LET'S TALK
Times OF OMAN

CONSULTANCY STUDY FOR A CARGO TRACKING PROJECT

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) reviewed a consultancy study that aims to improve the tracking of goods and shipments, as well as customs clearance procedures in the special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities in Oman. >B2

HOTEL REVENUES IN OMAN INCREASE BY 26.4%

The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman exceeded OMR153 million as at the end of September 2023, up by 26.4 percent over the corresponding period in 2022, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The total number of hotel guests rose by 27.3% to 1.43 million by the end of September 2023. >B1

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Sayyid Shihab presides over Academy for Strategic, Defence Studies' meeting A5

OMAN TAKES A GIANT LEAP IN REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS

Oman's largest solar photovoltaic plant for desalination inaugurated in Sur

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a significant stride towards fulfilling Oman's commitment to reduce carbon emissions and its ambitious target of achieving net zero by 2050, the largest solar photovoltaic (PV) system for desalination was inaugurated in Sur on Monday.

Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, the Minister of Energy and Minerals, presided over the unveiling of the 17-megawatt peak (MWp) solar photovoltaic farm, generating clean energy to power the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant in Sur.

This pioneering project will boast an annual capacity of over 32,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) of green electricity, fully covering the desalination plant's energy requirements during daylight hours.

Developed by Veolia in collaboration with TotalEnergies, the plant is poised to curtail around 27,200 tonnes of CO2 emissions annually, a reduction equivalent to the emissions generated by roughly 6,000 internal combustion engine-powered vehicles over the same period.

The journey of this solar plant commenced with construction in August 2022, followed by rigorous testing from March 30 to April 15, 2023. The plant's commercial operation was successfully achieved on April 16, 2023, with a lease agreement in place for the solar farm operation until March 31, 2036.

During the inauguration ceremony, Al Aufi said, "I am glad to witness the official inauguration of this crucial solar photovoltaic facility at the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant, serving the clean drinking water needs of over 600,000 inhabitants in the Sharqiyah region. This solar plant aligns seamlessly with global efforts towards energy transition for a net-zero world. Furthermore, it represents a significant contribution to water security in Oman and is aligned with our National Energy Strategy, which aims to derive 30 percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, one of the key objectives of Oman Vision 2040. I commend Veolia, its partners, and all involved in the development of this project for their unwavering commitment and diligent efforts in bringing this initiative to fruition." >A6

The solar plant has annual capacity of over **32,000** megawatt-hours (MWh) of green and renewable electricity

The plant will help cut about **27,200** tonnes of CO2 emissions per year

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Teachers' excellence award unveiled

1 The Ministry of Education outlined details of the second edition of Omani Teacher's Educational Excellence Award, which is dedicated every two academic years to outstanding teachers in government schools. The award is given out in appreciation for teachers' efforts to develop educational domains. >A3

WORLD

Jordan air-drops vital medical aid in Gaza

2 Jordan's King Abdullah II said in a post on X that Jordan's air force personnel had air-dropped urgent medical aid to a Jordanian field hospital in Gaza on Monday. "This is our duty to aid our brothers and sisters injured in the war on Gaza," the king said. >A6

SPORTS

Hockey teams to vie in Muscat for Paris spots

3 Hockey enthusiasts in Oman are in for a spectacular treat as world champions Germany, along with former Olympic Games winners, gear up for the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers in Muscat from January 15-21. >B6

Renaissance Services, Omantel and Marafiq swing their way to the top three at the Oman Golf League Debut

MUSCAT: Round one of Oman Golf Corporate League commenced at Al Mouj Golf, with Renaissance Services emerging as the front-runners, accumulating 97 points. They were closely followed by Marafiq with 97 points, and Omantel clinching third place with 94 points. This exciting event featured an impressive line-up of teams representing various industries including banking, oil and gas, telecommunications, and logistics.

Hole-in-one lit up the green as several individual performances shined on the course of Oman Golf Corporate League. Alistair Stock from Marafiq won the closest-to-pin award, while Ahmed Al Wahaibi from Medco LLC claimed the longest drive award on hole 15. Securing his spot at the top, Abhishek Kalla from Europcar Oman clinched the best overall individual performance with a stellar 39 stableford points.

The tournament will run for five months, with teams from more than 14 leading businesses in Oman competing over 18 holes each month at the Sultanate's first links-style course, highlighting not only the golfing talent in the corporate world but also bringing people from across industries together.

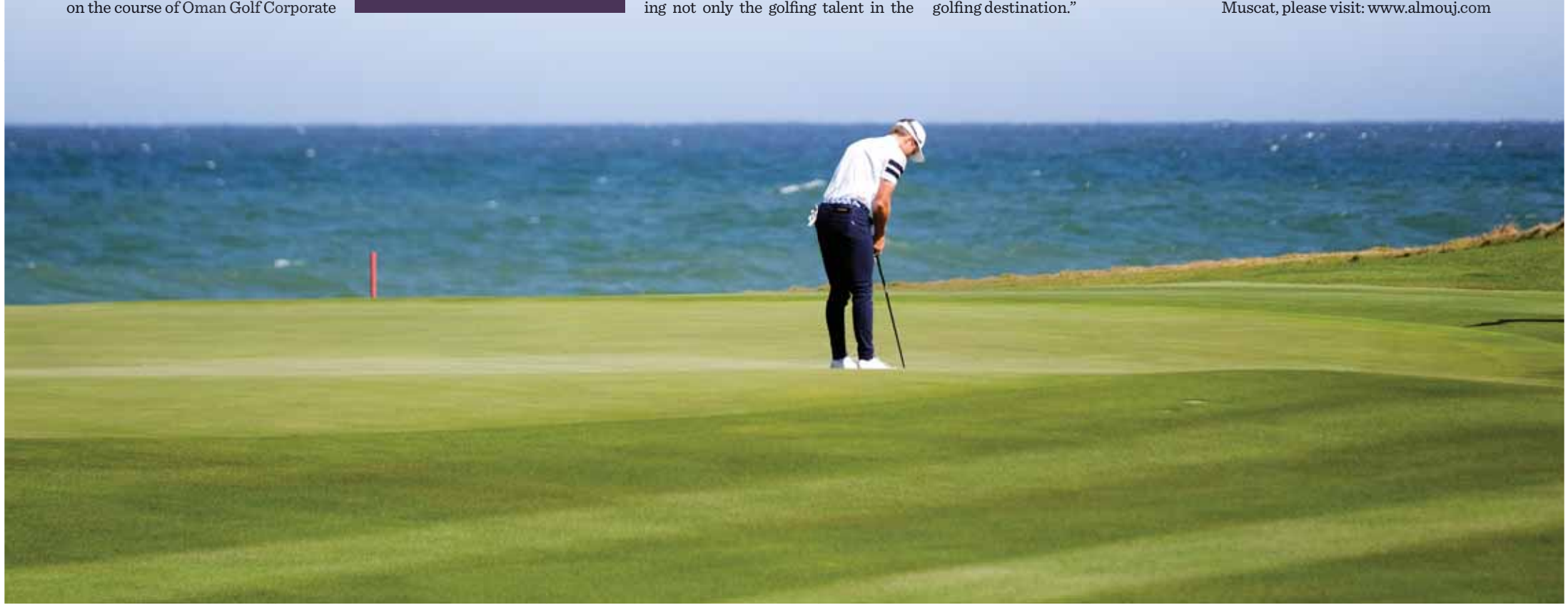
Nasser Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said "We were delighted with the participation and outcomes of the Oman Golf League's inaugural round, a unique event that is already set to become a benchmark for golf events in Oman. Our goal was to enable individuals and companies to foster connections through an unparalleled golfing experience – congratulations to this month's champions. I eagerly await the next rounds at our premier golfing destination."

With the second round coming in November 17, the fairways of Al Mouj Golf will be set for corporations to take part in a friendly competition, offering numerous networking opportunities and access to the exceptional amenities of Al Mouj Muscat, with its vibrant dining and retail district, in addition to five-star stay-and-play options with the boulevard-style development's seven luxury hotels.

For Al Mouj Golf, please visit www.almoujgolf.com

For more information on Al Mouj Muscat, please visit: www.almouj.com

Marafiq's Alistair Stock wins the closest-to-pin award and Ahmed Al Wahaibi from Medco LLC takes home the longest drive award on hole 15



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PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	11:56pm
Asr	3:07pm
Maghrib	5:30pm
Isha	6:42pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:59am

INCENTIVES BY OMAN

Trade between Oman, Egypt reached $1.1 billion in 2022

CAIRO: The Egyptian Businessmen Association held here on Monday a seminar themed "Cooperation Opportunities between Oman and Egypt in the field of Small and Medium Projects".

The event aimed at highlighting incentives offered by the Sultanate of Oman to small and medium enterprises and investors.

Abdullah Nasser Al Rahbi, Ambassador of Oman to Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League underscored the historic relations between the Omani and Egyptian peoples. He added that His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik's visit to Egypt on 21 May 2023 and his meeting with the Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi marked a positive step forward in boosting mutual relations in all political, economic, business and cultural spheres.

Al Rahbi pointed out that trade exchange between Oman and Egypt reached $1.1 billion in 2022 compared to $650 million in 2021.

Moreover, Egyptian exports to Oman reached $200 million in 2022 compared to $163 million in 2021, constituting a rise by 24%. Egyptian imports from the Sultanate of Oman stood at $870 million in 2022.

The ambassador also said that Egyptian investments in the Omani market reached $680 million in 2022 (744 companies) with a total investment capital exceeding $1.8 billion in the fields of infrastructure, road projects and real estate investments.

Meanwhile, Al Rahbi said, Omani investments in the Egyptian market reached $77.5 million, distributed over 92 companies operating in the fields of industry, tourism, agriculture, construction and other fields. -ONA

TWENTY-FIRST MEETING

Government Communication Centre organises meeting

MUSCAT: The Government Communication Centre organised its twenty-first meeting in the presence of directors and representatives of communication and media departments in government units.

The meeting dealt with the tasks of spokespeople representing government units. It outlined the roles of a spokesman and touched on the need to promote cooperation between spokespeople and communication and media departments.

The meeting touched on major projects undertaken by the Communication Centre as part of its cooperation with government units during the past period, with emphasis on streamlined communication plans espoused by the Centre. The Ministry of Information is embarked on a chain of training programmes aimed at honing the skills of spokespeople for units of the State's Administrative Apparatus. -ONA

RESPIRATORY DISEASES

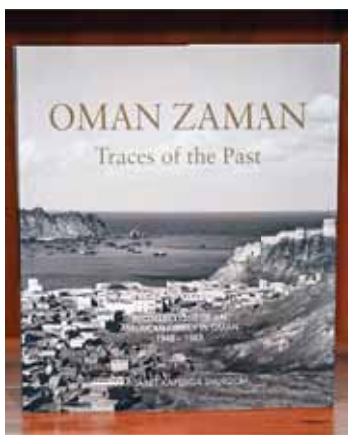
Health ministry work gets WHO praise

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health, represented by the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases, has been designated as a collaborating centre for research and training in the area of chronic respiratory diseases by the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Ministry of Health has enhanced and developed health services for patients with chronic respiratory diseases at all levels of healthcare. It has established 161 asthma clinics at the primary health care level and continues to provide a wide range of medications. In addition, the Ministry of Health has invested in training and building the capacity of pharmacists, doctors and nurses to ensure optimal healthcare delivery to patients. The WHO Collaborating Centers are distinguished global institutions that work to promote the goals of the WHO in a variety of health fields. -ONA

ANCIENT LIFE

Heritage Ministry launches book 'Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past'



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Oman Historical Association, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Monday launched a book titled "Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past", authored by Margaret Kapenga Shurdom.

The book deals with various aspects of ancient life in the Sultanate of Oman.

Kapenga lived and worked in the Sultanate of Oman between 1948 and 1983.

The book launch ceremony, held at the National Museum, was held under the auspices of Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

It was attended by the author, officials and specialists from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman Historical Association, the National Museum and Omani dignitaries.

Published in English, "Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past" will be translated at a later stage. It comprises more than 300 photos and images of paintings, manuscripts, letters and the writer's family memos that describe social life during their period of residence in Oman.

A photo exhibition was opened on the sidelines of the ceremony. It showcased paintings by artist Evelyn Underwood, the author's grandmother, whose works were inspired by her visit to the Kapenga family in the first years of their stay in Oman in the 1950s. -ONA

GROWTH THROUGH TOURISM

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender No.	23/2023
Tender Title	Prequalification for the design and supervision consultancy services for OMRAN Group residential projects including the 'Residential District' and Wadi Park at Madinat Al Irfan East.
Tender Submission Closing Date	15.11.2023
Tender Process Details	Please visit: **www.omran.om/tenders/**

omran.om/tenders/

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group)
Tel: +968 24 39 11 11
info@omran.om
@omrangroupom

OMRAN

INVITATION TO TENDER

SOHAR ALUMINIUM

Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Vendors for the following tenders:

Tender No. : 2023-ENG-SOW-0065
Tender Title : Electronic Permit System
Scope : Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) is seeking proposals from qualified vendors to develop and implement a Web-Based Permit Management System equipped with a comprehensive set of functionalities to manage various permit types and ensure compliance with local regulations.

Last Date for Applying Tender Documents	Date of Issuing Tender Documents	Last Date for Tender Submission
15 November 2023	17 November 2023	03 December 2023

Tender No. : 2023-ENG-SOW-0069
Tender Title : Refurbishment of the Cooling Towers
Scope : Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) requires the refurbishment of its cooling towers (Internal and external) steel structures, application of a corrosion-resistant coat, adding extra fins etc. to improve the cooling towers' efficiency.

Last Date for Applying Tender Documents	Date of Issuing Tender Documents	Last Date for Tender Submission
15 November 2023	17 November 2023	03 December 2023

Tender No. : 2023-ENG-SOW-0075
Tender Title : Controller Upgrade for Compressors
Scope : Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) has several industrial compressors that cater to compressed air requirements throughout the Smelter. SA seeks to replace the out-of-date controllers in these compressors.

Last Date for Applying Tender Documents	Date of Issuing Tender Documents	Last Date for Tender Submission
15 November 2023	17 November 2023	30 November 2023

Detailed scope of work will be shared with the vendors expressing their interest to participate in this tender.

Kindly send your email and company profile to: **tender@sohar-aluminium.com**
For list of active tenders visit: **https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing**

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Details of teachers excellence award for Omanis announced

Dr. Abdullah Khamis Ambusaidi, Education Ministry's Undersecretary for Education, Chairman of the Award's Supervisory Committee. - ONA

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education on Monday outlined details of the second edition of Omani Teachers' Educational Excellence Award, which is dedicated every two academic years to outstanding teachers in government schools.

The award is given out in appreciation for teachers' efforts made to develop different educational domains.

Dr. Abdullah Khamis Ambusaidi, Education Ministry's Undersecretary for Education, Chairman of the Award's Supervisory Committee, said in a speech that the award, in its first edition, saw a large turnout of participants and that the committee decided to repeat the experience as a measure to encourage teachers to be innovative and proficient and highlight their roles in developing students' skills and promote partnership in extracurricular activities.

The Undersecretary added that the second edition of the award will be more advanced, since it benefits from efforts to address challenges to introduce many improvements.

-ONA

Recall

Recall Date: 07.11.2023

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
C 200- C 300	2016-2024	113
CLS 350	2016-2024	3
E 200- E 300	2016-2024	60
G 500	2016-2024	1
GLC 200- GLC 300 4MATIC	2016-2024	20
GLE 450 4MATIC	2016-2024	31
GLS 450- GLS 580 4MATIC	2016-2024	6
Maybach GLS 600 4MATIC	2016-2024	8

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
Maybach S 680 4MATIC	2016-2024	5
Mercedes-AMG E 63 S 4MATIC+	2016-2024	1
Mercedes-AMG G 63	2016-2024	66
Mercedes-AMG GLE 53 4MATIC+	2016-2024	27
Mercedes-AMG GLS 63 4MATIC+	2016-2024	1
Mercedes-AMG GT 43	2016-2024	1
Mercedes-AMG GT 53 4MATIC+	2016-2024	1
S 450 - S 580 4MATIC	2016-2024	75

Recall consequence

The fuel pump impeller might not meet specifications in regards to material characteristics. As a consequence, the impeller might deform. It might therefore come into contact with the fuel pump housing, leading to an increased resistance. In some instances, this could lead to a shutdown of the fuel pump.

Recall Action

As a precautionary measure replace the fuel delivery module on the affected vehicles. Zawawi Trading Company team will contact the customers affected by the recall to arrange a convenient time from 07.11.2023 on all working days between 08:30AM-5:30 PM to replace the fuel delivery module

To check the serial numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website of Recalls & Warning: http://recall.pacp.gov.om

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www.pacp.gov.om

خط المستهلك
Consumer line
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80077997

Toll free number
80079777

Zawawi Trading Company L.L.C.

OMAN

MASTER'S AND EDUCATION HIGHER DIPLOMA DEGREE HOLDERS

University of Nizwa celebrates its 16th graduation ceremony

NIZWA: The University of Nizwa held its 16th graduation ceremony on Sunday, celebrating the accomplishments of its 16th batch of Master's and Education Higher Diploma degree holders.

The University produced 736 graduates from a wide range of majors in Master's degrees and Education Higher Diploma degrees, arming them with the skills needed to excel in their respective fields.

The graduation ceremony was graced by Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, the Minister of Social Development, accompanied by the University Chancellor, Prof. Ahmed Khalfan Al Rawahi, and respected deans from various colleges and deanships of the University.

Addressing the graduates, Professor Al Rawahi emphasised the significance of the knowledge they have acquired during their advanced academic journey, along with the fundamental values and skills they have developed. He expressed his unwavering confidence in their ability to employ these tools to realise their aspirations and fulfill their dreams.

On behalf of the graduates, Hilal Salem Al Sawafi, a master's degree student, expressed a deep sense of pride and gratitude towards the university and all its affiliates who have played a pivotal role in facilitating their academic journey.

It was a sight to behold as the alumni of the university donned their graduation gowns, exuding a sense of pride and accomplishment. The ceremony celebrated a total of 736 graduates, including 703 Higher Diploma recipients and 33 Master's degree holders, serving as a testament to their unwavering dedication and commitment to academic excellence. This was the first graduation ceremony where both degrees were conferred together.

The University of Nizwa affirmed its status as a premier educational institution with the successful completion of its 16th graduation ceremony. The ceremony underscored the university's steadfast commitment to empowering its students to become leaders in their respective fields.

AL WUSTA natural reserve possesses rare biodiversity

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority has announced the approval of the Secretariat of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands for the wetlands reserve in Al Wusta Governorate.

It is the third site in the Sultanate of Oman registered in the list of wetlands of international importance. The first site is Al Qurum Natural Reserve, registered in 2013 and the second site is Al Ansab Lakes, registered in 2020.

The wetland reserve, located in the Wilayat of Mahut, Al Wusta Governorate and declared by Royal Decree No. 51/2014, is one of the sites of multiple ecosystems with rare biodiversity.

It is one of the unique sites for studying the biodiversity and the sustainable usage of wetlands.

The reserve is rated one of the best sites of international importance for the migrating birds in the Middle East during the winter season of migration to Asia and East Africa.

The area of the reserve is approximately 214,032.862 hectares. The site of the reserve comprises several ecosystems such as the sea islands, bays, water courses, coastal sand dunes, plain lands, wild grass, coral reefs and sea herbs, turtle habitats, environment suitable for feeding sea turtles and crustaceans including endangered whales.

With a total area of approximately 162 hectares, the site accommodates the largest area of mangrove trees in the Sultanate along the coast of Mahut Island. The wetlands reserve enjoys natural tourism potentials making it a destination for tourists and lovers of bird watching.

The surveys conducted by the Environment Authority showed an increase in the number of migrating birds at the reserve annually where the number exceeds half a million during winter. The number of bird species coming to the reserve is 23.

It is worth mentioning that the site of the reserve hosts several animals such as foxes, wild rabbits and reptiles -ONA

Bangladesh visa suspension likely to be reviewed

A comprehensive review process is being conducted by the relevant Omani authorities to regulate the foreign labour market

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A comprehensive review is being undertaken to streamline the foreign labour market in Oman, according to a statement issued by the Bangladesh Embassy in Muscat.

The statement comes after Oman suspended all types of new visas to Bangladeshi workers coming to Oman.

"The content of the announcement issued by the Royal Oman Police (ROP) regarding suspension of issuance of visas for Bangladeshi nationals comes after a comprehensive review process being conducted by the relevant Omani authorities to regulate the foreign labour market in line with the needs and stability of Omani labour market to safeguard the rights of both workers and employers in accordance with the labour laws," the Embassy said in a statement.

Issuance of visas

It also said that issuance of visas has been suspended temporarily. "The competent authorities are exerting their sincere efforts and are keen to complete the review process as early as possible to resume visa issuance in accordance with the guidelines and regulations that conclude the review process," it said.

"Oman gives values and deeply appreciates the contributions of Bangladeshi expatriate workforce to the development process and economic growth in Oman. Oman shows its keenness on enhancing bilateral relations with the People's Republic of Bangladesh in a manner that serves the common interests of both countries. We reiterate and affirm that the decision announced here is no way and under no circumstances is political in nature rather Oman recalls with utmost respect and gratitude the contributions made and being made by Bangladeshi expatriates while it values the close and brotherly relations with the government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh," the Embassy said in a press release.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Sayyid Shihab presides over Academy for Strategic, Defence Studies' meeting

MUSCAT: The Board of Trustees (BoD) of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies held its annual meeting at Bait Al Falaj Garrison for 2023.

The meeting was chaired by HH Sayyid Shihab Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Chairman of the Academy's Board of Trustees.

At the outset of the meeting, HH Sayyid Shihab welcomed the BoD members, hoping that the meeting would contribute towards the realisation of the Academy's goals and mission. The Board members reviewed various topics on the agenda.

The Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies deals with developing strategic studies in line with approved plans and programmes, expanding the scope of strategic thought, implementing analytical aspects of strategic planning and honing the skills of Omani nationals to help them undertake leadership tasks.

The Academy conducts strategic and defence studies and develops scholarly research in different domains. It also seeks to consolidate ties with universities, centres and specialised institutes.

The meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Dr. Fahd Al Julanda Al Said , Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University, Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, Hassan Mohsin Al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Dr. Said Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces, Maj. Gen Sulaiman Khalid Al Zakwani, Secretary General of Military Affairs at the Royal Office, Maj. Gen Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, and Commodore Khalid Amir Al Salti, Director General of Studies and Academic Affairs at the Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies, rapporteur of the meeting. -ONA

Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Directorate General of Financial Affairs at Ministry of Health announces to all companies and institutions dealing with (MOH Headquarters) and (Directorates General of Health Services and its affiliated departments at all the Governorates) to submit their invoices to the concerned authorities not later than 15.11.2023, to settle all their claims before the end of current year 2023.

22ND MEETING

Oman chairs meeting of GCC heads of civil retirement agencies

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Social Protection Fund, chaired here on Monday the 22nd meeting of the committee of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Heads of Civil Retirement and Social Insurance Agencies.

Strong relations

Nasser Khamis Al Jashmi, Secretary General of the Ministry of Finance, Chairman of the Board of the Directors of the Social Protection Fund, said that what has been achieved throughout the march of GCC cooperation reflects the strong relations between the council's countries.

Moreover, the two-day meeting reviews the implementation of recommendations of the committee's 21st meeting which was held in Saudi Arabia during November 2022. -ONA

UNESCO CONFERENCE

Minister of Education heads to Paris

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Dr. Madiha bint Ahmed Al Shaibaniya, Minister of Education and Chairperson of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, left for Paris on Monday to head the delegation of Oman at the 42nd session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco).

The conference will be held from 7 to 22 November at the organisation's headquarters, with the participation of delegations from member states and representatives of international, civil society and civil community organisations.

The delegation included envoy Dr. Hamad bin Saif Al Hamami, Permanent Representative of Oman to the Unesco, and Amna bint Salem Al Balushi, Secretary of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

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Post	Qualification
AVP Middle, AVP Senior School, and HOD Activities (3 Leadership positions)	• Minimum 3 years of leadership experience in a school of repute as HOD/Coordinator or VP. • With excellent personal academic record and inspiring portfolio. • Should have excellent drafting, designing, and instructional skills along with the passion to lead and drive.
KG Teachers – Home Room Facilitators	• ECCE, EYFS, Kindergarten, or Montessori Trained with excellent IT skills. • Only candidates with regular courses of study shall apply. • Minimum of 3 years of work experience is a must.
Mother Teachers to teach English, Mathematics & EVS for Grades 1 and 2	• Elementary B. Ed with Masters or Graduation with English / Science/ Maths as major subjects. • Should be good at teaching all three subjects English, Mathematics and EVS. • Minimum of 3 years of work experience is a must.
Music Teacher - Instrumental	• 2 Posts - Western and Indian Instrument Specialist. • Bachelor's degree in music or a related field (Master's degree preferred). • Proficiency in playing multiple musical instruments. • Strong knowledge of music theory, history, and various musical genres. • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
Physical Education and Fitness Specialist	• Qualified M.PEd. NIS-trained specialist coaches for Gymnastics, Judo, Cricket, table tennis, Chess and Yoga. • Good English Communication and instructional skills. • IT certified and good at providing technology-integrated physical training.
For Primary, Middle and Secondary School Core subjects (PRT, TGT, and PGT)	• French, Hindi, Science, Maths, English, Social Science, Geography, Political Science, Business Studies, Accountancy, Economics, Computer Science and Psychology/Counselling. • Strong subject matter expertise and passion for teaching. • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. A commitment to promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment. • A growth mindset and a willingness to adapt to evolving educational practices. Prior teaching experience is preferred but not required.

• A detailed resume or curriculum vitae with a cover letter outlining your teaching philosophy and your interest in joining our school.
• Copies of your teaching certification, salary details, work experience, and academic credentials.
• Contact information of at least two professional references.
• Work experience with CBSE/ICSE /IGCSE/IB curriculum is preferred.
• Teachers presently working in the Indian School system shall apply with written NOC from the School Principal or else their application will not be considered.
• IELTS with a minimum of 7 bands or more is needed for core subjects teaching at ISB.
• Computer-literate facilitators with certification shall only apply.
• Interested applicants may email their latest CV and passport-size photograph to career.teachers@isboman.com and fill in the given Google link mandatorily https://forms.gle/bdsrmLy5R92cHFSr6 on or before 22nd November 2023.

We are Expanding and Growing – Educate to Innovate

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/2023/149	RECOVERY AND DEFAULTER MANAGEMENT SERVICES	21/11/2023	07/12/2023	RO. 105.000

- To view the tender details, you can visit www.dhofarservices.nama.om / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- For any clarifications contact us on:
- **Tel No. 23232554**
- **email: purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om**

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OMAN/WORLD

Jordan air-drops vital medical relief in Gaza

The heads of 12 United Nations agencies and six humanitarian organisations have issued a joint plea for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza

GAZA: Jordan's King Abdullah II said in a post on X, formerly Twitter, that Jordan's air force personnel had air-dropped urgent medical aid to a Jordanian field hospital in Gaza early on Monday.

"This is our duty to aid our brothers and sisters injured in the war on Gaza," the king said, adding: "We will always be there for our Palestinian brethren."

Last week, Jordan announced that it had recalled its ambassador to Israel and told the Israeli ambassador to stay away in protest at the Israeli strikes in Gaza, saying the military operation has caused a humanitarian catastrophe.

Call for cease-fire

The heads of 12 United Nations agencies and six humanitarian organisations have issued a joint plea for an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza, saying the situation there was "unacceptable."

"An entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship. This is unacceptable," the international groups said in a statement.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken kicked off difficult talks in Turkey on Monday, as part of an attempt to assuage Ankara over the bombardment of Gaza.

Turkish media showed Blinken shaking hands with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Monday morning. The visit is the latest in a tour of US diplomacy in the Middle East and the first trip to Turkey since the conflict between Israel and Hamas group erupted on October 7.

The fighting threatens to have wide-ranging repercussions on US ties with Turkey — a NATO member with stakes in conflicts across the region.

Speaking from Istanbul, DW correspondent Dorian Jones said the priority for Blinken's trip is the "containment of this conflict."

He noted that Turkey could play a key role in preventing the war from spreading further, due to Ankara's currently good relations with Iran.

"Blinken will be looking for talks on how to keep Iran out of this conflict and preventing a major, regional war," Jones said.

More than 100 attacks against health care facilities have been reported, the statement said.

"Enough is Enough," wrote UN's emergency relief chief Martin Griffiths on X.

Washington's top diplomat will also need to do some smoothing over with NATO-ally Turkey.

"Blinken could face a frosty reception given that there is a lot of frustration in Ankara that Blinken had appeared to be sidelining Turkey," Jones said.

Protests in Turkey

The talks come as fury at both Israel and the West spilled onto the streets of southern Turkey on Sunday, as hundreds of people at a pro-Palestinian protest marched to an air base housing US troops.

Police used tear gas and water cannon to disperse the demonstrators.

On Sunday, Blinken made a surprise visit to the West Bank to meet with Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who joined international calls for an immediate cease-fire.

The US top diplomat travelled under tight security through the city of Ramallah in an armored motorcade. -DW

88 United Nations staff killed in Gaza attacks

TEL AVIV: The United Nations on Monday stressed that 88 staffers have been killed in Gaza, marking the highest toll ever for UN fatalities recorded in a single conflict.

The 88 staff members from the Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA have been reportedly killed since the beginning of the war, on October 7.

A joint statement from the heads of all major United Nations stated that the figure represents "the highest number of United Nations fatalities ever recorded in a single conflict."

The statement further expressed outrage at the civilian death toll in Gaza and called for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire". -ANI

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IN LONDON

Oman participates in World Travel Market

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is taking part in the World Travel Market London 2023, which began yesterday in London.

Oman's delegation in the three-day event is headed by Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism.

As many as 4,000 exhibitors will take part in the event, representing 155 countries.

The Omani pavilion at the expo aims to bring together partners from the government and private sectors, whose participation in the global event stems from a promotional programme aimed at highlighting Oman's competitive tourism capabilities. -ONA

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

India sends relief to earthquake-hit Nepal

NEW DELHI : India on Sunday sent an emergency aid package, comprising medical equipment, relief materials and more, for people affected by the magnitude 6.4 earthquake in Nepal.

The strong temblor, which even jolted the Indian capital and parts of north India, left 157 dead and scores injured.

Serving as the first responder, India shipped essential medicines and relief materials to assist the earthquake-affected communities.

This rapid response aligns with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Neighbourhood First Policy," External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said, emphasising India's commitment to supporting its neighbouring nations in times of crisis.

Earthquake-affected

As a first responder, India delivers medicines and relief material to earthquake-affected areas of Nepal.

The first consignment of Rs 10 crore worth of emergency relief materials arrived at Nepalgunj, Nepal, on Sunday. -ANI

جامعة ظفار
Dhofar University

NOTICE FOR THE ANNUAL ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (AGM) OF DHOFAR UNIVERSITY S.A.O.C

The Board of Directors of Dhofar University (S.A.O.C) is pleased to invite the company's shareholders to attend the nineteenth Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the company (AGM) which will take place on Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 1:00 p.m. The meeting will be held through the AGM's electronic platform which can be accessed from the website of Muscat Clearing and Depository (S.A.O.C) (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum is not secured to convene the AGM, a second meeting will be held on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 01:00 p.m. The agenda of the valid meeting will be as follows:

AGM Agenda

1) To consider and approve the board of directors' report on the activities of the company and its financial status during the financial year ended on 31 August 2023.
2) To consider and approve the board of directors' report on the organization and management of the company, during the financial year ended on 31 August 2023.
3) To consider and approve the auditor's report on the financial statements of the company for the financial year ended on 31 August 2023.
4) To inform about the transactions entered into by the Company with related parties during the financial year ended on 31 August 2023.
5) To appoint the External Auditor for the new financial year ending 31st August 2024 and determine his fees.

As per the Articles of Association of the company, the MOCI's guidelines of holding AGMs for SAOC companies via electronic means and the other relevant rules, please note the following:

a. A legal person only has the right to appoint a natural person to attend the AGM and vote on decisions taken on his behalf via electronic means. This natural person must have an ID issued by Muscat Clearing and Depository Company SAOC.

b. Shareholders have the right to vote on any of the agenda items starting no earlier than three days from the date of holding the AGM. In case the shares owned by a shareholder changed (increased/decreased), the vote shall be void and a new vote needs to be made on the day of the AGM.

In case of any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Legal Advisor: Mohammed Abbas, Tel. No.: 23237108, GSM: 94043168

Chairman	Legal Advisor	External Auditor
Tariq Salim Mustahil Al Mashani	Mohammed Abbas	Deloitte & Touche (M.E.) & Co. LLC

ENERGY TRANSITION

Sur desalination plant is among Oman's most critical projects

< FROM A1

Philippe Bourdeaux, Vice President Africa, Near & Middle East of Veolia, said, "We are delighted to witness the commencement of our solar project's mission.

"The realisation of this achievement would not have been possible without the steadfast support from the leadership in the Sultanate of Oman, particularly the Ministry of Energy and Minerals. We extend our gratitude to them and our private sector partners for their support in joining local efforts towards energy transition and decarbonisation. Veolia aspires to be a global leader in ecological transformation. Water and renewable energy are pivotal areas of focus for our Group. Given the mounting challenges posed by climate change, we have developed substantial expertise in reducing carbon emissions across our operations and projects. In this transformative journey, renewables play an indispensable role in providing green energy while ensuring an uninterrupted supply of vital resources, such as drinking water."

The inauguration was graced by the presence of senior management from Veolia and Total Energies, along with government officials and representatives from the Sharqiyah Desalination Company SAOG (SDC) and the Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (NPWP).

Denis Le Maout, Chairman of the Board of Sharqiyah Desalination Company SAOG, underscored the importance of their desalination plant. He said, "With a desalination capacity of 131,837 cubic meters per day (m3/day) and over 400 million m3 of water produced since 2007, our Sur desalination plant ranks among the most critical projects in the Sultanate, serving as a lifeline for delivering clean drinking water to local communities while mitigating the extraction of already scarce freshwater resources. In light of the substantial environmental and economic costs associated with conventional desalination processes, our focus has been on harnessing the potential of innovative technologies, including renewable energy, to positively impact the environment, create economic opportunities, and contribute to the overall welfare of the community."

Ahmed bin Salim Al Abri, the acting CEO of Nama for Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP), said, "NPWP is actively collaborating with water desalination plants to support their transition to the use of renewable energy for desalination purposes. This initiative aligns with Oman's objectives to achieve 30 percent of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030 and 40 percent by 2040. The inauguration of the solar farm will ensure a sustainable water supply to North and South Al Sharqiyah Governorates through the use of renewable energy."

Veolia, a French-based company, has been actively engaged in Oman for over 15 years, with a substantial presence in various regions of the country. Oman holds strategic importance for Veolia, as the company has developed and delivered a diverse array of innovative, cost-effective, and sustainable solutions in alignment with Oman's objectives for a green and circular economy.

EU expresses concern over arrest of BNP leaders in Bangladesh

7,835 BNP leaders and activists have been arrested across Bangladesh within a span of eight days

DHAKA: Following the ongoing arrests of BNP leaders and activities across Bangladesh, the European Union (EU) has expressed concern over the clashes around the party's rally, held on October 28, reported *Dhaka Tribune*.

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell expressed his concern on X and stated, "Concerned by the arrest of over 8,000 opposition activists in Bangladesh. Justice must be served in all cases."

Moreover, Borrell urged all parties to refrain from violence.

"Vital to find a peaceful way to participatory elections, conducive to democracy, human rights & fundamental freedoms," he said.

Earlier on October 28, police clashed with the party's leaders and activities in Naya Paltan for several hours.

The clash resulted in the deaths of a policeman and a Jubo Dal leader, Dhaka Tribune reported.

Following the incident, law enforcement agencies have carried out a nationwide crackdown and detained BNP members, including top-level leaders.

As of Saturday, around 7,835 BNP leaders and activists were arrested across Bangladesh within a span of eight days.

Among those 7835, seven are senior leaders, including BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, according to Dhaka Tribune. Moreover, approximately 50 key leaders at district and metropolitan levels, including former members of parliament have been detained in connection with the incident.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also the Awami League President, denounced the recent terror activities carried out by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party in the name of an anti-government movement, Dhaka Tribune reported.

She said the BNP has once again proved through "resorting to violence" on October 28 that it is a "terrorist" party.

"BNP does not want an election; they want to create an unusual situation. BNP is a party of terrorists,"

PM Hasina declared during a press conference held at her official residence, Ganabhaban, to discuss the outcomes of her recent visit to Belgium.

Ruling out the possibility of any dialogue with the BNP, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina affirmed that the people of Bangladesh "do not want any dialogue with killers."

"No dialogue with the killers. This is Bangladesh. People of the country also do not want any dialogue with killers," she emphasised during the press conference.

-DW

$250 MILLION IN DAMAGES

Trump to testify in civil fraud trial

NEW YORK: Former US President Donald Trump is expected to take the stand to testify in the civil fraud trial, a case that could well decide the fate of his business empire in New York, CNN reported.

The trial brought by New York Attorney General Letitia James, is seeking $250 million in damages and barring the former president from doing business in the state.

James alleges that Trump and his co-defendants committed repeated fraud in inflating assets on financial statements to get better terms on commercial real estate loans and insurance policies.

While there are no criminal charges involved, the allegations have enraged the former president, who has attended the trial for multiple days and called it a "political witch hunt".

Before the trial began last month, Judge Arthur Engoron already ruled that Trump and his co-defendants, including his adult sons, were liable for "persistent and repeated" fraud. Now the judge is considering how much the Trumps will have to pay in damages for the profits they've allegedly garnered through fraudulent business practices.

The attorney general's office is also looking to prove six other claims: falsifying business records, conspiracy to falsify business records, issuing false financial statements, conspiracy to falsify false financial statements, insurance fraud, and conspiracy to commit insurance fraud, CNN reported.

On the other hand, Trump has relentlessly attacked James for bringing the case against him. He's attacked the judge for being "biased" against him and has also attacked the judge's law clerk for being "biased".

Also, Trump's conduct at the trial has been a flashpoint, as the former President has already been fined twice for violating a gag order barring him from speaking about the judge's staff.

According to CNN, the civil case is important to Trump because it strikes "at the heart of his persona" as a billionaire real estate tycoon. -DW

THAW IN TIES

China, Australia leaders meet, hail progress in relations

BEIJING: Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Monday met with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in Beijing as the two signalled a push toward improving ties between their countries.

The largely symbolic trip comes close to the 50th anniversary of the first trip by an Australian prime minister to the People's Republic of China.

Albanese on Monday stopped by the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, following in the footsteps of the first Australian leader, Gough Whitlam, who visited China five decades ago as ties between the two countries were being established. "Since he visited the Temple of Heaven in Beijing much has changed. But what is constant is that engagement between our two countries remains important," Albanese said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Albanese highlighted Beijing's lifting of some restrictions on Australian products since his first meeting with Xi in Indonesia last year.

"The progress we have made in advancing our relationship over that time has been unquestionably very positive," Albanese said in opening remarks to Xi before the media.

With Beijing being Canberra's biggest trading partner, the focus of Albanese's visit has been on trade discussions. This includes easing barriers that have impacted Australian exports by billions of dollars and seeking consensus on how to settle future trade disputes.

Xi said that both sides had resumed exchanges of views and worked out some problems.

Right path

"The China-Australia relationship has embarked on the right path of improvement and development," Xi said. "I'm heartened to see that."

-DW

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سلطنة عُمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology In Al Khuwair invites for the following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMSSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MT-CIT/229/2023	Consultancy Services For Supervision of The Dualization Of The Rab Al Khali Road (Phase 1) (Al Dhahira Governorate)	02-11-2023	13-11-2023	06-12-2023	Experienced Companies Registered in Consulting Offices, With the Secretariat General of Tender Board (First)	(125/-) One hundred Twenty Five Omani Rial (For Local) (10/-) Ten Omani Rial (FOR SME) Non-Refundable
MT-CIT/233/2023	Media Services For The Ministry Of Transport, Communications And Information Technology	05-11-2023	19-11-2023	06-12-2023	Experienced SME Registered in Services Category, With the Secretariat General of Tender Board (All Grades)	(10/-) Ten Omani Rial (FOR SME) Non-Refundable
MT-CIT/235/2023	Comprehensive security assessment for MTCIT-IT infrastructure	05-11-2023	19-11-2023	12-12-2023	Experienced Companies Registered in Information Technology Services Services, With the Secretariat General of Tender Board (All Grades)	(25/-) Twenty-Five Omani Rial (For Local) (10/-) Ten Omani Rial (FOR SME) Non-Refundable

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted online on given website

CORRESPONDANCE:
1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)
2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200 e-mail : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

@mtcitoman www.mtcit.gov.om

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Announcement of public Auction No. (35 /202)

Muscat Municipality, represented by the auction committee the establishment of a public auction for the sale of variety of different items (scrap, caravan, water tank with stand, light poles) according to the following details:
Interested individuals for this Auction must comply with the conditions set out here under:

- Those wishing to enter the auction must pay a fee of (4 OMR) (four Omani rials) which is not refundable, and a temporary deposit (refundable) is required of (500 OMR) (five hundred Omani rials) as fees to participate in the auction, as it required to be paid electronically to the cashier of the committee in the Directorate of Administrative & Financial Affairs at municipal presidency building Darsait.
- The person who wins the auction obligated to pay the full price of the items if awarded to him plus (5%) value added tax, and the auction fees by (3%) of the total amount through electronic payment.
- Items are sold in their current condition, and Muscat Municipality is not responsible for the loss or damage of it once its value is paid
- The items sold are not returned or reduced in value, and any petition submitted in this regard will not be accepted.
- the buyer is obligated to transfer the items that have been awarded to him after paying their full value within a period not exceeding two weeks from the date of purchase, and he bears full responsibility for the items that were not transported within the specified period, and in the event that they are not transferred within the specified period, the municipality may resell it at his own expenses.
- The date and location set for inspecting the movables and awarding the bid are specified as follows:

Location	AL Amerat Park – Labor camp in ALMahj
The Date/ Time of the inspection	12/11/2023 From 08:00 AM to 12:00- 00PM
The date for the submitting the participation	From 13/11/2023 to 16/11/2023
A site for submission participation fees	Head office in Darsite at the committee cashier at the General Directorate of Administrative & Financial Affairs
Auction date	21/11/2023 at 7:30 am o'clock in the morning (extendable)
For inquires and coordination	Please contact the specialist of the committee member at (98070900)
Other terms	• The VAT specified in the law will be applied to successful bidder. • It is not allowed to enter the auction area until after showing the receipt of the subscription fee and amount of insurance. • Muscat Municipality may cancel or defer the sale without providing any justification. • The security deposit will not be refunded in cases; 1. If he does not pay the value of the movables. 2. If he does not transfer the movables from the site within the specified period. 3. If the buyer did not clean the site after moving the items

SPORTS

BIZARRE DISMISSAL

Mathews is first to be dismissed timed out in international cricket

DELHI: Sri Lanka's veteran all-rounder Angelo Mathews became the first player ever to be timed out in international cricket after he asked for a helmet change after walking onto the pitch, subsequently not being ready to face his first ball within the two minutes the ICC Playing Conditions allow, during the World Cup match against Bangladesh on Monday. The dismissal was the first in international cricket across all formats.

The strap of Mathews' helmet broke just as he was tightening it around his chin, during his final preparations before taking strike against Shakib Al Hasan. By this stage, about a minute and 55 seconds had already passed since the previous batter Sadeera Samarawickrama had been dismissed in the 25th over.

Mathews soon called for a replacement helmet, which was run out to him by Chamika Karunaratne. Shakib Al Hasan then appeared to initiate a discussion with umpire Marais Erasmus, however, after which Mathews was informed he was timed out.

During the innings break reserve umpire Adrian Holdstock told broadcaster Star Sports: "The fielding captain initiated the appeal to Marais Erasmus, who was the standing umpire that he wanted to appeal for timed out."

Mathews was yet to put on the new helmet, and Karunaratne was still standing near the pitch when the news of his dismissal was relayed to him. At this stage, at least three minutes and twenty seconds had elapsed since Samarawickrama's dismissal.

Mathews initially seemed to think the umpire was joking, but quickly wore a worried expression, and began to engage in a long discussion with both Erasmus and square-leg umpire Richard Illingworth.

Erasmus then approached Shakib and had a quick discussion (the second between the two), following which Mathews also spoke briefly to Shakib, the Bangladesh captain offering a consoling tap on Mathews' shoulder. But ultimately the decision to rule him timed out was upheld, prompting more animated and visibly upset gesturing from Mathews at his broken helmet strap.

Mathews was visibly annoyed by the mode of dismissal as he left the field. He kicked the helmet in frustration as he passed out of the playing area and chucked his bat away.

BANGLADESH WIN DESPITE LATE HICCUPS

Shanto and Al Hasan were involved in a 169-run stand to lead Bangladesh to victory

WORLD CUP 2023 GROUP STANDINGS

TEAM	P	W	L	N/R	T	NRR	PTS
India	8	8	0	0	0	+2.456	16
South Africa	8	6	2	0	0	+1.376	12
Australia	7	5	2	0	0	+0.924	10
New Zealand	8	4	4	0	0	+0.398	8
Pakistan	8	4	4	0	0	+0.036	8
Afghanistan	7	4	3	0	0	-0.330	8
Bangladesh	8	2	6	0	0	-1.142	4
Sri Lanka	8	2	6	0	0	-1.160	4
Netherlands	7	2	5	0	0	-1.398	4
England	7	1	6	0	0	-1.504	2

DELHI: Bangladesh won by three wickets against Sri Lanka with Najmul Hossain Shanto and Shakib Al Hasan stitching together a 169-run third-wicket partnership in the run-chase at the Arun Jaitley Stadium on Monday.

A late middle-order collapse did make the game interesting but Towhid Hridoy and Tanzim Hasan Sakib ensured the team reached victory with three wickets in hand in the 42nd over. Chasing 280 for a win, Bangladesh lost openers Tanzid Hasan and Litton Das early in the powerplay to Dilshan Madushanka, who continued his impressive new-ball spells.

But having raced off the blocks early, Bangladesh only needed to consolidate and Al Hasan (82) and Shanto (90) did just that, forging a strong partnership to keep the run rate on par with the required rate.

At one point, both batters seemed to be on course for their individual hundreds, but Angelo Mathews extracted revenge for a first-innings mishap that saw him timed out. The all-rounder sent back Shakib with a cutter that found the leading edge and promptly gave him a send-off.

He went on to find seam movement with the scrambled ball and forced an inside edge off Shanto to clean him up next over. With Bangladesh less than fifty runs away from a win, it didn't seem like a huge blow until Madushanka and Maheesh Theekshana sent back Mushfiqur Rahim and Mahmudullah in quick succession.

With Mehidy Hasan Miraz chipping one to the deep fielder with Bangladesh still 11 runs away, the game got closer than they would have liked. However, they got home with more than enough balls to spare to register their first ever win over Sri Lanka in the men's Cricket World Cup.

In the afternoon, opting to bowl first, Bangladesh found an early breakthrough when Mushfiqur Rahim pulled off a sensational catch behind the wicket to dismiss Kusal Perera in the first over.

Kusal Mendis, who got off to a rather sedate start in uncharacteristic fashion, was dismissed by Shakib in his first over with the batter playing a mistimed stroke straight to mid-on. Tanzim Hasan Sakib compounded their woes next over when Pathum Nissanka was cleaned up by a delivery shaping back in.

Charith Asalanka and Sadeera Samarwickrama put on the resurrection act, but things turned dramatically Bangladesh's way in the 25th over when Samarawickrama was dismissed following which Angelo Mathews was timed out for taking too much time to walk in.

Asalanka carried the side forward amidst the chaos with Dhananjaya de Silva offering good support and the half-century stand lifted Sri Lanka out of trouble.

De Silva fell for 34 in another odd sequence of play. The Sri Lankan was stumped out despite Rahim removing the bails with his gloves first as the Bangladesh wicketkeeper could take his time and recover to remove the stumps a second time with de Silva still not making an attempt to get back.

Asalanka went on to make a fine hundred with Maheesh Theekshana aiding him but the final flourish never arrived as Bangladesh kept chipping away with wickets. They finished on 279, making just 56 runs in the last 57 balls of the innings.

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 279 in 49.3 overs (Pathum Nissanka 41, Charith Asalanka 108, Sadeera Samarawickrama 41, Dhananjaya de Silva 34; Shoriful Islam 2/51, Tanzim Hasan Sakib 3/80, Shakib Al Hasan 2/57) lost to Bangladesh 282/7 (Najmul Hossain Shanto 90, Shakib Al Hasan 82; Dilshan Madushanka 3/69, Maheesh Theekshana 2/44, Angelo Mathews 2/35).

AM Best affirms GIG Gulf's 'A' Excellent rating for the third consecutive year

MUSCAT: For the third consecutive year, GIG Gulf, one of the largest insurance providers in the MENA region, has received the Financial Strength Rating (FSR) of "A" (Excellent) and the Long-Term Issuer Credit Rating (Long-Term ICR) of "a" (Excellent) by AM Best with an outlook assigned to these Credit Ratings (ratings) of "stable".

These ratings underscore the company's 'very strong' balance sheet, history of strong profitability through underwriting discipline, top five positioning within each of its core markets: Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the UAE, and sophisticated risk management capabilities.

The stability of GIG Gulf's operations in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE following its acquisition and rebranding by Gulf Insurance Group K.S.C.P. (GIG) is reinforced by the globally recognized specialist insurance rating agency's evaluation.

Mehdi Salim Said Al Harthy, GIG Gulf's Oman General Manager, commented: "We are deeply committed to upholding the highest standards and a dedication to excellence which we have retained since our rebranding to GIG Gulf. Since 2020, we have delivered important milestones in Oman, including an AM Best 'A Excellent' rating for three consecutive years. This independent recognition confirms our financial strength and sustainability of our business to deliver in the future for our customers. GIG Gulf stands as one of the top three A-rated companies in Oman, underpinned by a consistent track record of strong performance year after year. With our ongoing investments, we are dedicated to meeting the consumers' future needs with the highest quality of service."

Paul Adamson, CEO of GIG Gulf, commented: "The Oman insurance market holds strategic importance as one of the largest in the GCC and a key focus for GIG. Oman possesses considerable untapped potential for enhancing its insurance penetration positively contributing to economic growth.

"With upcoming regulatory developments across the region, we see exciting opportunities in the insurance sector enhancing the availability of insurance services for consumers. GIG Gulf is fully committed to fostering sustainable growth in our insurance activities and is well placed to serve customers as the largest regional insurer."

While the updated ratings from AM Best are reflective of GIG Gulf's 2022 performance, an important highlight this year will be Fairfax's intended acquisition of KIPCO's entire shareholding in GIG Gulf's parent company, Gulf Insurance Group K.S.C.P. ("GIG Group Kuwait"). This transition promises to bolster GIG Gulf's strategic stance in the global insurance industry without changes to its strategy, service delivery, or operations.

This intended increase in investment by Fairfax signifies a vote of confidence in the growth trajectory of the Gulf region.

With Fairfax's global footprint spanning 40 markets and its expertise in property & casualty insurance, reinsurance, and investment management, GIG Gulf is poised for even greater accomplishments and milestones in the coming years.

Supported by its talented teams and the bright prospects that lie ahead, GIG Gulf remains committed to improve the lives of people and their communities by protecting them in the moments that matter.

MEHDI SAID AL HARTHY, GIG Gulf's General Manager & Head of Partnerships in Oman

GIG Gulf's financial strength and market position remains robust with a positive outlook, as the firm also looks forward to the anticipated transition with global insurer Fairfax

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by January 2024 reaching $86.78, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by $1.44 from the price of Friday, which was $88.22. - ONA

MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,560.94 points, up by 0.82 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.52 per cent at 440.84 points. Al Anwar Ceramics, up 7.32 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Madina Investments, down 7.90 per cent, was the top loser.

APT enhances stake in Ruvuma Asset with acquisition from Scirocco Energy

With this acquisition, APT's stake in the Ruvuma Asset has increased to 75%, making it a significant player in the region's energy sector. The remaining 25% interest in the Ruvuma Asset is held by Aminex

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ARA Petroleum Tanzania Limited (APT), an integral part of ARA Petroleum in Oman, announced the successful completion of the acquisition of an additional 25 per cent interest in the Ruvuma Asset from Scirocco Energy Plc (SCIR).

With this acquisition, APT's stake in the Ruvuma Asset has increased to 75 per cent, making it a significant player in the region's energy sector. The remaining 25 per cent interest in the Ruvuma Asset is held by Aminex Plc.

The Ruvuma Asset, located in southern Tanzania, has been a focal point of exploration and development activities. A significant milestone was achieved in 2011 when a gas discovery was announced at the Ntorya location following the drilling of the Ntorya-1 well. This success was further substantiated in 2017 with the drilling of the Ntorya-2 well, which encountered a substantial hydrocarbon-bearing structure.

Commenting on the completion of the acquisition, Sultan Al Ghaithi, CEO of ARA Petroleum stated, "This further investment in the Ruvuma Asset reaffirms ARA's confidence in the project. ARA is now well-positioned to take decisive steps towards developing the asset and ensuring that the natural gas produced from the Ntorya Field is introduced to the market as quickly as possible. We remain dedicated to contributing to Tanzania's energy sector, fostering economic growth, and ensuring the sustainable development of the region's natural resources. Additionally, I would like to thank the Government of Tanzania for the support they have continually extended to expedite this project."

Since 2020, APT has been actively involved in the Ruvuma Asset, having acquired a 50 per cent interest and assuming the role of the operator for the asset. Operations and investments gained momentum, leading to the commissioning of a large-scale 3D seismic survey covering an area of approximately 335 square kilometres. In a significant move towards the asset's development, APT has meticulously prepared and submitted a comprehensive Field Development Plan to the Tanzanian government in July 2023.

Looking ahead, APT is poised for further exploration and development activities in the Ruvuma Asset. Plans are underway to drill another exploration well in 2024, followed by the strategic execution of the approved development plan. These initiatives reflect APT's commitment to the responsible exploration and utilisation of Tanzania's natural resources.

OMR11.68 MILLION

Bank Nizwa records robust profit growth in third quarter of 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Reaffirming its unwavering dedication to Islamic banking excellence, Bank Nizwa has demonstrated impressive resilience throughout the third quarter, ending on September 30, with a net profit of OMR11.68 million. Rooted in a culture of innovation and customer-centric Sharia principles, the bank achieved a 9 per cent increase in net profits.

This noteworthy performance cements Bank Nizwa's position as the leading institution in the Islamic finance sector as the bank recorded a 6 per cent growth in revenues, reaching OMR40.627 million by the end of the third quarter, compared to OMR38.216 million at the end of the same period in 2022.

Owing to its efforts to enhance operational efficiency, the bank managed to achieve a 3 per cent growth in shareholders' equity, reflecting a strong capital base, and a 6 per cent growth in operating revenues compared to the same period last year.

These figures were reinforced by the excellent performance of both corporate and retail banking services, in addition to expenditure optimisation. The bank's total assets also grew by 6 per cent to reach OMR1,569 million compared to OMR1,487 million in the same period in September 2022. Furthermore, the financing portfolio grew by 9 per cent to reach OMR1,321 million.

Commenting on the bank's financial performance, Sheikh Khaled bin Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of Bank Nizwa's Board of Directors, said, "The financial performance of the bank for the third quarter reflects its ability to adapt to changes in the local market, keep up with new developments, and continue to support government efforts to empower various sectors and individuals. The increase in revenues for this quarter reflects the bank's commitment to supporting economic and social growth in the Sultanate of Oman."

He further added, "Bank Nizwa has a resilient balance sheet, and the strength to adapt and remains focused on delivering value for customers, employees, communities, and shareholders. We are committed to spearheading Islamic finance's growth and solidifying our leadership in the sector, leading the market share towards new heights. We are fully confident that the bank is on the right track to capture future opportunities, support sustainable growth, and maximise shareholder value."

The Islamic finance sector in the Sultanate of Oman has experienced remarkable growth, and the bank is dedicated to strengthening its position as the most trusted Islamic bank in the nation. Without a doubt, the bank's robust and enduring financial performance over the long term will empower its capacity to attain even greater levels of success, further augmenting the milestones it has achieved during its journey, which have played a pivotal role in creating a multitude of growth prospects.

> "The increase in revenues for this quarter reflects the bank's commitment to supporting economic and social growth in the Sultanate of Oman
>
> **Sheikh Khaled Al Khalili**
> Chairman of Bank Nizwa's Board of Directors

NCSI DATA

Oman's hotel revenues rise by 26%

MUSCAT: The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman exceeded OMR153 million as of the end of September 2023, up by 26.4 per cent over the corresponding period in 2022, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total number of hotel guests rose by 27.3 per cent to 1.43 million by the end of September 2023, compared to 1.13 million during the corresponding period in 2022. Meanwhile, the hotel occupancy rate registered a growth of 10.1 per cent.

According to the NCSI report, among the nationalities, as many as 567,447 of the hotel guests were Omanis, 156,703 were GCC citizens (up by 27.6 per cent), 295,155 were European citizens (an increase of 43.4 per cent), 41,079 were Americans (up by 1.8 per cent), 8,361 were citizens from African countries (up by 41.2 per cent), while the number of guests from Asian countries increased by 43.6 per cent to 213,980.

The number of guests from Oceania countries surged by 204.5 per cent to 30,898. - ONA

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR25.7 million

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR25.7 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Monday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR8.2 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.602 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.600 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.19362 per cent and 5.21441 per cent, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR17.5 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.669 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR98.665 per OMR100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.33805 per cent and 5.41005 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 6.00 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.50 per cent.

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

GROWTH FORECAST

India's growth outlook soars: Fitch raises medium-term potential to 6.2%

NEW DELHI: In an upward revision, Fitch Ratings has increased India's medium-term potential growth forecast from 5.5 per cent to a robust 6.2 per cent.

This positive development reflects the country's growing economic resilience and potential for expansion. This upgrade places India in the spotlight for its strong growth trajectory.

Additionally, Mexico received a substantial boost in its growth estimate, with Fitch revising it from 1.4 per cent to 2.0 per cent.

These positive changes were underpinned by a more favourable outlook for the capital-to-labour ratio. The adjustments didn't stop there. Fitch also revised growth forecasts for other countries. Poland's potential growth estimate was increased to 3.0 per cent from 2.6 per cent, Turkey's to 4.1 per cent from 3.9 per cent, Brazil's to 1.7 per cent from 1.5 per cent, and Indonesia's to 4.9 per cent from 4.7 per cent.

However, it wasn't all good news. Fitch Ratings simultaneously lowered the growth estimate for China from 5.3 per cent to 4.6 per cent, reflecting a significant reduction in China's supply-side growth potential. -ANI

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Al Anwar Ceramics, up 7.32 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Madina Investments, down 7.90 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,560.94 points, up by 0.82 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.52 per cent at 440.84 points. Al Anwar Ceramics, up 7.32 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Madina Investments, down 7.90 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of OQGN were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 1336 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR4.56 million, with more than 14.85 million shares changing hands. Out of 46 traded securities, 12 advanced, 14 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net buyers for OMR370,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR330,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR40,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,402.00 points, up 0.69 per cent. Prices of Bank Dhofar, Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Anwar Investment, Ominvest were up by 6.25 per cent, 3.85 per cent, 1.39 per cent, 0.25 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Global Financial Investments were down by 7.90 per cent, 1.79 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,387.72 points, up 0.35 per cent. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics, Muscat Thread Mill, Oman Chromite, A'Saffa Foods, Voltamp Energy were up by 7.32 per cent, 3.77 per cent, 3.73 per cent, 3.33 per cent, 0.86 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Refreshment, Construction Materials, Oman Fisheries, Raysut Cement were down by 6.25 per cent, 2.17 per cent, 1.92 per cent, 0.79 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.16 per cent before closing at 1,557.14 points. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Ooredoo were up by 4.55 per cent, 2.94 per cent respectively. Prices of Renaissance Services, Oman Oil Marketing, Sembcorp Salalah, Al Maha Marketing, Abraj Energy were down by 2.27 per cent, 1.12 per cent, 1.06 per cent, 0.50 per cent, 0.34 per cent respectively.— **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,560.939	4,513.244	4,560.939	4,523.972	36.967	0.82
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,402.902	7,351.116	7,402.002	7,351.116	50.886	0.69
Industry Index	5,422.520	5,366.274	5,387.718	5,368.813	18.905	0.35
Services Index	1,560.137	1,550.929	1,557.144	1,559.693	-2.549	-0.16
MSX Shariah Index	440.838	438.551	440.838	438.551	2.287	0.52
MSX TR INDEX	6,011.865	5,948.998	6,011.865	5,963.138	48.727	0.82
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,077.925	8,021.417	8,076.943	8,021.417	55.526	0.69
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	5,792.600	5,732.516	5,755.423	5,735.228	20.195	0.35
SERVICES TR IDX	1,735.639	1,725.395	1,732.309	1,735.145	-2.836	-0.16

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
14,854,698	4,560,363	1,336	23,661,480,658	12	14	20	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6

REGULAR MARKET

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	SECIRITY SYMBOL	MARKET CAP
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	9,000	955	3	0.106	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.103	0.107	0.100	ONES	16,050,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	248,210	73,718	11	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.000	0.000	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.100	NBOB	482,906,067
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	1,000	401	1	0.401	0.401	0.401	0.401	0.400	0.001	0.250	0.401	0.401	0.404	0.100	OMVS	268,014,536
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	346	19	1	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.052	0.002	3.846	0.054	0.054	0.056	0.100	OEIO	6,581,250
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	1,000	176	1	0.176	0.176	0.176	0.176	0.164	0.012	7.317	0.176	0.170	0.176	0.100	AACT	38,720,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	8,000	1,360	2	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.160	0.010	6.250	0.170	0.150	0.170	0.100	BKDB	509,379,744
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	4,802,249	1,220,335	146	0.255	0.255	0.253	0.254	0.254	0.000	0.000	0.254	0.254	0.254	0.100	BKMB	1,906,624,854
OM0000003000	Al MAHA PETROLEUM PRODUCTS MARKETING	4,225	4,204	3	1.000	1.000	0.995	0.995	1.000	-0.005	-0.500	0.995	0.995	1.050	0.100	MHAS	68,655,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,549,362	1,579,963	50	0.999	1.020	0.999	1.020	1.020	0.000	0.000	1.020	1.020	1.020	0.100	OTEL	765,000,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	1,690	93	1	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.056	-0.001	-1.786	0.055	0.055	0.056	0.100	GFIC	11,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	300,656	117,061	9	0.396	0.396	0.388	0.388	0.397	-0.009	-2.267	0.388	0.388	0.425	0.100	RNSS	91,727,080
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	3,357	339	3	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.101	0.102	0.100	BKSB	552,256,739
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	158,100	55,188	22	0.341	0.350	0.340	0.350	0.340	0.010	2.941	0.350	0.331	0.350	0.100	ORDS	227,830,481
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	15,000	990	2	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.066	0.070	0.100	SMNP	13,175,950
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	21,409	1,820	4	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.092	0.100	AMAT	14,875,000
Total	15	7,123,604	3,056,622	259													

Parallel Market

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RO)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	SECIRITY SYMBOL	MARKET CAP
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	500	2,500	1	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	4.820	0.180	3.734	5.000	0.000	5.000	1.000	OCCI	15,000,000
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	24,900	1,295	2	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.000	0.000	0.052	0.052	0.055	0.100	DFIN	10,279,200
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	735	33	1	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.045	0.046	-0.001	-2.174	0.045	0.000	0.050	0.100	CMII	2,812,500
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	4,900	613	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.126	-0.001	-0.794	0.125	0.125	0.130	0.100	RCCI	25,000,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	155	233	1	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.500	1.600	-0.100	-6.250	1.500	1.500	1.600	0.100	ORCI	75,000,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	4,700	343	1	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.001	1.389	0.073	0.072	0.073	0.100	AAIC	15,038,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	5,886	206	2	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.038	-0.003	-7.895	0.035	0.035	0.038	0.100	AMII	2,975,000
OM0000002036	MUSCAT THREAD MILLS	24,492	1,332	4	0.053	0.055	0.053	0.055	0.053	0.002	3.774	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.100	MTMI	883,996
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	2,458	403	2	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.000	0.000	0.164	0.164	0.167	0.100	ABOB	385,343,824
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	300	255	1	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.850	0.000	0.000	0.850	0.850	0.000	0.100	SOMS	80,750,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	655	578	4	0.890	0.890	0.880	0.880	0.890	-0.010	-1.124	0.880	0.850	0.880	0.100	OOMS	53,922,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	42,000	12,569	3	0.299	0.310	0.299	0.310	0.300	0.010	3.333	0.310	0.296	0.310	0.100	SPFI	37,200,000
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	5,000	180	1	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.037	-0.001	-2.703	0.036	0.036	0.038	0.100	BWPC	5,760,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	984	114	2	0.115	0.117	0.115	0.117	0.116	0.001	0.862	0.117	0.116	0.115	0.100	VOES	9,524,122
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	608,173	58,651	22	0.096	0.097	0.096	0.097	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.100	BKNZ	216,984,444
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	5,000	610	1	0.122	0.122	0.122	0.132	0.132	0.000	0.000	0.122	0.000	0.122	0.100	SHRQ	12,909,885
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	28,000	2,570	3	0.092	0.093	0.090	0.093	0.094	-0.001	-1.064	0.093	0.089	0.093	0.100	SSPW	88,775,191
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	3,250	153	1	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.047	0.049	0.100	TAOI	11,750,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	8,300	191	2	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.000	0.000	0.023	0.000	0.023	0.100	BATP	15,522,411
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	300	7	1	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.001	4.545	0.023	0.022	0.023	0.100	SUWP	16,431,346
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	461	25	1	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.053	0.055	0.100	PHPC	80,443,080
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	130	13	1	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.099	-0.001	-1.010	0.098	0.000	0.098	0.100	AMAN	19,600,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	690	85	1	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.123	0.000	0.000	0.123	0.120	0.123	0.100	PRFD	62,496,736
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	31,997	9,482	23	0.296	0.297	0.296	0.296	0.297	-0.001	-0.337	0.296	0.296	0.296	0.100	ABRJ	227,979,200
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	6,281,247	936,375	967	0.149	0.150	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.000	0.000	0.149	0.149	0.149	0.100	OQGN	645,262,964
Total	25	7,085,213	1,028,814	1,049													

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Omantel hosts annual Global Carrier Community Meeting

MUSCAT: Represented by the Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel), the Sultanate of Oman is hosting the annual Global Carrier Community Meeting (GCCM Middle East 2023).

The two-day event is organised by the Carrier Community, headquartered in Berlin, Germany.

GCCM Middle East 2023 is attended by more than 600 telecommunications professionals, representing decision-makers of more than 300 telecom operators, content providers and suppliers from more than 50 countries.

The event offers an opportunity for members of the wholesale telecom operators community to hold business meetings. The community represents companies providing international services for phone calls, data, SMS and services via submarine cables, satellites and data centres, among other sectors.

The event includes panel discussions and furnishes a platform for the participants to meet their counterparts, build relationships, exchange experiences, strike deals and other related business activities. -ONA

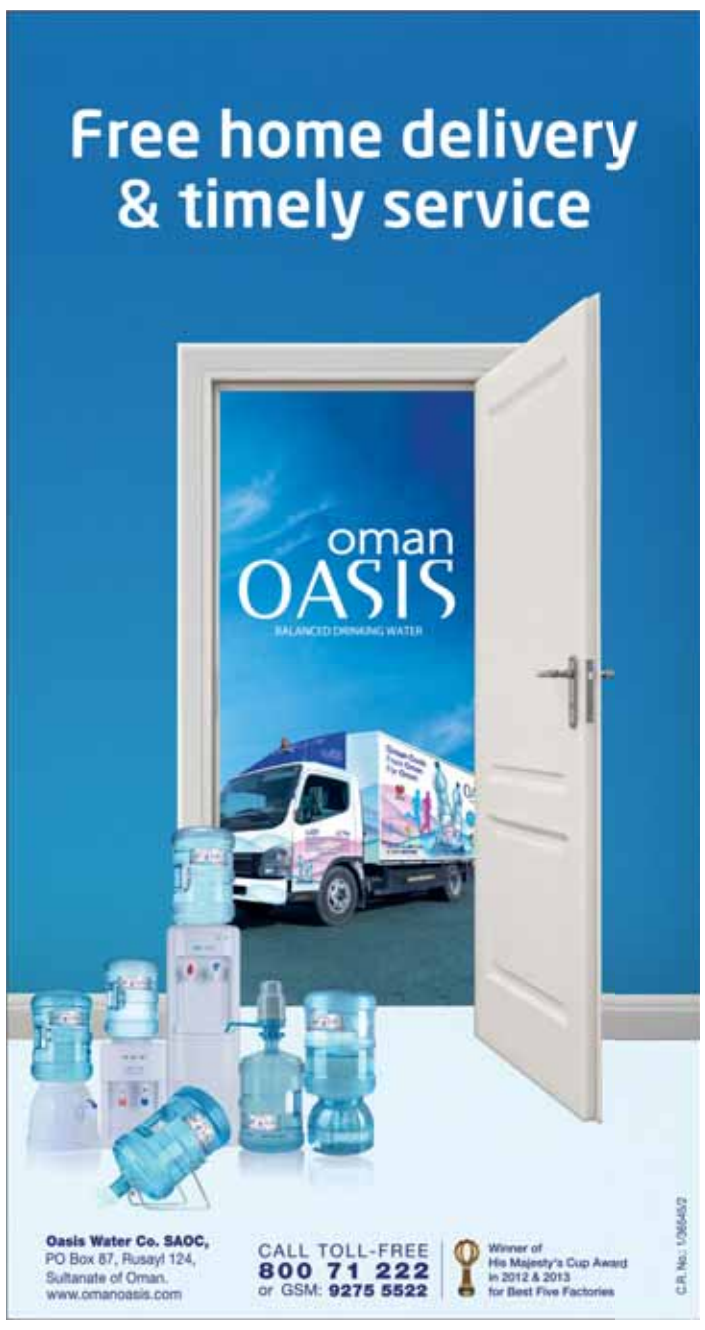
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Musk to integrate xAI startup with social media platform X

NEW YORK: Tech billionaire Elon Musk's artificial intelligence startup xAI will be integrated into his social media platform X, previously known as Twitter, Musk said on Sunday.

The move comes some six months after Musk was one of the signatories of a call to suspend the development of artificial intelligence for six months. However, his own AI company xAI was founded around the same time. Meanwhile, xAI released its first AI model, a bot named Grok, after making it available to all X Premium+ subscribers on Friday.

"A unique and fundamental advantage of Grok is that it has real-time knowledge of the world via the X platform. It will also answer spicy questions that are rejected by most other AI systems," the xAI team announced on X. -DW



FACILITATE CUSTOMS PROCEDURES

Opaz reviews consultancy results for cargo tracking system project to enhance smooth flow of goods

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has reviewed a consultancy study that aims to improve the tracking of goods and shipments, as well as customs clearance procedures in the special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities in Oman.

The study aims to put into practice advanced digital solutions that will enhance the smooth management of goods movement and customs clearance in these areas. These solutions will be in line with international best practices and procedures and will comply with globally recognised process manuals.

The review workshop was attended by Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Deeb, Opaz Deputy Chairman, as well as representatives from the Directorate General of Customs, Royal Oman Police, and the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology. Additionally, officials from the zones supervised by the Authority were present at the workshop.

The workshop focused on reviewing the current procedures for the movement of goods and shipments. The proposed modern procedures for managing shipping and customs procedures in the zones supervised by the authority were also discussed. The evaluation of these procedures identified the accompanying challenges, and solutions were devised to improve the efficiency of goods transportation between customs ports and zones supervised by the authority. These solutions aim to reduce the financial and administrative burdens associated with traditional means, control the customs movement of goods between different regions in the Sultanate, and create a strong database that enables competent authorities to know the volume of trade exchange.

Opaz conducted a consultancy study in collaboration with Crimson Logic to document the existing procedures for managing and shipping goods. The objective of the study was to streamline the movement of goods while maintaining proper control. Additionally, it aimed to integrate with national digital platforms to maximize their utilization. The study involved conducting visits to various regions, holding coordination meetings with relevant authorities including the General Administration of Customs at the Royal Oman Police, and reviewing customs procedures and regulations. The Authority will now finalise the requirements with the relevant authorities to implement the project.

Opaz is currently prioritising its digital transformation initiative and efforts to enhance the investment climate. The ultimate goal is to establish the zones under its management as the primary destinations for investment. To achieve this, Opaz is working on organising and developing the areas under its supervision while simultaneously establishing an attractive and sustainable investment environment.

LIFESTYLE

WANT TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS? WRITE THEM DOWN

If you have a big idea, goal or dream about helping others, writing down your vision can help. Studies show you're 42% more likely to achieve your goals if you write them down.

Take it from Marcy Bursac. After reviewing thousands of handwritten entries, Pilot Pen selected her as the newest winner of the G2 Overachievers Grant, which rewards an exceptional individual who goes beyond their everyday job and responsibilities to make a difference in the lives of others.

A technical analyst at a cybersecurity firm by day, Bursac is also an author, podcaster, wife and mother. She has used her technological expertise to develop an app for "The Forgotten Adoption Option," her book and platform that helps facilitate adoptions for children in foster care. As an adoptive parent herself, she made it her mission to make it easier for other families to adopt children from foster care, helping to place as many as possible in loving homes.

"Some types of adoption are cost-prohibitive for many families and can take years," says Bursac. "The reality is that there are thousands of children who need a forever family today, and foster care adoption is an option that can make this dream more financially affordable for more families."

Marcy has already helped more than 12,000 families through the foster care adoption process. She plans to use the grant money to fund her continued efforts to unite children in foster care with their forever families.

Inspired? Write down your own goals and aspirations and include all the little details required to bring them to life. Be sure to reach for a high-quality writing instrument like G2, the longest lasting gel ink pen. To learn more about the G2 Overachievers Grant competition or to enter or nominate someone you know, visit G2Overachievers.com.

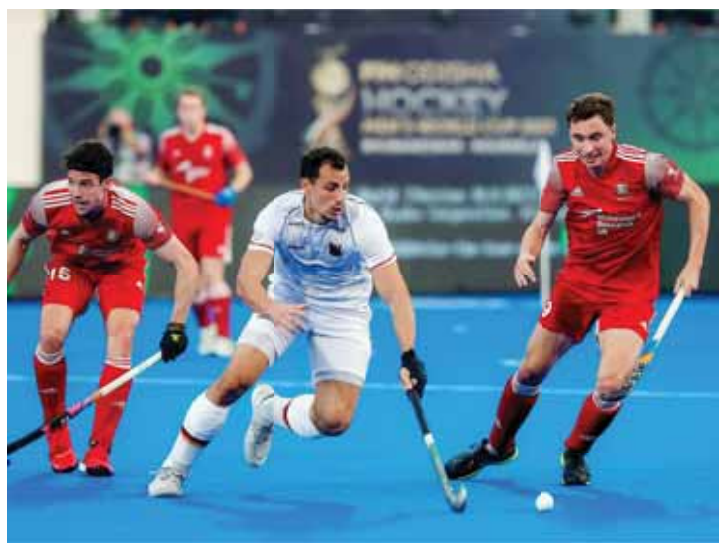
"We know firsthand that we are so much more likely to achieve our goals when we put pen to paper," says Ariann Langsam, vice president of marketing for Pilot Pen. "That's why we pride ourselves on both providing the tools that people can use to make a difference in the lives of others, and recognizing and amplifying the work of individuals who are making those efforts."

— StatePoint

SPORTS

Hockey powerhouses set to clash in Muscat for Paris 2024 spots

World champions Germany, along with Pakistan, Great Britain and NZ are among the eight teams who will fight for three spots at the Olympic Qualifiers in Oman from January 15-21, 2024



MUSCAT: Hockey enthusiasts in the Sultanate of Oman are in for a spectacular treat as world champions Germany, along with former multiple Olympic Games winners, gear up for the highly anticipated FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers in Muscat from January 15-21, 2024.

The qualifiers will see eight formidable teams vie for three coveted spots at the Paris Olympic Games 2024.

The powerhouses in contention include Germany, Pakistan, New Zealand, and Great Britain, who will face off against Malaysia, Canada, China, and Chile at the state-of-the-art Hockey Arena in Al Amerat.

The FIH announced the pools for the two men's hockey qualifiers, to be held in Muscat and Valencia, Spain. The two women's qualifiers will be held in Ranchi, India, and Valencia.

With only three spots available at each qualifier, the competition promises to be fierce, and the last opportunity for teams to secure their berth in the Paris Games.

Among these formidable teams, Germany, Pakistan, Great Britain, and New Zealand collectively hold an impressive ten Olympic gold medals and six World Cup titles.

Such a star-studded lineup has never graced Oman before, making the FIH Olympic Qualifiers in Muscat a must-watch event.

World champions Germany, who have participated in the Olympics 20 times, last clinched an Olympic title in 2012, with previous gold medals earned in 2008, 1992, and 1972. They also have three World Cup titles to their credit (2002, 2006, and 2023).

Pakistan, an Asian heavyweight, boasts a storied Olympic history with three gold medals in 1960, 1968, and 1984. They have also claimed the World Cup title four times and secured eight Asian Games titles, making 17 Olympic Games appearances to date.

With a significant Pakistani expatriate population in Oman, the team is likely to enjoy strong support as they aim to secure their Olympic berth.

Great Britain, a two-time Olympic champion, has competed in the Games on 18 occasions, with titles in 1920 and 1988. New Zealand, the sole Olympic gold medalists in 1976, have made 12 Olympic Games appearances.

In addition to these formidable teams, Malaysia has qualified for the Games nine times, Canada eight times, China once, and Chile will be attempting to secure their first-ever spot at the Olympics.

Five continental champions confirmed

Meanwhile, the road to the Paris 2024 Games has seen five men's and women's teams earn direct qualification as continental champions, in addition to host nation France. Another 16 teams for each gender have earned their place in the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers 2024.

The teams that finish in the top-three of each of the four qualifiers will secure their spots at the Olympic Games Paris 2024.

Recent African Hockey Road to Paris 2024 Games ended with South Africa's men and women claiming gold medals and booking their places in the Olympics on Sunday.

A total of 12 teams in both men's and women's categories will compete in hockey discipline at the Olympic Games.

Hosts France have gained direct qualification. Australia (men and women) were winners of the Oceania Cup, which sealed their qualification, while Netherlands (men and women) qualified as the European champions.

India (men) and China (women) clinched their spots at the Olympics through their gold medal victories at the Asian Games. Argentina (men and women) sealed their spots at the Olympics as winners of the Pan American Games.

A total of16 men's and women's teams have simultaneously secured their place at the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers 2024.

The 16 teams per gender have been divided into two groups, with eight teams traveling to each location: Muscat and Valencia (men), and Ranchi and Valencia (women).

Besides the eight teams that will fight out for three spots in Muscat, the other eight men's teams that will compete in Valencia, Spain are Belgium, Spain, Korea, Ireland, Japan, Austria, Egypt and Ukraine.

The eight women's teams that will compete in Ranchi, India are Germany, India, New Zealand, Japan, Chile, United States, Italy and Czech Republic

And the eight women's teams that will compete in Valencia are: Belgium, Great Britain, Spain, Korea, Ireland, Canada, Malaysia and Ukraine. With six more spots available, the road to the Paris Olympics is certain to be an exciting journey for hockey fans worldwide.

PARIS MASTERS

Djokovic downs Dimitrov to lift 40th Masters title

PARIS: Novak Djokovic won a record-extending seventh Paris Masters trophy and a 40th Masters title in total on Sunday.

The world No.1 beat unseeded Grigor Dimitrov 6-4 6-3 in straightforward fashion.

It is the 36-year-old's sixth title of 2023, which includes three Grand Slam crowns and the Masters trophy in Cincinnati.

"It's incredible to be able to win it after quite challenging circumstances this week," said Djokovic.

"I basically came back from the brink of losing three matches in a row so I'm very proud of this one considering what I've been through this week."

Djokovic has been dominant on hard courts this season, winning 33 matches and only losing once.

Playing in his 58th Masters final, the Serb was hardly challenged by Bulgarian Dimitrov, ranked 17th in the world, who was playing in only his second Masters final.

The 24-time Grand Slam champion only needed one break to take the first set with Dimitrov, 32, hitting a lame backhand into the net at close range to hand Djokovic the advantage. Djokovic has won his last 10 matches against Dimitrov, boasting an overall 12-1 record

Former world No.3 Dimitrov could not reproduce the strong form he had shown during the week, hitting 19 unforced errors in the first set compared with 10 from Djokovic. The second set continued in the same fashion as Djokovic serenely made his way to victory with a double break.

Next up for Djokovic will be the season-ending ATP Tour Finals in Turin, where he will be heavy favourite to lift a record-breaking seventh title. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Diaz ends emotional week with late Liverpool equaliser against Luton

LONDON: Luis Diaz came off the bench to salvage a point in the Premier League game for Liverpool with a stoppage-time goal as they drew 1-1 at Luton on Sunday in his first match since his parents were kidnapped in Colombia.

Diaz's father remains missing, and the forward lifted his shirt to show a message of "freedom for papa" after heading in Harvey Elliott's cross five minutes into added time.

He later issued a statement calling for those holding his father to release him "immediately".

"Every second, every minute our anxiety grows," Díaz, 26, said in a statement released shortly after the match in England's Premier League.

"My mother, my brothers and I are desperate, anxious and have no words to describe what we are feeling. This suffering will only end when we have him home with us.

"I beg that they free him immediately, respecting his integrity and ending this painful wait. In the name of love and compassion we ask they reconsider their actions and allow us to have him back."

The 26-year-old former Porto player had last featured in a Liverpool squad 10 days ago, but manager Jurgen Klopp said before this match that Diaz "wanted to be part of the team".

His goal was a poignant and remarkable conclusion to a contest in which Luton had appeared on course for a deserved first league win of the season at Kenilworth Road and a first victory over the Reds since 1991.

Substitute Tahith Chong sparked wild celebrations among the home fans, who were eyeing a famous result after he steered in Issa Kabore's cross at the climax of a superb counter-attack with 10 minutes of the regulation 90 remaining.

Until Diaz denied Luton the win, Rob Edwards' well organised and athletic side frustrated Liverpool, for whom Darwin Nunez had a day to forget in front of goal.

The result leaves Klopp's side third in the table, three points behind leaders Manchester City, while Luton have climbed out of the bottom three to 17th due to their superior goal difference over Bournemouth.

Also on Sunday, Nottingham Forest gained their first win in seven matches with a 2-0 victory over in-form Aston Villa at the City Ground. Ola Aina gave Forest a fifth-minute lead with his first goal for the club, powerfully side-footing into the net from 25 yards after Anthony Elanga's burst down the left was followed by Harry Toffolo's pass.

Villa would have gone third in the Premier League with the three points, but instead they lost in the league for the first time since 3 September when they were beaten 3-0 by Liverpool at Anfield.

Forest doubled their lead just after the restart when Orel Mangala's powerful 25-yard strike embarrassed Villa's World Cup-winning goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez. The victory takes Forest up from 16th to 12th in the table, while Villa stay fifth. - Agencies

SPANISH LA LIGA

Real Madrid miss chance to go top after draw

MADRID: Real Madrid missed an opportunity to return to the top of La Liga as they were held to a goalless draw by Rayo Vallecano at the Bernabeu on Sunday.

The result leaves Real second in the table, two points behind leaders Girona who won 4-2 at Osasuna on Saturday. Federico Valverde, Joselu, Jude Bellingham and Vinicius Jr all had chances to score for the hosts. However, the visitors held firm for their first away point in this fixture since 2000.

Francisco's Vallecano team are now unbeaten in their last nine matches in all competitions.

They frustrated their more esteemed Madrid neighbours but rarely looked capable of scoring, failing to register a shot on target.

In contrast, it was a frustrating evening for Carlo Ancelotti's home side, who were unable to convert any of their 22 attempts at goal and had a first-half injury scare when Bellingham required treatment for a shoulder problem. The two-goal hero of the recent Clasico was able to continue but could not deliver a show-stopping moment this time.

After the tests were carried out on Bellingham on Monday a dislocation of the shoulder was confirmed. It's not serious but it's painful, said a club statement.

Manager Ancelotti later confirmed that Bellingham is in doubt for Real's Champions League clash against Braga due to a shoulder injury. The doctors, the coaching staff and the player will decide on Tuesday if Bellingham will play against Braga. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

New batch of entrepreneurs in Duqm graduate from Al Wathba Academy

The participants successfully completed a training programme that covered lectures, workshops, discussions and practical training on a number of specialised fields in the business sector such as management, finance, marketing, and others

MUSCAT: In order to promote the concept of entrepreneurship among community members and implement plans to develop the skills of entrepreneurs small and medium-sized enterprises, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, celebrated the graduation of 46 entrepreneurs in Duqm, Al Wusta Governorate within Al Wathba Academy programme, in collaboration with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority.

The participants successfully completed a training programme that covered lectures, workshops, discussions and practical training on a number of specialised fields in the business sector such as management, finance, marketing, and others.

This ceremony marks the continuation of the successful Al Wathba Academy programme over the past years and confirms Bank Muscat's commitment to provide training programmes that contribute to the development of entrepreneurs' skills in various governorates of Oman.

Earlier this year, the bank signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority to launch this programme for entrepreneurs in Al Wusta, in cooperation with Radiant Sail. Trainees received an internationally recognised certificate from the knowledge works institution. Bank Muscat will continue implementing plans for the development of small and medium enterprises.

On this occasion, Ibrahim bin Khamis Al Balushi, Senior Assistant General Manager, SMEs, Bank Muscat, extended congratulations to all the graduates for their commitment during the training period. He said, "We are proud to see such a big number of participants in a single batch which shows how keen are the people here to benefit from training programmes. Al Wathba programme come within the bank's efforts to reinforce its pioneering position as a socially responsible bank in the field of entrepreneurship. Bank Muscat will continue to implement such programmes taking in new batches of entrepreneurs with a focus on choosing courses that keep pace with the latest developments required by the business sector."

Bank Muscat is proud of its track record of success and support for young Omani entrepreneurs who benefited from al Wathba program and are now efficiently running their own projects. Over the past years a number of 237 Omani entrepreneurs have successfully completed the program from different governorates of the Sultanate. It is also a matter of pride that Bank Muscat has contributed significantly to the development of SMEs in Oman, which have greatly succeeded in providing more jobs for Omani youth.

PROMOTING ITALIAN GASTRONOMIC CULTURE

Italian Embassy to host 8th edition of 'The Italian Cuisine Week in the World'

MUSCAT: Starting from November 8 to 14, the 8th edition of the Italian Cuisine Week in the World is back under the theme "At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste".

The initiative, which is endorsed each year by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, aims at promoting the Italian gastronomic culture emphasising the regional specialities, the importance of a healthy lifestyle and attention to the environmental dimension of food consumption.

During the week, many initiatives will provide the opportunity to the public to taste the best of the Italian culinary tradition. Michelin-starred chef Paolo Gramaglia, the founder of "President" restaurant in Pompeii in Italy, will be in Muscat and will participate in a special evening at the Italian Residence indulging the guests with delicious Italian recipes and live cooking.

Master Class

As the Embassy of Italy in Muscat also focuses on education, a Master Class will be presented by Chef Gramaglia at Oman Tourism College, highlighting the importance of having a healthy lifestyle through rich ingredients found in the Mediterranean Diet.

The Embassy of Italy in Muscat also aims at promoting exchanges with young Omani chefs.

The Embassy of Italy in Muscat invites everyone to experience the Italian taste around the city:

Brezza - Jumeirah Muscat Bay: Brezza at Jumeirah Muscat Bay presents 'A Taste of Italy - a Journey from North to South.' From the rich, olive oil-infused dishes of the North to the sun-drenched, seafood-laden specialties of the South, the menu captures the vitality and authenticity of each region's culinary heritage, embracing the harmony between taste and well-being.

Come prima - Crowne Plaza Muscat Hotel: Taste the essence of Italy through an exquisitely curated White Truffle Menu at Come Prima Restaurant.

Fresco – Al Mouj Muscat: Join Fresco Al Mouj for the Italian Cuisine Week and savor Michelin Star Chef Paolo Gramaglia's dishes that capture the essence of Italy's culinary excellence from November 8 to 14.

Tomato - Intercontinental Muscat: Special Italian menu prepared with care of your well-being at Tomato at InterContinental Muscat from November 8 to 15.

Tuscany - Grand Hyatt Muscat: Revel in the simplicity of fresh products with the art of fine cooking put together for you in Muscat's timeless Italian restaurant, Tuscany at Grand Hyatt Muscat. Experience the Italian Taste from November 8 to 14.

BRILLIANCE UNVEILED

Annual school exhibition Chrysalis showcases talent and creativity at ISML

MUSCAT: The Annual School Exhibition Chrysalis 2023 - Creativity unfolded held on November 2 and 3 was an extraordinary showcase of the creativity and talent of the students at Indian School Muladha (ISML).

The event provided a platform for the students to display their academic, artistic and emerging ideas through educationally, aesthetically and culturally valuable exhibits.

The chief guest Dr Kiran G.R.,Dean of Middle East College, Oman inaugurated the exhibition. The presence of the president of School Management Committee A Anilkumar, SMC members and other dignitaries was quite encouraging. The chief guest was given a floral welcome by the convener of SMC M.T. Musthafa. Principal Parveen Kumar presented a kaleidoscopic view of the exhibition. The Chief Guest, in his speech, appreciated the management, principal, staff and students for organizing the event in such grandeur and splendour. He exhorted the students to face the world with confidence and be problem solvers. He also emphasised the importance of nurturing creativity and innovation in education.

The colourful and vibrant stalls of Science, Social Science, Humanities, Computer Science, Kindergarten, Commerce, Primary Section stalls, Fine Arts and other faculties were an enchanting and memorable experience. The gala event which saw the participation of students from Kindergarten to class XII emerged as a thumping success. The exhibition was open to parents, teachers, and the local community.

The planetarium and the moon landing offer a glimpse into the Chandrayan 3, Shakespearean plays in The Globe Theatre, captivating paintings, sculptures and mixed-media creations in the art gallery, Mathematical marvels from the celestial wonders of Math in astronomy, Robotic Process Automation, Augmented Reality, a remarkable display of scientific projects and technology applications were some of the major highlights. The nonstop performances onstage and offstage by the talented dancers and singers along with skits, street plays and a lot more were a treat to the visitors. The energy and enthusiasm of the performers were truly infectious. The mouthwatering and lip-smacking dishes at the food stall were relished by the visitors and students alike.

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The Navigator makes every drive exceptional with a range of features inclusing adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go and lane centering assist, auto high-beam headlamps, blind spot information system with cross-traffic alert and trailer coverage, evasive steering assist, lane-keeping system with blind-spot assist which includes lane-keeping aid, lane-keeping alert, driver alert system and a pre-collision assist.

The Navigator is also equipped with driver and front passenger-dual-stage front airbags, front-seat side airbags, safety canopy side-curtain airbags with rollover sensor, AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control), MyKey technology and SecuriCode invisible keypad.

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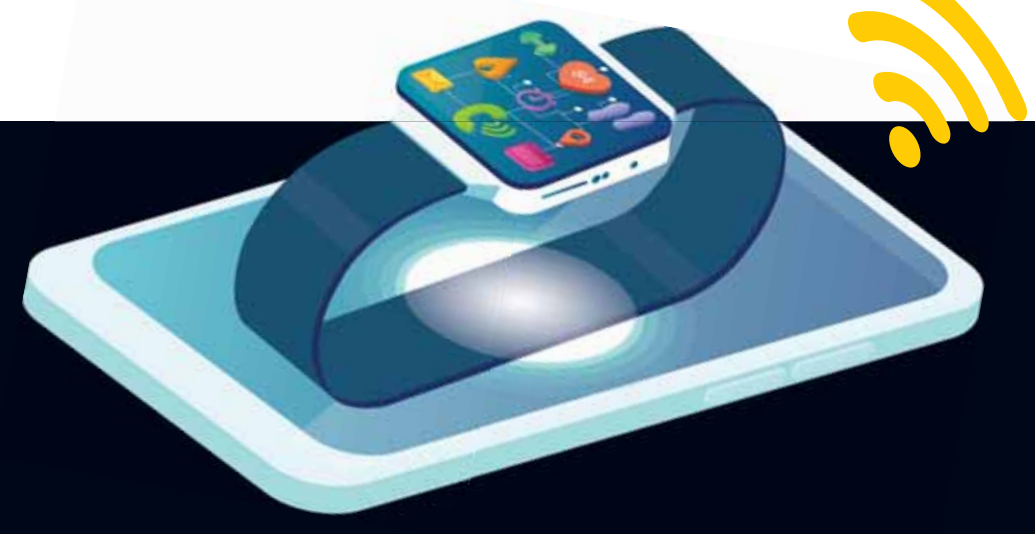
FEATURE



WEARABLE DEVICES CAN PREVENT ASTRONAUTS FROM BEING 'LOST' IN SPACE

ALTHOUGH the sky is no longer the limit, flying is dangerous. When we leave the Earth's surface, we lose many of the signs we need to orient ourselves, and this spatial disorientation can be fatal.

To defend themselves against it, astronauts often require significant training. Wearable gadgets that vibrate to provide orientation cues, however, have been identified by scientists to significantly improve the efficacy of this training, making spaceflight marginally safer.

"Long duration spaceflight will cause many physiological and psychological stressors, which will make astronauts very susceptible to spatial disorientation," said Dr Vivekanand P. Vimal of Brandeis University in the United States, lead author of the article in Frontiers in Physiology. "When disoriented, an astronaut will no longer be able to rely on their own internal sensors which they have depended on for their whole lives."

The researchers used sensory deprivation and a multi-axis rotation device to test their vibrotactors in simulated spaceflight, so the senses participants would normally rely on were useless. Could the vibrotactors correct the misleading cues the participants would receive from their vestibular systems, and could participants be trained to trust them?

30 participants were recruited, of which 10 received training to balance in the rotation device, 10 received the vibrotactors, and the remaining 10 received both. All participants were shown a video of the rotation device and told how it worked: moving like an inverted pendulum until it reached a crash boundary unless it was stabilized by a person sitting in the device controlling it with a joystick.

Additional training, for the participants who received it, included tasks that taught participants to disengage from their vestibular sense and rely on the vibrotactors instead of their natural gravitational cues. These tasks involved searching for hidden non-upright balance points, which meant participants had to ignore their desire to align upright and focus on the vibrotactors.

All participants were given a blindfold, earplugs, and white noise to listen to. Those with vibrotactors had four strapped to each arm, which would buzz when they moved away from the balance point. Each participant took part in 40 trials, aiming to keep the rotation device as close to the balance point as possible.

For half the trials, the rotation device operated on a vertical roll plane. This was considered an Earth analog because participants could use their natural gravitational cues for orientation. During the second half, which acted as a spaceflight analog, the rotation device operated on a horizontal roll plane where those gravitational cues could no longer help.

After each block of trials, participants were asked to rate how disoriented they felt and how much they trusted the vibrotactors. The scientists measured their success by looking at how often they crashed and how well they controlled their balance.

To infinity and beyond

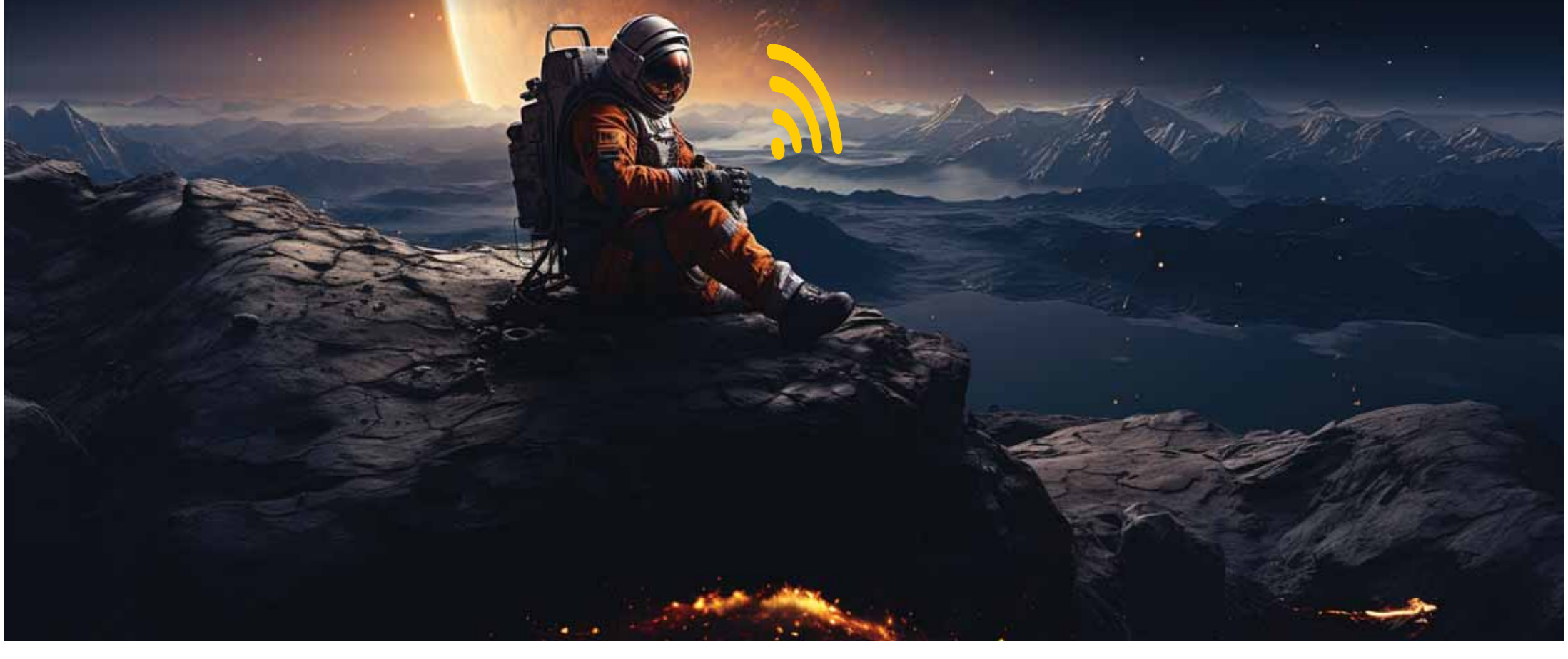
All the groups were initially disoriented in the spaceflight analog. The scientists expected this, because participants could not rely on the natural gravitational cues that they usually use. Nearly all participants reported that they trusted the vibrotactors, but they also reported confusion from conflicts between their internal cues and the vibrotactors.

The participants wearing vibrotactors still performed better than those who only received training. The training-only group crashed more frequently, moved around the balance point more, and accidentally destabilized themselves more often. Receiving the training did help, though. As the trials continued, the group who received both training and vibrotactors performed best.

However, even with training, the participants didn't perform as well as they did in the Earth analog. They may have needed more time to integrate cues from the vibrotactors, or the buzzing from the vibrotactors may not have given a strong enough danger signal.

"A pilot's cognitive trust in this external device will most likely not be enough," said Vimal. "Instead, the trust has to be at a deeper, almost sub-cognitive, level. To achieve this, specialized training will be required."

If the sensors succeed in more extensive trials, the scientists said, the possible applications for spaceflight are many -- from helping astronauts land safely on the surface of a planet, to supporting them as they move outside a vehicle in space. -ANI



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