A | THURSDAY
July 11, 2024
5 Muharram 1446 AH



Times of Oman
LET'S TALK

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HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN GREETS PRESIDENT OF MONGOLIA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh of Mongolia on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Khürelsükh and the people of his country. — ONA



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AL KINDI BREAKS ARAB RECORD AS OMAN ATHLETES EXCEL IN EGYPT





Ali Anwar Al Balushi picked his second gold as national team returned with four medals from Arab U23 Athletics Championship

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The future of Oman athletics looks exceptionally bright following the stellar performances by the youth team at the second Arab Athletics Championship U23 in Egypt, which concluded on Tuesday. Oman athletes returned home with a rich haul of four medals, including three gold and one bronze.

Mubeen Al Kindi set a new Arab record and bettered his own national record in the hammer throw with a distance of 67.46 metres.

Meanwhile, Oman's star sprinter, Ali Anwar Al Balushi, set the tracks ablaze in the Egyptian city of Ismailia, claiming a 'golden double' with his second title at the highly competitive meet.

On the opening day of the meet, Al Balushi won the 100m gold in 10 seconds (an unofficial record due to wind assistance of +2.6 m/s). He finished the championship in style with another superb run, winning the 200m in 20.68 seconds.

Al Balushi's teammate, Hamzah Al Jabri, narrowly missed the podium, finishing fourth with a time of 21.30 seconds. Lebanon's Tamer Saleh won the silver (21.01), and Kuwait's Yaqub Al Aazme claimed the bronze (21.26).

Two gold medals

The two gold medals will provide Al Balushi with a significant boost ahead of his participation in the Paris Olympics, beginning on July 26.

Al Balushi is the only Omani athlete to have qualified for the Games based on his world rankings.

The Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) is yet to announce the other athletes who will participate in the 2024 Paris Games.

Steady progress

Another talented athlete, Mubeen Al Kindi, has been steadily making progress, and his latest display is commendable.

The 21-year-old broke the existing Arab U23 hammer throw record with a distance of 67.46 metres, surpassing the previous record of 63.15m set by Saudi Arabia's Muhammad Al-Zayer in Tunisia during the first Arab U23 Athletics Championship last year.

Under the guidance of his long-term coach, Said Al Harthy, Al Kindi has constantly improved his distance. In January 2023, he threw 59.10m at a domestic meet, progressing to 59.70m at the first Arab U23 meet in Tunisia in May 2023. >A2

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Security forces continue to hire job-seekers

Times News Service



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour reaffirmed that the military and security apparatuses will continue to employ national job-seekers in accordance with the actual needs of the workforce.

Yahya bin Mohammed Al Battashi, Director of the Department of Other Units Affairs at the Ministry of Labour, said that all citizens registered during the period of submission of applications as per the advertisements released by the ministry and who have met the required terms and conditions but not included in the first sorting, shall be provided an opportunity to compete for the jobs available at the various military and security apparatuses.

"The employment in the military and security apparatuses shall be based on the population density in the wilayats of the Sultanate," he added.

He said that the employment of the youth in the military and security apparatuses came on top of their interests.

Al Battashi said that a large number of citizens are nominated for employment in the military and security apparatuses provided they are in the age group of under 27 for the Royal Oman Police (ROP), and under 25 for the Ministry of Defence and SAF and Royal Guard of Oman (RGO) and meet other terms and conditions for employment. They should also have the general education diploma certificate and passed the medical and fitness tests, including height and weight, he said.

As for the holders of the university qualifications, work is ongoing for the announcement of the same in the coming days at the various military and security apparatuses, provided they must be aged 27 for the Ministry of Defence and the Sultan Armed Forces and aged 35 years for the ROP.

Al Battashi urged jobseekers with general education diplomas or equivalent qualifications to register their interests in joining the military and security apparatuses through (taj.mol.om) platform and follow the notices of the Ministry of Labour released in the mass media and on the ministry's accounts on social media.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN

SQU, Moscow State University sign pact

1 Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Moscow State University inked a letter of cooperation in the field of students exchange as well as research, education, scientific and cultural cooperation. Moscow State University was founded in 1755. >A3

WORLD

India, Russia set $100 billion trade target

2 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in Moscow and outlined their goals to eliminate non-tariff trade barriers and achieve a trade volume of over $100 billion by 2030. They decided to continue talks on the liberalisation. >A7

SPORTS

Holder Alcaraz to face Medvedev in semis

3 The defending champion Carlos Alcaraz defeated United States Tommy Paul 5-7, 6-4, 6-2 and 6-2 in the quarterfinals on Tuesday to enter the semifinal of the ongoing Wimbledon 2024. He will now face Russia's Daniil Medvedev in the semifinal. >A8

GAZA DEATH TOLL

as of July 10, 2024



WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION

Oman seeks WIPO support for frankincense producers

GENEVA: Oman seeks the support of World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) for frankincense producers, aimed at preserving the quality and reputation of Omani frankincense and raising its marketing value by applying intellectual property system as a geographical indicator, said a top official from the Commerce ministry.



Represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Oman participated in the 65th meeting of the WIPO member states' associations, in Geneva.

Oman's delegation was headed by Dr. Saleh Said Masan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

In a speech during the meeting, Masan stressed that Oman attaches great importance to cooperation with the WIPO and has worked closely on various projects aimed at consolidating the international organisation's intellectual property system in the country.

He added that Oman is working on implementing the project of "National Intellectual Property Strategy" in cooperation with WIPO.

"The project seeks to establish a comprehensive framework to enhance innovation and ensure the protection of intellectual property rights in Oman," he said.

"WIPO's Global Innovation Index (GII) serves as one of the main reference indicators of this strategy," said Masan, noting that Oman advanced 10 ranks in the GII in 2023, compared to its position in 2022.

Masan also laid emphasis on the significance of "Treaty on Genetic Resources and Related Traditional Knowledge" in the protection of intellectual property rights for precious resources.

He also valued the support that the WIPO is lending to indigenous peoples and local communities by securing their fair access to benefits arising from the use of such resources.

At the meeting, Masan also read out the following statement: "The Sultanate of Oman would like to draw the attention of WIPO member states' associations to the Palestinian people's suffering caused by the devastating Israeli attacks on Palestinian tangible and intangible heritage. This devastation pervaded the existence of all objects and all human beings whose rights are blatantly violated on a daily basis.

"The Israeli aggression, which targeted all—men, children, women, health institutions and educational institutions—is unfortunately taking place under the full sight of the international community. No international organisation is taking legal action to hold the perpetrators culpable for these heinous crimes against humanity."



T OMAN

PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:17pm
Asr	3:37pm
Maghrib	7:02pm
Isha	8:23pm
Fajr (Tomorrow)	4:02am

DRIVER KILLED IN FUEL TANKER ACCIDENT IN AL DAKHILIYAH

A truck driver was killed after his vehicle broke down and caught fire in the Wilayat of Bidbid, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, said the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA). In a statement, the CDAA said:"The firefighting teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate dealt with an accident of a fuel tanker which overturned and caught fire in the Wilayat of Bidbid. The firefighting teams were able to extinguish the fire." In another incident, the CDAA team extinguished a fire that broke out in a company in the Rusayl Industrial Area in the Wilayat of Seeb, Muscat Governorate. No injuries were recorded in the incident. The CDAA said: "The firefighting teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Department in Muscat Governorate were able to control a fire that broke out in a company in the Rusayl Industrial area in the Wilayat of eeb, without recording any injuries ."









DISCUSSION

State Council's Office discusses draft law on documentation

MUSCAT: The State Council Office held a meeting on Wednesday during which it discussed its Legal Committee's proposal on the "Draft law on documentation" and a proposal on amending some provisions of the "Law on Arbitration in Civil and Commercial Disputes".

The discussion took place as part of the 4th meeting of the State Council's first convening during the 8th Term. The meeting was chaired by Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.





Leadership positions

The members of the State Council's Office discussed the Economic and Financial Committee's proposal on "the framework for developing the government's performance management system and criteria for placement in leadership positions".

The meeting also looked into a proposal on "the role of plant extracts in enhancing the local economy".

The meeting reviewed the Council of Ministers' reply to observations and views made by the State Council and the Shura Council about the "Draft of State Budget 2024".

The members elaborated on two studies conducted by the State Council: One titled "Legislative and regulatory determinants for e-commerce" and the other titled "Arts and their role in supporting the national economy." -ONA

ATHLETICS

Al Kindi happy for breaking Arab record in Egypt

< FROM A1

Mubeen Al Kindi surpassed the 60m mark at the start of the year with a throw of 64.43m in February and then achieved 64.95m at the West Asian Championships in Basra, Iraq, in May.

In Ismailia, the next best to Al Kindi was Egypt's Basel Mohamed with 65.63m while Saudi Arabia's Muhammad Al Zayer came third with 62.82m.

Al Kindi expressed his joy from Egypt on breaking the Arab record. Speaking to Times of Oman before boarding the flight to Muscat: "I am very happy that I could continue to improve my distance, and breaking the Arab and my national record was the icing on the cake."

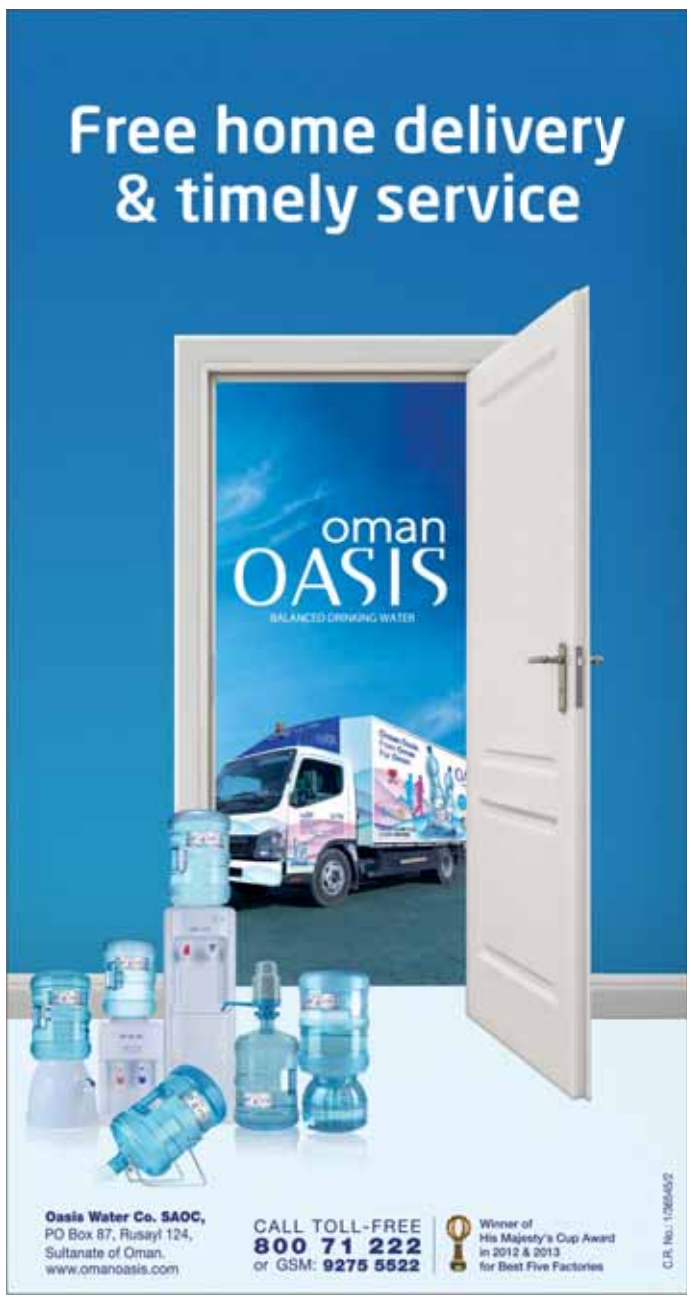
The fourth medal, a bronze, was won by Husain Al Farsi in the 800m race, clocking 1:52.34 to finish behind Algeria's Hiethm Shnetf (1:51.61) and Morocco's El Assal Abderrahman (1:51.98).



OAA congratulates winners

In his remarks to Times of Oman, As'ad Al Hosni, Oman Athletics Association (OAA) general secretary said: "We are proud of our young athletes. They bring a lot of hope to us and with proper guidance, they have the potential to excel at a bigger stage. We congratulate Ali Anwar Al Balushi, Mubeen Al Kindi and Husain Al Farsi for bringing laurels for the country and hope Ali will make us proud at the upcoming Paris Olympics."

The four-day Arab U23 championship witnessed the participation of 217 male and female athletes from 12 countries: Tunisia, Algeria, Oman, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Qatar, Kuwait, Morocco, Yemen, and Egypt.



SOUTH AL SHARQIYAH GOVERNORATE

Over 7,700 tonnes of Al Mabasli dates produced in Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan

Times News Service



MUSCAT: The Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate produced 7,798 tonnes of Al Mabasli dates in 2023.

The harvest and dressing season at Al Mabasli dates is one of the most prominent customs and traditions inherited from the ancestors among farmers of the village of Falaj Al-Mashaykh in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan in the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

The Al-Mabasli harvest season provides income to the people of the wilayat for which farmers are keen to take care of the palm trees.

The Al Mabasli harvest season begins from the end of June until the end of July each year, and is characterised by abundant production.

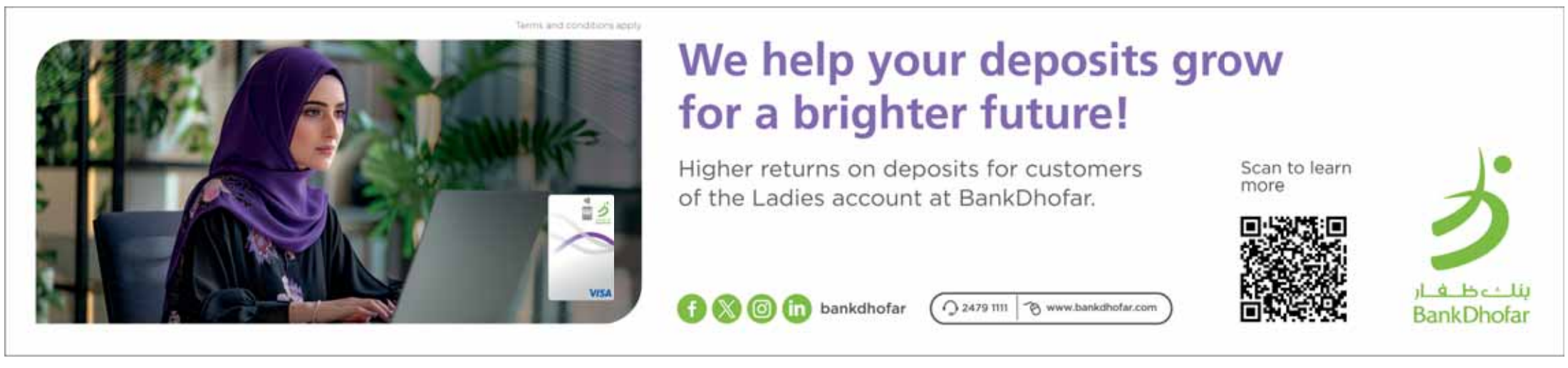
Salem bin Sultan Al Araimi, Director of the Department of Agricultural Wealth, Fisheries and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, said that the number of palm trees in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah is 115,367, while the quantity of their production reached 7,798 tonnes in 2023, with an average production of 68 kilograms per palm tree.

The Director of the Department of Agriculture , Fisheries and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, added that the Ministry of Commerce , Industry and Investment Promotion is working in coordination with the Nakheel Development Company to purchase basoor of various types to transform them into added value that contribute to enhancing the economic return and export to foreign markets.

He explained that the Ministry of Agriculture , Fisheries and Water Resources plays an important role in developing the date sector by adopting modern methods of farming and taking care of palm trees through prevention programmes from the palm pests, in addition to carrying out research, tissue propagation and agricultural extension work.

He pointed out that the Ministry seeks annually to provide a number of diverse textile palm varieties, distribute them to farmers, and develop many programmes to protect palm trees from pests, especially the palm dubas insect and the red palm weevil, which negatively affect trees.

Regarding the stages of the dressing process, Khamis bin Hamad Al-Mashayikhi, a resident of Falaj Al-Mashayikh, said:"The process of dressing begins after the fruits of the Al-Mabsley palm tree become fully yellowed, "bisr", and then the harvesting process takes place, called "Al-Jaddad". Then the farmers transfer it to what is called (the pot) to carry out the cooking process, then place it on the stove to dry for a period of approximately 5 to 7 days, depending on the outside air temperature, and then it is assembled.



Mahdha produces over five tonnes of 'Samar' honey



The production of honey supplements the national economy by meeting the local market needs and also earns revenue through exports

Times News Service

MUSCAT : The production of 'Samar' honey in the Wilayat of Mahdha in Al Buraimi Governorate for the year 2024 amounted to more than five tonnes.

The number of beekeepers and bee hives were 45 and 2,985 respectively in the Wilayat of Mahdha, according to statistics from the General Directorate of Agriculture and Water Resources,.

Engineer Mohammed bin Salem bin Obaid Al Kaabi, Director of the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Mahdha in Al Buraimi Governorate, said that the profession of beekeeping is considered one of the ancient Omani professions, and one of the main sources of income for many families in Al Buraimi Governorate.

It contributes to supporting the national economy by meeting the local market's need for Omani honey and exporting the surplus to foreign markets.

Al Kaabi added that the wilayats of Al Buraimi Governorate were affected during the recent period by large amounts of rain, which affected the vegetation cover, leading to the delay in honey harvesting this year compared to the normal time every year.

Al Kaabi explained that there are two types of honeybees in the Wilayat of Mahdha, the first type is known locally as "Abu Twaiq," which inhabits the mountain caves. This type of bee is characterised by its high quality, which is why its price is higher due to the low output and small number of hives. The second type is known as "Mustanas" bees, which are small in size and yellow in colour, and are raised using modern methods inside wooden hives.

This type of bee is characterised by the fact that it does not tend to be aggressive, has high production, is resistant to most pests and diseases, and highly efficient in collecting and storing nectar and pollen. It is also resistant to weather conditions, especially high temperatures.

Al Kaabi pointed out that the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources in the Wilayat of Mahdha provides all necessary support to beekeepers by providing technical support, in addition to providing tools and means that beekeepers need to raise and propagate bees.

It also implements many awareness programmes, seminars and lectures for beekeepers on the correct methods of raising and propagating Omani bees, and publishing guide books that introduce healthy methods of beekeeping.



STUDENTS EXCHANGE

SQU, Moscow State varsity sign Letter of Cooperation



MOSCOW: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Moscow State University inked a letter of cooperation in the field of students exchange as well as research, education, scientific and cultural cooperation.

The pact was signed by HH Mona Fahd Al Said, SQU Assistant Vice-Chancellor for International Cooperation and Viktor Sadovnichiy, Rector of the Moscow State University.

Moscow State University was founded in 1755 as it is one of the oldest and largest universities in the Russian Federation. According to the "QS" global classification for 2024, Moscow State University obtained the 87th place -ONA





T OMAN



Wajma village in Rustaq is ideal for mountain adventures

The village is famous for its springs flowing between the rocks, as well as the presence of four falajs: Falaj Al-Malaj, Al-Ghail, Al-Khatwa, and Al-Qabil, which irrigate farms

Times News Service

MUSCAT : Wajma village in Wadi Al Sahtan in the Wilayat of Rustaq is one of the beautiful tourist destinations in the mountain.

Located in the South Al Batinah Governorate, it is a promising tourist spot due to its distinguished geological diversity, and a hotspot for adventurers.

The village is famous for its many water springs flowing between the rocks, as well as the presence of four falajs: Falaj Al-Malaj, Al-Ghail, Al-Khatwa, and Al-Qabil, which irrigate farms.

They are used to irrigate terraced farms over a large area of the mountain slope.

Dr. Al Mu'tasem bin Nasser Al Hilali, Director of the Heritage and Tourism Department in the South Al Batinah Governorate, explained that the Wajma village is one of the beautiful villages in the mountains of Wadi Al-Sahtan and Aflaj and its farms are distributed on a steep mountainside.

The houses appear in the upper parts, distributed over the flat region and suitable for urban habitation. Visitors to the village can see the mixture of what remains of the old houses built of stones and mud with the newly built houses of cement, and they stand out due to their height as if they are hanging on the rocks touching the mountain peak adjacent to them.

The Director of the Heritage and Tourism Department in the South Al Batinah Governorate added that the most prominent beautiful landmarks in the village are its small mosques, the general council for the village people, the Aflaj canals, and the brilliantly built agricultural terraces.

He added that visitors can learn about the details of ancient life in the village, about the typical aspect of coexistence with a difficult environment, and how to meet the demands of community life in terms of movement, exploitation of water sources, and communication with neighbouring villages.

Al Hilali explained that those interested in adventures can walk on mountain trails that satisfy the passion of discovery that lead them to each of the villages of Jabal Shams and Misfat Al Abriyyin in the Wilayat of Al Hamra in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, and many other villages such as Al Fara'a, Al Hwaib, Al Hoop, Al Wadaym, Al Naid, Al Ghor and Limbo in Wadi Al Sahtin in the South Al Batinah Governorate.

Al Hilali stressed that through the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism's approach to diversifying aspects of tourism investment, it has provided institutions and citizens with the possibility of investing in small and medium-sized projects that are compatible with the tourism movement. One of these models is investing in guest houses and heritage lodges, which are small and medium-sized projects in tourist lodges that are compatible with the village of Wajma due to the presence of heritage houses and houses based on wonderful views.

They only need to obtain the necessary permits to operate them. Therefore, it will be an attractive venture for tourist traffic and commensurate with the potential of local residents.

Al Hilali stated that investing in such beautiful villages located far from city centres will meet the requirements of accommodation for tourists that has been in high demand in recent years. Investment in such buildings is also reflected in other positive aspects, including preserving the existing buildings in the village by restoring them and continuing their maintenance to sustain the tourism and visitor movement to the village, thus establishing other side projects that serve visitors, creating an additional source of income for the people and providing job opportunities for the villagers.

> "Investing in beautiful villages located in mountains and far from the city centres will meet the requirement of accommodation for tourists that has been in high demand in recent years, said Dr. Al Mu'tasem bin Nasser Al Hilali



It is worth noting that those wishing to go to the village of Wajma can take the Wadi Al-Sahtan road, which branches off the main road linking the Wilayats of Rustaq and Ibri on an asphalt path that leads to the beginning of the mountain road to the village, after which the path of the dirt road begins ascending for a distance of 4 kilometres.

This distance of the road is limited to four-wheel drive vehicles. Beautiful villages and towns are scattered along the path of the Wadi Al-Sahtan Road, spread among dense palm oases and diverse geological formations. There is also another road linking Wadi Al-Sahtan to Wadi Bani Awf, which makes it easier for tourists and visitors to travel to many of the villages spread throughout these valleys.



Environment Authority chairman calls for urgent action on climate





Oman is focusing on transition to renewable energy and implementing an action plan to expand solutions for achieving decarbonisation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is to host the Climate Week for the first time which will involve a set of activities that to achieve a "result that is compatible with 1.5 degrees Celsius ceiling by 2025".

The temperature limit was agreed upon at the COP29 climate conference.

The event will focus on cooperation between governments and other sectors to diminish the impact of climate change.

In this context, Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, stressed the need for urgent climate action. He said that the situation calls for expanding investments that address climate change (urgent measures to fund related projects and adaptation to climate impacts), by reducing emissions, phasing out coal as a source of energy, setting a price on carbon, developing climate technologies and ensuring smooth transition to renewable energy.

In its drive to address climate change, Oman is focusing on transition to renewable energy and implementing an action plan to expand solutions for achieving decarbonisation, notably through the execution of "Oman Vision 2040" and the national strategy on adapting to climate change.

Represented by the Environment Authority, the Sultanate of Oman will host Climate Week from 24 to 27 February 2025, for uniting the world in supporting climate action and focusing on the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to a zero-emission future.

The event assumes significance from global focus on mitigating climate change and on renewable energy as an alternative source to combat global warming.

Oman Climate Week constitutes a podium where global industrial leaders, policymakers and innovators showcase progress that they accomplished, collaborate, exchange ideas on climate change mitigation measures and explore opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman and the MENA region.





MEETING

Dubai Police keen to boost needs for safe traffic in city

DUBAI: Mattar Al Tayer, Director-General, Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of the Roads, and Transport Authority (RTA), and Lieutenant General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, held a coordination meeting, during which the two sides reviewed the results and indicators of the Dubai Traffic Safety Strategy.

The meeting also tackled Dubai Police's requirements for the Blue Line project of the Dubai Metro as well as the safety of public transport users.

During the meeting, Mattar Al Tayer praised the strategic partnership and excellent relationship between the RTA and Dubai Police, which contributed to enhancing the coordination and joint efforts towards achieving the objectives of the Dubai Traffic Safety Strategy highlighted by reducing road traffic fatalities and ensuring the safety of various public transport means.

"Traffic safety features high among the priorities of the Traffic Safety Strategy and RTA's goals. RTA is keen to achieve the targeted indicators of the Dubai Traffic Safety Strategy with its "Zero Fatalities" vision to rank Dubai the best in the world in terms of traffic safety. The traffic accident fatality rate decreased by as much as 93 percent between 2007 and 2023. RTA also strives to enhance safety and security of all mass and individual mobility means, and to develop traffic awareness and education channels for the benefit of all road users in Dubai," Al Tayer added.

Lieutenant General Abdullah Khalifa Al Marri commended the strategic partnership between the General HQ of Dubai Police and the Roads and Transport Authority, which has contributed to establishing joint systems, and achieving the goals of enhanced security, safety, and traffic safety on Dubai roads.

"The General HQ of Dubai Police is keen on boosting traffic safety to achieve Dubai's strategic goal of being a safe and stable city characterised by solid development and prosperity, prioritising the protection of lives and properties.

The traffic accident fatalities in Dubai have witnessed a significant decrease recently, thanks to the coordination and joint efforts with strategic partners, the ongoing efforts to curb traffic incidents, and the success of continuous awareness campaigns addressing various traffic issues and challenges," Al Marri added.

The meeting reviewed the progress of implementing the Dubai Traffic Safety Strategy 2022-2026, encompassing four main pillars: Enforcement, Roads and Vehicles Engineering, Traffic Awareness, and Systems & Management. The joint efforts resulted in achieving all annual targets for the Traffic Safety Strategy 2023. **-WAM**

DRUG SEIZED

Smuggler held

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Customs has thwarted an attempt to smuggle one kilogram of crystal drug into the country.

A statement issued by Oman Customs said: "The General Administration of Customs thwarted a smuggling operation of 1 kilogram of crystal drug via postal parcel. The accused was arrested and legal measures are currently being taken against him."

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Tel. No. +968 91320294/91401167, www.isboman.com

TENDER NOTICE

Ref: ISB/Tender/2024-25 dated: 10 July/2024

Bids are invited from experienced, qualified contractors for the following tender:

Name of Tender	Tender No.	Tender Documents available from	Tender Submission Date	Tender Fee.
Civil / Modification work of 4 activity rooms.	A0020/ 2024-25	14/07/2024	25/07/2024	(R.O.) 10.000

- Tender documents can be collected from the ISB office, untill a day before the date of submission.
- Inquiries /Clarifications regarding the above Tender shall be submitted through email to **purchase@isboman.com by cc to principal@isboman.com**
- Sealed tenders, separately for Technical & Commercial proposals, to be dropped in the tender box placed in ISB, on/before 01.00 PM of the tender submission date; along with all necessary details and supporting documents.

ISB reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

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 invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MTCIT 164/2024	SUPPLY OF (200) LIGHTING POLES FOR JEBREEN-BESYA ROAD IN WILAYAT OF BAHLA	11-07-2024	21-07-2024	11-08-2024	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (ALL CLASSES)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL FOR LOCAL COMPANIES (10/-) TEN OMANI RIAL (FOR SME) NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCIT 165/2024	CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO SUPERVISION THE CONSTRUCTION OF SAIH ALKHAIRAT - AL SHASSAR ASPHALT ROAD IN DHOFAR GOVERNORATE	11-07-2024	25-07-2024	18-08-2024	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD CLASSES (EXCELLENT, FIRST)	(62/-) SIXETY TWO OMANI RIAL FOR LOCAL COMPANIES (10/-) TEN OMANI RIAL (FOR SME) NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCIT 166/2024	RENEWAL OF SOFTWARE LICENSES AND MAINTENANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES	11-07-2024	18-07-2024	30-07-2024	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (ALL CLASSES)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL FOR LOCAL COMPANIES (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 documents. 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

WORLD

ESA launches Ariane 6 rocket successfully

The powerful rocket lifted off from Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana. The launch paves the way for Europe to get satellites into space without having to rely on other organisations or companies such as SpaceX



FRENCH GUIANA: The European Space Agency (ESA) sent its Ariane 6 rocket into space for the first time on Tuesday, some four years after its initial planned launch.

The powerful rocket lifted off from Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana at 4 p.m. local time (1900 GMT). The successful launch paves the way for Europe to get satellites into space without having to rely on other organisations or companies such as SpaceX.

ESA chief Josef Aschbacher said the successful launch marked a "historic day" for Europe.

'A new era of spaceflight'

"Ariane 6 demonstrated a successful liftoff, launch to orbit and deployment of satellites," the ESA wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

"We have now entered into a new era of spaceflight for Europe, powering us into space and allowing us to realize our ambitions on the world stage," it added wrote.

Ariane 6 replaces its predecessor, Ariane 5, which first took off in the mid-90s.

The last Ariane 5 flight was last year, since then the ESA had to rely on rivals in order to get its satellites into space.

The launch was delayed by an hour, after having to wait four years, due to a fault being discovered in the morning.

Its success was far from guaranteed, with around half of all inaugural flights ending in failure, including that of the Ariane 5 in 1996.

Commercial flights planned by end of year

The next stage for the ESA will be to study the launch before rolling out a commercial program.

Some 29 missions are already on the books for flights expected to start by the end of the year. Many are to deploy some of Amazon's Kuiper constellation of internet satellites.

Space flights have become a big business, with SpaceX's reusable Falcon rockets now taking off around twice a week.

The ESA will also be looking to "successfully ramp up" the number of flights, the agency's space transportation director Toni Tolker-Nielsen said.

Things started to pick up again in 2023. "We spent the whole of 2023 marrying the launchpad with the rocket," said ESA's Tina Büchner da Costa, an Ariane 6 launch system architect based at Europe's spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana.

The main stage was tested in French Guiana. "We fired up the main engine and tested the full flight up to [the rocket's initial] separation," said Büchner da Costa. That's over 7 minutes of flight.

The next part of the flight, where the upper stage goes in orbit, was qualified at the new test bench in Germany, "completely separately."

At the same time, engineers in Switzerland tested the fairing — that's the bit that carries the cargo and, perhaps one day, a capsule for human spaceflight — and the separation of the fairing.

"You test your system, step by step, in an incremental way, before you add any critical elements," said Büchner da Costa.

They did five complete countdowns and Büchner da Costa was there for them all. "It was really impressive to see, a full success," she said.

CubeSats satellites

A full success up to 2024: the year of Ariane 6's first full mission with cargo, including cubeSats satellites and scientific experiments.

At time of writing in late June 2024, six launches were planned for 2025 and eight for 2026. By 2027, the ESA aims to achieve a launch rate of 10 per year — and then keep evolving.

Ariane 6 is about versatility, said Büchner da Costa, calling the rocket an "eierlegende Wollmilchsau." That's a German term for which there is no direct translation, but basically means something that can do a bit of everything.

"The 'eierlegende Wollmilchsau' is a pig that gives you milk, wool and lays eggs," explained Büchner da Costa. "That's what we want from Ariane 6. The exciting thing is that [Ariane 6] gives us versatility. We want to fly anywhere." — DW

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NORTHERN TERRITORY POLICE

Crocodile shot dead in Australia by rangers

DARWIN: Authorities in Australia said on Wednesday that a 4.2 meter (14-foot) crocodile was located and shot dead by rangers after it killed a 12-year-old girl last week.

Northern Territory police said in a statement that local rangers killed the crocodile with the permission of the Traditional Owners, who are the region's indigenous landowners.

A 12-year-old girl had been swimming with her family last week when she was attacked and killed by a crocodile in Mango Creek, near the remote Palumpa community in Australia's Northern Territory.

On Thursday, authorities found the girl's remains two days after she was attacked.

Wildlife rangers had been trying to trap or shoot the crocodile since the fatal attack. Police said it was located on Sunday and shot.

Analysis confirmed that it was the animal responsible for the fatal attack, according to police.

"The events of last week have had a huge impact on the family and local police are continuing to provide support to everyone impacted," police spokeswoman Erica Gibson said. "The family have requested privacy as they grieve."

The girl's death came just weeks after regional authorities approved a 10-year plan aimed at containing crocodile numbers by lifting the rate of culling near human habitats from 300 to 1,200 a year. The Northern Territory recorded the deaths of 15 people in crocodile attacks between 2005 and 2014 and another two in 2018. — DW



BILATERAL RELATIONS

Indian PM Modi, Austrian Chancellor hold 'extensive and fruitful' talks

VIENNA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi engaged in "extensive and fruitful" discussions with Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer on Wednesday, bolstering the bilateral relationship between India and Austria.



The meeting, described as comprehensive by the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, covered a wide array of subjects pivotal to both nations.

Key areas of discussion included trade and investment, with both leaders expressing a commitment to enhancing economic cooperation. The talks also delved into science and technology, green energy, artificial intelligence, and startups, reflecting the shared interest in advancing technological and innovative collaborations.

Environmental and climate change issues were also on the agenda, with both leaders recognising the need for concerted efforts to address these global challenges. Cultural cooperation and people-to-people ties were highlighted as crucial elements in strengthening the bilateral partnership and fostering deeper mutual understanding and engagement between the two countries.

In addition to bilateral matters, PM Modi and Chancellor Nehammer exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest, underscoring the importance of collaborative approaches to international challenges.

"Energising India-Austria ties! PM @narendramodi held extensive and fruitful talks with Austrian Chancellor @karlnehammer today. Discussions covered various dimensions of the bilateral partnership, including trade & investment, S&T, green energy, AI, startups, environment & climate change, cultural cooperation and people-to-people ties. The leaders also exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest," said the MEA spokesperson in a post on X.

PM Modi and Austrian Chancellor Nehammer also participated in the India-Austria Business Meeting, bringing together around 40 businesses from both nations to explore new economic opportunities and strengthen bilateral trade relations.

The two also addressed India-Austria joint press meet, following their delegation-level talks.

Prime Minister Modi arrived in Vienna on Tuesday evening for a day-long State visit. Notably, this is the first time an Indian Prime Minister has visited Austria in 41 years. Indira Gandhi was the last PM to visit Austria in 1983.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi called on the President of the Republic of Austria, Alexander Van der Bellen, in Vienna on Wednesday. PM Modi arrived in Vienna on Tuesday evening for a day-long State visit under the second leg of his two-nation tour. He was in Russia on a two-day visit where he met President Vladimir Putin.

— ANI

CLIMATE CHANGE

Can wild animals handle the heat?

NORTH CAROLINA: Dehydrated howler monkeys fall from trees in Mexico. Billions of mussels, oysters and barnacles boil on the shorelines of Canada. Hundreds of Magellanic Penguins drop dead in Argentina in a single day.



These recent cases may have affected different animal species worldwide, but they have one thing in common: they were triggered by extreme heat.

Temperatures across the globe are rising as economies increasingly pump greenhouse gases into the atmosphere — 2023 was the hottest year on record. And climate change is only making heat waves more common and more extreme.

The way this affects wildlife depends on several factors: their geography, whether they are experiencing chronic heat or individual heat waves and, of course, what type of animal they are.

Birds and bats falling dead from the sky

In the most extreme cases, the heat can cause mass die-offs.

"This happens especially in already hot and dry areas where animals cannot really take a lot of additional heating," said Andreas Nord, an ecologist with Lund University in Sweden.

"Australia is a prime example. There, we're talking about the effects of biblical proportions. So birds and flying foxes literally fall dead from the sky."

Even if the heat doesn't kill the wildlife, it can change their behavior in ways that influence the population size.

There is a "potentially more insidious way of dying," says Eric Ridell, an ecologist with the University of North Carolina at Chapell Hill in the US, that leaves no bodies.

"Perhaps because they're more dehydrated or they can't be active enough because it's too hot, they don't breed that year," he said. "So the animals still survive, but they're not not creating young."

A 2023 study found that burying beetles were less likely to reproduce successfully when a heatwave hits during mating.

Adapting to the heat

When animals change the way they act to stay cooler or become warmer, scientists call this thermal regulatory behaviour. During heat waves, this can include staying in the shade, entering the water or resting more.

One way koalas in Australia cope with extreme heat is to hug cool tree trunks. Bears in California sometimes take a more unconventional approach, with videos showing them taking dips in people's pools when temperatures soar.

It's not clear, however, to what extent animals can change their behavior to keep up with an ever-warming planet.

"We don't really know that if, say, 100, 1,000 or 10,000 generations from now, animals will be more heat adapted or more tolerable to these extreme temperature fluctuations that we're seeing," said Nord. "But it's not looking good. It seems like many animals already live on the maximum of what their physiological systems can tolerate."

Birds are especially vulnerable

Another open question is which species are the most susceptible to rising temperatures. While



many groups suffer, scientists have observed that birds are often especially vulnerable.

"They have, comparatively speaking, relatively poor ways of cooling their bodies. Birds lack sweat glands. That is a very bad thing when it gets very hot," said Nord.

That is also something Riddell observed in a 2021 study he authored. The research analyzed a 100-year data set of small mammals and birds found in the Mojave Desert in California.

Though the two communities lived in the same ecosystem, eating the same food and drinking the same water, they responded differently to rising temperatures.

The mammal communities stayed stable throughout the century. Meanwhile, the number of bird species in the desert dropped by 43%.

It's not clear if the birds migrated to other environments or died. What is clear is that they are at a disadvantage when temperatures rise.

"Mammals largely live underground. They're mostly nocturnal. And birds are mostly diurnal [and] live above ground. They're experiencing the sun, which really heats them up," said Riddell. "These differences played a really big role in responses to climate change over the last 100 years."

Thinking long-term

There are few emergency interventions that humans can undertake to help animals cope with extreme heat. Some conservationists have tried to help wildlife by spraying them with water or providing shelter, but this is only a band-aid on a much larger problem.

What is even more important looking forward is for governments to conserve natural habitats long-term, say Nord and Riddell. The animals' natural environments will have the resources to buffer the worst effects of scalding temperatures. That could be shady trees, water, nourishment, places to seek refuge.

"This effect that climate change and extreme heat has on the living world really gets worse the less of the living world that we have left," said Nord. — DW

WHO chief warns over escalating healthcare crisis in Gaza Strip

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X platform: "There's really no safe corner in Gaza. The latest reports on evacuation orders in Gaza City will further impede delivery of very limited life saving care"



GAZA: The World Health Organization (WHO) raised alarms over the escalating healthcare crisis in Gaza following new evacuation orders in Gaza City, hindering the treatment of the injured.

WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on X platform: "There's really no safe corner in Gaza. The latest reports on evacuation orders in Gaza City will further impede delivery of very limited life saving care."

WHO said that major hospitals, such as "Al-Ahli and Patient Friendly hospitals are out of service. Patients either self-evacuated, were given early discharge or referred to Kamal Adwan and Indonesian hospitals, which are suffering shortage of fuel, beds and trauma medical supplies."

WHO explained that the "Indonesian Hospital is triple over its capacity," struggling to cope with the influx of patients. "Al-Helou Hospital is within the blocks of the evacuation order but continues to be partially functional," WHO added.

"As-Sahaba and Al-Shifa hospitals are in close proximity to the areas under evacuation order but remain functional so far," WHO said.

Additionally, six medical points and two primary healthcare centers fall within the evacuation zones, further straining the healthcare infrastructure.

In the same context, WHO spokesperson Tarik Jasarevic affirmed in a UN press briefing in Geneva that of 36 hospitals in Gaza, only 13 are partially functioning.

Jasarevic stressed that patients and medical staff evacuated three hospitals in one week in southern Gaza in fear of intensified military activities that could render the health facilities non-functional or inaccessible.

He said that "Out of 11 field hospitals in the Gaza Strip, three had to be temporarily shut down and four are only partially functioning, "due to the hostilities in Rafah and reduced access," adding that most of the field hospitals in Rafah will move to the central region.

Jasarevic explained that no WHO trucks crossed into Gaza last week since the Karm Abu Salem Commercial crossing was closed by the Israeli occupation authorities.

The occupation forces continue to commit the crime of genocide in the Gaza Strip, by launching dozens of air strikes and artillery shelling, in an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe, further complicated by the cessation of supplies of food, water, medicine and fuel.

Since 7 October 2023, the death toll from the Israeli occupation's aggression against the Gaza Strip has risen to 38,243 martyrs and 88,333 wounded.

Türkiye says Israel seeks to destroy Palestinian people

Türkiye condemned an Israeli attack on a school housing displaced people in the southern Gaza Strip, the Foreign Ministry said Tuesday, as reported by Andalou Agency.

The mass graves discovered in largely destroyed Khan Younis, and the targeting of four schools in as many days are "concrete evidence" that Israel seeks to destroy the Palestinian people, it said in a statement.

The attacks also showed that the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to undermine cease-fire negotiations, it added.

Israeli officials will be held accountable for actions that disregard all values of humanity and international law, said the ministry.

Several victims were killed and dozens injured in the Israeli strike Tuesday, according to medics.

Last week, the Israeli army issued evacuation orders for residents of several areas in eastern Khan Younis.

Since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict, the Israeli army hit several Palestinian displacement centers in Gaza, killing dozens.

PM Mustafa emphasises importance of coordinated efforts for early recovery in meeting with international partners

PM Mustafa emphasises importance of coordinated efforts for early recovery in meeting with international partners

Prime Minister Mohammed Mustafa has affirmed the critical need for coordination among international partners, donors, and UN agencies alongside the government to achieve early recovery and address urgent humanitarian needs arising from Israel's genocidal war on Gaza and its repercussions in the West Bank.

Speaking at a key meeting with international partners in Ramallah on Wednesday, Mustafa stated that the day following the cessation of war should see a unified Palestine under a single authority and government. He stressed the necessity of ensuring aid reaches those in need and avoiding duplication of efforts.

The Prime Minister emphasised the importance of working with international partners as one team with a unified plan, rejecting any transitional period that could lead to further complexity and chaos.

He underscored that the government has been responsible for Gaza since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, providing essential services such as healthcare, education, water, electricity, and various other services to the people of the region.

"Despite Israel's ongoing withholding of Palestinian funds, the government remains committed to fulfilling its obligations toward Gaza," said Mustafa.

In response, international partners affirmed their support for the government's vision of collaborative action and coordinated efforts in early recovery, humanitarian relief, and reconstruction efforts.

They further expressed their rejection of the reoccupation of Gaza, and reiterated their steadfast support for achieving a two-state solution. — WAFA

BILATERAL RELATIONS



India and Russia set $100bn trade target by 2030

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in Moscow on Tuesday and outlined their goals to eliminate non-tariff trade barriers and achieve a mutual trade volume of over $100 billion by 2030.

The two leaders also decided to continue dialogue on the liberalization of bilateral trade, including the possibility of establishing the EAEU-India Free Trade Area, according to the Leaders' Joint Statement released following the meeting.

"Aspiration for elimination of non-tariff trade barriers related to bilateral trade between India and Russia. Continuation of dialogue in the field of liberalization of bilateral trade, including the possibility of the establishment of the EAEU-India Free Trade Area. Achievement of a mutual trade volume more than 100 bln USD by 2030 (as mutually agreed), including increased supplies of goods from India to achieve balanced bilateral trade. Reinvigoration of investment activities of the Parties, i.e. within the framework of the special investment regimes," the statement read.

They also decided to work on developing a bilateral settlement system using national currencies and the consistent introduction of digital financial instruments for mutual settlements.

The two countries will focus on increasing cargo turnover with India through the launch of new routes for the North-South International Transport Corridor, the Northern Sea Route, and the Chennai-Vladivostok Sea Line. They will also optimize customs procedures through the application of intelligent digital systems for barrier-free movement of goods.

They will work to raise the volume of bilateral trade in agricultural products, food, and fertilizers, and maintain an intensive dialogue aimed at removing veterinary, sanitary, and phytosanitary restrictions and prohibitions.

India and Russia will work for "development of cooperation in key energy sectors, including nuclear energy, oil refining and petrochemicals and expanded forms of cooperation and partnership in the field of energy infrastructure, technologies and equipment. Facilitation of mutual and international energy security, i.a. taking into account the prospects of global energy transition."

The leaders stressed strengthening interaction in the fields of infrastructure development, transport engineering, automobile production and shipbuilding, space and other industrial sectors; facilitation of entry of Indian and Russian companies into each other's markets by creating subsidiaries and industrial clusters, and convergence of approaches of the Parties in the fields of standardization, metrology and conformity assessment.

The two nations will promote investments and joint projects across various sectors, including the digital economy, science and research, educational exchanges, and internships for employees of high-tech companies. They will also facilitate the creation of new joint (subsidiary) companies by providing favourable fiscal regimes. — ANI

MALE-DOMINATED POLITICAL SCENE

Women in politics: How far has Asia come?

TOKYO: Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, the first woman to lead Japan's capital, clinched a third term on Sunday to extend her time in office running one of the populous cities in the world.

Dozens of candidates were competing to unseat her, with female opposition lawmaker Renho Murata one of the main challengers — a rarity in Japan's male-dominated political scene.

In the country's 47 prefectures, only two governors are women. At the national level, the ratio is similar — only about 11% of members in the lower house of parliament are female. Japan does not currently have mandated gender quotas for politicians.

According to Mikiko Eto, a political science professor at Hosei University, such law would be "the most important point" to address the disbalance.

Have gender quotas worked?

Unlike Japan, many political systems around the world have implemented gender quotas to increase the number of women in politics.

In Taiwan, where there are reserved seats for women and candidate quotas in place, women now make up 41.6% of parliament — the highest percentage of female lawmakers in Asia.

In Indonesia, women's representation in parliament was quite low before the 30% candidate gender quota was introduced. In 1999, fewer than one in 10 lawmakers was female. Two decades later, that number had risen to one in five.

"In countries where women's descriptive representation is still very low, affirmative actions like gender quotas seem to be the first step to take," Nankyung Choi, a scholar who specialises in women and politics in Southeast Asia, told DW.

In 2023, India passed a bill to set aside 33% of seats for women in the lower house of the national parliament as well as in state assemblies.

But the quota wasn't implemented for this year's general election. So out of the 543 lawmakers elected, only 74 were women — about 14%.

Elsewhere in the region, 50 seats are reserved for women in Bangladesh's 350-member parliament. But only around 5% of the candidates vying for the other seats in the election earlier this year were women, according to data collected by the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Some countries in Asia have managed to increase the number of women legislators without gender quotas, "but it is not clearly associated with democratic development," said Choi.

In Singapore, for example, around 30% of members of parliament are women, but that figure is a result of "the People's Action Party-led government's decision to appoint more women to parliament to boost its weak democratic and inclusive credentials," she added.

Beyond the numbers

While gender quotas might have led to more women in politics, Choi states that the profile of those who "have made their way to decision-making positions" also needs to be discussed.

Some comparative studies show that "the majority of women parliamentarians in Asia are middle-aged, educated and professional women" while "young and working-class women are largely absent," said Choi.

Moreover, she warns that having more women in parliament is one issue, while assessing if this "has translated into any meaningful progress in gender equality" is a different question.

In the case of Taiwan, even with more than 40% of parliamentarians being women, MPs' efforts to represent women's interests are "important but insufficient" as "the attitude of the executive branch of the government remains the key," according to Chang-Ling Huang, a political science professor at the National Taiwan University.

In her article, "Substantive representation of women in Taiwan: Why is 42% not enough?," Huang argues that "a more active pro-women or pro-gender equality Cabinet is needed" if women's interests are to be effectively addressed in parliament.

Underrepresented at the top

Despite recent strides in the number of women in parliament, their presence in senior positions is still lacking. The share of female Cabinet ministers in Central and South Asia is 9.5% — the lowest ranked region, according to the UN Women's report "Women Political Leaders 2024."

Currently, Bangladesh only has two women heading ministries — one of them is the prime minister herself. In Pakistan's new Cabinet after the February elections, there is only one woman.

In Japan, the ratio is higher, with women now making up a quarter of Cabinet members after the reshuffle in 2023.

In contrast, there were 26 state ministers and 28 parliamentary vice ministers appointed in the same reshuffle — all of them male. Previously, women occupied around 20% of these lower-level posts.

Meanwhile in China, the share of women in the country's rubber-stamp parliament — the National People's Congress — has risen steadily in the past two decades, since the body adopted a form of gender quota in which the proportion of female members "should not be lower" than that of the previous term.

Nevertheless, no woman has ever served on the seven-member Politburo Standing Committee, the country's top ruling body, since the Communist Party came to power in 1949.

Currently, there are no women in the wider Politburo's 24 seats and only six women have ever been full members — three of them were wives of senior party leaders.

Few women leaders

The lack of female leadership stems from "the prevailing patriarchal culture and the growth of conservative counter movements" in the region, said Choi.

Most Asian women who have emerged as presidents or prime ministers have prominent political ties — from Indira Gandhi in India to South Korea's Park Geunhye and Corazon Aquino in the Philippines. But in recent years, there have been some positive developments — Taiwan's first female President Tsai Ing-Wen, for instance, doesn't come from a political dynasty.

President Draupadi Murmu

The same applies to current Indian President Draupadi Murmu — the first tribal woman to serve as head of state of the world's largest democracy.

Despite Japan never having a female prime minister, many people there believe that women and men make equally good political leaders, revealed a 2023 Pew Research Centre study.

For now, Eto says it a positive sign that Japan's ruling party is actively appointing women as ministers, despite some analysts questioning whether Prime Minister Fumio Kishida is just trying to boost his approval ratings.

Whatever Kishida's reasons for raising the number of female ministers from two to a record five, "increasing women in higher or leading positions encourages women to improve their status in politics, economy and society," said Eto.

— DW



SPORTS

Alcaraz sets up semi-final meeting with Medvedev

Novak Djokovic also reached last four after injury forced Alex de Minaur to pull out from their quarterfinal match on Wednesday







LONDON: Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz recovered from a slow start to beat Tommy Paul on Tuesday night and set up another Wimbledon semi-final against Daniil Medvedev - a repeat of their meeting from last year.

Meanwhile, Novak Djokovic is through to the semi-finals after Alex de Minaur withdrew from their last-eight tie because of a hip injury on Wednesday.

The Australian ninth seed was scheduled to take on 24-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic in Wednesday's second match on Centre Court.

His withdrawal helps Djokovic in his bid to win an eighth title at Wimbledon and move level with Roger Federer. He has now moved into a 13th Wimbledon semi-final - a joint Open era record with Federer.

Alcaraz defeats Paul, Medvedev sinks Sinner

Medvedev, who defeated world No.1 Jannik Sinner, will be looking to avenge his defeat in the 2023 last-four match that Alcaraz won in straight sets on his way to taking the title.

Alcaraz was a set and a break of serve down on Court One against American Paul, the 12th seed, but recovered to win 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, 6-2 in a match that lasted three hours 11 minutes.

Meanwhile, Medvedev had to fight every bit as hard as he defeated Sinner 6-7 (7-9), 6-4, 7-6 (7-4), 2-6, 6-3 win in four hours on Centre Court.

Alcaraz has already won three Grand Slam titles at the age of 21, while Medvedev, the 2021 US Open champion, will be aiming to reach the Wimbledon final for the first time.

"Daniil's a really great player. It's the same semi-final as last year so hopefully I'm going to get the same result," said Alcaraz.

"He just won against Sinner, the best player right now, so he's in really good shape and I have to play my best.

"I have to believe in myself and try to keep going. It's going to be difficult but I'm going to enjoy it."

Italian top seed Sinner, who was hampered by illness, had won his most recent five encounters against Medvedev - including January's Australian Open final.

But Russian fifth seed Medvedev avenged that Melbourne result.

"I knew if I wanted to beat Jannik it needs to be a tough match," said Medvedev.

"I'm really happy to win, really happy with my game and looking forward."

Devastated: De Minaur

Djokovic, 37, is handed a walkover and will face either Italy's Lorenzo Musetti or American 13th seed Taylor Fritz in the semi-finals.

"I am devastated to pull out due to a hip injury," De Minaur said.

"I felt a loud crack during the last three points of my match against [Arthur] Fils.

"[I] got a scan yesterday and it confirmed that this was the injury and with high risk of making it worse if I was to step on court."

De Minaur defeated Frenchman Fils in four sets on Monday to reach his first quarter-final at Wimbledon.

Rybakina in semis

Former champion Elena Rybakina cruised into the Wimbledon semi-finals with a clinical win over Elina Svitolina on Centre Court on Wednesday. Kazakhstan's Rybakina was a level above Svitolina in a 6-3, 6-2 victory that took just 62 minutes, and will play in the last four for the first time since she won the competition in 2022.

The 25-year-old will face Czech Barbora Krejcikova, who battled past Jelena Ostapenko on Court One to reach the last four at Wimbledon for the first time.

The result ended Svitolina's run, with the Ukrainian unable to repeat her semi-final appearance of last year.

Krejcikova started the 2024 season as the world No.10, but she has been hampered by a back injury and illness, causing her to slip to 32nd in the rankings.

But a 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) win to move past fellow Roland Garros champion Ostapenko marks an impressive return to form for the 28-year-old.

The 31st seed had not advanced past the last eight of a Grand Slam since triumphing at the French Open in 2021.

"It's an unbelievable moment that I'm experiencing right now in my tennis career," Krejcikova said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Italian seventh seed Jasmine Paolini won 6-2, 6-1 against American 19th seed Emma Navarro in the quarter-finals.

The increasingly impressive Paolini needed just 58 minutes to storm into her first Wimbledon semi-final with a blistering win over Navarro. - Agencies

T20I SERIES

India take 2-1 lead against Zimbabwe

HARARE: Shubman Gill slammed a half-century and Ruturaj Gaikwad hit 49 while Washington Sundar took with a three-wicket haul as India beat host Zimbabwe by 23 runs in the third match to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match T20I series on Wednesday.

Gill scored a 49-ball 66 opening the batting and Yashasvi Jaiswal, his partner, slammed 36 from 27, setting the platform for a 28-ball 49 from Gaikwad that helped India to 182/4. Sundar then picked up three wickets, including two in his first over, for 15 runs to quell chances of a Zimbabwe fightback.

Zimbabwe managed to delay the inevitable thanks to a fantastic half-century from Dion Myers, his first in T20Is, and his 77-run partnership with Clive Madande.

Jaiswal started with two fours and a six in the opening over. Gill did the same in the second over. India were 29 in two overs, and then 49 in four. Then Blessing Muzarabani found his length and the pace to bowl on a two-paced surface. Sikandar Raza's spin was tough to put away. And from 54/0 in five overs, India crawled to 67/0 at the end of eight before Jaiswal's dismissal.



Abhishek Sharma had a brief stay in the middle, which brought together Gill and Gaikwad in the 11th over. Gill sped up to bring up a 36-ball fifty, his first as India's T20I captain. Some late blows helped India to finish at 182, thanks to two half-century partnerships - 67 off 50 between Gill and Jaiswal and 72 off 44 between Gill and Gaikwad.

Tadiwanashe Marumani belted a couple of fours in the opening over bowled by Khaleel Ahmed - in for Mukesh Kumar - but fell trying to repeat the dose in his next over. From the other end, Avesh Khan first dismissed Madhevere, who patted one to short cover, and then Brian Bennett, thanks to a spectacular flying catch from Ravi Bishnoi at backward point.

When Raza swung across the line to hole out to deep square-leg off Sundar's second ball, the writing seemed to be on the wall. It got better for India - and worse for Zimbabwe - when substitute fielder Riyan Parag took a sharp catch at slip to dismiss Johnathan Campbell four balls later off Washington.

But Myers and Madande hit a combined six fours and two sixes before Sundar dismissed Madande for 37 to end the 77-run partnership. Myers reached his maiden half-century in T20Is in 45 balls, with five fours and a six but Zimbabwe ended at 159/6, with Myers (65* in 49 balls, with seven fours and a six) and Masakadza (18* in 10 balls, with a four and six).

Brief scores: India: 182/4 (Shubman Gill 66, Ruturaj Gaikwad 49; Sikandar Raza 2/24) beat Zimbabwe 159/6 (Dion Myers 65*, Clive Madande 37; Washington Sundar 3/15). -ANI

YOUNG OMAN GOLFER

Adam to play at R&A Junior Open

MUSCAT: Teenager Adam Al Barwani will represent Oman at The R&A Junior Open golf championship at Kilmarnock in Scotland from July 15-17. Established in 1994, The R&A Junior Open is played every two years.

The event is contested by U16 boy or a girl golfer from federations around the world. A total of 120 players from 71 countries will bet a the 2024 event.

Adam. 15, was selected based on his performance in the GO-juniors Tour, Oman's domestic series of junior events. Adam has previously represented Oman in age-group regional events over the past couple of years.

Ahead of his departure, Adam said: "I am excited to represent my country at The R&A Junior Open this year. A few years ago, I had a chance to visit the course during the Oman junior national team's training camp. The tournament features the best U16 players from each country, so I am looking forward to compete and learn from the experienced golfers. I will also get an opportunity to attend The Open and I am really looking forward to the experience."



His Highness Sayyid Azzan bin Kais Tarik Al Said, Oman Golf Association chairman said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for Adam. We thank The R&A for their ongoing support. It will be a privilege for Adam to visit The Open Championship. Adam has shown great dedication as part of the national junior team and has deservedly earned his place."

TRI-NATION TOURNAMENT

Oman ready for ICC World Cup League 2 in Scotland

MUSCAT: A new venue and a changed format (50-over-a-side) welcomed Oman national cricket team in Scotland as they arrived earlier this week to take part in the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 (CWCL2), which will be held from July 16-24.

Following the disappointment of the ICC T20 World Cup in West Indies, where Duleep Mendis' men lost all their four games in the group stage, the team regrouped at home and had a brief camp before departing for Scotland. Aaqib Ilyas, who led Oman at the T20 World Cup, has been retained as skipper.

Three changes have been made to the squad that took part in the T20 World Cup with Jay Odedra, Samay Shrivastava and Karan Sonawale drafted into the team. The players who have been dropped are Naseem Khushi, Mohammad Nadeem and Shakeel Ahmed.

The Men in Red are scheduled to play a 50-over tri-nation tournament as part of the CWCL2 and will face hosts Scotland and Namibia in the series.



Both Scotland and Namibia were coincidentally part of the same group at the T20 World Cup. Oman lost to Namibia in a Super Over in Barbados and then were outplayed by Scotland in Antigua.

Coach Mendis was confident that the team, which has few changes from the T20 squad, will put up a strong performance in the CWCL2, where Oman had finished behind Scotland in the previous cycle to qualify for the ICC ODI World Cup qualifier in Zimbabwe.

The ICC has tweaked the format and in the current cycle, has included eight teams in the CWCL2.

Oman meet Scotland on 16 July and then meet Namibia on 18July. They play again with Oman taking on the hosts on 22 July and Namibia on 24 July.

Prior to the main competition, Oman will take on Scotland A team in two 50-over practice games on 11-12 July at Forfarshire CC's Forthill ground, the venue of CWCL2.

Mendis said: "These warm-up games will give us a good idea of the conditions here in Scotland. It is always nice to play few friendly games ahead of the main competition. The weather is much better than Oman at this time and the players are getting used to the conditions having arrived well in advance."

The head coach added: "Thanks to Oman Cricket Board, we have arrived early to acclimatise and I am sure the boys will perform better on these hybrid wickets."

About CWCL2

The 2024-2026 ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 (CWCL2) is the second edition that forms part of the 2027 ODI World Cup qualification process.

With Super League scraped, the CWCL2 has been increased from seven to eight teams and Scotland are the defending champions. The teams participating are Canada, Namibia, Netherlands, Scotland, Nepal, USA, UAE and Oman.

The top four will advance to the next round following a total of 144 matches and then play the final qualifier featuring 10 teams, with four top teams joining the top eight for the World Cup.

Oman team: Aaqib Ilyas (c), Zeeshan Maqsood, Ayaan Khan, Kashyap Prajapati, Shoaib Khan, Karan Sonavale, Pratik Athawale, Jay Odedra, Khalid Kail, Mehran Khan, Bilal Khan, Kaleemullah, Fayyaz Butt, Samay Shrivastava, Rafiullah.

Support staff: Duleep Mendis (head coach), Evert Laubscher (assistant coach), Champaka Ramanayake (bowling coach), Zeeshan Siddiqui (team analyst), Sean Nowak (team physio), Amjad Khan (masseur).

Match schedule

Tuesday 16th July:
Scotland vs Oman
Thursday 18th July:
Oman vs Namibia
Saturday 20th July:
Scotland vs Namibia
Monday 22nd July:
Scotland vs Oman
Wednesday 24th July:
Oman vs Namibia
Friday 26th July:
Scotland vs Namibia

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by September 2024 reaching $84.53, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by $1.01 from the price of Tuesday, which was $85.54. - ONA



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,695.58 points, up by 0.11% from previous close. The Shariah Index ended down by 0.37% at 453.23 points. United Finance, up 3.33%, was the top gainer while, National Gas, down 8.85%, was the top loser.

Aggregate GCC project awards touch $51.7bn during 2nd quarter

Despite continuing lower oil output, contracts awarded by Saudi Arabia during Q2-2024 recorded a 9.9 percent increase to reach $30.6 billion as compared to $27.8 billion during Q2-2023



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Total project awards in the GCC witnessed a drop during the second quarter of 2024 mainly due to the unprecedented slump of project awards in Qatar coupled with steep fall in awards in the UAE.

Aggregate Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) project awards declined by 19.7 percent to $51.7 billion during the second quarter of 2024 as compared to $64.3 billion during the second quarter of 2023. GCC contract awards were evenly distributed during Q2-2024 as three out of the six countries in the GCC registered year-on-year (y-o-y) growth in their project awards while the remaining three markets witnessed y-o-y declines during the quarter.

Despite continuing lower oil output, contracts awarded by Saudi Arabia during Q2-2024 recorded a 9.9 percent increase to reach $30.6 billion as compared to $27.8 billion during Q2-2023. One of the main drivers of project activity growth in the Kingdom during the quarter is the acceleration of Neom projects as the Kingdom maintains its focus on delivering the 2030 Vision programme on time. In its latest Regional Economic Outlook, the IMF has revised down real GDP growth of all the six GCC member states citing regional insecurity and continuing oil production cuts. On the back of this economic environment, it is understandable that GCC contracts awarded in the region retreated y-o-y during the quarter.

Total contracts awarded in the UAE declined by 23.6 percent y-o-y during Q2-2024 to reach $16.3 billion as compared to $21.4 billion during Q2-2023. On the other hand, aggregate projects awarded in Qatar dropped 98.5 percent y-o-y during Q2-2024 to reach $162 million as compared to $10.5 billion in Q2-2023.

This steep fall of Qatari contracts awarded has dragged down the aggregate growth of GCC contracts awarded during Q2-2024. It is noteworthy to underline that Qatar has had one of its best years in 2023 in terms of value of contracts awarded as a result of the $10 billion LNG project awarded to develop the North Field South. Aggregate projects awarded in Kuwait jumped 33 percent y-o-y to reach $2.3 billion up from $1.7 billion in Q2-2023.

In terms of sectors, Q2-2024 witnessed a jump in the value of projects awarded in the Gas, Power and Transport sectors. Total GCC Gas Sector contracts awarded during the quarter jumped 17.3 percent to reach $14.0 billion as compared to $12 billion during Q2-2023. Moreover, the total value of contracts awarded in the GCC Power and GCC Transport sectors reached $9.8 billion each recording a growth of 9.7 percent and 27.3 percent respectively.

GCC projects market outlook

According to MEED Projects, the total value of projects that are planned or in pipeline in the GCC stood at $3.5 trillion as of 2, July, 2024. Saudi Arabia comprised the lion's share of ongoing or upcoming GCC projects (54 percent or USD 1.87 trillion) followed by the UAE which has $856.9 billion and Oman with estimated ongoing or upcoming projects at $245.5 billion. However, the picture was different in terms of only upcoming projects in the region excluding ongoing contracts. Total GCC projects in the pipeline (upcoming projects) reached $1.43 trillion as of 2 July, 2024. Expectedly, Saudi Arabia also dominated the Mena region's projects in the pipeline representing 51.6 percent ($737.2 million) followed by the UAE which comprised 20.4 percent ($291.4 million)

Total value for upcoming projects for Kuwait reached $112.4 million during July-2024 comprising 7.9 percent of the total GCC upcoming projects. In terms of sector representation, the Construction Sector comprised the largest sector, 29.8 percent or $426.4 billion, of upcoming projects in the GCC followed by the Transport Sector which comprised 20.8 percent or $297.9 billion of upcoming projects in the region.

Future oil and gas projects are expected to play a significant role in the GCC and MENA regions' future contract awards.

According to MEED Projects, currently there are over $408 billion worth of planned and an awarded oil and gas projects in the Mena region of which Saudi Arabia comprises nearly 19 percent ($77 billion) followed by the UAE at 16.5 percent ($67.4 billion) and Qatar at 8.7 percent ($35.3 billion). Two of the top ten largest by value of upcoming oil and gas projects in the Mena region were in the UAE; namely the Upper Zakum full field development project valued at $16 billion and the Upper Zakum full field development : UZ1000 expansion project valued at $6.6 billion.

BLOCKS 3&4

Tethys June oil production in Oman reaches 235,925 barrels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Tethys Oil's share of the production, before government take, from Blocks 3&4 onshore the Sultanate of Oman, in June 2024 amounted to 235,925 barrels of oil, corresponding to 7,864 barrels of oil per day.

The Official Selling Price (OSP) for Oman Export Blend Crude Oil for the month of June 2024 was $89.30 per barrel. The OSP, as published by the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is the benchmark price for Tethys Oil's monthly oil sales excluding trading and quality adjustments.



Tethys Oil, through its wholly owned subsidiary Tethys Oil Block 3 & 4 Ltd, has a 30 percent interest in Blocks 3&4. Partners are Mitsui E&P Middle East with 20 percent and the operator CC Energy Development (Oman branch) holding the remaining 50 percent. Tethys Oil is an oil exploration and production company with focus on onshore areas with known oil discoveries. The company's core area is the Sultanate of Oman, where it holds interests in Blocks 3&4, Block 49, Block 56 and Block 58.

Tethys Oil has net working interest 2P reserves of 21.7 million barrels of oil (mmbo) and networking interest 2C Contingent Resources of 15.5 mmbo and had an average oil production of 8,818 barrels per day during 2023. The company's shares are listed on Nasdaq Stockholm (TETY).

CLOSED-END FUND

Jabal Real Estate Investment Fund listed on Muscat Stock Exchange

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) celebrated the listing of Jabal Real Estate Investment Fund, which boasts a capital portfolio of OMR17.4 million that aims to invest in a variety of real estate assets.

The fund's units were offered between 13 and 27 June 2024. It comprises 174 million units, each valued at 100 baisas. Applications from investors in the first day of subscription exceeded the minimum target capital of the Fund.

Established as a closed-end fund under real estate investment in accordance with MSX regulations, the fund has been carefully structured to meet the needs of investors. -ONA



OMAN HOUSING BANK

OHB campaign to streamline financing requests for citizens

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Housing Bank (OHB) has launched "Wasalnakum" campaign, aimed at enhancing its developmental role across Oman's governorates. The initiative seeks to provide citizens with comprehensive guidance on completing their financing requests via the Iskan electronic platform.

The Iskan platform offers a suite of services to streamline the financing process for citizens. Users can check the status of their applications, determine the financing amount they qualify for, and anticipate the timeline for receiving their funding. Additionally, the platform provides step-by-step instructions on how to register using their civil number, making the process accessible and user-friendly.

By launching this campaign, Oman Housing Bank aims to strengthen its engagement with citizens and improve the efficiency of its financing services, thereby supporting the broader development goals of Oman.

The "Wasalnakum" campaign will be rolled out across several governorates and wilayats, including Al Dhahirah in the Wilayat of Ibri, North Al Batinah in the Wilayat of Suwaiq, South Al Sharqiyah in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Muscat Governorate in the Wilayat of Bausher, and Dhofar Governorate in the Wilayat of Salalah.

Dedicated booth

Citizens will be able to visit Oman Housing Bank's dedicated booth, where employees will provide a detailed explanation of the Iskan electronic platform and answer all inquiries. The bank had previously launched the "Iskan" programme, which aims to expedite the submission of supported housing finance applications for citizens listed on the waiting lists of Oman Housing Bank and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. This is achieved through effective partnerships with various local banks in the Sultanate, both traditional and Islamic, which have signed cooperation agreements. These agreements facilitate the processing of waiting list applications through local banks. Oman Housing Bank team has worked to build these partnerships to meet the financing options of eligible citizens, following a prudent approach that ensures satisfaction and fair inclusivity.



Commenting on the launch of the campaign, Arif bin Maqbool Al Zaabi, General Manager of the Oman Housing Bank, said: "Due to the numerous inquiries received by the bank from citizens in various governorates, especially those locals that don't have a Oman Housing bank branches, we decided to expand our roles through the 'Wasalnakum' campaign by going to the cities that we don't have a presence in. This is part of our commitment to provide services and to accelerate financing requests through partnerships with local banks, aiming to empower many Omani families.

"The Iskan platform offers many electronic services, such as submitting applications electronically from any geographical location, checking their turn details, eligibility criteria for housing finance, choosing the bank for their housing finance, and reviewing all financing details from application submission to disbursement. Through the electronic platform, citizens can accept or reject offers from chosen banks after reviewing the terms, repayment periods, and monthly instalments."

He added, "Oman Housing Bank is a key developmental pillar supporting the housing movement in the Sultanate for citizens eligible for government-supported housing finance. We strive to be a leader in accelerating the housing and construction movement, contributing to the Sultanate's economic development. The bank excels in providing services to clients, fulfilling the government's aspirations to extend development to various governorates and wilayats."

"In the near future, the bank's roles will expand further by signing several agreements with various real estate development companies, providing options for citizens who wish to purchase housing units in the upcoming integrated housing cities that the Ministry of Housing & Urban Planning is building.

"This step aims to offer citizens various financing options for building, purchasing, or both, and other services. Oman Housing Bank operates with a strategic vision to achieve development by distributing supported housing finance across all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, believing that the prosperity of individuals leads to the prosperity of communities and institutions."

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

United Finance, up 3.33%, was the top gainer while National Gas, down 8.85%, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,695.58 points, up by 0.11% from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.37% at 453.23 points. United Finance, up 3.33%, was the top gainer while National Gas, down 8.85%, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Oman Cables Industry were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 533 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of RO 2.27 million, with more than 8.23 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 12 advanced, 10 declined, and 26 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for RO 264K while domestic investors were net buyers for RO 145K, followed by foreign investors for RO 118K worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,630.61 points, up 0.04%. Prices of United Finance, National Bank Oman were up by 3.33%, 1.56% respectively. Prices of Muscat Finance, Al Anwar Investment, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Muscat, OMINVEST were down by 2.08%, 1.28%, 1.27%, 0.40%, 0.29% respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,955.52 points, up 0.4%. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Galfar Engineering, Al Anwar Ceramics, Oman Cement, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 1.33%, 1.25%, 1.08%, 1.03%, 0.36% respectively. Prices of were down by respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.07% before closing at 1,827.21 points. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Phoenix Power, Sembcorp Salalah, Sharqiyah Desalination, Oman Telecom were up by 2.63%, 1.64%, 0.97%, 0.74%, 0.20% respectively. Prices of National Gas, Abraj Energy, Shell Oman Marketing were down by 8.85%, 1.01%, 0.85% respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,695.58	4,652.39	4,695.58	4,690.59	4.99	0.11
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,630.61	7,539.27	7,630.61	7,627.53	3.08	0.04
Industry Index	5,958.35	5,931.78	5,955.52	5,931.78	23.74	0.40
Services Index	1,829.46	1,821.43	1,827.21	1,825.97	1.24	0.07
MSX Shariah Index	454.90	453.01	453.23	454.90	-1.67	-0.37
MSX TR INDEX	6,522.64	6,462.64	6,522.64	6,515.70	6.94	0.11
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,669.16	8,565.39	8,669.16	8,665.66	3.50	0.04
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,874.52	6,843.86	6,871.25	6,843.86	27.39	0.40
SERVICES TR IDX	2,121.63	2,112.31	2,119.01	2,117.57	1.44	0.07
FIXED INCOME INDEX	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	1,069.10	0.00	0.00

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,230,477	2,270,005	533	24,357,854,143	12	10	26	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, JULY 10

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	MARKET CAP
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	91,188	5,407	5	0.059	0.062	0.059	0.062	0.060	0.002	3.333	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.100	22,079,892
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	341,607	26,114	16	0.076	0.078	0.076	0.078	0.076	0.002	2.632	0.078	0.076	0.078	0.100	55,723,695
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	85,705	22,283	5	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.256	0.004	1.563	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.100	422,746,052
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	106,034	19,618	12	0.185	0.187	0.185	0.187	0.185	0.002	1.081	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.100	41,140,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	10,779	4,232	5	0.390	0.394	0.390	0.394	0.390	0.004	1.026	0.394	0.394	0.395	0.100	130,363,848
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	99,538	10,327	10	0.105	0.105	0.103	0.104	0.103	0.001	0.971	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.100	99,275,483
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	5,000	1,385	1	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.277	0.276	0.001	0.362	0.277	0.277	0.279	0.100	34,596,735
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	49,834	50,125	6	1.005	1.007	1.005	1.007	1.005	0.002	0.199	1.007	0.999	1.006	0.100	755,250,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	1,001	82	1	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.082	0.089	0.100	9,993,750
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	30,000	2,280	4	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.076	0.080	0.100	6,840,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	12,800	5,504	3	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.000	0.000	0.430	0.415	0.439	0.100	51,600,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	10,000	750	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.072	0.075	0.100	15,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	828	300	1	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.360	0.360	0.000	0.000	0.362	0.362	0.362	0.100	85,107,600
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	1,530,757	210,834	50	0.138	0.138	0.137	0.138	0.138	0.000	0.000	0.138	0.137	0.140	0.100	769,659,985
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	79,550	23,043	11	0.289	0.292	0.289	0.289	0.289	0.000	0.000	0.289	0.289	0.289	0.100	188,122,882
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	410,024	30,752	24	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.076	0.100	50,616,557
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	5,271	1,291	2	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.000	0.000	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.100	17,245,550
OM0000009072	OQ GAS NETWORKS	986,788	138,473	125	0.141	0.141	0.140	0.141	0.141	0.000	0.000	0.141	0.141	0.144	0.100	610,617,973
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	900	308	2	0.340	0.344	0.340	0.344	0.345	-0.001	-0.290	0.344	0.000	0.351	0.100	229,917,707
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	804,200	201,110	22	0.252	0.252	0.249	0.250	0.251	-0.001	-0.398	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.100	1,876,599,266
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	20	16	1	0.818	0.818	0.818	0.818	0.825	-0.007	-0.848	0.818	0.800	0.818	0.100	77,710,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	205,772	60,544	44	0.297	0.297	0.294	0.295	0.298	-0.003	-1.007	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.100	227,209,000
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	539,744	42,106	23	0.078	0.079	0.078	0.078	0.079	-0.001	-1.266	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.100	13,650,000
Total	23	5,407,340	856,885	374												

Parallel Market

OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	1,123,618	68,461	37	0.060	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.061	0.001	1.639	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.100	90,681,291
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	1,810	414	2	0.229	0.229	0.229	0.229	0.226	0.003	1.327	0.229	0.226	0.248	0.100	10,480,368
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	118,280	19,054	18	0.163	0.163	0.160	0.162	0.160	0.002	1.250	0.162	0.160	0.166	0.100	32,883,804
OM0000004669	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	5,000	680	1	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.135	0.001	0.741	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.100	13,301,094
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	5,000	370	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.082	0.082	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.100	16,209,508
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL INDUSTRIES	180	9	1	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.045	0.050	0.100	3,125,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	15,962	7,087	5	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.000	0.000	0.444	0.444	0.444	0.100	69,930,000
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	295,000	882,050	3	2.990	2.990	2.990	2.990	2.990	0.000	0.000	2.990	2.850	2.990	0.100	268,203,000
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	52,610	7,852	3	0.135	0.150	0.135	0.150	0.150	0.000	0.000	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.100	352,448,620
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	2,000	460	2	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.230	0.230	0.242	0.100	14,076,983
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	855	697	1	0.815	0.815	0.815	0.815	0.815	0.000	0.000	0.815	0.000	0.815	0.100	49,939,125
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	19,653	6,079	4	0.315	0.315	0.309	0.310	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.310	0.300	0.310	0.100	25,234,853
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	150,754	15,678	4	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.104	0.110	0.100	232,643,115
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	40,000	5,600	5	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.100	233,717,400
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	11,404	867	2	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.073	0.080	0.100	11,821,830
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	22,000	1,410	6	0.064	0.065	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.000	0.000	0.064	0.062	0.064	0.100	31,413,529
OM0000009569	JABAL REIF	19,220	1,936	6	0.103	0.103	0.099	0.099	0.100	-0.001	-1.000	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.100	17,226,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	86,500	6,656	9	0.077	0.077	0.076	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.076	0.085	0.100	16,337,860
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	48,000	2,273	6	0.048	0.048	0.047	0.047	0.048	-0.001	-2.083	0.047	0.047	0.048	0.100	14,435,877
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	11,360	1,029	4	0.090	0.091	0.090	0.090	0.096	-0.006	-6.250	0.090	0.090	0.091	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	303,668	32,770	31	0.111	0.111	0.103	0.103	0.113	-0.010	-8.850	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.100	8,755,000
Total	21	2,332,874	1,061,433	151												

REPORT

Digital payments changed consumer behaviour

NEW DELHI: The surge in digital payments in India for online purchases has led to a permanent shift in the behaviour of consumers, a report by Kearney observed in its report titled, "How Urban India Pays" adding that even it is influencing offline transactions as well.

According to the observations made by the report, a significant 90 per cent said that they prefer digital payments for online shoping. Similarly, about 50 consumers were found using online payment methods during their offline purchases.

More than 85 per cent of the respondent indicated a strong preference for digital payments for discretionary spending, such as for electronics, clothes, and footwear, as per the report.

It further added that millennials and Gen X are at the forefront of adopting digital payment instruments, though Boomers also exhibit significant usage, particularly with cards and digital wallets.

Notably, both men and women utilise digital payments in about 72 per cent of their transactions, underscoring gender parity in digital payment adoption, as per the report.

About 60 per cent people participated in the survey highlighted convenience as the primary reason behind their choice of digital payments. Additionally, consumers are also influenced by the rewards or incentives for digital payments. -ANI



STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RELATIONS



5th Japan-Arab Economic Forum kicks off in Tokyo

TOKYO: The fifth session of the Japan-Arab Economic Forum launched in Tokyo, Japan yesterday. The two-day forum, organised by the Secretariat General of the Arab League and Japan's Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and Economy, Trade and Industry, aims to explore ways to strengthen economic relations between Japan and the Arab countries.

At the outset of the forum, the economic and commercial conference was held between the public and private sectors from the Arab and Japanese sides.

During his speech at the conference, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States Ahmed Aboul Gheit emphasized that the private sector remains a key player in enhancing trade exchange between the two sides, calling for stronger partnerships between government and private sectors, as well as between companies.

He urged the Japanese government to continue encouraging its companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to expand their activities in the Arab region. Likewise, he encouraged Arab companies to take advantage of opportunities in the Japanese market, expressing his aspiration to elevate the partnership to a strategic level to align with the aspirations of the people and the economic potential of both sides.

The Secretary-General pointed out that there are several fields that could witness progress between the two sides, including partnerships in education, energy transition, digital technology, health, artificial intelligence (AI), and more. He noted that the Japan-Arab Economic Forum could play a significant role in promoting partnership opportunities in these fields and developing them in the future.

The fifth session of the Japan-Arab Economic Forum, held at the ministerial level, addresses topics related to resilient economic development sectors between Japan and Arab countries. These include energy security for both supply and demand sides, digital infrastructure, innovation with emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and the metaverse, in addition to aspects of sustainable economic development such as clean energy technologies, sustainable development goals initiatives, and human resource development in energy and digitization.

The forum's activities feature seminars and visits organized by the Japanese side, including the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japanese National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST). An exhibition is also being held to facilitate participation from relevant stakeholders from both the Arab and Japanese sides.

The forum is held in accordance with the memorandum of cooperation signed in 2009 between Japan and the Arab League to enhance cooperation between Japan and the Arab countries, as it was established as a framework for dialogue at the ministerial level to enhance economic relations between Japan and the Arab countries through cooperation in a wide range of economic fields, including trade, investment, energy, science, technology and human resources development.-ONA

LIFESTYLE

DISCOVER

GENÈVE GENÈVE:

A Vibrant Summer Festival of Creativity

The City of Geneva, the Canton of Geneva, and the esteemed "Fez Genève" Association are delighted to unveil a grand new summer event: the Genève Genève Festival. This vibrant event will take place from August 14 to 18, 2024, and promises to be an extraordinary celebration of culture, community, and creativity.

The festival aims to dissolve the barriers between organisers and spectators, crafting a seamless and vibrant experience for Genevans, tourists, and visitors alike. This celebration breathes life into the city, welcoming all—residents, visitors, workers, educators, performers, and more who contribute to the vibrant tapestry of daily Geneva life.

Reflecting on the festival's inclusive spirit, Marie Barbey-Chappuis, Administrative Advisor for the Department of Security and Sports, shared, "Following the tremendous success of Feu Ô Lac last year, we wanted to once again offer a major summer event that brings together the entire community, this time allowing a private association to design an original programme."

Delphine Bachmann, head of the Canton's Department of Economy and Employment, emphasised the festival's economic impact, noting, "This event will undoubtedly enhance Geneva's visibility as a destination, benefitting our local economy."

Genève Genève promises an array of activities to captivate audiences of all ages. From the quays to the water, the festival will feature concerts, dance nights, performing arts, children's activities, local gastronomy, and a unique lakeside spectacle. All activities and concerts will be free of charge, ensuring accessibility for everyone.

The Genève Genève Festival will unfold across several Harbor locations: Jardin Anglais, Rotonde du Mont-Blanc, Platform de la Machine, and Quai Général-Guisan. The City of Geneva will continue sponsoring events integrated into the program, including the Soapbox Race on Avenue de France, the Rollerskate Party and Paddle Parade on Quai Wilson, and the Jass Tournament on Quai General Guisan. The Jardin Anglais, serving as the festival's green lung, will host concerts by Geneva's top artists, food and drink stalls, and playful spaces with a Ferris wheel and small train. The Rotonde du Mont-Blanc will transform into a vibrant dance hub where visitors can learn swing, salsa, or afro-house steps in the afternoon and dance to lively concerts in the evening. At Quai Général-Guisan, nestled in a secluded harbour cove, festivalgoers can rediscover their love for music with classical performances by Geneva's finest ensembles, offering a rich repertoire that captivates listeners without the need for a grand theatre backdrop.

The festival will culminate in a spectacular show on the water in front of Plage des Eaux-Vives. Co-organised and co-financed by the Canton of Geneva and the City of Geneva, with support from private sponsors, the show will feature visual effects, music, and elements from two performances of approximately 45 minutes each, scheduled for August 16 and 17 at 10 p.m. The show, produced by the Mapping Festival, promises to be a mesmerising highlight of Genève Genève.

Geneva's commitment to the environment, fair working conditions for all collaborators and artists, and the joy of offering an inclusive, high-quality festival experience remains steadfast.

Genève Genève promises a celebration that transcends boundaries and brings our community together in the heart of the city cherished by all.











SPORTS

Yamal makes history as Spain beat France to reach Euro final

At 16 years and 362 days, he became the youngest man to score in the tournament's history





MUNICH: Lamine Yamal became the youngest goalscorer in European Championship history as Spain beat France 2-1 in an absorbing contest to reach the final of Euro 2024 on Tuesday.

After Randal Kolo Muani headed in Kylian Mbappe's cross to give France an early lead, Yamal curled home a stunning strike from outside the box to write his name into the record books by scoring at the age of 16 years and 362 days.

Yamal's goal came in the 21st minute, and Spain were ahead just four minutes later as Dani Olmo's shot was turned home by France defender Jules Kounde.

France had to come out fighting after a thrilling first half - and they did just that, with Aurelien Tchouameni having a header saved and Mbappe denied from an ambitious effort.

The France captain, playing without a face mask for the first time since breaking his nose at the start of the tournament, had a big chance to equalise late on - but he shot high over the bar in a moment that summed up his recent form.

While Spain have been the most attacking side at the tournament to date, here they showed they have the defence to match as they stayed on course for a fourth European Championship title.

France, for their part, came up short in attack against a side that will take some stopping when they face either England or the Netherlands in Sunday's final.

Spain are deserved finalists having been the best side at these Euros, winning all six of their games and scoring a tournament-high 13 goals.

Their shining lights have undoubtedly been their younger players, with Yamal and 21-year-old winger Nico Williams grabbing the headlines at various points.

This time it was all about Yamal.

The forward is not yet 17 but has already had a brilliant breakout season at Barcelona, during which he became both their youngest ever player and goalscorer.

He has taken that to the international stage by becoming the youngest man to score at the European Championship, showing a confidence far beyond his years.

Yamal looked nerveless in the build-up to the biggest game of his career, and when he had the chance let fly with a swerving strike straight into the top corner.

It was a goal that underlined the teenager has everything needed to become one of the world's best players.

France fall short

France reached the World Cup final two years ago and undoubtedly had the quality of players to replicate that run here.

But a mixture of reserved tactics and Mbappe's injury played their part in them falling just short.

Mbappe, who scored only one goal at Euro 2024, has not looked right since he broke his nose in the opening game against Austria.

A great cross to set up France's goal here suggested he may have found his form at just the right time, but after that there was little to be seen of him in the crucial moments.

So Didier Deschamps' side depart having scored just four goals, with only one from one their players in open play. - Agencies

'A superstar is born'



MUNICH: Every so often, a goal is scored at a European Championship that stands the test of time. It is remembered, replayed, and talked about for decades.

Marco van Basten's angled volley at Euro 1988 is one. Paul Gascoigne's individual run and finish at Euro 1996 is another, as is Karel Poborsky's chip at the same tournament.

Lamine Yamal's history making goal for Spain against France in the semi-finals of Euro 2024 can be added to the list.

With Spain trailing 1-0, Yamal curled a brilliant strike from outside the box into the top corner to send him into the history books.

"A superstar is born," former England striker Gary Lineker said on BBC One. "It was the moment of the match, possibly the moment of the tournament."

"Just incredible," added ex-England striker Alan Shearer. "We've been talking about him all tournament and saying what a ridiculously young age it is.

"To do that, it's just outrageous."

'A touch of genius'

The goal, which had fans inside the Allianz Arena and around the world gasping as it was replayed in slow motion, was all the more impressive because of its timing.

This was at 1-0 down in the semi-final of a major tournament. It was a high-pressure moment, but one he handled effortlessly.

At no stage in the build-up to the heavyweight contest did Yamal show signs of nerves.

He was smiling and joking with his team-mates on the pitch in the hours before kick-off, and carried that confidence into his performance.

"We saw a touch of genius," Spain boss Luis de la Fuente said of Yamal's goal.

"We all need to take care of him. I would like him to work with the same humility and keep his feet on the ground, to keep learning.

"He looks like a much more experienced player to be honest. I celebrate that he is in our team, that he is Spanish.

"We count on him and hopefully we can enjoy him for years to come."

Yamal turns 17 on 13 July - one day before the final of Euro 2024, in which Spain will face either England or the Netherlands.

Giving an insight into his mentality, the teenager said all he wanted to do to celebrate his birthday was "win, win, win and win". - Agencies

BEAT CANADA IN SEMIS



Messi leads Argentina into Copa America final

NEW JERSEY: Inter Miami forward Lionel Messi inspired Argentina to the Copa America final with a 2-0 win over Canada on Tuesday.

The 37-year-old scored six minutes into the second half to double Argentina's lead when he deflected an effort from Chelsea midfielder Enzo Fernandez past Canada goalkeeper Maxime Crepeau.

Manchester City striker Julian Alvarez had given the World Cup holders the lead when he latched on to a pass from Atletico Madrid's Rodrigo de Paul and converted from close range.

It's the sixth time in the last eight editions that Argentina, the 15-time Copa America winners, have reached the final.

The final, against either Uruguay or Colombia, will be Angel di Maria's final appearance for Argentina before his international retirement and there are also doubts over Messi's long-term future. "Let's enjoy what we are experiencing as a national team, as a group. It is not easy to be in a final again, to compete again to be champions," Messi told TyC Sports.

"I'm living it as I have been living everything lately - enjoying it very much and being aware, as it happens to Fideo (Di Maria) and Ota (Nicolas Otamendi), which these are the last battles."

Argentina boss Lionel Scaloni says he will work to "convince" Di Maria and Messi to continue with international duty.

"For Leo (Messi), it's similar to Angel," said Scaloni.

"We have to let him be and we will never be the ones to close the door. He can be with our team for as long as he wants to be. And if he wants to retire but still come and hang around, it would be great."

Jacob Shaffelburg, a winger for MLS club Nashville, squandered Canada's best chances in the early stages against Argentina.

Canada, ranked 48th in the world, were knocked off their stride by Alvarez's goal and Argentina took a firmer grip on the game. Lille striker Jonathan David had Canada's best chance in first-half stoppage time when he latched on to a long throw but his effort was fired straight at Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

Despite the defeat, Canada surpassed expectations in their inaugural appearance at the Copa America. Jesse Marsch's side, the co-hosts of the 2026 World Cup alongside Mexico and the USA, will face the losers from the other semi-final in a third-place play-off on Sunday. "What I said to the team afterwards is I know that they're very disappointed, but I'm very proud of them," said Marsch. "We've put together some incredible performances, just starting our process."

The semi-final between Uruguay and Colombia is on Thursday and Copa America final is on Monday. - Agencies

FRANCE EXIT

My Euro was a failure: Mbappe



MUNICH: French forward Kylian Mbappe has admitted that his Euro 2024 was "a failure" after France suffered a semi-final defeat at the hands of Spain on Tuesday.

Mbappe only scored one goal in the tournament with a penalty against Poland in the group stage.

Plagued by a broken nose and poor form, the new Real Madrid signing failed to light up the international stage as he has done before.

"In football you're good or not good. I wasn't good," Mbappe told reporters after the game.

"My Euro was a failure. I wanted to be European champion... I will now go on holiday, I will rest well, it will do me a lot of good, and then I will get ready to start a new life. There's a lot to do."

The Mbappe that lit up international tournaments in recent years was nowhere to be seen this summer. His talent was shrouded in an inept French forward line and conservative tactics, while a broken nose and protective mask hid the infectious emotion he so often displays.

"I don't know," Mbappe said when asked if France were stunned by Spain's two goals. "We opened the scoring, we told ourselves that we were doing the hardest part but maybe unconsciously we backed down a bit more.

"We put in less panache, less punch and we conceded two goals in quick succession. Afterwards, we tried to get the machine going again but it wasn't enough. The result is what it is and that means we didn't do enough to get to the final."

The forward had a glorious chance to send the tie to extra time but blazed his shot well over the bar.

"I think I have to score, at least get it on target," he said about his late miss. "It goes over the bar and that's the harsh reality of football. The mask? I was fed up, I couldn't see well with it. I spoke to the doctor to see and he told me to make the decision like a man and I don't regret it."

Deschamps future

The future of head coach Didier Deschamps, who has taken charge of the side for 12 years, is now in question.

The 55-year-old was quick to make sure that blame for the team's performances lies with him, and not his players.

"I don't want to put the responsibility on one or the other. It's mine," Deschamps added.

"Their end of the season was difficult, Kylian had a trauma. Even if we reached the semi-finals against a Spain with this quality, we have to be at our best. In the end, we were below. I'm not going to make excuses, but we started the preparation with neither Adrien [Rabiot] nor Aurelien [Tchouameni]."

Despite Kylian's broken nose, he elected not to wear the mask for the Spain game, a decision which Deschamps explained after the game. "Wearing the mask caused him more inconvenience than anything else, especially in his vision," he said. "The medical staff considered that the solidification was sufficient. He felt better without the mask."

Deschamps' contract runs through to June 2026 but the side's lacklustre displays this summer may have the French Football Federation rethinking that decision.

When asked if he is looking ahead to the 2026 World Cup, he gave a prickly response.

"Ask my president," he replied. "We just lost a semi-final. I will not answer that today. You know very well what my president thinks."

Deschamps admitted that Spain were the "superior" side on Tuesday night as La Roja exerted the control that has eluded Les Bleus throughout their campaign.

"They're a very good team, we knew that, even if we were lucky enough to open the score," the manager said. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

MHD automobiles unveils exclusive summer offer for INEOS Grenadier

The Grenadier quickly established itself as a global leader in the 4X4 segment, offering unparalleled off-road capability, durability and reliability



MUSCAT: MHD Automobiles announced an exclusive summer opportunity for adventure enthusiasts to own the INEOS Grenadier. A true testament to rugged British spirit and German engineering excellence, the Grenadier is designed to conquer any terrain with finesse and reliability, making it the ultimate companion for journeys both near and far. Seek out new adventures with the Grenadier. Book yours today and enjoy:

5 years / 75,000km service package

5 years unlimited mileage warranty

5 months' fuel

Complimentary insurance & registration

Crafted under the visionary leadership of INEOS Chairman Jim Ratcliffe, the INEOS Grenadier was born from a passion for uncompromising performance and reliability. Assembled by a team of automotive professionals with a fresh perspective on 4X4 development and manufacturing, the Grenadier embodies a perfect blend of British heritage and modern engineering.

Launched in 2022, the Grenadier quickly established itself as a global leader in the 4X4 segment, offering unparalleled off-road capability, durability, and reliability.

Mohsin Hani Al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE, added, "The Grenadier has clearly established itself as one of the best 4x4s on the market. With its ladder-frame chassis, durable ZF 8-speed automatic transmission, and powerful BMW 3.0L straight-six engine, the vehicle provides outstanding comfort even in the toughest of conditions." He also remarked," We aim to make your INEOS journey more convenient with the new summer offer."

Join us this summer in embracing simplicity and adventure with the INEOS Grenadier.

RECOGNITION

Al Obaidani wins Super Brand Status for 2024

MUSCAT: Al Obaidani, Oman's most favoured Dishdasha brand, has been bestowed with the prestigious Super Brand status for the year 2024. This distinguished recognition is reserved for only the most esteemed brands worldwide.

The Super Brands Organization, renowned globally as an independent authority on brand marketing excellence, is committed to recognizing exceptional brands and cultivating the art of branding. This status underlines the relentless pursuit of creativity, innovation, branding standards, service excellence, quality, and customer satisfaction embodied by each recognized brand.

With a heritage spanning 60 years, Al Obaidani has consistently introduced premium-quality fabrics to Omani gentlemen. Through its sub-brands like Hindam, Saktoon, Bahla, Royal, Al Hilali, and Jabreen, Al Obaidani offers customers a diverse range of high- quality fabrics to choose from, all synonymous with comfort and excellence.

Reflecting on the Super Brand award, Khalfan Al Obaidani, Director of Al Obaidani Stores, expressed, "We are immensely honoured to be acknowledged as a Super Brand. This is a testament to the exacting standards we uphold in quality, branding, production, and customer service. We remain committed to delivering only the finest quality fabrics to our customers. This award is dedicated to our loyal customers who have stood by us over the past six decades, as well as to our hard-working employees who continually strive to elevate the brand."



With a heritage spanning 60 years, Al Obaidani has consistently introduced premium-quality fabrics

Al Obaidani's retail footprint continues to expand, with the recent opening of its 32nd store in Saham. This new, spacious outlet will provide Saham's discerning customers with access to high-quality fabrics.

Exemplifying quality, creativity, reliability, and innovation, Al Obaidani endeavours to inspire its customers continuously. Since its establishment in 1964, the brand has been a source of pride among Omani gentlemen. Over the past six decades, Al Obaidani has consistently enhanced its offerings, setting a benchmark in Dishdasha tailoring for others to follow.

The Super Brand status is a testament to the brand's unwavering quality and consistency, further affirming Al Obaidani's position as the premier Dishdasha brand in the Sultanate of Oman.

SHARIA-COMPLIANT PRODUCTS

Dhofar Islamic launches Al Rifaa Privilege Banking

MUSCAT: Dhofar Islamic, the Islamic Banking Window of BankDhofar, announced the launch of its new suite of Islamic banking services, Al Rifaa Account.

Al Rifaa offers a comprehensive range of Sharia-compliant products and services designed to meet the financial needs of affluent customers.

The innovative account is designed to cater to the distinct needs of Dhofar Islamic's valued customers, providing an elevated banking experience that combines exclusive benefits, personalized services, and gratifying rewards. Al Rifaa Privilege Account is tailored for individuals who demand exceptional financial solutions, opening the door to a world of advantages, while setting a new standard in the banking industry.



Customers will earn preferential financing rates and avail branded Platinum Debit Card and Titanium Credit Card facilities with convenient banking solutions, including mobile and internet banking. The credit card is embedded with a host of benefits, ranging from special offers to airport lounge access, in addition to reward points on local and international purchases.

"Dhofar Islamic is committed to delivering excellence and innovation to our customers. Al Rifaa Privilege account exemplifies our dedication to providing a superior banking experience, with a combination of financial expertise with exclusive privileges. We believe that banking is not restricted to transactions; it's about enabling dreams and enhancing lifestyles. With Al Rifaa, we are raising the bar for personalized banking services in the Sultanate of Oman," said Amor Said Al Amri- DGM Dhofar Islamic Retail Banking.

Dhofar Islamic is committed to providing its customers with innovative Sharia-compliant financial solutions. With the launch of Al Rifaa account, Dhofar Islamic is confident that it can further serve the growing demand for Islamic banking in the Sultanate of Oman. During the past period, it has doubled its network of branches and ATMs/CDMs enhancing its product and service offerings to customers as well as enriching customers' digital experience. Dhofar Islamic continues to be committed towards building a strong foundation for valuable offers.

PROMOTION

Win big with Ford's exclusive limited-time Fabulous 4 offer

MUSCAT: Unlock this season's hottest promotions as Ford Oman presents an exclusive limited-time offer to own the Ford of your dreams. Experience the Ford lineup at your nearest showroom to participate in the Walk-in and Win Raffle Contest and secure a chance to win the Apple Watch 9 series! Ford's Fabulous 4 offer is up for grabs for customers to reap huge benefits.

Receive a company-enabled service of 3 years/60,000kms (whichever is earlier) with the added advantage of a 5-year manufacturer's warranty, 5-year roadside assistance and complimentary 1-year registration. Also win iPhone 15s and apple watches 9 series through Buy and Win Raffle draw. Enjoy the incredible perks and bag the coolest tech products in town while the campaign lasts 1st Aug 2024.

Relish the summer fun in a brand-new Ford Territory, Taurus or Everest which are now available as part of Ford's summer offerings. Ford extends its Buy and Win raffle draw to new owners to win iPhones 15s and Apple watches 9 series.

Stay within budget and experience huge savings with an attractive EMI plan starting at OMR 209 along with free 1-year vehicle registration. Achieve peace of mind with high-quality car maintenance at Ford's service facilities by professional staff. Ford is proud to offer convenience and quick response security in cases of mechanical failure through Ford's 5-year roadside assistance plan and an additional 5-year manufacturer's warranty for the safety of its customers.

"Ford provides premium automobile products that radiate luxury and style. We want to deepen our relationship with our customers and these offers exemplify our commitment to providing the best-in-class services." Shared a representative from Ford Oman. "Ford's 24/7 roadside assistance service is designed to assist Ford drivers during road emergencies in case of breakdowns." He further shared.

Create joyful memories in Ford Territory, a mid-size crossover SUV that boasts a dynamic design andpowered by a 1.8L EcoBoost® I-4 enginepaired with a 7-speed automatic transmission. Experience exceptional balance of power, torque and fuel economy while cruising urban pathways. Immerse yourself into spacious cabins, augmented with a 12.3-inch touch screen and modern Driver Assist features such as Adaptive Cruise Control, BLIS®, Collision Mitigation, Lane-Departure Warning, Rear-View Camera, Hill-Start Assist, and Front and Rear Parking Sensor.



Indulge in the Next-Gen Everest's bespoke experience matched for every kind of journey. The Everest is a family-friendly 4x4 featuring a turbocharged 2.3L EcoBoost® petrol engine with an efficient 10-speed SelectShift automatic delivering 296 HP power and 420Nm of torque. As a spacious 7-seater designed with capability as its core value, it impressively handles tedious tasks providing strong control with its driver-assist technologies. Theinstalled airbags and modern technical safety featureshelp minimize accident possibilities and ensure a stress-free journey.

Be prepared to be swept away with the Ford Taurus' 2.0L Eco boost producing 232 HP paired with an8-speed transmission. The interior is fitted with plush fabric and leather materials, a 6-speaker Sync 4 audio system integrated with an 8" digital LCD screen seamlessly blended into the instrument panel. Enjoy impeccable comfort and luxurious amenities in Ford's 4-door sedan.The Taurus provides an unmatched fuel economy of 15.3 km/l. Make every weekend getaway an experience of a lifetime.

Book a Ford now to avail the amazing range of benefits and discover Ford's premium product specifications and details from our experienced sales staff. Visit www.fordoman.com to learn more about the offer or request a test drive. The Ford Oman team eagerly anticipates your arrival.

In Oman, Ford vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat relaunches Asalah and Al Jawhar referral scheme with exciting cash rewards

The current referral scheme, which will run till the end of December, offers cash rewards when referring new customers to the bank to enjoy an extraordinary banking experience



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has launched its highly popular Asalah and Al Jawhar referral scheme for the year 2024 after the great success of last year's campaign.

The current referral scheme, which will run till the end of December, offers cash rewards when referring new customers to the bank to enjoy an extraordinary banking experience. It is worth noting that the current scheme is cross-referral between the two segments, "Asalah" Priority Banking and "Al Jawhar" Privilege Banking. Asalah customers may refer Al Jawhar customers to the Bank, while Al Jawhar customers may also refer customers to open a new Asalah salary account and avail the advantages of this year's campaign.

The Asalah and Al Jawhar referral schemesees positive feedback from customers every year.

The scheme offers Asalah customers and new customers a chance to win up to OMR 100 for every successful referral after the referees meet the eligibility criteria. The referees should have a monthly salary of OMR 3,500 ortransfer and maintain a deposit of OMR 30,000 or more in their savings accounts within a maximum period of 30 days from the date of referral.Both the referrer and referee get a sum of OMR 100 if the referee successfully meets all eligibility criteria after opening the new Asalah account.

For Al Jawhar customers, the referrer and the referee will win OMR 50 per successful referral once the referees successfully meet all eligibility criteria, including maintaining a depositingOMR 10,000 - 29,999in their Bank Muscat Al Jawhar savings accounts within a month from the date of successful referrals or have a monthly salary of OMR 1,000 – 3,499. Both the referrer and referee win a sum of OMR 50 per successful referral, if the referee successfully meets all eligibility criteria after opening the new Al Jawhar account.

On this occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are pleased about the relaunch of the referral scheme campaign this year for Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking from Bank Muscat, after the great success of the scheme last year. In line with its vision "To serve you better, everyday," Bank Muscat continues to focus on fostering customer experience and enhancing its customers base in the Sultanate. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our valued customers for their trust in our cutting-edge products and services. Bank Muscat will continue offering special products and services that meet the customer aspirations. We would also like to encourage our Asalah and Al Jawhar customers to avail the current offers of cash rewards."

The participation in Asalah and Al Jawhar referral schemes is based on successful referrals to the Bank based on the eligibility criteria set for each segment.

Customers of both banking segments can refer family and friends to open a new Bank Muscat account, provided that the referees meet the eligibility criteria at the end of the three-month review period from the date of the salary\deposit transfer to the Bank account.

It may be noted that Asalah customers enjoy a range of benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 47 Asalah centers distributed across the Sultanate, and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre (24779999). Exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer, which has more than 3,500 "Buy 1, Get 1 free" offers in Oman and at international destinations, as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments. Asalah Visa Signature credit cardholders can enjoy a cashback of 1% when using their credit cards locally and internationally, airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges worldwide, up to 12 times a year, and a 24/7 global concierge service. Meanwhile, Al Jawhar Privilege Banking is designed to elevate Privilege Banking to unparalleled heights and enhance customers' banking experience. Al Jawhar Privilege Banking customers are eligible for exclusive 2-for-1 deals on food, entertainment and shopping that are available through the xperience within the Entertainer app. They also have access to a higher ATM withdrawal limit of OMR1500.

PARTNERSHIP



Oman United Insurance inks strategic Bancassurance pact with Muscat Finance

MUSCAT: Oman United Insurance Company (OUIC) and Muscat Finance announced the signing of a strategic Bancassurance agreement.

The agreement was signed by Sayyid Nasser Bin Salim Al Busaidi, Chief Management Executive of OUIC, and Rashad Al Shaikh, CEO of Muscat Finance, at Muscat Finance's Head Office in Azaiba, Muscat.

OUIC, a leading Omani insurance company with a 39-year history, offers a comprehensive range of insurance products to both individuals and corporates. Muscat Finance SAOG, established in July 1987, is a pioneer in the non-banking financial sector in Oman, providing innovative financial services to individuals, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and Corporates across Oman.

The partnership between these two financial institutions is designed to leverage each other's strengths, aiming to enhance customer experience through integrated financial and insurance solutions. This collaboration underscores OUIC's commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and business diversification. Additional, and in line with Muscat Finance diversification strategy, this partnership aims to provide the best-in-class insurance products along with financing to its customers.

The signing ceremony was attended by senior officials from both companies. Representing Muscat Finance were Kumail Al Musawi, Chief People Officer and Rajesh Bansal, CFO.

From OUIC, present were Sivakumar, Deputy CEO, Sanjay Jha, Medical & Life General Manager, and Moosa Yahya Al Amri, Company Secretary and Investors Relations Officer.

This agreement marks a significant step forward in providing comprehensive and accessible financial services to a broader customer base, combining the robust financial expertise of Muscat Finance with the extensive insurance solutions offered by OUIC.

SECOND EDITION

Dhofar University launches summer academy programme to enhance students' talents and develop their skills

MUSCAT: Dhofar University has inaugurated the "Dhofar University Summer Academy" programme under the supervision of the Community Service and Continuing Education Center. This summer programme targets school students from grades seven to 12 and runs from July 7 to July 25. It aligns with the university's mission in education, learning, scientific research, and community service.

The programme aims to enhance the university's role in discovering and developing students' talents and abilities by combining education with entertainment. It provides an educational environment designed to impart academic knowledge and refine students' personal and creative skills. Additionally, it offers students the opportunity to think critically, develop scientific attitudes and inclinations, and raise awareness about the importance of utilizing leisure time positively and productively.

Omar Al-Shahri, Director of the Community Service and Continuing Education Center, indicated that this summer program, now in its second edition, continues Dhofar University's vision of implementing the concept of lifelong learning.

He provided a detailed explanation of the summer academy's content, highlighting its comprehensive three-dimensional educational package in English (Cambridge curriculum) covering reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The program also includes information technology fields such as computer usage, basic software, and applications. Additionally, students engage in practical applications within laboratories through workshops in electrical, civil, and chemical engineering.



