

OMAN, KAZAKHSTAN SIGN AGREEMENT TO FORM PANEL

The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Kazakhstan held a session of political talks on Wednesday. The session reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation in fields of economy, renewable energy, tourism and food security. **>A2**



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RIMA WATER TREATMENT PLANT INAUGURATED

The Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) celebrated the inauguration of its second nature-based project, Rima Water Treatment Plant. The project, valued at OMR87 million, follows the success of the company's award-winning Nimr Wetlands, which treats produced water using a series of sloping reed fields and evaporation ponds. **>B1**



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Sayyid Bilarab presides over opening of Swiss Non-Conformist Design Exhibition

A3

BILATERAL RELATIONS

HM receives written message from President of Kazakhstan

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a written message from President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The message was handed over to HH Sayyid Asa'ad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, when he received in his office yesterday Mukhtar Tileuberdi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan.

During the meeting, the guest conveyed greetings and best wishes of the Kazakh President to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people. In his turn, HH Sayyid Asa'ad asked the guest minister to convey greetings and best wishes of His Majesty the Sultan to President Tokayev and the people of Kazakhstan.



The meeting discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and means of promoting them in various field. It also reviewed a set of matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr Hamad

Al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, the Secretary General and the two advisors at the Office of HH Sayyid Asa'ad, as well as the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Oman and members of the delegation accompanying the guest. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Ambassador of Oman presents credentials

1 President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. of the Philippines received Eng. Nasser Said Al Manwari, who presented his credentials as the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Philippines. **>A3**

WORLD Missing radioactive capsule found

2 The Emergency Services Ministry said that they had found a radioactive capsule in Western Australia after days of searching along a 1,400-km stretch of road. **>A7**

SPORTS Chelsea hire Enzo Fernandez for \$131mn

3 Chelsea recruited Enzo Fernandez after paying the midfielder's \$131 million release clause in a record-breaking deal. An agreement between the two clubs has been made over the release price. **>A8**

OMAN-SAUDI ARABIA TRADE EXCHANGE WITNESSES A MASSIVE 219% INCREASE

Qais Mohammed Al Yousef addressed the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum being held in Riyadh

Times News Service

RIYADH: The volume of trade exchange between Oman and Saudi Arabia has seen a massive 219 percent increase between the two countries until September 2022 compared to 2021, said Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP). This was stated by the minister while addressing the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum, being held in Riyadh on Wednesday. The forum also discussed means of enhancing the long-term economic partnership between the two countries in investment and



The activities of the Omani-Saudi Industries Exhibition kicked off in Riyadh, on Tuesday evening.

industrial sectors.

During his speech, Al Yousef said that the volume of Omani non-oil exports to Saudi Arabia until September 2022 amounted to over OMR659 million, up by 33.98 percent from 2021, and the volume of Saudi imports to Oman increased to more than OMR1.27 billion until September 2022.

Eng. Khalid Abdulaziz Al Falih, Minister of Investment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

stressed the importance of the private sector's role in Oman and Saudi Arabia in pushing the wheel of development forward as it acts as an active partner and contributor to the development of the economic, investment and trade sectors between the two countries.

He affirmed that the Saudi government is keen to strengthen and develop investment relations with Oman, noting that the volume of trade exchange between the two

countries during the first half of 2022 reached SAR11.392 billion.

Other activities of the forum included dialogue sessions to review prospects for promising investment sectors between the two countries. These sectors include opportunities for integration in renewable energy and supply chains, tourism and real estate development, and other activities of common interest, which contribute to advancing and accelerating invest-

Oman, Saudi Arabia ink MoU on development of special economic zones, free zones **>A5**

Pact signed to fund Phase I of Al Dhahirah Economic Zone's infrastructure project **>A5**

ment flows between the two sides.

At the sidelines of the forum, B2B meetings were held between representatives of the private sector in the two countries. The meetings discussed opportunities for cooperation and partnership and reviewed the available investment opportunities in the two countries.

The opening of the forum was attended by Dr. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidi, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, His Highness Sayyid Faisal Turki Al Said, Ambassador of Oman to Saudi Arabia, Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, some officials from the private sector in the two countries, as well as Omani and Saudi business people. — **With inputs from ONA**

MUSCAT NIGHTS

Probe begins after one of electric games collapses

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A thorough investigation is now under way to find out the lapses which led to the collapse of one of the electric games at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, one of the venues of Muscat Nights, on Tuesday evening.

A senior official of the Public Prosecution confirmed to Shabiba Radio that a team from the department inspected the accident site on Wednesday. "If it becomes clear that there was negligence, those responsible will be punished according to the Omani Penal Code," an official said.

The Muscat Municipality has confirmed that most of the people injured in Tuesday night's acci-



dent have returned home.

Seven children and a woman suffered injuries in the incident.

The Municipality added that it is monitoring the health status of two cases who were referred for further examinations.

The municipality also confirmed that an investigation is underway, the damage is being assessed, and the necessary measures are being taken.

Meanwhile the Child Protection committee in the Sultanate of Oman has communicated with the concerned authorities to ensure child safety, due to the accident on Tuesday.

The Child Protection Committee in Muscat Governorate held an urgent meeting via videoconfer-

ence, chaired by Sayyida Ma'ani bint Abdullah Al Busaidi, Director General for Family Development at the Ministry of Social Development, to find out the details and events of the accident.

The committee has communicated with the concerned authorities to ensure the safety of the children, as it will work to provide psychological support and counselling to the injured children and their families, with the aim of mitigating the psychological effects of the accident.

The committee also called for the importance of providing psychological support to the children present at the event, by communicating with specialists via the child protection line 1100.

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Sayyid Bilarab presides over opening of Swiss Non-Conformist Design exhibition

The exhibition, which will last until 22 July 2023, is the first appearance of this genre of Swiss design in the Middle East



MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said presided over a ceremony at the National Museum on Wednesday to inaugurate the exhibition of Swiss Non-Conformist Design.

The exhibition was held in co-operation with the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in Oman, within the context of celebration of the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two friendly countries.

HH Sayyid Bilarab also opened another exhibition titled "Hope: Housing, People and Environment 2023", which is organised by the German University of Technology (GUTech).

HH Sayyid Bilarab toured the Swiss Non-Conformist Design exhibition, which celebrates the uniqueness of modern and contemporary Swiss design, right from the beginning of the 20th century, notably upon the emergence of the "Dada" movement in Zurich, through to postmodern expressions.

This exhibition, which will last until 22 July 2023, is the first ap-

pearance of this genre of Swiss design in the Middle East. It is one of the first exhibitions of its kind in the world outside Switzerland.

The exhibition is distinguished for its special focus on non-conformist design. Nearly 40 percent of the pieces exhibited in Muscat have not been displayed before.

The exhibits are carefully selected from among high-level museum designs of pioneers of architecture in the 20th and 21st centuries.

HH Sayyid Bilarab listened to a detailed account of the pieces on display, including themes of 'chairs' and the culture of 'sitting posture', since sitting and communication between people acquires special significance in the aftermath of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Jamal Hassan Al Moosawi, Secretary General of the National Museum said that the event celebrates swiss design and designers interested in the basic principles that underlines Omani and Swiss cultures.

In his turn, Thomas Oertle, Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to the Sultanate of Oman



said that this unique exhibition of Swiss Non-Conformist Design displays objects from iconic artists such as Le Corbusier or Sophie Arp Täuber, to items never exhibited before such as furniture of Pierre Jeanneret from the UNESCO World Heritage Site Chandigarh Capitol Complex in India, and finally to designs from contemporary Swiss artists such as Tom Strala.

Oertle pointed out that the exhibition is held within the framework of celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Swiss Confederation - with more celebratory events that will follow.

He said that through this exhibition, the National Museum organized an open space for creative thinking, for reflection and exchanges between Omani and Swiss perspectives on art and design that will add a new dimension to the existing strong bilateral ties between the two countries.

Moreover, HH Sayyid Bilarab toured the "Hope: Housing, People and Environment 2023" exhibition, which highlights the idea of building healthy, modern and sustainability cities.

Prof. Dr. Michael Braun, Rector of the German University of Technology in Oman (GUTech) said that "Hope: Housing, People and Environment 2023" exhibition is an initiative to promote people-centered planning to activate urban environments in Oman.

This initiative, he added, combines architecture, urban planning, social sciences, technology, environmental and sustainability aspects and many more.

Pedja Hadži-manović, a Swiss designer presented a commemorative gift to HH Sayyid Bilarab at the conclusion of his visit to the two exhibitions. Sayyid Bilarab signed the VIP visitor's book and expressed his admiration for the two exhibitions. -ONA

Ambassador of Oman to Philippines presents credentials



CREDENTIALS: President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. of the Republic of the Philippines received on Wednesday Eng. Nasser Said Al Manwari, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Philippines. - ONA

MUSCAT: President Ferdinand Romualdez Marcos Jr. of the Republic of the Philippines received on Wednesday Eng. Nasser Said Al Manwari, who presented his credentials as Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Philippines.

During the meeting, the am-

bassador conveyed greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to President Ferdinand.

In his turn, President Ferdinand expressed his appreciation for His Majesty and affirmed his country's keenness to boost joint cooperation on all levels and spheres. -ONA

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Muscat Nights



EXPLORING THE WONDERLAND

A North Pole Circus show, theatrical shows of Alice in Wonderland and Aladdin, and over 23 games including electrical and VR technology games ... Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre is undoubtedly buzzing with activities.

The Fantasy Lion at the carnival's ground is an exclusive show that is being held for the first time in the Middle East. The different timings of the show are 5.00pm to 5.30pm, 6.45pm to 7.15pm and from 8.45pm to 9.15pm.

Meet Mr. Bob, the key character of the carnival, with whom the adults and children are having a gala time at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. His show is from 4.15pm to 4.45pm, 6.40pm to 7.10 pm, 8.40pm to 9.10pm and 10.00pm to 10.30pm.

Another mind blowing event is the North Pole circus with characters and scenes in winter in the forest. Children can be seen crowding in large numbers here and waving to their heart's content. The show is from 5.00pm to 5.30pm, 7.30pm to 8.00pm and from 9.10pm to 9.40pm.

Relive your childhood memories with Alice in Wonderland and Aladdin. Entry fee to the festival location is OMR 3 followed with entry to watch the visual dazzling shows.

Husna, Jameela and Nasra were busy hovering around their parents and waiting for Alice in Wonderland's show to begin. "They have read the fairy tale almost 100 times but they still do not get bored watching it once again," their mother said with a smile, such was the charm.

Gamers are spoilt for choices as there are over 23 games in-



cluding electrical, fixed games and VR technology amongst other sliding games played with leather shoes to provide utmost safety for children along with PlayStation games.

There is also a corner at the festival ground allocated for kids in the presence of cartoon characters of Cocomelon cartoon's serial.

Symposium focuses on human rights, dignity

The symposium has been organised by OHRC in cooperation with the Arab Parliamentarians Forum for Population and Development in Jordan

MUSCAT: Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) yesterday organised a symposium titled “Sustainable development and its relationship with human rights”. The symposium drives home the idea that sustainable development reflects positively on human rights and human dignity. The symposium brought together 70 participants from various institutions and government agencies. It is organised by OHRC in



cooperation with the Arab Parliamentarians Forum for Population and Development in Jordan. Dr. Hamoud Ahmed Al Yahya'ee, Chairman of the Services and Social Development Committee at the Shura Council, member of OHRC, said at the opening of the symposium that the event is held within the framework of OHRC's fulfilling its duty to promote and protect human rights, spread public awareness and highlight aspects of relevance to bridging the gap between rights and mechanisms of protecting them. For his part, Dr. Mohammad Al Smadi, Secretary General of the Arab Parliamentarians Forum for Population and Development,



told Oman News Agency (ONA) that there is ongoing cooperation between the Arab parliamentarians' forum and OHRC. Two experts from Asia and the Arab region attended the symposium to discuss human rights among 2030 Sustainable Development

Goals, said Al Smadi. In his turn, Dr. Farrukh Usmonov, Executive Director of the Asian Parliamentary Forum for Population and Development, said that the event constitutes part of the activities of the Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development and the Asian Population and Development Association in Japan. He underscored the significance of aligning sustainable development goals with human rights, for the common good of all humanity. Three working papers were discussed at the symposium. They were presented by international experts in the field of sustainable development. -ONA

OMANI-SAUDI BUSINESS COUNCIL



Measures to ease entry of Omani products to Saudi markets reviewed

RIYADH: The Omani-Saudi Joint Business Council held a special meeting on Wednesday to discuss means of easing the entry of Omani products to Saudi markets and overcoming obstacles facing Saudi investors in the Sultanate of Oman. It also touched on the issue of certificates of origin and the customs tax imposed on Omani products. Ali Hamad Al Kalbani, Headed the Omani side in the business council, while Nasser Said Al Hajri, Headed the Saudi side. The meeting was attended by Eng. Khalid Abdulaziz Al Falih, Saudi Minister of Investment. It was also attended by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and In-



vestment Promotion and Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), as well as officials, businesspeople and representatives of private sector companies from both countries. -ONA

IN INTEGRATED ECONOMIC ZONE



Pact signed to fund infrastructure project in Al Dhahirah Governorate

RIYADH: The Ministry of Finance and the Saudi Fund for Development signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to finance the infrastructure construction project for the integrated economic zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate in Oman. The signing ceremony took place on the sidelines of the Omani-Saudi Investment Forum held in Riyadh. The MoU serves to consolidate Omani-Saudi economic relations and encourage partnerships between their sectors. The first phase of the project costs around OMR122 million. The project includes the construction of infrastructure, roads, electrical installations, water and sewage networks, treatment of in-

dustrial waste, and the setting up of basic facilities, in addition to providing engineering consultancy services for the project (design and supervision). The establishment of the integrated economic zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate seeks to maximise benefits from its strategic location on the borders with Saudi Arabia. The new zone will augment trade exchange between the two countries, attract Saudi companies to set up projects in Oman and consolidate economic partnerships. It will also cut down the cost of production and export, facilitate the supply of goods and products, attract quality industries and provide new employ-

ment opportunities. The new integrated zone will enhance development efforts and upgrade investments and economic diversification by opening inroads for industries in both countries. OPAZ already completed studies of the master plan for the development of the integrated economic zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate, scheduled to occupy an area of 388 square kilometres, with options for future expansion of investment lands. The integrated economic zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate is situated at about 20 km from Al Rub El Khali (Empty Quarter) border checkpoint with Saudi Arabia, at 100-km from Ibra Industrial City. -ONA

OMAN-SAUDI ARABIA

Oman, Saudi ink several agreements

RIYADH: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Economic Cities and Special Zones Authorities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) in the field of economic and investment development. The MoU seeks to optimise the competitive advantage of cities and special economic zones by setting a general framework for joint activities and developing capabilities between the two sides in a manner that achieves mutual benefits. The MoU was signed by Dr. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidi, Chairman of OPAZ, and Nabil Mohammed Khoja, Secretary General of the Authority for Special Economic Cities and Zones in Saudi Arabia.



The MoU will pave the way for the finalisation of detailed studies and plans for the “Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate” and joint investments in economic zones. Under the terms of the MoU, the two sides will exchange expertise and information on exemptions

and incentives offered by cities and special economic zones. The MoU also provides that the two sides shall hold training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences on their respective areas of specialty and exchange visits to zones of relevance. -ONA

IN MUSCAT

Ironman 70.3 triathlon to begin on Thursday

MUSCAT: The 2023 Ironman 70.3 triathlon, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, will kick off on Thursday. The opening ceremony will be held under the auspices of Basil Ahmed Al Rowas, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth. This came during a press conference held on Wednesday. After the opening ceremony, the race will kick off from Muscat's Shatti Al Qurum (Qurum Beach). In the lead up to the event, Saleh Ali Al Khayfi, Director of Events of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said “For the Sultanate of Oman, this globally-recognised triathlon event serves to further enhance the country's reputation as a premier host destination for regional and international sporting events, as well as for outdoor and adventure tourism activities of all kinds. -ONA



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OF USED ITEMS

The U.S. Embassy Muscat is auctioning used household and office furniture, furnishings, appliances, computers, and IT equipment by online auction.

Interested bidders may view the auction items online starting on Tuesday, January 31, 2023 by going to <https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US>. Online bidding for all items will open on Thursday, February 2 at 10:00hrs. Bidders must first register on the website before placing a bid.

All items offered for sale will be sold "as is, where is," which means that there are no warranties, either expressed or implied. Bidding closes on Sunday, February 5, 2023 at 12:00hrs (noon).

Successful bidders will be notified on Monday, February 6, 2023. At that point, they must make full payment of all lots won to the Bank Muscat U.S. Embassy account. Payment instructions are listed in the "How to pay for your items" section in the "How it works" link on the auction page. **PLEASE NOTE PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS AUCTIONS AND FAILURE TO FOLLOW PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS WILL RESULT IN FORFEITURE OF YOUR LOTS AND BANK FEES TO RETURN YOUR MONEY. PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. All payments must be received in full before 12:00hrs (noon) on February 8 in the U.S. Embassy account in Bank Muscat. NO LATE PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Successful bidders with fully paid lots may collect their items on Saturday, February 11 at the Ghala Warehouse during their scheduled time. If you are not available to collect your items on Saturday, February 11, 2023, please do not participate in the auction, as there are no alternate pickup dates.

REMEMBRANCE



Sneha Iyer

27-01-2009 - 03-02-2022

Days will pass
and turn into years & decades.
But we will always remember you with
Silent tears. Missing you

Parents and Sister

Big relief for taxpayers in Indian Budget 2023

The number of tax slabs has been reduced to 5 and the tax exemption limit has been increased to Rs300,000

NEW DELHI: Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced an increase in the income tax rebate limit from Rs500,000 to Rs700,000 stating that the new tax regime will now be the default tax regime.

The Finance Minister also proposed to change the tax structure in this regime by reducing the number of tax slabs to 5 and increasing the tax exemption limit to Rs 3 lakh. On personal income tax, the FM announced that "Tax for income of Rs 0-Rs 3 lakh is nil, for income above Rs 3 lakh and up to Rs 5 lakh will be taxed at 5 per cent, for income of above Rs 6 lakh and up to Rs 9 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent and for income above Rs 12 lakh and up to Rs 15 lakh to be taxed at 20 per cent and above 15 lakh at Rs 30 per cent."

For pensioners, the finance minister announced extending the benefit of standard deduction to new tax regime. Each salaried person with an income of Rs. 15.5 lakh



or more will benefit by Rs. 52,500.

Sitharaman, while presenting the Union Budget in Parliament said, "A person earning Rs 9 lakh a year will now be paying just Rs 45,000 instead of Rs. 60,000 currently. Similarly, a person earning Rs 15 lakh will now pay only 10 per cent of this as tax."

Leave encashment

The finance minister also said: "The limit of Rs 3 lakh for tax exemption on leave encashment on government salaried employees. That was set in 2002 when government salaries were lower and is now being raised to Rs 25 lakh."

She also added, "The new income tax regime will now become the default option, but people will still have the option to go for earlier regime."

The average processing time for income tax returns has been reduced from 93 days to 16 days. — ANI

50 new airports announced

NEW DELHI: During the Union Budget speech in the House, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday announced that 50 additional airports, helipads, water aero drones, and advanced landing grounds will be revived to improve regional air connectivity in the country. "50 additional airports, helipads, water aero drones, and advanced landing grounds will be revived to improve regional air connectivity," informed Sitharaman in Lok Sabha. Sitharaman started her Budget speech

at 11 am, the last full Budget of the Modi government in its second term. Like the previous two Union Budgets, Union Budget 2023-24 is also presented in paperless form.

This year's Budget holds much significance as the country is scheduled to have the next Lok Sabha election in April-May 2024.

This is the fifth budget presentation by Sitharaman.

The budget session of the Parliament began with President's address, subsequently tabling the Economic Survey for 2022-23. — ANI



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UK STRIKES

Half a million walk out for higher pay

LONDON: About 500,000 people are expected to take part in a massive strike in Britain on Wednesday. Teachers, civil servants, train drivers and university lecturers will take part in the rally demanding pay rises, that would ease a cost-of-living crisis caused by rising inflation.

Authorities expect widespread disruption, with very limited rail services and schools closed.

An Ipsos poll said public opinion was divided about the strike, with 40% in favour and 38% against the strike.

Why is the UK strike happening

"After years of brutal pay cuts, nurses, teachers and millions of other public servants have seen their living standards decimated — and are set to face more pay misery," said Paul Nowak, general secretary of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the union umbrella group.

"Instead of scheming up new ways to attack the right to strike, ministers should get pay rising across the economy — starting with a decent pay rise for workers across the public sector," he added.

The TUC said this would be the "biggest day of strike action since 2011." Union leaders also said there would be a strike against a planned law to curb strikes in some sectors.

"We are up front that this will disrupt people's lives, and that is why we think that negotiations rather than picket lines are the right approach," Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesperson told reporters.

Britain is currently seeing the highest level of inflation in four decades, reaching more than 10%. A series of strikes have been going on recently, from health care and transport workers, postal staff, and warehouse employees.

— DW

MINISTER OF TOLERANCE AND COEXISTENCE

UAE Minister unveils bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Dubai

DUBAI: United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister of Tolerance and Coexistence, Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan unveiled a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Dubai on Tuesday.

He was accompanied by the Ambassador of India to UAE, Sunjay Sudhir and Dr Aman Puri, The Consul General of India to Dubai during the event. "HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Tolerance and

Coexistence, highlighted the message of peace, civility and nonviolence that our father of the nation #MahatmaGandhi symbolized," the official Twitter page of Consulate General of India in Dubai tweeted.

Message of peace

The UAE minister also highlighted the message of peace, civility and nonviolence during the unveiling of the bust.

Addressing the delegates, he said, "Today we recognise his enduring call to all to be aware, lying on our non-violence strength and to be agents of peaceful change," as he described Mahatma Gandhi as a remarkable man.

"In my view, today's event is an opportunity for us to reflect on the state of our world. To look at the individual roles we each can play. And, most importantly, to focus our attention on their utility," he said.

Al Nahyan further added by saying that the celebration belongs to the most influential figures in modern history.

"By unveiling this bust of Mahatma Gandhi, today we are grateful to the Embassy of India, to the consul general of India in Dubai and to the Indian community in the UAE. For this celebration of one of the most influential figures in modern history," he added. — ANI



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SPORTS

It is about people asking me why are you stopping rather than when: Sania Mirza



Sania will not feature in any Grand Slam and will soon hang up her racquet

NEW DELHI: Sania Mirza played her last Grand Slam at the Australian Open where she partnered with Rohan Bopanna and ended up as a finalist in the mixed doubles. The six-time Grand Slam champion will not feature in any Grand Slam and will soon hang up her racquet. "For me, it is about people telling me why are you stopping rather than when are you stopping. Absolutely I have the game and I can still win tennis matches at the highest level. That is not the point. But what goes in behind staying at this level and competing at this level is an issue. Physically, mentally and emotionally I am no longer capable of handling this. The process is the issue. "In Melbourne, I would spend hours with the physio to be able to go out and compete. What goes

in behind your ability to compete is something I can no longer deal with. And I am not one to compete when I know I can no longer do it," said six-time Grand Slam champion Sania Mirza on Backstage with Boria show. The Hyderabad was at her peak but she had to take a maternity break in order and she made a comeback but her comeback was not as good as she would have liked. "When I was pregnant, I was a top 10 player. People said I was mad to stop at the time and take a break. But you know there is never a right time. I felt it was the right time. I took a break. But never did I say I will retire. That is because deep down I knew I had tennis left in me. Now it is different. Now like I said to you I can no longer deal with the process. **Time to stop** "As a result, I think it is time to stop. But then I still have two tournaments left. And I am playing with Bethanie and Madison Keys. They are two of my best friends on tour and I will do all I can to win. That competitive me is still very much there and will be there till I play my last match," added Sania Mirza. **-ANI**

CRICKET

Suryakumar reaches new career-high in ICC rankings

DUBAI: The accolades continue to roll in for Suryakumar Yadav as the India dynamo and world's best T20I batter reached a new career-high rating on the updated ICC Men's T20I Batting Rankings.

910 points Suryakumar reached the rating of 910 points after he stroked quick-fire innings of 47 during the first match of India's ongoing series against

New Zealand in Ranchi as the exciting right-hander maintained his healthy lead at the top of the T20I rankings for batters. While Suryakumar played a more composed knock of 26* in the second match of the series, the 32-year-old dropped back to a total of 908 rating points as a result.

He will have an opportunity to improve on his record in the third and deciding match of the series in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

It also means Suryakumar remains within striking distance of England batter Dawid Malan in the race to hold the highest rating of all time for Men's T20I batters.

Malan achieved a rating of 915 points in Cape Town back in 2020, but Suryakumar now holds the second-highest rating of all time for T20I batters following his recent heroics with the willow.

He claimed the top ranking for current batters while scoring a total of 239 runs from six matches at last year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup and only last month was deservedly named the ICC Men's



T20I Cricketer of the Year.

While just how high Suryakumar can rise dominates much of the interest surrounding the latest set of T20I rankings, a host of New Zealand players have been the biggest movers on the updated charts for both batters and bowlers.

New Zealand opener Finn Allan jumps eight places to 19th on the list for batters, while teammate Daryl Mitchell improves nine spots to 29th overall following his unbeaten half-century in the opening match against India.

But it is perhaps fellow Kiwi Mitchell Santner that has made the most eye-catching move, with the all-rounder impressing with both bat and ball in India.

Santner top-scored for New

Zealand with 19 in the second match of the series and has been economical with the ball while collecting two wickets with his valuable left-arm orthodox spin.

The 30-year-old jumps up two places to ninth overall on the latest list for T20I bowlers and is also rewarded with a five-spot rise to 23rd on the updated rankings for all-rounders.

There was little movement on the ODI rankings this week, although exciting England pacer Jofra Archer re-entered the charts for bowlers at 35 following a successful return from a long-term injury against South Africa.

But it has been South Africa that have dominated the first two matches of that ODI series, with skipper Temba Bavuma and top-order batter Rassie van der Dussen among the stronger performers for the Proteas thus far.

Bavuma hit a brilliant century in Bloemfontein's second match of the three-match series and duly improved a massive 27 spots to 49th overall on the latest list for ODI batters.

It was van der Dussen that contributed a century in the series opener and that has helped the right-hander close the gap on Pakistan skipper Babar Azam at the top of the ODI rankings for batters.

Van Der Dussen's rating improves from 766 to 795, meaning Babar's lead at the top is down to just 92 rating points on the second-placed South African. **-ANI**

PREMIER DIVISION



Muscat CT edge past Renaissance; Oman Stallions thump Zawawi Powertech

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat CT beat Renaissance by 7 wickets and Oman Stallions thump Zawawi Powertech by 7 wickets in the Premier Division of the Oman Cricket Domestic League Season 2022-23 powered by Muscat Pharmacy.

Muscat CT elected to bowl first with Renaissance batsmen negotiating the ball well.

Oman's one of the profound batsmen making his comeback, Aqib Ilyas (61 of 57; 6x4,1x6) steered the Renaissance batting but couldn't find a support other than tailender Bilal Muhammed (29 of 46; 3x4,1x6) who helped them post 190/10 in 46.3 overs.

Samay Shrivastav's magical spell for his 6/20 was the key to restrict Renaissance. In response, Muscat CT got off to a flying start by Aiyappa CR (56 of 66; 6x4) and Kashyap Prajapati (52 of 60; 6x4)

setting the tone for the chase. Although due to rain interruptions, the target was reduced to 156 which was successfully chased down by Muscat CT in 31.5 overs.

Bilal Muhammed (3/39) was the sole bowler to bag wickets for Renaissance. Muscat CT register their 5th win of the season out of 6 games.

Oman Stallions

In another match the Oman Stallions pacers made optimum use of the conditions and wreaked havoc in the Zawawi Powertech batting not allowing them to stitch a partnership.

Hemal Tandel (5/30) and Faisal Shah (3/15) were the key to the Stallions bowling unit bundling Zawawi Powertech down to just 84 in 29.2 overs.

In response, Oman Stallions chased down the target in 12.5 overs registering their 4th win in 5 games of the season.

FOOTBALL

Chelsea hire Argentine Fernandez in record deal



LONDON: Chelsea recruited Enzo Fernandez after paying the midfielder's EUR 121 million (USD 131 million/GBP 106 million) release clause in a record-breaking deal.

An agreement between the two clubs over how Chelsea would pay the release price for the 22-year-old, who has signed an eight-and-a-half-year contract, was made, according to a statement from Benfica as per ESPN. The deal surpasses Manchester City's previous Premier League record payment of GBP 100 million for Jack Grealish's transfer from Aston Villa in 2021.

Despite the fact that Chelsea had yet to officially announce the transaction, the paperwork was reportedly submitted on schedule and before Tuesday at 2300 GMT.

The 22-year-old made an impact for Argentina in their 2022 World Cup victory, earning Young Player of the Tournament honours.

He joins Benoit Badiashile, David Datro Fofana, Andrey Santos, Mykhailo Mudryk, Noni Madueke, and Malo Gusto as Chelsea's seventh additions to the team during a busy January transfer window.

Although Roger Schmidt, the manager of Benfica, did not want to see Fernandez depart, he had previously stated that if a club met the player's release clause.

Fernandez joined Benfica in 2022 after leaving the Argentine team River Plate. He has since played 29 matches across all competitions, contributing four goals and seven assists.

Since being acquired by an investment group led by Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital last year, Chelsea has spent more than £500 million on players overall.

In the Premier League, Chelsea is currently in 10th place, 10 points off of the top four. On Friday, they will host their rivals Fulham in the Premier League.

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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2023 reaching \$83.55, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$3.15. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,709.60 points, up by 0.13 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.05 per cent at 486.77 points. Gulf Mushroom Products, up 9.60 per cent, was the top gainer while Sohar Power, down 15.00 per cent, was the top loser.

PDO inaugurates Rima water treatment plant

The OMR87mn water treatment plant uses a gravitational oil and water separation and natural biological treatment process, an emerging breakthrough technology that is the first of its kind to be used in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Under the auspices of His Highness Sayyed Marwan bin Turki bin Mahmood Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) celebrated today the inauguration of its second nature-based project, Rima water treatment plant. The project, valued at OMR87 million, follows the success of the company's award-winning Nimr Wetlands, which treats produced water using a series of sloping reed fields and evaporation ponds. The event, held at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in Muscat, was attended by several senior government officials, members of the company's board and executive committee and rep-



resentatives from both the public and private sectors. His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki bin Mahmood Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, said, "It was a pleasure to attend today's inauguration of the Rima Water Treatment Plant, a remarkable environmentally friendly project that applies natural technology to treat and manage water associated with oil production. "This project showcases a commitment to using natural technology and green solutions to preserve the environment and make the most of our natural resources.

It sets a strong example to be followed in the region and worldwide, especially in terms of sustainable water management and addressing the challenges faced in the oil and gas industry. We commend PDO for its innovative and environmentally responsible approach to its work and projects. The company's dedication to preserving the environment is truly admirable and deserves recognition." Spanning an area of 25km², Rima water treatment plant uses a gravitational oil and water separation and natural biological treatment process, an emerging break-

through technology that is the first of its kind to be used in Oman. This innovative solution not only ensures the effective treatment of the water but also creates a desert oasis for local wildlife. The project has the capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an impressive 53,000 tonnes per year. PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister said. "Rima Water Treatment Plant represents a significant step forward in our commitment to sustainability and reducing our environmental impact. By using nature-based solutions to treat wastewater, we can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and create new habitats for wildlife. Indeed, it is a breakthrough technology that provides an eco-friendly alternative to traditional deep-water disposal methods, and can be utilised in many other industries that produce wastewater as a by-product." Before the launch of the plant, 60 per cent of the associated water produced at Rima was used for water flooding to maximise recovery, with the remaining 40% being pumped into a deep reservoir in an expensive and energy-intensive operation. This has now been replaced by a more environmentally friendly and sustainable solution, capable of processing up to 65,000 cubic metres of associated water a day and reducing high-energy consumption by 10 megawatts. The construction and commissioning of the plant came four months ahead of schedule with around 1.38 million LTI-free man-hours achieved. Additionally, all construction work was carried out by local companies, with types of equipment being procured and prefabricated in Oman.

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERINGS

51 IPOs in Mena region raised \$22bn in 2022

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region saw a record number of initial public offerings (IPOs) in 2022 with 51 IPOs combined raising \$22 billion, according to a new report. "The year witnessed a 143 per cent increase in the number of listings in 2022 when compared to the 21 announced in 2021, a 179 per cent hike in value when compared to last year, according to the EY Mena IPO Eye Q4 2022 report. The strong run across the region's markets included 20 IPOs in the fourth quarter of 2022 that raised \$7.3 billion in proceeds. In terms of value, the second quarter of 2022 was the strongest quarter with \$9.2 billion in proceeds raised across nine IPOs. "Mena region IPOs had a stellar 2022, with interest and liquidity in the region continuing to defy global trends. The number of IPOs in the fourth quarter of 2022 was the highest at 20; however, the second quarter marked the highest proceeds with the listing of Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA) on the Dubai Financial Market (DFM) which raised a record \$6.1 billion," Brad Watson, EY Mena Strategy and Transactions Leader, said. "The year to watch will be 2023 as there is a healthy IPO pipeline across the region against the backdrop of a challenging and volatile global economic environment," he added. Globally, 2022 saw a total of 1,333 IPOs raising \$179.5 billion in proceeds, a 45 per cent decrease in volume and a 61 per cent decrease in value year-on-year. In contrast to the record-breaking 2021, IPO activity hit long-term lows by volume and value across several



Gregory Hughes

regions, with the strongest downward trend observed in the Americas, the EY Mena report said. The Mena region, however, continues to buck the trend, with listings remaining strong until end-2022, and a positive outlook for 2023. Several companies have already announced their IPO plans for the new year. Mena's equity performance experienced volatility throughout 2022 due to rising interest rates, inflation, and geopolitical unrest, which impacted investor sentiment. At the closing of the year, 24 out of the region's 51 IPOs had a negative return compared to their IPO price. "The year 2022 marked a record year for Mena IPOs with a year-on-year growth of 179 per cent in total proceeds raised from both state-owned and private companies. The region is coming together with the recent first-time regional dual listing and concurrent IPO of Americana Restaurants on ADX and Tadawul and announced collaborations with regional and international exchanges, as well as a unified set of ESG Disclosure Metrics by the GCC Exchanges Committee," Gregory Hughes, EY Mena IPO and Transaction Diligence Leader, said.

Digital transformation benefits everyone



Mr. Abdulnasir Al Raisi

Bank Muscat offers a large number of secure digital banking services to enhance the ease of banking for its different customer segments. This digitalisation trend is visible the most in the Personal Banking space, where the bank has been constantly innovating to provide and launch new services and products that unleash the convenience, speed and security of digital banking for the benefit of its customers. We spoke to Mr. Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager, Personal Banking, Bank Muscat about the rapid changes happening in the digital banking space and the bank's strategy for facilitating national growth and development.

The banking and finance sector continues to see rapid transformation over last few years. How is Bank Muscat adapting to this ever-quicker cycle of change?

The financial sector has long been one that takes full advantage of the latest technological developments globally. There is no doubt that this digital transformation is providing multiple opportunities for financial institutions around the globe to overcome barriers

and create a far better environment for economic growth and development. As the leading financial services provider in Oman, Bank Muscat has always played a key role in launching innovative new products that benefits our customers and support the digital transformation of the country in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040. For this, we are constantly keeping pace with global technology trends as well as the aspirations and needs of our customers here in the Sultanate of Oman.

How can Bank Muscat customers benefit from new digital banking services and products?

Bank Muscat has been adding many benefits to its customers and some of the most important benefits of digital banking include opening of new accounts digitally, bill payments, fund transfers within Oman and internationally, enabling and disabling of Debit Cards for international usage, opening new accounts through the website, opening new savings account for existing customers through Mobile banking, booking of fixed deposits, QR-code based PoS payments etc. Customers can also make Speed Transfers to Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Egypt with instant credit to the beneficiary account in most cases, in addition to remittances across the globe through the SWIFT network.

Our customers find digital banking channels a convenient option to pay their children's school fees, mobile top ups, transfer of funds within the bank and within Oman, change of PIN, loading funds on mobile wallet, prepaid card and cheque book requests among others. Customers can also use the mBanking app or the BM Wallet app to make payments at retail outlets across Oman using QR-code based payments. Bank Muscat's Mobile Banking app, which offers maximum convenience to customers, is highly secure and does not store any sensitive information or transaction logs on the phone. Transactions using the app are based on the best industry standards and dual-factor authentication. In fact, Bank Muscat's mobile banking offers easy access to more than 130 different services and products.

It is also important to note that our customers benefit from free access to, and free payments and fund transfers within the bank using the largest e-channel network in Oman of ATMs, CDMs, Mobile and Internet banking. Thus Bank Muscat is always committed to providing the largest portfolio of secure and convenient banking services to meet the diverse needs of its customers.

How have your customers adapted to the new digital services and products launched by the bank?

The banking sector has traditionally been a pioneer in adapting digital

services and we are delighted that our customers are quite up-to-date with the benefits of the latest technologies which are being launched continuously. In fact even as we speak, Bank Muscat's mobile banking app, which along with Internet banking and our ATM-CDM network, is a crucial part of the bank's electronic channels continues to register strong growth. Currently, the Internet Banking and mBanking app have around 1.4 million registered customers. No doubt, the physical distancing obligations of the pandemic has played a role in popularizing the bank's e-services. But we are happy to note that customers are conducting a whole gamut of banking transactions and service requests through mobile and Internet banking, from the convenience of their homes and offices, 24/7 and 365 days a year. The popularity of these e-channels reflect the convenience and advantages they provide customers round the clock and in the future, things are only going to get better.

Does the bank formulate its future plans as part of a larger national strategy?

Thanks to the strong digital transformation template and goals provided by the landmark Oman Vision 2040, the Sultanate of Oman is on a path to comprehensive development. We would like to extend our sincere



appreciation and gratitude to the Government of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik for providing us with this ambitious roadmap for transition to a knowledge-based society. What this means is government ministries, institutions, corporates and the people, all have a ready reckoner to see how they fit in the larger roadmap and can tailor their individual strategies accordingly. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Central Bank of Oman, which has been playing a key role in the digital transformation process by ensuring a well-regulated environment and helping ensure procedures and processes to implement the latest technological services to benefit customers.

The bank is constantly on the lookout for new opportunities to support national goals and also expand its customer-centric offerings. For example, the bank currently offers Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises a whole range of digital payment solutions including POS and QR-code based payments through its Al Wathbah (SME) and Najahi (Retail Enterprises) units. I would like to reiterate that Bank Muscat's strategy and plans are fully-aligned to Oman Vision 2040 and the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman. We will continue to play an important role in the Renewed Renaissance of our beloved Oman.



MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Gulf Mushroom Products, up 9.60 per cent, was the top gainer while Sohar Power, down 15.00 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,709.60 points, up by 0.13 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.05 per cent at 486.77 points. Gulf Mushroom Products, up 9.60 per cent, was the top gainer while Sohar Power, down 15.00 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of the Oman Cables Industry were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 268 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR6.81 million, with more than 9.28 million shares changing hands. Out of 37 traded securities, 16 advanced, 9 declined, and 12 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR230,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR158,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR72,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,550.49 points, up 0 per cent. Prices of Bank Dhofar, National Finance, Al Sharqia Investment, Al Anwar Investment, and Bank Muscat were up by 3.33 per cent, 1.52 per cent, 1.39 per cent, 1.25 per cent and 1.09 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, National Bank Oman, Takaful Oman, Global Financial Investments, and Sohar International Bank were down by 9.60 per cent, 3.29 per cent, 2.44 per cent, 1.70 per cent and 0.98 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,897.97 points, up 0.73 per cent. Prices of Gulf Mushroom Products, Construction Materials, Galfar Engineering, Oman Flour Mills, and Oman Fisheries were up by 9.60 per cent, 6.76 per cent, 2.81 per cent, 2.53 per cent and 2.27 per cent respectively. Services Index was up by 0.49 per cent before closing at 1,690.02 points. — **United Securities**

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,715.56	4,684.63	4,709.60	4,703.38	6.21	0.13
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,560.82	7,515.52	7,550.49	7,550.17	0.32	0.00
Industry Index	5,897.97	5,863.86	5,897.97	5,855.01	42.96	0.73
Services Index	1,690.02	1,681.78	1,690.02	1,681.78	8.24	0.49
MSX Shariah Index	487.37	485.53	486.77	486.52	0.26	0.05
MSX TR INDEX	5,954.19	5,915.14	5,946.66	5,938.82	7.84	0.13
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,911.55	7,864.15	7,900.74	7,900.41	0.33	0.00
SERVICES TR IDX	1,792.88	1,784.14	1,792.88	1,784.14	8.75	0.49
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,140.52	6,105.00	6,140.52	6,095.79	44.73	0.73

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
9,288,290	6,812,731	268	23,546,890,387	16	9	12	37

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFR	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OMD000003224 RENAISSANCE SER	300,000	136,378	6	0.452	0.458	0.452	0.458	0.440	0.018	4.091	0.458	0.458	0.460	0.100	108,275,780
OMD000001400 OMAN FLOUR MILLS	100	65	1	0.648	0.648	0.648	0.648	0.632	0.016	2.532	0.648	0.648	0.648	0.100	102,060,000
OMD000001152 OMAN NAT ENG	153,272	18,419	22	0.120	0.121	0.120	0.121	0.119	0.002	1.681	0.121	0.121	0.122	0.100	16,940,000
OMD000002440 AL SHARQIA INV	10,402	759	2	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.001	1.389	0.073	0.073	0.073	0.100	6,570,000
OMD000002796 BANK MUSCAT	435,435	121,414	29	0.276	0.280	0.276	0.279	0.276	0.003	1.087	0.279	0.279	0.279	0.100	100,284,284,780
OMD000001525 OMAN INVST& FIN	24,925	3,165	3	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.126	0.001	0.794	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.100	30,099,000
OMD000001707 OMAN CABLES INDSTR	3,863,100	4,867,506	1	1.260	1.260	1.260	1.680	1.680	0.000	0.000	1.260	0.000	1.845	0.100	150,696,000
OMD000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PROD	10,000	2,240	2	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.000	0.000	0.224	0.224	0.246	0.100	27,977,143
OMD000003026 OMAN TELECOM	358,057	337,692	13	0.940	0.948	0.940	0.948	0.948	0.000	0.000	0.948	0.920	0.948	0.100	711,000,000
OMD000003968 OOREDOO	131,112	56,905	3	0.436	0.436	0.434	0.434	0.436	-0.002	-0.459	0.434	0.406	0.440	0.100	282,509,796
OMD000003396 SOHAR INT. BANK	40,425	4,088	5	0.101	0.102	0.100	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.101	0.102	0.100	463,596,291
OMD000003125 GLOBAL INV H	40,100	2,326	3	0.058	0.060	0.058	0.059	-0.001	-1.695	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	11,600,000
OMD000001483 NATIONAL BANK OMAN	339,971	89,940	6	0.261	0.265	0.261	0.265	0.274	-0.009	-3.285	0.265	0.265	0.275	0.100	430,875,784
Total	13	5,706,899	5,640,898	96											

Parallel Market

OMD000002267 GULF MUSHROOM P	4,595	977	4	0.200	0.217	0.200	0.217	0.198	0.019	9.596	0.217	0.206	0.200	0.100	9,028,344
OMD000001368 CONSTRUCTION M	100	8	1	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.074	0.005	6.757	0.079	0.000	0.080	0.100	4,937,500
OMD000003549 BANK DHOFAR	79,000	12,245	2	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.150	0.005	3.333	0.155	0.135	0.155	0.100	464,434,473
OMD000003521 GALFAR ENGINEER	429,382	77,472	37	0.180	0.183	0.177	0.183	0.178	0.005	2.809	0.183	0.183	0.183	0.100	37,146,520
OMD000001566 OMAN FISHERIES	9,013	784	2	0.087	0.090	0.087	0.090	0.088	0.002	2.273	0.090	0.087	0.090	0.100	16,387,056
OMD000004669 SHARQIAH DESALIN	32,000	4,352	4	0.136	0.139	0.136	0.139	0.136	0.003	2.206	0.139	0.133	0.139	0.100	13,594,500
OMD000004248 SMN POWER HOLDING	210,000	11,470	10	0.055	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.054	0.001	1.852	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.100	10,979,958
OMD000005963 PHOENIX POWER	125,257	6,764	7	0.054	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.054	0.001	1.852	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.100	80,443,080
OMD000002648 NATIONAL FINANCE	10,100	1,353	4	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.134	0.132	0.002	1.515	0.134	0.134	0.140	0.100	72,524,881
OMD000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	21,666	1,755	4	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.081	0.075	0.081	0.100	16,200,000
OMD0000001319 ALUMINIUM PROD	100	7	1	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.060	0.065	0.100	2,182,144
OMD0000001418 RAYSUT CEMENT	101,797	12,928	2	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.127	0.129	0.139	0.100	25,400,000
OMD0000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO	10,000	740	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.078	0.100	9,018,750
OMD000002374 UNITED FINANCE	368,926	22,529	16	0.062	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.100	21,297,809
OMD000004420 BANK NIZWA	934,446	92,784	35	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.100	223,695,303
OMD000007084 MCT DESALINATE	14,300	1,416	4	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.095	0.099	0.100	15,399,490
OMD000008868 THE PEARL REIF	300	35	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.116	0.118	0.100	50,122,885
OMD000004776 TAKAFUL OMAN	10,100	404	2	0.040	0.044	0.040	0.040	0.041	-0.001	-2.439	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.100	10,000,000
OMD000004925 ALBATAINAH POWER	119,021	4,167	8	0.037	0.037	0.035	0.036	0.037	-0.001	-2.703	0.036	0.034	0.036	0.100	24,295,947
OMD000004933 AL SUWADI POWER	98,181	3,347	10	0.036	0.036	0.033	0.035	0.036	-0.001	-2.778	0.035	0.034	0.035	0.100	25,004,222
OMD000005260 OMAN ARAB BANK	14,389	1,630	4	0.113	0.115	0.113	0.115	0.125	-0.010	-8.000	0.115	0.115	0.125	0.100	191,982,150
Total	21	2,592,653	257,168	160											

UNION BUDGET REACTION

Balanced budget that takes into account aspirations of India's youth and MSMEs: Lulu Financial MD

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As India navigates a period of global economic shocks, the country's economic resilience has managed to hold steady. Youth and MSMEs, two foundational strengths of the country have been part of this growth story.

The Union Budget presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has checked several boxes, and Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of Lulu Financial Holdings termed it a balanced budget, with equal focus on traditional and emerging sectors, agreeing that, "the way forward is to build a technology and knowledge-based economy."

With the UN declaring 2023 as the International Year of Millets, Adeeb applauded the efforts of the government to raise global awareness about India's millet farmers, as well as provision schemes in the budget to make India a hub for mil-



let production and research.

Touching upon the matter of financial inclusion, Adeeb, who has significant investments in India's financial services sector in the form of Lulu Forex and Lulu Finserv – an NBFC providing microloans, said that the move to ramp up the credit guarantee scheme for MSMEs will give a fillip to enabling faster access to financial services.

He added that the decision to expand the scope of services in

DigiLocker to include MSMEs and make PAN a common identifier will give a big boost to user documentation, supporting the onboarding efforts of NBFCs and fintech driving financial inclusion among such companies.

Adeeb, who also has investments in the travel and luxury hospitality sector felt that the proposal to adopt an integrated and innovative approach to develop destinations augurs well for the tourism sector.

"It is encouraging to note that under the Swadesh Darshan and Dekho Apna Desh schemes, the government will be rolling out physical initiatives such as the Unity Mall to raise the global profile of GI products as well as virtual assets to enhance the experience of domestic and international travellers in some of the top destinations."

"The proposal to develop the tourism sector through the converge of public and private stakeholders will surely help generate adequate em-

ployment opportunities. The proposal to open 50 new airports will further drive more inbound traffic and add to the overall economic prospects of the sector," he added.

Tourism is already one of the highest generators of employment in the country but suffers from high operating expenses and low margins, and Adeeb admitted that it would have been beneficial to also relook at the existing GST rates, apart from rolling out sector-specific schemes to encourage domestic and foreign investment into the sector.

He also acknowledged the Budget's focus on skill development under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana 4.0 and the setting up of 30 Skill India international centres, many of which can add immense value in service-based sectors. Lulu Financial has been an active participant in the upskilling of India's youth, having partnered last year with NSDC International.



Ultratech Cements signs partnership pact with Seven Seas

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A strategic partnership agreement was signed in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) between UltraTech Cement Limited, India (Ultra Tech), the flagship cement company of Aditya Birla Group, and Seven Seas to invest in Duqm Cement Projects International which was fully owned by Seven Seas Company.

The partnership is expected to contribute to the twin national objectives of economic diversification and employment generation. The team is working in close coordination with Sezad (a zone affiliated with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones) officials to fast-track various approvals, and infrastructure and provide an investment environment in Sezad.

FINTECH PROVIDER



Mohamad Ibrahim joins XS.com as Group CEO

DUBAI: XS.com, the multinational fintech and financial services provider for brokers as well as retail and institutional traders today announced a new addition to the team - Mohamad Ibrahim - who has joined the international online trading firm as the new Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Ibrahim will be responsible for driving XS.com's growth strategy, developing new products and services, and ensuring customer satisfaction. He will be based out of Dubai, UAE but will spend time equally across all offices and place a strong focus on penetrating new markets.

Sakis Paraskevov, Group COO at XS.com commented, "Having Mohamad Ibrahim join our brokerage as our new group CEO is something myself and our leadership team are very excited about. Mohamad brings with him a great wealth of experience."

UNION BUDGET FOR 2023-24

Indian stock market investors cheer, Sensex up over 1,000 points

NEW DELHI: Indian stock markets reacted positively to the Union Budget for 2023-24 with benchmark indices rising over 1,000 points to breach the 60,000 mark.

Barring the Nifty oil and gas index, all other indices traded in the green, National Stock Exchange data showed. Nifty banks, financial services, and private banks rose the most. This year's budget is significant being the last full budget of PM Narendra Modi government's second tenure with general elections scheduled for next year.

Union Finance Minister, in her Budget speech in Parliament on Wednesday, announced that the government proposes to increase capital expenditure outlay by 33 per cent to Rs 10 lakh crore in 2023-24, which would be 3.3 per cent of the GDP.

"This overall outlay would be 3.3 per cent of GDP, almost three times the outlay made in 2019-20. With the substantial increase, it is central to the government's efforts to enhance growth potential and job creation, the crowd in private investments and provides a cushion against global headwinds," Sitharaman said in her Budget speech.

The outlay for Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) has been



enhanced by 66 per cent to over Rs 79,000 crore.

Further, the government proposed a capital outlay of about Rs 2.40 lakh crore for the Indian Railways. This budgeted outlay for the railways, Sitharaman told Parliament, is the highest ever and nine times what it was in 2013.

The government proposes to increase the agricultural credit target to Rs 20 lakh crore with a focus on animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries, Sitharaman told Parliament. The agriculture sector of the country has been growing at an average annual growth rate of 4.6 per cent in the last six years.

The Economic Survey, tabled in the Parliament on Tuesday, noted India's GDP is expected to grow in the range of 6 to 6.8 per cent in the coming financial year 2023-24. This is in comparison to the estimated 7 per cent this fiscal and 8.7 per cent in 2021-22. —**ANI**

OIL PRICES

Oil rises as slowing US inflation eases recession concerns

MELBOURNE: Oil prices rose on Wednesday as signs of slowing inflation in the United States eased fears that the world's largest oil user may face a recession because of further interest rate hikes and a weaker dollar supported some buying interest.

Brent crude futures gained 32 cents, or 0.4 per cent, to \$85.78 a barrel at 0407 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose 42 cents, or 0.5 per cent, to \$79.29 a barrel, Reuters reports.

Both benchmarks were up for a second day, after gaining about 1 per cent in the previous session. "Sentiment shifted amid a positive company reporting season. Signs of cooling inflation also raised expectations that the Fed will be able to pause rate hikes," ANZ commodities analyst said in a note. Tamer rate hike expectations helped lower the dollar index, which supported oil prices as a weaker greenback makes the commodity cheaper for buyers holding other currencies.

"Oil prices seem primed to navigate a period of heightened volatility ... Opec+ is likely to stick to its current production targets, however, Russia is leaning towards increasing oil exports to Asian buyers at deep discounts, which can disrupt the balance in oil markets," independent oil market expert Sugandha Sachdeva said. —**BNA**

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WHAT'S BUZZING IN HOLLYWOOD?

JAMES GUNN SAYS
'THE FLASH'
IS "ONE OF THE GREATEST
SUPERHERO MOVIES EVER"

Ezra Miller, the star of 'The Flash,' seemed to be finished with the DC Universe after a turbulent year marked by many arrests and public meltdowns. However, after 'The Flash' stand-alone debuts on June 16, according to recently appointed DC co-head Peter Safran, the door is open for potential collaborations with Miller!

According to Variety, a US-based media house, Safran said that "Ezra is completely committed to their recovery." Safran added, "And we are fully supportive of that journey that they're on right now. When the time is right, when they feel like they're ready to have the discussion, we'll all figure out what the best path forward is. But right now, they are completely focused on their recovery. And in our conversations with them over the last couple of months, it feels like they're making enormous progress."

Variety reports that Ezra Miller began treatment for a previously undiagnosed mental health condition. Phase 1 of the DC reset, which will begin with a 'Superman' movie in 2025, was outlined by Safran and DC co-head James Gunn. For that project, neither a director nor an actor has yet been selected.

ROBERT PATTINSON
STARRER
'BATMAN PART II'
TO RELEASE IN
OCTOBER 2025

Warner Bros has announced Matt Reeves' 'The Batman Part II' will be hitting the theatres on October 3, 2025. However, the storyline and more details regarding the project have been kept under wraps for now. According to Variety, a US-based media house, Reeves' 'The Batman Part II' will continue to be a standalone property and fall under the newly branded 'DC Elseworlds' category while Gunn and Safran are creating a new DC Universe that will include the 2025 theatrical release 'Superman: Legacy. According to Gunn, any DC movie or TV show set outside the main DC Universe will be given the 'DC Elseworlds' label, just like DC Comics. Talking about 'Batman', Variety reports that Pattinson and Reeves will continue to explore their version of Batman in the 'DC Elseworlds' sidebar while Gunn and Safran will cast a new Batman in the DC Universe. The two declared that a Batman and Robin film, based on 'The Brave and the Bold' comics, will be a part of the DC Universe. Reeves is preparing to begin filming 'The Batman Part II' as well as a spinoff series focusing on Colin Farrell's character, the Penguin. (ANI)

WILL SMITH AND
MARTIN LAWRENCE
ANNOUNCE
'BAD BOYS' 4

Will Smith and Martin Lawrence have announced that they will team up once more for the fourth installment of the 'Bad Boys' movie! Will Smith and Martin Lawrence announced the film through a video on social media with the caption, "IT'S ABOUT THAT TIME!" According to Variety, a US-based media house, Adil El Arbi and Bilall Fallah will be back as directors of the untitled sequel. Chris Bremner is working on the script. 25 years after the first 'Bad Boys' movie was released, the directors--who also worked on Warner Bros.' shelved 'Batgirl' film--helmed 2020's 'Bad Boys for Life,' which reunited Smith and Lawrence as Miami-Dade detectives Mike Lowrey and Marcus Burnett. Variety further reports that Sony revealed that a fourth 'Bad Boys' movie was in the works soon after the third sequel was out in the theatres. The third part of the film 'Bad Boys for Life' became one of the blockbusters of the pre-pandemic era, grossing USD 426.5 million globally.

Directed by Michael Bay, the original Bad Boys introduced viewers to Marcus Burnett (Lawrence) and Mike Lowrey (Smith), two hip detectives who look to protect a witness to a murder, while investigating a case of stolen heroin from the evidence storage room of their police precinct.

IN-PICTURES



Mithun Chakraborty, Mouni Roy, Subhashree Ganguly and others at the inauguration of 'Dance Bangla Dance'
Bollywood actors Mithun Chakraborty, Mouni Roy, Subhashree Ganguly and others pose for a group photo during the inauguration of 'Dance Bangla Dance', in Kolkata. ANI Photo



Myanmar exports over 1.35mn tonnes of beans, pulses in nearly 10 months
This picture shows a port in Yangon, Myanmar. Myanmar exported more than 1.35 million tonnes of beans and pulses in nearly 10 months of the 2022-23 fiscal year beginning in April last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce. xinhua



Highlight of Judo Grand Prix Portugal 2023
Brasnjevic Darko (bottom) of Serbia competes against Clerget Axel of France during the men's -90 kg bronze medal match at Judo Grand Prix Portugal 2023 in Almada, Portugal. Xinhua



Zimbabwe to receive more agricultural machinery from Belarus
A man speaks on the phone besides farming equipment during a launch ceremony in Harare, Zimbabwe. Xinhua



Night view of Johannesburg, South Africa
This picture shows the night view of Johannesburg, South Africa. Xinhua



Griffon vulture released into wild after treatment and rehabilitation in Croatia
A griffon vulture, which was found malnourished and disoriented on Hvar Island last December, is released into the wild after treatment and rehabilitation in Torak, Croatia. Xinhua



Highlight of 2022 Skateboarding Street and Park World Championships
Lan Junyi (front) of China competes during the women's street qualifiers at the 2022 Skateboarding Street and Park World Championships in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Xinhua

Owners praise INFINITI QX60 for its confident and responsive performance

Given its immense power and capability, aspiring owners might be surprised to learn that the INFINITI QX60 is also quite fuel efficient

MUSCAT: INFINITI QX60 has already set a high bar for family SUVs with generous features which complements its serene interior and sleek exterior. The seven-seater luxury family SUV - INFINITI QX60 offers a confident and responsive performance. Given its immense power and capability, aspiring owners might be surprised to learn that the INFINITI QX60 is also quite fuel efficient.

Salim Al Shukaili, who is a recent owner, says, "INFINITI QX60 is as much a powerful performer as it is a premium and advanced crossover. QX60 is powered by a 279-horsepower 3.5-litre V6 engine teamed with an all-new 9-speed automatic transmission. This makes it the perfect car ever."

A senior spokesperson at INFINITI Oman said, "INFINITI QX60 is impressive outside, its interior is serene and is full of technology that takes the stress out of driving, all of which allow its owners to conquer life in style."

Nasser Al Alawi says, "INFINITI QX60 features intuitive technology and impressive driveline dynamics. It features INFINITI's InTouch™ 12.3-inch Interactive Display touchscreen for infotainment with wireless Apple CarPlay and USB-based Android Auto compatibility. An available INFINITI 12.3-inch Dynamic Metre Display in front of the driver renders beautifully crisp information such as speed, navigation information and more, and can be paired with a sharp 10.8-inch head-up display which provides vital information to the driver while keeping their eyes on the road. In the centre console, an available wireless charging mat, large enough to support an iPhone Pro Max, makes keeping devices connected and charged easy."

Appreciating the model's advanced safety features, Jamil Al Mamri says, "Active safety features such as Rear Automatic Braking, Predictive Forward Collision Warning, and Forward Emergency Braking with Pedestrian Detection are available on the QX60. Adaptive Front Lighting and Auto-Leveling Headlights are available to light the road ahead brilliantly. The Smart Rear View Mirror provides an unobstructed view behind the QX60 when passengers or car-



go obstruct rearward vision."

Observing that powertrain delivers a responsive drive that's quiet, confident, and poised, Abbas Al Balushi says, "With three rows, INFINITI has paid careful attention to ensure the driver and passengers in each row ride in the utmost comfort."

With the INFINITI QX60, designers created a new expression for the premium brand by combining powerful athleticism with harmony and simplicity. The combination is a hallmark in INFINITI's design language, underscored by the available brilliant Moonbow Blue shade that reproduces deep blues and violets that blanket the summer sky at dusk. An understated character line runs the length of the QX60, bisecting its equally appealing, available two-tone black roof from its lower body.

A significant model for INFINITI, the QX60 delivers luxury that should be lived in. The next generation model ushers in a refined,

modern look for INFINITI with an upright stance, bold available color-contrast roof, and exceptional Japanese-inspired details including an origami-inspired signature mesh grille, kimono folds in "digital piano key" lighting signatures and the aesthetic of ripples on a pond interpreted in the leather-appointed seats.

The car has generous standard equipment to complement its soothing interior and sleek exterior. The stunning model is magnificent outside, its interior is peaceful and is full of technology that takes the stress out of driving, all of which allow its owners to conquer life in style.

The direct coupling all-wheel-drive system almost instantly engages when it detects wheel slip for a confident driving experience. Up to 50% of the available power can be sent to the rear wheels for increased grip. INFINITI's Active Brake Limited Slip functionality can brake individual wheels to re-

direct torque to the wheels that do have grip almost instantly.

Exquisite details, curated materials and tailored artistry adorn the interior of the INFINITI QX60. Available Saddle Brown semi-aniline leather appointments showcase the subtle curves with handsome, double-stitch contrast accents and piping. For the QX60, an AUTOGRAPH grade level features quilted semi-aniline leather accouterments in the first two rows of seating with embossed seatbacks and rich open-pore wood accents.

All QX60s feature ergonomically designed "zero gravity" seats in the first row - developed in a joint study with Yamazaki Laboratory at Keio University to reduce pressure on the hips - to carry the driver and front passengers more comfortably. In addition, in-seat massagers in the first row with climate-control are available on selected grades.

The QX60 offers plush seating

for up to seven passengers on most grade levels. Exclusive to the QX60 AUTOGRAPH grade level, are standard captain's chairs, providing first-class seating accommodations in the second row.

QX60 includes enhanced features that made the nameplate a bestseller for INFINITI. For example, the QX60 keeps its ingenious sliding and tilting seats for the child seat-ready second row, allowing easy access to the third row without removing an already-installed child safety seat.

Available on the QX60 and standard on select grade levels, a premium Bose® Performance® series 17-speaker sound system faithfully replicates beautiful audio and nuanced notes in the cabin. Specifically designed for the QX60 SUV and its audio profile, the Bose Performance® Series audio system executes a rich and broad range of audio, no matter the source.

INFINITI's ProPILOT Assist makes use of a camera and radar

to support the driver. It is designed to reduce the stress of stop-and-go driving by helping control acceleration, braking and steering during single-lane highway driving.

SBA is largely committed to supporting INFINITI Oman's growth in the Sultanate through major emphasis on customer satisfaction and by providing world-class after-sales services in Oman. SBA has further built upon its legacy of trust, excellent customer service and providing value for money to each of its customers.

INFINITI Motor Company is headquartered in Yokohama, Japan with operations around the world including regional offices based in the America, China and INFINITI International Markets based in Dubai. The INFINITI brand of premium automobiles are assembled in manufacturing facilities in Japan and North America. INFINITI design studios are located in Atsugi-Shi near Yokohama, London and San Diego.

25TH BRANCH

Al Khalili Buildex opens new branch in Misfah industrial area

MUSCAT: Al Khalili Buildex opened its newest 25th branch in the Misfah industrial area in the Wilayat of Muscat.

Aimed at enhancing its presence in the Sultanate, to provide quality customer service and easy accessibility to its diverse product portfolio, the opening comes in line with the company's strategic expansion roadmap for the year which entails bringing its services and products closer to customers.

Shathan Al Khalili, Marketing Manager, Al Khalili Group, said, "We are delighted to open our new branch in Misfah, where we seek to provide our comprehensive suite of services for the company's existing and potential customers. Buildex's growing network of branches is fundamental to and complements our ongoing efforts to bring our services closer to the people of Oman both online and offline."

"Given its strategic location, the new branch will be closer to its customers in the Misfah Industrial Area, ensuring fast and easy access to their material requirements. We are putting in concerted efforts in the direction of meeting excellent



customer service levels throughout our branch network with the support of our well-trained staff," Al Khalili added.

The new branch can be distinguished by its design and range of products and equipment that reflects the company's identity and business philosophy. The branch includes highly qualified human resources, who harness their talents to ensure that the needs of the customers are met, through a fast

response mechanism. The branch is also equipped with the state-of-the-art Hempel Multi-tint centre which produces customised protective and Industrial coatings.

Al Khalili Buildex, the trade-name of Al Khalili United Enterprises, the flagship of the business conglomerate - Al Khalili Group, is the one-stop solution provider in the retail and trade segment in the construction materials industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

APPOINTMENT

Renaissance Services appoints Chief Communication and Marketing Officer

MUSCAT: Renaissance Services has appointed Mohana Prabhakar as Chief Communication and Marketing Officer.

Mohana took up the role in December 2022, bringing to Renaissance her comprehensive and strategic skills in media, content creation and delivery, publishing, marketing communication and brand building.

In the over three decades of her career, 21 years of which have been in Oman, Mohana has held several roles - as equity researcher, business analyst, editor, columnist and events planner. Her underlying commitment across these domains has been to differentiate, maintain quality and focus and always look for a fresh approach.

Renaissance CEO, Stephen Thomas, said, "Mohana has made a transformational difference to the company's communications from a consultancy perspective over recent years. We are now delighted to have her join us in the C-suite leadership team, where her transformative skills may be applied beyond communications.



It's exciting to join at a time where I hope to contribute my experience and expertise in enhancing brand Renaissance

Mohana Prabhakar
Chief Communication and Marketing Officer

porate landscape because of its consistent focus on excellence and efficiency without compromising on the essential tenets of worker welfare and ESG."

"The company has many inspiring stories to tell but always with an eye on the future as we go on the Renaissance 2.0 transformation journey. It's exciting to join at a time where I hope to contribute my experience and expertise in enhancing brand Renaissance," she added.

Renaissance is committed to DEI and we are seeing more and more female colleagues joining our team at every level, making a positive difference to our outlook and delivery."

Commenting on her new role, Mohana said, "Renaissance has always stood out in Oman's cor-

ROUND-UP

Offer on Ford 2-door Bronco WildTrak SUV

Besides sporting a tough and attractive design, the Bronco WildTrak takes on any terrain to offer some of the finest experiences on every journey



MUSCAT: Adventure seekers can now make the most of their wishes with the powerful and dependable 2-door Ford Bronco WildTrak SUV. The Bronco is now available with exclusive benefits.

They include service 3 years / 60,000km and registration 1 year. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Ford showroom.) The offer is valid until March 1.

Besides sporting a tough and attractive design, the Bronco WildTrak takes on any terrain to offer some of the finest experiences on every journey.

The 2-door Bronco WildTrak delivers maximum 4x4 go-anywhere, anytime capability and confidence. Offering fantastic off-road experiences for drivers is the Bronco's off-road mapping and drive technologies.

Bronco's advanced four-wheel-drive technology is at the core of its off-road capabilities, and at the heart of it all is Bronco's exclusive Terrain Management System with

G.O.A.T. Modes that is designed to help drivers better navigate any type of terrain. Up to seven driver-selectable modes are offered including Normal, Eco, Sport, Slippery and Sand, with Baja and Mud/Ruts.

The base system utilises a two-speed electronic shift-on-the-fly transfer case, while the optional advanced system features a two-speed electromechanical transfer case that adds an auto mode for on-demand engagement to select between 2H and 4H.

Available segment-first Trail Toolbox gives Bronco owners a suite of exclusive technologies to elevate their off-road experience. This includes Trail Control – cruise control for low-speed trail driving, while Trail Turn Assist tightens off-road turning radii through torque vectoring, and the innovative Trail One-Pedal Drive acceleration/braking control makes for more precise and confident slow-mode rock crawling. Segment-leading levels of off-road

capability are possible thanks to Bronco's available best-in-class 11.6-inch ground clearance, maximum 29-degree break over angle and 37.2-degree departure angle, plus best-in-class water fording capability of up to 33.5 inches.

Thanks to Bronco's legendary Baja racing DNA, each model brings forth a thrilling off-road experience and delivers it with modern, heritage-inspired style. To deliver thrilling high-speed off-roading and overall driving performance, every Bronco comes with an independent front suspension for improved control, confidence and comfort.

Race-bred EcoBoost engines and a 10-speed automatic transmissions give the all-new Bronco the optimal combination of power, torque and gear ranges to perform in a wide variety of terrains and uses. The 2.3-litre EcoBoost is targeted to deliver best-in-class four-cylinder torque of 310 lb.-ft. with an expected 270 horsepower.

Inside, all Bronco models are purpose-built and ready for action. The instrument panel is inspired by the first-generation model, with gauges and controls clearly visible and intuitive. A multifunction colour LCD instrument panel is front and centre. Further setting Bronco ahead of the off-road competition is an available segment-exclusive 12-inch SYNC® 4 system.

A modern high-strength steel roll cage with integrated side curtain airbags in the upper structure and seats helps protect passengers from side impacts and complements driver and front passenger airbags. Available Ford Co-Pilot360 driver-assist technologies plus standard AdvanceTrac with Roll Stability Control™ and Trailer Sway Control help instil driver confidence.

Those interested in experiencing the 2-door Ford Bronco can visit their nearest Ford showroom.

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



Jindal Shaded hosts Family Day

MUSCAT: As a people-centric organisation that focuses on continuously strengthening its bonds with its employees as well as the community at large, Jindal Shaded has been at the forefront of leading initiatives and conducting programmes that add value to the lives of people.

In line with the same, the company recently organised a large-scale event for its employees and their families. The Jindal Shaded Family Day, which was held at the company's headquarters in Sohar on Sunday, 29 January 2023, witnessed the attendance of over 800 people.

Commenting on the Family Day, Harsha Shetty the CEO said, "Jindal Shaded takes great pride in its community-centred approach and events like these help us to reaffirm our position as an integral part of society. Employees are the vital link between the company and its external stakeholders, and we acknowledge the quintessential and fundamental role that they play. We, therefore, continuously strive to foster a strong, resilient, and dynamic corporate culture that upholds the values of transparency, ethicality, and mutual respect. Our staff engagement activities

help promote increased collaboration and cooperation between team members while nurturing a conducive work environment."

He added saying, "To truly integrate employees into the ecosystem and instil in them an inherent passion to achieve new heights, Jindal Shaded also believes that individuals should acquire a more holistic understanding of the core business and also appreciate the roles played by each department. This is the main reason why we organised an extensive tour of the plant as part of the staff gathering."

The Family Day event brought together employees and their families from Al Palaj Township, Sohar Township, and Liwa Township for an activity-filled day. A pickup was arranged for everyone from their respective townships and each group was greeted with a warm welcome. As part of the event, the three groups were given a tour of Jindal Shaded's plant and explained the operations as well as the working of different units. The highest levels of health and safety precautions were maintained throughout the tour with an ambulance on site, first aid kits at every drop-off point, and emergency numbers in place.

UNIQUE FACILITIES

Bank Muscat opens state-of-the-art branch at Madinat Sultan Qaboos

MUSCAT: In line with Bank Muscat's customer-centric vision 'To serve you better, everyday', the bank inaugurated a new state-of-the-art banking branch at Madinat Sultan Qaboos in the presence of Murtadha Ahmed Sultan, Director, WJ Towell Group, Ahmed Faqir Al Balushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat, and senior officials from the bank.

The new branch features a number of unique facilities like a Private Banking Branch, an Asalah Priority Banking Centre and a customer-centric reception desk that can promptly and efficiently assist customers in their banking needs. Also, as part of the bank's focus on improving access to persons with disabilities, the new branch will have disabled-friendly access, teller counters and ATMs.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdunasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat has earned a name over four decades of operations in the Sultanate for its customer-centricity, which is backed by the largest branch and ATM-CDM-FFM network, state-of-the-art Mobile and Internet banking, and world-class products and services. The opening of the new branch will further strengthen the bank's leadership position in Oman by helping it serve its customers better every day in line with its aim for an enhanced Customer Experience. I take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their confidence and trust in the bank, and for being our partners in the progress and development of the Sultanate."

He added that the bank would be



opening more such hi-tech branches to meet the needs of different customer segments in the near future.

Taya Eid Bait Sabeeh, Deputy General Manager – Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, added: "We are pleased to open our new Madinat As Sultan Qaboos branch to reach out and provide the best services to different segments of the bank's customers, especially Premier Banking customers. The bank's continuously expanding branch and ATM-CDM-FFM network, which serve different customer and demographic segments, highlight its efforts to remain the bank of first choice in Oman." He added that the current branch was

chosen to meet current and future customer needs and was an implementation of the bank's vision to serve its customers better, every day. He thanked customers for their confidence in the bank.

The new branch, which will work from 8am to 2pm, will be a convenient option for the community in Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos in general and Premier Banking customers. Staffed by well qualified and experienced Omani employees, it aims to provide prompt and efficient customer services thereby building further on the bank's reputation as a listening bank that constantly strives to do better, every day.

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Free 20,000 cancer risk assessments by Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals

MUSCAT: On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals and to mark World Cancer Day falls on February 4, Badr Al Samaa announced a mass campaign of providing 20,000 free cancer risk assessments and consultation for the residents and nationals of Oman.

The campaign, conducted by Badr Karkinos Centre for Cancer Care, will run for 3 months ending April 30, 2023. The aim of this campaign is the early detection of cancer and the spreading of important health awareness on cancer. Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, being the largest private healthcare provider understands its responsibility of contributing to medical programmes of national importance.

Cancer is the second most cause of mortality in the world today and Oman is not an exception. It is estimated that more than 20 million new cancer cases are diagnosed every year in the world. Data from Oman shows 3700+ new cancer cases diagnosed in the year 2020. The major challenge in cancer care is that around 70% of cancer cases are diagnosed in the advanced stages. Cancers detected in early stages are more likely to be cured with standard treatment protocols than those diagnosed late. The substantial delay in detection and lack of proper prevention is one of the key reasons for poor cancer outcomes.

How to register
Anyone interested in Badr Al Samaa's free cancer risk assessment programme can en-



rol themselves by sending their name, age, gender and preferred location of Badr Al Samaa for assessment via WhatsApp to 72255689. The QR code for registration is available in the picture in this news story and on the social media handles of Badr Al Samaa as well. An appointment date and time will be communicated within 24 hours of sending the request for an appointment.

AI-based tool of risk-assessment
The lack of awareness about cancer, especially regarding the common symptoms, prevention and early diagnosis aspect of the same is the predominant reason for late diagnosis and subsequent poor prognosis. Proper awareness among the public is the need of the hour. Badr Al Samaa's cancer risk assessment program is an AI-based platform curated by a group of experienced oncologists. It includes a series of questions comparing all the risk factors associ-

ated with malignancy and other non-communicable diseases. In the end, the platform with the help of AI shall compute the risk score for individual citizens.

Apart from cancer risk assessment, Badr Al Samaa will be providing free consultation and cancer awareness and education material to all the enrolled.

Speaking on this occasion the managing directors of Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals Abdul Latheef and Dr P A Mohammed said that there is an immense need for health screening programs to ensure timely diagnosis and proper treatment which will result in saving many precious lives. They said the main reason for providing a large number of 20,000 cancer risk assessments for free is to encourage people to dissolve the taboo around cancer and come in large numbers to ensure safety from this deadly disease. Badr Al Samaa is working hard in spreading important health awareness on cancer.



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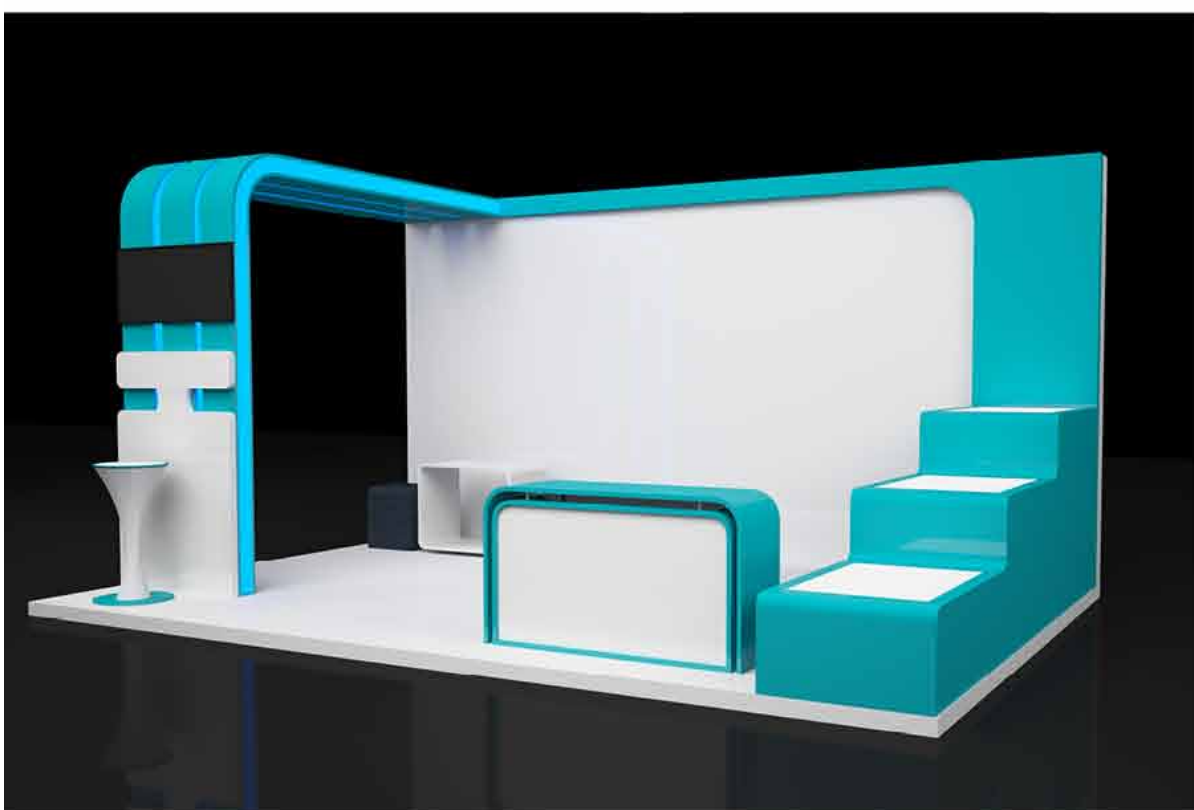
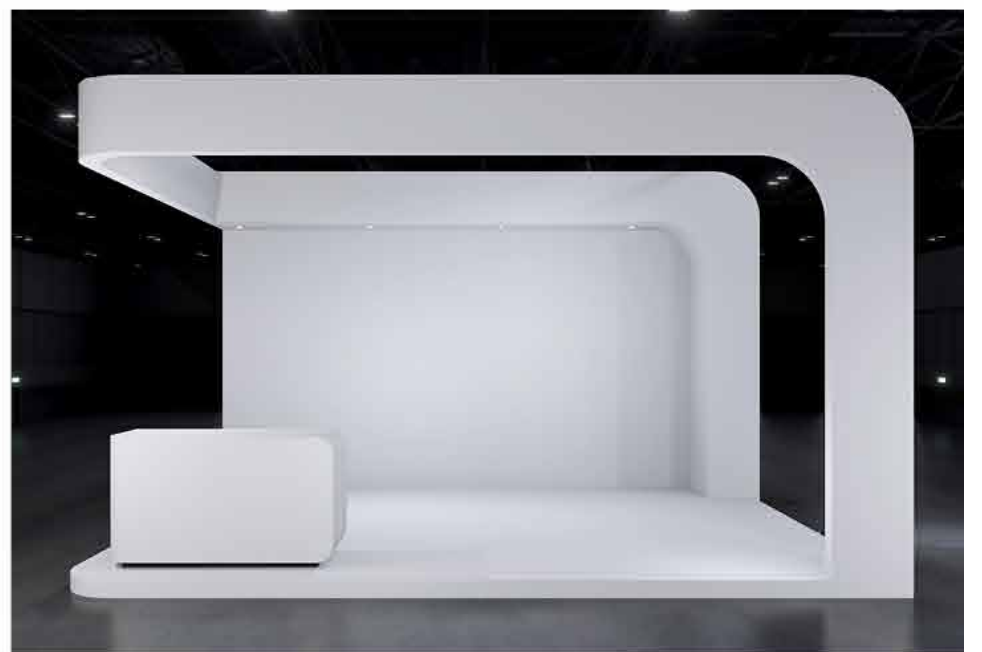
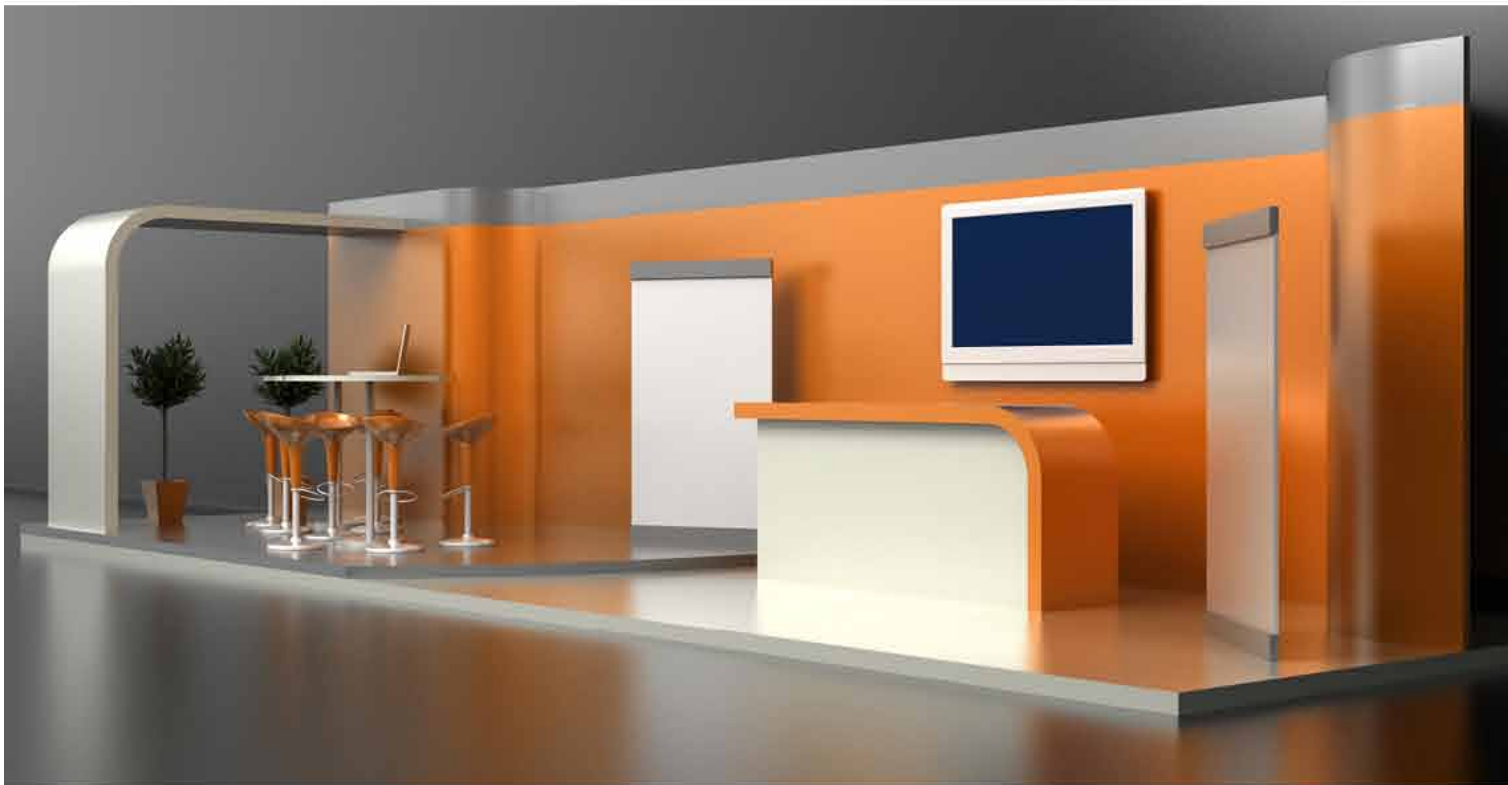
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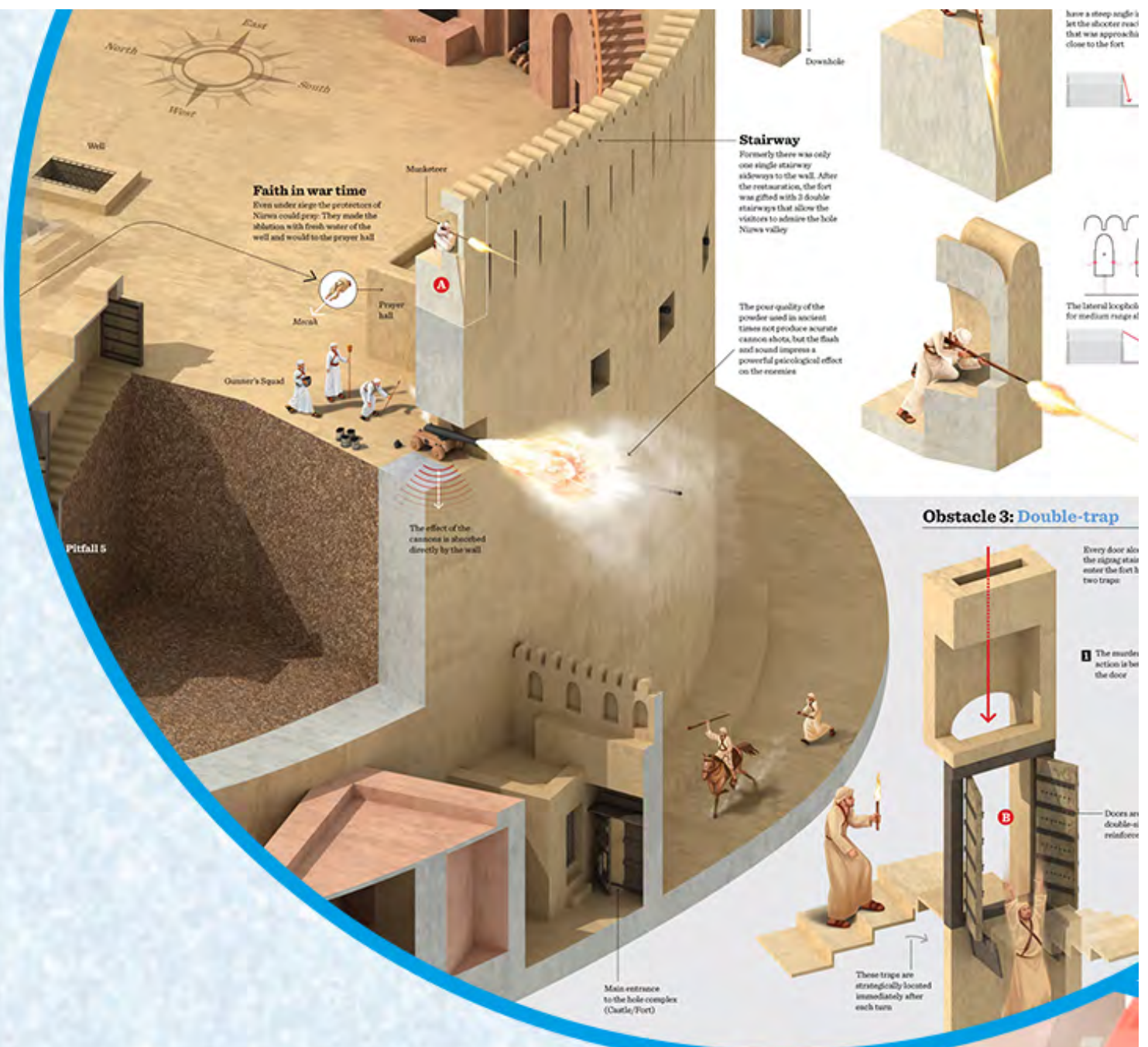
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