadium went through every emotion imaginable. France had a goal rightly disallowed in extra-time, and with neither side able to break the deadlock over 120 minutes this entertaining quarterfinal had to be decided on penalties. Both teams missed from the spot in the shootout - but it was France's four misses which proved the most costly, giving Vine the chance to end a tense shootout and spark wild celebrations among the Australian players in front of nearly 50,000 equally jubilant fans. It was a cruel way for France to lose, especially as Les Bleues had had plenty of opportunities to score during a match in which momentum switched from one team to the other throughout. Ultimately, Vicki Bècho's miss - the 19-year-old hit the post to present Vine with the opportunity to send her country into a frenzy - was the costliest of all. Australia are the first hosts to reach the Women's World Cup semi-finals since the USA in 2003 - and could be the first since the Americans in 1999 to triumph on home soil. - Agencies

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Spain to meet Sweden in last 4



SYDNEY: Spain reached the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup semifinals for the first time after edging the Netherlands 2-1 in a thriller on Friday, while third-ranked Sweden outlasted former champions Japan with a tense 2-1 win. Sixth-ranked Spain will next face Sweden in a mouth-watering final four clash on Tuesday in Auckland. Japan's elimination means a first-time World Cup champion will be crowned at the tournament. Playing in their first quarter-final, Spain showed no signs of nerves and overcame ninth-ranked Netherlands with teenager Salma Paralluelo scoring an extra-time winner in Wellington. "It's a great day for Spanish women's football," Spain coach Jorge Vilda said. "We've reached somewhere we've never reached before, and

done it playing a good game as well, with a team that is convinced that we can go even further." "The goal from Salma, it was sheer joy. We had to wait for a few minutes to get the end result of the whistle in the end, and I'm extremely happy." In a see-saw of a contest, Paralluelo produced a brilliant solo goal in the 111th minute to down the Netherlands and the result also signalled the end of defender Stefanie van der Gragt's career. The 30-year-old endured an emotionally draining swansong having conceded an 81st minute penalty for a handball with Spain's Mariona Caldentey breaking the deadlock. But van der Gragt equalised in the dying minutes to force extra time before the Netherlands ultimately fell short. "We had the chance in extra



time and we didn't score, they had one chance and they scored. That's football," said van der Gragt, who was part of Netherlands' runner-up finish in 2019. "I have to be proud of myself and the team." **Japan knocked out** In the later game, Sweden reached their fifth World Cup semifinal after surviving a late onslaught from 2011 champions Japan in Auckland. After goals to Amanda Ilestedt and Filippa Angeldal either side of the interval, Japan appeared headed for a tame exit and they couldn't peg a goal back with Riko Ueki missing a penalty in the 76th minute. But Japan's hopes were revived when substitute Honoka Hayashi scored from close range in the 87th minute.

Japan aggressively pushed for an equaliser, but missed several opportunities as a nervous Sweden hung on. Sweden celebrated with gusto, but they were made to work hard after having a stranglehold. Both teams had conceded just one goal from their first four games and a defensive style ensued in the early exchanges. Sweden drew first blood in the 32nd minute when Ilestedt scored her fourth goal of the tournament - one behind Japan's Hinata Miyazawa in the overall tally. Japan lacked potency and did not have a goal on target in the first-half. They were in a hole when Angeldahl converted a penalty in the 51st minute before clawing back into the contest. But Sweden defied Japan's final surge to reach another semi-final. - Xinhua

LEAGUES CUP



Messi scores again in Miami's victory

WASHINGTON: World Cup winner Lionel Messi scored his eighth goal in five matches with Inter Miami as the Florida outfit reached the Leagues Cup semi-finals with a 4-0 home win over Charlotte on Friday. Josef Martinez put the hosts ahead with a penalty and Finland international winger Robert Taylor doubled the advantage by sweeping home a first-time effort after Deandre Yedlin's cross. Adilson Malanda gifted Inter Miami their third goal when he turned the ball into his own net before Argentina captain Messi latched onto Leonardo Campana's cross to side-foot home from the edge of the six-yard box four minutes from time. The result at DRV PNL stadium in Fort Lauderdale means

Inter Miami will meet Philadelphia away on Tuesday for a place in the final. In other quarter-final fixtures on Friday, Nashville won 5-0 at home to Minnesota, Philadelphia edged to a 1-0 home win over Queretaro and Monterrey prevailed 3-2 at Los Angeles FC. Miami were winless in 11 games but have now won five in a row since the 36-year-old arrived in July. After a dramatic last-16 tie with FC Dallas which ended 4-4, with Miami progressing through penalties, manager Gerardo Martino was happy his side was able to keep a clean sheet. "We kept control of the ball for longer spells and I think there was only one clear chance from the opponent," said the former Barca and Argentina manager. - Xinhua

NEW SIGNING

PSG signs deal with Dembele

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) have signed France forward Ousmane Dembele from Barcelona for US\$55.2mn. Dembele, 26, joined Barcelona from Borussia Dortmund for US\$171mn in 2017 and scored 40 goals in 185 games, winning three La Liga titles. The 2018 World Cup winner has signed a five-year contract with the Ligue 1 champions. "I am very happy to join Paris Saint-Germain and can't wait to play in my new colours," said Dembele. "I hope I can continue to grow here and make all the club's fans proud." - Agencies

ENGLAND STAR

Kane joins German giants Bayern from Tottenham

MUNICH: German football giants Bayern Munich announced on Saturday the signing of England striker Harry Kane, with the footballer agreeing to a deal with the club till June 2027. He will wear the No.9 jersey for the German club. "FC Bayern have signed Harry Kane from Tottenham Hotspur. The 30-year-old England striker has agreed terms with the German record champions until 30 June 2027 and will wear the number 9 shirt for the Munich club," said a statement from the club on Saturday. Bayern president Herbert



Hainer said: "Welcome to Munich, Harry Kane! We are very happy about this top-quality new arrival. The transfer required tenacity, bite and perseverance - my compliments to all those involved in these negotiations at FC Bayern, led by our CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen. Harry Kane will not only strengthen FC Bayern, but also be a real asset to the entire Bundesliga." Harry also expressed his happiness at joining the club, which he said is defined by its winning mentality. "I am very happy to be a part of FC Bayern now. Bayern is one of the biggest clubs in the

world, and I have always said that I want to compete and prove myself at the highest level during my career. This club is defined by its winning mentality - it feels very good to be here," he said. Kane joined the Tottenham Hotspur academy in 2009. He represented the club at all junior age group levels up to U18 and signed his first professional contract in July 2010. For Tottenham, he has played 435 competitive games and scored 280 goals, which makes him the club's record goalscorer. In the years 2016, 2017 and 2021, Kane was the Premier League's

top scorer. He has the second-highest goals in league history after Alan Shearer. He also leads England at the international level and has 58 goals in 84 full internationals so far, making him his country's leading goalscorer. Kane posted a farewell message on social media. He said: "I am sad to be leaving the club I have spent nearly 20 years of my life at, from an 11-year-old boy to a 30-year-old man. There have been so many great moments and special memories that I will cherish forever. And mostly thank you to the Tottenham fans. - AMI

ROUND-UP

Toyota’s campaign with exclusive and attractive benefits ending soon



Customers can choose from an exciting range that includes the Corolla, Hilux, Land Cruiser, all-new Urban Cruiser and Camry

MUSCAT: Own a Toyota and enjoy exclusive benefits before the campaign ends on August 16. The benefits include service from 2 years/20,000 km up to 5 years / 50,000 km (whichever is earlier), insurance 1 year, scratch and win fuel card raffle with prize up to 100 litres of fuel and attractive instalments. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year

and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers may visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.) Customers can choose from an exciting range that includes the Corolla, Hilux, Land Cruiser, all-new Urban Cruiser and Camry. The Toyota Corolla is available with monthly instalments from RO 108. The Corolla is equipped with a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dy-

namic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque. For more immersive driving experiences, the engine is paired to a Direct Shift CVT transmission. Customers looking for a more fuel-efficient option can choose the 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine Corolla that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque. This is paired with a CVT transmission. The Toyota Hilux is available with monthly instalments from RO 127. In Oman, customers have a choice of two versions of the Hilux. The rugged Hilux with J-Deck and the sporty 4.0 Litre V6 Hilux Adventure with the A Deck. The 4.0 Litre V6 Toyota Hilux Adventure is a truly exciting mean machine that’s been developed by Toyota to get your pulse racing. The powerful Hilux Adventure is equipped with

a mighty 4.0 Litre V6 Engine packing a mighty punch with 235 HP & 38.3 Kg-m Torque. It has an Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the tempo going. Similarly the Hilux 4X4 is equipped with a 2.7 Litre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-speed Manual Transmission and 6 Speed Automatic Transmission, outputting 164 HP. The Toyota Land Cruiser is available with monthly instalments from RO 239. Powering the Land Cruiser is a choice of two powertrain options. The V6 twin-turbo 3.5-liter petrol engine achieves class-leading performance that surpasses that of a conventional V8, producing 409 hp and up to 650 nm. This is paired to a 10-speed automatic transmission. Also available is a naturally aspirated 4.0-liter V6 petrol en-

gine that produces 271 hp and up to 385 nm paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission. The all-new Toyota Urban Cruiser is available with monthly instalments from RO 116. The 2023 Toyota Urban Cruiser is a five-seater vehicle which features a 1.5-liter gasoline engine and Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) that functions as both an electrified generator and motor. Combined with a compact Lithium-Ion battery, the powertrain delivers 102 hp and 135 Nm of torque, with an average fuel consumption of 19.8 km/l and is paired with six-speed automatic transmission. The Toyota Camry is available with monthly instalments from RO 145. The Toyota Camry takes style and performance to high levels with stylish exterior,

advanced range of features and technology. The Camry is available with a choice of three powertrain options. They include a 2.5-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine that produces 204 hp and 24.8 kg.m of torque which is paired with an eight-speed Direct-Shift Multi-mode automatic transmission. A 3.5-liter V6 engine with D-4S fuel injection system that produces 298 hp and 36.3 kg.m of torque and which is mated to an eight-speed multi-mode automatic transmission. And an electrified hybrid system, which combines a petrol engine and two electric motors. The combined power of the two power sources is 208 hp. It is also paired with an Electrically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission (ECVT), delivering heightened driving pleasure.

ISLAMIC BANK

Bank Nizwa launches first eco-friendly corporate debit card with smart features



MUSCAT: As Oman’s leading and most trusted Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa has consistently been enhancing its corporate services and recently announced the introduction of the first-of-its-kind eco-friendly corporate debit card in the Sultanate of Oman. The newly launched cards cater to the specific needs of corporate and SME clients, providing a convenient solution for business transactions. With round-the-clock access to company accounts, smart and customisable services and the highest levels of transparency in operations, the cards are aimed at making transactions more seamless and prompt while reducing the hassles of dealing with cash. Cardholders can enjoy multiple benefits such as cash withdrawals and deposits, secure, contactless payments at Point of Sale (POS) machines and e-commerce platforms and accessibility across a diverse network which includes OmanNet and GCCNet as well as

Mastercard – International. Whilst incorporating several innovative features, the cards also firmly adhere to Islamic banking principles. Commenting on the launch of the new cards, Mr Khalid Al Barwani, Deputy General Manager Wholesale Banking at Bank Nizwa said, “Vigilant and responsive to the evolving demands of the market, Bank Nizwa has been able to identify and address the common challenges encountered by corporates when it comes handling transactions and making payments. The new eco-friendly corporate debit card will help companies to better control and monitor expenses and gain real-time insights into their accounts. For SMEs and other corporates, transparent and accurate expense management that reduces the chances of errors or frauds is a critical factor that contributes to growth.” He added, “At Bank Nizwa, we understand the unique needs of our corporate customers and are certain that the newly introduced

corporate debit cards will enhance business efficiency. As a bank that has been revered for providing exceptional corporate banking services, we will continue to focus on providing Sharia-compliant, customer-centric, and value-added solutions that benefit our clients every step of the way.” Corporate debit cards allow for customisable transaction limits and the flexibility to enable or disable specific services. With a heightened focus on convenience, customers can use the Bank Nizwa app to activate the card and change or reset the PIN. Furthermore, the cards can also be personalised to showcase company branding. In addition, to incorporate end-to-end sustainability in design, the cards are eco-friendly and the welcome kit is made of seed paper. Bank Nizwa, through such endeavours, seeks to not only nurture a dynamic ecosystem of Sharia-compliant products and services but also complement the nation’s digitalisation agenda.

STATE-OF-THE-ART



JCDecaux Oman unveils digital advertising screen at Muscat International Airport

MUSCAT: JCDecaux Oman, the leading out of home advertising company, has recently unveiled state-of-the-art digital advertising screen at Muscat International Airport, showcasing the pinnacle of digital screen technology. This captivating 3D content capable screen is designed to engage all arriving passengers to Oman, irrespective of their destination or travel class. This milestone represents yet another step in the company’s journey, adding to its diverse advertising solutions offered in airports and reaffirming its commitment to innovation in advertising. Powered by advanced technology, this screen delivers seamless displays of high-quality content, offering advertisers a unique platform to promote their brands and capture the attention of passengers from all segments throughout the day, including first-class, business, and economy travellers on both domestic and international flights. Notably, JCDecaux’s commitment to sustainable development shines through in this

project, as the screen’s electrical consumption is covered by green energy sources. This eco-friendly approach aligns with Oman’s efforts towards carbon neutrality, underscoring the company’s responsible advertising campaigns that resonate with the aspirations of society. Bechir Chehab, the Managing Director of JCDecaux Oman, expressed immense pride in the strategic partnership with Oman Airport, which enabled the demonstration of a seamless execution, providing a unique passenger experience that combines technology, digital solutions, and sustainability. Positioned at the last custom checkpoint, this iconic digital screen not only serves as a digital advertising signage but also integrates harmoniously with the airport’s architecture, preserving its traditional aspect. The Screen “Premium Edge” allows advertisers to deliver their messages boldly and disruptively, leveraging the latest technology, including 3D and real-time dynamic content. Moreover, it meets the group’s sustain-

ability requirements, reducing consumption and the carbon footprint, aligning with Oman Airports’ initiatives and Oman’s 2040 Visions. Bechir Chehab extends JCDecaux Oman’s gratitude to their partners at Oman Airports for their continuous support and fruitful collaboration, instrumental in realizing this ambitious project. Special recognition goes to our technical team for completing the implementation while preserving the highest standard of Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) without disrupting passenger flow. With the launch of this new screen at the airport, JCDecaux Oman looks forward to embarking on a new era of working with advertisers to provide a unique and exceptional experience for passengers at Muscat International Airport. By combining advanced technology, sustainability, and strategic placement, this project sets a new standard for innovative and responsible advertising practices in the Sultanate of Oman.

ROUND-UP

bp Oman and Outward Bound Oman conclude ‘Build your Resilience’ programme to support mental health

The programme was able to benefit more than 1000 Omanis aged 18 - 39 years old from various regions of Oman, especially North and South Al Batinah governorates

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, Outward Bound Oman concluded the ‘Build your Resilience’ programme, which aimed to support the mental well-being and resilience of young Omanis, especially those affected by the Shaheen cyclone and those who volunteered in the recovery services provided after the cyclone. The programme was able to benefit more than 1000 Omanis aged 18 - 39 years old from various regions of Oman, especially North and South Al Batinah governorates. The programme included over 60 indoor two-day courses which were held at the Outward Bound Oman Muscat Centre. The courses enhanced the participants’ soft skills, interpersonal skills and capabilities. It also offered a safe environment for them to discuss mental health, and well-being and share advice for achieving personal and professional success. The programme also included 10 motivational sessions, that hosted various inspiring mentors and volunteers from many organisations such as bp Oman, Sultan Qaboos University, counselling centres and more.



Ibrahim Al Hinai, Social Investment Manager at bp Oman, Qatar and Kuwait, commented: “Good mental health is critical to wellbeing and is crucial to helping people realize their potential. That’s why we strive to partner with local organisations and national programmes to achieve this. We are delighted that through our partnership with Outward Bound Oman and this programme, we

were able to help and improve the health and well-being of our workforce and their families and overall build a positive mindset in our youth, contributing to their self-development and in turn to our local community.” Ziad Al-Harathi, one of the programme’s beneficiaries, further added: “This course helped me greatly in dealing with mental health issues and overcoming

them. I learnt many concepts and practical tools that helped me better understand myself and the challenges that I faced. Through the workshops and practical activities, I learned how to control stress and anxiety, and how to deal with life pressures appropriately. I learnt about meditation and relaxation techniques that help calm the mind and strengthen my emotional stability.”



MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & CO

MARH hosts exclusive free vehicle health check-up for Khareef



MUSCAT: Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co. (MARH) Group, the official distributor of GMC and Suzuki vehicles in Oman, announces its exclusive Khareef Free Health-Check, designed to enhance the safety and peace of mind for all its customers visiting Salalah. The initiative stems from the company’s commitment to bringing the very best of vehicle offerings and services to its valued customers. Commenting on the Khareef, Said Darwish Al-Balushi, CEO of Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co, said, “MARH has always been

dedicated to providing exceptional experiences to our customers. Through our free vehicle Health check-up initiative, we aim to extend our commitment to safety and convenience to all travellers visiting Salalah.” He adds, “The Khareef season is a much-awaited time, attracting visitors from far and wide to experience the breathtaking beauty and pleasant climate of the region. At MARH, we understand the importance of ensuring your journeys are as smooth and worry-free as possible, especially during this time.”

To avail of this exclusive offer, GMC and Suzuki customers planning to take their vehicles to Salalah, can simply call 800 76 200 to book an appointment at the service centre and benefit from a vehicle health check. In addition, Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co has also set up a mobile station at Salalah, for easy accessibility and an express check-up with the assistance of skilled technicians, to ensure their customer’s cars are in top-notch condition for a peaceful and enjoyable journey.

VALUE-ADDED BENEFITS

ahlibank offers cashback to its credit cardholders at Shell Oman

MUSCAT: In a continued effort to offer value-added benefits and services to its customers, ahlibank has once again teamed up with Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) to provide all its credit card holders with an exciting cashback offer. Scheduled to run for 5 days each month until October 2023, the promotion offers all ahlibank credit cardholders 20% cashback when fuelling or shopping in shell Service Stations and Select Shops with a maximum cap of OMR10 per customer. Muneer Al Balushi – AGM-Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, “Our role as one of the Sultanate’s leading banking institutions requires us to develop offers and services that meet customer needs over time. This will enable us to fulfil their intention to utilize their credit cards in the best way possible. Such offers enhance our customers’ loyalty and give them added value.” “We are pleased to announce this offer, which will help us strengthen relationships with existing clients and build relationships with new ones. With the launch of the latest promotional offer, ahlibank is demonstrating its leadership in providing innovative



tive banking reward programs and solutions that meet the diverse needs of its customers” he added. The cashback campaign reflects the bank’s commitment to its growth strategy by creating products and services that offer value-added benefits to the customers and help consolidate its position in the market as one of Oman’s leading and most trusted banks. The bank continues to offer a

comprehensive suite of services, modern technology, and innovative solutions across its branches in Oman. All its product offerings and account types aim to achieve its customers’ targets and consolidate its position in the market. The bank offers top-class retail, commercial, and investment banking solutions in line with its vision of being a vibrant and innovative centre of banking.



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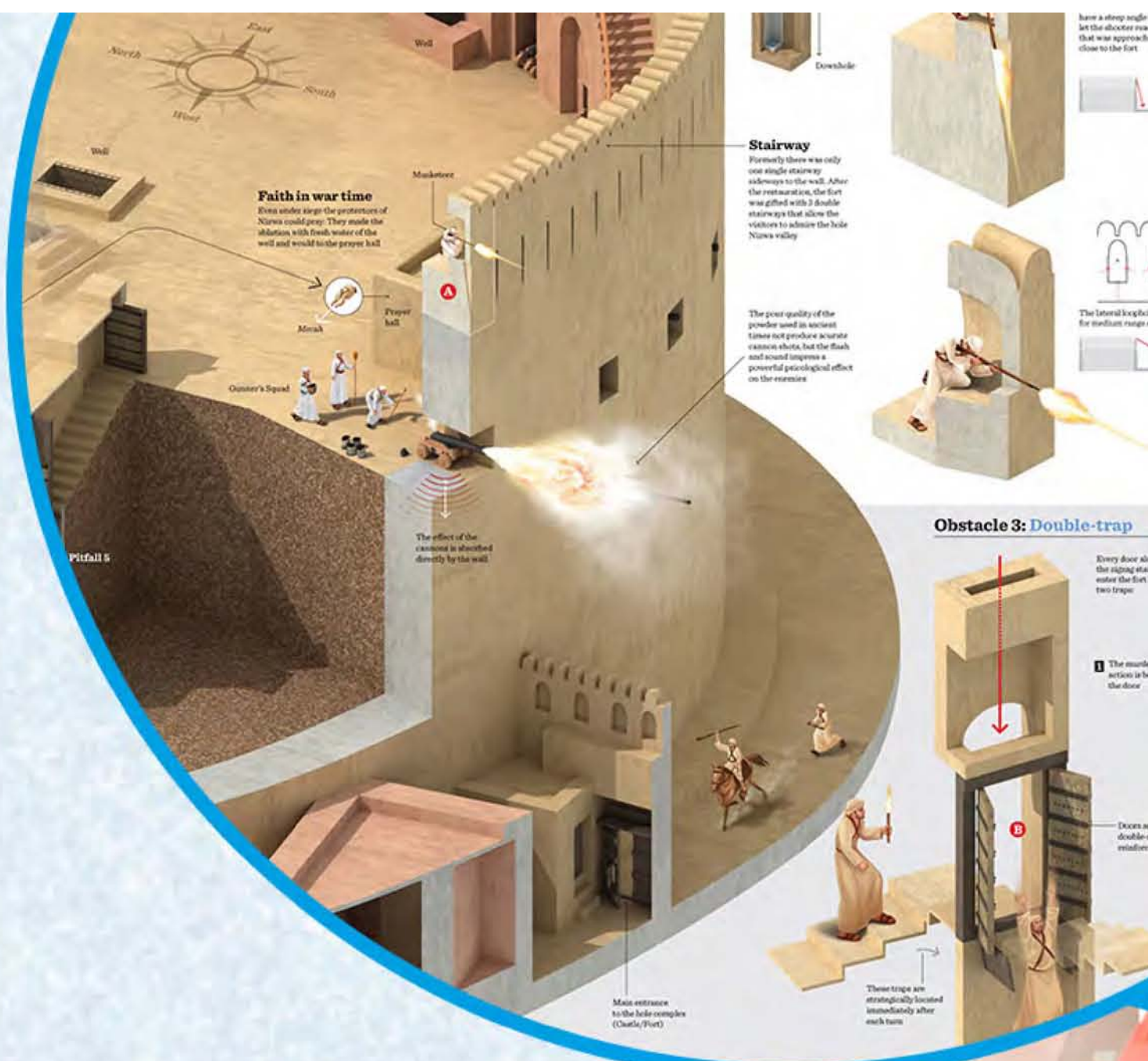
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