

NEW FUND TO TAKE CARE OF ALL SOCIAL PROTECTION INITIATIVES

The Social Protection Fund will be responsible for all societal protection initiatives and programmes in the Sultanate of Oman, said Dr. Saif bin Musabab Al-Mutairi, a member of the retirement and social protection restructuring project team. **>A3**



AL JABAL AL AKHDAR FARMERS READY TO HARVEST POMEGRANATES

Farmers in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah will begin harvesting pomegranate from August. This season is expected to witness abundant production of the pomegranate crop, due to rains and abundance of water. **>A4**



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CBO REPORT

Whopping 387,000 cheques bounced: CBO

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A total number of 387,000 unpaid cheques were reported in 2022, according to a Financial Stability Report of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

The CBO report said that the volume of unpaid cheques fell as compared to 2021 when there were 399,000 cases of dishonoured cheques.

With the rise of electronic payments, there is a notable decrease in the use of cheques for payments since 2018 - from about 4.7 million to 3.8 million in 2022, which indicates the transition from paper-based payments to digital payments.

The report said that “insufficient funds” were the major reason for unpaid cheques as 309,728 unpaid cheques fell under the category, accounting for 80.1 percent of all unpaid cheques. This was followed by “Account Closed/Frozen/Transferred” totalling 39,457 (10.1 percent).

In Oman, an unpaid cheque or bouncing a cheque is considered a serious offence and can lead to legal consequences, including fines and imprisonment.

The report added that some countries have initiated the implementation of partial fulfilment of cheques where it is possible to cash a cheque for an amount less than the full amount written on the cheque.

After the amendments introduced in some countries, banks are required to fulfil partial amounts of the cheque equal to the amount available in the drawer’s account, unless the cheque bearer rejects the option for partial payment.

MINISTRY TAKES MEASURES TO COMBAT HIDDEN TRADE

HIDDEN TRADE OCCURS

WHEN A COMPANY IS OWNED

ON PAPER BY AN OMANI

NATIONAL BUT, IN TRUTH, IS

RUN BY SOMEONE ELSE

The decision was issued after appeals from citizens calling for an end to this practice

MUSCAT: A Ministerial Decision No. 412/2023 has been issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in cooperation with government departments for combating illicit trade.

The decision, which seeks to address the economic and social impacts of illicit trade on business owners and society, was issued in response to appeals from citizens calling for an end to this negative practice that, they said, has damaged their interests for years.

It will be implemented after 90 days from the date of its publishing in the Official Gazette.

The decision reflects the ministry’s keenness to eliminate the negative effects of illicit trade on the national economy and local markets.

The rise in cases of commercial fraud impacted the labour market by introducing unfair competition with entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), besides facilitating tax evasion and avoidance of standard procedures.

The decision is a step forward in implementing the executive regulations of the Foreign Capital

Investment Law, furnishing an attractive investment environment and streamlining procedures for registering foreign firms, said the ministry.

The decision defines the conditions necessary for issuing approvals, permits and licenses related to investment projects.

Call to report cases

Through advertising, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion should encourage citizens and residents, and urge them to contribute to reducing cases of hidden trade and reporting them, and take measures it deems appropriate to implement the provisions of this article.

Hidden trade occurs when a company is owned on paper by an Omani national but, in truth, is run by someone else. Such a person does not create employment

sometimes for this company and instead tells them to go out and find their own jobs.

The decision indicated that the implementation of the provisions should be in accordance with the mechanism determined by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, taking into account the nature and size of each activity subject to the provisions of this decision, which indicated that every person who becomes aware of any person’s conduct of hidden trade must inform the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion of that immediately, with the evidence of the violations stipulated in this decision, including electronic evidence.

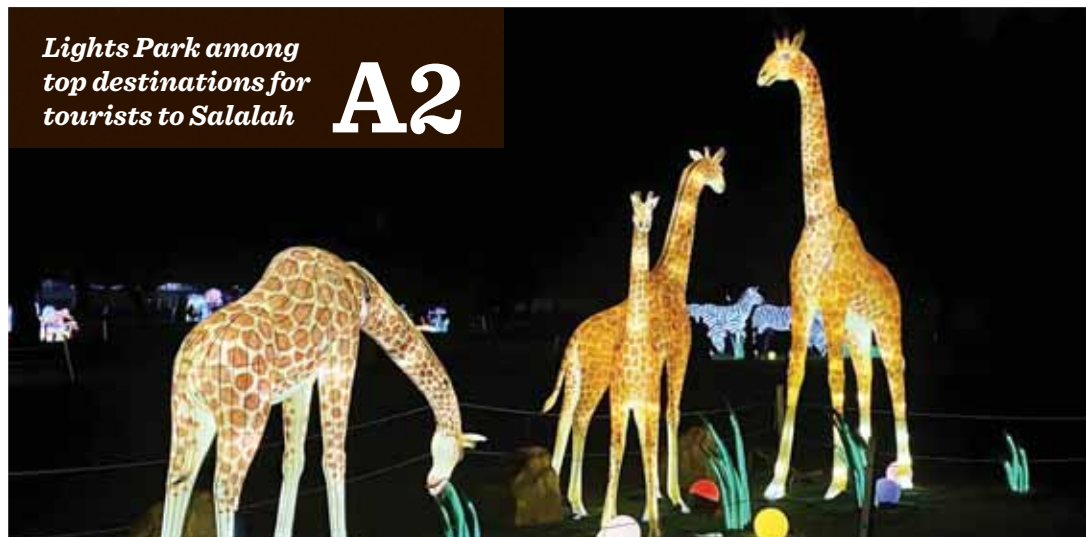
The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may also assign some of its specialised employees in the Ministry’s general office or directorates and departments affiliated to it to monitor establishments, to ensure the implementation of the provisions of this decision, and take necessary measures.

The decision to combat hidden trade confirmed that the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may impose one of the following penalties: Striking off the activity from the commercial register, or an administrative fine of OMR5,000, or an administrative fine of OMR10,000.

In the case of committing violation for the second time, with the activity suspended for a period of three months, or an administrative fine of OMR15,000 in the event of committing the violation for the third time, with the activity being struck off from the commercial register, and the activity may only be re-registered one year after the date of cancellation.

Lights Park among top destinations for tourists to Salalah

A2



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Agreements inked for vehicles’ purchase

1 Represented by the Directorate General of Government Procurement, the Secretariat General of the Tender Board on Sunday signed framework contracts for the purchase of government vehicles. The Tender Board also launched a system of managing orders to provide vehicle purchase services via Amana platform. **>A5**

WORLD US, Australia to work for Indo-Pacific peace

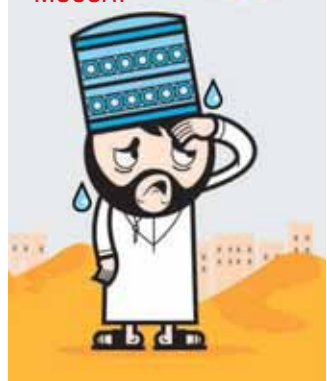
2 US and Australia on Saturday agreed to further cooperate with India, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea to ensure the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific at the 33rd Australia-US Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN). The officials from the two countries met in Brisbane to discuss the issue. **>A7**

MARKET Inflation in Oman up by 2.8% last year

3 The inflation rate in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 2.8 percent in 2022 as the Consumers Price Index (CPI) registered 109.7 points compared to 106.7 points in 2021, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The data indicated a rise in the prices of main groups in 2022 in varying rates. **>B1**

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MUSCAT



MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

New charitable organisations to help serve community

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development’s endeavour in the development of people’s welfare has been a continuous affair.

The ministry has been playing a pivotal role in providing guidance to several charity associations to help improve the overall well-being of citizens in the Sultanate of Oman. Be it taking care of people with disabilities or the care for the elderly and supporting the needy, the ministry has been committed to serve them.

On Sunday, Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, issued ministerial decisions announcing the setting up of four charitable organisations

to help serve the community in a much better way.

The four new organisations launched are Ishraqa Charity Foundation, Al Yusr Charitable Foundation, Al Roya Al Ejabya (Positive Vision) Association and Omani Design Association.

Financial support

Ishraqa Charity Foundation aims to provide financial support to needy for developing Omani society in areas of education, support for children with disabilities and geriatric care.

Al Yusr Charitable Foundation seeks to improve the living conditions of families in need of livelihood assistance.

Al Roya Al Ejabya focuses on



implementing public awareness programmes to lend support to segments that are prone to HIV infection or addiction to drugs and psychotropic substances.

Omani Design Association plans to develop frameworks, concepts and practices related to design as a sustainable industry.

It considers establishing links with all sectors and operators in the field.

The association envisages imparting knowledge and experience with government departments, private establishments and individuals, with a view to keeping pace with global developments in design thinking and related professional applications.

The ministry is responsible for enacting regulations and policies that regulate social life. It is also entitled to supply people in need, people with social insurance, elderly, widowed and divorced

with financial aids.

It also works hard to provide all services for the community according to what has been mentioned in the basic statute of the state: “The country is responsible for providing aids for citizens in case of emergencies, sickness and aging.”

The launch of the four new charity organisations is expected to serve society in a much better way.

One of the members of a leading charity organisations said: “This is a welcome step as more organisations means better care and service to the community and society in general. Charitable organisations are doing a great service when it comes to helping elderly, sick and needy people in Oman.”

ASSISTANT SECRETARY GENERAL

Minister of Interior meets GCC senior security official

MUSCAT: Sayyid Hamoud Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior received in his office on Sunday Brigadier Hamad Ajlan Al Amimi, Assistant Secretary General for Security Affairs of the GCC.

Al Amimi highlighted several topics related to joint GCC security action. He also addressed some aspects related to enhancing joint cooperation.

In his turn, Al Busaidi expressed his thanks to Al Amimi, wishing him success in carrying out his duties. **-ONA**



GCC CIVIL SERVICE AFFAIRS

Training programmes reviewed

SALALAH: The GCC Technical Committee for Civil Service and Human Resources Affairs is currently holding its second meeting of the year. Being held in Salalah Millilumen Resort, the two-day meeting discusses the decisions of

the of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee at its 117th meeting regarding the challenges facing the Gulf market.

The meeting also reviews the recommendations of the 26th meeting of the GCC Undersecre-

taries of Civil Service and Administrative Development Units, in addition to the initiative of joint training programmes among the GCC countries and unifying the purchase of licenses for human resources systems. **-ONA**

INVITATION TO TENDER

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Tender Title	: Digital Fault Recorder at smelter 220kV GIS		
Scope	: Sohar Aluminium Co. LLC (SA) manufactures and produces liquid and solid metals and requires a vendor for supplying, installation & commissioning of digital fault recorder at smelter 220kV GIS. The vendor who will be identified for this work shall be able to provide services on turnkey basis for the full scope of the project. Detailed specification and scope of work to be shared to vendors expressing their interest to participate in this tender.		
Document Issue Date	: 09 August 2023	Last Date For Applying	: 07 August 2023

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

COMMENTARY

The jungle we call malls



Saleh Al-Shaibany

While I was in a mood to watch people in a mall and it turned out that everyone in there acted like it was a huge jungle. So I sat in a coffee shop to amuse myself watching people acting in peculiar ways.

There was an old man chewing his own tongue as he was watching people walking past him. He was in a foul mood, if his creased up face was any indication. Perhaps he never wanted to be there but he had no choice after being dumped by his children.

I shifted my gaze elsewhere and saw a child crying quietly in a corner. I saw the mall security guard walking towards her. She was obviously lost and probably was thinking she would never see her parents again. As he was taking her away, a young woman weaved through the crowd to claim her daughter.

The old man was watching them and he smiled as mother and daughter were reunited. It was the case of the very young and the very old whose minders were careless enough to leave them alone. I thought if that old gentleman left his seat and wandered off, he might find it difficult to come back. The old timer looked with disapproval at the woman slapping her little girl. The mother was blaming herself for being negligent of her duties but she took it on her daughter.

It is amazing how they cramp



up these shopping malls with as many business outlets as possible. People who idle away the time on the coffee shops literally sat on the middle of the walkway. The car dealers use the place as extended showrooms to display their vehicles. The girls, with their painted faces, had their beauty product stalls right in the middle of the passageway. If a fire breaks out, how would anyone find the exits? As it is, there are not many of them. I guess in the age of consumerism, making as much money as possible in a congested place is everything. One wonders why the government regulators do not stop that. Perhaps they are waiting for a stampede with newspapers splashing charred bodies on the front pages for them to react. I also wonder how developers of these shopping malls managed to force a blind eye from regulators.

I might have been making my own inspection that evening as I walked past people who found it compulsory to be there. Also, I walked past traders who thought they needed to be there to make something for their businesses. I stopped and looked at a man tapping

his fingers impatiently on a counter while watching his wife try different fragrances of perfume. He was among those who did not really want to be in that jungle of people. I am not sure if he realized that, but his hand reached for his pocket and caressed his wallet. It was a subconscious reaction. He was going to part with cash that he would rather spend somewhere else.

A few paces away, an Asian labourer was standing on the ATM machine queue. He was turning his bank card as if he expected some answers from it. But the interesting thing was that, the two people who were standing either side of him were not impressed by his presence. They kept glancing at him as if a labourer had no right to stand with the serious money makers. But he kept his dignity and stood in the line. I saw him half an hour later standing outside smoking.

For me, I had enough of a jungle we call shopping malls. As I was trying to locate my car, people were still walking to the building the way ants would rush towards breadcrumbs. It is the law of the jungle and it is right in our cities.

KHAREEF TOURISM

Salalah's Lights Park among top destinations for tourists

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Lights Park event organised by the Dhofar Municipality at Salalah Public Park as part of the Dhofar Khareef season this year has become one of the attractive destinations for tourists.

Ahmed bin Awad Al Rawas from the Department of Events and Awareness in Dhofar Municipality said: "The illuminated garden includes models and shapes of animals and plants in artistic

design using three-dimensional techniques, while decorating them with lights to create a wonderful atmosphere."

Al Rawas added that the illuminated garden is characterised by fine details that reflect the beauty of animals and plants, and gives the place a wonderful and distinctive atmosphere through the use of sound effects and simulating animal sounds to look like real creatures."

This year's Khareef tourism season has witnessed the influx

of many visitors and tourists from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman. They are , arriving to enjoy the pleasant weather and stunning landscapes throughout the Dhofar Governorate.

Dhofar 2023 activities are distributed in different locations, including: Salalah Gardens, Awqad, and Al Saada, in addition to the activities of 'return of the past' in the Hafah area and Atin Square in the Atin Plain.

The events will continue until 31 August.



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New fund to take care of all social protection initiatives

Based on the current system no insured person will leave without a retirement pension, even if the period of service is interrupted to preserve people's rights through Articles 83 and 84

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Social Protection Fund will be responsible for all societal protection initiatives and programmes in the Sultanate of Oman, said Dr. Saif bin Musabih Al-Mutairi, a member of the retirement and social protection restructuring project team.

Speaking exclusively to *Times of Oman's* sisterly Radio channel Al Shabiba, he said that it is an administrative and financial independent entity established by Royal Decree No. (33/2021).

He clarified that the mission is to implement the provisions of the Social Protection Law and related legislation, and to cooperate with the authorities concerned for empowerment, integration, care and support to the deserving groups.

He added that this programme will continue to be supervised by the Ministry of Social Develop-



ment, while the Social Security Programme will be replaced by the currently administered Social Protection Fund.

He explained that based on the Social Protection Law, the legislation mentioned in Article 6 of the law will be implemented from the beginning of the law's issuance.

He stated that in all systems the period of service required for early voluntary retirement should be replaced by 30 years, with the exception of those who have completed 20 years of service on the date of issuance of the Social Protection Law, and thus the legislation of April 2021 decided the date of entry into force of the new retirement requirements.

Therefore, Article 6 of the Royal Decree on the Social Protection Law refutes articles to be implemented from the first day of the law's promulgation, he added.

He added that Articles 83 and 84 are also in effect from the first day of the law's promulgation, and they are concerned with rewards for loss of a retirement pension, meaning that the previous systems have certain retirement requirements that may remove a person from the retirement programme without obtaining a pension and be given a reward for losing the pension.

He explained that based on the current system no insured person will leave without a retirement pension, even if the period of service is interrupted to preserve people's rights through Articles 83 and 84, which stipulate that the interruption of the service period does not lead to the loss of the retirement pension, just as the systems do not require the payment of reward for the loss of the retirement pension.

He clarified that for example, if a person appointed in the civil service sector or any other fund at the age of 51 years completes his service period till the age of 60 years, he has only 9 years of service. According to the previous system, the person is not entitled to a retirement pension despite reaching the normal retirement age, and is paid a reward for losing the retirement pension.

However, according to the new system, the same person is entitled to a retirement pension for the nine years of service, and is not paid a reward for losing the pension.

He added that in the case of a 20-year-old employed person in the civil service or any other fund, when he reaches the age of 30, he submits a resignation at his place of work. So according to the previous system, the person is not en-

titled to a retirement pension for the years of service he spent and is paid a reward for losing the pension only, he said.

Thus, based on the previous two examples, people's insurance rights are not forfeited.

On Article No. (6) of the Social Protection Law, which states that "the age of the elderly, starting from the date of implementation of the provisions of this law, is raised at an average rate of one year every 7 years until he reaches the age of 65, and the specified age for the elderly is reviewed every (5 years after he reaches the age of 65, according to estimates of life expectancy at birth.

Dr. Saif said that based on the foundations of the retirement insurance programme that insures the person against a certain risk, and in this article it insures the person with regard to old age and lack of earning ability, and because of the progress of health services, the average lifespan has increased around the world and people have the ability to work for longer years than before.

Therefore, the costs of retirement programmes in general depend on insurance risks while calculating the costs of these programmes, it is taken into account that the retirement programme was able to comply with the costs of the programme and its contributions.

Stressing that this article allows the pension programme for a period of 35 years, with an automatic escalation in the retirement age so that the value of participation in the programme does not increase, meaning that the change will begin after 2031, with the age of the elderly starting from 61 years instead of 60 years, However, this is subject to many considerations and the approval of the Council of Ministers.

On Article (13) of the Social Protection Law, which states that "the Council shall organise and determine the date of implementation of the provisions of the first-time job seekers benefit, the maternity benefit, the social health insurance branch and any other benefits or insurance branches that are approved, in accordance with the rules and conditions that a decision is issued by the Council after the approval of the Council of Ministers," Dr. Saif said that these two benefits have been approved, and what remains is only to determine the time of maturity and organise its mechanism, based on the fact that the Social Protection Law took care of all life risks and did not overlook any of them, and the legislator confirmed them to be among the benefits that the social protection system undertakes, based on the priority and the amount of budgets and resources available to launch the system and start with the most socially impactful and sustainable benefits.

On Clause No. (3) in Article No. (39) of the Social Protection Law, which states that "the total family income should be less than the level specified in accordance with the provision of Article (40) of this law," Dr. Saif said that in general, after the family receives all the individual benefits due to it and after calculating the family income, there may be families that require additional support until they reach the target income specified in Article 40 of the law and published in the form of a target income table, which represents OMR115 for a family consisting of only one member, and any family larger than one member takes the square root of the number of family members multiplied by 115, and the family in the application of the family income support benefit includes both husband and wife and

non-working children up to reaching 26 years, and non-working girls who have not reached 40 years if they are unmarried or divorced and do not have children, and fostered children are considered as sons in forming a family.

Dr. Saif explained that with regard to widows, the entitlement conditions are that whether a widow is an Omani or a resident, as well as for orphans who are Omani, resident, father or mother or both, and in both cases the maximum benefit is OMR 80, and in the event that the widow or orphan receives a death pension, the difference is given if his share is less than the targeted amount.

Regarding divorced women, Dr. Saif explained that this category requires a study of the case of the divorced woman and her economic and social status, and is not excluded from the law, as it was mentioned in Article 41 of the law, which stipulates that "any of the following cases shall be considered a divorced woman who has no children, and who has reached the age of (40) years or more, and an unmarried woman who is (40) years or more."

He added that the social protection system was designed on the basis of not creating counter incentives that lead to undesirable social phenomena, such as divorce, which is an undesirable incentive and other cases that require a case study to be included in the family support benefit.

Regarding the Omanis working in the GCC countries, Dr. Saif stated that based on the agreement of the leaders of the Gulf countries under the name of extending insurance protection to the citizens of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, which stipulates that the citizens are subject to the laws and regulations of the home country of the worker.

Exhibition to create traffic awareness



SALALAH: The Royal Oman Police, represented by the General Traffic Department and the Dhofar Governorate Police Command, inaugurated on Sunday traffic exhibition, which comes as part of the awareness campaign slogan 'Slow down' for visitors to Dhofar 2023.

The exhibition, which will last for 5 days, includes several corners and sections, such as: the corner of the National Committee for Road Safety, and the corner of the Traffic Safety Institutes of the Royal Oman Police, which aim to train policemen and road users in the field of traffic safety.

During the exhibition, a set of educational visual presentations about traffic control, which has proven effective in reducing the rate of road deaths and injuries, will also be presented, with a review of statistics on the rates of

traffic accidents in the Sultanate of Oman during the years 2012-2022, as well as an introduction to electronic services and the smart traffic patrol.

On the sidelines of the opening of the exhibition, the 'Vigilant Traffic Thought' competition was launched in its seventh edition, which aims to provide information and instil traffic culture among road users.

The opening of the traffic exhibition, which was held in Salalah Gardens Mall, was sponsored by Dr. Ahmed Mohsen Al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality.

It is worth noting that the traffic awareness campaign for visitors to the Dhofar for the year 2023 includes the holding of traffic competitions and educational recreational activities for children in the Awqad Public Park in Salalah. **ONA**

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Al Jabal Al Akhdar farmers ready to harvest pomegranates



The number of pomegranate trees has reached more than 27,000 whereas the marketing value of the pomegranate crop stood at OMR1,727,000 last year

AL JABAL AL AKHDAR: Farmers in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah will begin harvesting pomegranate from August. Statistics issued by the Wilayat's Department of Agriculture and Water Resources indicate that the number of pomegranate trees has reached more than 27,000 whereas the marketing value of the pomegranate crop stood at OMR1,727,000 last year (2022).

The percentage of healthy fruits of pomegranate reached more than 90 percent, after the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources implemented the control programme and released as many as 42.147 million parasites during this season (2023). The programme is part of a project of integrated management of pomegranate fruit sucking moths through the use of alternative means and modern



OMAIR MOHAMMED AL FAHDI: Head of the Agricultural Development and Water Resources Department at the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar.

control methods. Omair Mohammed Al Fahdi, Head of the Agricultural Development and Water Resources Department at the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, said that

the average fresh fruits during the last season (2022) amounted to 88.7 percent, and the average fruits per tree stood at an estimated 55 fruits. He added that this season will witness abundant production of the pomegranate crop, due to rains and abundance of water. The region is expected to witness a big footfall of visitors that coincides with activities of Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival 2023, Al Fahdi said. It is worth noting that the pomegranate harvest season in Al Jabal Al Akhdar is one of the unique seasons that adds more diversity in terms of tourism products and highlights elements of recreational tourism, adventure tourism, natural and heritage tourism. Visitors to Al Jabal Al Akhdar at this time of the year will enjoy learning how to harvest delicious pomegranates. -OMA



VISION AL KHAIR GCC FUND				
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - JUNE 2023				
The Vision Al Khair Fund (VAKF) gained 15.3% for H1 2023 and 9.0% during the second quarter ending 30 June 2023. The NAV of the fund was RO 1.207 as on 30 June 2023.				
Global markets continued to gain during the quarter, led by developed markets, as economic data indicated resilience amid persistent inflation and monetary tightening. GCC markets were mixed during the quarter, with the S&P GCC Index closing H1 2023 up by 4.8%. Dubai emerged the best performing market with gains of 13.7% followed by the Saudi index which rose 9.4%. On the other hand, the Abu Dhabi index ended the first half with a 6.5% decrease while Qatar declined 5.7% for the year to date.				
The GCC region saw several positive announcements during the quarter, pointing to continued economic resilience in the region. One of the notable announcements was the establishment of four new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) across Saudi Arabia which have attracted close to \$12.6 billion investment in sectors such as marine, manufacturing and technology. In addition, NEOM awarded contracts valued at SAR 21 billion on social infrastructure and utilities projects. Qatar awarded EPC contracts valued at \$10 billion for its North Field South expansion programme.				
While the extension of OPEC production cuts may impact oil revenues for GCC economies in the near term, the region's positive outlook is supported by major project awards and targeted capital expenditure initiatives aimed at attracting foreign investment. Corporate fundamentals in the GCC also indicates optimism in specific sectors such as industrials, technology, healthcare, real estate and financials that specialize in project and corporate financing.				
On behalf of members of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge and thank our valued unit holders for the continued participation. We would like to accolade His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his inspiring leadership and vision under whose wise guidance, Oman will assuredly continue on the path towards successful development.				
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2023				
Statement of financial position				
	Note	30 June 2023 RO	30 June 2022 RO	31 December 2022 RO
ASSETS				
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5	4,423,910	4,041,408	3,838,583
Cash and cash equivalents	6	89,217	64,423	46,407
Other receivables		4,942	82,443	178,238
Total assets		4,518,069	4,188,274	4,063,228
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
Accruals and other payables	7	104,597	47,833	71,120
Total liabilities		104,597	47,833	71,120
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders		4,413,472	4,140,441	3,992,108
Net asset value per unit	11	1.207	1.140	1.096
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Statement of comprehensive income				
	Note	30 June 2023 RO (6 months)	30 June 2022 RO (6 months)	31 December 2022 RO (12 months)
INCOME				
Dividend income	4 b)	97,489	77,510	120,725
Profit on call accounts	4 b)	155	279	355
Net realised gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	5 a)	213,184	228,461	250,140
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	5 a)	398,139	(206,155)	(345,214)
Foreign exchange gain (net)		701	--	--
Other income		--	--	10,197
Total income		709,668	100,095	36,203
Expenses				
Management fees	16	32,466	39,545	73,231
Fund Management body fee		17,356	17,356	35,000
Custodian service fees	16	8,852	8,852	19,146
Brokerage expenses		7,012	6,758	14,437
Shariah board fees		4,959	4,959	10,000
Performance fee	17	37,125	--	--
General and administration	18	14,822	12,579	28,232
Foreign exchange loss (net)		--	11,276	16,346
Total expenses		122,592	101,325	196,392
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the period / year		587,076	(1,230)	(160,189)
Net profit / (loss) per unit	12	0.161	(0.000)	(0.042)

VISION FOCUSED FUND				
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - JUNE 2023				
The Vision Focused Fund (VFF) gained 13.6% for H1 2023 and 9.2% during the second quarter ending 30 June 2023. The NAV of the fund was RO 1.124 as on 30 June 2023.				
Global markets continued to gain during the quarter, led by developed markets, as economic data indicated resilience amid persistent inflation and monetary tightening. GCC markets had a mixed performance during the quarter, with the S&P GCC Index closing H1 2023 up by 4.8%. Dubai emerged as the best-performing market with gains of 13.7%, followed by the Saudi index, which rose by 9.4%. However, the Abu Dhabi index ended the first half with a 6.5% decrease, while Qatar declined by 5.7% year-to-date.				
During the quarter, Qatar awarded an EPC contract for the construction of two LNG mega trains for the North Field South expansion valued at \$10 billion. Similarly, Saudi saw the establishment of four new Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and NEOM awarded contracts for social infrastructure and utilities projects indicating a pickup in project activity. In the UAE, real estate sector is seeing an uptick in transaction volumes both in the residential and commercial space.				
The World Bank has revised its growth forecasts for the GCC region, expecting growth to taper to 2.4% in 2023 impacted by easing oil prices and lower oil production. However, economic data from the region, particularly the PMI (Purchasing Managers' Index) in Saudi Arabia and the UAE, continues to indicate growth, supported by low unemployment rates, while inflation remains under control. With the extension of OPEC+ production cuts expected to have a stabilizing effect on oil prices, regional markets continue to remain attractive especially in opportunistic sectors supported by economic reforms and initiatives.				
On behalf of members of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge and thank our valued unit holders for the continued participation. We would like to accolade His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his inspiring leadership and vision under whose wise guidance, Oman will assuredly continue on the path towards successful development.				
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2023				
Statement of financial position				
	Note	30 June 2023 RO	30 June 2022 RO	31 December 2022 RO
ASSETS				
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5	2,161,987	1,498,318	1,513,179
Cash and cash equivalents	6	114,581	41,521	13,289
Amounts due from brokers and other receivables		290,057	32,662	--
Total assets		2,566,625	1,572,501	1,526,468
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
Accruals and other payables	7	39,039	13,995	12,491
Total liabilities		39,039	13,995	12,491
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders		2,527,586	1,558,506	1,513,977
Net asset value per unit	11	1.124	1.071	0.991
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Statement of comprehensive income				
	Note	30 June 2023 RO (6 months)	30 June 2022 RO (6 months)	31 December 2022 RO (12 months)
INCOME				
Dividend income	4 b)	36,491	26,289	35,616
Interest income	4 b)	90	76	127
Net realised gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	5 a)	209,554	36,151	154,618
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	5 a)	27,625	(56,852)	(192,897)
Foreign exchange gain (net)		3,023	--	--
Other income		276,783	5,664	(2,536)
Expenses				
Management fees	16	13,674	13,331	26,172
Brokerage expenses		12,201	3,357	12,507
Custodian service fees	16	3,515	4,485	9,349
Foreign exchange loss (net)		2,427	1,184	6,593
Performance fees	16	10,809	--	--
General and administration	18	10,332	10,397	19,461
		52,958	32,754	74,082
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the period / year		223,825	(27,090)	(76,618)
Net profit / (loss) per unit	12	0.135	(0.018)	(0.051)

VISION REAL ECONOMY GCC FUND				
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - JUNE 2023				
The Vision Real Economy GCC Fund (VREGF) gained 17.2% for H1 2023 and 9.5% during the second quarter ending 30 June 2023. The NAV of the fund was RO 1.293 as on 30 June 2023.				
GCC markets gained in Q2 2023, with the S&P GCC Index increasing by 4.8% during the quarter, bringing the gains for the first half of the year to 2.9%. The Dubai Index recorded the highest gains, with an 11.3% increase during the quarter, ending H1 2023 as the top-performing GCC market, up 13.7%. The Saudi index was the second-best performing index during H1 2023, rising by 9.4%. On the other hand, the Abu Dhabi index experienced a marginal gain in Q2 2023, but ended the first half with a 6.5% decrease. The Qatar and Kuwait indices, however, declined for the second consecutive quarter, resulting in H1 losses of 5.7% and 2.4%, respectively.				
The World Bank has revised its growth forecasts for the GCC region, expecting growth to taper to 2.4% in 2023. This reflects the impact of easing oil prices and lower oil production. However, the extension of OPEC+ production cuts are expected to stabilize oil prices, amid concerns about a slowing global economy.				
Economic data from the region continues to indicate growth, supported by low unemployment rates, while inflation remains under control. This view is supported by the announcement of several projects in the region including the establishment of four new SEZs in Saudi Arabia, Qatar's award of contracts valued at \$10 billion for its LNG expansion among others. Although GCC markets are not immune to global economic uncertainties, the region benefits from improving sovereign fiscal positions and policy reforms, which are supportive of economic growth in the region.				
On behalf of members of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge and thank our valued unit holders for the continued participation. We would like to accolade His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his inspiring leadership and vision under whose wise guidance, Oman will assuredly continue on the path towards successful development.				
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 JUNE 2023				
Statement of financial position				
	Note	30 June 2023 RO	30 June 2022 RO	31 December 2022 RO
Assets				
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5	5,346,576	4,761,539	4,525,530
Cash and cash equivalents	6	69,027	130,604	50,986
Due from brokers		--	48,681	186,594
Dividend receivable		6,589	637	332
Total assets		5,422,192	4,941,461	4,763,442
LIABILITIES				
Current liabilities				
Due to brokers		23,453	--	--
Accruals and other payables	7	98,201	45,173	50,598
Total liabilities		121,654	45,173	50,598
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders		5,300,538	4,896,288	4,712,844
Net asset value per unit	11	1.293	1.200	1.152
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME				
Statement of comprehensive income				
	Note	30 June 2023 RO (6 months)	30 June 2022 RO (6 months)	31 December 2022 RO (12 months)
INCOME				
Dividend income	4 b)	120,266	90,285	152,928
Interest income	4 b)	202	351	424
Net realised gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	5 a)	251,146	59,706	85,796
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	5 a)	558,827	(246,808)	(429,397)
Foreign exchange gain (net)		134	--	--
Other income		--	--	8,772
		930,575	(96,466)	(181,477)
Expenses				
Management fees	16	38,716	43,714	83,140
Fund Management Body fees	8 a)	24,299	24,299	49,000
General and administration	18	10,474	10,319	18,243
Brokerage expenses		9,080	7,094	18,237
Custodian fees		6,787	7,318	20,812
Foreign exchange loss (net)		--	11,166	24,411
Performance fees	17	60,144	--	--
		149,500	103,910	213,843
Net profit / (loss) and total comprehensive income for the period / year		781,075	(200,376)	(395,320)
Net profit / (loss) per unit	12	0.191	(0.048)	(0.096)



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Pacts inked for purchase of government vehicles

The Tender Board also launched a system of managing orders to provide vehicle purchase services via Amana platform

MUSCAT: Represented by the Directorate General of Government Procurement, the Secretariat General of the Tender Board on Sunday signed framework contracts for the purchase of government vehicles.

The contracts were inked with a number of vehicle suppliers in Oman.

The Tender Board also



launched a system of managing orders to provide vehicle purchase services via Amana platform.

An agreement to this effect was signed by Eng. Badr Salim Al Ma'amari, Secretary General of the Tender Board, who described the signing of the first contract for the purchase of government vehicles as a major achievement. The added value of the contract is seen

through shortening vehicle delivery time by 50 to 60 percent, he explained.

The signing of the contracts underlines the Tender Board's keenness to develop Amana platform as a unified government electronic system for the management of purchase orders, the automation of such requests and the unification of purchase prices for government departments.

The step also helps devise terms and conditions of framework contracts, augment the gains of local content in contracts and link the parties concerned electronically.

The Secretariat General of the Tender Board was embarked on training more than 175 employees from the various government units to use Amana platform and manage orders.

It also provided technical support to users of the platform through a 100 percent Omani staff that lends technical assistance whenever needed.

Amana platform is distinguished in many ways.

It provides a range of price preferences, access to 36 types of vehicles, automation of vehicle purchasing processes, offering 270 training opportunities and more than 20 employment opportunities in the automotive sector.

This is in addition to streamlining procedures and cutting down 55 to 60 percent of purchased vehicle delivery time. -ONA

Oman to host Gulf Forum for Youth

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, will host the activities of the Gulf Forum for Youth Volunteering 'Isnad' from 6 to 11 August in Dhofar Governorate.

The forum - with the participation of five Gulf countries: the Sultanate of Oman, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait - targets Gulf youth between the ages of 22 and 35 who are active in the voluntary sector.

The Director General of the General Directorate of Youth, explained that the forum is based on the decisions and directives of



the Supreme Council in the field of youth by creating joint programmes, events, activities and workshops in the field of humanitarian volunteer work. -ONA

Omani sculptor makes a mark in China's floating exhibition

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Omani sculptor Ali bin Sulaiman Al Jabri concluded his participation in the "China Garden - Hulan" exhibition on Sunday.

The exhibition for a floating sculpture in the international season of sculpture art started on 17 July, amid international participation that included 16 countries.

Ali Al Jabri indicated that his participation in the exhibition came with the launch of the first floating sculpture garden in the world.

The sculptures will be placed on buoys that will float on the water surface, allowing visitors to approach and appreciate these works of art through close interactions and experience the beauty



of the fusion of art with nature.

Other ships will tow buoys and travel downstream of two rivers: Songhua and Heilongjiang.

"The sculpture is a vertical structure consisting of cubes of different sizes in an irregular

movement executed in stainless steel. It is seven metres high, painted red and has polished outer surfaces. The cube constitutes the most important component of the building. The construction is completed through interconnection between the cubes that maintain their interdependence in a compact structure, and any defect in one of them may shake the structure and destroy the work," Al Jabri added.

Al Jabri's participation received the support and cooperation of a number of official and artistic institutions in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Omani sculptor has participated in many local and international events and has won a number of awards in individual and group exhibitions in several countries, such as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, Monaco, France, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, China, and others.

This is in addition to presenting many research studies and contributions in the field of plastic arts.

TRA launches public consultation service

MUSCAT: The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) has launched a public consultation on its regulation/guideline for regulating the registration and use of radio frequencies and devices and determining their prices.

The consultation, launched via TRA Twitter account and website, was aimed at revising TRA regulation/guideline in accordance with the recommendations and decisions of the International Telecommunication Union and international organizations in a manner that achieves telecommunications market needs in Oman.

The consultation deals with 4 main topics, namely updating the regulatory and technical requirements of TRA guideline, keeping pace with the rapid development of radio communications technology, supporting innovative business models (locally) and upgrading the quality of telecommunication services.



The review seeks to manage natural and national resources efficiently, develop a flexible and investment-friendly regulatory environment, encourage research and enable investment in innovative technologies and services.

Through such consultations, TRA involves beneficiaries and stakeholders in drawing up regulations and related systems. This approach establishes an enhanced environment for a digitally savvy society based on empowerment, initiative, innovation and cooperation.

-ONA



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health (Al Buraimi Hospital) invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tender:

Tender Ref:	Description	Last date for collection of tender document	Last date for submission of tenders	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non Refundable)	Bidding Method
1567/2023	Building Management System (BMS) Upgrading in Buraimi Hospital	Before 12 PM On 24/08/2023	Before 12 PM On 17/09/2023	Specialized companies and institutions registered with the Tender Board	R.O 25 Per set	Electronically via the Esnad system for electronic bidding

Please note the following:

- Companies wishing to participate in the tender can purchase the tender documents electronically through the website (etendering.tenderboard.gov.om), provided that they are registered in the system.
- Companies must submit their bids electronically via the above-mentioned website, provided that a **Bid Commitment Declaration**, and bids received without the required Declaration will not be considered.
- The concerned entity is not obligated to accept the lowest bid or any other bid.
- For inquiries related to the above tender, please contact the following:
 - Through the website of the Esnad system for electronic tendering: (etendering.tenderboard.gov.om)
 - By e-mail: (said.alnaaimi@moh.gov.om)) (adanamnama@yahoo.com)
 - Through the following contact numbers: **96946935 / 97875606** time of call: 8:00am to 12:00pm

Don't overstate 1.5 degrees Celsius threat, says UN climate panel chief

Jim Skea, the new head of the UN's IPCC climate panel, said the world won't end if it warms by more than 1.5 degrees

NEW YORK: The newly appointed head of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Jim Skea, spoke to two major German news outlets over the weekend, soon after his appointment to the role.

Speaking to weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*, in an interview first published on Saturday, Skea warned against laying too much value on the international community's current nominal target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared the pre-industrial era.

"We should not despair and fall into a state of shock" if global tem-



peratures were to increase by this amount, he said.

In a separate discussion with German news agency DPA, Skea expanded on why.

"If you constantly communicate the message that we are all doomed to extinction, then that paralyzes people and prevents them from taking the necessary steps to get a grip on climate change," he said.

"The world won't end if it warms by more than 1.5 degrees," Skea told *Der Spiegel*. "It will however be a more dangerous world."

Surpassing that mark would lead to many problems and social tensions, he said, but still that would not constitute an existential threat to humanity.

The international community's stated target is currently to limit global warming to the 1.5 degrees Celsius target, even though UN estimates suggest that the current commitments made by countries are actually likely to fall far short of their nominal goal.

The UN estimates that within roughly a decade, the target is liable to be breached.

What else did Skea say?

James "Jim" Skea is a physics graduate born in Dundee in Scotland who did his doctoral thesis in energy research and has worked at Imperial College London since 2009.

The 69-year-old, who has been involved with the IPCC since its foundation in the 1990s, was named its new chairman on Wednesday.

He told *Der Spiegel* that there remained good reasons to be optimistic in the battle against climate change.



Jim Skea, the new head of the UN's IPCC climate panel.

New infrastructure required

Skea predicted that one difficult area might prove to be changing people's lifestyles. He said that no scientist could tell people how to live or what to eat.

"Individual abstinence is good, but it alone will not bring about the change to the extent it will be necessary," Skea said. "If we are to live more climate consciously, we need entirely new infrastructure. People will not get on bikes if there are no cycle paths."

Skea said he also wanted to adapt the IPCC so that it could provide better and more targeted advice to specific groups of people on how they could act to combat climate change.

He named groups like town planners, landowners and businesses: "With all these things it's about real people and their real lives, not scientific abstractions. We need to come down a level," he told DPA.

He said he also hoped to make progress during his tenure on how and where money was sent and spent to tackle the problem globally.

"There's enough money in the world, the challenge is getting it to flow to the right places," he said. -DW

PSLV FLIGHT

PSLV-C56 carrying seven Singapore satellites placed in orbit: ISRO chief

SRIHARIKOTA: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman S Somanath on Sunday said 7 Singapore satellites — primary satellite DS-SAR and 6 co-passenger satellites, which blasted off into space on launch vehicle PSLV-C56, were successfully placed in orbit.

The launch vehicle with 7 Singaporean satellites lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota at 6.30 am on Sunday.

Addressing fellow ISRO scientists after the successful launch, which came on the heels of the launch of India's third moon mission — Chandrayaan 3, Somanath said, "Congratulations! PSLV-C56, carrying seven satellites, including the primary satellite DS-SAR and 6 co-passenger satellites, has been successfully placed in the right orbit. This is a mission of NSIL, and I want to congratulate the customers sponsored by the Government of Singapore for having this mission onboard PSLV."

This PSLV flight marks the



58th overall and the 17th using the Core Alone configuration. The upper stage of the rocket was placed in a lower orbit after injecting all the satellites to assure its shorter orbital life.

PSLV-C56 / DS-SAR is the

Dedicated Commercial Mission of NewSpace India Limited (NSIL) for ST Engineering, Singapore. DS-SAR, a Radar Imaging Earth Observation satellite is the primary satellite for the mission.

In addition to this, there were 6

co-passenger customer satellites from Singapore that lifted off on the ISRO launch vehicle.

All satellites would be injected into a 535 km circular with 5 orbital inclination, stated a release from ISRO earlier.

The DS-SAR satellite is developed under a partnership between DSTA (representing the Government of Singapore) and ST Engineering. Once deployed and operational, it will be used to support the satellite imagery requirements of various agencies within the Government of Singapore, the release added.

ST Engineering will use it for multi-modal and higher-responsiveness imagery and geospatial services for their commercial customers. DS-SAR carries a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) payload developed by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI).

This allows the DS-SAR to provide all-weather day and night coverage and is capable of imaging at 1m resolution at full polarimetry, ISRO said. -ANI

SUNGAI KOLOK

9 killed in Thailand warehouse blast

BANGKOK : A firework warehouse was destroyed by an explosion in southern Thailand killing at least nine people dead and more than 100 others injured, Al Jazeera reported citing the officials.

According to the provincial governor, the incident occurred on Saturday in the town of Sungai Kolok in the southern province of Narathiwat.

The explosion is suspected to have been caused by welding while the structure was being constructed.

At least 118 individuals were hurt, according to the public relations department of the province of Narathiwat, and more than 200 families were affected.

Officials, according to the report, think there are still a number of persons trapped beneath the wreckage, Al Jazeera reported.

According to the report, the bomb left damage behind in a 500-metre (1,640-foot) radius.

Several videos from the scene that circulated online showed a massive smoke plume over the re-



Representative image.

gion, numerous destroyed buildings, automobiles, and motorcycles, as well as debris-filled streets.

There are numerous houses and other structures that look to have fallen walls and roofs.

According to Thai PBS, the explosion in the border town near the Malaysian border may have caused damage to as many as 500 homes. -ANI

AUSTRALIA-US MINISTERIAL CONSULTATIONS

US, Australia to cooperate for security, stability of Indo-Pacific

WASHINGTON DC: US and Australia on Saturday agreed to further cooperate with India, Japan, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea to ensure the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific at the 33rd Australia-US Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN).

Officials from the two countries on Saturday met in Brisbane. The US delegation was led by Secretary of Defence Lloyd J Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The Australian delegation included Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Penny Wong. During the meeting, the two countries reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing interoperability with the militaries of the Pacific through a range of exercises.

They welcomed Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga's participation in the TALISMAN SABER 2023 exercise for the first time, as well as India, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines as inaugural observers, according to a fact sheet released by the US Department of Defence.

The two countries welcomed progress under the AUKUS partnership (the trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) toward the Australian acquisition of a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability and the development of advanced capabilities to safeguard stability and security in the Indo-Pacific.



MEETING: The US delegation was led by Secretary of Defence Lloyd J Austin and Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Australia will initially buy three Virginia-class nuclear-powered attack submarines (known by the common naval acronym SSN) from the USA. These are likely to be second-hand boats from the US Navy (USN), plus there is an option for obtaining two more Virginia-class submarines should plans to build a new class of SSN-AUKUS boats be delayed.

The SSN-AUKUS submarine will be largely based on a British SSN design, but with the incorporation of some American technology.

Both the UK and Australia will obtain SSN-AUKUS boats, with British production kicking off slightly earlier than in Australia, which is a total novice at such sophisticated shipbuilding. The whole intent is for Canberra to be able to build and maintain a fleet of SSNs as a sovereign capability, but with support from the UK and USA.

Australia will become the seventh country in the world to operate nuclear-powered submarines. Of course, it should be pointed out once again that these Australian

SSNs are not capable of carrying ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads. They are not ballistic missile submarines (SSBN), which only a very exclusive club of nations operate.

Moreover, Australia and US reaffirmed their commitment to transparency and urged others to take a similar approach to their capability development.

During the 33rd Australia-US Ministerial Consultations, the two countries planned the deployment of a USCG Cutter to the Pacific in

The two countries also agree to uphold a global order based on international law, including the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

early 2024 to further maritime domain awareness and training in the region to address maritime security priorities including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Unbreakable alliance

The two determined that the unbreakable alliance between the United States and Australia has never been stronger and that the alliance remains a partnership of strategic interest rooted in common values and a common determination to preserve stability, prosperity, and peace.

Against the backdrop of historic momentum for the alliance, the United States and Australia committed to advance a number of key lines of shared effort, according to

the US fact sheet titled 'Secretary Austin's Eighth Trip to the Indo-Pacific Region.'

This includes reaffirming respect for each other's sovereignty and their commitment to operationalize the Alliance, the United States and Australia advanced key priorities across an ambitious range of force posture cooperation efforts, including conducting more regular and longer expeditionary visits of US submarines to Australia starting this year.

The two reaffirmed the importance of maximizing the strategic and technological advantage of the Alliance in an age of heightened strategic competition. They advanced a number of key priorities to strengthen their advanced capabilities and the health of their defence industrial bases.

They committed to collaborating on critical technologies and innovation to ensure the Alliance's asymmetrical capability edge and to explore opportunities for regional co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment aligned to agreed capability priorities.

The two countries also agree to uphold a global order based on international law, including the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. They advanced a number of key priorities to strengthen their mutual alliances, partnerships, and trilateral and multilateral security arrangements, according to the fact sheet. -DNA

Unstoppable Verstappen

The Dutchman claims his eighth successive Formula One win as Red Bull bag 1-2 finish at Belgian Grand Prix

STAVELOT: Max Verstappen recovered from a five-place gearbox penalty to claim his eighth successive victory in Sunday's Belgian Grand Prix, with team-mate Sergio Perez adding to the celebrations for Red Bull as he completed a one-two result.

It also means Verstappen now holds a lead of 125 points over Perez in the drivers' standings, as the Dutchman continues his push towards what would be a third world championship on the bounce.

"It is a new spot [to win from], P6, that's for sure," said Verstappen. "We knew we had a good car, it was just about surviving Turn 1. I could see it was all getting pretty tight - I have been in that position before so I was just like 'I am going to stay out of that'."

"From there onwards, we made the right moves. I got a bit stuck in the DRS train but once that cleared I could do my own pace."

Verstappen gradually picked off his rivals across a tense 44-lap encounter at Spa-Francorchamps, taking P1 after Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc had started the race on pole.

The championship leader then kept his car on the track during a mid-race shower that threatened to - but did not quite force - a move from slick tyres to intermediates.

Perez also worked his way past Leclerc to come home in the runner-up spot, crossing the



"It is a new spot [to win from], P6, that's for sure," said Verstappen

double points finish as Lance Stroll backed up team-mate Alonso in ninth, while Esteban Ocon and Yuki Tsunoda completed the points in eighth and 10th respectively.

Pierre Gasly went longer into the race than anyone else with a sizeable first stint, but a slow stop when he eventually boxed hindered his efforts and left him 11th at the chequered flag, followed by the Alfa Romeos of Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu.

Williams had mixed it in the points-paying places early on, with the FW45 showing incredible straight-line speed, but they faded as the different slick-tyre strategies

played out, leaving Alex Albon 14th and Logan Sargeant 18th.

Haas duo Kevin Magnussen and Nico Hulkenberg, both impacted by pre-race penalties, wound up 15th and 17th respectively, sandwiching the second AlphaTauri of Daniel Ricciardo, who could not match team mate Tsunoda's points-scoring efforts.

Only 18 cars finished the race after a first-corner clash between Sprint podium finisher Oscar Piastri and Carlos Sainz led to both drivers retiring - the McLaren man clipping the inside wall at La Source and stopping at the side of the track, and the Ferrari nursing damage before being called in to retire.

When the drivers returned to parc ferme, Verstappen could not hide his delight as he punched the air in celebration for the 10th time this season, moving just one win away from matching Sebastian Vettel's successive victory record of nine races in the process. - Agencies

WI VS INDIA SECOND ODI



We got one win, got to take the next to clinch series: WI skipper

BRIDGETOWN: After a comfortable six-wicket win over India in the second ODI on Saturday, West Indies skipper Shai Hope said that they are just one win away from claiming the three-match series victory against India.

Indian bowlers failed to defend a low target of 182 as West Indies Captain Shai Hope, who scored unbeaten 63, said in post-match presentation, "I am happy, when I get a fifty, when I get a hundred and when the team wins. You got to find ways to score quickly on that wicket, especially against a quality bowling attack like India. Very satisfied. We got one win,

got to win the next game to take the series."

Hope got the support of Keacy Carty, who scored 48* off 65 balls. Shardul Thakur picked up three wickets, conceding 42 runs.

India were bundled out at 181 in 40.5 overs with Gudakesh Motie and Romario Shepherd picking up three wickets each. Ishan Kishan was the top scorer with 55.

Brief scores: India: 181 in 40.5 overs (Ishan Kishan 55, Shubman Gill 34; Gudakesh Motie 3/36, Romario Shepherd 3/37) lost to West Indies 182/4 in 36.4 overs (Shai Hope 63*, Keacy Carty 48*, Shardul Thakur 3-42). -ANI

WEST INDIES VS INDIA ODI SERIES

Dravid looking at 'bigger picture', not worried about ODI defeat

BRIDGETOWN: India head coach Rahul Dravid doesn't want to "make the mistake" of letting the ODI series scoreline of 1-1 take the focus away from looking at the "bigger picture" as India build towards the 2023 World Cup at home this October-November.

Dravid meant the team is willing to strike a balance between providing opportunities to players, even if it means resting seniors like Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, and winning while not obsessing over short-term results, given there are fewer than 10 games left before their World Cup opener against Australia in Chennai.

"I think we will always look at the bigger picture," Dravid said after West Indies levelled the ODI series with a win on Saturday.

"To be honest, at this stage in the cycle with the Asia Cup and World Cup coming up, and with the injuries we have, we have to look at the bigger picture. We can't

worry about every single game, every single series. If we do that, it will be a mistake."

Resting Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli for the second ODI meant game time for Sanju Samson and Axar Patel. Samson will be tussling with Ishan Kishan for the second wicketkeeper's slot, while Axar is largely seen as a like-for-like back-up to Ravindra Jadeja.

Samson managed just 9, while Axar, promoted to No. 4, scored 1. They were part of a middle-order meltdown that led to India floundering from 90 without loss to 181 all out.

Dravid labeled it a "challenging wicket" where 230 would have been par for the course, but wasn't fretting over the result, instead choosing to draw positives from giving back-up players game time in the wake of a scenario where their regulars - Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul - currently recuperating from injuries at the NCA don't make it. "Honestly, this was our



last chance to be able to try out some of our players," Dravid said.

"We have got a few of our players who are injured and are at the NCA. With a month to go for the

Asia Cup, we are kind of running out of time in a lot of ways. And we're hopeful some of them will be fit for the Asia Cup and World Cup. But we can't take those chances; we have to try out other people and give them chances so that, in a worst-case scenario, they have game time behind them.

One of the players who has been given a run in Iyer's absence is Suryakumar Yadav, who is currently India's T20I vice-captain. Renowned for his 360-degree game in the shortest format, Suryakumar hasn't been able to replicate the same success in the 50-overs format. In both games in this series, Suryakumar has thrown away starts. In the first ODI, he was lbw for 19 trying to sweep left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie. In the second ODI, he shelved the sweep completely, but was out cutting Motie for 24. In all, Suryakumar averages a shade under 24 after 23 ODI innings with just two half-centuries.

ENGLAND PACER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Broad to retire after Ashes series

LONDON: England pacer Stuart Broad on Saturday announced that the ongoing fifth Test match of the Ashes series will be the last match of his international cricket career.

Broad called time on his 17-year-old career at the end of Day 3 of the final Ashes Test at The Oval. "Tomorrow or Monday will be my last game of cricket," Broad said.

"It's been a wonderful ride, a huge privilege to wear the Nottinghamshire and England badge for as much as I have."

"I've always wanted to finish at the top, and this series just feels like it's been one of the most enjoyable I've been part of."

Considered one of the greatest seamers to have represented England, especially in Test cricket, Broad has over 800 international wickets across formats.

Broad has taken 602 wickets in 167 Test matches he has played.



He has also scored 3656 runs at an average of 18 with 1 century and 13 fifties in Test cricket.

In ODIs, Broad has featured in 121 games taking 178 scalps. His best bowling effort in the 50-over format to date is 5/23 while

in T20Is, he has 65 wickets in 56 matches, with his best being 4/24.

Meanwhile, in T20I format, he has played 56 matches and taken 65 wickets with an average of 22.93.

Broad revealed he'd come to the decision on Friday evening. "I've been thinking about it for a couple of weeks ... you know, England versus Australia has always been sort of the pinnacle for me."

"I've loved the battles with Australia that have come my way personally, and the team's way. I've got a love affair with Ashes cricket, and I think I wanted my last bat and bowl to be in Ashes cricket."

Broad made his Test debut against Sri Lanka in 2007 and is one of only two fast bowlers to take over 600 wickets, alongside longtime bowling partner Jimmy Anderson. -ANI

FIFTH ASHES TEST

Australia need 249 runs to win

LONDON: A day which started with Stuart Broad receiving a guard of honour from the Australians follow his retirement announcement on previous night, ended with Aussie openers - David Warner (58*) and Usman Khawaja (69*) - having given them a terrific base to reach 135 without any loss from a where an unlikely target of 384 appeared achievable in the fifth and final Test at the Kia Oval on Sunday.

In all, only 40 overs were possible on the fourth day before rain closed in but they went entirely Australia's way. When the rain arrived, at drinks in the afternoon session, they needed a further 249 runs to take the series 3-1 and, weather permitting, will have 98 overs to do so on the final day.

After walking through the lineup of Australian players, Broad faced the first over the day from



Mitchell Starc and somewhat comically farmed the strike for five balls before launching the last ball off his Test career over deep midwicket for six - a feat only previously achieved by West Indies' Wayne Daniel in 1984.

James Anderson, too, declined a single when he reverse-swept Todd Murphy and was then lbw missing another three balls later as the hosts were all out for 395. And so, the final innings of this

enthralling series began with Australia needing what would be their second-highest successful chase in history to secure a first series win in England since 2001.

Earlier, at the end of the third day's play, England were 389/9 to take a 377-run lead on Saturday. **Brief scores:** England: 283 and 395 (Joe Root 91, Jonny Bairstow 78, Zak Crawley 73; Mitchell Starc 4-94, Todd Murphy 3-110) vs Australia 295 and 135/0

TRAINING PLATFORM LAUNCHED

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has taken a significant step towards employee development and performance enhancement by introducing an online training platform named "Durbah". >**B2**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,778.81 points, down by 0.03 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.99 percent at 468.36 points. Voltamp Energy, up 4.03 percent, was the top gainer while, Al Jazeera Services, down 8.33 percent, was the top loser. >**B2**

SOHAR PORT AND FREEZONE

Pact signed to set up \$1.3mn steel fabrication unit

Times News Service

SOHAR: Sohar Port and Freezone has signed a land lease agreement with SCME Projects Pvt Ltd (FZC), to establish a steel fabrication unit within Sohar Freezone. This agreement is geared towards fostering seamless integration in the mining sector's business ecosystem and providing comprehensive industrial services like project development to operational support and mechanical maintenance of FAP, effectively reducing construction costs.

With a total investment of \$1.3 million and total area of 5,000 square metres, the investment from SCME Projects highlights the attractiveness of Sohar Freezone for foreign investors, setting the stage for future foreign direct investment in the region.

Barjesh Kumar Singh, Authorised Manager of SCME Projects said, "We are excited about this partnership with Sohar Freezone and the promising opportunities it offers to investors. By leveraging the strategic advantages provided by the freezone and its continued



growth. Our comprehensive service platform will offer businesses a streamlined approach to accessing essential services, ultimately enabling them to focus on their core operations and maximise productivity."

"This signing with SCME Projects signifies our unwavering commitment to driving economic development and fostering a self-sustaining industrial ecosystem," said Haitham Al Omairi, Business Development Manager of Sohar

Port and Freezone.

"This agreement will significantly enhance our value proposition in establishing a dynamic ecosystem, facilitating the provision of specialized technical services to both current and prospec-



tive clients, thereby optimising operational cost-effectiveness and maximising mutual growth opportunities."

Embracing SCME Projects and their steel fabrication unit represents a significant stride in Sohar Freezone's mission to foster economic development, enhance business efficiency, and create a self-sustaining industrial ecosystem. This agreement positions Sohar Freezone as a thriving global hub for trade and industry, where innovation, growth, and operational excellence consolidate.

As one of the fastest-growing ports in the world, Sohar Port and Freezone continues to leverage on its strategic location and enhance its services, positioning itself as a key logistics hub within the region and across the world boasting container, liquids, and bulk terminals.

A powerful combination of the expertise of the Port of Rotterdam and the government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by Asyad, it is earmarked as one of the Sultanate's mega-projects, home to logistics, petrochemicals, and metal clusters, as well as the region's first dedicated agri terminal.

Today, after 17 years of operation, it serves as the main gateway for import and export in Oman, directly contributing 2.1 percent of the country's GDP and almost 26,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities.

With a focus on sustainable development and cutting-edge technology, it is leading the development and modernization of the Sultanate's logistics infrastructure and supporting the economic diversification objectives of Oman's 2040 Vision.

FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Musk refuses incentives to move Twitter headquarters

SAN FRANCISCO: X CEO Elon Musk refused the incentives offered by the San Francisco authorities to move its headquarters saying one comes to know about their real friends when "chips are down."

Taking to his official handle on X, formerly known as Twitter, Musk said he was being offered some rich incentives to move its headquarters out of San Francisco. "Many have offered rich incentives for X (fka Twitter) to move its HQ out of San Francisco. Moreover, the city is in a doom spiral with one company after another left or leaving. Therefore, they expect X will move too. We will not. You only know who your real friends are when the chips are down. San Francisco, beautiful San Francisco, though others forsake you, we will always be your friend," Musk wrote on the micro-blogging site.

This tweet came a few hours after Musk shared a video of his company's San Francisco headquarters adorned with the new logo — 'X'. In the clip, the giant sign is seen on top of the downtown building formerly known as Twitter headquarters. Musk tweeted, "I knew birds weren't real" adding, "We just proved it."

— ANI

Inflation rate in Oman up 2.8% in 2022: NCSI

The Governorate of Al Buraimi recorded the highest inflation rate of 3.6 percent, while the Governorate of Muscat recorded the lowest rate of 2.4 percent



MUSCAT: The inflation rate in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 2.8 percent in 2022 as the Consumers Price Index (CPI) registered 109.7 points compared to 106.7 points in 2021, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data indicated a rise in the prices of main groups in 2022 in varying rates.

A rise was recorded in in the

main groups of housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels by 1.1 percent, transport by 3.9 percent, food and non-alcoholic beverages by 5.2 percent, clothing and footwear by 1.3 percent, restaurants and hotels by 2.1 percent, furniture, household equipment and routine household maintenance by 1.3 percent, recreation and culture by 1.6 percent, education by 3.8 percent, miscellaneous

goods and services by 2.1 percent, health by 3.1 percent and tobacco by 0.6 percent.

Meanwhile, prices of the communications group stabilised without change.

As far as products are concerned, oils and fats recorded the highest contribution rate to the rise in the CPI by 16 percent, followed by fuels and oils for personal transport equipment by 9.2 percent, kinder-

garten by 6.4 percent and spending on hotels by 5.5 percent.

The Governorate of Al Buraimi recorded the highest inflation rate by 3.6 percent, while the Governorate of Muscat recorded the lowest rate of 2.4 percent.

Producers Price Index (PPI) in Oman recorded an increase by 36.4 percent during 2022, registering 167.8 points compared to 123 points in 2021. Prices of oil

and gas products lead the rise by registering a growth by 44.1 percent. Non-oil products recorded an increase by 3.8 percent.

Moreover, prices of crude oil and natural gas went up by 47 percent and the prices of refined oil increased by 28.2 percent.

A rise was also recorded in the prices of products of mining, electricity and water by 1.3 percent and converting industries by 4.5 percent. — ONA

THREE-DAY EVENT



Arab strategy for communications, information technology discussed



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, is hosting the 51st meeting of the Permanent Arab Committee for Communications and Information Technology, which kicked off here on Sunday.

The three-day meeting discusses a spectrum of topics related to joint Arab cooperation in the fields

of communications and information technology, such as cybersecurity and the Arab strategy for communications and information technology, among other topics.

Oman is hosting the committee's meeting for the first time in a bid to highlight prominent achievements in the communications and information technology field in Oman, as well as attract foreign investments. — ONA

SEMICONINDIA 2023 CONFERENCE

Experts discuss crucial themes in global semiconductor industry

GANDHINAGAR: The second day of the SemiconIndia 2023 Conference witnessed discussions and deliberations as India showcased its growing commitment to the semiconductor industry.

The three-day event, graced by the presence of Union Minister of State for Electronics & IT and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, served as a platform for industry leaders, academics, and government representatives to strategise India's path towards a robust, vibrant, and competitive presence in the global semiconductor ecosystem, read Ministry of Electronics & IT press release. Rajeev Chandrasekhar highlighted the significant progress made by India under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He spoke about the country's semiconductor ambitions and how India is making rapid strides in the sector.

The conference featured multiple sessions focusing on diverse



aspects of the semiconductor industry, with the spotlight on Next-Gen Computing, semiconductor packaging, future designs, and investment opportunities.

Industry stalwarts and experts shared their views, experiences, and innovative solutions to foster growth and development in India's semiconductor landscape.

In the session on Next-Gen Computing, Balaji Baktha, CEO of Ventana MicroSystems, shed light on digital autonomy and sovereign data centre infrastructure powered by RISC-V.

Raja Koduri, CEO of Mithira AI, provided valuable insights into the future of computing, particularly emphasising the potential of startups and the significance of time and financial resources.

Panel discussions were organised to deliberate on crucial themes like semiconductor packaging. Distinguished panellists, including Gursharan Singh of Micron Technology, Jeffery Chun of Simmtech, Noboru Yoshinaga of Disco, and Raja Vinay of Air Liquide, engaged in discussions about Micron's Assembly, Testing, Marking, and Packaging (ATMP) plant's supply chain strategy and roadmap in India, added the release.

The panel emphasized the role of packaging research and innovation in driving future semiconductor performance and the potential of large-scale R&D in India.

The "Next-generation designs" session brought to light cutting-edge advancements and future possibilities in the semiconductor industry. — ANI

MARKET



MSM index ends lower marginally

Voltamp Energy, up 4.03 percent, was the top gainer while, Al Jazeera Services, down 8.33 percent, was the top loser on the MSX

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,778.81 points, down by 0.03 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.99 percent at 468.36 points.

Voltamp Energy, up 4.03 percent, was the top gainer while, Al Jazeera Services, down 8.33 percent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman REIT Fund were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover. A total number of 303 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR5.52 million, with more than 10.09 million shares changing hands.

Out of 45 traded securities, 9 advanced, 13 declined, and 23 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR40,000 while foreign investors were net buyers for OMR33,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR7,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,812.08 points, down 0.09 percent. Prices of HSBC Bank Oman, Bank Muscat were up by 0.61 percent, 0.36 percent respectively. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Al Sharqia Investment, National Finance, Taageer Finance were up by 3.28 percent, 2.74 percent, 2.47 percent, 2.06

303 trades were executed during the day's trading session generating a turnover of OMR5.52 million with more than 10.09 million shares changing hands

percent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 6,115.61 points, up 0.41 percent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, A'Saffa Foods, Oman Cement, Raysut Cement, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 4.03 percent, 1.95 percent, 1.43 percent, 1.21 percent, 0.82 percent respectively. Prices of Oman Packaging were up by 2.50 percent respectively. Services Index was down by 0.62% before closing at 1,665.70 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Oman National Engineering were up by 1.19 percent, 0.94 percent respectively. Prices of Majan College, Barka Water & Power Company, Dhofar Generating, Phoenix Power, Abraj Energy were up by 8.00 percent, 4.44 percent, 1.72 percent, 1.61 percent, 1.27 percent respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,782.65	4,771.92	4,778.81	4,780.02	-1.21	-0.03
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,825.39	7,802.03	7,812.08	7,818.85	-6.78	-0.09
Industry Index	6,115.61	6,090.89	6,115.61	6,090.89	24.72	0.41
Services Index	1,676.05	1,665.70	1,665.70	1,676.01	-10.31	-0.62
MSX Shariah Index	473.58	468.36	468.36	473.02	-4.66	-0.99
MSX TR INDEX	6,293.87	6,279.74	6,288.82	6,290.41	-1.59	-0.03
FINANCIAL TRIDX	8,538.94	8,513.45	8,524.41	8,531.81	-7.40	-0.09
SERVICES TR IDX	1,850.15	1,838.73	1,838.73	1,850.11	-11.39	-0.62
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,532.99	6,506.59	6,532.99	6,506.59	26.40	0.41

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,090,134	5,519,207	303	23,875,637,655	9	13	23	45

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, JULY 30

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	500	178	1	0.355	0.355	0.355	0.355	0.350	0.005	1.429	0.355	0.355	0.375	0.100	117,459,812
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	453,843	38,526	18	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.001	1.190	0.085	0.084	0.086	0.100	16,969,026
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	12,140	1,311	2	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	16,200,000
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	66,262	16,242	7	0.245	0.247	0.245	0.247	0.245	0.002	0.816	0.247	0.246	0.247	0.100	54,340,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	491,328	137,554	40	0.280	0.280	0.279	0.280	0.279	0.001	0.358	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.100	2,101,791,177
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	4,231	2,677	3	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.290	0.295	0.100	471,524,443
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	69,000	4,140	3	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.069	0.069	0.070	0.100	8,409,375
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	5,000	305	1	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	21,723,765
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	64,165	6,792	8	0.107	0.107	0.105	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.107	0.100	491,136,665
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	69,479	25,499	10	0.367	0.367	0.367	0.367	0.367	0.000	0.000	0.367	0.367	0.380	0.100	238,896,532
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	11,300	963	3	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.083	0.089	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	131,786	131,522	15	0.998	0.999	0.995	0.995	0.998	-0.003	-0.301	0.998	0.995	0.998	0.100	746,250,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	2,015	767	3	0.380	0.381	0.380	0.381	0.383	-0.002	-0.522	0.381	0.371	0.378	0.100	90,072,210
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO.	278,990	19,660	21	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.073	-0.002	-2.740	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.100	6,589,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	50,000	2,970	3	0.060	0.060	0.059	0.059	0.061	-0.002	-3.779	0.059	0.060	0.062	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	10,000	2,275	3	0.235	0.235	0.220	0.220	0.240	-0.020	-8.333	0.220	0.220	0.240	0.100	13,464,940
Total	16	1,713,949	391,380	141												
Parallel Market																
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	77,300	9,834	14	0.124	0.129	0.124	0.129	0.124	0.005	4.032	0.129	0.127	0.130	0.100	10,500,955
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	14,296	4,489	8	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.308	0.006	1.948	0.314	0.311	0.338	0.100	37,680,000
OM0000004418	RAYSUT CEMENT	93,400	15,664	17	0.186	0.189	0.186	0.188	0.186	0.002	1.205	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.100	33,600,000
OM0000001095	DHOAFAR INSURANCE	200	46	2	0.239	0.239	0.219	0.219	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.000	0.220	0.100	23,907,106
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	26,606	3,193	3	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.120	0.126	0.100	3,600,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	1,000	1700	1	1.700	1.700	1.700	1.700	1.700	0.000	0.000	1.700	1.700	1.700	0.100	85,000,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	272,705	23,180	21	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.100	17,510,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	15,296	627	3	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.000	0.000	0.041	0.040	0.044	0.100	3,485,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	5,030	4,779	2	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.000	0.000	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.100	90,250,000
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORPORATION	118	7	1	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.100	4,271,828
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	213,570	34,845	13	0.163	0.164	0.162	0.163	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.162	0.162	0.163	0.100	33,086,791
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	106,530	10,120	10	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.094	0.095	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	900	25	1	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.100	20,003,378
OM0000004447	OMAN REIT FUND	900,000	81,000	9	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.084	0.095	0.100	42,408,775
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	21,162	2,777	3	0.131	0.134	0.130	0.134	0.134	0.000	0.000	0.134	0.131	0.134	0.100	10,119,948
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	55,075	17,148	18	0.316	0.318	0.310	0.310	0.314	-0.004	-1.274	0.310	0.310	0.314	0.100	238,762,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	33,944	2,072	5	0.061	0.062	0.061	0.061	0.062	-0.001	-1.613	0.061	0.061	0.063	0.100	89,218,689
OM0000007407	DHOAFAR GENERATING	200	11	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.000	0.057	0.100	12,667,680
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	3,000	285	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.097	-0.002	-2.062	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100	25,064,328
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	35,846	5,656	4	0.157	0.158	0.157	0.158	0.162	-0.004	-2.469	0.158	0.157	0.158	0.100	90,645,276
OM0000001608	OMAN PACKAGING	2,500	488	1	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.200	-0.005	-2.500	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.100	6,324,993
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	96,110	4,208	7	0.045	0.045	0.043	0.043	0.045	-0.002	-4.444	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.100	6,880,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	10,000	1,150	1	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.125	-0.010	-8.000	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.100	10,350,000
Total	23	1,984,788	223,303	146												
INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION																

Genesis GV60 tops small premium SUV segment in J.D. Power 2023 US APEAL Study

MUSCAT: The Genesis GV60 was named top small premium SUV in the J.D. Power 2023 U.S. Automotive Performance, Execution, and Layout (APEAL) Study. Commenting on the award, Omar Al Zubaidi, Head of Genesis Middle East and Africa, said: "Receiving international recognition of the Genesis GV60 is a testament to the car's impressive performance and user-focused design, which brings innovative technology and customisable features to the forefront of the driving experience. We're thrilled to see another one of our models being celebrated on the global stage and remain committed to delivering automotive products that set the standards for sustainability, safety, and speed." GV60 embodies the Genesis design language of Athletic Elegance and 'Beauty of White Space' ethos. Its interior features a spacious layout while incorporating more eco-friendly and recycled materials with leading safety and technology. GV60 also features world-



driving experience. "We are pleased that our customers have recognised the exceptional design and performance of GV60, our first dedicated electric vehicle, in this year's APEAL study," said Claudia Marquez, Chief Operating Officer of Genesis Motor North America. "GV60 represents the brand's customer-centric focus as our most personalised model yet. With leading technologies like Face Connect, GV60 delivers on our commitment to tailor the vehicle ownership experience to suit customers' individual needs." The J.D. Power U.S. APEAL Study examines new-vehicle owners' assessments of their experiences with their new vehicle after 90 days of ownership. The study data provides insight on experiences with design, performance, safety, usability, comfort, and other factors.

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DURBAH INITIATIVE

Madayn launches online training platform to enhance employee development, organisational performance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) has taken a significant step towards employee development and performance enhancement by introducing an online training platform named "Durbah".

This platform, which was launched on Sunday under the auspices of Eng. Dawood bin Salim Al Hadabi, CEO of Madayn, aims at enhancing practical and scientific skills of employees in the industrial cities, while also fostering organisational performance by facilitating knowledge transfer and promoting continuous learning.

During the initial stage, the platform targets all Madayn's employees, and in the second stage, the outreach will expand to include the workers in the companies and factories investing in the industrial cities.

Haneen Al Balushi, Durbah Project Manager, stated that the platform, which aligns with the Sultanate's digital transformation initiatives, streamlines the entire training experience and offers the latest curricula and training



SEARCHING FOR SUSTAINABLE, CONVENIENT COFFEE? HERE’S WHAT TO KNOW

Music, hairstyles and fashions may change over time but one thing remains constant: Americans love their coffee and it seems, will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. In fact, the number of Americans who drank coffee in the past day (65%) -- more than any other beverage -- is on the rise, according to the latest “Atlas of American Coffee.” And Market Research Future predicts that the global coffee market will be worth \$112.8 billion by the year 2030.

If you’re like many coffee drinkers these days, you may find yourself preferring your daily dose of caffeine come in the form of speciality coffee. At a time when many consumers are cutting back in discretionary spending, 2023 data from the National Coffee Association of USA shows that the speciality coffee market

continues to thrive.

At the same time, you likely also prioritise both sustainability and convenience. As with many products, you may be doing your research about your coffee, looking into your brand of choice’s manufacturing and production processes to see how eco-friendly they are, while continuing to expect a quick and handy cup of coffee.

With these values in mind, coffee technology companies are working to innovate the game. For example, NuZee Inc., a leading coffee technology and co-packing company, recognized the growing popularity of single-serve coffee and has made brewing just one cup of coffee as convenient as preparing a cup of tea.

“We saw a need to bring high-quality, single-serve coffee options to the market that are also more sustainable and eco-

friendly,” says Masa Higashida, CEO of NuZee Inc.

The brand sells both single serving pour over kits and coffee brew bag filters that make it possible to prepare a cup of coffee from anywhere you have access to hot water, including your home, the workplace and when travelling. And because NuZee will soon be rolling out industrially compostable brew bag filters, and the company uses recyclable foil boxes for its single-serve coffee products, it’s also an eco-conscious way to enjoy a fresh, single serving of coffee. To learn more, visit mynuzee.com.

When it comes to your cup of joe, convenience and sustainability don’t have to be at odds. Thanks to recent innovations, you can enjoy a fresh-brewed cup of coffee at home or on-the-go that you can feel good about

— StatePoint

SPORTS

Morocco are history makers



They became the first Arab nation to win a game at the FIFA Women's World Cup after they upset South Korea

ADELAIDE: Morocco gained their first ever victory at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup as they secured a shock 1-0 win over South Korea on Sunday. Ibtiissam Jraidi scored Morocco's first World Cup goal with a sixth-minute header as the north Africans, ranked 72nd in the

world, stunned their 17th-ranked opponents. Sixteen-year-old substitute Casey Phair fired wide for South Korea late on. "We are just so pleased our efforts have paid off. "This victory is for Morocco and Arabs, it's the fruit of our hard work," said Jraidi. Morocco lost 6-0 to Germany in their first match in Group H, but were much better against South Korea. There was only one shot on target in the first half, with Jraidi scoring with a diving header following Hanane Ait Elhaj's cross for Morocco's first ever goal at the tournament. South Korea, managed by Englishman Colin Bell, performed better in the second half, but could not find an equaliser. Ji So-yun had a good chance with a central free-kick just outside the penalty area in the 82nd minute, but her effort did not clear the Morocco defensive wall.

Phair, who became the youngest player to ever play in a FIFA Women's World Cup match when she came on in the 2-0 loss to Colombia, failed to hit the target with a late chance. Morocco coach Reynald Pedros said: "There's a sense of pride for us to pull this first World Cup win out of the bag. "We didn't change our philosophy. The Korean team is not like the German team and we got off to a blinding start. "We were efficient in the box, which was missing against Germany." The 2023 Women's World Cup, hosted jointly by Australia and New Zealand from July 20 to August 20, will see only the top two teams from each of the eight groups progress to the round of 16. This marks the inaugural instance of the women's football's premier tournament expanding to a 32-team format. - Agencies

Benzina becomes first player to wear hijab at Women's World Cup

ADELAIDE: Morocco defender Nouhaila Benzina has made history by becoming the first player to wear a hijab at a Women's World Cup. The 25-year-old wore the Islamic headscarf as she made her first appearance at the tournament in her side's 1-0 win over South Korea. The wearing of head coverings for religious reasons was authorised by FIFA in 2014. Morocco are one of eight teams making their debut at this summer's Women's World Cup. Benzina, who plays her club football in Morocco, is the first player to wear a hijab at a senior women's international tournament. She was an unused substitute during her country's opening game against Germany, which they lost 6-0. - Agencies

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Co-hosts New Zealand knocked out

DUNEDIN: Tournament co-hosts New Zealand were knocked out of the FIFA Women's World Cup on Sunday as Switzerland got the 0-0 draw they needed to advance as Group A winners. New Zealand began the day in second position in the group, but Norway moved above them thanks to a convincing 6-0 victory over the Philippines. Jacqueline Hand hit the post for New Zealand but they could not get the win they needed to stay in the competition. They become the first host nation to fail to make it past the group phase. It was a tame and disappointing end to the tournament for New Zealand, who had beaten Norway 1-0 in the World Cup's opening match. A shock 1-0 loss on Tuesday in Wellington against the Philippines, the lowest ranked nation in Group A, left New Zealand's qualification in the balance, although their fate was still in their hands before their final match in Dunedin. But, in a game they needed to win, they failed to have a single shot on target in the opening 70



minutes against Switzerland. A number of New Zealand players were in tears at the final whistle, with their team eliminated on goal difference. This was the country's sixth appearance at a Women's World Cup, but they had not won any of their previous 15 matches before Hannah Wilkinson scored the only goal in their 2023 opener as they beat Norway in front of a crowd of 42,137.

Norway on a roll In the same group, former world champions Norway rediscovered their form and ferocity in the nick of time as Sophie Haug's hat-trick helped them hammer the Philippines 6-0 in Auckland to reach the last 16 on Sunday. Haug got the ball rolling in just the sixth minute courtesy of a neatly taken back-post volley before then doubling her and her

side's tally 11 minutes later via a looping header. Caroline Graham Hansen underlined her importance with the third, scoring with a superb low shot from range - a key goal that gave Norway complete control of their fate, regardless of the scoreline in the other final group game between Switzerland and co-hosts New Zealand. Norway then put the outcome completely to bed with two goals early in the second half - a bundled own goal from the unfortunate Alicia Barker and a Guro Reiten penalty. The Philippines' woes were compounded when substitute Sofia Harrison was sent off less than 10 minutes after coming on following a VAR review on a late challenge on Thea Bjelde. In the middle of 11 added minutes, Haug completed her treble with another header and could have had a fourth but steered a sliding effort against the post. Switzerland topped Group A after drawing with New Zealand in the other game. - Agencies

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP



Colombia stun Germany with an injury time winner

SYDNEY: Manuela Vanegas scored a 97th-minute winner as Colombia stunned Germany 2-1 at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup on Sunday. Linda Caicedo netted a wondergoal to give the South Americans the lead, before Germany equalised with an 89th-minute Alexandra Popp penalty. Vanegas then headed Leicy Santos' corner past Merle Frohms to send the vast numbers of Colombia supporters at Sydney Football Stadium wild. It condemned Germany to

a first World Cup group stage defeat since 1995. A manic ending came after Caicedo, 18, had brilliantly curled into the top corner on 53 minutes to shock the two-time world champions. The final round of fixtures in this group kick off on August 3, with Colombia taking on Morocco and Germany facing South Korea. Colombia need a point to top the group, while Germany may need victory to be sure of reaching the knock-outs. - Agencies

PRE-SEASON USA TOUR

Barcelona register convincing 3-0 victory over Real Madrid

TEXAS: Barcelona continued their pre-season tour of the USA with a 3-0 win over Real Madrid in Arlington, Texas on Saturday. Ousmane Dembele's early goal was followed up by late strikes from Fermin Lopez and Ferran Torres. New signing Jude Bellingham played for Barca's El Clasico rivals Real and the England midfielder's header was one of five Real efforts that struck the woodwork at the AT&T Stadium. "The result is a bit misleading," said Barca coach Xavi Hernandez. "We shouldn't be overconfident. The result is very favourable but it doesn't mean we played a super match. It was a very even match in which Madrid also had many chances. There are many things to improve." New Barca signing Oriol Romeu was the first to hit the woodwork at the home of the NFL's Dallas Cow-



boys as he rattled the Real cross-bar with a thundering drive in the fourth minute. But Barca took the lead shortly after as a cleverly worked free-kick resulted in Pedri sliding a diagonal pass into the path of Dembele, who drilled the ball inside the far corner from a tight angle. Real were awarded a penalty just five minutes later after Barca defender Ronald Araujo handled in the box but Vinicius Junior blasted the spot-kick against the bar. The Brazil forward then fired against the underside of the bar and although Bellingham out-jumped Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen from the rebound, his header came back off a post before being scrambled behind. Aurelien Tchouameni fired a long-range strike against the bar after half-time and as Real pushed for an equaliser, Barca substitute

Lopez, 20, beat Thibaut Courtois on 85 minutes with a 20-yard strike after Toni Kroos had given away possession. Vinicius fired against the bar for a third time from a tight angle yet Torres sealed the win as he ran on to a Lopez pass before lifting the ball over the advancing Courtois and tapping it into the empty net. "The result is the least important thing," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti. "It hurts to lose, but I'll keep the good things we did. "We were good in terms of intensity, we had a lot of chances that didn't go in. Five [against the woodwork] in a game is quite rare, I don't think it has ever happened to me. But it's better if it happens in the pre-season." Barcelona complete their trip with a game against AC Milan in Las Vegas on 2 August while Real face Juventus in Orlando the following day. - Agencies

IN-PICTURES



10 killed in fireworks warehouse explosion in southern Thailand
This picture shows the scene of explosion in Narathiwat, Thailand. At least 10 people were killed and more than 100 were injured after a fireworks warehouse exploded in southern Thailand on Saturday, government officials said. *Xinhua*



US sanctions impede wildfire fighting in Syria
Smoke billows in a mountain fire in Latakia province, northwestern Syria. Earlier this month, massive wildfires broke out in several Syrian provinces, including Hama, Latakia and Idlib. Firefighters managed to control most of the fires but in Latakia, fires restarted and fire crews have been battling numerous blazes in the region. *Xinhua*



International Tiger Day marked in Malaysia
A Malayan tiger is pictured at Zoo Negara near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. *Xinhua*



Models walk the ramp at India Couture Week 2023
Models walk the ramp while showcasing the collection of designer Kunal Rawal at the Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI) X Hyundai India Couture Week 2023, in New Delhi. *ANI Photo*



Lomba Tari Nusantara held to preserve Indonesian traditional dance
Dancers perform Indonesian traditional dance during Lomba Tari Nusantara at Rumah Budaya Nusantara Puspo Budoyo in South Tangerang, Banten Province, Indonesia. Lomba Tari Nusantara is held to preserve the Indonesian traditional dance among teenagers. *Xinhua*



South Korea's players celebrate birthday in Chengdu Universiade Village
Water polo player Lee Sideok of South Korea and taekwondo player Park Hyejin of South Korea attend their birthday party at the dining centre in the 31st FISU Summer World University Games Village in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. *Xinhua*



Performance of China's Xinjiang Art Theatre Muqam Art Troupe in Indonesia
Dancers of China's Xinjiang Art Theatre Muqam Art Troupe perform in Bandung, Indonesia. The art troupe presented its first performance in Jakarta, capital of Indonesia and will travel to other cities until August 10. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Bank Nizwa’s exclusive event in Salalah provides holistic experience for attendees

The gathering offered networking and communications opportunities to the bank’s clients, industry experts, and renowned financial advisors



MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa, Oman’s leading and most trusted Islamic bank organised a special event dedicated to its customers in Salalah. This exclusive gathering brought together clients, industry experts, and renowned financial

advisors, and provided a holistic experience for attendees by offering networking and communications opportunities. Moreover, it proved to be a unique platform that promoted the exchange of valuable insights and contributed

to further strengthening relationships with the local community in Dhofar region. The event commenced with a welcome address by Sh. Khalid Al Khalili, Chairman of Bank Nizwa. Expressing his gratitude to the

bank’s clientele for their unwavering trust and loyalty, he said, “This exclusive event not only reaffirms our steadfast commitment to providing exceptional services but also exemplifies our strategic focus on cultivating enduring relation-

ships with our customers. It serves as a platform for the exchange of ideas and insights amongst thought leaders in the community, furthering collaboration and propelling industry growth. We are proud to have facilitated such valuable interactions that will undoubtedly contribute to the continued success of our customers and the industry as a whole.” He added saying, “At Bank Nizwa, we are committed to the financial success of our clients. We remain dedicated to helping them navigate their financial journeys and achieve long-term goals by investing in Sharia-compliant products and services that are ethical, sustainable, and have the potential to contribute to the creation of a more resilient economy.” Bank Nizwa offers a range of effective Islamic financial solutions that cater to the varying demands of its clients, both individual and corporate. With a comprehensive range of tailor-made products

and services, customers benefit from a personalized banking experience that includes round-the-clock access to dedicated personal bankers, Mudaraba investment options, and an array of value-added advantages. Well-versed with the trends and norms of the local market, Bank Nizwa also offers prudent advisory solutions to its clients. By identifying viable opportunities to grow business and wealth portfolios, the bank’s advisors provide various ethical investment options to clients and keep them updated on prospective financial opportunities. A pioneer in Islamic banking, Bank Nizwa remains dedicated to providing its clients with innovative financial solutions and unrivaled service quality. The event is a testament to Bank Nizwa’s continued efforts to support and engage with its customers to better understand their needs and help them achieve their financial aspirations while maximising growth.

MOUNTAIN DEW CAR WINNER HANDOVER CEREMONY HELD

Mountain Dew, Oman’s most favourite soft drink is currently running a national campaign on its can. The promotion is valid from 9 July, 2023 to 23 August, 2023. The mechanism for winning is simple, Open and Win, buy a Mountain Dew 330ml can, scan the QR on the can and look up for the unique code under the lid and WhatsApp. You can stand a chance to win many rewards such as coolbox, backpacks, camping chairs, caps, and t-shirts and 3nos- 4 x 4 vehicle under this promotion. To make this experience unique for its loyal customer, Mountain Dew will deliver the rewards directly at the doorstep of its winners. Najwa Moabad Abdul Hafidh is our first Winner and she received the keys of her vehicle from Youssef Ezzikhe, CEO, Oman Refreshment Company. There are 2 more vehicle as giveaways... Grab a Mountain Dew can from the nearest outlet , and you could be the next lucky winner with Mountain Dew. — Supplied picture



2023 FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Toyota GAZOO Racing wins 6 hours of Monza

MUSCAT: Toyota GAZOO Racing (TGR) has pulled off another outstanding first-place finish at the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship’s (WEC) 6 Hours of Monza. Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and José María López, in the No. 7 GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar, saw off an intense challenge from staunch competitors to attain top podium position for the third time this season in front of a 65,000-person crowd. This win, TGR’s fourth of the season, also extends the team’s World Championship lead to 26 points. Conway led the 36-car field into an intense opening lap from pole position. He consistently fought for first place amidst strong opposition, exerting pressure on the leaders as the first round of pit stops approached at the one-hour mark to eventually regain his lead. López joined the battle, pushing past competitors and setting new fastest laps twice in the process. His efforts in the fourth hour paid off, and he handed over the No. 7 GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar to Kobayashi with a significant advantage. Kobayashi’s skills were put to



the test during the thrilling final 90 minutes of the race when a safety car eliminated the 45-second gap between him and the contending vehicle. Following a remarkable pit stop by the mechanics that allowed him to rejoin the track ahead of his rival and set the fastest lap, Kobayashi finally pulled clear to secure victory with a 16.520-second lead. Koji Sato, President of Toyota Motor Corporation and Chairman of Toyota GAZOO Racing Europe, commented: “In the 2023 WEC season’s fifth round, the 6 Hours of Monza, the No. 7 GR010 Hybrid Electric Hypercar secured victory from pole position. The Monza fans cheered us on throughout the race and we were able to compete

in an electrifying atmosphere. The last four weeks, in which we all worked together as one to move forward and showcase our true performance capabilities, were very important to us. Thanks to these efforts, we were able to compete as a cohesive team at Monza. Mike, Kamui, and Jose kept calm and steady throughout the race, and I am proud of all the team members at the track who worked hard for this win. In the next round at Fuji, we will continue our best under the leadership of Kamui. My heartfelt gratitude goes out to everyone who supported us.” Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including

Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota’s participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established TGR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota’s belief that ‘the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,’ TGR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota’s commitment to making ‘ever-better’ cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, TGR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone. The penultimate round of the 2023 FIA WEC season takes place on 10 September in Japan with the 6 Hours of Fuji. Toyota GAZOO Racing has won eight of its last nine races at Fuji Speedway and is poised to contend for another victory in their home race.



Aster Royal Hospital launches Cochlear Implant programme

MUSCAT: Aster Royal Hospital Al Ghubra recently launched its Cochlear Implant programme to provide state-of-the-art treatment for hearing loss due to weak nerves. Aster Royal Hospital offers a comprehensive range of services that cater to individuals with hearing loss. It includes surgical treatment as well as personalised rehabilitation, emotional support, educational assistance, community engagement, ongoing care and maintenance. The Cochlear Implant programme at Aster Royal Hospital is backed by a panel of highly qualified medical professionals, including experienced consultant surgeon with years of experience in Cochlear Implantation surgery. The team includes ENT specialists Dr.Vidya Bhargavan and Dr. Yasmeen Khan. The team is supported by a group of audiologists, speech therapist, anaesthetists, radiologist nursing staff, and an excellent administrative setup. The high quality of state-of-the-art equipment available for ear surgeries at Aster Royal Hospital makes this programme a leading-edge service in the region. The program provides a comprehensive assessment to identify hearing loss severity, assess candidacy for cochlear implants, and understand the social challenges faced by individuals with hearing loss. The surgical expertise of the programme includes implantation procedures by skilled surgeons who ensure safety and precision during surgery and address social concerns related to surgery. The personalised rehabilitation services of the program include auditory training and therapy sessions, speech and language development support, and strategies for coping with social situations. Emotional support services, including counselling for individuals and families, address the emotional impact of hearing loss and build

self-confidence and resilience. The ongoing care and maintenance services of the programme include a wide network of centres across Oman, regular follow-up appointments, device maintenance, troubleshooting, and providing continuous social support. The continued support services of the program include upgrades and advancements in technology, addressing evolving social challenges, and ensuring long-term success and well-being. Aster Royal Hospital team proudly states, “We are excited to offer the Cochlear Implant programme to our patients in Oman, which has the potential to transform the lives of individuals with severe to profound hearing loss. Our team’s expertise in ear surgeries and our state-of-the-art facilities enable us to deliver world-class care in private set up which was available only in selected government hospitals and abroad.” The Otology programme at Aster Royal Hospital has already helped several patients with ear diseases including a young boy who recently underwent Cochlear Implant surgery, marking a new milestone in the hospital’s efforts towards restoring hearing for the patients in Oman in line with the National Ear Care Programme. The success of the surgery highlights the hospital’s clinical strength and its commitment to providing the best possible care to its patients. “With the launch of the Cochlear Implant programme, individuals seeking this service can now access this treatment at Aster Royal Hospital. We hope that this programme will help many more individuals overcome the challenges of hearing loss and live a productive life,” said Dr. Vidya Bhargavan, Specialist - ENT at Aster Royal Hospital. For more information and appointments please visit the Aster Royal Hospital website www.aster.om



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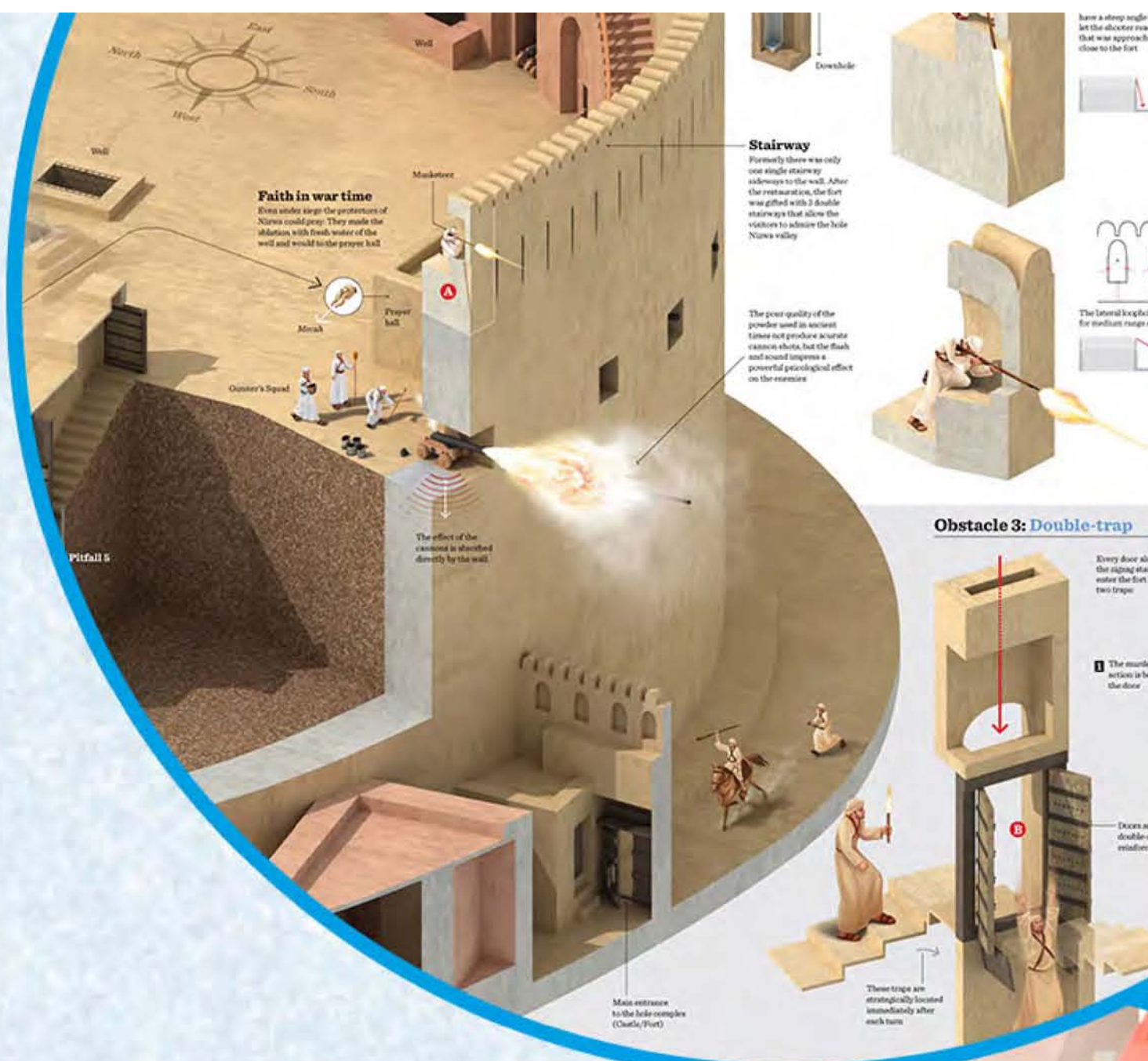
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