

**COMEX 2023 AIMS TO BOOST  
DIGITAL INVESTMENT IN OMAN**

The activities of the 32nd edition of the Communications and Information Technology Exhibition 'COMEX 2023' will kick off on 22 May at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. **>A3**



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**HM THE SULTAN SENDS GREETINGS  
TO PARAGUAY PRESIDENT**

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulation to President Mario Abdo Benitez of the Republic of Paraguay on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes to the president and his country's people. **-ONA**



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**1** THE REPORT SHOWED AN ANNUAL INCREASE OF 1 MILLION EVERY FIVE YEARS, FROM 2025 TO 2040. IN 2025, THE HIGHEST POPULATION INCREASE WILL REACH 5.3 MILLION WHILE IT WILL RISE IN 2030 WITH THE SAME SPEED TO 6.2 MILLION. IT WILL TOUCH 7.3 MILLION IN 2035, BEFORE REACHING 8.7 MILLION IN 2040

# OMAN'S POPULATION LIKELY TO TOUCH 8.7 MILLION BY 2040

The arrival of expats will play a larger role in the surge of population

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The population of the Sultanate of Oman is projected to touch 8.7 million by 2040, according to a report from the National Centre for Statistics and Information, (NCSI).

With a fresh wave of development and growth driving the country's economy, the arrival of expatriates will play a larger role in the surge of the population with the report suggesting a 50 percent

rise in the expatriates by 2040, considering 2020 as the base year. According to the NCSI data, Oman's population touched five million recently.

In 2020, Oman's population was 4.5 million but by 2040, the total population will have Omanis and expatriates 4.35 million each.

The report noted: "As for the average population increase, it is expected that the population in the Sultanate of Oman will reach 8.3 million by 2040, distributed equally between Omanis and expatriates. However, if the population rise is slow, Oman's population will reach 7 million with Omanis and expatriates having an equal share."

The report showed an annual increase of 1 million every five years, from 2025 to 2040. In 2025, the highest population increase will reach 5.3 million while it will rise in 2030 with the same speed to 6.2 million. It will touch 7.3

million in 2035, before reaching 8.7 million in 2040.

**Demographic distribution**

The number of Omanis in 2020 in North Al Batinah Governorate were 549,976 and the population is expected to touch 847,387, by 2040, marking the highest increase among the governorates.

The population of Omanis in the Governorate of Muscat will increase from 543,293 in 2020 to 783,891 by 2040.

The population of Omanis in South Al Batinah Governorate is expected to rise from 351,791 in 2020 to 569,174 by 2040.

The Omanis strength in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah will increase from 364,457 in 2020 to 534,139 by 2040 while in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, it is expected to increase from 225,096 to 348,729.

In North Al Sharqiyah, 100,012 Omanis will be added to

the population by 2040.

Al Dhahirah Governorate will mark an increase of 77,558 Omanis in the corresponding period while in Al Buraimi Governorate an addition of 56,700 Omanis is projected. In Dhofar Governorate, the number of Omanis in 2020 were 215,564 and the population will increase to 305,568 by 2040. There will be a marginal increase of Omanis by 2040 in the governorates of Musandam (23,201) and Al Wusta (10,429).

**Expatriates population to grow significantly**

The report confirmed a healthy increase of expatriates in the Governorate of Muscat with an addition of 1,040,863 from 2020 to 2040. This will be the highest increase among the governorates of the Sultanate, followed by the Governorate of North Al Batinah where 333,373 expatriates are expected to be added. **>A2**

**AGREEMENT**

## Oman and Etihad Rail, Vale sign MoU for iron ore transport



**ABU DHABI:** Oman and Etihad Rail Company, the developer and operator of the UAE-Oman Rail Network, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Vale, to explore utilising rail to transport iron ore and its derivatives between Oman and the UAE, connecting Vale's industrial complex in Sohar Port and Freezone to its planned mega-industrial complex in the UAE.

This agreement reflects the

logistical importance that the project will provide to major international players in several sectors, as they stand to benefit significantly from the competitive advantages and economic incentives of the project.

The MoU was signed by Ahmed Al Musawa Al Hashemi, CEO of Oman and Etihad Rail Company, and Rogerio Nogueira, Director of Business Development at Vale.

**>A5**

**TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES**



**OMAN**

### 'Dialogue vital for resolving disputes'

**1** The Sultanate of Oman affirmed its firm position of peaceful coexistence, and the importance of encouraging constructive dialogue between countries for resolving their disputes as tolerance is rooted in the Omani society. **>A3**

**WORLD**

### India plans deeper ties with Middle East

**2** India is planning an ambitious connectivity project to link New Delhi to the Middle East. India's National Security Adviser held a meeting with his US and UAE counterparts recently. **>A7**

**MARKET**

### Oman's banking sector credit grows

**3** The total credit granted by conventional and Islamic banks, or what is known as ODCs, increased by 6.9 percent to reach OMR29.90 billion at the end of March 2023. **>B1**

**Asyad Dry Dock in Duqm records revenues of OMR57mn**

**A2**



**RESULTS DECLARED**

## Oman-based Indian students shine in CBSE 10 and 12 exams

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Indian School Ghubra's Dhruvan Gnanadhandayuthapani and Indian School Wadi Kabir's Shaan Shetal Vora emerged as Oman's toppers in CBSE class 12 with an overall percentage of 98.6 in science stream, scoring 493 marks out of maximum 500.

Indian School Sohar's Meghna Jayakumar was Oman's topper in commerce stream with 97 percent while Rebecca Magdalena Dsouza of Indian School Muscat (ISM) and Thana Aysha of Indian School Ghubra (ISG) topped in humanities stream with 96.6 percent each.

The Indian education board (CBSE) announced results on Friday.

In class 10, ISG's Geetika Manoj Nambiar and Vedica Chhabra scored an incredible 99 percent while Amal Iqbal of Indian School Wadi Kabir was a close second with 98.6 percent.

ISG's Dhaval Gowder and Indian School Maabela's Rahul Elamaram and Navneet Gopalana emerged as

**Dhruvan Gnanadhandayuthapani and Shaan Shetal Vora emerged as Oman's toppers in CBSE class 12 exams**

came overall third with 98.4 percent.

In class 12, Indian School Sohar's Swati Rajesh scored 489 to record 97.8 percent and came overall second in science stream followed by ISM's Jheel Chethan Thanki with 97.6 percent.

In commerce stream of class 12, ISM's Demello Mark Savio was overall second with 96.6 percent while ISG's Melina Natasha Goveas was third with 96.4 percent.

ISM's pair of Diya Ganapathy Bollepanda (96.4 percent) and Fauziya Feroz Peerzade (96 percent) came overall second and third respectively in the humani-

ties section.

The CBSE class 12 final results had an overall pass percentage of 87.33. This year, girls outshined boys by 6.01 per cent with 90.68 per cent.

CBSE class 12 board exams were held in February, March and April. As many as 16,96,770 students were eligible to appear for these exams.

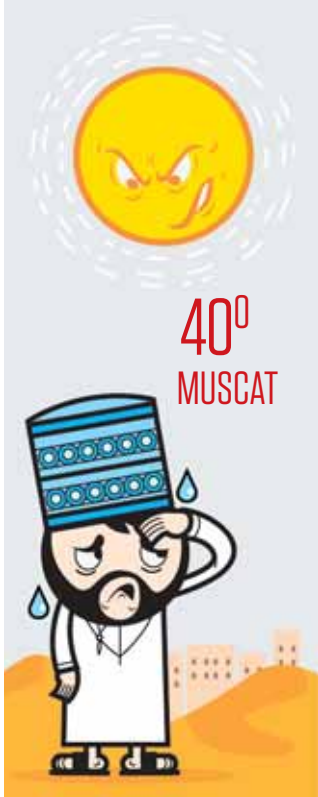
The board said it will award merit certificates to the 0.1 percent of students who have scored the highest marks in subjects.

In class 10, 93.12 percent have qualified. The overall pass percentage in Class 10 results this year is 93.12 per cent, which is 1.28 percentage points less than last year's 94.40 per cent.

A total of 28,471 schools participated in the CBSE Board exams in India and in 26 countries while the total number of students registered for CBSE 10th exams 2023 was 21,86,485.

The pass percentage of girl students in CBSE was 94.25 percent while 92.27 percent boys passed.

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| Asr.....             | 3:31pm  |
| Maghrib.....         | 6:46pm  |
| Isha.....            | 8:04pm  |
| Fajr (Tomorrow)..... | 4:02am  |

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AT END OF 2022

# Oman-Saudi trade increases by 123%

**MUSCAT:** The trade between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia registered a 123 percent rise at the end of 2022 to reach OMR2.7 billion compared to the end of 2021.

Bandar bin Ibrahim Alkhorayef, Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, said that this remarkable growth in trade reaffirms the joint interest for integration between the two countries.

He said that there are opportunities in the fields of logistics and mining in both the countries, which can provide raw materials for basic products in both the countries.

He said that the two countries aspire for development of the industrial sector through adopting the technologies of the 4th industrial revolution to make available high quality products.

On the integrated economic



zone (under incorporation) in the Governorate of Al Dhahirah , he said that such economic zones would save the costs and accelerate exchange of trade and motivate investors in both the countries. The Minister praised the strong relation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in various fields.

He described the relationship as “a source of pride for the two countries and is considered a model for joint work”. He also stressed his country’s keenness for boosting cooperation in various fields. —ONA

2022

# Asyad Dry Dock in Duqm posts OMR57mn revenues

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Asyad Dry Dock in Duqm records revenues of OMR57 million and a net profit of OMR12 million at the end of the year 2022 as it continues to support the national economy.

It has established its leadership and competitiveness in marine services and solutions in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, becoming a global provider of maintenance and repair services for giant ships.

Since its inception in 2011, the number of projects it has implemented has topped more than 1,300 maintenance projects from more than 550 local and international commercial clients from 45 countries.

During the past year, Asyad Dry Dock carried out maintenance work for 221 ships, in-



cluding 190 ships for periodic maintenance and 31 ships for the implementation of other projects.

These included the installation of new equipment and navigation aids that support the marine industry to make the life cycle of ships safe, reliable and sustainable, thus achieving a competitive number in the average period of time. Vessel repair and maintenance took

NCSI DATA

# Expatriate population

**< FROM** The Governorate of Dhofar will see a rise of 283,371 expatriates. The South Al Batinah Governorate will witness an increase of 156,596 expatriates, while the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah will see a growth of 154,954 expatriates and the Governorates of South and North Al Sharqiyah will see a rise by 133,153 and 118,999 expatriates respectively.

In Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi the increase is of 63,992 and 63,106 expatriates respectively while in Al Wusta and Musandam, the number of expatriates will grow by 30,425 and 18,680 respectively. The report also indicated that the total increase in the population during the period (2020-2040) will be by 3.8 million, including 1.4 million Omanis and 2.4 million expatriates. The projection is based on the fact that the average population increase for Omanis (3.3 children per woman) and the proportion of expatriates will gradually increase to 50 percent until 2040.

سلطنة عُمان  
Sultanate of Oman

هيئة تنظيم الاتصالات  
Telecommunications Regulatory Authority

## financial statements for the last year 31 December 2022

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INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY

**Opinion**

We have audited the financial statements of Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (the Authority), which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2022, and the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Authority as at 31 December 2022, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs).

**Basis for opinion**

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the "Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements" section of our report. We are independent of the Authority in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the Sultanate of Oman, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with those requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Responsibilities of Management and Board of Directors for the financial statements**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with IFRSs, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Authority or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

The Board of Directors are responsible for overseeing the Authority's financial reporting process.

Crowe

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY (continued)

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements**

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but it is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate to the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Authority's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Authority's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Authority to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

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TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

|                                             | Note | 2022<br>RO        | 2021<br>RO        |
|---------------------------------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                               |      |                   |                   |
| Non-current assets                          |      |                   |                   |
| Property and equipment                      | 4    | 8,988,028         | 9,991,001         |
| Intangible assets                           | 5    | 365,644           | 452,409           |
|                                             |      | <b>9,353,672</b>  | <b>10,443,410</b> |
| Current assets                              |      |                   |                   |
| Trade receivables                           | 6    | 2,332,289         | 1,514,529         |
| Advances, prepayments and other receivables | 7    | 7,642,219         | 8,719,383         |
| Financial assets at amortised cost          | 8    | 9,504,496         | 8,504,192         |
| Cash and bank balances                      | 9    | 12,471,439        | 13,114,993        |
|                                             |      | <b>31,971,419</b> | <b>31,517,081</b> |
| <b>Total assets</b>                         |      | <b>40,325,091</b> | <b>41,960,491</b> |
| <b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>               |      |                   |                   |
| Equity                                      |      |                   |                   |
| Retained surplus                            | 10   | 21,386,339        | 21,429,330        |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                          |      |                   |                   |
| Non-current liabilities                     |      |                   |                   |
| Defined government contributions            | 11   | 4,968,066         | 5,377,398         |
| Employee's end of service benefits          | 12   | 2,480,881         | 2,313,134         |
|                                             |      | <b>7,448,947</b>  | <b>7,690,532</b>  |
| Current liabilities                         |      |                   |                   |
| Contract liabilities                        | 13   | 9,012,849         | 10,676,978        |
| Trade and other payables                    | 14   | 3,372,349         | 3,610,463         |
|                                             |      | <b>12,385,198</b> | <b>14,287,441</b> |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                    |      | <b>19,834,145</b> | <b>21,977,973</b> |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>         |      | <b>40,325,091</b> | <b>41,960,491</b> |

These financial statements were approved for issue on 23-03-2023 and signed by:

CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT

The notes on pages 8 to 28 form part of these financial statements.

Crowe

TELECOMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AUTHORITY  
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2022

|                                                            | Note | 2022<br>RO          | 2021<br>RO         |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Income</b>                                              |      |                     |                    |
| Radios spectrum income                                     | 15   | 17,746,229          | 17,242,228         |
| Annual release fee                                         | 16   | 3,791,232           | 3,984,642          |
| Income from issuing numbers                                |      | <b>937,892</b>      | <b>714,687</b>     |
| Postal service income                                      |      | <b>896,447</b>      | <b>831,899</b>     |
| Telecom equipment type approval income                     | 17   | 599,643             | 426,710            |
| Domestic lease income                                      |      | <b>71,248</b>       | <b>42,740</b>      |
| Other telecoms lease fee                                   |      | <b>132,639</b>      | <b>79,880</b>      |
|                                                            |      | <b>24,384,048</b>   | <b>24,441,732</b>  |
| <b>Operating Expenses</b>                                  |      |                     |                    |
| Salaries and employee related costs                        | 18   | (5,203,148)         | (4,989,136)        |
| General and administrative expenses                        | 19   | (1,715,989)         | (1,730,791)        |
| Consultancy fees                                           |      | <b>(738,471)</b>    | <b>(813,370)</b>   |
| Depreciation                                               | 4    | (961,798)           | (980,332)          |
| Amortisation                                               | 5    | (178,899)           | (179,082)          |
| Monitoring station cost                                    |      | <b>(478,918)</b>    | <b>(508,261)</b>   |
| Donation to charitable institutions                        | 20   | (398,000)           | (390,000)          |
| Allowances for credit losses on trade receivables          | 6    | (23,477)            | (23,493)           |
| Remuneration to Board of Directors                         |      | <b>(49,925)</b>     | <b>(42,230)</b>    |
|                                                            |      | <b>(10,229,313)</b> | <b>(9,148,440)</b> |
| <b>Net income from operations</b>                          |      | <b>14,154,735</b>   | <b>15,293,292</b>  |
| <b>Non-operating income</b>                                |      |                     |                    |
| Interest income                                            | 21   | 543,398             | 678,217            |
| Government contributions                                   | 11   | 452,732             | 432,733            |
| Provisions reversed during the year                        |      | -                   | 9,202              |
| Other income                                               | 22   | 338,269             | 92,574             |
|                                                            |      | <b>1,334,399</b>    | <b>1,212,726</b>   |
| <b>Surplus and total comprehensive income for the year</b> |      | <b>15,489,134</b>   | <b>16,506,018</b>  |

The notes on pages 8 to 28 form part of these financial statements.

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OITE GROUP

# COMEX 2023 aims to boost digital investment in Oman

**MUSCAT:** The activities of the 32nd edition of the Communications and Information Technology Exhibition “COMEX 2023” will kick off on 22 May at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The Communications and Information Technology Exhibition “COMEX 2023” will be organised by Oman International Trade and Exhibitions (OITE Group) in co-operation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the implementation follow-up unit of Oman Vision 2040.

The Communications and Information Technology Exhibition aims to boost the concept of digital investment in the Sultanate of Oman. COMEX 2023 will see the participation of over 100 local and international establishments concerned with information technology and communications in the region.

“COMEX 2023” is the largest forum for the information technology and communications sector in the Sultanate of Oman. This year, COMEX 2023, focuses on boosting digital investment in the Sultanate of Oman and promoting available opportunities in major companies in the market.

COMEX 2023 also encourages local companies to adapt to the changes in the international market and the mechanisms generated in the field of future technologies in the various industries and sectors in the Sultanate of Oman in consistent with Oman Vision 2040’s goals supportive to digital transformation. **ONA**



# Dialogue vital for resolving disputes, affirms Sayyid Badr



Sayyid Badr urged the need for sustainable economic growth and investment in key sectors

**MUSCAT:** The Sultanate of Oman affirmed its firm position of peaceful coexistence, and the

importance of encouraging constructive dialogue between countries and resolving differences through talks, as tolerance and dialogue are rooted in the values and principles of Omani society.

The Foreign Minister, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al-Busaidi, participated via video conference on Saturday, in the 6th edition of the Indian Ocean Conference, in the Bangladeshi capital, Dhaka under the slogan “Peace, Prosperity and Partnership for a Resilient Future in the Indian Ocean Region.”

In his speech, the Foreign Minister also referred to the importance of economic prosperity by ensuring the resilience of the Indian Ocean region, the need for sustainable economic development and investment in key sectors, and the promotion of active trade partnerships between countries.

He also called for the importance of respecting international law and constructive cooperation to face the challenges facing the Indian Ocean region.

It is worth noting that the Indian Ocean Conference, which is held annually, is an important platform that brings together policy makers, diplomats, scholars and experts from all over the world to discuss major issues affecting the Indian Ocean region, with the aim of promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region. **-With ONA inputs**

RAFO

# Missing citizens at sea traced, in good health



**LOCATED:** The missing citizens were found 43 nautical miles from the state of Liwa, and they are in good health. **- ONA**

**MUSCAT:** The Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), with its specialised reconnaissance aircraft, and the Royal Navy of Oman were able to find the missing citizens in good health at sea while they were on a fishing trip a few days ago in the North Al Batinah Governorate.

They were found 43 nautical miles from the state of Liwa, and they are in good health. The Coast Guard police were contacted, who in turn towed the boat to the shore.

It is worth noting that this comes within the framework of the national efforts, humanitarian roles, and search and rescue services provided by the Sultan's Armed Forces and other departments of the Ministry of Defence to citizens and residents of this dear country.

Last month a citizen had gone missing at sea in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) had called on everyone to join the search efforts.

The police had confirmed that search for the missing citizen were ongoing, with the participation of the relevant authorities and a group of citizens and fishermen. **-ONA**

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COMMENTARY

# Raising awareness: Oman and disability

Dr. Wahid Al Kharusi  
and Sh. Soud Al Rawahi

IT IS HEARTENING to recognise the progress made in disability rights in Oman and appreciation for people with special needs since the beginning of our Renaissance in the 1970s to the present time.

Societal awareness, recognition and acceptance of people of special needs especially children have positively dramatically changed in the last 50 years.

Now parents no longer hide their disabled children and are ready to seek support to overcome their challenges. The role of disabled members within our community is recognisable, increasingly active and impressive. We in Oman are extremely lucky to have a very progressive government supporting the disabled part in our community and encouraging their integration within the community.

We have seen a positive paradigm change within our society due to the recognition by our government of the very positive role of the nongovernmental organisations (NGO) and patients' organisations (PO) whose work is complementary to the social and health needs of our community during time of peace or crisis.

I was inspired by the recent Royal Decree fixing the terminology associated with this this sector of the community, as well as other independent grassroots initiatives celebrating the early warriors of the movement, to highlight the pioneers who overcame seemingly insurmountable challenges to establish a genuinely multi-disciplinary foundation calling for inclusion and accessibility and normalising collaborative engagement between the public & private sector and budding civil society.

In Oman, I would mark the start of the movement as 1984 with Race Aid, an initiative introduced and managed by Sh. Soud Al Rawahi, who was then the President of the Oman Athletics Association. When he visited the physiotherapy department of Khoula Hospital, he noticed that a very high number of in-patients were disabled, from genetic, metabolic, infectious, to victims of Road Traffic crashes (RTC), across the gam-



bit from physical and intellectual disabilities.

Together with Dr Wahid Al Kharusi, the then head of the Orthopaedic, trauma and rehabilitation services of Oman, they explored how to best address the issues and challenges of the disabled and determined that there was potential for Race Aid to be transformed from simply being a fun race, to a race that would raise funds for the disabled who desperately needed support at multiple levels.

At that time in terms of the status and awareness, the disabled were still in the shadows, hidden, not talked about or accepted, not recognised nor embraced within the community. The two conceptualised the beginning of the movement and formed a Task Force with like-minded people: The late Prof. Mussalem Al Bualy, Sh. Salim Hamoud Al Kharusi, Ms. Yuthar Al Rawahi, the late Mukhtar Al Rawahi and Mr Tariq Al Khabouri.

Parallel to the above, Race Aid approached and worked with a group of ladies at the Oman Women Association who supported the cause by holistically working and caring for disabled children. This was the origin of a number of NGOs' affording excellent care for children with disability. To mention some, Ms Raya Saif Al Riyami, Ms Shukoor Ghamary, Ms Barka Saleh.

Since its formation of the task force until the registration of the

Association with the Ministry of Social Affairs in 1993, the task force worked tirelessly to develop a roadmap for the next 10 years encompassing awareness, fund raising, empowerment of the disabled community and advocacy for inclusion of members of the disabled community in decision making capacities and naturally, participation in sports events nationally, regionally and internationally.

The infrastructure then was needed to support such an ambitious shift within the community was outlined and advocacy and awareness community outreach programmes were developed that were also directed to the decision makers who were very supportive and to the private and corporate sectors to develop public private programs (PPP) for a Win-Win situation.

The mission was to create awareness and advocate for accessibility and develop innovative solutions to rehabilitate and re-integrate the disabled members of the community back into society with sustainability. Disabled people have abilities that are critical to national growth and that would allow them not only a new lease of life if their potential is recognised and propelled, but an active thriving contributing existence too.

Unfortunately, there were, and regrettably in some areas, continue to be overlooked, or relegated to charity cases.



The task force pooled their diverse expertise and corridors of influence to advocate for specialised rehabilitation programs and training facilities and, fundamentally, introduced the concept of utilising and exposing the abilities of the disabled population rather than concentrating on their disabilities. This was revolutionary.

Recognising and respecting people with disabilities was a hurdle that needed to be crossed. Having active members of that community on the task force impressed upon both the authorities and the general public the importance of the movement, legitimising and galvanising support across the board.

## Disabled Association

It was agreed that a fully-fledged Disabled Association needed to be urgently realised. The late Mukhtar Al Rawahi, a thoroughly capable rehabilitated RTC person with disability was endorsed to chair the Association and develop it.

He made an unprecedented difference under his tremendous leadership. He propelled forward with wise planning, future vision and dedication the status of the disability to greater heights working closely with the media and with the support of the then Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Social Affairs as well as Muscat Municipality and the Ministry of Sports, the Asso-

ciation grew to become a strong, globally recognised institution conducting a number of urgently needed landmark projects.

Race Aid managed to raise a substantial funds to support the Association and also sponsored 2 container loads of wheelchairs that were desperately needed and were distributed freely to the disabled and to ensure sustainability, a repair workshop was initiated and managed totally by the trained disabled using the spare parts that were brought together with the wheelchairs - it was the first of its kind in the region.

In 2009, Mr. Tariq Khabouri started a challenging program, the Oman Disabled Diving group - an independent body that holds biannual events and also trained and certified 12 Omani doctors in hyperbaric medicine. This program afforded the disabled to venture and safely enjoy deep sea diving and exploration, illustrating yet again that if opportunities are afforded to them, the disabled equal the abled population if not exceed them in performance.

The early days of the movement really were a shining example of PPP in action; the active support of the different government entities put the disabled agenda on the highest levels of priority, the generous stakeholders in the private and corporate sector brought in philanthropists and CSR support, and the general public's engagement and involvement with the Association's mes-

sages and initiatives paved the way for success under the wise leadership of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour.

Further improvement of the disabled status is evidently improving with the 2040 vision under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and his strong support for the disabled community. It is incumbent on any exploration of the evolution of disability rights locally to recognise the role of the Oman Women Association for their lead in supporting disabled families especially those with disabled children.

Amongst the many in the Association who became actively involved, Ms. Raya Al Riyami and Ms. Barka Al Bakry stand out in how they dedicated their time and embraced the disabled children with excellent and sustainable rehabilitation and care protocols.

As a result of these persistent efforts, the disabled in Oman enjoy recognised global rights and concessions. There is still more to be done. The Association, after a number of challenges, succeeded in securing disabled parking spaces, easier access to most government and private institutions and commercial malls.

With the late Mukhtar vision and personal efforts he developed the Oman Paralympics team and our youths became involved in the Paralympics and graced Oman with a number of medals and many more milestones were reached. Advocacy and awareness for disability needs to continue within our community. Families with disabled members need to be identified and fully supported, with their human rights protected.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on many NGO's globally. We need to support the disabled population and their families with professionalism, innovation, compassion, integrity and patience. We must collectively mobilise efforts to make them feel that they are valuable and integral members of our society, socially, educationally and commercially and not in anyway different. They deserve peace, respectability and contentment. Let us not neglect them nor treat them as charity cases - let us include and embrace and celebrate them, one and all.

H H Sayyid Shabib Bin Taimur Al Said

Samir J Fancy

Mukhtar Hasan

Samira Fancy

express their sincere gratitude to all for giving the  
family strength and courage to bear the loss of their beloved

*Amisa*



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POET AND NOVELIST

Omani author Zahran Al Qasmi shortlisted for International Prize for Arabic Fiction

**ABU DHABI:** Omani poet and novelist Zahran Al Qasmi has been shortlisted for International Prize for Arabic Fiction 2023. His novel ‘The Exile of the Water Diviner’ has been shortlisted for the award which will be announced on Sunday. He has published four novels: Mountain of the Horseradish Tree (2013), The Sniper (2014), Hunger for Honey (2017), and Exile of the Water Diviner (2021), as well as ten poetry collections and Biography of the Stone 1 (short story collection, 2009) and Biography of the Stone 2 (non-fiction, 2011). Each of the six shortlisted authors will receive \$10,000, with the winner being announced on Sunday 21 May 2023 in Abu Dhabi receiving an additional \$50,000. The shortlist was revealed in a virtual press conference.

FACT

Vale plans industrial complexes with low carbon footprints

**<FROM A1** Under the terms of the agreement, both parties will work to develop integrated logistics solutions that connect Vale's industrial complex in Sohar Port and Freezone and transport the company's iron ore products and derivatives between the company's Sohar hub and various factories and distribution centres. Suhail Mohammed Al Mazrouei, Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Chairman of Oman and Etihad Rail Company, said, “The agreement is in line with our desire to continue to work on and establish strategic partnerships with major companies in the UAE and Oman, supporting economic growth, continued development and investment in both countries.” In his turn, Ahmed Al Musawa Al Hashemi, CEO of the Oman and Etihad Rail Company, commented, “We are proud to partner with a leading international company like Vale, which has a long history and extensive global experience in the production of iron, utilising rail as a primary means of transportation for its logistical operations. The MoU highlights the interest of potential users in utilising the UAE-Oman Railway Network and benefiting from its fast, sustainable, reliable, and cost-effective services.” Commenting on the MoU, Rogério Nogueira, Product and Operations Manager at Vale said that the agreement supports Vale's plans to develop industrial complexes in the UAE and Oman to produce low-carbon products for the steelmaking industry. He added that Vale's partnership with Oman and Etihad Rail Company reinforces the regional logistics progress, which enables various economic and trade activities, and provides several benefits, including creating new job opportunities and providing high-quality transport solutions.

-ONA

FRIENDi mobile Oman Partners with Starlink to Strengthen Recharge Distribution in Oman



**FRIENDi** mobile Oman, a leading mobile network operator in Oman, is proud to announce its partnership with Starlink, a leading distributor of telecom products in the GCC region, to enhance the distribution of electronic recharge services in the Sultanate of Oman. This collaboration aims to increase the penetration and availability of electronic recharge in Oman, offering a more convenient and seamless experience to FRIENDi mobile customers.

With Starlink's vast expertise in telecom product distribution across the GCC region, FRIENDi mobile Oman will capitalize on their professional proficiency in the distribution business to better serve its customers. The partnership is expected to significantly improve the accessibility and convenience of electronic recharge services for FRIENDi mobile users throughout Oman.

Salma Nasser Al Mawali, CEO of FRIENDi mobile Oman, expressed her enthusiasm about the collaboration, stating, “We are excited to join hands with Starlink, a leader in the telecom distribution sector. Their proven expertise and extensive reach in the GCC region will enable us to enhance our recharge distribution network and offer our customers a better experience.”

Munera Al Dosari, Group CEO of Starlink, echoed the sentiment, saying, “We are proud to partner with FRIENDi mobile Oman, a company that shares our commitment to delivering exceptional services. This collaboration will enable us to further strengthen our presence in the Omani market and support FRIENDi mobile in providing exceptional electronic recharge services to their customers.”



**Muscat Gases Company SAOG**  
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COMPANY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

Dear Shareholders,

We would like to present to you the unaudited consolidated financial statements for the period ended 31st March 2023.

At the group level, the total turnover of the Company for the period ended 31st March 2023 is 6.193 million OMR compared with 6.370 million OMR for the same period of the last year, i.e. a decrease of 3%.

The parent Company's total turnover for the period ended 31st March 2023 is 5.994 million OMR compared with 6.335 million OMR for the same period of last year, i.e. a decrease of 5%.

At the group level, we made a net profit after tax of 83,368 OMR for the period ended 31st March 2023, compared with 92,302 OMR for the same period of the last year, i.e. a decrease of 10%.

The parent Company's net profit after tax for the period ended 31st March 2023 is 74,794 OMR compared with 63,568 OMR for the same period of the last year, i.e. an increase of 18%.

The Management is focusing on the enhancement of LPG business to yield better results in the coming period and the Company will put all its efforts to maximise the shareholders return.

Thanking you,

Engr. Omar Ahmed Salim Qatan  
Chairman

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

|                                     | 31st March 2023 |             | 31st March 2022 |             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                                     | Parent          | Group       | Parent          | Group       |
| Revenue                             | 5,993,932       | 6,193,150   | 6,334,634       | 6,370,493   |
| Cost of sales                       | (5,700,963)     | (5,877,896) | (6,059,731)     | (6,058,783) |
| Gross Profit                        | 292,969         | 315,254     | 274,903         | 311,710     |
| General and administration expenses | (228,611)       | (239,847)   | (228,600)       | (230,896)   |
| Investment and Other Income         | 23,635          | 23,635      | 28,483          | 28,483      |
| Profit for the period before tax    | 37,993          | 99,042      | 74,786          | 109,298     |
| Provision for Income tax            | (13,199)        | (15,674)    | (11,218)        | (16,995)    |
| Net Profit for the period after tax | 74,794          | 83,368      | 63,568          | 92,302      |
| Other comprehensive income          | -               | -           | -               | -           |
| Total comprehensive income          | 74,794          | 83,368      | 63,568          | 92,302      |
| Earnings per share                  | 0.002           | 0.003       | 0.002           | 0.003       |

Note: The complete account will be sent by email to any Shareholders who request them in either Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of the request.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT MARCH 31, 2023

|                                          | 31 March 2023 |            | 31 March 2022 |            |
|------------------------------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
|                                          | Parent RO     | Group RO   | Parent RO     | Group RO   |
| ASSETS                                   |               |            |               |            |
| Non-current Assets:                      |               |            |               |            |
| Property, plant and equipment            | 3,175,182     | 3,401,380  | 2,845,591     | 3,057,527  |
| Right of use assets                      | 232,020       | 232,020    | 204,121       | 204,121    |
| Deferred Tax Asset                       | -             | 2,635      | -             | -          |
| Investment                               | 1,901,475     | -          | 1,901,475     | -          |
| Goodwill                                 | -             | 996,800    | -             | 996,800    |
| Trade Receivable                         | 249,912       | 249,912    | 447,759       | 447,759    |
| Total Non-current Assets                 | 5,558,589     | 4,882,747  | 5,398,946     | 4,706,207  |
| Current Assets:                          |               |            |               |            |
| Inventories                              | 1,024,681     | 1,119,725  | 566,552       | 637,400    |
| Trade and other receivables              | 4,352,684     | 3,863,008  | 3,712,451     | 3,476,040  |
| Cash and cash equivalents                | 2,504,048     | 2,520,132  | 2,537,937     | 2,545,454  |
| Total Current Assets                     | 7,881,413     | 7,502,865  | 6,816,940     | 6,658,894  |
| TOTAL ASSETS                             | 13,440,002    | 12,385,612 | 12,215,886    | 11,365,101 |
| EQUITY AND LIABILITIES                   |               |            |               |            |
| Equity:                                  |               |            |               |            |
| Share capital                            | 3,000,000     | 3,000,000  | 3,000,000     | 3,000,000  |
| Statutory reserve                        | 1,000,000     | 1,012,670  | 1,000,000     | 1,009,975  |
| Special reserve                          | 1,457,067     | 1,457,067  | 1,457,067     | 1,457,067  |
| Land revaluation reserve                 | 807,666       | 807,666    | 753,887       | 753,887    |
| Retained earnings                        | (97,315)      | (25,166)   | 128,977       | 217,152    |
| Total Equity                             | 6,167,418     | 6,252,237  | 6,339,931     | 6,438,081  |
| Non-current Liabilities:                 |               |            |               |            |
| End of service benefits                  | 83,961        | 86,914     | 69,671        | 70,648     |
| Non current portion of Term Loan         | 163,608       | 163,608    | 342,430       | 342,430    |
| Non current portion of lease liabilities | 230,702       | 230,702    | 186,105       | 186,105    |
| Deferred tax                             | 147,149       | 147,330    | 153,225       | 154,740    |
| Total Non-current Liabilities            | 625,420       | 628,554    | 751,431       | 753,923    |
| Current Liabilities:                     |               |            |               |            |
| Trade and other payables                 | 6,038,309     | 4,891,185  | 4,391,383     | 3,423,163  |
| Bank overdraft                           | 409,433       | 409,433    | 497,631       | 497,631    |
| Current portion of Term Loan             | 141,505       | 141,505    | 164,784       | 164,784    |
| Current portion of lease liabilities     | 24,500        | 24,500     | 29,375        | 29,376     |
| Income Tax                               | 33,417        | 38,198     | 41,350        | 58,143     |
| Total Current Liabilities                | 6,647,164     | 5,504,821  | 5,124,524     | 4,173,097  |
| Total Liabilities                        | 7,272,584     | 6,133,375  | 5,875,955     | 4,927,020  |
| TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES             | 13,440,002    | 12,385,612 | 12,215,886    | 11,365,101 |
| Net Assets Per Share (RO)                | 0.206         | 0.208      | 0.211         | 0.215      |

WORLD

FROM TURKMENISTAN

Afghanistan receives 125 tonnes of aid

**KABUL:** In order to support Afghanistan amid the ongoing crisis, Turkmenistan has sent 125 tonnes of humanitarian aid including medicine, medical supplies, food and textile products to the country, Khaama Press reported.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan announced on Thursday the aid being sent to Afghanistan, the people who are

living under miserable conditions and are denied basic rights under the hardline regime of the Taliban.

**Decree signed**

Earlier on Sunday, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, the president of Turkmenistan, signed a decree directing the Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov Charitable Fund to provide children and impoverished

Afghan families with humanitarian aid. In the meantime, the ministry has announced that on May 15 a team of medical specialists would travel to Afghanistan and offer consultation services at a maternity hospital in Turgundi village of western Herat province, Khaama Press reported.

he humanitarian contribution is intended to support Afghan fami-

lies in need and to fortify friendly and fraternal connections between the countries.

Under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, women and children face significant obstacles related to a lack of resources and access to healthcare. According to Khaama Press, Afghanistan under the Taliban has had the highest maternal mortality rate in the world. — ANI



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HARVEST

CRUCIAL CONTEST

What you need to know about Thailand's election

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's general election on Sunday is seen as a crucial contest between the military-backed ruling coalition and pro-democracy parties that are challenging the status quo.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former military general who has been in power since engineering a coup in 2014, is heading the conservative camp and running for reelection with the newly formed United Thai Nation Party.

After nine years at the helm, his popularity has dwindled, with recent opinion polls showing that many Thais want him out.

"This election is important because it could mark the first transition of power in Thailand in nearly a decade," Napon Jatusripitak, a visiting fellow at ISEAS—Yusof Ishak Institute in Bangkok, told DW.

"Should General Prayuth fail in his reelection bid, it could lead to the search for an alternative leader who could serve as a buffer between the conservative status quo forces and the democratic sections of the country," he added.

**Race to become prime minister**

Prayuth is up against political newcomer Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the leader of Thailand's biggest opposition party, Pheu Thai.

A populist politician, Paetong-



tarn has a strong support base. Her father, Thaksin Shinawatra, and aunt, Yingluck, are both former prime ministers.

Political parties affiliated with Thaksin have performed well in every election since 2001. Pheu Thai is hoping for a landslide victory in the polls so that it doesn't need the support of the Senate, whose 250 members are hand-picked by the military, to form the next government.

Prayuth is also facing a challenge from Move Forward. The pro-reform party is gaining momentum and its leader, businessman Pita Limjaroenrat, has emerged as one of the leading contestants to become prime minister, according to the latest

poll by the National Institute of Development Administration.

Pita's surge in popularity has seen him overtake former front-runner Paetongtarn, while Prayuth is a distant third.

**Will election be free and fair?**

Although the opposition parties are riding high in surveys, Thailand's 2017 constitution is designed to favor military-affiliated parties.

A political party, or coalition, needs to win a majority of 376 votes from both the 500-seat lower house and the 250 military-appointed senators.— DW

Full story @ [timesofoman.com/world](https://timesofoman.com/world)

ELECTORAL BATTLE

Big win for Congress in Karnataka

**BENGALURU:** Congress won an emphatic victory in Karnataka polls on Saturday, pushing BJP out of power in the only southern state it ruled, and boosting its own prospects for the electoral battles ahead.

Congress has won 131 seats and is ahead on five more seats, comfortably crossing the halfway mark in the 224-member Karnataka assembly. Bharatiya Janata Party is poised to win 65 seats,

having already won 61 seats and leading on four more.

JD(S) won 19 seats, independents have won two seats, while Kalyana Rajya Pragathi Paksha and Sarvodaya Karnataka Paksha won one seat each.

An incumbent government has not returned to power in Karnataka after a full term of five years since 1985.

In the 2018 assembly polls, BJP emerged as the single largest par-

ty with 104 seats, Congress won 80 seats and JD(S) got 37 seats.

The Congress victory has come at a time when it is seeking momentum ahead of assembly polls later this year in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Telangana and the Lok Sabha polls next year.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Congress over its victory in assembly polls.

-ANI



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| DISC/2023/086 | Testing of all HT Metering Units Having Supply on 33 KV & 11 KV Voltage along with Metering Connection                                             | 28th May 2023                                | 13th June 2023                           | RO. 26.250                          |

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# India plans deeper connectivity with Middle East region

The ambitious connectivity project aims to link the Middle East to India through roads, rails, and seaports



**WASHINGTON:** India is planning an ambitious connectivity project that aims to link New Delhi to the Middle East, reported Foreign Policy.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval held a meeting with his US and UAE counterparts, which was also attended by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The leaders discussed a joint infrastructure project that would connect the Middle Eastern countries via rail. The ambitious connectivity project aims to link the Middle East to India through roads, rails, and seaports. The idea emerged during meetings of the I2U2 group--which also includes Israel--over the last year, Axios reported.

The I2U2 group--a relatively new vehicle for US-India cooperation in the Middle East--was not envisioned as a China-focused entity, given the close commercial cooperation that both the UAE and Israel enjoy with China, reported Foreign Policy.

Saudi Arabia hasn't formalised relations with Israel, which means the latter isn't a formal part of the project, but its membership in I2U2 suggests it will have a role.

The connectivity project shows just how much India benefits from the Abraham Accords, the Trump-era agreement that normalised relations between Israel and several of its Arab neighbours. The deal allowed for the establishment of the I2U2 group, and discussions there gave rise to the new initiative, reported Foreign Policy. The proposed initiative signals that India and the United States are ready to take their joint efforts to counter China beyond the Indo-Pacific region and into the Middle East.

It's clear the Biden administration views the connectivity project as a way to balance Chinese power in the region. "Nobody said it out loud, but it was about China from day one," a former senior Israeli official told Axios.

The connectivity project aims to leverage India's capacity as an infrastructure provider. Its track record includes the construction of the world's largest rail system in Asia and contributions to cross-border electricity-sharing arrangements. Through the new initiative, Indian officials hope to develop a deeper infrastructure footprint in the Middle East to counter China's BRI.

According to one assessment,

in a best-case scenario, India could eventually benefit from land and sea trade routes stretching from Israel and the UAE all the way to Greece's Piraeus port and onward into Europe.

India wants to participate in a new multilateral effort to push back against China's growing Middle East footprint--driven by Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) investments and by a recent strategic agreement with Iran. Notably, Beijing also recently mediated a reconciliation deal between Tehran and Riyadh, reported Foreign Policy.

The Middle East is an increasingly significant space for India, given its trade interests there and the several million Indians who work in the region and send remittances back home.

Moreover, recently Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen visited New Delhi. Although he departed early because of a crisis with Gaza, he likely planned to meet with Indian interlocutors about the connectivity project.

In a statement released before the visit, Cohen said India can play a key role in strengthening regional stability in the Middle East, reported Foreign Policy.

— ANI

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## Cyclone threatens Bangladesh and Myanmar refugees

**DHAKA:** The most powerful cyclone in nearly two decades is barreling toward the coasts of eastern Bangladesh and Myanmar, forecasters warned on Saturday.

After brewing in the Bay of Bengal for days, Cyclone Mocha was packing winds of up to 175 kilometres per hour (109 miles) as it approached the two Asian countries.

Mocha is likely to intensify further and make landfall later on Sunday between Cox's Bazar, a southeastern border district of Bangladesh, and Sittwe on Myanmar's western Rakhine coast, Bangladesh's Meteorological Department said in a bulletin.

**Cox's Bazar**

Cox's Bazar is where more than a million Rohingya refugees live in flimsy shelters — most having fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017.

Bangladeshi authorities have banned the Rohingyas from constructing permanent concrete homes, fearing it may incentivize them to settle permanently rather than return to Myanmar.

"All the Rohingyas in the camps are at risk," Bangladesh's deputy refugee commissioner Shamsud Douza told Agence France-



Presse. Authorities in Bangladesh began evacuating refugees from "risky areas" to community centers, while hundreds fled a nearby island.

"We are focusing on saving lives," said Mohammad Shamsud Douza, a Bangladesh government official responsible for refugees. "People who are at risk of landslides will be evacuated."

According to the United Nations, more than six million people need humanitarian assistance in the storm's path in Myanmar alone.

The World Food Programme said it was preparing food and relief supplies that could help more than 400,000 people in Rakhine state and surrounding areas for a month.

— ANI

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TODAY'S MATCHES

VS

Rajasthan Royals

Royal Challengers Bangalore

2pm, Jaipur

VS

Chennai Super Kings

Kolkata Knight Riders

6pm, Chennai

POINTS TABLE

| TEAM | P  | W | L | NR | NRR    | PTS |
|------|----|---|---|----|--------|-----|
| GT   | 12 | 8 | 4 | 0  | +0.761 | 16  |
| CSK  | 12 | 7 | 4 | 1  | +0.493 | 15  |
| MI   | 12 | 7 | 5 | 0  | -0.117 | 14  |
| LSG  | 12 | 6 | 5 | 1  | +0.309 | 13  |
| RR   | 12 | 6 | 6 | 0  | +0.633 | 12  |
| RCB  | 11 | 5 | 6 | 0  | -0.345 | 10  |
| KKR  | 12 | 5 | 7 | 0  | -0.357 | 10  |
| PBKS | 11 | 5 | 6 | 0  | -0.441 | 10  |
| SRH  | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0  | -0.471 | 8   |
| DC   | 11 | 4 | 7 | 0  | -0.605 | 8   |

CSK: Chennai Super Kings, DC: Delhi Capitals,

GT: Gujarat Titans, KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders,

LSG: Lucknow Super Giants, MI: Mumbai Indians,

PBKS: Punjab Kings, RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore,

RR: Rajasthan Royals, SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad

POORAN, MANKAD SHINE

Big-hitting Nicholas Pooran and Prerak Mankad's half-century guide Lucknow Super Giants to win over Sunrisers Hyderabad

**HYDERABAD:** Nicholas Pooran smashed an unbeaten 13-ball 44 and Prerak Mankad's unbeaten 64 off 45 steered Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) to a crucial seven-wicket victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Saturday.

The win resurrected LSG's flailing campaign with their first win in four matches and took them to fourth spot while Sunrisers Hyderabad moved to the brink of elimination.

Chasing 183 to win, Lucknow Super Giants' Marcus Stoinis hammered 40 off 25 and shared a 73-run third wicket stand with Mankad before Pooran's stunning assault.

With five overs to go and 69 runs to get on a slow pitch, Super Giants appeared to be in trouble. But Pooran and Stoinis took 31 off the 16th, bowled by part-time left-arm spinner Abhishek Sharma, to turn the game completely on its head.

LSG captain Krunal Pandya earlier took successive wickets of Aiden Markram and Glenn Phillips to derail SRH innings.

Heinrich Klaasen and Abdul Samad dished out impressive knocks as Sunrisers piled a stiff 182/6 on the board. The pair added 58 runs from 40 balls as Klaasen fell for 47 (29).

Samad returned unbeaten on 37 (25), which featured one boundary and four maximums.

Sunrisers didn't get off to a disastrous start. LSG's Yuvraj Singh bowled with fire and got rid of Abhishek early, but Anmolpreet Singh (36) and Rahul Tripathi kept hitting. They took two boundaries each off Avesh Khan's first over, the fifth; even though Yash Thakur bounced Tripathi out, Sunrisers got 56 off 2 in the powerplay.

On a surface with some turn,

LSG's Ravi Bishnoi and Amit Mishra frequently overpitched or went too short. Klaasen and Markram tucked into it, reaching 115 for 3 in 12 overs.

Krunal showed what the pitch was capable of. He extracted big turn even at his pace to get Markram and Phillips off successive deliveries. Krunal bowled three overs for 13 runs and two wickets, knocking the wind out of Sunrisers' sails.

In the chase, Kyle Mayers and Quinton de Kock departed early with Phillips dismissing Mayers for 2. Mankad and de Kock (29) struggled to get going before the latter targeted Mayank Markande and hit him for a six and a four at the end of seventh over. He targeted Markande again in the ninth, but a reverse-sweep got him out. Mankad and Stoinis too got stuck, adding just 34 off

the first 28 balls they faced.

With eight wickets in hand, LSG still needed 94 off seven. Mankad hit the first ball after Time Out for a six off Markande. Bhuvneshwar too went for a six in the 15th over. Markram then brought Abhishek in 16th over.

Stoinis hit Abhishek two successive sixes before departing. Left-handed Pooran arrived and hit Abhishek for three consecutive sixes as 31 came off that over. Pooran was 18 off 3, Super Giants needed 38 off 24, and despite the best efforts of Natarajan, LSG cruised to win.

**Brief scores:** Sunrisers Hyderabad 182/6 (Heinrich Klaasen 47, Abdul Samad 37; Krunal Pandya 2/24) lost to Lucknow Super Giants 185/3 in 19.2 overs (Prerak Mankad 64 n.o., Marcus Stoinis 40, Nicholas Pooran 44 n.o.). - Agencies

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**INDIA'S RETAIL INFLATION**  
Retail inflation in India eased sharply in April to 4.7 per cent as against 5.7 per cent the previous month. The inflation index for rural and urban was 4.68 per cent and 4.85 per cent, respectively.

# MARKET

## BUSINESS & FINANCE



**ATTACKS ON ICS COMPUTERS**  
Attacks on 27 per cent Industrial control systems (ICS) computers were detected in the Middle East highlighting the need for a secure-by-design approach to protect nuclear power plants, according to an industry expert.

# Oman's bourse ends lower in weekly trade



Despite this week's losses, the Omani stock market could see an improvement in risk appetite with investors returning to buy the dip after the strong price corrections the main index recorded since mid-March



Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Omani stock market has accumulated losses this week as sentiment deteriorated on the local and global stage with investors looking into the various issues and developments in the country and the US in particular. "From the banking sector's worries to the debt ceiling and changing monetary policy, investors had a lot to take into account," said Ahmed Negm, Head of Market Research MENA at XS.com. Energy markets were also volatile and moved to a less optimistic outlook, creating some concerns over an impact on the local stock market. "On a local scale, the mar-

ket has seen the publication of mitigated company earnings reports, which eroded confidence to a certain extent and contributed to the concerns that the Omani economy could be seeing a wider impact," he further added. At the same time, US inflation data has consolidated investors' expectations regarding the direction of the monetary policy. Interest rates are expected to remain on hold for the moment, which could translate into less upward pressures on financing costs in Oman and other countries with pegged currencies, Ahmed Negm said. "This stabilisation could alleviate some pressures for companies and households alike and could create some breathing room for the economy, which could, in turn, provide some support to the Muscat stock market, helping limit losses over time," he added. Additionally, investors the world over are monitoring the discussion in the US around the



debt ceiling issue while the possibility of the country defaulting on its obligations becomes more palpable. Such an event could have wide-reaching consequences and could impact banks and economies in the region. While the US government is expected to come to a deal before an effective default, the approaching deadline is fueling concerns and is pushing some investors away from international markets like Oman while they look for safety. "Such a trend could squeeze liquidity levels on the market and put downward pressures on Omani stocks," Ahmed Negm said. Moreover, the Chinese economic recovery has been weaker than expected, leading to some concerns about the demand for energy and oil in particular. The subdued recovery in China in addition to the slowing US economy could dampen exports from oil-producing countries, impacting public finances and companies

earnings over the medium to long term in Oman and other countries in the region. "In this regard, oil markets have recorded significant volatility this week and have ended up declining, nearing the 70 dollars per barrel mark. Crude prices could remain under pressure this month while traders wait for the next OPEC meeting for more indications regarding any changes in production levels," Ahmed Negm said. Despite this week's losses, the Omani stock market could see an improvement in risk appetite with investors returning to buy the dip after the strong price corrections the main index recorded since mid-March, Ahmed Negm said. "However, this could be conditioned by the developments on the local and global stage as traders assess market conditions. New data releases are expected next week for most major economies and could also affect the direction of the market," he added.

## CONVENTIONAL AND ISLAMIC BANKS



# Oman's banking sector credit grows 6.9% to OMR29.9bn

**MUSCAT:** The total credit granted by conventional and Islamic banks, or what is known as other depository companies (ODCs), increased by 6.9 percent to reach OMR29.90 billion at the end of March 2023. Regarding the total credit granted to the private sector a growth of 6.8 percent to reach OMR25.10 billion at the end of March 2023. Data related to its distribution among various sectors indicate that non-financial companies received the largest share, which amounted to 46.3 percent, followed by the individual sector at 44.4 percent, and the remaining percentage was distributed to the financial companies sector at 5.6 percent and other sectors by 3.7 percent.

Total deposits with the banking sector recorded a growth of 4.6 percent to reach OMR27.10 billion at the end of March 2023. Within this total, private sector deposits with the banking system increased by 1.4 percent to reach OMR17.70 billion at the end of March 2023. When looking at the distribution of the total deposit base of the private sector over various sectors, the figures indicate that the private sector received the largest share, which amounted to about 52.1 percent, followed by the non-financial companies sector and the financial companies sector with a share of 28.7 percent and 16.4 percent, respectively, while the remaining percentage 2.8 percent, distributed among other sectors. -ONA

## JEBEL ALI FREE ZONE

# Jafza cements growing trade relations with India



**DUBAI:** DP World's Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza) is supporting the growth of India - UAE bilateral trade relations by outlining its efforts to drive towards the \$100 billion goal for non-oil trade over the next five years. Plans for growth were highlighted at a Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) event in Delhi, India, on May 11, where Abdulla bin Damithan, CEO & Managing Director, DP World UAE & Jafza, addressed an audience on why 'Dubai is India's Gateway to the World'. Following the launch of Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which came into force last year, the exclusive event outlined the major opportunities for Indian businesses in the UAE, which include lower or eliminated tariffs and an open and non-discriminatory environment for cross-border trade. As per IHS Markit, the bilateral trade between India and the UAE increased from \$68 billion in 2021 to \$84 billion in 2022, registering a year-on-year growth of 23%. Jafza currently serves over 9,500 companies from 130 countries, with the Jafza-India route handling 19% of non-oil trade between the UAE and India, making it India's largest supporting ecosystem for trade. With its India-UAE Bridge initiative, Jafza aims to reduce

time and cost of shipping goods between India and the UAE by providing a seamless and efficient logistics solution and creating new business opportunities for companies in both countries, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare, etc. The initiative is a major step towards strengthening the economic ties between India and the UAE and promoting greater trade and investment between the two nations. "The announcement of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) last year is already having tangible benefits for India - UAE trade relations. Tariffs have been eliminated on more than 10,000 products and services over the next 10 years, which will provide a major impact on trade between the countries and the wider Gulf region. Jebel Ali Port and Jafza have played a crucial role in boosting trade between the two countries, and we look forward to further contributing to the growth of trade between India and the UAE," said Abdulla Bin Damithan, CEO & Managing Director, DP World UAE & Jafza. Speaking to business leaders from across India, Abdulla Bin Damithan highlighted Jafza's unique value proposition and how

the Free Zone can play a catalytic role for Indian companies to expand operations into foreign markets and strengthen their global value chains. In the Free Zone alone, Indian companies are the second largest partners in terms of trade volume and are fourth in terms of trade value. Jafza supports the 'Make in India' Initiative and 'Production Linked Incentive' schemes to boost manufacturing, investments, and exports in India via its Jebel Ali hub, offering unmatched logistics and trade solutions and greater access to new markets. As part of Dubai Traders Market, Bharat Bazaar, the Free Zone's mega-distribution centre with its showrooms and warehouses, will allow Indian traders to serve local and global customers from a single hybrid business platform for wholesale and retail via Jafza. Jafza also links businesses to Jebel Ali Port's F&B Terminal, which spans over one million square meters and offers dedicated facilities such as cereal silos, covered warehouses, and refrigerated container storage yards that cater to the specific needs of the food and beverage industry. Together, the Port and Free Zone offer a comprehensive logistics solution that can help Indian companies thrive. -WAM



# Scan Electromechanical Contracting Company and Oman India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO) sign agreement to implement solar car-park project

**SUR:** Scan Electromechanical contracting Company has recently signed an agreement with Oman India Fertilizer Company (OMIFCO). This agreement was signed by Eng. Mohammed Khamis Al Namani, CEO of SCAN Group and Khalid Al Farsi, GM-Supply Chain at Oman India Fertiliser Company (OMIFCO). About this agreement, CEO of SCAN stated "We are proud of this agreement with OMIFCO which is an excellent step towards reducing the electricity expenditure. We believe that together we can influence a positive change towards achieving Oman's vision 2040 to promote Oman as a leading country in sustainability armed with a clear strategic goal to lead the industry in the Sultanate and abroad." He added: "One of the aims of this project is to reduce the



carbon emission as one of the solutions in coming years. This project will undoubtedly strengthen our efforts to combat climate change to pave the way for a more sustainable future." For his part, Khalid Al Farsi, GM-Supply Chain at OMIFCO,

stated: "We are delighted for this newly established agreement between OMIFCO & SCAN. The Project reflects our commitment toward supporting the national objectives of preserving the environment and diversifying energy sources. Solar car-park project is the company's third project with a capacity of 723 kwp and a total of 1154 Mwp hours of annual energy produced. This project will add a big addition by our orientation to clean energy." He added: "Work on this project is expected to start soon. We hope that the production capacity exceeds 1 Mwp, and the plan for next year will reach the desired goal." SCAN Electromechanical has executed critical projects related to power and renewable energy sectors in the region and is expanding internationally.





# WHY DO WE FALL FOR PARTICULAR PEOPLE?

“WE ARGUE THAT BELIEVING PEOPLE HAVE AN UNDERLYING ESSENCE ALLOWS US TO ASSUME OR INFER THAT WHEN WE SEE SOMEONE WHO SHARES A SINGLE CHARACTERISTIC, THEY MUST SHARE MY ENTIRE DEEPLY ROOTED ESSENCE, AS WELL.



Even the shortest ties can sometimes lead to the deepest bonds in life. Like when you attend a party and run into someone wearing the T-shirt of your favourite band, or who laughs at the same jokes as you, or who picks up the oddball food you alone (or so you thought) enjoy. My favourite is when a conversation is started by a tiny, common interest that develops into an enduring love.

We tend to prefer people who are similar to us; this phenomenon is known as the similarity-attraction effect. New research from Boston University has now uncovered one of the causes.

Charles Chu, an assistant professor of management and organisations at the BU Questrom School of Business, studied the factors that influence how attracted or turned off we are by one another in a number of studies. He discovered that self-essentialist thinking, where people believe they have a deep inner core or essence that shapes who they are, was a key determinant. Chu found that when someone believes an essence drives their interests, likes, and dislikes, they presume the same is true for others as well. If they locate someone with a single similar interest, they anticipate that person will share their larger worldview. The Journal of Personality and Social Psychology of the American Psychological Association published the findings.

“If we had to come up with an image of our sense of self, it would be this nugget, an almost magical core inside that emanates out and causes what we can see and observe about people and ourselves,” says Chu, who published the paper with Brian S. Lowery of Stanford Graduate School of Business. “We argue that believing people have an underlying essence allows us to assume or infer that when we see someone who shares a single characteristic, they must share my entire deeply rooted essence, as well.”

But Chu’s research suggests this rush to embrace an indefinable, fundamental similarity with someone because of one or two shared interests may be based on flawed thinking--and that it could restrict who we find a connection with.

Working alongside the pull of the similarity-attraction effect is a countering push: we dislike those who we don’t think are like us, often because of one small thing--they like that politician, band, book, or TV show we loathe.

“We are all so complex,” says Chu. “But we only have full insight into our own thoughts and feelings, and the minds of others are often a mystery to us. What this work suggests is that we often fill in the blanks of others’ minds with our own sense of self and that can sometimes lead us into some unwarranted assumptions.”

## Trying to Understand Other People

To examine why we’re attracted to some people and not to others, Chu set up four studies, each designed to tease out different aspects of how we make friends--or foes.

In the first study, participants were told about a fictional person, Jamie, who held either complementary or contradictory attitudes toward them. After asking participants their views on one of five topics--abortion, capital punishment, gun ownership, animal testing, and physician-assisted suicide--Chu asked how they felt about Jamie, who either agreed or disagreed with them on the target issue. They were also quizzed about the roots of their identity to measure their affinity with self-essentialist reasoning.

Chu found the more a participant believed their view of the world was shaped by an essential core, the more they felt connected to Jamie who shared their views on one issue.

In a second study, he looked at whether that effect persisted when the target topics were less substantive. Rather than digging into whether people agreed with Jamie on something as divisive as abortion, Chu asked participants to estimate the number of blue dots on a page, then categorized them--and the fictional Jamie--as over- or under-estimators. Even with this slim connection, the findings held: the more someone believed in an essential core, the closer they felt to Jamie as a fellow over- or under-estimator.

“I found that both with pretty meaningful dimensions of similarity as well as with arbitrary, minimal similarities, people who are higher in their belief that they have an essence are more likely to be attracted to these similar others as opposed to dissimilar others,” says Chu.

In two companion studies, Chu began disrupting this process of attraction, stripping out

IF THEY LOCATE SOMEONE WITH A SINGLE SIMILAR INTEREST, THEY ANTICIPATE THAT PERSON WILL SHARE THEIR LARGER WORLDVIEW. THE JOURNAL OF PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION PUBLISHED THE FINDINGS.

the influence of self-essentialist reasoning. In one experiment, he labelled attributes (such as liking a certain painting) as either essential or nonessential; in another, he told participants that using their essence to judge someone else could lead to an inaccurate assessment of others.

“It breaks this essentialist reasoning process, it cuts off people’s ability to assume that what they’re seeing is reflective of a deeper similarity,” says Chu. “One way I did that was to remind people that this dimension of similarity is actually not connected or related to your essence at all; the other way was by telling people that using their essence as a way to understand other people is not very effective.”

## Negotiating Psychology — and Politics — at Work

Chu says there’s a key tension in his findings that shape their application in the real world. On the one hand, we’re all searching for

our community — it’s fun to hang out with people who share our hobbies and interests, love the same music and books as us, and don’t disagree with us on politics. “This type of thinking is a really useful, heuristic psychological strategy,” says Chu. “It allows people to see more of themselves in new people and strangers.” But it also excludes people, and sets up divisions and boundaries--sometimes on the flimsiest of grounds.

“When you hear a single fact or opinion being expressed that you either agree or disagree with, it really warrants taking an additional breath and just slowing down,” he says. “Not necessarily taking that single piece of information and extrapolating on it, using this type of thinking to go to the very end, that this person is fundamentally good and like me or fundamentally bad and not like me.”

Chu, whose background mixes the study of organizational behaviour and psychology, teaches classes on negotiation at Questrom and says his research has plenty of implications in the business world, particularly when it comes to making deals.

“I define negotiations as conversations, and agreements and disagreements, about how power and resources should be distributed between people,” he says. “What inferences do we make about the other people we’re having these conversations with? How do we experience and think about agreement versus disagreement? How do we interpret when someone gets more and someone else gets less? These are all really central questions to the process of negotiation.”

But in a time when the political division has invaded just about every sphere of our lives, including workplaces, the applications of Chu’s findings go way beyond corporate horse-trading. Managing staff, collaborating on projects, and team bonding--all are shaped by the judgments we make about each other. Self-essentialist reasoning may even influence society’s distribution of resources, says Chu: who we consider worthy of support, who gets funds and who doesn’t, could be driven by “this belief that people’s outcomes are caused by something deep inside of them.”

That’s why he advocates pushing pause before judging someone who, at first blush, doesn’t seem like you.

“There are ways for us to go through life and meet other people, and form impressions of other people, without constantly referencing ourselves,” he says.

“If we’re constantly going around trying to figure out, who’s like me, who’s not like me? That’s not always the most productive way of trying to form impressions of other people. People are a lot more complex than we give them credit for.”

— ANI

SPORTS

AFC ASIAN CUP DRAW

Oman take on Saudi Arabia in their Asian Cup opener

**MUSCAT:** Oman will kick off their AFC Asian Cup 2023 campaign with a tough match against fancied Saudi Arabia in Doha, Qatar on January 16, 2024. The match will be played at Khalifa International Stadium and will begin at 9.30pm, Oman time.

The continental showpiece, is scheduled to be played from January 12 to February 10, 2024.

Oman and Saudi Arabia have been pooled along with Thailand and Kyrgyz Republic in Group F of the continental showpiece after the draw was held in Qatar on Thursday.

The AFC Asian Cup will feature 24 teams and have been divided into six groups with the top two from each group advancing to the knockout stage along with four best third-placed teams from the six groups.

Following the match against Saudis, Oman will next play against Thailand on January 21 at Al Janoub Stadium before concluding the group stage with a match against Kyrgyz Republic on January 25 at Al Thumama Stadium. For Branko Ivankovic's Red Warriors, this would be the first time that they would be taking on Saudi Arabia in an Asian Cup. Both teams have met 23 times on the international stage, including multiple occasions in the Gulf Cup and FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

Fresh off an impressive showing at the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, the Green Falcons, who upset World Cup champions Argentina, will be confident of building on that momentum and aim to add to their haul of three Asian titles.

Oman will be targeting qualification from the group stage for a second consecutive edition.

Defending champions Qatar are the top seeded team in Group A with their title defence to begin against two-time runners-up China, Tajikistan and Lebanon. Group B will see 2015 champions Australia, Uzbekistan, Syria and India contesting for the knockout stage spots.

Three-time winners Iran, 1996 runners-up United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, and Palestine will vie for the knockout stage spots in Group C while record four-time winners Japan, Indonesia, 2007 champions Iraq and Vietnam were drawn in Group D. Twice champions South Korea, the top seeded team in Group E, will have a battle with Malaysia, Jordan for the knockout stages.

The Asian Cup Qatar 2023 will be staged across eight stadiums with the tournament opener to be played at Al Bayt Stadium between Qatar and Lebanon. The final will also be played on February 10, 2024 at the Al Bayt Stadium.

Six of these were venues for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, namely: Al Janoub Stadium, Al Bayt Stadium, Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, Al Thumama Stadium, Education City Stadium, Khalifa International Stadium as well as the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium and Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium.

**Draw result:**  
**Group A:** Qatar, China, Tajikistan, Lebanon.  
**Group B:** Australia, Uzbekistan, Syria, India.  
**Group C:** Iran, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Palestine.  
**Group D:** Japan, Indonesia, Iraq, Vietnam.  
**Group E:** Korea Republic, Malaysia, Jordan, Bahrain.  
**Group F:** Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Kyrgyz Republic, Oman.

NZ's Bradburn named Pakistan head coach



Newly-appointed Pakistan cricket head coach Grant Bradburn (right) and team director Mickey Arthur

Former South Africa cricketer Andrew Puttick has also signed a two-year contract as the batting coach

**ISLAMABAD:** Former New Zealand international Grant Bradburn has been named as the new head coach of the Pakistan men's team for the next two years. He had held the position on a consultancy basis during Pakistan's recent home series against New Zealand as well.

Former South Africa cricketer Andrew Puttick has also signed a two-year contract as the batting coach. Strength and conditioning coach Drikus Saaiman and physiotherapist Cliffe Deacon will continue in their roles.

Bradburn had previously served

as the fielding coach of the side, from 2018 to 2020, before moving to the National Cricket Academy in Lahore. Before that, he was the head coach of Scotland.

"It is a great honour for me to work with the highly talented and skilful side like Pakistan as a head coach," Bradburn said in a Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) release. "The New Zealand series has been valuable to get game time and create clarity of roles, culture and brand to win.

"We have raised the bar of expectation and we will keep challenging our players. The process has started and our players are agreeing to take these challenges head-on. We have mutually agreed with our players that they are capable of higher team scores, even when setting totals. There have been immediate positive signs during this series and this group of players is determined to continually improve, to put ourselves into contention to win major events."

"We have been working hard on raising our game and are eager to showcase our growing skills. Mickey Arthur and I are excited to support, challenge and develop our players."

"We have raised the bar of expectation and we will keep challenging our players. The process has started and our players are agreeing to take these challenges head-on. ODI cricket has evolved and our agreed expectations are aligned to being the best in the world. We have mutually agreed with our players that they are capable of higher team scores, even when setting totals. There have been immediate positive signs during this series and this group of players is determined to continually improve, to put ourselves into contention to win major events," added the coach.

According to the release, the Pakistan team management has unveiled a playing style with which it will approach the 2023 ODI World Cup. The style branded as 'The Pakistan Way' will see the team approach the ODIs in the build-up and during the tournament with positive and bold tactics and attacking strategies.

"If a team wins without a culture, without a brand or without a style, it may work for a short period but will eventually fall," team director Mickey Arthur said.

"If a team is losing with a culture, a brand and its own style, then it is moving towards the right direction.

"So how do we achieve The Pakistan Way? We achieve this by winning while having our own culture, our own brand of cricket and our own style. We will not be satisfied with wins without that culture in the team. Pakistan as a nation is proud of its identity, culture and style. I love Pakistan and Pakistan cricket; I want to leave behind a legacy as a director where the rest of the world says we want to play The Pakistan Way.

"To achieve on-field success, the team management will put emphasis on the importance of building a culture where a player's success is enjoyed by everyone and creating an inclusive environment where anyone can speak up at any time and everyone is treated equally eventually resulting in achieving collective goals as a nation and team."

Pakistan are next slated to play a three-match ODI series against Afghanistan, followed by Asia Cup as a part of their preparation for the ODI World Cup in India from October-November this year. -ANI

WEST INDIES CRICKET



Sammy appointed WI white-ball coach

**ST JOHNS:** Cricket West Indies (CWI) has appointed Daren Sammy, who led West Indies to two T20 World Cup titles, as head coach of West Indies' T20I and ODI teams. Andre Coley, who was West Indies' interim coach after Phil Simmons resigned, will be in charge of the Test and West Indies A teams.

According to Kishore Shallow, who took over from Ricky Skerritt as CWI president in March, a total of 20 applications from around the world had come to the board.

Former West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul, who had coached Jamaica Tallawahs to the CPL title in 2022, was among those who had applied for the job.

A panel of five, comprising Jimmy Adams, CWI's director of cricket, Enoch Lewis, the chair of cricket committee, Oneka Martin-Bird, the board's HR manager, Debra Coryat-Patton, one of CWI's newly independent directors, and Shallow conducted the interviews.

Sammy's first assignment will be a three-match ODI series against the UAE in Sharjah in June, which will form part of the preparations for the World Cup qualifiers in Zimbabwe in June-July. "It will be a challenge but one that I'm ready for and excited about," Sammy said in a CWI statement.

"I'm really looking forward to the opportunity, especially looking at the players we have and the impact that I believe I can have in the dressing room. I believe I will bring the same approach as I had as a player: the passion, the desire for success, and my undying love for West Indies cricket.

"When I look around there is an abundance of talent, and what I saw in South Africa in the white-ball matches under new captains Shai Hope and Rovman Powell and the leadership provided by Andre Coley, there is great belief that we can do well. I'm looking forward to imparting my knowledge, my tactical acumen, my communication skills and my man-management skills. I get excited about putting the plans together and seeing the players execute them."

Sammy has coaching experience in the CPL and the PSL, but this will be his first assignment in international cricket.

While Sammy is not a certified coach, Shallow pointed out that he fulfilled all the criteria necessary for a coaching role. "There's a different set of criteria that you know don't necessarily need to be a Level 3 [coach]," Shallow said. "It's ideal, but when we go through the different assessments, he certainly qualified to be the head coach, which is why he was shortlisted in the first place and then he was interviewed by a panel of five."

Sammy's leadership skills, both as a captain and coach, were central to St Lucia Kings' recent success in the CPL. In 2020, he beat the odds and captained a Kings side to the CPL final despite Chris Gayle pulling out of the season.

Brian Lara, who is currently with Sunrisers Hyderabad as their head coach in the IPL, will continue to assist West Indies as a performance mentor as his contract runs until January 2024. -Agencies

FOOTBALL WRITERS' ASSOCIATION

City striker Haaland named as footballer of the year 2022/23

**LONDON:** Manchester City's Norwegian goal-scoring machine Erling Haaland has been named as Football Writers' Association Men's Footballer of the Year for 2022/23 on Friday.

The Norway international received 82 per cent of the FWA vote, ahead of Arsenal duo Bukayo Saka and Martin Odegaard. Haaland has dominated the world of football after his arrival in the Premier League. As the 2022/23 season approaches its climax, the Norwegian has 51 goals in all competitions so far this season as Manchester City continue their journey to secure a historic treble.

The last English team to achieve this were Manchester United. The Red Devils became the first and only team to secure the treble under Sir Alex Fergus-



son in the 1998-99 season.

Haaland is following the footsteps of his colleague Ruben Dias who won the prize in 2021 and former City star Raheem Sterling who took the award in 2019.

"To win the Football Writers' Award in my first season in Eng-

lish football is an honour. I try every single day to be the best I can be, and to be recognised like this means a lot to me," Haaland said. "I have loved my time at City so far - my teammates are incredible, and they provide me with the chances to score goals. I want to thank all of them, because I could not have won this award without them.

On the other hand, Chelsea striker Sam Kerr has won the Women's Footballer of the Year award for the 2022/23 season. Kerr hailing from Australia has displayed terrific form this season. Her statistics speak of her prowess as she has 10 goals in 18 games in the Women's Super League. She also scored her 50th league goal in England. Overall she has 26 goals in 34 club appearances this season. -ANI

TENNIS

Djokovic, Rune advance to round of 32 in Italian Open

**ROME:** Serbian star Novak Djokovic advanced to the round of 32 of the ongoing Italian Open on Friday. The top seed advanced to the next round after a win over Tomas Martin Etcheverry by 7-6 (5), 6-2 at the ATP Masters 1000 event.

This win was a hard-earned one for Djokovic, who committed 21 unforced errors and appeared physically unwell during a rough first set.

Later Djokovic said: "It is always a little bit tricky playing someone for the first time. He is a clay-court specialist. He started better than I did, I started pretty slow, but I found my groove towards the end of the first. The second set was good, especially the last three or four games. I am happy with the way I closed out the match."



Djokovic is a six-time Rome champion, aiming to clinch a record-extending 39th Masters 1000 crown. He will lock horns with Grigor Dimitrov in the third round. Dimitrov defeated Stan Wawrinka 6-4, 7-6(3).

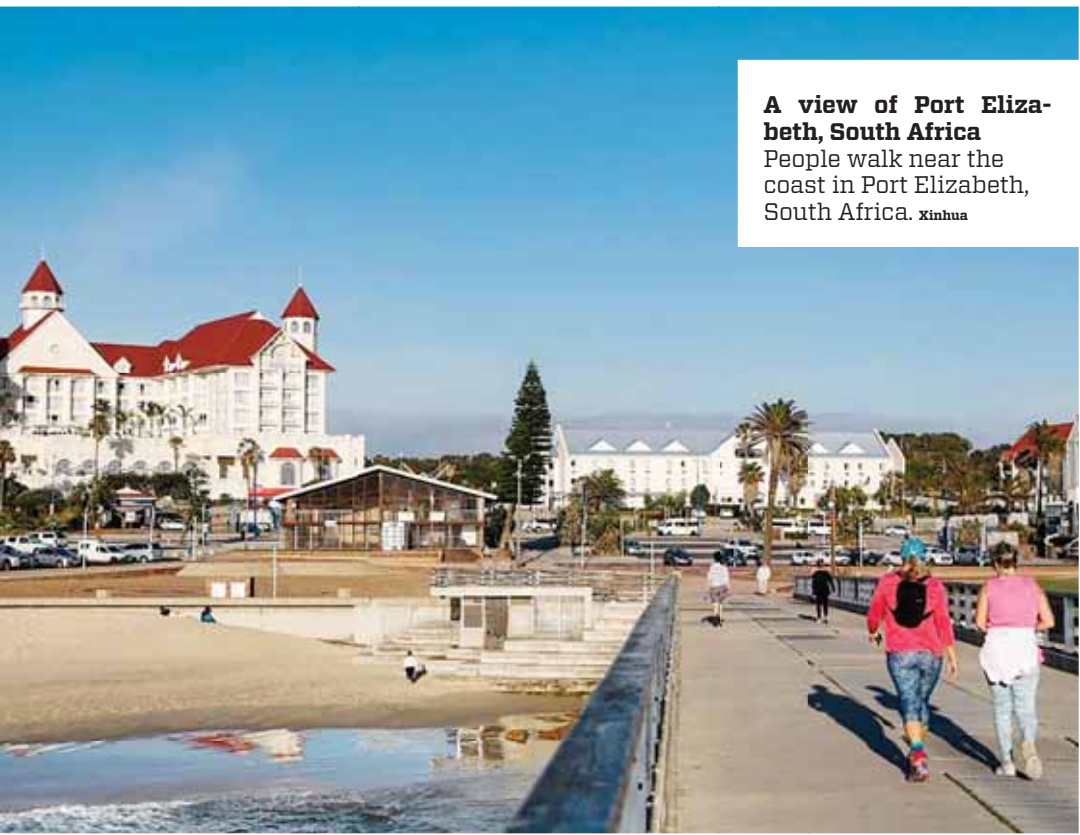
After he reached his first-ever

clay court ATP Masters 1000 final last month in Monte Carlo, Holger Rune made a memorable debut at the Italian Open with a win over Arthur Fils. He won the match 6-3, 6-3. In the third round, Rune will go up against wild card Fabio Fognini. -ANI

# IN PICTURES



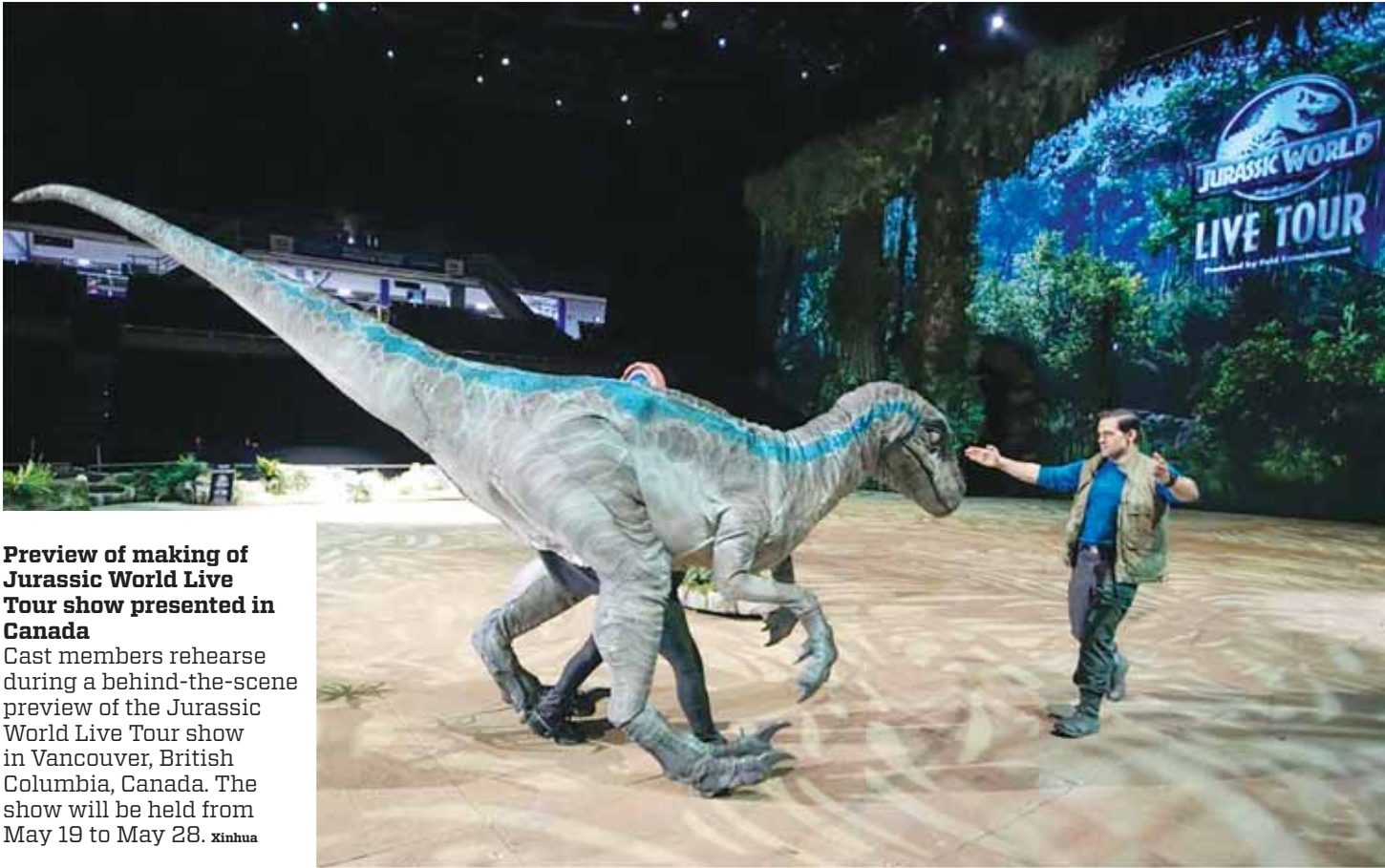
**People buy flowers ahead of Mother's Day in Los Angeles, US**  
People buy flowers ahead of Mother's Day at a flower market in downtown Los Angeles, the United States. *Xinhua*



**A view of Port Elizabeth, South Africa**  
People walk near the coast in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. *Xinhua*



**Scenery of Labuan Bajo, Indonesia**  
This aerial picture shows seaside scenery in Labuan Bajo, a tourist town in East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



**Preview of making of Jurassic World Live Tour show presented in Canada**  
Cast members rehearse during a behind-the-scenes preview of the Jurassic World Live Tour show in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The show will be held from May 19 to May 28. *Xinhua*



**Media preview of exhibition 'The Great Theatre of Civilization' held in Rome**  
A woman takes photos during a media preview of the exhibition 'The Great Theatre of Civilizations' at Fendi's headquarters in Rome, Italy. The exhibition displays approximately thirty works created by Italian contemporary sculptor Arnaldo Pomodoro between the late 1950s and 2021, together with a series of archival materials including photographs, documents, sketches and drawings. *Xinhua*



**Actress Priyanka Chopra arrives at Delhi Airport**  
Actress Priyanka Chopra arrives at Delhi Airport to attend the engagement of her sister and actress Parineeti Chopra and AAP MP Raghav Chadha, in New Delhi. *ANI Photo*



**Handmade human and animal shaped dolls exhibited in Russia**  
Picture shows dolls exhibited at an international dolls exhibition in St. Petersburg, Russia. A variety of handmade human and animal shaped dolls are exhibited at the international dolls exhibition attracting more than 400 craftsmen from Russia and abroad. *Xinhua*



**Sri Lanka steps up precautionary measures to control dengue**  
A worker sprays insecticides to prevent mosquito breeding at a railway station in Colombo, Sri Lanka. In the wake of the rise of dengue cases in Sri Lanka, all the provincial chief secretaries in the country were informed in writing to take all precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the disease, said the President's Media Division (PMD). *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

# Bank Muscat honoured with 2 awards by Arab Federation of Capital Markets

The awards for Best Investment Bank (Oman) and Best ESG Integration (Oman) were announced at a glittering event held recently in Muscat

**MUSCAT:** Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been honoured with 2 prestigious awards by the Arab Federation of Capital Markets.

The awards for Best Investment Bank (Oman) and Best ESG Integration (Oman) were announced at a glittering event held recently in Muscat as part of an-



Haitham Salim Al Salmi, CEO, Muscat Stock Exchange handed over the awards to Khalifa Abdullah Al Hatmi, Deputy General Manager -Investment Banking and Capital Markets, Bank Muscat, in presence of number of CEOs of other regional stock exchanges.

Speaking on the occasion after receiving the awards, Khalifa Abdullah Al Hatmi, Deputy General Manager - Investment Banking and Capital Markets, Bank Muscat, said: “We are really delighted to receive these prestigious awards from the Arab Federation of Capital Markets.

**Testament**

“They are a testament to the bank’s pioneering role in Oman and its long-standing experience in continuously delivering distinguished services and solutions to its customers and partners. We take this opportunity to thank all our customers for their continuous trust in the bank as well as constant feedback which helps us serve them better, every day.”

Bank Muscat has a successful track record of providing innovative and customised financing solutions to suit the unique requirements of its customers.

The bank provides corporate finance and advisory services for a number of prestigious clients in-

cluding for Government Related Entities as well as corporates. In 2022, Bank Muscat successfully advised on multiple transactions spanning across various sectors including telecom, financial services, gas networks, utilities and supplier financing, which resulted in fundraising in excess of OMR800 million.

As the market leader in corporate finance and advisory solutions encompassing corporate finance, project finance, debt capital markets, debt refinancing and restructurings, IPOs, structured financings, quasi-equity financings, private placements, as well as mergers and acquisitions in Oman, the bank prides itself in its intricate understanding of diverse business requirements of its clients. It offers unmatched financial expertise and guidance, innovative funding solutions and wide array of services for various customer needs. It is also the largest asset manager in Oman with approximately US\$ 2.5 billion of Assets under Management (AUM).

PAYMENT SOLUTIONS

## OMPAY supports 20th Student Forum’s ‘Digital Horizons’ event

**MUSCAT:** Oman’s newest and most exciting payment solutions provider, OMPay, showcased its online payment abilities at the recently concluded 20th Student Forum held at the Oman Across Ages Museum, Manah.

Conducted by UTAS Nizwa, the forum brought together students of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences Al Musannah, Al Rustaq, Muscat, Salalah and Sur.

Open to a total of 45,000 students from all 11 branches of UTAS in the country, the forum held competitions across 22 different criteria for the generation of fresh ideas in six subject categories, including technology, education and infrastructure. Held from May 7 to 10, the event was themed ‘Digital Horizons’.

As a collaborator of the 20th Student Forum, OMPay facilitated proceedings at the event and showcased its products among students. “The youth and students are the target segment critical to the brand and the future of the country. We thank UTAS Nizwa for giving us an ideal platform to connect with them,” said Eng. Abdulaziz Al Rawahi, CEO of Global Financial Technology.

First, second and third place winners in 22 competition categories were awarded cash prizes digitally through the OMPay application. Additionally, special guests



and judging committee members were presented OMPay cards. All attending students were also given OMPay gift cards.

OMPAY handed out the competition prizes and gifts via its dedicated cards with QR codes for recipients to scan to claim their prize amounts. On scanning the QR code, the OMPay app was downloaded on individual devices and the prize or gift amount made available in their respective digital wallets.

Launched in 2022 by Eng. Abdulaziz Al Rawahi and Oman Telecommunications Company

(Omantel), OMPay is owned and operated by Muscat-based Global Financial Technology, which provides fintech services through its wallet and payment gateway.

Eng. Rawahi expressed that Global Financial Technology’s vision is to become a formidable fintech solutions provider in the region offering a wide variety of enhanced products and services.

“OMPAY transforms lives by giving users complete control over their finances. Whether you’re looking to accept payments or expand your business, we have some-

thing for everyone.”

OMPAY is Oman’s app that offers mobile payment services in the form of a digital wallet to consumers while enabling merchants to receive payments through its NFC, QR code, POS, bank transfer and online payment gateway.

With the OMPay wallet, users can receive and send money through chat transfers to local and international banks, pay bills and pay through contacts. A one-stop app, OMPay is available for download on the App Store, Google Play Store, and Huawei App Gallery.

LAUNCH EDITION



## Maserati celebrates GranTurismo at Milan Design Week

**MILAN:** Maserati celebrated its new GranTurismo along with personalities from the world of fashion, showbiz, sport, and music at its new Milan retail store in the heart of Italy’s design capital.

The Trident introduced its GranTurismo Launch Edition PrimaSerie 75th Anniversary along with three masterpieces – GranTurismo One Off Prisma and Granturismo One Off Luce, designed by Maserati Centro Stile, and Granturismo One Off Ouroboros conceived by the intrepid inspiration of Japanese street culture pioneer and friend of the Trident Hiroshi Fujiwara.

Style pioneer and global brand ambassador David Beckham was in attendance to pay a personal tribute to the new GranTurismo, along with Japanese designer Hiroshi Fujiwara, Italian pianist and composer Dardust and Italian actress Matilda De Angelis who raised a glass and celebrated the Trident’s icon – first designed in 1947 to enhance the long-distance sports car par excellence.

The GranTurismo One Off Prisma is a refined work of craftsmanship art, equipped with the Nettuno V6 internal combustion engine, dedicated to the heritage of this glorious car. The bodywork is made of a chromatic partnership consisting of 14 different colours – all painted by hand – and embellished with details of more than 8,500 letters hand-applied and hand-varnished one by one, making up the names of Maserati cars. Two of colors look

ahead to the future, whilst the other twelve have been selected from the hues of the most popular GranTurismo models of the past, such as the characteristic Amaranto from the 1947 Maserati A6 1500, and the Oro Longchamps that brightened the 1973 Maserati Khamzin.

Klaus Busse, Head of Design at Maserati, stated: “GranTurismo Prisma is an ode to our 75-year heritage and to the know-how that has imbued all the cars Maserati has made over time. GranTurismo Luce is our future, looking ahead, in perfect balance with Prisma. The essence of each one depends on the other. In terms of innovation, Prisma expresses all the beauty and excellence of the Italian craftsmanship, as well as mastery in painting and colour; Luce reveals all the technology developed with Folgore, combining our forward-thinking attitude and Italian creativity”.

Following a long-standing partnership with Japanese brand Fragment, started in 2021, Maserati introduced the GranTurismo One Off Ouroboros, a virtual Fuorisserie GranTurismo designed by street culture innovator Hiroshi Fujiwara, as his own creative interpretation of the contemporary GranTurismo in the full-electric Folgore version. Inspired by the ‘Ouroboros’, a gnostic symbol that expresses the unity of all things which never disappear but perpetually change form in an eternal cycle of destruction and recreation.

BIGGEST RAMADAN BONANZA

## Dream car win makes Ramadan with Sharaf DG memorable

**MUSCAT:** Sharaf DG Oman successfully concluded the Biggest Ramadan Bonanza with mega prizes to be won.

Customers could double their chances of winning with every additional OMR 100 spent at Sharaf DG. Shoppers stood a chance to take home the Grand Changan CS85 SUV Car worth OMR 16,000 and enjoy 2 Home Makeovers from OC Homes worth OMR 500 each. Add to that, the most desired iPhone 14 Pro Max, Hisense Refrigerator and a Gaming Laptop made it the most fascinating shop-

ping season. A total of 51 winners walked away with exciting prizes.

**Joy of shopping**

Talking about the experience, Arhab Hilal Al Rahbi, a customer shared, “We were excited to shop at Sharaf DG this Ramadan. We have been dreaming of our own car for too long. And what better than chance to win big this holy month. We recently moved houses and were looking for the best deals for a home makeover. The joy of shopping with a chance to win incredible prizes, all in one place has us

coming back to Sharaf DG. Looking forward to seeing what’s in store for the coming months.”

Winners were facilitated in a grand ceremony at Muscat Grand Mall in the esteemed presence of Rakesh Madhur, Chief Operating Officer, Retail, Sharaf DG. Their joy knew no bounds.

Sharaf DG continues to grow in both, strength and impact and it will only get better with expansion plans, growth projects and aligning with the times to create new benchmarks for Middle East retail. Their customers, brand partners and

teams are their biggest strength. What’s coming next will deliver on many more years of great value for shoppers and partners.

An interest in sustainable resources has led Sharaf DG to take significant steps toward mitigating the impending effects, gradually shifting to wiser resources and spearheading positive climate impact in electronics retail space. While steadfast growth remains at the heart of development, green steps are being integrated hand in hand to lend themselves to balanced progress.





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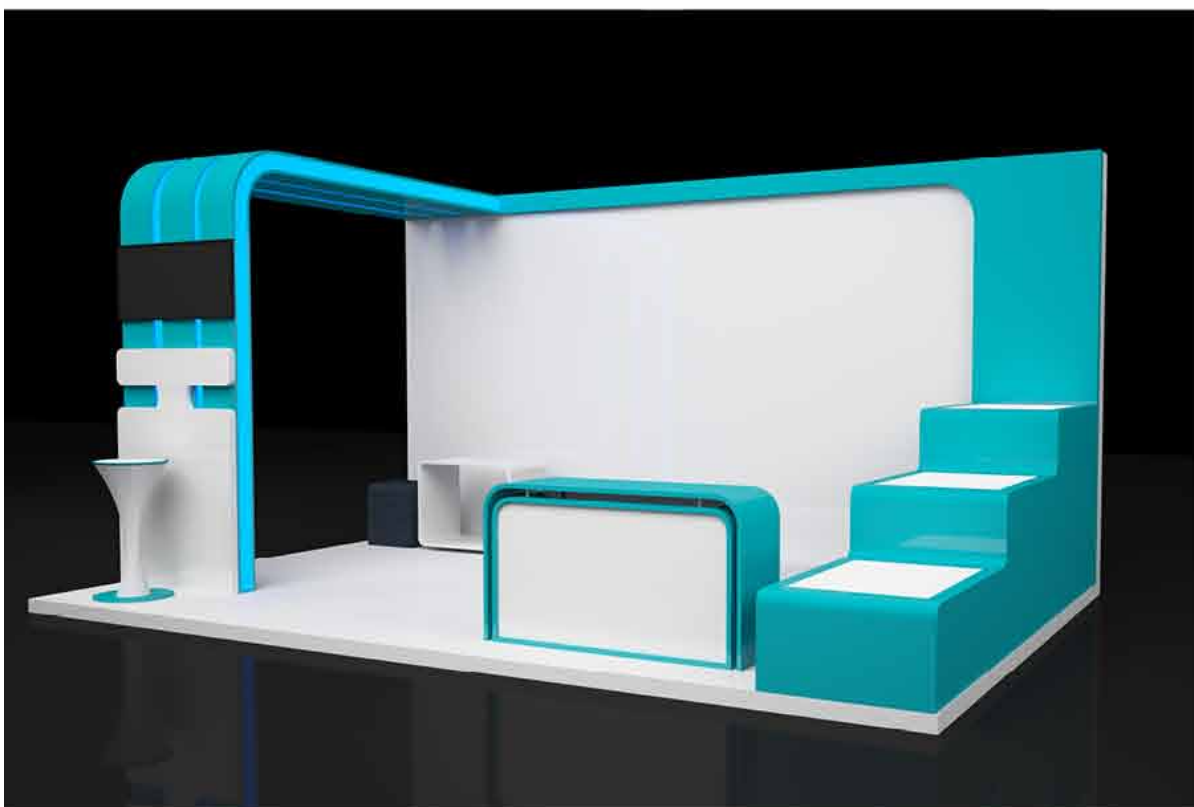
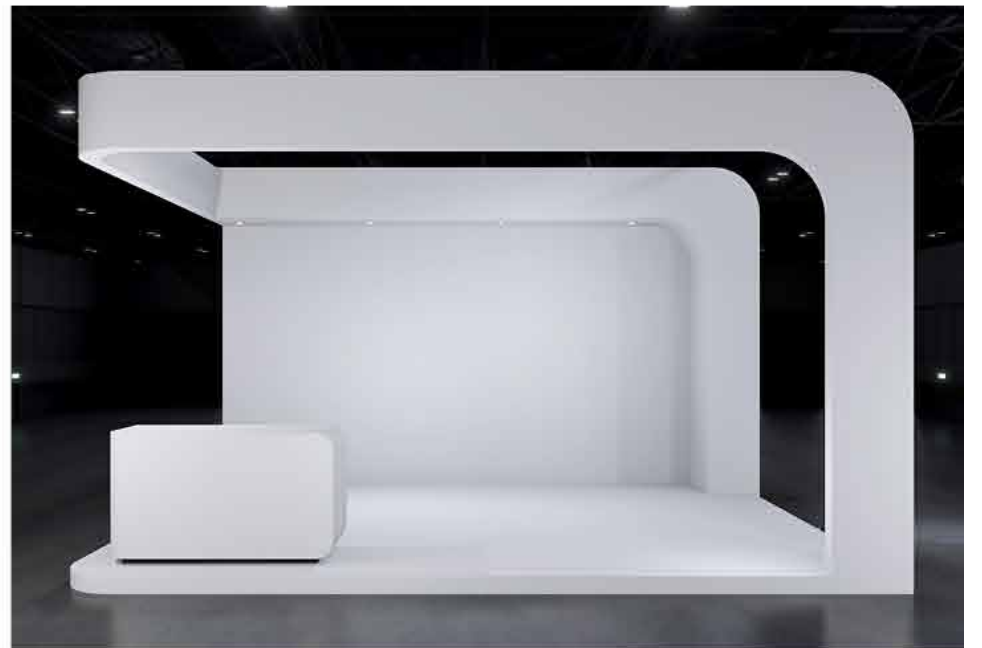
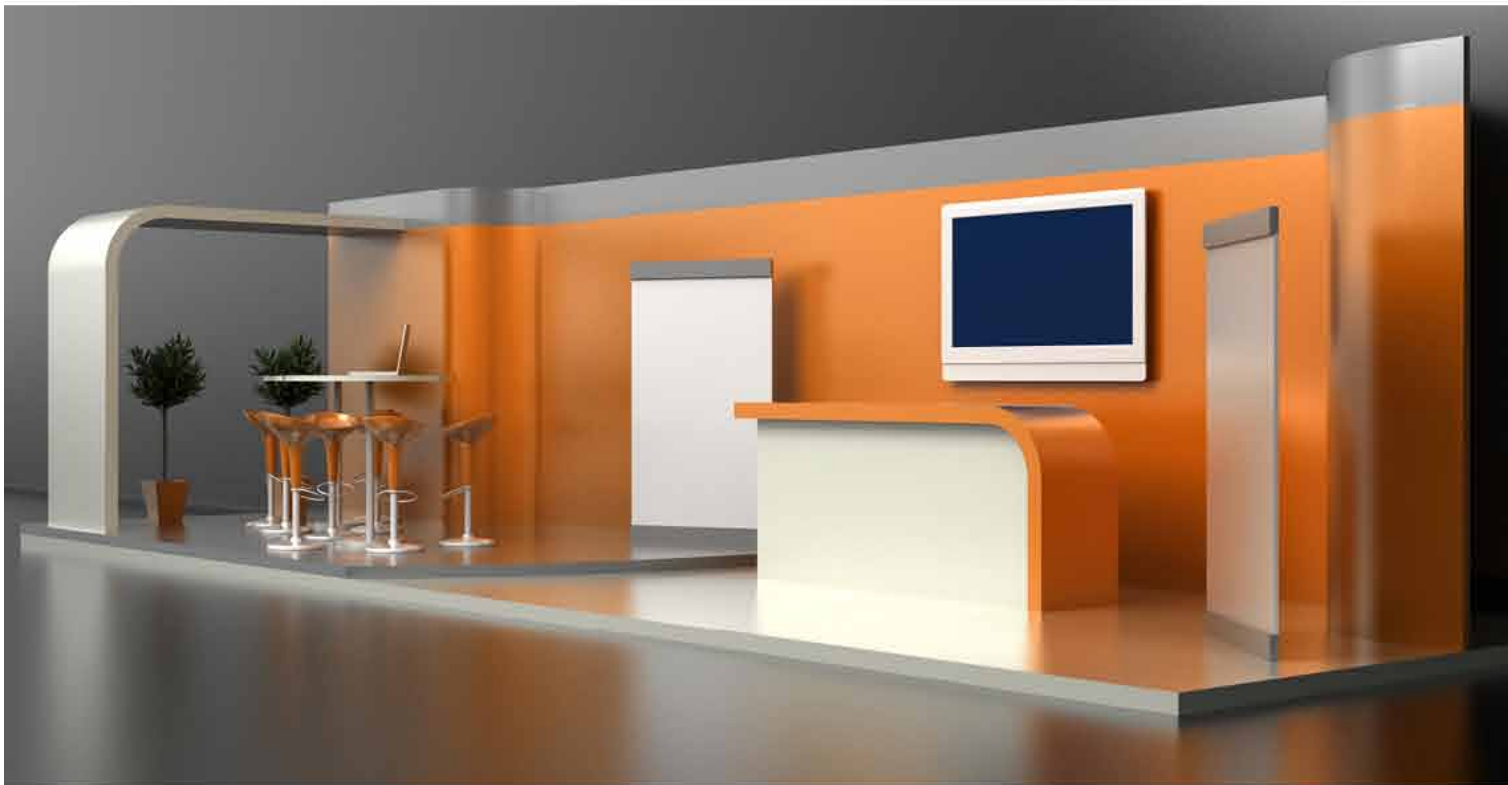
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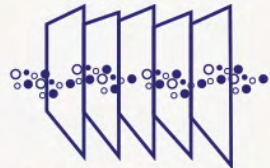
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## RECIPROCATING SERIES

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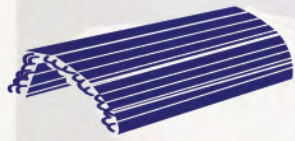
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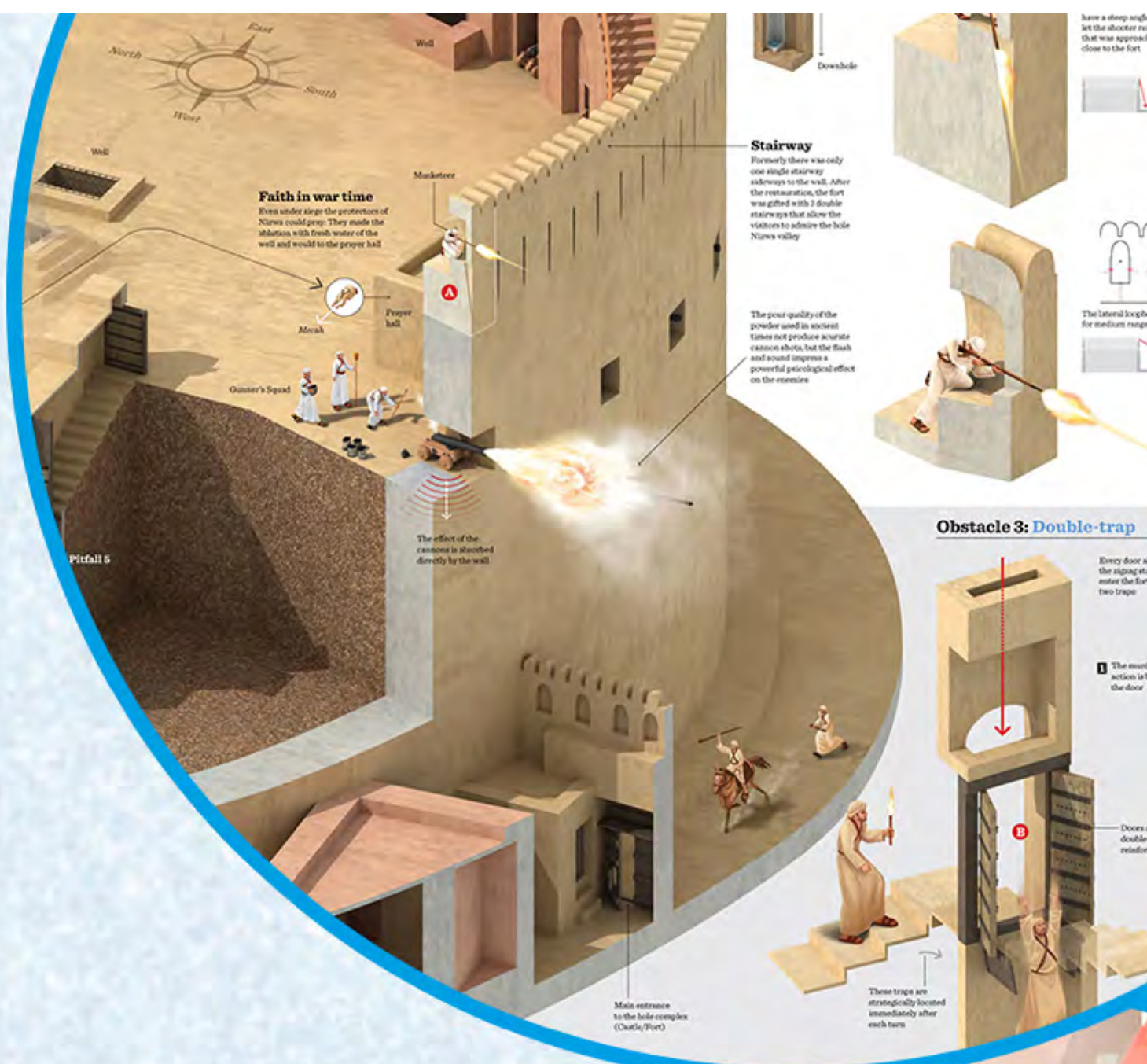
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