



Founded 1975 · Volume 49 No. 24 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

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OFFICIAL DECLARATION

HM issues Royal Decree promulgating Biosignatures Law



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday issued Royal decree No. (21/2024) on promulgating the Biosignatures Law, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article (1) states that the provisions of the Biosignatures Law attached to this decree shall be enforced.

Article (2) says that the In-

spector General of Police and Customs shall issue the executive regulations of the attached Law.

Article (3) cancels all that contradicts the attached Law or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing. — **ONA**

GAZA DEATH TOLL
as of March 26, 2024

UN demand for Gaza ceasefire provokes clash between US and Israel

A7

Deaths
32,414

Injured
74,787

GROUNDREAKING DISCOVERY

Research study reveals genetic variants linked to chemotherapy toxicity

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A pioneering research conducted at the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre (SQCCCRC) has shed light on a groundbreaking discovery regarding the relationship between genetic variants and severe toxicity reactions among Omani patients with gastrointestinal tumours.

The study, led by Dr. Ahmed Al Ghoche, senior specialist oncologist in the gastrointestinal cancer programme at SQCCCRC, revealed that specific genetic variations within the DPYD (dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase) gene could predict adverse reactions such as neutropenia and diarrhoea in Omani patients undergoing chemother-

apy. "Among the 53 Omani cancer patients receiving FP chemotherapy for gastrointestinal cancers, 28 encountered associated toxicities, while 25 did not," said Dr. Al Ghoche, who served as the principal investigator of the research study titled "DPYD Gene Variants and Chemotherapy-Induced Toxicity in Omani Patients with Gastrointestinal Tumours."

Mitigate toxicity risks
Highlighting the significance of personalised medicine, the study stressed the potential of genetic testing in tailoring chemotherapy dosages to mitigate toxicity risks and improve patient care.

Fluoropyrimidine (FP)-based drugs, integral in treating various cancers, are known for their



significant toxicity profiles, with the most severe reactions attributed to deficiencies in the dihydropyrimidine dehydrogenase (DPYD) enzyme.

The DPYD gene, responsible for encoding the DPD enzyme crucial for metabolising FP drugs, exhibits genetic polymorphisms that can result in enzyme deficiency, leading to heightened mortality and morbidity.

"While DPYD gene polymorphisms have been documented across different populations, our study marks the first investigation of such variants in the Omani population," said Dr. Shoaib Al Zadjali, Head of Research Lab at SQCCCRC.

Despite the relatively low prevalence of DPYD gene vari-

ants observed in the study, the findings underscore the necessity for further research involving larger cohorts to validate these results and ascertain their clinical implications.

Reducing risk
"Identifying these genetic variants before commencing treatment can facilitate dose adjustments, reducing the risk of toxicity and ultimately enhancing treatment outcomes," the research study concluded. The groundbreaking insights provided by this research hold promise in revolutionising cancer treatment strategies, paving the way for more tailored and effective therapeutic approaches in the Omani population and beyond.

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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN NCSI receives ISO certification

1 The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) has been awarded the Information Security Management System certificate (ISO 27001:2022 ISO/IEC) by the International Organisation for Standardisation. **>A2**

WORLD Two rescued after bridge in US collapses

2 A portion of the steel arch-shaped Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland, collapsed into the water after a cargo ship struck it. Officials said two people were rescued, with one of them in a very serious condition. **>A6**

SPORTS Oman beat Malaysia 2-0 in Kuala Lumpur

3 Oman maintained their winning momentum, recording their second successive victory as the Red Warriors outplayed Malaysia 2-0 at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday. **>A8**

ROAD ACCIDENTS DROP BY 35% IN FIRST TEN DAYS OF RAMADAN

Traffic accidents decreased by 35%, deaths by 46%, and injuries by 33%, the Royal Oman Police said on Tuesday

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of road accidents decreased by 35% during the first 10 days of Ramadan, official sources said on Tuesday.

Statistics from the General Traffic Department at the Royal Oman Police (ROP) indicated a decrease in traffic accidents during the first 10 days of the holy month of Ramadan this year compared to the same period last year.

Traffic accidents decreased by 35%, deaths by 46%, and injuries by 33%, the ROP said on Tuesday.

In this regard, Brigadier General/Engineer Ali bin Sulayem Al-Falahi, stressed the importance of concerted efforts by all members of society to achieve the highest rates of road safety and ensure the smooth flow of traffic during this holy month.



The Director General of Traffic indicated that the increase in traffic during the month of Ramadan is due to many factors, including the increase in purchasing activity in markets and commercial complexes, the departure of families and friends to break the fast elsewhere, and the desire of some to complete their family tasks before breakfast time.

He explained that the most prominent wrong behaviours that were monitored during the past ten days of the blessed month of Ramadan, which pose a threat to everyone's safety on the roads, are driving at excessive speed and recklessness, and using the phone while driving, which distracts the driver's attention and makes

him vulnerable to accidents, in addition to incorrect entry.

To the main roads and in front of vehicles in their lane, and wrong overtaking is one of the main causes of many traffic accidents on single, two-way roads.

Regarding the movement of trucks, the Director General of Traffic explained the times when it was decided to prevent the passage of trucks in order to avoid the occurrence of traffic jams throughout the holy month of Ramadan on the main roads in the Muscat Governorate, the Al-Dakhiliyah Road from the Muscat Governorate to the Bidbid Bridge, and the Al-Batinah General Road from the Muscat Governorate to the Wilayat of Shinas during the period.

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A'DAKHILIYAH GOVERNORATE

Municipal Council holds meeting

NIZWA: The Municipal Council in the Governorate of A'Dakhiliyah on Tuesday held a meeting under the chairmanship of Sheikh Hilal Said Al Hajri, Governor of A'Dakhiliyah.

The meeting covered a range of topics on the agenda that are related to developing services, the municipal sector, investment and urban planning. — ONA



INITIATIVE ESPOUSED BY OMAN LAWYERS ASSOCIATION

Ahad Foundation secures release of some prisoners

MUSCAT: Ahad Foundation contributed to the release of a number of prisoners who met the conditions of the humanitarian relief aid programme 'Tak-Kurba', an initiative espoused by Oman Lawyers Association.

Ahad Foundation keeps lending support to distressed detainees and their families during the blessed month of Ramadan and other occasions.

Its backing turns timely in the runup to Eid Al Fitr celebration so that the families could enjoy a happy social ambience.

Ahad Foundation promotes community empowerment ini-



tiatives, notably those related to women, people with disabilities and people with limited income. It also supports families, individuals and civil society organisa-

tions that provide rehabilitation and social care services for needy segments of the community, including the elderly and orphans. — ONA

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BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR STANDARDISATION



NCSI gets ISO certificate for data security management system

MUSCAT: The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) has been awarded the Information Security Management System certificate (ISO 27001:2022 ISO/IEC) by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) in recognition of NCSI's application of the highest levels of excellence in the field of data protection and security.

Khalifa Abdullah Al Barwani, CEO of NCSI, said that the Centre's obtaining the ISO 27001 certificate was the outcome of extensive efforts exerted by the NCSI in establishing and maintaining a secure statistical and information environment in all the tasks assigned to it and its ability to update its electronic services, its electronic portals and digital platforms.

The ISO 27001:2022 ISO/IEC certificate (ISMS) is awarded by the ISO, an international accreditation service organisation based in the United Kingdom.

The organisation is specialises in the field of developing administrative systems, evaluating performance and services and calculating globally applicable quality measurements. — ONA

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

Three arrested for setting off fireworks in Al Dhahirah

Times News Service

Muscat: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has arrested three people for possessing fireworks and igniting them while driving a vehicle in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

Royal Oman Police said in a statement: "Al Dhahirah Governorate Police Command arrests three citizens for possessing fireworks and igniting them while driving a vehicle, endangering themselves, road users and passers-by."

"The legal procedures are being completed against them," Royal Oman Police further added.



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Future Fund Oman empowering private sector, small businesses

The Ramadan Evening also deliberated the mission, goals and work mechanisms of the fund and the types of partnerships between the public sector and the private sector

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) reviewed in its third Ramadan Evening the role the Future Fund Oman plays as a reliable investment partner.

The evening also deliberated the mission, goals and work mechanisms of the fund and the types of partnerships between the public sector and the private sector and the fund's role in finance of small

and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Rashid bin Sultan Al Hashmi, Sr. Manager of Investments of Future Fund Oman delivered a working paper titled 'Future Fund Oman; a reliable investment partner' in which he tackled the objectives of the fund associated with boosting the economy and empowerment of the private sector and the support of SMEs and encouragement of investment among other issues.



The working paper also dealt with the role of the fund in integration with the government finance projects aimed to provide wider finance options for the private sector companies and establishments, businessmen, SMEs, and foreign investors along with the sectors of propriety to economic

diversification, in accordance with Oman Vision 2040.

These sectors included tourism sector, industrial sector, green energy, information technology and communications sector, mining sector, agriculture and fisheries sector, ports and logistics sector among others.

The capital of the fund amounts to OMR2 billion. The fund provide finance during 2024 to 2028 at OMR400 million every year.

Dr. Yousef bin Hamad Al Balushi, founder of Smart Investment Gateway (SIG) delivered a working paper in which he reviewed the development march

and the macro-economy framework 1970- 2020, the qualitative changes in the structure of the economy and the role of the Future Fund Oman among other issues.

Oman Vision 2040

Qais bin Rashid Al Tobi, General Supervisor on the programme of the Omani promising emerging companies at the Authority of SMEs Development delivered a working paper on the targets of the Authority of SMEs Development in achievement of Oman Vision 2040.

The evening also saw discussions on the mechanisms of Future Fund Oman and the types and forms of partnership between the public sector and the private sector through Future Fund Oman and its role as a third portfolio to Oman Investment Authority.

MOCIIP

National Team to Combat Hidden Trade holds its first meeting

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The first meeting of the National Team to Combat Hidden Trade was held on Tuesday at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP).

It was represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Information, represented by the Government Communication Centre, the Tax Authority, the Central Bank, the Royal Oman Police, the Consumer Protection Authority and the Small and Me-

dium Enterprises Development Authority.

The meeting came to review and discuss the mechanism for implementing the decision to combat hidden trade, review the terms of reference of the national team, and agree on the first phase of implementing the decision to combat hidden trade No. 412/2023 issued by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The National Team for Combating Hidden Trade works to propose commercial activities that are subject to the oversight process, works to facilitate proce-

dures for implementing the provisions of the Anti-Hidden Trade Decision, each within its field of competence, holds periodic meetings with the technical team to implement the provisions of the decision, follows up and evaluates its work, and receives the reports of the technical team.

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion calls on the owners of commercial companies to quickly reconcile the status of their commercial records to legalise commercial work, identify active companies, verify the effectiveness of these establishments.



TENDER NOTICE

Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) hereby announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Tender Fee	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Bid Submission Date
T/2609959/2024	Extension of Water Network in Al Najdah in Mahoot Willayat	Small and Medium Enterprises (Riada Card Holder) registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	Free	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2610960/2024	Extension of Water Network in Khaloof in Mahoot Willayat	Small and Medium Enterprises (Riada Card Holder) registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	Free	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2610961/2024	Extension of Water Network in Sarab in Mahoot Willayat	Small and Medium Enterprises (Riada Card Holder) registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	Free	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2611959/2024	Rehabilitation of Sinni Network in AL Rustaq - AL-Batinah South Governorate	Small and Medium Enterprises (Riada Card Holder) registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	Free	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2611960/2024	Construction Supervision of C13 Package C3A & C3F & C3E of A'Seeb Networks in Muscat Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and International Companies specialized in the works mentioned	R.O. 1,500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2611961/2024	Construction Supervision of C13 Package C4 of A'Seeb Networks in Muscat Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and International Companies specialized in the works mentioned	R.O. 1,500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2611962/2024	Construction Supervision of C13 Package C5A & C5B of A'Seeb Networks in Muscat Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and International Companies specialized in the works mentioned	R.O. 1,500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	8/4/2024	6/5/2024
T/2612960/2024	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of the Generators with all Accessories at STP, Pumping Station and Lifting Stations at Masirah, Al Mudhaibi and Wadi Bani Khalid	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	R.O. 100/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	8/4/2024	6/5/2024

The tender document can be purchased from Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) e-tendering page (Supplier Login) from the date of publication of this announcement. The applicants shall pay the tender fee through electronic payment gateway through Supplier Login.

Applicants who are not registered with Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) shall register from <https://owwsc.nama.om/Business-with-Us/Vendor-Registration> to have the login credentials of Supplier portal.

All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through Nama Water Services e-tendering page (Supplier Login). All participating Companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value in a sealed envelope to Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) Chairman of Tender Committee not later than 2:00 pm on the bid submission date.

Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman and it should be addressed in favour of Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services). The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) e-tendering page not later than 2:00 pm on the date specified above. For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.owwsc.nama.om or Email to: tender@owwsc.nama.om



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» RAMADAN WORDS



“

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous”
-- Surat Al-Baqarah 2:183

» FASTING HEALTH TIPS



Dates are must after fasting. Rich in Vitamin K, dates are helpful to make your body cells store fluids as they are a natural source of glucose. It is also a tradition to include them in the meals. Dates are also rich in copper and magnesium.

» IFTAR RECIPE Oneza Tabish

RED RICE PUDDING



INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup red rice, soaked in water for 3 hours, drained
- 3 cups full-fat milk
- 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 5 Tbsp grated fresh coconut
- Pinch of ground cardamom
- Slivered almonds for garnishing

METHOD

1. In a saucepan, cook the red rice according to the package directions, about 35 minutes, until completely softened.
2. In another pot over low-medium heat, bring the milk to a boil and stir in the sweetened condensed milk. Reduce the heat to low and cook to thicken slightly.
3. Stir in the red rice. The colour will bleed into the milk. Continue to cook over low heat for 20 minutes more until the rice absorbs the milk.
4. Stir in the coconut and cardamom. Remove from the heat.
5. Refrigerate the pudding to cool thoroughly for 4 hours.
6. Garnish with almonds before serving.

» RELIGIOUS CHANTS



THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT WELCOMES RENOWNED SYRIAN ENSEMBLE FOR ITS RAMADAN CONCERT SERIES

The Royal Opera House Muscat continued its Ramadan concert series with a divine concert from the renowned Syrian ensemble, the Malawiyyin and Levantine Religious Chants Group, in tandem with Khalid Al Araiimi, an Omani chanter of great note. The Ramadan series, which started on March 18 and will run until 1st April, is designed to offer respectful evenings of sacred prayer that inspire devotion.

Over 300 people joined last night’s concert, experiencing firsthand the incredible talent of The Malawiyyin and Levantine Religious Chants Group. Conceived in 2014 by a group of four musicians known as the Damascus Quartet, the group is comprised of leading musicians, who have carved their inshaad journeys through different experiences and with diverse backgrounds. The combined energy and talent of Mahmoud Al Siad, Mohammed Shafik Al Chaar, Ghassan Al Srouji Kanani, and Mustafa Al Sheikh gave rise to the larger group, drawing the best chanters and musicians, with their aim to create an incredibly high standard of performance. Their presence on stage at the opera house gave rise to a sincere concert, which was both profoundly touching and exquisite in its execution.

Focused on cultural collaboration between Oman and Syria, ROHM welcomed Oman’s most inspiring



chant performer, Khalid Al Araiimi. Originally from Sur, Al Araiimi began chanting in school and has continued to develop the art with instruction, performing across the region at public events to celebrate Inshaad and religious devotion. His presentation inspired considerable pride in the culture and history of inshaad within the Sultanate, offering a new generation of chanters an example of dedication

and talent.

The final concert in the Ramadhan series will feature renowned Egyptian artist Ali El Helbawy and Sami Alsubhi of Oman and will take place on Monday April 1. The concert will be held at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts, starting at 9:30 pm. For more information and ticket purchases, please visit the box office, ROHM website, or app.

OOC committed to enhancing sports in Oman, says Al Zubair

Oman Olympic Committee Chairman hailed the ongoing studies commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth to assess the state of sports in Oman and governance structures

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) Chairman Khalid Al Zubair has reaffirmed OOC's commitment to enhancing the sports sector in the Sultanate of Oman. He hailed the ongoing studies commissioned by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth to assess the state of sports in Oman and governance structures.

"The efforts by the sports ministry aim to streamline roles and responsibilities across stakeholders and pave the way for comprehensive planning geared towards achieving optimal sporting outcomes in the years to come," said Al Zubair. Addressing the members of the board at the OOC General Assembly held on Tuesday, Al Zubair commended the active participa-



tion and insightful contributions of committee members. He emphasised the importance of trust, constructive dialogue, collaboration, and partnership within the Omani sports community. Highlighting OOC's commitment to fostering regional cooperation, Al Zubair stressed the significance of collaboration within the GCC framework. "Such collaborations serve as a conduit for sharing experiences, fostering cooperation, and align-

ing visions among GCC nations towards common sports and youth objectives," he added. Al Zubair also praised Oman's successful hosting of the 35th meeting of GCC NOCs Presidents in Muscat and expressed satisfaction with the subsequent strides taken to implement the outcomes of these meetings, including the hosting of the inaugural GCC Youth and Junior Games in the United Arab Emirates in April. Regarding ongoing initiatives

related to the governance of OOC and sports federations, Al Zubair outlined the committee's proactive approach towards future projects and programmes. He highlighted the implementation of governance frameworks and the adoption of pertinent regulations, including financial guidelines and athlete-related protocols aligned with international standards. Al Zubair congratulated Omani athletes for their recent achievements across sailing, athletics, and para-sports at the Asian Games. He reiterated OOC's drive to nurture Omani youth as catalysts for comprehensive development and thanked the pivotal role played by His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports, and Youth, in bolstering the sports sector towards multifaceted and sustainable growth, echoing His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said's vision for a robust and resilient nation.

BY GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS

SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi crowned 'Largest Indoor Marine-Life Theme Park'

ABU DHABI: SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, the region's first Marine Life Theme Park, has won a coveted place in the Guinness World Records as the "Largest Indoor Marine-Life Theme Park" in the world. The certificate was presented to Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO of Miral, and the SeaWorld Abu Dhabi leadership. This milestone comes less than a year after the colossal theme park, which spans over 183,000 square metres (sqm) across five indoor levels, opened its doors to the public. SeaWorld Abu Dhabi offers guests a fascinating glimpse into the world of marine life, combining entertainment, education and conservation in one place. Guests can discover the vast ocean through eight immersive realms including Abu Dhabi Ocean, One Ocean, MicroOcean, Endless Ocean, Tropical Ocean, Rocky Point and Polar Ocean which is divided into the Arctic and Antarctic realms.



is committed to providing the highest standard of animal welfare based on best practices and standards set by internationally recognised animal welfare organisations and is the region's first facility to be certified by Global Humane, the world's largest certifier of animal welfare. SeaWorld® Yas Island, Abu Dhabi General Manager, Thomas Kaferle, said, "We are very pleased to receive recognition from Guinness World Records as the world's largest Marine-Life Theme Park. This prestigious achievement is a testament to our commitment to providing the best possible entertainment experience, coupled with an interactive educational

aspect enabling guests to learn more about marine life in a fun and entertaining setting that engages all ages." With an incredible variety of aquatic life, over 15 interactive experiences, thrilling rides, and animal experiences and presentations, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi offers a wealth of educational opportunities allowing guests to gain insights from the park's experts about the mesmerising marine life. Additionally, guests can enjoy over 20 live characters and performances, along with more than 10 up-close encounters with animals, guaranteeing delightful entertainment throughout their visit. — WAM

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SUMMARY OF ASSETS & LIABILITIES - WASEL EXCHANGE SAOC AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2023					
(Amount in RO'000)					
ASSETS	31.12.2023	31.12.2022	LIABILITIES	31.12.2023	31.12.2022
1. Cash in hand	765	878	1. Capital & Reserves	2,783	3,394
2. Deposits with Central Bank of Oman	100	100	2. Borrowings from Banks	-	-
3. Precious metals	-	-	3. Balances due to branches	-	-
4. Balances due from Banks	1,159	1,334	4. Balances due to Money Changers	107	260
5. Balances due from branches	-	-	5. Loans and Advances payable	-	-
6. Balances due from Money Changers	26	80	6. Cheques & Drafts issued and outstanding	-	-
7. Cheques and drafts purchased	-	-	7. Other Liabilities	674	291
8. Loans and Advances	-	-			
9. Investments	-	-			
10. Fixed Assets	181	254			
11. Other Assets	1,333	1,299			
Total	3,564	3,945	Total	3,564	3,945

We certify that the above balances are in agreement with the books and records of the company as at 31 December 2023.
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28 February 2024

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Ramadan
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The Prophet (ﷺ) said "Whoever breaks the fast for a fasting person, will have a reward similar to his reward, however, nothing is detracted from the reward of a fasting person".

The Oman Charitable Organization is pleased to announce that it will receive donations for Ramadan Iftar Program in Sultanate of Oman for the year 1445 AH AD 2024

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BALTIMORE BRIDGE COLLAPSE

Two rescued, several missing after vehicles plunge into water

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A container ship struck Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge on Tuesday after losing propulsion, causing a "catastrophic collapse," sending vehicles and people into the water. "At this time, it is an active search and rescue mission," said Maryland Secretary of Transportation Paul Wiedefeld. "We know there were individuals on the bridge at the time of the collapse, working on the bridge."

Officials said two people were rescued, with one of those people said to be in very serious condition. The other person did not need medical treatment. The Maryland Transportation Authority said the collapse occurred due to ship strike. The US Coast Guard is conducting search and rescue for those who remain unaccounted for as a result of the bridge collapse.

A major bridge in Baltimore snapped and collapsed after a con-



tainer ship rammed into it early Tuesday, and several vehicles fell into the river below.

The vessel appears to have hit one of the supports of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, causing the roadway to break apart in several places and plunge into the water.

Multiple vehicles plunged from the bridge at the time of the collapse, the Baltimore City Fire

Department said. Divers were searching for at least seven people in the water, the department said.

The 1.6-mile bridge spans the Patapsco River in southern Baltimore, in the east of the US. Videos shared on social media showed multiple vehicles falling into the river after the collision.

The mayor of Baltimore said emergency personnel were on

scene and rescue efforts were underway.

"Emergency personnel are on scene, and efforts are underway," Baltimore Mayor Brandon M. Scott wrote on X. People were possibly in the river after the collapse, a police spokesperson from the Baltimore Police Department told NBC News.

— with inputs from agencies

NY judge sets April 15 trial date in Trump case

Trump, who has looked to postpone all four of his criminal cases beyond the election, requested the judge toss his case over new documents recently turned over, or at least sanction Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg and postpone the trial



Trump's trial had long been scheduled to begin on Monday, but at the last minute, Bragg's office agreed to a multi-week delay, according to *The Hill*.

This comes after the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York turned over more than 100,000 pages of records in recent weeks.

Following this, the parties traded blame for why the documents did not come to light earlier.

Trump attended the hearing alongside a roughly half-dozen of his lawyers, who were occasionally whispering to them but otherwise sitting stone-faced.

Moreover, he sat back in his chair for most of the hearing, looking ahead towards the judge, *The Hill* reported.

After the hearing, Trump repeated familiar claims that Bragg's case was brought to keep him from campaigning for the presidential elections, scheduled for November.

"This is a case that could have been brought three and a half years ago and now they're fighting over days because they want to try to do it during the election. This is election interference. That's all that is. Election interference," he said.

Trump is charged in the case

with 34 counts of falsifying business records over reimbursements to his then-fixer, Michael Cohen, who paid adult film star Stormy Daniels USD 130,000 just before the 2016 election to stay quiet about an alleged affair with Trump.

Trump, who has acknowledged the reimbursements but denied the affair, has pleaded not guilty, as reported by *The Hill*.

However, Trump's team and prosecutors, inside the courtroom, disagreed about how many new and relevant documents there were, with Trump attorney Todd Blanche claiming there were "thousands and thousands" without providing a specific number.

Assistant District Attorney Matthew Colangelo, meanwhile, estimated there were only about 300 new, relevant records.

Blanche also went further, asserting that Bragg's office was obligated to have the new documents months ago so Trump could adequately prepare his defence.

Merchan condemned the notion and raised his voice at one point as he pressed Blanche to cite a singular past case supporting his position.

"If you don't have a case right now, it is really disconcerting because the allegations the de-

fence makes in all of your papers, about the people's misconduct, is incredibly serious, unbelievably serious," Merchan said.

"You're literally accusing the Manhattan DA's office and the people assigned to this case of prosecutorial misconduct and trying to make me complicit in it. And you don't have a single cite to support that position?" he added.

Relief to Donald Trump

In a relief to former US President Donald Trump, a New York appellate court on Monday ruled that it would accept a far smaller bond of USD 175 million to cover his USD 464 million civil fraud judgement, ABC News reported.

The Appellate Division, First Department, said Trump can post a bond "in the amount of USD 175 million" to cover the judgement.

Trump's attorneys had argued obtaining a bond for the full amount of USD 464 million was a "practical impossibility."

The panel of five judges also opted to delay enforcement of the USD 464 million judgement by 10 days.

The ruling comes as Trump and his sons faced a Monday deadline to pay or secure a bond, or risk New York Attorney General Letitia James beginning the process of seizing the former president's prized assets, ABC News reported.

"It is ordered that the motion is granted to the extent of staying enforcement of those portions of the Judgment (1) ordering disgorgement to the Attorney General of USD 464,576,230.62, conditioned on defendants-appellants posting, within ten (10) days of the date of this order, an undertaking in the amount of USD 175 million dollars," the two-page order said, ABC News reported.

Trump, addressing reporters during his appearance Monday at a hearing in his hush money criminal case, thanked the appellate court for the ruling. **ANI**



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

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CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

NEAR PORBANDAR



Indian Coast Guard rescues 5 sailors from sinking boat

AHMEDABAD: The Indian Coast Guard evacuated five fishermen from a sinking Indian fishing boat, Premsagar, at mid-sea, approximately 40 km from Porbandar, on Sunday.

"ICG Ship C-161 commanded by Asst Comdt Karthikeyan was sailed immediately from Porbandar after input from fisheries community regarding sinking boat received at Maritime Rescue Sub Centre Porbandar of Indian Coast Guard's Dist HQ -1 (South Gujarat Daman & Diu)," the Defence Ministry release said.

The Indian Coast Guard ship C-161 arrived in vicinity of Fishing Boat in short time and

launched a damage control team for undertaking rescue and support mission.

"The efforts of team resulted in ceasing of flooding in boat temporarily and the half submerged boat was attempted to be towed with another Fishing boat in vicinity. However as fishing boat was already 75% flooded, resultant damages caused sinking of the boat 12 kms off Porbandar," the release said.

All five crew members were rescued by the ICG Ship and medical support was provided. The survivors were thereafter brought to Porbandar and handed over to Fisheries Association. **ANI**

SECOND PHASE

Pakistan begins preparations to send back Afghans

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has started preparations to launch the second phase of its repatriation drive to send nearly one million 'documented' Afghans back to Afghanistan, with orders given to district authorities and police to find and gather data of their whereabouts across the nation, Pakistan-based Dawn reported citing documents.

An official aware of the development said directives have been issued to district administrations and police to expedite the mapping of Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, the report said.

No date has been announced yet. However, an official said the campaign to repatriate ACC holders could start in early to mid-summer, after receiving go ahead from Pakistan's federal government.

Speaking to Dawn, Abid Majeed, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's ad-

ditional chief secretary, said, "We have already started the mapping process." He said, "It will pick up the pace after Ramazan and we hope to complete the survey before April 30."

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), there are 2.18 million documented Afghan refugees in Afghanistan, which include 1.3 million refugees having Proof of Registration (PoR) cards as per the census conducted in 2006-07 and an additional 880,000 refugees issued ACCs after a registration drive in 2017.

Afghans arrived in Pakistan after the Taliban seized power in August 2021.

According to officials, the number of Afghans who arrived in Pakistan was between 600,000 and 800,000, some with valid travel documents, but an uncertain future, Dawn reported. **ANI**

DROUGHT

Malawi: Call for 'urgent support' after disaster declared

MALAWI: The government of Malawi is seeking urgent assistance following Saturday's declaration by the country's president of a state of disaster caused by drought.

The East African country's Department of Disaster Management Affairs called for the international community to channel contributions towards "alleviating the suffering" of all those who were being impacted by an ongoing drought.

On Saturday, President Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera declared a state of disaster because of the ongoing drought in 23 of its 28 districts

McCarthy also made an appeal for "urgent support" as the country grapples with what government said was "El-Nino induced prolonged dry spells and floods."



El Nino is a natural, cyclical climate pattern that tends to cause hotter weather and reduced precipitation and has heightened the risk of food, water and health security in some parts of the world.

Chakwera said that more than \$200 million (roughly €185 million) in humanitarian assistance was needed.

The move comes less than a month after neighboring Zambia appealed for help. According to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) seasonal monitor, southern Africa is under the influence of El Nino patterns associated with below-average rainfall patterns and below-average harvests.

Zimbabwe: Severe drought threatens millions with hunger

The WFP said in an update from February that the region — which

included Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana — was experiencing the driest February in the past forty years and that there were "severe rainfall deficits" in southern Malawi. Zimbabwe has also seen its crops decimated and may have to follow the same course of action as its northern neighbors.

In January the WFP said that it was already working with the Zimbabwean government and aid agencies to provide food to 2.7 million people living in rural parts of the country.

Aid agency USAID said in its Fiscal assessment of 2023 that the region was facing acute food insecurity, and listed "conflict-induced displacement, and numerous climatic shocks" among the challenges facing countries in the region. **AW**

UN demand for Gaza ceasefire provokes US, Israel clash



John Kirby said the administration was 'kind of perplexed' by Netanyahu's decision

NEW YORK: The United Nations Security Council has issued its first demand for a ceasefire in Gaza, with the US angering Israel by abstaining from the vote. Israel responded by cancelling a visit to Washington by a high-level delegation in the strongest public clash between the allies since the war began.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the US of "retreating" from a "principled position" by allowing the vote to pass without conditioning the ceasefire on the release of hostages held by Hamas, a Palestinian Resistance Movement.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said the administration was "kind of perplexed" by Netanyahu's decision. He said the Israelis were "choosing to create a perception of daylight here when they don't need to do that."

Kirby and the American ambassador to the UN said the US abstained because the resolution did not condemn Hamas. US officials chose to abstain rather than veto the proposal "because it does fairly reflect our view that a ceasefire and the release of hos-

tages come together," Kirby said.

The 15-member council voted 14-0 to approve the resolution, which also demanded the release of all hostages taken captive during Hamas' Oct. 7 surprise attack in southern Israel. The chamber broke into loud applause after the vote.

The US vetoed past Security Council ceasefire resolutions in large part because of the failure to tie them directly to the release of hostages, the failure to condemn Hamas' attacks and the delicacy of ongoing negotiations. American officials have argued that the ceasefire and hostage releases are linked, while Russia, China and many other council members favored unconditional calls for a ceasefire.

The resolution approved on Monday demands the release of hostages but does not make it a condition for the ceasefire for the holy month of Ramadan, which ends in April.

Hamas, a Palestinian Resistance Movement said it welcomed the UN's move but said the ceasefire needs to be permanent.

"We confirm our readiness to engage in an immediate prisoner exchange process that leads to the release of prisoners on both sides," Hamas said. For months, Hamas have sought a deal that includes a complete end to the conflict.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres tweeted: "This resolution must be implemented. Failure would be unforgivable."

The US decision to abstain comes at a time of growing tensions between President Joe Biden's administration and Net-

anyahu over Israel's prosecution of the war, the high number of civilian casualties and the limited amounts of humanitarian assistance reaching Gaza. The two countries have also clashed over Netanyahu's rejection of a Palestinian state, Jewish settler violence against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and the expansion of settlements there.

In addition, the well-known antagonism between Netanyahu and Biden — which dates from Biden's tenure as vice president — deepened after Biden questioned Israel's strategy in combating Hamas.

Then, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, a Biden ally, suggested that Netanyahu was not operating in Israel's best interests and called for Israel to hold new elections. Biden signaled his approval of Schumer's remarks, prompting a rebuke from Netanyahu.

During its US visit, the Israeli delegation was to present White House officials with its plans for a possible ground invasion of Rafah, a city on the Egyptian border in southern Gaza where over 1 million Palestinian civilians have sought shelter from the barbaric war.

Last week, Netanyahu rebuffed a US request to halt the planned Rafah invasion - vowing during a visit by Secretary of State Antony Blinken to act alone if necessary. Blinken warned that Israel could soon face growing international isolation, while Vice President Kamala Harris said Israel could soon face unspecified consequences if it launches the ground assault. **-ANI**

Israeli occupation forces accused of committing genocidal acts in Gaza

GENEVA: Francesca Albanese, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories affirmed that there are "reasonable grounds" to determine that the Israeli occupation committed several acts of "genocide," warning also of "ethnic cleansing."

"The overwhelming nature and scale of Israel's assault on Gaza and the destructive conditions of life it has inflicted reveal an intent to physically destroy Palestinians as a group," she said in a report.

This report finds that "there are reasonable grounds to believe that the threshold indicating the commission of the following acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza has been met: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to groups members; and deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."

She also affirmed in her report



that photos of dead civilians after their displacement to southern Gaza, accompanied by statements by some senior Israeli officials declaring their intention to forcibly displace the Palestinians out of Gaza and replace them with Israeli settlers, lead logically to the conclusion that the "evacuation orders and safe zones have been used as genocidal tools to achieve ethnic cleansing."

The report continued that "genocidal acts" were approved and carried out following statements

expressing "genocidal intent," issued by senior military and government officials, affirming that "Israel's genocide on the Palestinians in Gaza is an escalatory stage of a longstanding settler colonial process of erasure."

Since 7 October 2023, the death toll from the Israeli aggression continued in the Gaza Strip and has risen to 32,414 martyrs and 74,787 wounded, the majority of whom are children and women. **-DNA**

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SUMMARY OF ASSETS AND LIABILITES AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023					
ASSETS	31.12.2023 (RO' 000)	31.12.2022 (RO' 000)	LIABILITIES	31.12.2023 (RO' 000)	31.12.2022 (RO' 000)
1. CASH IN HAND	854	1,028	1. CAPITAL AND RESERVE	1,381	1,440
2. DEPOSITED WITH CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN	100	100	2. BORROWING FROM BANKS	-	-
3. PRECIOUS METALS	-	-	3. BALANCES DUE TO BRANCHES	-	-
4. BALANCES DUE FROM BANKS	654	812	4. BALANCES DUE TO MONEY-CHANGER	155	482
5. BALANCES DUE FROM BRANCHES	-	-	5. LOANS AND ADVANCES PAYABLE	-	-
6. BALANCES DUE FROM MONEY-CHANGER	79	83	6. CHECKES AND DRAFTS ISSUED AND OUTSTANDING	-	-
7. CHECKES AND DRAFTS PURCHASED	-	-	7. OTHER LIABILITIES	657	429
8. LOANS AND ADVANCES	-	-			
9. INVESTMENTS	-	-			
10. FIXED AND INTANGIBLE ASSETS	129	27			
11. OTHER ASSETS	377	301			
TOTAL	2,193	2,351	TOTAL	2,193	2,351
WE CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE BALANCES ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE BOOKS AND RECORDS OF THE COMPANY AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023					
20 FEBRUARY 2024			MGI Vision Chartered Accountants		



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Oman make it two in a row with a win over Malaysia

Silhavy's Red Warriors emerge comfortable 2-0 winners against the hosts in Kuala Lumpur to increase their points tally to nine in Group D of joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers

MUSCAT: Oman maintained their winning momentum, recording their second successive victory as the Red Warriors outplayed Malaysia 2-0 in their Preliminary Joint Qualification - Round 2 for the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Group D tie at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

The richly deserved win leaves Oman, coached by Czech Jaroslav Silhavy, on nine points, level with Kyrgyzstan, who earlier defeated Chinese Taipei 5-1. However, Kyrgyzstan stay ahead of Oman despite being level on goal-difference as the former had defeated Oman.

Silhavy's men will next play Chinese Taipei on June 6 before concluding the group engagements with a game against Kyrgyzstan on June 11 in Muscat.

Malaysia, who lost the earlier fixture 2-0 last Thursday in Muscat, had the early chance with Ariff Aiman gaining possession just inside the Oman half before unleashing a shot that almost slipped through the legs of keeper Ibrahim Al Mukhaini, who recovered well to scramble the ball to safety.

Ariff threatened again in the seventh minute with a surging run down the right flank before floating the ball into the area towards Romel Morales who,



however, failed to connect.

Oman responded two minutes later with Jameel Al Yahmadi in the thick of things but his shot from inside the box went high above the bar.

The Red Warriors continued to attack and threatened again in

the 14th minute with Mohsen Al Ghasani just failing to connect from inside the box, before Al Yahmadi saw his effort blocked after beating two defenders.

Malaysia goalkeeper Syihan Hazmi then produced two brilliant saves, the first in the 41st minute

when he foiled Salah Al Yahyaie's shot with Al Ghassani skying his effort on the follow up before tipping over the latter's looping header two minutes later.

Syihan, however, conceded a penalty in the closing stages of the half when he brought down Al

Ghassani, leaving Omar Al Maliki to score the ensuing spot-kick to give Oman the lead going into the break.

Malaysia started the second half with confidence but it was Oman who came close, with the post denying Al Yahmadi in the 52nd

minute with Syihan beaten.

Mohammed Al Ghafri was then denied by the woodwork with less than 10 minutes remaining but he came good in the fourth minute of added time, finishing off Abdullah Fawaz's cutback from the edge of the area to seal the win.

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by May 2024 reaching \$86.18, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 89 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$85.29. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,755.46 points, down by 0.57 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.73 per cent at 438.80 points. Barka Water & Power Company, up 9.64 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Cement, down 9.90 per cent, was the top loser.

Producer price index in Oman declines 7.9%

A decline was registered during the 4th quarter of 2023 in the groups of mining and quarries (7.5 per cent) which is attributed to the drop in products of crude oil and natural gas by 7.7 per cent



MUSCAT: The Producer Price Index (PPI) in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a drop of 7.9 per cent during the 4th quarter of 2023, compared to the cor-

responding period in 2022 with 2018 being the base year. According to the data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), a decline was registered in the groups of mining and quarries (7.5 per cent) which is attributed to the drop in products of crude oil and

natural gas by 7.7 per cent. Meanwhile, a rise was recorded in products of metal ores (17.2 per cent) and rock and sand products (0.5 per cent). A decrease was recorded in the groups of converting industries (9.1 per cent) as prices in these groups went down such as other transport-

able products (5.9 per cent) and metal products, machinery and equipment (17.3 per cent), while a rise was recorded in foodstuff, drinks and textiles (0.1 per cent). PPI went down for the electricity group by 4.8 per cent and increased by 1.7 per cent for the water group. - **ONA**

Oman Cables reports strong financial performance for 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Annual General Meeting of Oman Cables Industry (OCI), the leading cable solutions provider in the Sultanate of Oman, approved the financial results for 2023 with a turnover of OMR 248.17 million and a net profit of OMR 18.93 million, marking a 69.4 per cent increase compared to the last year. More than a cable producer, the company capitalised on its leading position as a technological enabler of the energy transition, aiming to anticipate the needs of its customers, by strengthening its engagement with suppliers and focusing on continuous innovation, leveraging on technological and industrial leadership to amplify the positive impact that it can generate for the community. The Annual General Meeting also elected the Board of Directors, a renewed board covering a broad spectrum of international skills, educational background, professional qualifications, experience and expertise strengthening the robust corporate governance framework.

The Board of Directors is led by Cinzia Farisè as the Chairperson. Cinzia Farisè has a long track record of board membership and chairmanship in various multinational companies, in addition to being a member of the Advisory Board of Sultan Qaboos University of Oman, College of Engineering. She served as the Chief Executive Officer at Oman Cables and as Regional Chief Executive Officer at Prysmian MEART - Middle East, Africa, Turkey, Russia and India, before moving to her global role as the Executive Vice President of Power Grids at Prysmian Group. As a woman, she is the first Chairperson to lead a manufacturing-listed company in Oman.

As a Vice Chairperson, Mohamed Al Lawati will continue to bring a set of professionalism and experience

to the Sultanate, also previously the Vice Chairperson of the Board of Directors at Oman Cables. Newly elected, Sayyid Shabib Al Busaidi joins the Board of Directors as a professional in the fields of finance, strategic planning, statistics, actuarial studies and social insurance schemes. In addition, Laura Figini continues to be a Member of the Board of Directors of Oman Cables, bringing international expertise in finance, acquisitions and human capital. With extensive experience in leadership of human capital, change management and post-merger integration processes across borders and different cultures, Fabrizio Rutschmann continues to be a Member of the Board of Directors, offering strong support in governance matters, succession planning, remuneration, sustainability and diversity, equality and inclusion. Yasser Al Rashdi also maintains his Board membership in Oman Cables, bringing more than two decades of experience in the field of investments, accounts and finance. In addition, Ian Prescott joins the Board of Directors, with more than 30 years of international experience in managing multi-billion-dollar businesses and projects, spanning across the oil & gas, petrochemical, mining, power and water industries, served in executive and Board positions for various multinational private and publicly listed companies. Cinzia Farisè, the newly appointed Chairman of the Board of Oman Cables, commented: "During the recent years Oman Cables has shown continued growing results and a robust financial performance. The strong focus on differentiation was paying, and the significant increase in profitability is the result of a clear strategy aiming to support the ongoing energy transition, within the frame of Oman Vision 2040."

S&P Global raises India's growth forecast to 6.8% for FY25, lower than current fiscal

NEW DELHI: S&P Global Ratings has revised India's growth projection from 6.4 per cent to 6.8 per cent. After a better-than-expected 7.6 per cent growth in fiscal year 2024 estimated by the National Statistical Office, S&P India pegged real GDP growth to moderate to 6.8 per cent in fiscal year 2025. Factors contributing to this moderation include restrictive interest rates expected to weigh on demand, regulatory actions aimed at controlling unsecured lending, and a lower fiscal deficit, which is anticipated to dampen growth

prospects. The agency also said consumer inflation is expected to decline further to 4.5 per cent on average in fiscal 2025. While non-food Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation softened by approximately 250 basis points, food inflation experienced a slight rise of 40 basis points in the first ten months of the current fiscal year. Despite these fluctuations, headline inflation is estimated to have decreased to 5.5 per cent this fiscal year from 6.7 per cent in fiscal 2023, primarily due to elevated food inflation.

In largely domestic demand-led economies such as India, Japan, and Australia, higher interest rates and inflation have impacted household spending power, leading to a reduction in sequential GDP growth in the second half of the fiscal year. This slowdown in sequential growth was observed in India after a period of robust growth in the first half of the year. Similar trends were observed in economies such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand. With slowing inflation, a smaller fiscal deficit, and lower US policy rates, the groundwork is being

laid for the Reserve Bank of India to initiate rate cuts. However, S&P Global Ratings suggests that more clarity on the path of disinflation could delay this decision until at least June 2024, if not later. The revision in India's growth projection comes amidst ongoing economic uncertainties both domestically and globally. While the outlook remains positive, policymakers are closely monitoring various factors to ensure sustainable economic growth and stability in the region. - **ANI**



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Campaign Period: 03.03.2024 - 01.05.2024. Benefits applicable for all purchases except Government Organizations & Ministries. *Cash gift in lieu of insurance* Cash Gift is given in Lieu of Insurance only as applicable for respective models. In case customer chooses Insurance (as applicable), he/she will not be eligible for "Cash gift in lieu of insurance" offer. **Comprehensive 1 Year Insurance (Oman only, excluding diesel grades) on Yaris, Corolla, Corolla Cross, Camry, Camry HEV, Raize, Urban Cruiser, Veloz, RAV4, RAV4 HEV, Fortuner, Hilux, Lite Ace & Innova. Insurance benefit under the campaign would be given upto the extent applicable for Private vehicles only. Additional premium as per Insurance norms will have to be paid by the RAC, Taxi & Driving School Company. *** Free 1st year Registration for the models Yaris, Corolla, Corolla Cross, Camry and Camry HEV. **3 Years / 30,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 3 services at 10,000 Kms service interval based on normal operating conditions (Excluding DSL grades) on Fortuner, Prado, LC Wagon, LC pickup, Hilux, Lite Ace, Innova and Crown. **3 Years / 45,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 6 services at 7,500 Kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on Urban Cruiser. **5 Years / 50,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 5 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on Corolla Cross, Camry, Camry HEV, RAIZE, Veloz, RAV4, RAV4 HEV. **10 Years / 100,000 Kms Service (whichever is earlier) covering 10 services at 10,000 kms service interval based on normal operating conditions on Yaris and Corolla. \$ Raffle: 5 units of 23YM CROWN 2.4T HEV-LUXURY 2 Tone as raffle. The raffle will be applicable for all Toyota customers who purchase cars during the campaign period. (Tentative raffle dates: 12th March, 19th March, 26th March, 2nd April and 8th May 2024). Vehicles may include dealer-installed items. For further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Toyota showroom. Pictures and colours shown above are for illustrative purposes only. Campaign will not be applicable for ministry and government deals/supplies. @EMI calculated are for base models with 20% down payment for 10 years. Loan Approval is based on sole discretion of Bank / Finance company. Terms and condition apply.



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LIFESTYLE

STUDY FINDS HOW COLORECTAL CANCER GENE IS ASSOCIATED IN BROAD RANGE OF SOLID TUMOURS

WASHINGTON: A gene linked to colorectal cancer appears to play a role in the development of other solid tumours, according to a study.

A study of over 350,000 patient biopsy samples conducted by researchers from the Johns Hopkins Kimmel Cancer Centre, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and Foundation Medicine.

Scientists have known since the early 2000s that inheriting two mutant copies of the gene MUTYH increases the risk of colorectal cancer by 93 times and is a leading cause of the disease in people under the age of 55 years. The current study, published online February 23 in JCO Precision Oncology, is the largest to date to look into whether a single mutant copy of MUTYH influences one's risk of acquiring cancer.

"We know two missing copies of MUTYH greatly increases the risk of colon cancer, and now it appears that having only one missing copy may lead to a small increased risk of other cancer types," says the study's lead author, Channing Paller, M.D., director of prostate cancer clinical research and an associate professor of oncology at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. She co-led the work with Emmanuel Antonarakis, M.D., associate director of

translational research at the Masonic Cancer Centre and Clark Endowed Professor of Medicine at the University of Minnesota Medical School. He was at Johns Hopkins at the time the research was conducted.

The gene MUTYH encodes a critical enzyme in the base excision repair (BER) pathway, which fixes DNA damage in human cells. When the BER pathway isn't working, routine DNA damage is not repaired, leading to additional DNA mutations or cell death.

Since 2021, Paller has co-led PROMISE, a genetic registry of patients with inherited mutations in prostate cancer. When one of her patients asked whether his MUTYH mutation, for which he had one defective copy rather than two, affected his aggressive prostate cancer, there was not enough data on MUTYH variants to answer the question, says Paller. Past studies reached conflicting results about whether a single, heterozygous mutation of MUTYH might predispose a person to cancer.

In pursuit of an answer, Paller reached out to Foundation Medicine, a Massachusetts-based genomic profiling company that maintains one of the world's largest cancer genomic databases. With researchers at Foundation Medicine; Alexandra Maertens, Ph.D., of the Centre for

Alternatives to Animal Testing at the Bloomberg School of Public Health; and others, the team applied an advanced algorithm to analyse the genetic data of 354,366 solid tumour biopsies stored in the Foundation database.

Within that population of tumour samples, 5,991 had one working version and one mutated version of MUTYH. Of those, 738 (about 12%) had lost their working copy of the gene, leaving them with just the mutated copy. Those with a single, mutated copy of MUTYH showed a genetic signature, like a fingerprint, of additional genetic mutations and a defective BER pathway. Individuals with that genetic signature had a modest increase in susceptibility to a subset of solid tumors, including adrenal gland cancers and pancreatic islet cell tumours. However, they did not have an increased risk for breast or prostate cancer, resolving the original patient's question.

The results suggested that MUTYH variants might be involved in a broader range of cancers than previously known, Paller said.

"The next question is whether this finding has therapeutic implications," she said. "Can we target the BER pathway for possible drug sensitivities?" If so, doctors might be able to add a new therapeutic approach to their arsenal of tools against solid cancers. **-ANI**

SPORTS

Kohli and Karthik shine in Bengaluru’s win over Punjab

A last-over thriller saw hosts Royal Challengers Bengaluru edge past Punjab Kings at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium

BENGALURU: Virat Kohli’s batting masterclass combined with Dinesh Karthik and Mahipal Lomror’s finishing touches sealed a four-wicket win for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) against Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League 2024 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium on Monday. The packed stadium was treated to a masterclass from Kohli after Jonny Bairstow dropped his catch on the second ball of the innings during the chase of 177. Kohli struck three boundaries in the next four balls to make Kings pay for missing out on the chance. Kagiso Rabada repaired some damages by removing skipper Faf du Plessis for three. Rabada came back to dismiss Cameron Green for 3 reducing RCB to 43/2. A short-lived 42-run partnership between Kohli and Rajat Patidar kept RCB on track for the chase. Harpreet Brar managed to put Kings in the driver’s seat by claiming the wickets of Patidar (18) and Glenn Maxwell



(3) in quick succession. A couple of overs later, Kohli followed in the footsteps of Maxwell with Harshal Patel getting his revenge for the back-to-back foures earlier in the 16th over. Impact sub-Mahipal Lomror and experienced batter Dinesh Karthik amassed 48 runs in the final 21 balls to clinch a four-wicket

win for the home team. Karthik finished off the game in style as he effortlessly sent the ball to the boundary line to finish off the game for RCB. Put to bat first by RCB, Kings did not have a very good start. Shikhar Dhawan started the innings with a boundary off Mohammed Siraj’s opening delivery and Jonny Bairstow also



hit him for two successive fours in the third over, the pacer had the last laugh as he got Bairstow caught by Kohli for eight runs in six deliveries. At the end of six overs, Punjab were at 40/1 after the powerplay, with Shikhar (21*) and Prabhsimran Singh (10*) unbeaten. However, before Punjab could complete

the first half of their innings, Glenn Maxwell got Prabhsimran caught behind by Anuj Rawat for 25 in 17 balls, with two fours and two sixes. At the end of 10 overs, Kings were 78/2 and Dhawan (42*) was joined by Liam Livingstone (1*). After some early attacks by Livingstone, RCB bowlers put pressure on rival batters again, with Alzarri

TODAY’S MATCH

Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Mumbai Indians

Hyderabad, 6pm

Joseph getting Livingstone caught behind for 17 in 13 balls.

Maxwell started his next over with a big wicket of Dhawan for 45 in 37 balls, with five fours and a six. Kings reached the 100-run mark in 12.3 overs. RCB continued to restrict the run flow of Kings batters until Jitesh Sharma smashed Mayank Dagar for two sixes in the 15th over. At the end of 15 overs, Kings were 128/4, with Jitesh (17*) and Sam Curran (13*) unbeaten.

Curran and Jitesh brought up their 50-run stand and the team’s 150-run mark in 17.4 overs. Yash Dayal got Curran dismissed to end the partnership, with Rawat taking a fine catch to remove him for 23 in 17 balls, with three fours.

Rawat was absolutely electric behind the stumps, taking yet another catch to dismiss Jitesh for 27 in 20 balls, with a four and two sixes.

Shashank Singh started Joseph’s final over with two sixes and a four. Kings ended their innings at 176/6, with Shashank unbeaten at 21* in eight balls with a four and two sixes. Siraj (2/26) and Maxwell (2/29) were the pick of the bowlers for RCB.

Brief scores: Punjab Kings 176/6 (Dhawan 45, Jitesh 27; Siraj 2-26, Maxwell 2-29) lost to Royal Challengers Bengaluru 178/6 in 19.2 overs (Kohli 77, Karthik 28*; Brar 2-13, Rabada 2-23). - ANI

TWO-MONTH BREAK

A surreal experience not to be recognised, says Kohli

BENGALURU: Virat Kohli, after his match-winning 77 against Punjab Kings at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, opened up about his two-month break when his wife Anushka Sharma gave birth to their second child. Kohli missed India’s home Test series against England as he and his family spent time away from the country. “We were not in the country. We were at a place where people were not recognising us. Just time together as a family, just to feel normal for two months,” Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony. “For me, for us as a family, it was a surreal experience. “Of course, having two kids, things become totally different from a family perspective. So just the ability to be together, the connections that you make with your older child, it’s amazing. “I mean, I couldn’t have been more grateful to God for the opportunity that I got to spend time with my family.” Kohli spoke about how he enjoyed not being treated like a celebrity. “And yeah, just the place that we were in, I was telling the guys that when we came back, the voices back home felt that much louder,” he said. “I couldn’t look up because I was just not used to being called my name for two months. And then immediately you hear these loud noises and then you’re back in it all again. “But it was beautiful. It’s an amazing experience to just be another person on the road and not



be recognised and just carry on about life that normally people would on a daily basis,” he said. Kohli also spoke about the love he gets from the RCB fans, especially in Bengaluru, having played for the franchise since the inception of the IPL. “It’s been going on for years and you know, people talk about a lot of other things when you play sport. The achievements, the stats, the numbers. Look at the end of the day when you look back you’re not going to think of the numbers and the stats. It’s the memories that you create,” Kohli said, before citing the Indian team head coach Rahul Dravid. “Famously Rahul bhai in the change room nowadays says exactly the same to us. When you play, you play your heart

out because you’re going to miss these times when you’re with your friends in the change room playing in front of fans. “So the relationship that’s happened organically over so many years it’s something that I can never ever forget. Just the love and the appreciation and the backing I’ve received for so many years that’s been amazing.” Kohli, however, knows that he has to make changes to his game to keep up with the ever-evolving nature of T20 cricket. “Well I mean you have to [make additions to your game],” he said “So, I mean, you have to come up with a game plan here and there and try to keep improving your game,” Kohli said, before issuing a friendly reminder. - Agencies

FIVE MATCHES

Australia-India Test series to start in Perth in late November

PERTH: Perth Stadium has dethroned the Gabba as Australia’s preferred first Test venue with the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy to begin in Perth on November 22 this year before the series moves to Adelaide for the day-night Test, Brisbane, Melbourne for Boxing Day and Sydney for the New Year’s Test. Cricket Australia (CA) unveiled their international schedule for next summer with the Border-Gavaskar Trophy as the summer’s showpiece event. After Perth, the second Test will be a day-night pink-ball encounter played at Adelaide Oval from December 6-10. The third Test will be in Brisbane from December 14-18. The fourth Test will be at the MCG in the traditional Boxing Day slot on December 26 and the fifth Test will be at the SCG starting January 3. Australia has an unblemished record at Perth’s newest venue having won four out of four Tests there including the first one against India in December 2018, although India went on to claim the series. Perth did not host a Test between Australia and India in the 2020-21 series, which India also won when the final Test was held in Brisbane. The decision to start with Perth and then the day-night Test also means there is a clear window for the BBL to begin after December 10, as those matches are played at night while the Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney Tests are played during the day. CA had to halt the BBL for



five days early in the season last summer while the Perth Test between Australia and Pakistan was played in late December. Then the Adelaide Test against West Indies was a day game in mid-January before the day-night Test was held in Brisbane after the BBL had been completed. The BBL will likely start during the three-day break between the Adelaide and Brisbane Tests and will run through until Australia Day on January 26, with Australia’s Test players set to be available for a few weeks after the Sydney Test is completed on January 7. However, Australia have a two-Test tour of Sri Lanka scheduled for late January and early February which could mean some players are withdrawn from the BBL finals as there is a preference for a seven to 10-day build-up for that series to acclimatise to conditions. The dates for the Sri Lanka tour are yet to be announced. Australia’s ODI players will likely

head straight to the Champions Trophy after the Sri Lanka tour, with the tournament likely to start on February 19. **Pakistan return for white-ball cricket** Australia will host Pakistan in three ODIs and three T20Is in early November before the Border-Gavaskar Trophy begins. The ODIs will be part of both teams’ preparation for the Champions Trophy and is likely to be Australia’s last official ODI series before that tournament begins in Pakistan. The ODI series will start at the MCG on Monday, November 4, the night before the Melbourne Cup public holiday in Victoria. The series will then move to Adelaide on November 8 and finish in Perth on November 10. The T20I series will run close to the Test series against India and will likely mean that none of Australia’s Test players will feature. - Agencies

FLAMENGO FORWARD

Brazil striker Barbosa suspended for 2 years for attempted anti-doping fraud

RIO DE JANEIRO: Flamengo and Brazil striker Gabriel Barbosa has been suspended for two years for attempted anti-doping fraud. Local media have reported that the 27-year-old, known as ‘Gabigol’, made it difficult to carry out an anti-doping test the day before a game. Barbosa, who has played 18 times for his country, denies the allegations. “I have never attempted to obstruct or defraud any test, and I trust that I will be cleared by the

higher court,” he said in a post on X. “Since the beginning of my career as a footballer, I have always followed the rules of the game and never used banned substances. I have been subjected to dozens of tests, all of which have always been negative. “I am disappointed with the outcome of the judgement, but I will continue co-operating with the sporting authorities and trust that my innocence will be proven and re-established by the higher court.”

Barbosa, who was part of Brazil’s gold medal-winning squad at the 2016 Rio Olympics, can appeal the decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). The Brazilian Doping Control Authority said: “The aforementioned athlete was judged by the Anti-Doping Sports Court of Justice and, by a majority vote, it was decided that a violation of the anti-doping rule of attempted fraud had occurred.” The two-year ban starts from the date of violation, which occurred on April 8, 2023.

The Brazilian Serie A season starts on April 14 and runs until December 8 meaning Barbosa will miss the full season, but should be available for the start of the 2025 campaign. Flamengo said they were surprised by the verdict and would help the player with an appeal. “(The club) will assist the athlete in presenting an appeal to CAS, since it understands that there was no fraud, not even an attempt, to justify the punishment applied,” they said in a statement.

Barbosa signed for Flamengo on a permanent deal in 2020 after a successful loan spell from Italy’s top-flight club Inter Milan, where he only played nine times in four years. The forward scored the winning goal in the 2022 Copa Libertadores final - South America’s version of the Champions League - in a 1-0 win over fellow Brazilian side Athletico Paranaense. Barbosa made his Brazil debut in a 2-0 friendly win over Panama in May 2016 and has scored five international goals. - Agencies



Dubai’s Ramadan markets veritable melting pot of local culture, cuisine and artisanal flair

Seasonal souks remain ever popular among families, friends, couples and individuals eager to discover local and regional traditions or simply go gift shopping

Dubai: This year, pleasant evening temperatures provide a splendid opportunity for residents and visitors to savour their evenings post-Iftar and explore an array of vibrant Ramadan markets across Dubai as part of the city-wide #RamadanInDubai campaign launched by the Dubai Media Council under the directives of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Second Deputy Ruler of Dubai and Chairman of the Dubai Media Council (DMC).

Offering something for everyone, the city’s Ramadan markets allow families, friends, couples, and individuals to discover unique traditions and shop for distinctive gifts from local artisans and vendors. The vibrant and welcoming atmosphere of the markets adds to the joyous evenings and the spirit of togetherness during the holy month.

Ramadan at Jumeirah Emirates Towers

The popular Ramadan market at the picturesque Jumeirah Emirates Towers Plaza Terrace has returned this year in Dubai. Set against the backdrop of Dubai’s Museum of the Future, the events bring together art, food and shopping. Whether you’re after iftar or suhoor, the Terrace Between the Towers is well worth a visit. The venue boasts an Arabesque setting, and guests can dine under the stars while taking in the spectacular skyline. There is the promise of wholesome family fun on moonlit nights, with the chance to discover more about the allure



of Emirati and regional culture in the process. Featuring stalls set up by local designers, creative food offerings, daily events and activities, and a designated children’s play area, families can enjoy hours of togetherness and come away with memories to last a lifetime.

The ever-popular Ramadan Souq organised by Dubai Municipality, as always, has plenty in store by way of household essentials and food specialties to help residents make their Ramadan truly special. The Old Municipality Street in Bur Deira is another place that offers a unique shopping experience, with an abundance of items to be found at great prices. There is also a mini marketplace showcasing items traditionally associated with Ramadan. Vibrant live entertainment shows draw visitors of all ages, and there are also fun activities youngsters can participate in.

Close by, City Walk, the open-air lifestyle destination that is home to hundreds of exclusive retailers and must-visit restaurants is host-



ing an unmissable Night Market. Located next to The Green Planet, it allows visitors to scour the shops for a variety of unique gifts that are perfect for the gifting season.

Then there is Ramadaniyat, at The Hub at Majlis Al Khawaneej, where families and friends can explore an array of food offerings from artisanal vendors. The whole experience is based upon trying out

new flavours, soaking up the community atmosphere, and sharing time together long into the evening.

Across town, the Bay by Social Night Market at Dubai Festival City Mall is the place for visitors of all ages to immerse themselves in cultural workshops and activities, besides exploring a range of wares displayed by local vendors. A lavish Iftar is also served here as the

famous Ramadan cannon signals sunset. With so much to see and explore, visitors have the liberty to stay back until Suhoor.

Range of activities
Over at Dubai Expo City, Hai Ramadan, one of Dubai’s biggest and most beloved events of the Holy Month, is back once more. Designed to depict a traditional Emirati community, more than 20

outlets and food carts showcase handicrafts, traditional garments and local delicacies. A truly authentic experience, a ‘grandmother’s supermarket’, known as a ‘Dukan Yadoo’, invites children to buy candy using tokens from a traditional ‘Floos bank’ – a popular payment system. Visitors can soak up the vibrant atmosphere and be part of celebrations all evening, with a diverse range of activities and options awaiting them, including Iftars and Suhoors across the destination’s outlets.

For those preferring an alternative daytime experience, the family-favourite Ripe Market heads to the Dubai Police Academy Park every Saturday and Sunday, allowing visitors to shop for Ramadan gifts from artisanal stalls. Local farms sell fresh organic produce, and guests can join craft workshops and wellness sessions, which are open to all ages, in a beautiful al fresco setting.

From 23 - 31 March, Al Serkal Avenue welcomes residents and visitors for a special Ramadan programme named ‘Stay a Little Longer’. The event showcases transnational events of histories of diverse communities in the UAE. Visitors can explore a lively market featuring a rich variety of products, besides attending special talks, live music performances, an outdoor photographic exhibition, art tours, and workshops. Welcoming guests of all cultures and nationalities, the events and activities will unfold in a host of languages including Arabic, Hindi/Urdu, Malayalam, Tagalog, and English among others.

The #RamadanInDubai campaign brings the public and private sectors together for the first time for a unified celebration of the Holy Month. The Dubai Media Council has tasked Brand Dubai, the creative arm of the Government of Dubai Media Office (GDMO), with overseeing the campaign’s execution. The campaign has been designed to bring to the community the unique spirit, beauty and warmth of Ramadan and share the rich cultural heritage and traditions that are an integral part of celebrations during the Holy Month. The initiative also aims to create a unique ambience across the city that captures the true essence of Ramadan, reflecting the authentic Emirati customs and traditions that make the occasion truly special.

NEW FEATURE

Update Know Your Customer details through Bank Muscat mobile and Internet banking

MUSCAT: In line with its vision “To Serve You Better, Everyday,” Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, continues to upgrade the banking services offered through Mobile and Internet banking to provide a seamless experience for customers. The bank introduced updating “Know Your Customer (KYC)” details to help customers minimise their need to visit the branches.

KYC is an important process that enables the bank to verify and maintain customers’ identity, information and documents at all times to serve them better, enhance their banking experience and avoid any delays in their transactions. Bank Muscat is committed to provide innovative services that are in-line with the latest technological developments and customers’ current and future needs.

The new feature enables customers to update their KYC details online by logging in to Mobile or Internet Banking and navigating through the app via Requests / Customer Services < KYC < Update KYC and follow the on-screen instructions. After uploading the required documents, the details are instantly updated in the bank records and customers will receive a confirmation SMS and Email notification. Customers can also update their civil or resident ID details and passport details through this service.



Bank Muscat offers a wide range of online services, including Soft Token App for the approval of Internet Banking transactions, instant opening of Themaar Savings Plan, view access for minor accounts, payment to Pakistan and Bangladesh wallet, Speed transfer to Egypt, Friendi Mobile Topup, payment to government for Value added Tax (VAT), Excise Tax and Corporate income Tax, VAT statement for Corporate customers, Group Bill Payments which allows

user to submit multiple Bill Payment transactions in single click, setting SMS Language instantly by Internet Banking & Mobile Banking, performing QR payment by doing a phone shake, MEDC electricity prepaid & post-paid payment, Muscat Finance and National Finance Loan Installment payment and payments to new educational institutes. In addition, customers can also apply for loan products and a variety of credit cards online and much more.

PRESTIGIOUS

Geely Yinhe E8 wins iF Design Award

MUSCAT: The German Firm iF Design Award (iF DESIGN AWARD), known as the “Oscar of the design industry”, awarded the 2024 iF Design Award to Geely Yinhe E8. The newest star from the Geely Auto stood out from nearly 11,000 entries from 72 countries and regions around the world.

As one of the world’s three major industrial design awards along with the Red Dot Award (German) and the IDEA Award (America), the iF Design Award was founded in 1953. It is famous for its independent, rigorous and reliable. In this world, the selection criteria are extremely harsh. This year’s iF Design Award uses “Idea”/“Form”/“Function”/“Differentiation”/“Impact” as the evaluation criteria, emphasizing the global influence of design. Geely Yinhe E8 has won high recognition from 132 global authoritative design review experts from 23 countries with its impressive “new design paradigm” in the era of smart electric vehicle.

Break through design boundaries with high-value design

Review experts believe that the breakthrough of Geely Yinhe E8 lies in the perfect integration of culture, technology and user needs. In the “Galaxy Era” of new energy vehicles, Geely Yinhe anchors the “high value” of its products and adheres to its original intention of “making smart premium cars for everyone”.

As the flagship pure electric sedan of the Geely Yinhe series, the Geely Yinhe E8 is equipped



with the world’s first mass-produced integrated luminous front face created by patented “micro hole laser engraving” technology. It not only inherits Geely’s classic ripple symbol design, but also maintains its extremely high brand Recognizable.

The world’s first mass-produced 45-inch 8K unbounded smart screen in the car integrates multiple functions to meet the in-vehicle interactive unbounded experience required by users. In addition, in terms of driving experience design, Geely explores the real demands of each occupant in the car from the user’s perspective, repeatedly tests the interactive experience in various scenarios, and improves the “attention rate” in the driving area and the “competency rate” in the blind operation area, providing Safe travel protection for users.

Leading the era of smart electric vehicle with ‘new design paradigm’

As the wave of smart electrifica-

tion triggers a century-old revolution in automobiles, globalization has become an irreversible and inevitable trend. Different economic, cultural, social and other diverse fields are deeply integrated. Rooted on cultural and brand heritage and be inclusive, Geely design is embracing the global perspective.

Design team

Geely’s design team is composed of outstanding designers from different countries and regions around the world. Under the diverse, inclusive, and open team culture, the collision of different perspectives and thinking brings unlimited possibilities to car design and constantly improves intelligent design. In the electric era, Geely advocates the “new design paradigm”.

As Geely’s global model, the release of Geely Yinhe E8 is an important step in the strategic transformation of Geely’s new energy brand, leading China’s new energy into a high-value era.

ROUND-UP

Mitsubishi unveils new limited edition Montero Sport ‘Special Action Model’



FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND



Alizz Islamic Bank honours graduation of first batch of ‘Tamkeen’ programme

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank, represented by the Sharia Compliance & Audit Department, celebrated the graduation of the first batch of the ‘Tamkeen programme’ for ‘Empowering the Second Line of Sharia Supervisory Board Members’. The bank also announced the enrolment of the second batch of candidates for the programme.

The first-of-its-kind programme which aims to enhance the knowledge and strength of potential future Sharia Supervisory Board Members as one of the bank’s initiatives under the ManarAlizz umbrella, the program that aims to develop Omani Islamic Scholars to assume the role of Members in Sharia Supervisory Boards in Islamic Financial Services Institutions in the future, by enhancing their knowledge on Banking, Economics, Legal, Finance & Governance in addition to the leadership skill sets aligned to SSB roles.

The ceremony was attended by Ali Al Mani, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank, members of the Sharia Supervisory Board, and other members of executive management.

Speaking about the graduation ceremony Issa bin Salim Al Riyami, Head of Sharia Compliance and Audit said, “We emphasise the importance of col-

lectively serving our country and we are dedicated to develop the future Shari’aSupervisory Board members and equipping them with the necessary knowledge and tools to succeed. It has been our immense pleasure to witness first-hand the success and growth of the first batch of candidates from the office of the Grand Mufti and we would like to welcome the second batch and wish them success.”

It is worth noting that the Sharia Supervisory Board, through the reports submitted to it, monitors the Sharia performance of the bank, which enables the board to evaluate the extent of compliance with Sharia directives and decisions. It also provides its recommendations and advice to create value-added products for the Islamic banking industry and providing financial solutions to meet the high customer demand in the market. The Sharia Compliance and Audit Department plays a vital role in monitoring the correct application of the Sharia Supervisory Board’s instructions by overseeing the mechanisms used to create products and develop product related documents, while examining the executed transactions and applying control and auditing measures.



The luxurious, advanced Mitsubishi Montero Sport SAM carries forward the DNA of the legendary Pajero, not only in its outstanding off-road capabilities but also in its super-refined comfort, quietness and overall driving composure

MUSCAT: General Automotive Company (GAC), the authorised dealership for Mitsubishi Motors has added a limited edition ‘Special Action Model’ (SAM) variant to the widely popular Montero Sport SUV.

The luxurious, advanced Mitsubishi Montero Sport SAM carries forward the DNA of the legendary Pajero, not only in its outstanding off-road capabilities but also in its super-refined comfort, quietness and overall driving composure. Little wonder, why it is a favourite among Off-road enthusiasts and adventure-seekers.

“With the Special Action Model, customers can now get a more personalized look, with exclusive trims and genuine Mitsubishi accessories loaded on their Montero Sport,” said Aftab Ahmed Khan, Sales head of Mitsubishi Motors Oman.

While the most striking aspect is the two-tone exterior with black roof and roof rail, SAM also flaunts high-gloss black accents on the headlights cluster, front and rear bumpers and radiator grille, plus beefy 18-inch black alloy rims.

Aesthetics in the interior have received a boost with deep brown highlights on the center and side

armrests, complemented by tasteful beige stitching.

“It’s not just the looks that have received an upgrade. SAM owners can expect exclusive value-additions in the cabin comfort too,” Aftab added, referring to the space-age material of the seats called QuoleModure™, which is specially engineered to reflect the infrared spectrum of sunlight and keep the seats cooler than standard premium seat materials when parked outdoors.

There is also all-round interior protection of SRS airbags for driver and front passenger, besides side curtain airbags of 1st, 2nd and 3rd row passengers, and even an airbag for the driver’s knees.

The Montero Sport SAM is powered by the 3.0 Litre MIVEC engine mated to Mitsubishi’s first 8-speed automatic transmission, with multiple advanced 4WD modes – all of which are designed to deliver a smoother ride and improved fuel efficiency while sprinting on city streets, cruising on highways, or making your own path off-road.

The Montero Sport SAM is on display at GAC’s Mitsubishi showrooms in Muscat, Sohar, Nizwa and Salalah, and can be booked for delivery at any showroom in Oman.

RADISSON COLLECTION HOTEL

Hormuz Grand Muscat continues to offer exceptional Iftar and Ramadan experience

MUSCAT: As the holy month of Ramadan unfolds, Hormuz Grand Muscat continues to uphold its commitment to providing an exceptional Iftar and Ramadan journey. Amidst the sacred atmosphere, guests are invited to embark on an unforgettable journey of tradition, culture, and culinary delight.

Each evening esteemed guests gather to break their fast in the company of loved ones, indulging in an array of traditional Arabian delicacies such as Ouzi and Mansaf, and international favourites meticulously crafted by our talented chefs. From appetizers and our live grills to every dish is infused with flavours that will delight the palate and nourish the soul.



Against the backdrop of the night sky at our Oasis Terrace, the soothing melodies of Arabic oud music fill the air, adding to the ambience of tranquillity and reflection. Here at Hormuz Grand Muscat, Ramadan is not just a

month—it’s a celebration of togetherness, spirituality, and the rich tapestry of Arabian culture.

In addition to our Iftar experience, Radisson Collection Muscat also offers another special Ramadan activity. Guests can gather

until early morning at Ramadan Majlis under the stars, and savour conversations, board games, and a nutritious à la carte Suhoor menu.

Group and private iftars can be organised at any of our stunning event spaces to accommodate gatherings of any size, ensuring that every celebration is tailored to perfection. Additionally, in-house guests can enjoy a complete Ramadan experience and indulge in an additional in-room Suhoor, allowing for a seamless and memorable stay.

Whether guests are seeking spiritual enrichment, cultural immersion, or simply a memorable dining experience, Hormuz Grand Muscat, A Radisson Collection Hotel, is the perfect destination to celebrate the beauty of Ramadan.

FIRST TIME IN OMAN

BankDhofar introduces Dhofar-Pay revolutionising contactless payment



at the forefront of technological developments.

On the other hand; BankDhofar’s Mobile Banking App boasts an intuitive and user-friendly

interface, making navigation a breeze. Whether customers are checking their account balance, transferring funds, or paying bills, it is crafted to assist them in man-

aging their finances through a simple and straightforward process.

As per Amjad Iqbal Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar; “We always work towards making banking easier and better for our customers and Dhofar-Pay is a perfect example of that. We are committed to use the latest technology to give the best banking experience possible for our customers. Our goal is to give easy and safe financial solutions that adapt to the evolving customer needs”

The Bank introduced a customer-centric Vertical Debit Cards, aiming to enhance the banking experience for valued customers. The portrait-oriented design aligns with how people use their cards, resembling smartphone orientation. The front displays customer details, issuer, and logos, while the back hides sensitive information for improved security and intuitive ‘Tap and Pay’.





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Ramadan Staycation

Enjoy the tranquil settings of our resorts throughout the month of Ramadan, with suhoor served in your room and a delightful Iftar buffet served daily at Al Tanoor.

Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah

Al Waha
From OMR 84++

Al Bandar
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Shangri-La Al Husn

An adult-only resort
From OMR 120++

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