

ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER MEETS ENVOYS OF AUSTRIA, SUDAN

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received Christian Brunmayr, Ambassador of Austria to the Sultanate of Oman, and Salah Al Din Al Haji Mohammed Al Kando, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan. **>A2**



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HM GREETES KING OF SWEDEN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Carl XVI Gustaf of the Kingdom of Sweden on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere appreciation to King Carl XVI, wishing him good health and happiness. His Majesty also wished the people of Sweden further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



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GROOMING NATIONAL LEADERS

Directives of His Majesty on Royal Academy of Management highlighted

MUSCAT: The Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Management held its second meeting under the chairmanship of Sayyid Khalid Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court.

Al Busaidi highlighted the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik when he patronised over the inauguration of the Academy, which consolidate developing human capital and leadership through systematic programmes and discussions.

The Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court also highlighted the directives to enhance communication and government integration, to develop intellectual content to enhance Oman's future readiness, and to position Oman among the top ranks of developed countries.

Board members discussed recent strategies and accomplish-



ments as well as the launch of upcoming programmes. Emphasis was laid on grooming national leaders at various levels of management and providing the public and private sectors with empowered and qualified leaders.

The meeting also discussed the process of moving employees to the new Royal Academy of Management building and ensuring a seamless transition.

In addition, the Board of Trustees also reviewed several topics

in its agenda and took appropriate decisions. The Royal Academy of Management is under the honorary patronage of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. Established in January 2022, the Academy aims to develop national leaders at various levels of management in the public and private sectors through an integrated suite of specialised centres, initiatives, and programmes based on the latest concepts and trends in New Public Management. — **ONA**

OMAN MOVES CLOSER TO FULL-SCALE PRODUCTION OF ELECTRONIC CHIPS



First Made in Oman chips sent to Taiwan for testing and verification

MUSCAT: Oman moved a step closer to launching a full-fledged manufacturing unit of advanced semiconductor chips. On Monday, the first batch of advanced electronic chips design (Oman-1, Oman-2), made by the Global Semiconductor Microelectronics Company (GSME Oman) was dispatched to the laboratories of the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company.

The chips, made by Omani designers, have been sent to Taiwan for testing and verification as GSME Oman prepares itself to start a streamlined production and manufacturing.

The tie-up between Oman and Taiwan is part of the National Programme for Digital Economy and the project was undertaken with the support of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the Ministry of Labour.

The production of advanced electronic chips is a step forward towards the implementation of an agreement that was inked in June 2022 by Global Semiconductor Microelectronics Company with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the Ministry of Labour.

The agreement was aimed at establishing the first investment project in the Sultanate of Oman to design and manufacture semiconductors and advanced electronic chips, besides training Omani cadres in this field.

On Monday, the consignment was dispatched at a ceremony that was held under the auspices of Said Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information

Technology and attended by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Also present were senior government officials and private sector representatives.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, said: "The step assumes significance in Oman's drive to make semiconductors and electronic chips and it demonstrates the capabilities and talents of young Omani engineers."

He added that the move paves the way for domestic and global investments in research, development and advanced chips manufacturing.

Al Shidhani said the project will promote the growth of industries related to semiconductors and electronic chips in general, and build an integrated ecosystem that supports related industry in Oman. **>A5**

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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN



Muscat Academies Youth League planned

1 In a pioneering initiative that is expected to bring hundreds of young footballers to a common ground and compete against each other over a period of six months in the Sultanate of Oman, a new football tournament named Muscat Academies Youth League (MAYL) was announced on Monday. **>A4**

WORLD

Trains resume, probe into accident begins

2 Trains are once again running at the site of Friday's deadly rail crash near Balasore in the state of Odisha in India, officials said on Monday. **>A6**

SPORTS

Ons Jabeur enters French Open quarters

3 Tunisia's Ons Jabeur moved into the quarter-finals of the French Open for the first time with a 6-3, 6-1 victory over American Bernarda Pera on Monday. **>A8**

NATURAL DIVERSITY

Oman an attractive destination for tourists in all seasons

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman with its enormous natural diversity is considered an attractive tourism destination in all seasons of the year.

Summer tourism is expected to witness a giant leap this year with increase in the number of visitors to the cold destinations that enjoy exceptional lower temperatures coupled with many activities to entertain tourists.

Al Jabal Al Akhdar and Jabal Shams in the Governorate of Al-Dakhiliyah, as well as the Governorate of Dhofar and the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, are attractive destinations for tourists. These regions have cool weather and low temperatures unlike the north.

Rain and light drizzle

Dhofar receives rain and light drizzle during the Khareef Season when the entire north sizzles with high temperatures. In addition, authorities make unremitting efforts to enhance activities and organise events to make the visit



memorable for tourists.

The existence of solid infrastructure supports the tourism sector through the availability of well established hotels in the Governorate of Al-Dakhiliyah, that has 8 hotels in Al Jabal Al Akhdar with a rating of (1-5) stars, two hotels are in Jabal Shams and many hotel establishments with

a rating of (1-5) stars are in the Governorate of Dhofar, providing a wide choice of accommodation and luxury. There are 86 hotels in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, and 43 hotels in the Governorate of Al Wusta.

Commenting on this, Raia bint Salem Al Maskeriyah, Assistant Director of Tourism Promotion



and Marketing at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism said: "These destinations are receiving great attention from the ministry by promoting investments that contribute to keeping pace with the growing tourism, and enriching tourism products and experiences that encourage comfortable and long stay for tourists."

She added: "The tourism promotion programme by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism continues to be implemented through various media, social media, exhibitions, posters, flyers, brochures and pamphlets, in addition to co-operating with sector partners to provide promotional offers.

She pointed out that, visitors

can practice many tourism activities, such as enjoying the moderate weather and practice adventure tourism and marine sports.

Tourism activities

She clarified that, there are many activities carried out by tourists in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah, particularly in the morning, including camping, hiking, mountain climbing, hiking between valleys, shopping for the products of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, visiting heritage sites, such as castles and forts, as well as Aflaj, ancient lanes and ancient houses to identify customs and traditions of the people of these areas.

Cultural heritage

The tourists and visitors can also get acquainted by the cultural heritage, can roam on a bicycle and enjoying a lot of other activities. She also said that farming activity is also carried at Al Jabal Al Akhdar where visitors can watch unique cultivation on terraces where pomegranates, walnuts, almonds, figs, peaches, apricots and aromatic plants are grown.

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:10pm
Asr.....	3:29pm
Maghrib.....	6:56pm
Isha.....	8:18pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:53am

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MEETINGS

Royal Office Minister receives envoys of Austria, Sudan

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Monday Christian Brunmayr, Ambassador of the Republic of Austria to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

The ambassador expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him by all officials in the Sultanate of Oman. He also lauded the bilateral relations between the two countries.

In his turn, Al Nu'amani thanked the ambassador for the efforts he exerted in boosting bilateral rela-



tions during his tour of duty, wishing him success.

Moreover, Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani also received yesterday Salah Al Din Al Hajji Mohammed Al Kando, Ambassador of Sudan to the Sultanate of Oman.

Gen. Al Nu'amani underscored the relations between Oman and Sudan, wishing that Sudan would enjoy security and stability.

In his turn, the Ambassador expressed his appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman.

Moreover, the two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest. -ONA

JOINT SYSTEMATIC STUDY

Study on molecular characteristics of colorectal cancer conducted

MUSCAT: A number of doctors at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH) and the Royal Hospital conducted a joint systematic study on molecular characteristics of colorectal cancer.

Diagnosed colon cancer figures among the most common cancers in Oman after breast cancer and thyroid cancer. This disease is considered the main cause of many deaths worldwide, in advanced and developing countries.

"Hardly any studies investigating colorectal cancer were conducted in Oman. Besides molecular characteristics of the disease, this study explores social, demographic and economic factors in-



involved. It probes the prevalence of certain types of colon cancer in different regions of Oman," said Dr. Mohammed Hilal Al Azri, Head of the Department of Fam-

ily Medicine and Public Health, Associate Professor at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, Senior Consultant at SQUH and a principal member of the team that conducted the study.

Al Azri told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the study was mainly aimed at determining the collateral relationship between the disease's molecular characteristics and its propagation in terms of causative factors.

The study also investigates common obstacles and challenges with a view to espousing a national programme for screening colorectal cancer in various segments of society, said Al Azri. He hoped that

the study would benefit decision makers in Oman.

Al Azri pointed out that, in the same context, three more studies will be conducted to further investigate the causes, factors and challenges involved upon the prevalence of colon cancer.

He explained that the three studies will target different groups of the population, including colon cancer patients and health care providers operating in primary health centres.

Towards this objective, as many as 2,178 community members concerned will be examined at health centres located in Muscat Governorate, Al Azri added. -ONA

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Sidrah 2.0 to boost skills of young Omani women



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sidrah 2.0, the second edition of the youth leadership programme for young Omani women has been launched. Following the resounding success of its inaugural in 2022, the programme aims to cultivate and enhance the skills of Oman's talented youth.

Co-designed and co-run by Lahunna Oman and Outward Bound Oman, Sidrah 2.0 brings together a diverse group of young women aged 20-30 from across the Sultanate, that is all inclusive for students, fresh graduates, job-seekers, and young professionals.

The programme is designed to equip participants with the confidence, resilience, and leadership qualities needed to become the next generation of transformational leaders. Through a combination of experiential learning, workshops, mentorship, community building and career coaching, Sidrah 2.0 aims to create a transformative learning experience that seeps into their hearts and ignites a life-long thirst for continuous learning.

Over the 6-month course of the programme, participants will engage in activities and workshops that foster self-awareness, self-reliance, perseverance, networking, and effective collaboration. This will instill a sense of higher purpose and service-oriented mindsets, enabling participants to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

Sidrah 2.0 has been enhanced with a coaching initiative in partnership with the International Coaching Federation (ICF) – Oman Chapter. Participants will benefit from 3-6 months of group and one-to-one career coaching sessions, providing invaluable support and guidance as they navigate their personal and professional journeys.

Shatha Salim Al Maskiry, Lahunna's Founder, said: "After the success of our inaugural edition,

we aim to offer our young Omani women a profound journey that inspires them to own and shape their own future. After setting such a wonderful precedent last year with our partner Outward Bound Oman, we have expanded the programme's scope to allow us to properly invest in the next generation of leaders who will carry the torch of progress and play a vibrant role in serving the national priorities of Oman's Vision 2040."

She added, "Bringing onboard ICF coaches is a crucial step to serve as guiding lights by providing the participants with invaluable support to illuminate their path and unlock their true potential as they embark on a lifelong impactful experience."

Sidrah 2.0 incorporates two phases. Phase I takes the form of an 11-day experiential learning and values-based leadership workshops at Outward Bound Oman Jabal Akhdar Training centre, where participants engage in interactive sessions, simulations, role plays and team-building activities to develop their leadership skills and discover a sense of purpose and pride in how they can positively contribute to their community.

Phase II will compromise of an online module followed by 1:1 career coaching sessions with ICF coaches, to support their transition from education to the workforce, and equip them with the confidence needed to make informed personal and professional decisions to build successful lives.

Mark Evans, Outward Bound Oman's Executive Director, said, "The power of our partnership with Lahunna Oman shows that together we can create a legacy and Sidrah 2.0 aims to be a catalyst in the longer term that transforms ideas into action. We aspire to continuously carve an inspiring learning path for the youth to find their inner calling to build a brighter future for Oman."

More than 65% of 5,000 trees for Sezad planted



Tremendous work is underway to plant trees at several key locations in Sezad, including main and service streets



GREEN COVER: The current green spaces in Sezad cover about 26,000 sqm.

Times News Service

DUQM: Coinciding with the World Environment Day, the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) continues implementing its plan to increase the green cover in the Zone.

Tremendous work is underway to plant trees at several key locations in Sezad, including main and service streets, in addition to planting plants in a number of parks where modern systems are used for irrigation, using treated water.

Ibrahim bin Zaher Al Rawahi, from the Afforestation and Landscaping Department in the Special Economic Zone Department of Duqm, confirmed, "Around 67 percent of the project to plant 5,000 trees, intended to be planted by the end of 2023, has been completed

in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm with more than 3,347 trees have been already planted.

The current green spaces in Sezad cover about 26,000 sqm. It is expected that the green spaces in the zone will be increased by the end of this year to cover an area of over 50,000 sqm of various special trees that are suitable for the climatic conditions in Sezad".

Duqm agricultural nursery project

Al Rawahi pointed out that the agricultural nursery in Duqm, which is stretching over an area of 5,000 sqm, is being operated to serve as a primary source for supplying plants that are compatible with the climate of Duqm.

The nursery serves as the main incubator for the production of

seeds and ornamental trees before planting them in the parks and on the streets, in addition to being a hub for agricultural experiments and new types of plants and trees.

"The Special Economic Zone at Duqm has allocated part of the nursery to be operated and managed by a small and medium enterprise, which is specialised in afforestation. This reflects Sezad's efforts to involve and support the local community to contribute in the development of Duqm".

Moreover, the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) has allocated several investment lands for the purpose of establishing agricultural nurseries in the Zone. This will contribute significantly to the production of plants suitable for the zone's environment and to increase the green spaces.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, in cooperation with the Environment Authority, has allocated one of these lands for establishing a nursery for propagating wild plants and will be managed by the Environment Authority.

This nursery will serve the initiative to plant 100,000 wild trees at Al Wusta Governorate and implement the national initiative to plant 10 million wild trees.

It is noteworthy that the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has assigned, in the first quarter of 2022, a project to design and implement the first phase of landscaping, agricultural works in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, with an estimated value of over OMR2.3 million.

Several locations

This project includes afforestation of several locations in the Zone and many other main and service streets.

In addition, the project will cover as well a number of parks with basic facilities, including green spaces, and other spaces for multi-use, including walkways and areas for public facilities and sports activities.

Hence, such spaces can accommodate different events and activities of social and cultural activities, while modern systems will be used to irrigate trees and plants.

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Oman, S. Korea can jointly work for a green hydrogen future: Korean envoy

The economic ties between the two countries have paved the way for a robust growth in clean energy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Having shared decades long, mutually beneficial relationships in the critical field of energy, the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Korea are now well-positioned to support each other in their joint transition to a greener, sustainable energy future, says South Korean Ambassador Kim Kiejoo.

Speaking exclusively to The Times of Oman, Ambassador Kim noted that burgeoning economic relations between the two countries, anchored by longstanding energy cooperation, have paved the way for a new phase of robust growth centring on clean energy, among other areas of mutual interest.

Ambassador Kim's comments came ahead of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries – a milestone that will be celebrated in 2024.

"I feel proud and privileged to witness the ever-growing partnership between Oman and Korea, which I now wish to take a higher plane going forward," he said. "It has been a long standing partnership, which started in 1974, the anniversary milestone of which will be celebrated next year. Our bilateral relationship is broad-

based and encompasses a variety of sectors and elements, first and foremost, being political relations, which are very strong."

Voicing his admiration for Oman as an ardent advocate of peace, Ambassador Kim added: "We appreciate the role of Oman in ensuring and contributing to higher levels of peace and stability in this region and beyond."

Korea, for its part, has also been a keen champion of peace, he stated. "Korea has been pursuing various initiatives at the international level to contribute to peace and security, as well as prosperity in the world."

Expanding economic relations

A standout feature of Oman-Korea bilateral ties has been the economic component, according to the official. Two-way trade climbed to US\$5.66 billion in value in 2022, with Korea ranked among the major trade partners of Oman. Significantly, trade is beneficial to both sides – a mutuality that is the hallmark of the relationship, he said.

LNG supplies from Oman LNG currently account for around 10 percent of Korea's annual consumption of this fuel, said Ambassador Kim, noting that Korean companies have been important off-takers of Oman LNG for around two decades.

Recalling this landmark relationship between Korea and Oman LNG, he explained. "We committed to the first ever offtake agreement of LNG from Oman LNG – a move that attracted a great deal of international exposure to the project, further helping with international assistance and financing facilities too. Thus, in everything that we did, we did it for the mutual benefit of our two countries."

Going forward, this relationship has the potential to evolve beyond conventional energy into the post-



hydrocarbon era into the realm of decarbonisation and the energy transition, said the Ambassador.

In particular, he voiced praise for Oman's Vision 2040 which, among other objectives, places a great deal of emphasis on the development of a green hydrogen industry to help Oman achieve its Net Zero goal by 2050. This commitment was strongly welcomed by international partners, including Korea, the Ambassador said.

"Korea is also committed to this same goal of achieving Net Zero by 2050. As we heavily depend on hydrocarbon energy sources to power our manufacturing-based economy, we are now moving towards an economy with a lower carbon footprint based on greener energy sources. We also have a priority to introduce hydrogen and other energy sources with minimal or zero carbon emissions."

He stressed in this regard the need for the two countries to "synergise our partnership to our mutual benefit in advancing this very important emerging sector", notably by capitalising on the strong commitment of the two countries' leaderships to forge a "future-oriented" partnership.

"Indeed, cooperation in the field of green hydrogen and the hydrogen economy in general are a very strong testament to this advancing partnership," he stated, recalling in this regard the hosting of a Korea-Oman Green Hydrogen Strategic Forum as part of the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman last December. That forum, the Ambassador said, reflected Korea's commitment to work in synergy with Oman's own energy transition.

Ambassador Kim underlined Korea's technological progress that could be suitably leveraged to support Oman on its energy transition journey. This could be

"We committed to the first ever offtake agreement of LNG from Oman LNG – a move that attracted a great deal of international exposure to the project, further helping with international assistance and financing facilities too"

Kim Kiejoo
South Korean Ambassador to Oman

rea is also keen to build on historical relations between the two countries dating back several centuries, said the Ambassador. Maritime trade between the two countries has been known to exist and could serve as a foundation for enhanced linkages between the two peoples, he said.

"Nowadays, we have an increasing level of people-to-people exchanges. Further, my government, like other countries, is sincerely pushing forward with public diplomacy notably by having cultural exchanges that can reinforce mutual understanding and affinity. Culturally, there is a lot of affinity and semblance between the two people."

Cultural ties are poised for a major boost as Oman prepares to host the highly anticipated Korean-boy band B.I.G (Boys In Groove) who are scheduled to perform in Muscat on 9th June 2023 at the Madinat Al Irfan Theatre at the OCEC (Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre).

Korean K-Pop music is hugely popular in Oman, particularly among young Omanis with Korean boy bands enjoying a large fan base here.

Helping strengthen cultural ties from the Korean side are various sporting activities as well as the traditional Korean martial art of Taekwondo, which is making steady inroads into Oman among fitness enthusiasts.

Ambassador Kim also underlined the potential for tourism to bolster cultural and people-to-people relations between the two countries. Oman, with its abundance of stunning cultural, historical and natural landmarks, has the potential to attract more Koreans once direct flights are introduced. Korea, for its part, has extended visa-free travel to Omanis looking to visit Korea for business or tourism, he added.

Foundation stone laid for OMR13mn Mahout Hospital



MAHOUT: The Minister of Health Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti laid the foundation stone for Mahout Hospital project in Al Wusta Governorate on Monday.

Sheikh Me'athad Mohammed Al Yaaqoubi, Governor of Al Wusta, Dr. Fatima Mohammed Al Ajmi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Health for Administrative, Financial, and Planning Affairs, Wali of Mahout and number of Shura Council members at the Governorate featured at the groundbreaking ceremony.

The ceremony included a presentation of the project's components and construction stages delivered by Eng. Jamal Salim Al Shanfari, MoH's Director General of Projects & Engineering Affairs. The 54 bed-hospital will be built in a construction area of 18,300 square metres, serving approximately 20,000 people in the Wilayat.

The hospital will include outpatient clinics, an accident and emergency department, an operating theatre, a delivery room, medical laboratories, pharmacy, and a radiology department, in addition to internal wards, central sterile supply unit, a neonatal intensive care unit, and a service building.

The hospital will be equipped with electrical and mechanical services, air-conditioning works and networking, along with all supporting services in accordance to latest systems and applicable standards.

The Ministry has announced last year the commencement of the construction works for this health project upon approval from the Tender Board with a total cost of OMR13 million. Construction works are ongoing and are expected to be completed at the end of 2025. -OMA

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Muscat Academies Youth League set to be launched in October

Organised by Muscat Football Academy in cooperation with Muscat Media Group, the league will be played at the lush green grounds of Cheltenham Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a pioneering initiative that is expected to bring hundreds of young footballers to a common ground and compete against each other over a period of six months in the Sultanate of Oman, a new football tournament named Muscat Academies Youth League (MAYL) was announced on Monday.

Organised by Muscat Football Academy in cooperation with Muscat Media Group, the league for age-group teams, will be played at the lush green grounds of Cheltenham Muscat. The league will begin in October 2023 and will continue till March 2024.

Providing the details, MFA owner Chuck Martini said: "We are delighted to announce the first of its kind league that will cater to the young footballers in Oman, who are learning their skills at different academies in the country.

"I have been associated with the development of grassroots football over the past decade and I realised that there were not many opportunities for the youngsters to compete against each other. Training is different and unless players experience the thrill of

playing a match, a lot remains to be desired. We do have few tournaments but to have a full league and have weekend matches was something Oman lacked."

Martini, a former Moroccan international, said that the inaugural edition of the league will feature five age-group leagues and also have a girls' league.

"We will have a league for under-9, under-11, under-13, under-15 and under-17 for the boys while the girls' league will feature an under-14 category. While the U9 league will be a seven-a-side format, leagues for U11, U13 and U15 will be eight-a-side and the U17 league will be played on a 10-a-side basis," Martini said.

Martini said that private football academies look for more support from the Oman Football Association (OFA) and revealed that the Muscat Academies Youth League will also be open to age-group teams from OFA-recognised clubs.

He said: "We have got a good response so far. We have around 16 private football academies and schools in operations in Oman. We are hopeful that the inaugural edition will feature at least eight

academies and around 400 kids across all categories. Our success in the opening season will certainly open doors for more academies to come on board as all youngsters wish to play matches and the joy of winning a match is priceless. Competitive games are a must to improve the players' skills and temperament and this is why we have come up with this project."

"I would like to thank Cheltenham Muscat for providing us with their excellent facilities and Muscat Media Group for supporting this league that is expected to bring some of the future stars of Oman," added Martini.

Graeme Fisher, director of Cheltenham Muscat said: "We are a new school in Oman, having launched our operations two years back. We have always believed in all-round development of children and sports activities are part and parcel of our curriculum. We are proud to be partners of Muscat Football Academy for the league, which will bring together kids from different schools and academies. It gives us a sense of community involvement and we are happy to be associated with it."

Sultan al Harassi, former national youth team player, who was also present on the occasion said, "There is a need for better coordination between private football academies and Oman Football Association. This initiative is praiseworthy as it will give a good platform for children to compete over months and help them gain exposure to play against different teams. I am looking forward to a successful inaugural league for the youths."



ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Environment Authority launches project to protect coral reefs in Musandam Governorate



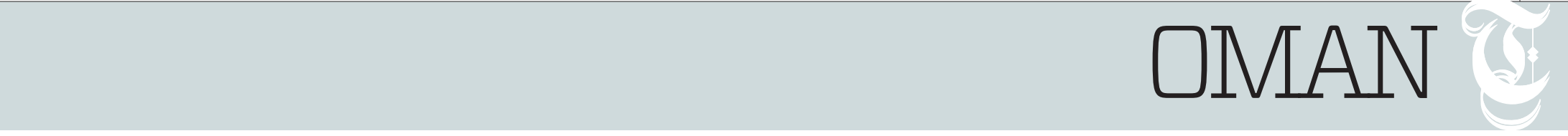
KHASAB: Acting in cooperation with some private sector companies, the Environment Authority launched a project to install artificial structures to attract and protect coral reefs in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate.

The project, carried out in conjunction with the Environment Department in Musandam Governorate, involves placing 500 environmentally friendly concrete blocks at a site that was previously determined by specialists from the environmental department in the governorate.

The project provides for initiatives to be implemented over a period of five years, with a plan to lower 250 concrete molds in the site this year and 250 concrete molds in 2024, to help attract, develop and protect the growth of coral reefs.

It also includes a field study of the site between 2025 and 2027 to follow up the rates of growth and survival of coral reefs on those structures. The study will assess the extent to which such projects are successful in protecting and sustaining marine resources.







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Oman, Saudi Arabia launch initiatives to boost tourism sector

Oman and Saudi Arabia are two important tourist destinations in the region due to their natural and cultural diversity



MUSCAT: Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, on Monday received Ahmed Aqeel Al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, it was agreed to launch joint tourism initiatives as a first stage covering the areas of promotion, market-

ing, tourism activation, tourism regulations, cooperation in the field of air connections and seasonal flights.

Tourism programmes
The two sides also agreed on implementing joint tourism programmes in the field of camping and adventure tourism, a calendar of joint tourism events and a programme to support small

and medium enterprises in the tourism sector.

Al Mahrouqi said that Oman and Saudi Arabia are two important tourist destinations in the region due to their natural and cultural diversity.

He stressed the need to consolidate integration and upgrade the capabilities of the two countries so that they could occupy a prominent place on the

map of global tourism.

Al Khateeb underscored the significance of optimising tourism relations between the two countries. He said that a framework was drawn out during the meeting to implement the MoU inked by the two countries on the sidelines of the World Travel and Tourism Council Global Summit, held in Riyadh.

FROM A1 Semiconductor chips

Farhat Jahangir, CEO of GSME Oman, said: “The registration of the first locally designed set of chips (Oman-1 and Oman-2) reflects a commitment from the company to promote technological growth and innovation in Oman by investing in the development of domestic talent and expertise. The overall objective is to lay strong grounds for the establishment of a trading centre for chip design and validation in Oman.”

Earlier, Oman Semiconductor and Electronics Company conducted a comprehensive chip design training programme that was attended by more than 90 engineers. The programme was

aimed at furnishing a stimulating environment for international and local companies to make Oman a regional home for their operations and services.

Semiconductors have certain electrical properties that enable them to serve as a cornerstone for making computers and other electronic devices. Semiconductors are also a means of controlling electrical current, car computers and aircrafts, among other equipment. The total global sales revenues of semiconductors and electronic chips in 2022 stood at \$601.7 billion approx worldwide, up by 1.1 percent, compared to 2021 revenues (\$595 billion). -ONA

MINISTRY OF LABOUR



Forum on innovation, future of government work kicks off

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour organised a conference titled “Innovation and the Future of Government Work”.

The two-day event seeks to establish a culture of innovation and promote its role in developing the work environment in government establishments.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr.

Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The conference offers an opportunity to discuss experiences, enhance the competitive status of the government sector and promote knowledge economies.

The conference also explores the future of government work in the context of artificial intelli-

gence, economic diversification, technology and its relation to economic growth.

The conference has several themes, including “Knowledge Economy and Sustainable Development” which deals with recent trends in building knowledge economy and the role of knowledge management in achieving sustainable development. -ONA

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

National Centre for IP system

MUSCAT: A workshop was held on Monday on a programme to boost the national intellectual property (IP) system and ongoing cooperation projects between the Sultanate of Oman and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

The two-day workshop comprises visual presentations and sessions on ongoing cooperation projects, notably those related to the specifying training materials in intellectual property, training diplomats and commerce officials, considering a master's programme in intellectual property and other areas of cooperation in higher education.



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TENDER NOTICE
Ref: ISB/Tender/2023-24 dated 05/06/2023

Bids are invited from interested parties for the following tenders:

Sl. No.	Name of Tender	Tender No.	Tender Documents available from	Tender Submission Date	Tender Document Fee. (R.O.)
01	AMC for Air Conditioners	A003/2023-24	06/06/2023	13/06/2023	Nil
02	Collection sewage water	A004/2023-24	06/06/2023	13/06/2023	Nil
03	Appointment of Cafeteria Contractor	A005/2023-24	06/06/2023	13/06/2023	Nil
04	Students and Staff Transport	A006/2023-24	06/06/2023	13/06/2023	Nil
05	Supply of School Uniforms	A007/2023-24	06/06/2023	13/06/2023	Nil

Tender documents can be collected from ISB office, till a day before the date of submission.

Enquiries and requests for clarifications regarding above Tenders shall be submitted through emails to PURCHASE@ISBOMAN.COM

Sealed tenders, inscribing the tender name and number only, on the envelope to be dropped in the tender box placed in ISB, on/before **01.00 PM** of the tender submission date; along with all necessary details and supporting documents. ISB reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Invitation to the Extra Ordinary General Meeting

The Board of Directors of HSBC Bank Oman SAOG (hereinafter referred to as the “Bank”) is pleased to invite the shareholders of the Bank to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting (“EGM”), to be held at 3:00 pm on Tuesday, 20 June 2023 at the HSBC Annex Building in Al Khuwair and via the electronic platform for convening general meetings which can be accessed via the Muscat Clearing and Depository website (www.mcd.gov.om) (the MCD Portal). In the event the legal quorum is not met at such time on such date, a second EGM will be held at 3:00 pm on Thursday, 22 June 2023 at the same location and via the MCD Portal to consider the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the dissolution of the Bank and the proposed merger of the Bank with Sohar International Bank SAOG (“Sohar International”) through a merger by incorporation (the “Merger”) in accordance with Articles 33(1) and 35 of the Commercial Companies Law (Royal Decree 18/2019) (“CCL”) whereby the Bank will merge into Sohar International, with Sohar International as the surviving entity, pursuant to the terms and conditions set out in the Explanatory Note.
- To authorise the Board to do all such acts, deeds, matters and things, which are necessary in order to complete and give full effect to the Merger, including but not limited to signing all documents relating to the Merger, filing and registering all documents relating to the Merger with any relevant authorities and making any public announcements.

In accordance with the Bank's Articles of Association and the controls for Convening General Meetings of Public Joint Stock Companies using modern technology issued by the Capital Market Authority, we would like to draw to your attention the following:

- Juristic persons shall have the right to appoint a proxy to attend General Meetings and vote on their behalf via electronic means, subject to the proxy holder having an investor number issued by the MCDC.
- Voting on agenda items shall begin three (3) days prior to the date of the EGM and shall continue until the end of the voting process on the day of the EGM. If a shareholder's shares in the Bank change either by increase or decrease, the voting process (relative to such shareholder) shall stand canceled, and the shareholder must vote again at the EGM. .

For more information, please contact Ms. Rahma Al Busaidy, the Bank's Secretary, telephone number +968 9224 7271 or rahma.e.albusaidy@hsbc.com.

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India investigates rail disaster, train service resumes

Railway officials and witnesses gathered to submit evidence to a two-day inquiry, led by a local rail safety commissioner

BALASORE: Trains are once again running at the site of Friday's deadly rail crash near Balasore in the state of Odisha in India, officials said on Monday.

The incident was India's most devastating train accident in decades and led to the loss of nearly 300 lives while leaving hundreds injured.

Authorities launched an official investigation into the incident on Monday.

An issue with the electronic signalling system led a train to wrongly change tracks, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said.

"Who has done it and what is the reason will come out of an investigation," he said in an interview with New Delhi Television network.

Two-day inquiry

Railway officials and witnesses gathered to submit evidence to a two-day inquiry, led by a local rail safety commissioner in Kharagpur in the state of West Bengal, 120 km from the crash site.

"Several officials and witnesses have joined the inquiry. The inquiry is underway," a senior railway official told Reuters news agency,



as documents were checked and submitted for examination.

But India's Railway Board, the top executive body, has recommended that the Central Bureau of Investigation take over the investigation.

Services resume after crash

There are concerns that the number of fatalities may increase as medical facilities struggle to cope with the influx of patients, many of whom are in critical condition.

Vaishnaw told reporters, "We have to move towards normalisation... Our responsibility is not over yet."

Green netting has been put up on both sides of the tracks, concealing the wreckage of the crushed carriages, which had been pushed down the embankment.

It remains unclear whether all the tracks have been completely repaired, as trains on Monday were limited to using only one side of the lines. — DW

NDRF teams working at accident site withdrawn

BALASORE: The Inspector General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Narendra Singh Bundela on Monday announced the withdrawal of all nine teams of NDRF deployed for rescue operation in Odisha's Balasore after the triple-train accident.

"Train movement on main lines has been restored, and things are back to normalcy after the full operation. All 9 teams of NDRF who were working in Odisha's Balasore have been withdrawn," Narendra Singh Bundela told

ANI. He said that they went through a lot of challenges as the crash involved three trains with multiple coaches.

Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday waved at the crew of a goods train and prayed for a safe journey, as services on the tracks that were affected resumed in the accident resumed after 51 hours of massive rescue and restoration exercise.

On Sunday, Vaishnaw said the accident occurred due to a "change in electronic interlocking". — ANI



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Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
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IATA REPORT

Unruly air passenger behaviour rose in 2022

ISTANBUL: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released a new analysis showing an increase in reported unruly passenger incidents in 2022 as compared to the previous year.

IATA called for more states to take the necessary authority to prosecute passengers under Montreal Protocol 2014 (MP14). The latest figures show that there was one unruly incident reported for every 568 flights in 2022, up from one per 835 flights in 2021. The most common categorisations of incidents in 2022 were non-compliance, verbal abuse and intoxication. Physical abuse incidents remain very rare, but these had an alarming increase of 61 per cent over 2021, occurring once every 17,200 flights.

"The increasing trend of unruly passenger incidents is worrying. Passengers and crew are entitled to a safe and hassle-free experience on board. For that, passengers must comply with crew instructions. While our professional crews are well-trained to manage unruly passenger scenarios, it is unacceptable that rules in place for everyone's safety are disobeyed by a small but persistent minority of passengers. There is no excuse for not following the crew's instructions," said Conrad Clifford, IATA's Deputy Director General said on Sunday.

Although non-compliance



incidents initially fell after the mask mandates were removed on most flights, the frequency began to rise again throughout 2022 and ended the year some 37 per cent up in 2021. The most common examples of non-compliance were smoking of cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vapes and puff devices in the cabin or lavatories.

Failure to fasten seatbelts when instructed, exceeding the carry-on baggage allowance or failing to store baggage when required, consuming own alcohol on board and the Two-pillar strategy are some examples of unruly behaviour of the passengers. A two-pillar strategy is in place for the needed zero-tolerance approach to unruly behaviour. A possible solution is for the governments to have the necessary legal authority to prosecute unruly passengers, regardless of their state of origin and to have a range of enforcement measures that reflect the severity of the incident. Such powers exist in the Montreal Protocol 2014 (MP14), and IATA is urging all states to ratify this as soon as possible.

— ANI





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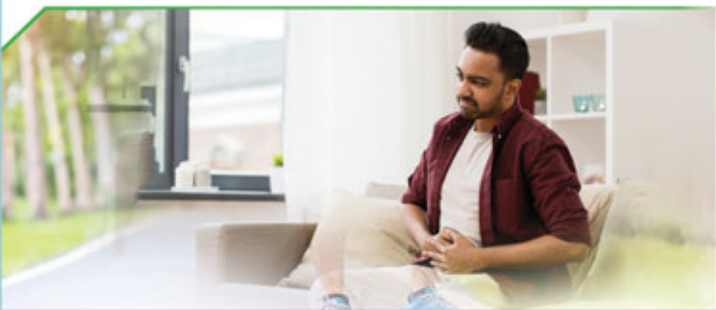




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MOH No. 580/22

Little optimism ahead of climate change talks in Bonn this week

The little-known talks, which take place each year ahead of the United Nations landmark COP climate summits, lay the groundwork for humanity’s response to global warming

BONN: Diplomats from around the globe will meet in the German city of Bonn this week to hash out plans that are key to global efforts to stop the planet heating and adapt to violent weather.

The little-known talks, which take place each year ahead of the United Nations landmark COP climate summits, lay the groundwork for humanity’s response to global warming. Negotiators from across the world will agree on technical details about how to cut pollution, protect people from a hotter and more hostile environment, and move money to pay for it. It will clear the way for bigger political fights at the COP28 conference in the United Arab Emirates in November.

The meeting in Bonn gives officials a space both to talk about the outcome of the climate summit and figure out what is and what’s not working in their climate policy, said Alex Scott, a diplomacy expert at the climate think tank E3G in London. “The thing that’s different about Bonn is that the politicians aren’t there — or very few of them are.”



Paying for climate damage, cutting fossil fuel pollution

The Bonn conference is the first time climate diplomats will have come together since COP27 — a tense summit in Egypt last year where world leaders agreed to set up a fund to pay poor countries for some of the damage wrought by extreme weather. The last-minute deal was a landmark step in rich countries taking responsibility for their carbon pollution.

But many countries were left frustrated by the weak decisions on climate mitigation — actions to cut planet-heating emissions — that came out of the summit.

“We got agreement on the new fund,” said Marjo Nummelin, Finland’s lead climate negotiator. “But we really do think that that we cannot have another COP where there is no real progress on the mitigation agenda.”

Even the fund’s future is uncertain. Before any money changes hands, countries will have to agree

who will pay, who will get money, how much will be sent, and under which circumstances. Some of the work for that will start in Bonn, but the political arguments will be left until later this year.

“My expectation out of Bonn is that at least we are going to have an informal note,” said Juan Carlos Monterrey, a former chief climate negotiator for Panama who now works for Geoversity, an educational charity trying to save wildlife. “And an informal note is literally — as it sounds — just a note with no standing that collects the vision, the positions of the different parties and groups.”

For some countries on the frontlines of climate change, battling scorching heat waves and watching homes wash away as sea levels rise, fixing those issues on paper is no guarantee of cash.

Rich countries broke a promise made in 2009 to get poor ones \$100 billion a year in grants and loans by 2020. Unlike the new fund, which will help countries recover from bad weather, this money was supposed to help them cut carbon pollution and adapt to bad weather.

Some analysts expect they will hit the target in 2023, three years later than planned, though data to check this will only be available in the following years. In any case, scientists say, the money promised was never enough to begin with.

Negotiators in Bonn will discuss a new climate finance target for after 2025.

Rising emissions a ‘death sentence’

The UN will also check progress toward climate goals during the conference. Its global stocktake, a two-year review of humanity’s response to climate change, will move into its final phase in Bonn this month before being published ahead of COP28 in November.

The review will draw on previous research that has found countries are spewing too much planet-heating gas for world leaders to honor their climate promises and spending too little money to keep their citizens safe from extreme weather.

“There has to come a point where we reduce emissions, because otherwise for countries like us it’s really a death sentence,” said Khadeeja Naseem, climate minister for the Maldives, an island nation in the Indian Ocean.

“That’s just not for the dramatic value,” she added. “The Maldives is just a meter above sea level and all of its critical infrastructure is just 100 meters from the shore. We have increasing erosion. Tidal swells in most homes. And we’re a geographically dispersed island nation. There is a lot at stake here.”

In a bid to stop heat waves getting hotter and coastal floods stronger, world leaders promised in 2015 to try to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7°F) above pre-industrial temperatures by the end of the century. But their current policies are

set to nearly double that.

To meet their targets, scientists say, world leaders must immediately burn less coal, oil and gas — and make deep and rapid cuts to emissions in all sectors. Governments will put forward new and more ambitious action plans at the COP30 conference in 2025, which will take place in the city of Belem near the Amazon rainforest, according to a recent announcement by the Brazilian government.

“For us, it’s absolutely critical that there is an international enabling environment that will guide parties to put on the table the most ambitious action,” said a Brazilian climate negotiator who agreed to speak to DW under the condition of anonymity. If the gaps in ambition aren’t closed by then, and not implemented during this critical decade, “it means that we lost the fight for 1.5 C.”

Oil and gas lobbying

The COP28 climate summit has been criticized because its president, Sultan Al Jaber, is the CEO of UAE oil company ADNOC. In an open letter published in May, 130 lawmakers from the EU and US called for his removal.

“With that appointment, you are just sending the message that the oil industry is in charge,” said Monterrey, the former negotiator from Panama. “We are at a higher risk than before of making this process obsolete, because when people see this, what they think is that it’s a joke.”

Still, some delegates are cautiously optimistic. The UAE plans to increase oil production but has also invested heavily in clean technology.

“They’re in a unique position to also push the positives,” said Naseem, the negotiator from the Maldives. “I really hope the UAE can play a critical role in pushing for the kinds of transition — and renewable energies and technologies — that can help countries like us to exist longer.” — **DW**

INVESTIGATION ONGOING

80 girls hospitalised after being poisoned in Afghanistan schools

KABUL: An education official in Afghanistan said almost 80 girls were hospitalised after being poisoned at schools, according to media reports.

According to reports, the incidents happened over Saturday and Sunday in the province of Sar-e-Pul in the north. Mohammad Rahmani, the director of the provincial department of education, said the poisoning had occurred in the Sangcharak district among female pupils in grades 1 through 6.

He said that 60 children at Naswan-e-Kabod Aab School and 17 more at Naswan-e-Faizabad School had been poisoned.

“Both primary schools are near to each other and were targeted one after the other,” he said, adding, “We shifted the students to the hospital and now they are all fine.”

The department’s investigation is ongoing and initial inquiries show that someone with a grudge paid a third party to carry out the attacks, Rahmani said, without sharing further details.

Nature of their injuries

He gave no information on how the girls were poisoned or the nature of their injuries, according to reports.



Girls are banned from education beyond sixth grade, including university, and women are barred from most jobs and public spaces.

The attack serves as a reminder of a wave of poisonings in neighbouring Iran targeting school-age girls, dating back to November. Thousands of students said they were sickened by noxious fumes in the incidents.

But there has been no word on who might be behind the incidents or what -- if any, chemicals have been used. — **ANI**

OPERATIONAL COOPERATION

US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin arrives in Delhi to strengthen partnership with India

NEW DELHI: US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin arrived in India from Singapore on Sunday to further strengthen the defence partnership between the two nations.

Upon his arrival, US Ambassador to India, Eric Garcetti, received the Pentagon Chief who kickstarted the third leg of his four-nation tour. Taking to Twitter, the US Defence Secretary wrote, “I’m returning to India to meet with key leaders for discussions about strengthening our Major Defence Partnership.”

“Together, we’re advancing a shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific,” he added.

Austin’s New Delhi visit will prominently focus on advancing India-US new defence innovation and industrial cooperation initiatives and continuing with the efforts to expand operational cooperation between the US and Indian militaries.

The Pentagon, while elaborating on the details of the Defence Secretary’s visit, said, “After Singapore, Secretary Austin will visit New Delhi to meet with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and other leaders as the United States and India continue to modernise the US-India Major: Defense Partnership.

“This visit provides an oppor-



tunity to accelerate new defence innovation and industrial cooperation initiatives and drive ongoing efforts to expand operational cooperation between the US and Indian militaries,” the statement added.

During his New Delhi visit, Austin is set to meet Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with an aim to expand the defence-industrial partnership.

The visit holds particular significance considering Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s upcoming state visit to the White

House in June. Austin attended the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore and his first stop was in Tokyo where he met with Japanese Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada and other senior leaders and visited US troops stationed in Japan.

Later, from Japan, he flew to Singapore, where he addressed plenary remarks at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) 20th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore.

During his stay in Singapore, he also held key bilateral meetings to

advance US partnerships across the region.

After New Delhi, the US Defence Secretary will embark on a visit to France.

Also just before PM Modi’s visit to the US, a powerful Congressional Committee has recommended strengthening NATO Plus by including India. This step is a move to deter China.

The suggestion of including India in the five-member grouping has been made by the committee to win the “strategic competition with the Chinese Communist Party.”

Presently, NATO Plus 5 is a security arrangement that works towards boosting global defence cooperation and comprises NATO and five aligned countries, Australia, Japan, Israel, New Zealand and South Korea.

India getting included in NATO Plus would mean the facilitation of seamless intelligence sharing between these nations and India and access to the latest military technology with a minimal time lag, reported NewsonAir.

Secretary Austin will conclude his four-nation trip in France and will take part in events commemorating the 79th anniversary of D-Day and meet with French and United Kingdom defence leaders. — **ANI**

SPORTS



Jabeur powers into quarters

World No. 1 Alcaraz sets up last-eight clash with Tsitsipas at the French Open

PARIS: Tunisia's Ons Jabeur moved into the quarter-finals of the French Open for the first time with a 6-3 6-1 victory over American Bernarda Pera on Monday. Jabeur played in the Wimbledon and US Open finals in 2022 but lost in the first round at Roland Garros last year. She has now reached the quarter-finals in all four Grand Slam events. Seventh seed Jabeur, 28, will meet Brazilian 14th seed Beatriz Haddad Maia in the last eight after she eliminated Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo. World No.36 Pera, also 28 and playing in her first Grand Slam last-16 match, struggled on Court Philippe Chatrier and did not hold serve at all. Jabeur was not at her fluent best and was herself broken three times in the first set and at the start of the second set, but she raced through the final six games, sealing victory in 63 minutes.



"I wouldn't say it was easy, it was very tough and I'm so happy. It took me three times to get to the quarter-finals and I'm very happy to make my best result here at the French Open," Jabeur told Eurosport. "Hopefully I can continue playing well and we will see what happens." Haddad Maia, 27, came back from a set down to win 6-7 (3-7) 6-3 7-5 in an epic encounter which

lasted three hours and 51 minutes - the longest match on the WTA Tour in 2023. Sorribes Tormo, ranked 132nd in the world, had gained a walkover win in the third round when Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina had to withdraw because of illness. Earlier on Sunday night, world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz of Spain cruised past 17th seed Lorenzo

Musetti 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 to set up a quarter-final clash against fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece. The US Open champion extended his Grand Slam winning streak to 11 matches, having missed the Australian Open earlier in January due to injury. Musetti had defeated Alcaraz on clay in their only previous face-off, in the Hamburg final last July. The

Spaniard had his sweet revenge this time, rallying from an early break in the opening set to claim 18 of the next 23 games for the victory. "I think I played such a great level," said Alcaraz on court. "A really high quality of shots, playing really aggressively. I think I played a really complete match." Tsitsipas, the runner-up in 2021, beat Austrian qualifier Sebastian Ofner 7-5, 6-3, 6-0 to return to the quarterfinal of the clay-court major after a fourth-round exit last year. "Today's performance was good, actually. I'm not really sure how the first game was, because I didn't feel that great coming from my end. But I picked up fast. "I kept the focus locked in. I felt like I read his game at some point. I felt like I was getting into the match stronger and stronger. More games and more opportunities I got to kind of hit balls and stay in rallies and read rallies. I got a sense of how I can win more points against him. It helped a lot," Tsitsipas said later. "I need to play good tennis. Carlos [Alcaraz] is someone that keeps the intensity high at all times. He's someone that is not going to give you gaps where his attention is not there. He's very energetic, and you can see that on the court. He adds a lot of that into the

rallies, into his rituals when he is out there playing the game," added Tsitsipas. Former women's world No.3 Elina Svitolina of Ukraine advanced to the quarter-finals in her first Grand Slam since becoming a mother, ousting Russian ninth seed Daria Kasatina 6-4, 7-6. "I don't have the pressure I used to have," the 28-year-old said. "Of course, personally I put kind of pressure on myself because I want to win a Grand Slam. This is the ultimate goal for me. "But definitely not the pressure from outside. I feel almost like I'm 17 again coming on the tour fresh." Next for Svitolina is second seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus, who defeated former US Open champion Sloane Stephens of the United States 7-6, 6-4 to progress. "It's a good match to play on the clay court. It's good preparation. If you can get through this match, you can get through whatever happens to you, you know. Like, it was a really tough, tough match," Sabalenka said after her win. Talking about her quarter-final opponent, Sabalenka said,"[Svitolina is] playing really great tennis here in Paris, moving well. Another player [that's] gonna run a lot and put a lot of balls back, and I just have to be patient and wait for that perfect shot to finish the point." - Agencies

OC TENNEX CUP

Abu Hatim are champs



MUSCAT: Abu Hatim defeated defending champions Sarco in the final of the Oman Cricket (OC) Tennex Cup to bring the curtains down on the 2022-2023 domestic cricket season. The second edition of the 10-over-a-side tournament began on May 5 and the final was held on June 2. A total of 32 teams took part in the event. In the summit clash, Abu Hatim scored 120/7, thanks to Sagheer Mohammed's 61 off 20 balls, which included seven sixes and three fours. Pradeep Salian took three wickets for seven runs. Sarco were then restricted to 97/9 as Sachin Hegde picked three wickets for just nine runs. Imran Mohammed was the top

scorer with 29. Ihsanullah was named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament, having scored 159 in six innings. Later, Ishrath Habibulla, managing director, Majees Technical Services, who was the chief guest, gave away the awards. Earlier in the semi-finals, Sarco beat Muscat Super Kings and Abu Hatim defeated Deccan Champions B. Duleep Mendis, OC's chief development officer said: "It was a great tournament to conclude the domestic season. The final event was an attempt to connect cricketers who have not played or experienced the feeling of playing on turf and encourage them to participate in domestic cricket."

WTC FINAL

'Series win against Australia in 2021 is our biggest highlight in last few years'

LONDON: Ahead of the World Test Championship (WTC) final, which begins on Wednesday, Indian captain Rohit Sharma said that his team's series win against Australia in 2021 in their rival's home territory is the "biggest highlight" for the team in the last few years. "The biggest highlight for us in the last few years has been winning in Australia. After losing the first Test, the way we came back, it showed the depth and strength of our team. We were missing some senior players, there were injuries, but a lot of youngsters stepped up," the Indian skipper said at the event organised in London ahead of the WTC final. The India players, most of whom played the recently-concluded IPL will have to make the switch from the white Kookaburra to the red Dukes, but Rohit feels this challenge is no longer new to the modern-day player. Instead, the youngsters in the team should focus on the mental aspect, he said. "If you're going to play, this is something that you have to come up with mentally. You got to be adaptable, adjust whatever little tweak you need to do in your technique," he said. "But more than that, I think it's just talking to yourself and getting mentally ready. Lot of the other guys in the squad haven't done that because we've got a lot of new faces in the squad as well. "For me, it's just been really talking to myself, getting mentally ready, because that is something that a lot of us have been doing for many years." Rohit also spoke about the chal-



lenges batters face while playing in England. "England, in general, is pretty challenging conditions for the batters, but as long as you are prepared to have a good grind, you know, you can have some success as a batter," he said. "One thing I realised batting [in 2021] was you are never in actually because the weather keeps changing a lot. So you have to keep concentrating for longer periods of time and that is the challenge of this format. You know, you'll get that message or you can get that intuition when your time to take the bowler on and that is when you should be ready for it and more importantly, you need to be there." And if you maintain that focus, Rohit said it can be easy to make runs at The Oval. "As we know that this is probably one of the best batting wickets as well," he said. "You get value for your shots, the square boundaries are quite quick. So it's just about



giving yourself the best chance of having success, which is to concentrate for longer periods of time." **'Australian side not affected by poor record at The Oval'** Meanwhile, Australia skipper Pat Cummins admitted that his side is not affected in any way by their poor Test record at The Oval, where it has won only two Tests in the last fifty years. Out of their 38 matches at The Oval, Australia has won only seven, lost 17 and drawn 14. With a win percentage of 18.42, this is one of Australia's worst-performing venues across the world. In the last fifty years, they have won two (in 2001 and 2015). "Not really (if the poor record at The Oval bothers his team). Our playing group has not played a lot of those matches. Our side is experienced. We have played some Ashes matches here. Some of our guys have scored runs. It

has a similar pace, bounce to many Australian venues. We hope to get that same pace, bounce in the WTC final," said Cummins. Australia missed out on the final of the first WTC in 2021 due to a slow-over rate penalty, which saw their points being reduced. Cummins said that initially, it was not something much talked about in the group. "But when we saw the final (between India and New Zealand), we realised what we had missed. It has been a driving force for us during these last couple of years. We have played some really awesome cricket during this time," said the Aussie skipper. "At home, we have been formidable, except against India, who defeated us twice. We have a lot of experienced players, some players at the top of their game despite being at the twilight of their career. It is going to be interesting playing at a neutral venue," added Cummins. On the lack of cricket played before the WTC final as compared to India, whose players played a lot of IPL recently, Cummins said that from a bowlers' point of view, he would prefer to be "underdone" than "overdone", to stay fresh. "We have been having a great time training. The team is fresh and rejuvenated," added Cummins. Cummins said that Test cricket is the top format of the game and he loves it. "It drains you mentally and physically. It tests you in every aspect as a player. You have to pick yourself, dust everything off yourself more than any other format," added Cummins. - Agencies

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by August 2023 reaching \$76.51, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$3.25 from the price of Friday, which was \$73.26. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,654.80 points, down by 0.15 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.45% at 468.08 points. DIDIC, up 9.76 per cent, was the top gainer while, Muscat Gases, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser.

Pact inked to study development of green hydrogen network in Oman

OQGN and Hydrom signed a strategic memorandum of understanding to partner on the development study of green hydrogen common-use infrastructure

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), the sole transporter of natural gas in the Sultanate of Oman and owner of the natural gas transportation network, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom), to study the development of green hydrogen network infrastructure in the Sultanate.



This partnership establishes a strong collaboration and is the first step towards the development of an optimal, efficient, and cost-effective solution for green hydrogen transportation in Oman. OQGN will leverage its expertise and

capabilities to provide shared infrastructure plans allowing green hydrogen developers to capitalise on the substantial technical and economical synergies and benefits of a shared infrastructure. OQGN is well-placed to be at the centre of

the development of green hydrogen network initiatives.

The company will help explore the best options for the development and construction of green hydrogen pipeline network infrastructure to transport green hy-

drogen from Hydrom's Renewables and clean hydrogen blocks to the downstream plants at the special economic zones and ports, as well as linking the network across governorates and explore potential interconnection with neighbouring countries – as part of Hydrom's masterplan.

Further, the partnership will help to facilitate study outcomes, which will enable local company talents to develop optimal, efficient, and cost-effective solutions for green hydrogen transportation in Oman, advancing the green hydrogen economy and attracting international investments.

The agreement was formalised as part of OQGN's efforts to drive clean energy initiatives and is a direct reflection of OQGN's deep commitment to developing clean energy infrastructure, as well as an acknowledgement of OQGN's capabilities and expertise by key stakeholders in the hydrogen ecosystem.

Mansoor Ali Al-Abdali, Managing Director, OQGN, commented: "OQGN's core focus is on clean energy infrastructure. This MoU reflects both the importance of green hydrogen for the Sultanate of Oman and our intention to play a leading role in green hydrogen

transportation. We are delighted to be formalising our relationship with Hydrom, which has already achieved a great deal in its first year of existence."

Dr Firas Ali Al-Abduwani, Acting Managing Director at Hydrom, added: "The huge potential and rich natural resources for green hydrogen in Oman can only truly be captured through the development of robust and reliable infrastructure. We are therefore delighted to be signing this MoU with OQGN. We are confident there are many other similar opportunities that we are hoping to explore with other national and international infrastructure providers, which will benefit the green hydrogen developers by providing reliable cornerstones, supporting Hydrom's vision of creating a green hydrogen hub in the Sultanate of Oman."

It is worth mentioning that Hydrom was established in 2022 and is the entity orchestrating the national interest in green hydrogen, which includes operating a competitive auction process for lands to be allocated for green hydrogen projects and orchestrating and master planning the Common Use Infrastructure, which includes hydrogen networks.

FEES EXEMPTION FACILITY

Tender Board urges SMEs to register on electronic platform

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The General Secretariat of the Tender Board urged the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman to register on the electronic platform *Isnad* for managing government tenders and procurement of the state's administrative apparatus units.

This platform enhances the competitiveness and transparency in the awarding process, by issuing government tenders and procurement and monitoring the competing of the registered bidders in the platform following a systematic basis and a transparent process to ensure the right to compete for these tenders.

As support for the small and medium enterprises SMEs, which obtained the entrepreneurship card from the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, these enterprises were exempted from registration fees through the *Isnad* website for electronic tenders till August 22.

The registration in *Isnad* enables the private sector companies to increase their chances of obtaining tenders and procurement



in the government and private sectors, as well as to acquire technical and administrative experience in submitting bids for tenders and procurement through working with government entities and private sector companies.

Registering on this platform also provides chances for taking advantage of indirect business opportunities through companies that obtained contracts, in addition to benefiting from training and qualification opportunities in big companies.

MUSCAT AWARDS EXHIBITION

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will hold the Muscat Awards exhibition and forum on August 7 and 8.

The event, which will be held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), will focus on tourism investment opportunities, especially those in the fields of sport tourism and real estate in the Sultanate of Oman.

The exhibition aims to introduce investment opportunities and projects available in the Sultanate of Oman and present them to investors in the various tourism sectors, to attract more foreign investments in various tourism projects.

Sheikh Faisal bin Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said during the press conference with the participation of many media outlets: "Believing in the high care and interest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq - may God protect him - in the economy, invest-



ment and trade sector, and the trend to diversify and enhance the sources of economic diversification, and to exploit the position of the Sultanate of Oman and its natural components, the idea of announcing the Muscat Awards for investment opportunities in the tourism sector, which includes sports and real estate tourism, came up with the idea of announcing the Muscat Awards for investment opportunities in the tourism sector, which includes sports and

real estate tourism.

He explained that the forum is interested in presenting investment opportunities in sports tourism in terms of establishing medical cities, international sports events and tournaments in the Sultanate of Oman, and providing the necessary facilities for investors in the sports sector as they are partners in sports development, and this forum will focus on presenting investment opportunities in this vital sector

to establish international sports projects in the Sultanate of Oman, and it is expected the participation of more than 150 investors from inside and outside Oman.

He said, "The agenda of the exhibition and forum includes establishing an accompanying exhibition for companies specialised in the establishment of entertainment, sports and adventure tourism projects.

"The exhibition will include real estate and tourism development projects, in addition to the participation of international companies specialised in the management and operation of international tourist hotel facilities and resorts, and spaces will be allocated for small and medium companies specialised in the field of sports tourism and adventure tourism. The second day of the forum will be dedicated to holding bilateral meetings between investors and business owners, in addition to honouring the most prominent developers in the field of tourism and real estate projects during the forum."

IATA REPORT

Middle East carriers see significant rise in passenger load factor

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle East carriers return to profitability in 2022 was supported by a significant increase in the passenger load factor of almost 25 percentage points, outstripping the performance of the other regions, according to a new report.

"At the same time, Middle East carriers have been swiftly rebuilding their international networks and in March 2023, the region's international connectivity had returned to 98 per cent of its pre-COVID level," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in its new report.

It announced an expected strengthening of airline industry profitability in an upgrade of its outlook for 2023.

"Resilience is the story of the day and there are many good reasons for optimism. Achieving profitability at an industry level after the depths of the COVID-19 crisis opens up much potential for airlines to reward investors, fund sustainability, and invest in efficiencies to connect the world even more effectively. That's a big 'to do' list to achieve with just a 1.2% net profit margin. That's why we call



REPORT: Middle East carriers have been swiftly rebuilding their international networks and in March 2023, the region's international connectivity had returned to 98 per cent of its pre-COVID level.

- Photo used for illustrative purpose only

on governments to keep their focus on initiatives that will strengthen safe, sustainable, efficient, and profitable connectivity," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

"Priorities for 2023 include SAF production incentives to accelerate progress toward net zero carbon emissions, ensuring the integrity of CORSIA as the economic measure applied to international aviation, eliminating inefficient

cies in air traffic management and applying global standards consistently," he further added.

The improvement in industry financial performance in 2022 outpaced previous expectations. Net industry losses for 2022 are now estimated to be -\$3.6 billion, strengthening from the previously estimated -\$6.9 billion loss (December 2022). At the operating level, and notwithstanding the

wide variation in performance, the latest data point to the industry has returned to profit in 2022 on a pre-tax basis, the IATA report said.

Highlights of the report

Airline industry net profits are expected to reach \$9.8 billion in 2023 (1.2 per cent net profit margin) which is more than double the previous forecast of \$4.7 billion (December 2022).

Airline industry operating profits are expected to reach \$22.4 billion in 2023, much improved over the December forecast of a \$3.2 billion operating profit. It is also more than double the \$10.1 billion operating profit estimated for 2022. Some 4.35 billion people are expected to travel in 2023, which is closing in on the 4.54 billion who flew in 2019.

Cargo volumes are expected to be 57.8 million tonnes, which has slipped below the 61.5 million tonnes carried in 2019 with a sharp slowing of international trade volumes.

Total revenues are expected to grow 9.7 per cent year over year to \$803 billion. This is the first time that industry revenues will top the \$800 billion mark since 2019 (\$838 billion). Expense growth is expected to be contained to an 8.1 per cent annual increase.

"Airline financial performance in 2023 is beating expectations. Stronger profitability is supported by several positive developments. China lifted COVID-19 restrictions earlier in the year than anticipated. Cargo revenues remain above pre-pandemic levels even though volumes have not. And, on

the cost side, there is some relief. Jet fuel prices, although still high, have moderated over the first half of the year," said Willie Walsh.

The return to net profitability, even with a 1.2 net profit margin, is a major achievement. First, it was achieved at a time of significant economic uncertainties. And second, it follows the deepest losses in aviation's history (\$183.3 billion of net losses for 2020-2022 (inclusive) for an average net profit margin of -11.3 per cent over that period). It should be noted that the airline industry entered the COVID-19 crisis at the end of a historic profit streak that saw an average net profit margin of 4.2 per cent for the 2015-2019 period.

"Economic uncertainties have not dampened the desire to travel, even as ticket prices absorbed elevated fuel costs. After deep COVID-19 losses, even a net profit margin of 1.2% is something to celebrate! But with airlines just making \$2.25 per passenger on average, repairing damaged balance sheets and providing investors with sustainable returns on their capital will continue to be a challenge for many airlines," Walsh further added.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower



DIDIC, up 9.76 per cent, was the top gainer while, Muscat Gases, down 10 per cent, was the top loser in Monday's trading session

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,654.80 points, down by 0.15 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.45 per cent at 468.08 points. DIDIC, up 9.76 per cent, was the top gainer while, Muscat Gases, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 583 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.74 million, with more than 7.04 million shares changing hands. Out of 58 traded securities, 13 advanced, 22 declined, and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net buyers for OMR883,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR773,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR111,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,503.70 points, down 0.54 per cent. Prices of DIDIC, Takaful Oman, Ahli Bank, Al Madina Takaful, and Al Batinah Development Company were up by 9.76

per cent, 4.17 per cent, 2.78 per cent, 1.21 per cent, 1.02 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Taageer Finance, Global Financial Investments, and HSBC Bank Oman were up by 9.26 per cent, 9.24 per cent, 3.30 per cent, 1.61 per cent, 1.27 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,096.10 points, up 0.19 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Oman Cement, Jazeera Steel Products, and Raysut Cement were up by 8.00 per cent, 7.78 per cent, 0.71 per cent and 0.58 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Ceramics, Al Maha Ceramics, A'Saffa Foods, Voltamp Energy and Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 5.59 per cent, 2.86 per cent, 2.67 per cent, 2.02 per cent, 1.33 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.7 per cent before closing at 1,689.62 points. Prices of Ooredoo were up by 0.56 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Desalination, Oman National Engineering, Renaissance Services, OIFC and Sembcorp Salalah were up by 4.26 per cent, 3.64 per cent, 2.60 per cent, 2.06 per cent and 0.99 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,685.93	4,654.42	4,654.80	4,661.80	-7.00	-0.15
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,561.98	7,503.70	7,503.70	7,544.21	-40.51	-0.54
Industry Index	6,157.63	6,096.10	6,096.10	6,084.76	11.34	0.19
Services Index	1,705.83	1,672.33	1,689.62	1,701.49	-11.87	-0.70
MSX Shariah Index	471.35	468.08	468.08	470.18	-2.10	-0.45
MSX TR INDEX	6,160.60	6,119.17	6,119.65	6,128.88	-9.20	-0.15
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,237.56	8,174.07	8,174.07	8,218.20	-44.13	-0.54
SERVICES TR IDX	1,875.26	1,838.43	1,857.44	1,870.48	-13.05	-0.70
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,577.88	6,512.15	6,512.15	6,500.03	12.12	0.19

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
7,040,893	2,738,997	583	23,742,026,480	13	22	23	58

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JUNE 5

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PB	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000001749 OMAN CEMENT	340,304	121,766	39	0.352	0.360	0.352	0.360	0.334	0.026	7.784	0.360	0.360	0.364	0.100	119,114,176
OM0000004768 MADINA TAKAFUL	54,300	4,561	4	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.001	1.205	0.084	0.078	0.086	0.100	14,700,000
OM0000002176 JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	10,500	2,949	4	0.280	0.282	0.280	0.282	0.280	0.002	0.714	0.282	0.282	0.284	0.100	35,221,225
OM0000003868 OOREDOO	65,750	23,844	24	0.364	0.364	0.362	0.362	0.360	0.002	0.556	0.362	0.362	0.324	0.100	235,641,811
OM0000001533 OMNIVEST	77,051	28,486	15	0.372	0.372	0.368	0.370	0.370	0.000	0.000	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.100	247,285,208
OM0000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO.	103,800	7,874	9	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.000	0.000	0.076	0.074	0.076	0.100	9,262,500
OM0000002226 ALJAZEERA SERVICES	3,630	908	3	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250	0.250	0.252	0.100	15,301,068
OM0000002374 UNITED FINANCE	70	4	1	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.055	0.056	0.100	19,943,129
OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	871,669	232,971	56	0.266	0.268	0.266	0.266	0.266	0.000	0.000	0.266	0.266	0.240	0.100	1,996,701,618
OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	368,134	358,828	26	1.000	1.000	0.968	0.972	0.972	0.000	0.000	0.972	0.972	0.876	0.100	729,000,000
OM0000003398 SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	381,757	38,939	8	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.102	0.104	0.100	488,186,354
OM0000001485 NATIONAL BANK OMAN	85,707	23,841	17	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.272	-0.002	-0.735	0.270	0.270	0.245	0.100	439,003,516
OM0000001517 HSBC BANK OMAN	60,902	9,440	2	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.157	-0.002	-1.274	0.155	0.155	0.158	0.100	310,048,482
OM0000003125 GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	3,711	225	2	0.060	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.062	-0.001	-1.613	0.061	0.060	0.063	0.100	12,200,000
OM0000001535 OMAN INVESTMENT & FINANCE	122,000	11,677	21	0.097	0.097	0.095	0.095	0.097	-0.002	-2.062	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.100	23,640,750
OM0000003224 RENAISSANCE SERVICES	5,486	2,062	9	0.378	0.384	0.374	0.374	0.384	-0.010	-2.604	0.374	0.374	0.346	0.100	88,417,340
OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	4,775	1,624	10	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.350	-0.010	-2.857	0.340	0.320	0.350	0.100	18,700,000
OM0000001152 OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INV.	94,554	10,021	8	0.101	0.109	0.101	0.106	0.110	-0.004	-3.636	0.106	0.100	0.109	0.100	15,900,000
OM0000002168 AL ANWAR CERAMIC	7,000	1,890	2	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.286	-0.016	-5.594	0.270	0.262	0.270	0.100	59,400,000
Total	19	2,671,900	883,907	256											

Parallel Market

OM0000001509 DHOFAR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	1,940	349	1	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.164	0.016	9.756	0.180	0.000	0.180	0.100	73,664,337
OM0000001301 DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	20,600	1,549	6	0.081	0.081	0.075	0.081	0.075	0.006	8.000	0.081	0.000	0.081	0.100	6,548,850
OM0000004776 TAKAFUL OMAN	450	23	2	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.048	0.002	4.167	0.050	0.044	0.052	0.100	12,500,000
OM0000002200 AHLI BANK	405,100	73,928	14	0.180	0.185	0.180	0.185	0.180	0.005	2.778	0.185	0.183	0.185	0.100	360,686,631
OM0000007910 AMAN REAL ESTATE	1,000	94	1	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.093	0.001	1.075	0.094	0.093	0.095	0.100	18,800,000
OM0000002386 AL RATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INV.	200,000	19,790	15	0.098	0.099	0.098	0.099	0.098	0.001	1.020	0.099	0.096	0.100	0.100	2,970,000
OM0000001095 DHOFAR INSURANCE	37,566	7,513	3	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.198	0.002	1.010	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.100	21,832,973
OM0000001418 RAYSUT CEMENT	103,900	18,441	17	0.176	0.179	0.173	0.173	0.172	0.001	0.581	0.173	0.171	0.174	0.100	34,600,000
OM0000001020 OMAN CHROMITE	100	350	1	3.500	3.500	3.500	3.500	3.500	0.000	0.000	3.500	3.500	3.750	0.100	10,500,000
OM0000001186 NATIONAL BISCUIT INDUSTRIES LIMITED	130	502	1	3.860	3.860	3.860	3.860	3.860	0.000	0.000	3.860	3.860	3.860	1.000	3,860,000
OM0000001400 OMAN FLOUR MILLS	28,000	14,616	3	0.522	0.522	0.522	0.522	0.522	0.000	0.000	0.522	0.522	0.522	0.100	18,500,000
OM0000001426 OMAN REFRESHMENT	5,100	7,088	2	1.425	1.425	1.425	1.425	1.425	0.000	0.000	1.425	0.000	1.425	0.100	71,250,000
OM0000002028 GULF INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS	35,639	2,423	4	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.068	0.000	0.000	0.068	0.068	0.073	0.100	1,428,000
OM0000002275 SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,000	900	1	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.900	0.000	0.000	0.900	0.900	0.968	0.100	83,500,000
OM0000004925 ALBATINAH POWER	43,214	1,211	7	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.100	19,571,735
OM0000004983 AL SUWADI POWER	47,929	13,713	14	0.025	0.029	0.027	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.027	0.029	0.100	20,171,784
OM0000005963 PHOENIX POWER	46,419	3,035	11	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.100	97,964,268
OM0000007407 DHOFAR GENERATING	500	30	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	13,334,400
OM0000008934 ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	764,229	227,546	73	0.298	0.299	0.295	0.298	0.299	-0.001	-0.334	0.298	0.297	0.298	0.100	225,519,600
OM0000007811 MUSANDAM POWER	32,837	9,687	2	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.296	-0.001	-0.338	0.295	0.295	0.300	0.100	20,765,050
OM0000003521 GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	431,962	84,487	47	0.197	0.200	0.193	0.193	0.194	-0.001	-0.515	0.193	0.191	0.200	0.100	39,176,384
OM0000004735 SEMBICORP SALALAH	114,830	11,211	11	0.097	0.100	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	-0.994	0.100	0.094	0.100	0.100	25,457,450
OM0000004420 BANK NIZWA	73,280	6,978	21	0.096	0.096	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	-0.042	0.095	0.095	0.098	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	5,850	532	2	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.092	-0.001	-1.087	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.100	18,200,000
OM0000002387 DHOFAR STEEL PRODUCTS	300	67	1	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.223	0.000	0.000	0.223	0.220	0.220	0.100	10,200,770
OM0000003661 VOLTAMP ENERGY	3,236	314	5	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.099	-0.002	-2.020	0.097	0.097	0.100	0.100	7,896,067
OM0000002804 ASAFFA FOODS	6,750	1,981	2	0.294	0.294	0.292	0.292	0.300	-0.008	-2.667	0.292	0.276	0.300	0.100	35,040,000
OM0000003281 TAAGEER FINANCE	29,660	2,610	5	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.091	-0.003	-3.297	0.088	0.088	0.090	0.100	22,217,463
OM0000007084 MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	18,574	1,706	7	0.093	0.093	0.090	0.090	0.094	-0.004	-4.255	0.090	0.093	0.096	0.100	13,999,536
OM0000002077 AL OMANIA FINANCIAL SERVICES	224	24	1	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.119	-0.011	-8.244	0.108	0.108	0.130	0.100	33,228,636
OM0000001862 MALWA INVESTMENT HOLDING	142,000	7,048	10	0.051	0.051	0.049	0.054	0.054	-0.005	-9.249	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.100	4,165,000
OM0000001178 MUSCAT GASES	5,144	566	3	0.110	0.110	0.108	0.108	0.120	-0.012	-10.000	0.108	0.108	0.126	0.100	3,240,000
Total	32	3,037,449	520,491	294											

KASPERSKY REPORT

New mobile APT campaign targeting iOS devices detected

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Kaspersky researchers have uncovered an ongoing mobile Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) campaign targeting iOS devices with previously unknown malware. Dubbed as 'Operation Triangulation', the campaign distributes zero-click exploits via iMessage to run malware gaining complete control over the device and user data, with the final goal to hiddenly spy on users.

Kaspersky experts have uncovered a new mobile APT campaign while monitoring the network traffic of its corporate Wi-Fi network using the Kaspersky Unified Monitoring and Analysis Platform (KUMA). Upon further analysis, company researchers discovered the threat actor has been targeting iOS devices of dozens of company employees.

The investigation of the attack technique is still ongoing, but so far Kaspersky researchers were able to identify the general infection sequence. The victim received a message via iMessage with an at-



tachment containing a zero-click exploit. Without any further interaction, the message triggered a vulnerability that led to code execution for privilege escalation and provided full control over the infected device. Once the attacker successfully established its presence in the device, the message was automatically deleted.

Further, the spyware quietly

transmitted private information to remote servers: including microphone recordings, photos

MULTIVITAMIN IMPROVES MEMORY IN OLDER ADULTS: STUDY



A comprehensive study headed by experts at Columbia University and Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard found that taking a daily multivitamin pill helps reduce age-related memory deterioration.

"Cognitive ageing is a top health concern for older adults, and this study suggests that there may be a simple, inexpensive way to help older adults slow down memory decline," says study leader Adam M. Brickman, PhD, professor of neuropsychology at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons. Many older people take vitamins or dietary supplements under the assumption that they will help maintain general health. But studies that have tested whether they improve memory and brain function have been mixed, and very

few large-scale, randomised trials have been done.

STUDY METHODS

In the current study, more than 3,500 adults (mostly non-Hispanic white) over age 60 were randomly assigned to take a daily multivitamin supplement or placebo for three years.

At the end of each year, participants performed a series of online cognitive assessments at home designed to test memory function of the hippocampus, an area of the brain that is affected by normal ageing. The COSMOS-Web study is part of a large clinical trial led by Brigham & Women's Hospital and Harvard called the Cocoa Supplement and Multivitamin Outcomes Study (COSMOS).

By the end of the first year, memory improved for people

taking a daily multivitamin, compared with those taking a placebo. The researchers estimate the improvement, which was sustained over the three-year study period, was equivalent to about three years of age-related memory decline. The effect was more pronounced in participants with underlying cardiovascular disease.

The results of the new study are consistent with another recent COSMOS study of more than 2,200 older adults that found that taking a daily multivitamin improved overall cognition, memory recall, and attention, effects that were also more pronounced in those with underlying cardiovascular disease.

"There is evidence that people with cardiovascular disease may have lower micronutrient levels that multivitamins may correct, but we

don't really know right now why the effect is stronger in this group," says Brickman.

GOOD NUTRITION IMPORTANT FOR THE AGEING BRAIN

Though the researchers did not look at whether any specific component of the multivitamin supplement was linked to the improvement in memory, the findings support growing evidence that nutrition is important for optimizing brain health as we age.

"Our study shows that the ageing brain may be more sensitive to nutrition than we realised, though it may not be so important to find out which specific nutrient helps slow age-related cognitive decline," says Lok-Kin Yeung, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher in Columbia's Taub Institute for Research

on Alzheimer's Disease and the Aging Brain and first author of the study.

"The finding that a daily multivitamin improved memory in two separate cognition studies in the COSMOS randomized trial is remarkable, suggesting that multivitamin supplementation holds promise as a safe, accessible, and affordable approach to protecting cognitive health in older adults," says co-author JoAnn Manson, MD, chief of the Division of Preventive Medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"Supplementation of any kind shouldn't take the place of more holistic ways of getting the same micronutrients," adds Brickman. "Though multivitamins are generally safe, people should always consult a physician before taking them."

— ANI

SPORTS

Swedish great Ibrahimovic ends football career at the age of 41

AC Milan's striker announced his retirement, bringing an end to one of the modern era's most glittering careers

ROME: Emotions ran high at the San Siro on Sunday when Zlatan Ibrahimovic, also known as Ibra, announced his retirement from football at the age of 41 after AC Milan's final match of the 2022-2023 season bringing an end to one of the modern era's most glittering careers.

Before the kick-off of Sunday's game, the fans in the stands energetically chanted his name and displayed a banner reading "Goodbye," a sight that brought Ibra to tears.

The Swedish veteran player, whose previous teams include Malmo, Ajax, Juventus, Inter Milan, Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain, Manchester United and LA Galaxy, began his second spell at Milanello in January 2020, making substantial impacts both on and off the pitch.

However, injuries beset the striker and limited him to just four appearances this season, during which he mostly made cameo appearances and scored only one goal.

Ibra announced his decision during the post-game ceremony, saying: "It's time to say goodbye to football, but not to you. There are too many emotions for me, Forza Milan and goodbye."

"The first time I came here you gave me happiness, the second time you gave me love.

"You welcomed me with open arms, you made me feel at home, I will be a Milanista for the rest of my life."

Known as a consistent trophy collector, Ibra amassed 34 trophies over his 24-year profession-



al career. He made over 900 appearances at both the national and club levels and scored 511 goals and won 14 league titles in four countries. He was nominated for the Ballon d'Or 11 times in a career that began in the last century.

Ibrahimovic began his second spell with AC Milan in early 2020, having won the Scudetto with them in 2011, and helped them win the title again last season.

But he played only four times and started one match for the Serie A side this term - and scored one goal - following a series of injuries,

and his contract was set to expire this month.

The one major club trophy that eluded him was the Champions League, with his only European title coming with Manchester United in the shape of the 2017 Europa League.

The striker also retires as Sweden's all-time top scorer with 62 international goals in 122 matches.

He quit the national side after Euro 2016 but returned in 2021 for their unsuccessful World Cup qualifying campaign.

"I used to be scared when journal-

ists asked about my future, but now I can accept it, I'm ready," he told reporters after his announcement.

"I've been doing this all my life. Football made me a man. It allowed me to know people I otherwise would never have known. I've travelled the world thanks to football. It's all thanks to football."

The Swedish great was given a guard of honour by his AC Milan team-mates as he left the pitch.

Ibrahimovic started his professional career with hometown side Malmo FF in 1999 before

moving to Ajax in 2001 for a three-year spell in which he won three league titles.

A move to Italy followed in 2004 with Juventus, where he won two league titles, both of which were later stripped from the club as a result of the Calciopoli scandal.

However, the Swede won three more Serie A titles with his next club, Inter Milan, before a move to Barcelona in 2009.

Ibrahimovic spent only one season at the Catalan club, winning a La Liga title before being loaned to AC Milan, a move which was made

permanent in 2011. A year later, however, and Ibrahimovic was on the move again, signing for Paris St-Germain, where he scored 113 goals in 122 league appearances and won four Ligue 1 trophies.

In July 2016, he signed for Manchester United for a two-year spell with the Premier League club that saw him win the League Cup and the Europa League.

Ibrahimovic signed for MLS side LA Galaxy in 2018, spending two seasons in California before making his return to AC Milan. - Agencies

LA LIGA

Benzema marks his final Real Madrid appearance with a goal

MADRID: French striker Karim Benzema marked his final Real Madrid appearance with a goal as they drew 1-1 their last game of the La Liga season at home to Athletic Bilbao on Sunday.

The 35-year-old, second on the club's all-time record goal scoring list, slotted in from the penalty spot after Eder Militao was fouled in the box.

Real confirmed the end of Benzema's 14-year stay at the Bernabeu on Sunday, before a reported move to Saudi Arabia's Al Ittihad Club.

Sancet fired home after Thibaut Courtois had kept out his initial attempt, while the Belgium goalkeeper also saved a first-half penalty from Mikel Vesga following Toni Kroos' handball.

Benzema cut a largely peripheral figure throughout his final game, but his spot-kick - rolled into the middle of the goal - provided a fitting conclusion to a glittering career in Spain which included five Champions Leagues and four La Liga titles.



The France striker was replaced by Luka Modric in the 74th minute, leaving the field to a superb ovation from the home crowd. Marco Asensio, whose own eight-year spell with Real will come to an end this summer, received a similar reception when he

was taken off during stoppage time.

But there was no farewell appearance for former Chelsea forward Eden Hazard, who was an unused substitute prior to his departure on 30 June.

Real Madrid ended the season second in the table behind

champions Barcelona following Atletico Madrid's 2-2 draw away to Villarreal.

Elsewhere, Valladolid were relegated from La Liga to the Spanish second division, Liga Smart Bank, in a dramatic finale to the season.

Valladolid ended with a 0-0 draw at home against Getafe. Coupled with other results, this led to their relegation.

Elsewhere, Gabri Veiga likely made his final appearance for Celta memorable with a brace in their 2-1 win at home against Barcelona.

Cadiz secured safety after a 1-1 draw away to Elche and Betis and Valencia also drew 1-1. Two second-half goals from Ante Budimir secured Osasuna a spot in European football next season, with a 2-1 win at home against Girona.

Mallorca ended the season with a 3-0 home win against Rayo Vallecano. And, Real Sociedad capitalised on Sevilla's Europa League hangover to end the season with a 2-1 win. - Agencies

CRICKET

Litton to captain Bangladesh in Afghanistan Test



DHAKA: Litton Das will lead the Bangladesh side in the one-off Test against Afghanistan starting on June 14, *ESPNcricinfo* reported on Sunday. He took charge after Shakib Al Hasan's finger injury ruled him out for at least six weeks during the ODI series in Chelmsford last month. Litton will lead a 15-man squad that includes uncapped players Shahadat Hossain and Musfik Hasan.

The visitors are set to arrive on June 10. The home squad gathered for a training camp at the Shere Bangla National Stadium, the Test venue, on Sunday.

Taskin Ahmed, who was ruled out of the Ireland Test due to a side strain, comes back to the squad. Zakir Hasan also makes his return after missing the Ireland Test in April. He suffered a thumb injury after being picked in the ODI squad for the first time in March. His return means no place for Shadman Islam, while Shakib and Rejaur Rahman Raja are also out from the previous squad.

Shahadat was a member of the Bangladesh side that won the Un-

der-19 World Cup in 2020, after which he sparked in domestic competitions. A middle-order batter, he recently made two half-centuries in as many unofficial Tests against West Indies A.

Fast bowler Musfik burst onto the scene with a 25-wicket season, averaging 15.92, in the 2022-23 National Cricket League. He took 8 for 73 against Dhaka Division, only the third eight-wicket haul in domestic first-class cricket in Bangladesh. He bowled steadily against India A and West Indies A this season and was also part of a bowling group that Allan Donald worked with earlier this year.

Afghanistan will be in Bangladesh in two phases: the first involving the Test, the second involving three ODIs and two T20Is in July.

Bangladesh squad: Litton Das (capt), Tamim Iqbal, Zakir Hasan, Najmul Hossain Shanto, Mominul Haque, Mushfikur Rahim, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Khaled Ahmed, Ebadot Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Shahadat Hossain, Musfik Hasan. - Agencies

ENGLAND VS AUSTRALIA

England spinner Leach ruled out of Ashes series

LONDON: England spinner Jack Leach has been ruled out of the Ashes series after suffering from a low back stress fracture, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) announced on Sunday.

The 31-year-old Somerset slow-left-arm developed low back symptoms during England's Test victory over Ireland on Saturday. A stress fracture was discovered during a scan on Sunday in London, ruling him out of the upcoming Ashes Test series, which begins

on Friday, June 16 at Edgbaston.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan expressed his disappointment over Leach's omission from the Ashes series against Australia, saying that the "sport is cruel at times" and him not being in the squad is a big blow to England.

Leach has become a "pivotal figure" under the leadership of skipper Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum.

"Gutted for Jack leach .. Sport is cruel at times .. he has become

a pivotal figure for England under Ben & Baz .. !! This is a big blow to England's chances as Jack has become very good at holding an end whilst the seamers rotate & getting key wickets .. !! #Ashes," tweeted Vaughan.

England squad: Ben Stokes (c), Ollie Pope, Jonny Bairstow (wk), Joe Root, James Anderson, Stuart Broad, Harry Brook, Ben Duckett, Zak Crawley, Matthew Potts, Ollie Robinson, Dan Lawrence, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, Josh Tongue. - ANI



IN PICTURES



Parade takes place to celebrate 2023 Rose Festival in Bulgaria

Children in folk costumes are pictured during the Rose Festival parade in Kazanlak, Bulgaria. A parade took place during the 2023 Rose Festival. Kazanlak is known for its Rose Festival, which has been organised since 1903. [Xinhua](#)



Themed exhibition kicks off in Lebanon
A girl visits the exhibition 'Dark Light: Realism in the Age of Post-Truths' at the Aishti Foundation art museum in the suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon. [Xinhua](#)



Coastal view of Bridgetown in Barbados

This aerial picture shows a dock in Bridgetown, capital of Barbados. [Xinhua](#)



Workers pick strawberries at farm in Indonesia
Workers move boxes of strawberries at La Fresha Strawberry Farm in Lembang, West Java, Indonesia. [Xinhua](#)



1700-year-old statue of Pan uncovered in Türkiye's Istanbul
This undated photo provided by the Istanbul Municipality shows a newly discovered ancient statue of the Greek god Pan. An ancient statue of the Greek god Pan was discovered in urban Istanbul, the mayor of the mega Turkish city said. [Xinhua](#)



Vintage and antique car show held in Stockholm
Vintage and antique cars are seen at a parade in the Djurgården royal park in central Stockholm, capital of Sweden. The annual event, which features vintage and antique car parade and exhibition, attracted thousands of visitors. [Xinhua](#)

ROUND-UP

Meethaq continues supporting SMEs to strengthen national economy

As part of the importance given to the sector, Meethaq had earlier launched a dedicated desk for MSMEs and Corporates at Meethaq branches located in prominent business hubs including Al Khuwair, Al Khoudh, Salalah and the head office

MUSCAT: As the leading Islamic financial services provider in the Sultanate, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat continues to play an important role in supporting the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) sector, which has a huge potential for improving economic diversification and creating employment opportunities.

As part of the importance given to the sector, Meethaq had earlier launched a dedicated desk for MSMEs and Corporates at Meethaq branches located in prominent business hubs including Al Khuwair, Al Khoudh, Salalah and the head office.

Meethaq has managed to extend its support to its customers by offering a complete range of Sharia-compliant products and services available to them through its extended network of 26 Meethaq branches spread across the Sultanate.

Ali Ahmed Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager, Meethaq - Corporate Banking, spoke about the importance of the MSME sector for



the national economy and the prosperity of the community. "Meethaq's Sharia-compliant MSME solutions are designed to support our customers to grow their businesses by availing both funded and non-funded financing. Meethaq has also been playing a key role in the development of key sectors in the Sultanate including manufacturing, logistics, telecommunication, fisheries, mining and energy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our valued customers for the tremendous confidence they have placed in Meethaq, and promise to continue developing our products and services to serve them better, every day."

It may be noted that every Meethaq product goes through Shari'a compliance certification by the bank's Shari'a Supervisory Board and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman. The large suite of Islamic banking offerings includes project

financing, working capital facilities, trade financing, access to the largest Islamic banking branch network in the Sultanate and digital banking facilities. Other essential solutions offered by Meethaq include bank guarantees to third parties and Letters of Credit. The services also cover current accounts, deposits and call accounts and corporate purchase cards. All of these are designed following Islamic Sharia-compliant contracts such as Murabaha, Musharaka, Ijarah and Wakala amongst others.

Meethaq is continuously working on improving its services and supporting the MSME and corporate sectors in enhancing its competitiveness by providing a variety of banking facilities. Most importantly, banking support for the MSME sector is backed by an easy, convenient process and assistance from dedicated Relationship Managers.



Meethaq's Sharia-compliant MSME solutions are designed to support our customers to grow their businesses by availing both funded and non-funded financing. Meethaq has also been playing a key role in the development of key sectors in the Sultanate including manufacturing, logistics, telecommunication, fisheries, mining and energy

Ali Ahmed Al Lawati
Assistant General Manager, Meethaq - Corporate Banking

APPOINTMENT

Kempinski Hotel Muscat appoints Assistant Director of Marketing & eCommerce and Executive Pastry Chef

MUSCAT: Kempinski Hotel Muscat announced the appointment of Manal Al Omari as Assistant Director of Marketing & eCommerce and Mohamad Haidar as Executive Pastry Chef.

Manal brings with her more than 10 years of experience in e-commerce and marketing, having led the e-commerce and digital departments for leading hotel chains across several countries in the Middle East.

Manal joins Kempinski Hotel Muscat from her most recent role as Marketing Manager for the Burj Al Arab in Dubai where her mission was to develop and execute marketing campaigns to drive further business growth.

In her new role, Manal will use her relentless pursuit of best practices and her passion for improvement towards the continued success of the hotel where she will be entrusted with deploying innovative marketing campaigns and growing the revenue and market share from e-commerce activities.

Manal was recognised in Hotelier Middle East's inaugural 30 under 30 power list not only for her expertise but also for her work

ethic and commitment.

Mohamad brings with him more than 15 years of extensive pastry chef experience, having led the pastry kitchen team for leading hotels and restaurants across several countries in the Middle East & Europe.

Mohamad joins Kempinski Muscat from his most recent role as Head Pastry Chef for L'Oscar London, a luxury boutique hotel in London where his mission was to manage all aspects of the pastry and bakery sections, including menu development, team members training and ensuring compliance with food safety and quality standards.

In his new role, Mohamad will use his expertise and impressive background towards the continued success of the hotel where he will focus on bringing innovation and enrichment to the hotel pastry products and introduce a new diverse offering of sweets and craft pastry masterpieces.

Throughout his career, Mohamad has received numerous accolades for his pastry creations, including recognition in national and global pastry competitions such as Horeca and the World Chocolate Master Competition in Dubai.



Manal Al Omari joins Kempinski Muscat from her most recent role as Marketing Manager for the Burj Al Arab in Dubai where her mission was to develop and execute marketing campaigns to drive further business growth



Mohamad Haidar joins Kempinski Muscat from his most recent role as Head Pastry Chef for L'Oscar London, a luxury boutique hotel in London where his mission was to manage all aspects of the pastry and bakery sections



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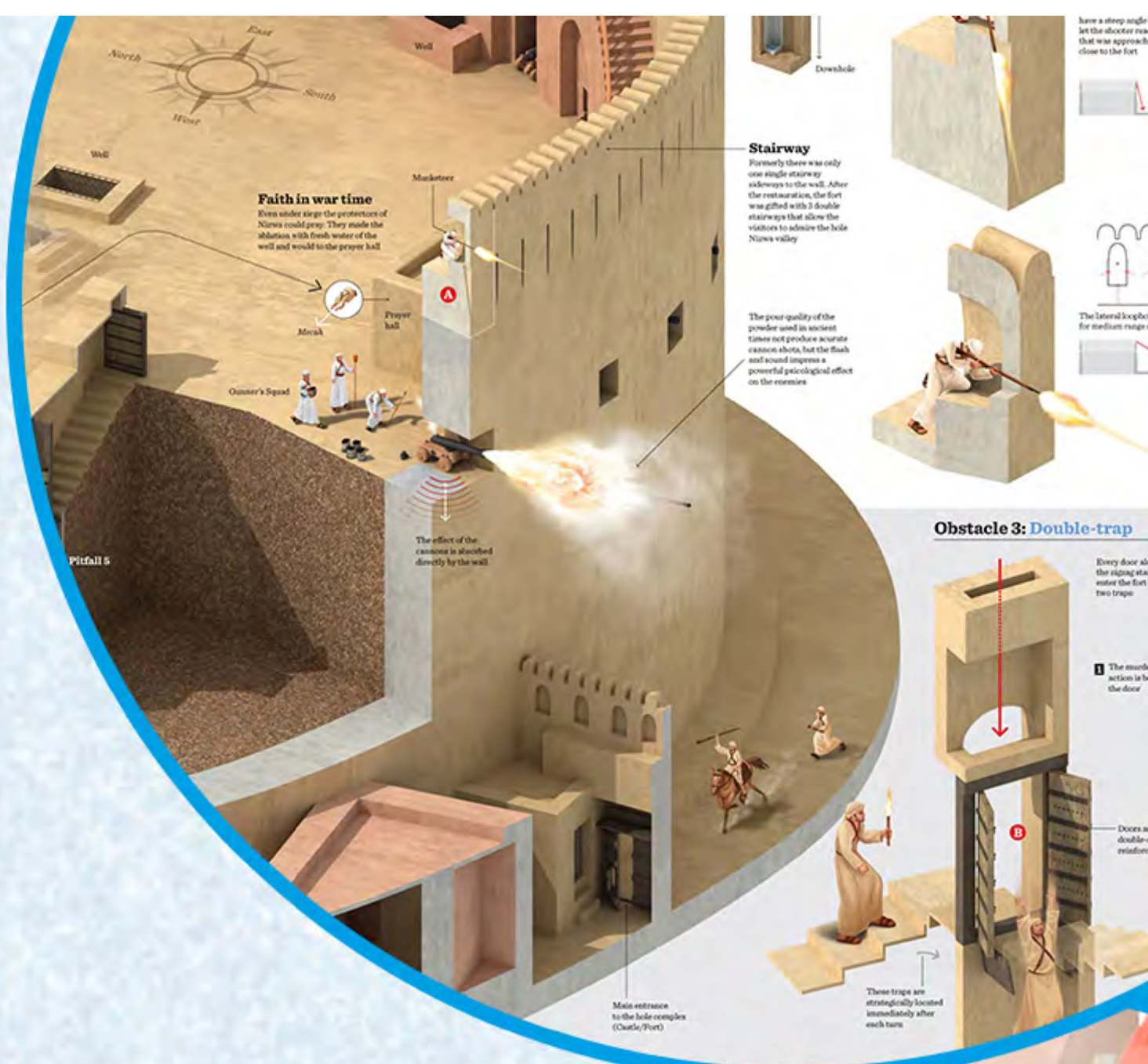
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