

**OMAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER,
UN ENVOY REVIEW
SITUATION IN YEMEN**

Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid
Badr Hamad Al Busaidi received
Hans Grundberg, UN Special
Envoy to Yemen in Muscat on
Wednesday. >**A2**



**OQGN IPO Individuals'
Subscription Closes
Today**

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Travellers have welcomed the cut in taxi fares from the Muscat airport

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Travellers arriving at the Muscat International Airport will heave a sigh of relief after Wednesday's announcement by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology that the fares of airport taxis have been reduced by a massive 45 percent if booked through licensed taxi applications – OTaxi and Oman Taxi.

In recent times, boarding an airport taxi was a costly affair,

which led to a growth of unlicensed operators. To provide a boost to airport taxis and more frequent use of licensed taxi applications, the Ministry has now announced a new fare system.

Under the new system, the base rate for airport taxis has been fixed at OMR1.5, with an additional 250 baisas charge for every kilometre travel.

Previously, the base rate was OMR3, and the additional rate was fixed at 400 baisas per kilometre.

Besides the taxi options, Mwasalat runs airport services, which have become quite popular with travellers while going and coming to the airport.

Rakesh KP, an Indian traveller welcomed the news of reduction in the airport taxi fares. "It is a big news for a frequent traveller like me, who travels to neighbouring countries for work twice a week. The app based taxis are much organised and with the

fares being reduced by 45 percent, I think, the taxi system at the Muscat International Airport will be a good option."

"Earlier, I had to encounter unpleasant conversations with unregulated taxi drivers over fares. The app based applications will solve the issue," he added.

Anita Mathews, a working woman, expressed relief with the reduction and launch of app-based taxis from the airport. "I am thankful to the ministry for taking into account the high prevailing rates of airport taxis. This move will greatly benefit the passengers as well as the taxi operators."

To streamline taxis at airports across Oman, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MTCIT) has licensed two companies, Al Sahab World Company with the Otaxi app and Ubar Smart Cities Company with the Oman Taxi app, which began operation from October 1.

INITIAL PUBLIC OFFERING

OQGN IPO for individual investors ends today

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Initial Public Offering of OQ Gas Networks (OQGN) ends on Thursday for the second category of individual investors.

The company floated about 636,601,716 shares for this category. This represents 30 percent of the total floated stocks (2,122,005,720 shares) and the price range of this category was set at about 126 baisas per share.

The IPO for the first category (corporate entities) ends on October 9, 2023. The company has floated about 848,802,288 shares for this category, which constitutes 40 percent of the total floated shares.

Anchor investors include the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia; Qatar Investment Authority, represented by Falcon Company and the Belgian company Fluxys International have committed to buy a 30 percent stake of the total floated shares.

The IPO comes as part of the economic diversification policies adopted by the Omani government to achieve the objectives



of Oman Vision 2040, which reflects a long-term development and sustainability plan.

OQGN holds a natural monopoly over critical gas transportation infrastructure in Oman as the exclusive owner and operator of the natural gas transportation network.

In 2022, the company transported about 39.4 billion cubic metres of gas from six gas suppliers to around 130 gas consumers along 4,031 kilometres of gas pipelines. In its operations, the company

is supported by three compression stations and 25 gas supply plants. OQGN works according to a long-term franchise granted to it by the Omani government for 50 years until 2070 in line with the amended franchise agreement.

The company plays a vital role in connecting gas producers with consumers through its assets, which include a gas pipeline network supported by compression and gas supply stations, which generates transportation and delivery fees for the company. >**A2**

HIJRI YEAR 1445

Registration for Hajj ritual starts

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs announced the opening of registration for those wishing to perform Hajj ritual from the Sultanate of Oman for the Hijri year 1445.

The registration for pilgrims begins on Monday 23 October 2023 and continues until Sunday 5 November 2023.

The registration process can be made via www.hajj.om, the ministry's electronic website for registering pilgrims of the Sultanate of Oman. >**A1**



TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Nizwa Hospital expansion costs OMR30mn

1 The Ministry of Health celebrated the opening of Nizwa Reference Hospital's expansion project carried out to the tune of OMR30 million. The expansion takes up the hospital's capacity to more than 555 beds—adding 245 new beds and 8 buildings on total area of 45,000 sqm. >**A4**

OMAN

First phase of Sorouh project completed

2 The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning announced the completion of the first phase of Sorouh project, named 'Al Naseem', in the Wilayat of Barka, Governorate of South Al Batinah. Al Naseem neighbourhood is spread over an area of 350,000 sqm. >**A3**

WORLD

Saudi Arabia to bid for 2034 World Cup

3 Saudi Arabia has announced its intention to bid for the 2034 FIFA World Cup. The bid for 2034 intends to deliver a world-class tournament and will draw inspiration from Saudi Arabia's ongoing transformation and the country's deep-rooted passion for football. >**A6**

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Oman-Germany Business Forum focuses on enhancing relations

The forum focuses on several sectors, namely transport, logistics, renewable energy, tourism, real estate, construction, petrochemicals and health

MUSCAT: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) organised here on Wednesday the Oman-Germany Business Forum. The forum focuses on several sectors, namely transport, logistics, renewable energy, tourism, real estate, construction, petrochemicals, health and advocacy. Engineer Hammoud bin Salem Al-Saadi, deputy to the Chairman of

the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, praised the visit of the trade delegation from the Federal Republic of Germany, which reflects their interest in developing opportunities for trade and investment between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Germany. This visit confirms the common desire between the two friendly



B2B MEETINGS: The meetings aimed at boosting cooperation and enhancing business relations, as well as exchanging expertise and information. - ONA

countries to enhance the level of partnership and cooperation in various fields, he said. He explained that the exchange of trade delegations

between countries is of great importance for strengthening relations and expanding joint investment and trade opportunities, and to facilitate import and



export between countries. On the sidelines of the forum, several B2B meetings were held between Omani and German businesspeople. Those meetings

aimed at boosting cooperation and enhancing business relations, as well as exchanging expertise and information. - ONA

MEETING

Oman's foreign minister, UN envoy review Yemen situation

MUSCAT: Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi received in Muscat today Hans Grundberg, UN Special Envoy to Yemen. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed the situations in Yemen and the efforts exerted to reach a peaceful solution that serves the Yemeni people and establishes security and stability. - ONA



JEDDAH

Jeddah meeting reviews sustainable growth indicators

JEDDAH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), took part on Wednesday in the 48th meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), held in Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The meeting reviewed a range of topics, including the action plans for 2024 and 2025 as per the needs of statistics departments and the initiatives of partnered organisations. It also highlighted the experiences of various Arab statistics



departments in the field of sustainable development indicators, among other topics. Oman's

delegation in the meeting was headed by Dr. Khalifa Abdullah Al Barwani, CEO of NCSI. - ONA

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OQGN is an attractive entity for investment

< FROM A1 Driven by strong and sustainable profit margins, the company is based on huge and growing regulatory assets. This makes it an attractive entity for investment that achieves the aspirations of investors. In addition, OQGN has strengths that qualify it to play a key role in the energy transition journey in the Sultanate of Oman. The company's growth strategy is based on maximising its strengths and market position in order to play a key role in Oman's energy transition through facilitating the transportation of hydrogen and captured carbon and



their utilisation strategies. The growth strategy of the company is based on three main pillars. The first is investing in the

growth of the natural gas transportation network, removing barriers and performing updates, while the second includes acquiring the assets of gas transportation and expanding in the activity of transporting other sources of energy. The future growth of the company is also based on the increasing demand for gas in Oman with the rise in economic activity and manufacturing in all vital sectors, including the liquefied natural gas sector, the electricity sector, the water desalination sector, the oil and gas sector, in addition to the industrial and commercial sectors. - ONA

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Vehicles shown are for illustrative purposes only.

CIVIL AVIATION

Boosting ties with weather enthusiasts

MUSCAT: The Civil Aviation Authority held a meeting with representatives of weather groups in the Sultanate of Oman, with the aim of strengthening community partnership with weather enthusiasts, which comes within the Friends of Omani Meteorology initiative. During the meeting, unifying the naming of winter depressions was discussed. They agreed to establish a national group for weather enthusiasts that brings together all representatives of weather groups in the Sultanate of Oman, with the "Rasda" project supervising the management of this group. This group names the winter depressions in coordination with the Authority. It is noteworthy that the Civil Aviation Authority launched the Friends of Meteorology initiative in March this year with the aim of caring for weather enthusiasts and meteorology lovers, and enhancing cooperation with community members. - ONA





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First phase of Sorouh project in Barka completed

Al Naseem Neighbourhood in Barka, to be implemented in five phases, will provide more than 1,000 housing units

Times News Service

BARKA: The first phase of Sorouh project, named 'Al Naseem', in the Wilayat of Barka, Governorate of South Al Batinah has been completed, announced the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. Al Naseem neighbourhood covers an area of 350,000 sqm.

Ten percent of the first phase of Al Naseem was sold out, with 10 title deeds handed over to those eligible to the properties, said Eng. Wissama Nasser Al Harbi, Director of Integrated Residential Neighborhoods Department at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Al Harbi told Oman News Agency (ONA) that Al Naseem Neighbourhood, which constitutes the first project of Sorouh Initiative, comprises 220 housing units.

He added that Al Naseem Neighbourhood, to be implemented in five phases, will provide multiple housing alternatives, offering more than 1,000 housing units, such as 320 apartments consisting of 3 to 4 rooms, and there are 120 units of separate villas consist-



SOROUH PROJECT: Al Naseem Neighbourhood, which constitutes the first project of Sorouh Initiative, comprises 220 housing units.

ing of 3 to 5 rooms, in addition to 132 units of semi-detached villas consisting of 3 to 5 rooms, and 479 units of townhouses consisting of 3 to 4 rooms.

He stated that it is permissible to apply for the purchase of a residential unit to those eligible for residential land grants and those who have applied for residential land but were not previously granted any plot of land. Citizens who have previously obtained a plot of government land can also replace those lands with residential units in the project.

It is worth noting that the National Initiative for Integrated

Residential Neighbourhoods (Sorouh) contributes to providing an alternative suitable housing for citizens eligible for residential land grants in partnership with the government and private sectors.

It provides quality housing in integrated neighbourhoods at reasonable prices, aiming to promote home ownership in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as stimulate the economy and enhance government spending on infrastructure services for plots of land granted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, by involving the private sector. With ONA inputs

DEFENCE TOWER

Tourism officials visit Nizwa Fort



NIZWA: People responsible for tourism in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries on Wednesday visited the historic Nizwa Fort on the sidelines of the seventh meeting of tourism agents in the GCC countries.

They were briefed on the building and facilities of the citadel, which is the largest defence tower in the Arabian Peninsula

and is distinguished by its narrow corridors and defensive positions, the citadel with its artistic architecture, and the numerous halls such as the gallery, the study rooms.

They also viewed the facilities accompanying the castle and listened to an explanation about the history of the castle and its role throughout successive eras. -ONA

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Nizwa Hospital expansion project costs OMR30 million

With the expansion, the hospital's capacity has risen to more than 555 beds—adding 245 new beds and 8 buildings on total area of 45,000 sqm

Times news service

NIZWA: The Ministry of Health on Wednesday celebrated the opening of Nizwa Reference Hospital's expansion project carried out with an expenditure of OMR30 million.

The expansion takes up the hospital's capacity to more than 555 beds—adding 245 new beds and 8 buildings on total area of 45,000 sqm. The first phase of the project was implemented under the supervision of the Royal Court Affairs.

The project reflects the government's sincere efforts to meet the needs of citizen and enhance decentralisation in accordance with the national strategy endorsed by Oman Vision 2040.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Finance Minister Sultan Salim Al Habsi and attended by Health Minister Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti, among other officials.

At the ceremony, Dr. Ali Zayid Al Busaidi, Director of Nizwa Hospital highlighted the facilities included in this phase of expansion, namely Cardiac Catheterization Unit, Cardiac Care Unit (CCU), Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), Adult ICU, Endoscopy Unit, Day Care Unit, additional Operation Theaters, expanding of Emergency Department (first phase), and Outpatient Clinics.

He added that the expansion also included Radiology department by the addition of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) Unit, bone-density test, and CT for emergency cases, along with admission wards and a full-fledged center for Training and Studies.

Dr. Al Busaidi pointed out that waiting lists for outpatient clinics

and surgeries are shortened with the new expansion.

He emphasised that this expansion will not only serve the Governorate of Al Dhakhiliya but also other neighboring governorates such as Al Wusta, North Al Sharqiyah and Al Dhahira.

At the end of the ceremony, the chief guest and the attendees toured the expanded facilities where the project manager from Royal Court Affairs Eng. Yousuf Yaqoob Ambo Ali explained details of the project, new buildings and the additions of the expansion. The expansion project includes the addition of 8 beds to the internal medicine ward (male and female), 14 beds to the maternity ward, 32 beds to male surgery ward, 6 beds to the stroke ward, 2 beds to the cardiac intensive care unit, (20) beds to the newly established Post Cardiac Cath Unit (PCCU), 8 beds to Adult ICU, (4) pediatric intensive care beds, and 11 NICU beds.

Moreover, a total capacity of 67 beds was added in specialised units such as the emergency department, delivery room, gynecology emergency, day care, dialysis unit, endoscopy and pain control, and operation and recovery theatres. The project increased further rooms for doctors and nursing and treatment in outpatient clinics up to 85 rooms.

As for Radiology department, the project introduced new services represented in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and bone-density test. Within the expansion, a second CT was installed in the department in addition to number of radiation devices such as X-ray, c-arm, fluoroscopy, mammogram, and mobile X-ray.



A total capacity of 67 beds was added in specialised units such as the emergency department, delivery room, gynecology emergency, day care, dialysis unit, endoscopy and pain control, and operation and recovery theatres.



HEALTH AWARENESS

WHO team visits Badaa Health Village in North Al Sharqiyah



WADI BANI KHALID: A delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) office in the Sultanate of Oman on Wednesday visited Badaa Health Village in the wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid, Governorate of North Al Sharqiyah.

The visit was made within the context of a programme to follow up initiatives and projects implemented by the Ministry of Health and the WHO in the health field.

The delegation held meetings with the personnel tasked with the project and took note of the progress of the initiative.

The visit was aimed at fostering health awareness among local community members and exploring their opinions and views about the best ways to support and implement such initiatives.

The delegation consisted of Dr. Jean Yaacoub Jabbour, WHO Representative for Oman, and Dr. Hamoud Ali Al Marshoudi, Wali of Wadi Bani Khalid, and other officials.

It is worth noting that the "Badaa" Health Village in the wilayat of Wadi Bani Khalid in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate is

considered the first child-friendly health village due to its great and effective contribution to improving the lives of children, caring for them, and paying attention to them educationally, health-wise, and socially.

The health village was established in December 2020, with the aim of spreading, and strengthening the health culture of the individual through society.

"Badaa" was chosen as one of the healthy villages within the healthy villages programme at the level of the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

GCC officials discuss unified tourist visa, ways to boost tourism industry



The meeting was aimed at exploring optimum ways of utilising opportunities and capabilities of GCC countries

MANAH: GCC tourism undersecretaries on Wednesday held their 7th meeting of 2023 at Oman Across Ages Museum in the Wilayat of Manah, Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

The officials discussed the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) tourism strategy, the unified GCC tourist visa, tourism guidebook and one-stop platform.

Azzan Qasim Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, said that the meeting was aimed at exploring optimum ways of utilising



opportunities and capabilities of GCC countries.

Tourism undersecretaries

The officials studied the progress made in upgrading the tourism sector, based on measures approved during the sixth meeting of GCC tourism undersecretaries held in the city of Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, in 2022.

Khalid Ali Al Sunaidi, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs at the GCC Secretariat General, said that the meeting was in pursuance of efforts made to improve the tourism sector in member states.

He pointed out that 2022 saw a 57.5 percent rise in the GCC travel and tourism sector's total added value within the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2021.

Al Sunaidi pointed out that the GCC Supreme Council, during its 43rd session, approved the general framework of the GCC Tourism Strategy (2023-2030), which sets out ambitious goals to meet the aspirations of GCC states. — **ONA**

HORTICULTURAL EXPO 2023 DOHA



Oman showcases sustainability and environment awareness

DOHA: A number of officials and specialists in the field of horticulture stressed the significance of participation in the Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha under the theme “Green desert, better environment”.

The expo showcases sustainability, environment awareness, technology and innovation and modern agriculture.

Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said that the Sultanate is participating along with a large number of countries in this event, being held for the first time in the Middle East.

The Sultanate's participation represents an opportunity for showcasing its trees that grow in desert environments.

It is also an opportunity for exchange of expertise and knowl-



edge among the countries taking part in the expo, he said, adding that the Expo 2023 Doha focuses on climate change and the contribution of horticulture in reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

He praised the efforts of the State of Qatar for hosting the Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha.

Dr. Khalid Abdulziz Al Farsi, Head of the Horticulture Depart-

ment at the Oman Botanic Garden, said that the plants at the Sultanate's pavilion in the Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha are all brought from the country.

Oman Botanic Garden has participated in the Sultanate's pavilion at Horticultural Expo 2023 Doha, represented by the Ministry of Heritage.

— ONA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Training course to conclude today

Times News Service

Muscat: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Training and Rehabilitation, in cooperation with the Omani School Sports Association, will conclude on Thursday the training programme “Sports Events and Tournament Management.”

The programme was launched early this week on Sunday with the participation of 26 teachers and supervisors in the field of physical education and management of sports activities from various educational directorates in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The closing ceremony and the distribution of participants' certificates is held today, Thursday, under the patronage of Suleiman bin Hamoud Al Harasi, Advisor to the Minister of Education for Studies and Research, and in the presence of Fahd bin Khalfan Al Mashaikhi, Secretary-General of the Omani School Sports Association.



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The last date for submission of offers is on Tuesday, 2359 hours detailed date on the above table, accompanied by a bid bond issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 1%) of the total tender value, for the SI # 1 cash deposit of RO. 500/- on our account and send email to the above email seeking your deposit receipt. The bid bond/deposit cash receipt must be valid for 120 days from the last date of submission of offers and ORIGINAL bid bond/Deposit cash receipt must be submitted on the tender box at the reception on our Administration Building, Al Mesfah West factory Site, Bausher, Muscat, Oman.

Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by a tender bond will NOT be considered. This publication is part of the tender documents

AL BURAIMI GOVERNORATE

Rise in foreign investment firms

AL BURAIMI: The statistics issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion showed an increase in the number of foreign investment companies in Al Buraimi Governorate up to October this year.

The number stood at 777 companies compared to 177 in 2022.

Hamad bin Mohammed Al Saidi, Director of the Department of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in the Governorate of Al Buraimi, said that the capital registered for foreign

investment in the governorate amounted to over OMR9 million and the number of industrial establishments was 584.

The number of commercial registrations in the Governorate of Al Buraimi stood at 923, including 223 commercial registrations for individual merchant companies, 363 commercial registrations for Sole Propriety Companies, 303 commercial registrations for limited liability companies among other others.



— ONA



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Public Auction No. (31 /2023)

Muscat Municipality, represented by the auction the establishment of a public auction for the sale A variety of different vehicles (Light& Heavy vehicles - motorcycles) according to the following details:

Interested individuals for this Auction must comply with the conditions set out here under:

- Those wishing to enter the auction must pay a fee and its amount (=4 OMR) (four Omani rials) witch are not refundable, As A temporary deposit (refundable) is required to pay an amount of (500 OMR) (five hundred Omani rials) as fees to participate in the auction , as it required to pay it electronically to the collector of the committee in the directors the general directorate of public affairs administration & financial affairs at municipal presidency building darsait.
- The person who wins the action obligated to pay the full price of the vehicles if they were awarded to him plus 5% value added tax, and the action fees by (=3%OMR) of the total of vehicles through electronic payment.
- Vehicles are sold in their current condition , and the Muscat municipality is not responsible for the loss or damage of part of it once its value is paid its value does not bear any obligation with respect to vehicles in the event that the description of any displayed commodity does not match, It also does not guarantee the validity of the vehicles offered for sale or the safety of their technical condition those wishing to participate in the bidding will inspect the vehicles on the specified days therefore .
- The vehicles sold are not returned or reduced in value , and any petition submitted in this regard will not be accepted .
- The buyer is obligated to transfer , and load the vehicles that have been awarded to him after paying their full value within a period not exceeding one week from the date of purchase , and he bears full responsibility for the movables that were not transported within the specified period , and in the event that they are not transferred within the specified period , the municipality may resell the sale at its own expenses .
- The date and location set for inspecting the movables and awarding the bid are specified as follows:

As stated here above.	Location
Inspection Date	From 08/10/2023 to 09/10/2023
Inspection Time	From 08: 00 AM to 12:00- 00PM
The date for the submitting the participation	From 08/10/2023 to 09/10/2023
A site for submission participation fees	Head office in darsait at the committee loader at the general directorate of public affairs Administrative & financial
Auction date	12/10/2023 at seven o'clock in the morning (meet the day to extend)
For inquires and coordination	- The VAT specified in the law will be applied to successful bidder. - It is not allowed to enter the auction arena until after showing the receipt of the subscription fee and amount of insurance. - Muscat Municipality may cancel or defer the sale without providing any justification. - The security deposit will not be refunded in cases:- - If he does not pay the value of the movables. - If he does not transfer the movables from the site within the specified period.

IN ALASKA

2 US army soldiers die after vehicle flips

ALASKA: Two US Army soldiers have died, 12 others are injured after a military vehicle flipped on its way to a training exercise in Alaska on Monday, the US Army Alaska said, according to medi report.

The truck, a light medium tactical vehicle used for troop transport, was travelling to a training near Salcha, Alaska, about 30 miles southeast of Fairbanks, where the

soldiers were based.

11th Airborne Division

Seventeen soldiers of the 11th Airborne Division were in the vehicle, which was travelling with a convoy of others, a US Army Alaska spokesman, John Pennell, said on Monday night.

The vehicle's driver lost control at about 11 am and it overturned

on a dirt road in the Yukon Training Area, just outside Salcha near Richardson Highway, Pennell said.

First responders extracted the soldiers and provided on-scene medical treatment until they could be medically evacuated by ground and air, the Army said in a statement.

Pennell said the injured were taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hos-

pital. Two who were seriously hurt were then transported to Providence Alaska Medical Center. The injured soldiers were not released from the hospital as of Monday evening. The names of the two soldiers who died will be released 24 hours after relatives are notified, he said An investigation will examine what caused the accident, he further said. – ANI



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Saudi Arabian Football Federation set to bid for 2034 FIFA World Cup

Saudi Arabia's inaugural FIFA World Cup bid is backed by the country's growing experience of hosting world-class football events

RIYADH: The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has announced on Wednesday its intention to bid to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup.

Led by the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF), the bid for 2034 intends to deliver a world-class tournament and will draw inspiration from Saudi Arabia's ongoing social and economic transformation and the country's deep-rooted passion for football.

Saudi Arabia's inaugural FIFA World Cup bid is backed by the country's growing experience of hosting world-class football events and its ongoing plans to welcome fans across the world to the 2023 FIFA Club World Cup and 2027 AFC Asian Cup.

Reflecting on the intention to bid, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, emphasised that Saudi Arabia's desire to bid for the 2034 FIFA World Cup is a reflection of the country's progress in all sectors. The Kingdom has quickly emerged as a leading hub and an international destination for hosting



major events thanks to its rich cultural heritage, economic strength and the ambition of its people.

Under Vision 2030, sport is playing a significant role in contributing to the country's economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for all and holds a unique ability to unite and bring different cultures together. Saudi Arabia will plan to provide an unparalleled experience and an event that brings joy to fans across the globe.

A renowned host for some of the biggest global sports events since 2018, Saudi Arabia has been home to over 50 international events for

both male and female athletes including football, motorsports, tennis, equestrian, esports and golf.

Saudi Arabia has qualified for the iconic tournament on six occasions since 1994 – most recently in 2022 – when the Green Falcons secured a historic victory over eventual champions Argentina.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal, Minister of Sport and President of the Saudi Arabian Olympic and Paralympic Committee said: "Hosting a FIFA World Cup in 2034 would help us achieve our dream of becoming a leading nation in world

sport and would mark a significant milestone in the country's transformation. As an emerging and welcoming home for all sports, we believe that hosting a FIFA World Cup is a natural next step in our football journey"

Yasser Al Missehal, President of the Saudi Arabian Football Federation (SAFF), stated: "We believe the time is right for Saudi Arabia to host the FIFA World Cup. Our bid is driven by a love for the game and a desire to see it grow in every corner of the world. We want to celebrate our football culture and share our country with the world."

"We are embracing Saudi Arabia's enthusiasm for innovation and growth as we make our bid for this iconic tournament; the Kingdom's transformation journey is the driving force behind our bid. We are committed to hosting an exceptional event that celebrates the game, captivates players and fans, and inspires future generations. To be in a position to bid to host a FIFA World Cup is only possible with the full support of the Kingdom's leadership and we thank them for their continued committed to drive the country forward and open up new opportu-

nities," Al Missehal added.

As the FIFA World Cup expands to a 48-team tournament from 2026 onwards, tournament logistics are front of mind for players, officials, and fans. Saudi Arabia will host all matches in the Kingdom, streamlining travel, optimizing match scheduling, and providing unique fan experiences across host venues and cities.

A young and vibrant nation with over 70% of its population under the age of 35, Saudi Arabia is also home to one of the strongest leagues in Asia, the Saudi Pro League (SPL). Welcoming and engaging fans from across the globe, the league is home to some of the best Saudi talent and international star players from over 45 different countries.

SAFF's commitment to invest and grow the game at every level across the men's and women's game is highlighted by recent notable achievements including winning the men's U-23 AFC Asian Cup, 160% increase in youth football investment, opening 18 youth regional training centers, increasing registered coaches from 750 in 2018 to over 5,500 today, and witnessing an increase of 56% and 86% in registered male and female players respectively since 2021.

Saudi Arabia's ambition to grow the game and create new opportunities across the ecosystem is equaled in the women's game. Since 2019, SAFF has successfully established a senior women's and U-17 national teams, two professional women's leagues featuring 38 clubs, and a school girls league which welcomed over 48,000 girls in its first week. In just 2 years, there has also been an 800% growth in the number of female coaches. – SPA

ITALY



Bus crash kills 21 people near Venice

ROME: As many as 21 people have been killed, including two children after a passenger bus carrying Italians and foreigners fell off a bridge in Mestre, Italy, near Venice on Tuesday, according to media report.

The bus was travelling from Venice to nearby Marghera and was "full of people returning home from work," Venice mayor Luigi Brugnaro told state media RAI.

"It completely went off the road, it flew off the bridge. It was a bus; it was a highway. We are in mourning," he added. Brugnaro described the scene as "apocalyptic" in a post on Facebook.

Chief of Staff of the Prefecture of Venice Francesco Martino told CNN that 18 people were also injured in the crash and that authorities were still trying to determine what caused it.

The accident occurred on the overpass of a road that leads from Mestre to Marghera and the A4 motorway, Italian media skytg24 reported, as per CNN.

The bus broke through a wall of the overpass, falling between

The bus was travelling from Venice to Marghera and was full of people returning home from work, Venice mayor said

a warehouse and the tracks of the Mestre station below, according to skytg24.

The fire brigade wrote on X: "Following the impact, the vehicle caught fire."

Morris Ceron, general director of the municipality of Venice, told the Italian public broadcaster RAI that the vehicle was headed towards a campsite.

"The identification of the bodies is underway," Ceron told RAI. – ANI

CHEMISTRY

Nobel chemistry prize awarded to scientists who discovered quantum dots

STOCKHOLM: This year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry was awarded to scientists who worked decades to make your TV watching experience better, among other things.

Moungi G. Bawendi, Louis E. Brus and Alexei I. Ekimov received the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for developing quantum dots, customisable nanoparticles which have different properties depending on their size.

"Quantum dots have many fascinating and unusual properties. Importantly, they have different colors depending on their size," Chair of the Nobel Committee for Chemistry Johan Åqvist said.

You're likely looking at light emitted from quantum dots right now, as many modern computer-monitors and televisions using QLED technologies use quantum dots to create RGB colours of each pixel.

But that's not all. The quantum dot technology is used in biomedical research to visualise molecules. In the future, quantum dots could be used in new areas of quantum communications, flexible electronics, miniature sensors as well as in improving solar cell technologies.

What are Quantum Dots?

Quantum dots are very tiny semiconductors around 2-10 nanometers in size – a few billionths of a meter.

The size ratio of a quantum dot to a football is about the same as a football to planet Earth.

Quantum dots all have the same structure – a crystal of metal oxide atoms. Simply changing their size can completely alter their properties. Smaller dots emit blue light



and larger dots red and yellow.

It's not just their color that changes – but also their magnetic, electrical, thermal, catalytic properties. In other words, size matters.

Three Nobel Laureates

While the three chemists share the prize money worth 11 million Swedish crowns (\$990,000, €948,000), they worked on quantum dots separately, and over several years.

"Their incredible contributions to chemistry are reflected in their citation records: Bawendi shows an astonishing 100,000-plus citations in the Web of Science, and Brus 60,000-plus." David Pendlebury, Head of Research Analysis at

the Institute for Scientific Information at Clarivate told DW.

Perfect crystals

The theory of quantum dots goes back over a hundred years, but scientists found it near impossible to produce these materials. They needed to be able to make perfect crystals where its structures needed to be precise down to the atomic level.

Nobel Prize winner Alexei Ekimov broke the deadlock and was the first to succeed in creating size-dependent quantum effects in glass. He did this by producing copper chlorine nanoparticles that displayed these quantum effects.

Luis Bruce observed the same

effect for nanoparticles floating freely in a liquid solution.

For the dots to be useful, they need to be made with extreme control of size and surface. However, for a long time, no one thought these small particles could be produced.

Bawendi was awarded the Nobel Prize for doing exactly this – he invented the chemical method for creating quantum dots, allowing scientists to perfect the production of nanoparticles of very specific size and quality.

What's more, the dots could be perfectly tuned to display different properties just by changing their size, and not their entire molecular structure. – DW

43 missing in India as glacial lake outburst triggers flash floods

Several buildings and vehicles have been damaged by sludge and there are also reports of loss of lives, with around 20 people missing

GANGTOK: As many as 43 people, including army soldiers and civilians, have been reported missing after South Lhonak Lake, situated in North West Sikkim experienced a glacial lake outburst and triggered flash floods due to incessant rainfall in the region.

Around 3,000-4,000 people were evacuated last night in and around Rangpo and 5 relief camps were also opened in the district, said an official.

According to Sikkim District Magistrate, Tashi Chopel, “A lot of buildings and vehicles have been damaged by sludge. There are also reports of loss of lives, with around 20 people missing. We are also hearing about 23 casualties in the army, which needs to be confirmed with them. 3000-4000 people were evacuated last night in and around Rangpo. We have opened 5 relief camps in the district.”

The heavy downpour that triggered the lake outburst reportedly damaged over 150 houses in the Industrial Belt (IBM) at Rangpo, on the banks of river Teesta.

Following the devastation, an unidentified body was also discovered on Wednesday afternoon in the IBM area. In most of the houses, the lower two floors have been submerged in sediments and made redundant, said the official.



Speaking to the media, Pakyong District Magistrate Tashi Chopel informed, “There have been some loss of lives while over 150 houses have been damaged in the IBM area in Rangpo. If we take the stretch between Singtam and Rangpo along NH 10 which falls under Pakyong district, around 150-200 houses could have been damaged by the flash flood”.

The District Magistrate further informed that while industries ranging from pharmaceutical to manufacturing units along the banks of the River Teesta have been affected, no reports of damages have been received by the Pakyong District Magistrate.

Educational institutions Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology in Majhitar and Advanced Technical Training Centre in Bardang between Singtam and Rangpo also reported of flash flood entering the premises, with the first floors being inundated, informed Pakyong District Authorities.

The students in SMIT were reported to be safe, while students from ATTC have been given permission to go to their homes. There are still some people stuck in the houses in IBM who are now being evacuated by fire services and NDRF.

Five relief camps

Rangpo has five relief camps which include the Chanatar government school, the hall of Sikkim distilleries, the Tourism Information Centre hall, the housing complex at Majhigaon, and the Mining Government school hall.

Councillors from Rangpo Nagar Panchayat along with civil defence have been overseeing the relief camps. Around 300-400 people have reached relief camps so far, by evening all the people from damaged houses will be taken to relief camps, informed Pakyong District Authorities.

The South Lhonak Lake, situated in North West Sikkim experienced a glacial lake outburst



and triggered flash floods due to incessant rainfall in the region on Wednesday morning. Areas near River Teesta have been put on high alert, said an official.

According to the Legislator of Tumin-Lingee Assembly constituency, Sikkim, Ugyen Tshering Gyatso Bhutia, “The South Lhonak lake situated in North West Sikkim experienced an outburst in the early hours of Wednesday morning due to incessant monsoon rainfall. Areas near River Teesta were put on high alert.”

Giving information about the outburst, the Gangtok District Administration said, “The flash flood made its way through River Teesta sweeping Indreni Bridge in Singtam town, some 30 kilometres from Gangtok. A connecting bridge of the Balutar hamlet was also swept away around 4 am.”

In the wake of the devastation caused by a cloud burst in Sikkim, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Dilli Ram Thapa on Wednesday

urged the people of the state to stand together in difficult times and help each other to overcome the destruction.

“Several properties have been damaged. We cannot even estimate right now how much devastation has taken place. I request all institutions to support Sikkim,” said Thapa adding, “I took stock of the situation in the morning and will do it again. Rescue operations are underway,” he assured.

“Today a big situation has arisen in front of the people of Sikkim. I request everyone, all the people of Sikkim to stand together in these times and help each other out of this destruction,” added the Sikkim BJP chief.

On Wednesday, South Lhonak Lake, situated in North West Sikkim witnessed a glacial lake outburst that triggered flash floods accompanied by incessant rainfall in the region. Officials on Wednesday sounded alert for areas near River Teesta.

The flowing flash flood made its

way through River Teesta sweeping Indreni Bridge in Singtam town, some 30 kilometres from Gangtok informed Gangtok District Administration.

Another connecting bridge of Balutar hamlet was also swept away around 4 am.

As per information from Mangan District Administration, Chungthang town, some 90 kilometres north of Gangtok, houses the Teesta Stage 3 Dam. Upon high alert, the local residents have been evacuated from the area.

“Similarly, the Teesta Stage 5 dam at Dikchu in Mangan district was opened up for water disbursement after a high alert. It is reported that the control room of the dam has been severely damaged,” they informed.

Many homes near the River Teesta, situated in Gangtok’s Singtam have been evacuated. Additionally, temporary relief facilities have been established in the town’s Singtam Senior Secondary School, added officials. — ANI

TAIWAN



Typhoon Koinu brings heavy rains ahead of landfall

TAIPEI: Typhoon Koinu hit southern Taiwan with heavy rains and winds on Wednesday.

Koinu — which formed over the Pacific Ocean — is expected to make landfall on Taiwan’s south-eastern coast as a Category 3 storm Thursday.

The heaviest showers are expected along the mountainous and sparsely populated parts of Pingtung County in the south and Taitung and Hualien Counties in the east.

It is also expected to affect the major southern port city of Kaohsiung.

“The whole nation should be well prepared for the test of strong winds and heavy rains,” Premier Chen Chien-jen said at a meeting at the Central Emergency Operation Centre.

The emergency centre reported more than 120 accidents by noon, including uprooted trees and damaged roads. More than 1,700 households in eastern and central Taiwan were left without power.

“During the passage of the typhoon, residents should avoid going out and never go to mountains and coastal areas,” Chen said.

More than 100 flights were cancelled, mainly domestic flights.

Kaohsiung and Tainan — cities at the southern tip of the island

The heaviest showers are expected along the mountainous and sparsely populated parts of Pingtung County in the south and Taitung, Hualien areas

— suspended work and classes on Wednesday and Thursday.

Koinu is expected to weaken as it crosses the island’s southern tip and enters the Taiwan Strait, according to the Tropical Storm Risk website.

The typhoon comes after another major storm, Typhoon Haikui, hit the island in early September. Haikui was the first typhoon to directly make landfall in Taiwan in some four years.

Haikui uprooted trees and damaged cars, and injured dozens, but did not cause any catastrophic damage.

— DW

US HOUSE

Kevin McCarthy falls to Grand Old Party revolt in speakership ouster

WASHINGTON: Members of the US House of Representatives removed Speaker Kevin McCarthy from power in a historic vote on Tuesday.

McCarthy’s ouster represents the first time in the history of the United States that a speaker — the leader of the House majority and second in line from the presidency behind the vice-president — has been removed from office.

“I ended up being the 55th speaker of the House... one of the greatest honours. I loved every minute,” McCarthy told reporters after the vote, making it clear he had no intention to stand again.

“And the one thing I will tell you is doing the right thing isn’t always easy, but it is necessary. I don’t regret standing up for choosing governance over grievance.”

Choose a replacement quickly

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden urged the House to choose a replacement quickly.

“Because the urgent challenges facing our nation will not wait, he hopes the House will quickly elect a speaker,” White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said in a statement.

Representative Patrick McHenry of North Carolina was tapped as speaker pro tempore after McCarthy’s seat was vacated. McHenry, the chair of the House Financial Services Committee, is a McCarthy ally and spoke in support of him before the vote.

How was McCarthy voted out?

The motion to vacate the California Republican was filed by fellow GOP Representative Matt Gaetz of Florida.

On Monday, Gaetz announced in the House: “I have enough Republicans where at this point next week, one of two things will happen: Kevin McCarthy won’t be speaker of the House, or he’ll be the speaker of the House working at the pleasure of the Democrats.”



In the end, he didn’t need that long. Tuesday’s 216-210 for removal swiftly saw McCarthy gone after a motion to delay the vote failed just prior.

McCarthy’s reputation as a comparatively moderate Republican, who has in some cases shown a willingness to compromise with President Joe Biden, ultimately led to his downfall among conservatives.

Earlier on Tuesday, McCarthy announced that he intended to conduct the ballot in the chamber’s first round of votes in the afternoon. The move came just days after the passing of a 45-day, stop-gap funding bill to avoid a government shutdown.

Gaetz was angered that Mc-

Carthy passed the measure with Democratic votes and accused him of working for President Biden, and not his Republican colleagues.

He was also unhappy that McCarthy had come to an agreement with Biden over further funding for Ukraine despite such finances being struck from the emergency 45-day bill known as a Continuing Resolution, or CR.

Many Republicans opposed to the idea of ousting McCarthy, as there was no clear plan in place for how to deal with the eventuality of his removal. That was the motivation for their last-minute motion to table the vote and cancel the process.

Yet that, too, failed by a 208-218

tally, with 11 Republicans voting against delay.

McCarthy’s road to the speakership was arduous and his hold on power had been hanging by a thread throughout his tenure.

Gaetz led opposition to McCarthy taking the gavel and forced him to make concessions to the far-right Freedom Caucus — of which Gaetz is a member — before he would stop blocking him.

One of those concessions was to make it possible for any single member of the House to bring a motion to vacate the speakership, making McCarthy’s position inherently unstable even after he secured it.

Republicans have a narrow 221-212 majority in the House.

Open outcome

When McCarthy was appointed in January, he needed a record 15 rounds of voting before assuming the role. He now becomes the first House leader ever voted out of the speakership. Ousting the ambitious Californian threatens to throw the House into total chaos, as no Republican has declared a willingness to take up the gavel.

Earlier on Tuesday, McCarthy had said: “I’m an optimist. I put money on myself” That confidence was ultimately misplaced.

— DW

SPORTS

ICC MEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP 2023 BEGINS TODAY



Defending champions England take on New Zealand in the tournament opener

AHMEDABAD: The ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 begins on Thursday at the world's largest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad with holders England taking on New Zealand in a repeat of the 2019 final. The match at the Narendra Modi Stadium begins at 12.30pm, Oman time. Over the next 45 days, 48 matches will take place across ten world class venues.

Ahead of the tournament opener, all the ten captains shared their thoughts and hopes.

Reigning champion England captain Jos Buttler said: "The team's been mainly together for a long time since 2015. Now in England, young players coming through play a certain way and are determined to carry on the style, and I think we know it gives us the best chance of success. Other teams will push you and move it on further, so we always want to try and be at the head of that curve as well."

Australia captain Pat Cummins said: "I don't think there's too many events around the world where you feel like half the world's tuning in to watch and whenever India play Pakistan in a World Cup. It seems like one of those moments. So, it's going to be great that

it's at this [Ahmedabad] stadium. You can have over 100,000 people."

India captain Rohit Sharma said: "I have said it from the start, you know, every leader sitting here wants to achieve something really special for their country. It is something that is very highly prized; the 50-Over World Cup is something that I have always dreamt of growing up as a child, and I am sure it is the same for all the guys sitting here as well. One thing I can assure, which I am pretty sure everyone knows, is that people are going to love this tournament here; the stadium is going to be jam-packed because people here in India love their cricket as much as they love their team, but they love their cricket as well. But rest assured, it's going to be a great tournament."

Pakistan captain Babar Azam said: "We received good hospitality, and we were not expecting this, but I think the way people responded to us, everyone enjoyed it. We are here for a week in Hyderabad, so we do not feel like we are in India; it was like we are at home. We enjoyed ourselves and had a lot of fun. It's good, and I think it's a golden opportunity for everyone to give 100 percent and enjoy the tournament."

Afghanistan captain Hashmatullah Shahidi said: "I believe in this World Cup we will make a statement about the batting that we can do very good, play very good cricket."

Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan said: "I think we have prepared well. If we talk about the last four years since the 2019 World Cup, we are probably the third or fourth team in the qualifiers' point system. So, we have done really



well as a group; now it's time for us to put on a good show."

Netherlands captain Scott Edwards said: "I think all games in this tournament are going to be tricky. But, yeah, for us, we're just excited to get this tournament going. That's against Pakistan in Hyderabad."

South Africa captain Temba Bavuma said: "I think that's something that is relevant to all the teams. A lot of the teams have guys who played in India, have done well in India, so I wouldn't really say it's an advantage for us. I think all we could do is for the guys who have that experience and knowledge; they can share it among the team or use it in terms of our strategies and plans."

Sri Lanka squad Dasun Shanaka said: "See, exciting times for us. We have been struggling a lot in the recent past with injuries, but at the same time, we have some good records with us. You know, as a group, we are looking forward to the World Cup. Everyone wants to make a statement, that we are here to perform well in this tournament." (icc-cricket.com)

Stokes in doubt for England's opener against New Zealand

AHMEDABAD: Ben Stokes is a doubt for England's World Cup opener against New Zealand on Thursday because of a hip issue. England skipper Captain Jos Buttler played down the new issue on Wednesday but England are unlikely to take a risk on Stokes at the start of a seven-week tournament.

"It's not the time to take big risks on someone," said Buttler. *BBC Sport* reported on Wednesday. "Nearer the end, maybe you do take more of a risk with people's injuries but it's going to be a long tournament."

If Stokes is not fit, batter Harry Brook, who was only called up as a late change for Jason Roy, is the obvious replacement. Stokes has not played since hitting an England-record 182 in the third ODI against New Zealand on 13 September, having sat out Monday's warm-up game against Bangladesh.

"He's got a slight niggle with his hip," said Buttler. "But fingers crossed that it'll be good news for us. We'll see."

"He's working hard with the physios and we'll know more



when the guys arrive for training. We'll make the right call. If he's not fit to play, he's not fit to play. If he is, we can make that decision."

The tournament begins with a 10-team round-robin stage, with the top four qualifying for the semi-finals.

NZ skipper Williamson yet to recover

Captain Kane Williamson is not yet fit after rupturing knee ligaments in March and bowler Tim Southee is sidelined after surgery on a dislocated thumb. But they have a superb record in recent tournaments, having also reached the 2015 50-over World Cup final, plus two semi-finals and a final

in the past three T20 World Cups.

Last autumn England won the T20 crown to become double world champions and are now looking to become the first side to defend the 50-over title since Australia in 2007.

"It is obviously a good place to be having had the success of winning the 2019 one," Buttler said. "I have said lots of times that I don't see us as defending champions now. We are at the start of a new World Cup and it is about going out there and creating new memories and trying to win it again."

"I probably don't like the word defend either. I want us to attack as a side and attack this World Cup." - Agencies

THIRD WTT CONTENDER IN OMAN

World's leading paddlers to take part in WTT Contender Muscat from October 8 at SQSC



MUSCAT: Four of the world's top-ten men's paddlers and six of the top-20 women's players along with other leading players will vie for the top honours in the WTT Contender Muscat 2023, which will be played from October 8-14 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex (SQSC).

Heading the men's singles field is world No.4 Tomokazu Harimoto of Japan while the other top-ten ranked paddlers include world No.5 Hugo Calderano of Brazil, Chinese Taipei's Lin Yun-Ju (world No.7) and Germany's Dimitrij Ovtcharov.

In the women's singles, Japan's world No.6 Hina Hayata is the top ranked player in the competitive field, which also has South Korean world No.9 Shin Yubin besides a host of top-20 players.

The US\$75,000 prize-money tournament will be played at the

indoor hall of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex with nearly 150 players from 34 nations competing in men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles events.

Organised by Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) in coordination with World Table Tennis (WTT), this is the third time the WTT Contender event is being held in Muscat after two successful outings in March and September 2022.

Oman's head coach Omid Shamas Sharbabki from Iran also announced the team for his first major assignment with the Sultanate paddlers. The five-member squad includes Muhanad Al Balushi, Asad Al Raisi, Badar Al Jassasi, Loqman Al Farsi and Mohammed Al Mutawa.

The players went under an intensive training programme during

the past couple of weeks under Sharbabki. The Iranian coach picked the team based on the players' recent achievements in the domestic tournaments. Oman's paddlers will hope to gain experience against the world's top players as the WTT provides a great opportunity for the local paddlers.

OTTA Chairman Abdullah Bama-khalif said: "Hosting of such international tournaments in Oman is part of the OTTA's annual plans to organise world-class events and put Oman on the world map. It also provides a good platform for our local players to gauge their skills and watch the best in action. OTTA had successfully hosted two editions of WTT Contender in Muscat last year. We hope to make this edition event better. Earlier this year we also hosted the 2023 World Veteran Championship at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre."

ASIAN GAMES W'LIFTING

Al Khanjari fails to finish in 81kg event

MUSCAT: Oman's final medal hopes at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, were dashed on Wednesday when Amur Salim Al Khanjari failed to finish in the 81kg weightlifting Group A competition.

All the three attempts of Al Khanjari in the snatch were declared failed attempts.

Al Khanjari was among the 9 lifters in Group A vying for the medal in the class. North Korea's Chongsong Ri won the gold with a Games record of 364kg Ahead of the event, Al Khanjari's best combined lift total was 346kg.

Oman's campaign at the Games will end with the hockey team playing against Bangladesh in a seventh-place classification game on Friday. The Asian Games will conclude with a closing ceremony on Sunday.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by December 2023 reaching \$90.68, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 33 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was \$91. - **ONA**

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,733.33 points, down by 0.13 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.74 per cent at 461.65 points. Oman & Emirates Investment, up 1.61 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 4.65 per cent, was the top loser.

Masirah Island to be linked with OETC's transmission network

The key project involves linking the island of Masirah to OETC's transmission network through a 35-kilometre submarine cable with a voltage of 132 kilovolts and 60 kilometres of overhead power transmission lines

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) is set to embark on a strategic project to link the island of Masirah to OETC's transmission network through a 35-km submarine cable with a voltage of 132 kilovolts and 60 kilometres of overhead power transmission lines.



The project aligns with Oman Vision 2040 which aims to achieve carbon neutrality by marking a significant step towards reducing carbon emissions.

The key project involves linking the island of Masirah to OETC's transmission network through a 35-kilometre submarine cable with a voltage of 132 kilovolts and 60 kilometres of overhead power transmission lines. The connection will extend from the Mahout substation at 400/33 kilovolts to the Masirah substation. The consultancy contract for this project was awarded to an experienced firm in December 2023.

Furthermore, the transmission line routes and the marine cable directions have been approved by all relevant authorities, and a tender for project implementation is set to be released, with construction scheduled to commence in 2024. These strategic projects are aimed at realizing Oman's Vision of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. They aim to reduce reliance on diesel-based power generation, curb carbon emissions, meet the energy demands of Masirah Island, and accommodate the growing electricity consumption while also facilitating the integration of renewable energy sources.

This project includes a unique technological component in the form of the submarine cable, which employs complex and highly critical technologies. The project consultant has completed marine surveys, including geophysical and geotechnical surveys, each with its specialised equipment and expertise. These surveys represent the crucial initial steps required for the construction of the undersea cable.

Eng. Hisham Al-Riyami, the General Manager of the Planning and Design Department, emphasized the strategic significance of this project and its potential to

enhance the power supply on Masirah Island. He noted that it will improve various services on the island, saying, "Oman Electricity Transmission Company always strives to meet the growing energy demand across different sectors and locations in the Sultanate of Oman. This demonstrates our commitment to contributing to the development and progress of various fields in the country."

"This project will support all local activities and services on Masirah Island, improve the electricity sector's infrastructure, and provide sustainable solutions to meet sector needs."

It is worth mentioning that OETC, a member of the Nama Group, is the company responsible for the transmission and control of electricity across the Sultanate's network. The electricity is transmitted from production stations to distributed load centres in the governorates. The transmission network operates at a voltage of 132kV and above to cover most of the governorates in the Sultanate, whether in the north or the south. Furthermore, OETC manages the interconnection lines between Oman and the GCC interconnection network, which operates at a voltage of 220kV.



IN-COUNTRY VALUE



Forum highlights means of establishing ICV programmes

MUSCAT: Oman In-Country Value Forum was held under the slogan 'Productivity and Mechanisms of Achieving Balance'.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr Said bin Mohammed Al Saqri, Minister of Economy.

The forum explored means of establishing new foundations for In-Country Value (ICV) programmes and specifying determinants in a bid to achieve maximum benefit in various development fields.

The forum highlighted the experiences of various enterprises and companies with ICV.

Further, the National Platform for Business Accelerators 2023 was launched during the event. The platform will facilitate striking

partnerships between large enterprises with promising investments in the ICV sector with small and medium enterprises (providers of services).

At the end of its deliberations, the Oman In-Country Value Forum recommended adopting a national strategy for ICV. It also recommended establishing a national authority that regulates and activates ICV programmes, as well as taking necessary steps to support competitiveness.

Moreover, the forum suggested that private and public companies should set up ICV departments. These departments shall bear the responsibility of implementing plans and programmes catered to boosting the contribution of ICV to quarterly results. - **ONA**

IATA REPORT

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle Eastern carriers experienced a 1.4 percent year-on-year increase in cargo volumes in August 2023, according to a new report.

"This was an improvement from the previous month's performance (-0.1 percent), the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in its latest data for global air cargo markets for August 2023.

"The demand on the Middle East-Asia market has been trending upward in the past three months, expanding its year-on-year growth from 1.8 percent in June to 3.5 percent in August," the IATA report said. "Capacity increased 15.7 percent compared to August 2022," the report further added.

IATA in its report said that global year-on-year air cargo demand grew for the first time in 19 months.

Global demand, measured in cargo tonne-kilometres (CTKs), increased by 1.5 percent compared to August 2022 levels (1.2 percent for international operations).

Capacity, measured in available cargo tonne-kilometres (ACTKs), was up 12.2 percent compared to August 2022 (11.8 percent for international operations), the IATA report said. "This was largely related to belly capacity which rose 30 percent year-on-year as airlines ramped up operations to meet peak-northern summer travel season demand," the report further said.

"Air cargo demand grew by 1.5



percent over the previous August. This is the first year-on-year growth in 19 months, so it is certainly welcome news. But it is of a low 2022 base and market signals are mixed," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

"Looking ahead, while many uncertainties remain, we can take some optimism from PMI data moving towards positive territory. This is particularly significant as we head into air cargo's traditional peak year-end season," he further added.

August regional performance

Asia-Pacific airlines saw their air cargo volumes increase by 4.9 percent in August 2023 compared to the same month in 2022, the IATA report said. This was a significant performance improvement compared

pared to July (+2.3 percent).

Carriers in the region benefited from growth on two major trade lanes: Europe-Asia (up from 3.1 percent in July to 8.8 percent in August) and Middle East-Asia (up from 2.7 percent in July to 3.5 percent in August).

Additionally, the within-Asia trade lane also performed better in August, with international CTKs contracting by 4.7 percent compared to the 9.7 percent annual decline in July. Available capacity for the region's airlines increased by 28.5 percent compared to August 2022 as more belly capacity came online from the passenger side of the business.

North American carriers saw their air cargo volumes decrease by 1.2 percent. This was a performance improvement compared to July (-5.4 percent). Carriers in

the region benefitted from a slight improvement in growth on two major trade lanes: North America - Europe (2.9 percent annual contraction in August, 1.2 percentage points better than in July) and Asia-North America (declined 4.2 percent in August compared to 4.4 percent decrease in July). Capacity increased 2.7 percent compared to August 2022.

European carriers saw their air cargo volumes decline by 0.2 percent in August compared to the same month in 2022. This was, however, an improvement in performance versus July (-1.0 percent). Volumes saw an increase due to the aforementioned Europe-Asia performance and a small increase in the Middle East-Europe markets by 0.4 percent. Capacity increased 3.6 percent in August 2023 compared to 2022.

The IATA report further said that in August, both the manufacturing output Purchasing Managers Index or PMI (49.4) and new export orders PMI (47.0) saw a slight improvement to the previous month. They remained, however, below the critical threshold represented by the 50 mark, indicating a continuing, if slower, annual decline in global manufacturing production and exports.

Global cross-border trade contracted for the fourth month in a row in July, decreasing 3.2 percent year-over-year. This reflects the cooling demand environment and general macroeconomic conditions.

GLOBAL FISHERY FORUM & SEAFOOD EXPO RUSSIA

FDO showcases Oman's fisheries sector products and investment prospects



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), the force behind Oman's fisheries sector advancement, has just returned from its successful participation in the sixth Global Fishery Forum & Seafood Expo Russia, held from September 27 to 29, in St. Petersburg, Russia.

This event helped FDO, draw substantial attention from attendees who were enthralled by the diverse array of products and enticing investment prospects within Oman's thriving fisheries domain. FDO's presentation of its high-quality offerings reinforced

its stature as a pivotal contributor to the global fisheries industry.

This global powerhouse expo attracted over 100,000 visitors and witnessed active participation from more than 400 companies, alongside the contributions of 139 speakers, creating a convergence of industry luminaries, traders, and retailers.

Visitors to FDO's exhibition stand were impressed by the multifaceted investment avenues Oman's fisheries sector offers. FDO placed particular emphasis on its unwavering commitment to sustainable fishing practices, which underpin the long-term viability and preservation of Oman's

abundant marine resources. The exhibition of cutting-edge aquaculture technologies and infrastructure further underscored FDO's dedication to enhancing productivity and maintaining exemplary standards along the value-added chain.

Juhaina Al Kendi, Fisheries Development Oman spokesperson commented on FDO's participation: "Our presence at the Global Fishery Forum & Seafood Expo Russia 2023 was an unequivocal success. This platform allowed us to showcase Oman's fisheries sector potential to a global audience. We received overwhelming

interest from attendees who recognised the enticing investment opportunities and the top-notch products and services offered by FDO. We are confident that these interactions will pave the way for meaningful partnerships and collaborations, ultimately driving the sustainable growth of Oman's fisheries industry."

FDO presented its extensive portfolio throughout the exhibition, encompassing fresh and frozen fish, value-added seafood products, state-of-the-art fish processing facilities, aquaculture technologies, and sustainable fishing practices.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Oman & Emirates Investment, up 1.61 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 4.65 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,733.33 points, down 0.13 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.74 per cent at 461.65 points. Oman & Emirates Investment, up 1.61 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 4.65 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank 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 313 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.39 million, with more than 11.74 million shares changing hands. Out of 38 traded securities, 7 advanced, 11 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR183,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR128,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR55,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,718.29 points, down 0.15 per cent. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Bank Muscat were up by 1.61 per cent, 0.65 per cent, 0.35 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Sohar International Bank, National Bank Oman were up by 1.25 per cent, 0.95 per cent, 0.64 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,587.00 points, down 0.46 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement, Galfar Engineering were up by 1.52 per cent, 0.63 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Chromite, Oman Cables Industry, Jazeera Steel Products, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 4.00 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 0.83 per cent, 0.54 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.05 per cent before closing at 1,633.98 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Abraj Energy were up by 1.37 per cent, 1.36 per cent respectively. Prices of Ooredoo, Shell Oman Marketing were up by 1.07 per cent, 0.11 per cent respectively – United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,745.918	4,724.715	4,733.332	4,739.612	-6.280	-0.13
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,746.065	7,718.292	7,718.292	7,729.565	-11.273	-0.15
Industry Index	5,619.651	5,586.999	5,586.999	5,612.582	-25.583	-0.46
Services Index	1,635.364	1,629.513	1,633.983	1,633.197	0.786	0.05
MSX Shariah Index	465.092	461.651	461.651	465.092	-3.441	-0.74
MSX TR INDEX	6,248.572	6,220.655	6,232.001	6,240.269	-8.268	-0.13
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,452.380	8,422.074	8,422.074	8,434.376	-12.302	-0.15
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,003.185	5,968.305	5,968.305	5,995.634	-27.329	-0.46
SERVICES TR IDX	1,806.173	1,799.711	1,804.647	1,803.780	0.867	0.05

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
11,748,861	2,392,167	313	23,584,818,727	7	11	20	38

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4

INDEX

SECURITY NAME

VOLUME

TURNOVER

TRADES

OPEN PRICE

HIGH

LOW

CLOSE PR.

PREV. CLOSE

DIFF (BD)

DIFF %

LAST PR.

LAST BID

LAST OFFER

PAR VALUE

SECURITY SYMBOL

MARKET CAP

REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	49,444	15,476	1	0.313	0.313	0.313	0.313	0.315	-0.002	-0.635	0.313	0.300	0.313	0.100	NBOB	508,921,209
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	205,201	82,073	6	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.399	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.399	0.399	0.400	0.100	OMVS	266,677,805
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	98,741	6,216	15	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.063	0.001	1.613	0.063	0.063	0.064	0.100	OEJO	7,678,125
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	23,874	4,457	7	0.187	0.187	0.186	0.186	0.187	-0.001	-0.535	0.186	0.180	0.186	0.100	AACT	40,920,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	480,067	115,558	12	0.242	0.242	0.240	0.240	0.242	-0.002	-0.826	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.100	ATMI	29,975,510
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO.	36,780	2,611	4	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071	0.000	0.100	SIHC	6,390,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	41,385	7,242	2	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.000	0.000	0.175	0.160	0.175	0.100	BKDB	524,361,501
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,245,180	840,094	36	0.281	0.281	0.281	0.281	0.285	0.001	0.352	0.285	0.281	0.285	0.100	BKMB	2,138,323,163
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	429,524	435,506	25	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.015	0.015	1.500	1.015	1.016	1.020	0.100	OTEL	761,250,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INV. HO.	50,000	3,000	2	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.057	0.061	0.100	GFIC	12,000,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	92,033	37,732	8	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.000	0.000	0.410	0.407	0.410	0.100	RKSS	96,928,100
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	4,824,713	502,155	29	0.105	0.105	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.001	-0.952	0.104	0.104	0.108	0.100	BKBS	568,660,404
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	417,791	154,673	6	0.374	0.374	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.004	-1.070	0.370	0.370	0.380	0.100	ORDS	240,849,365
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	100	7	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.073	0.001	-1.370	0.074	0.072	0.074	0.100	SMNP	14,773,034
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	1,000	85	2	0.084	0.085	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.084	0.085	0.100	AMAT	14,700,000
Total	15		8,995,833	2,006,886	156												

Parallel Market

OMAN CHROMITE	6,700	32,650	10	4.850	5.000	4.800	4.800	5.000	5.000	-0.200	-4.000	4.800	4.700	5.000	1.000	OCCT	14,400,000
RAYSUT CEMENT	163,151	21,797	12	0.132	0.134	0.132	0.134	0.132	0.134	0.002	1.515	0.134	0.132	0.134	0.100	RCCT	26,800,000
OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	16,428	32,034	6	1.950	1.950	1.949	1.950	2.000	2.000	-0.050	-2.500	1.950	1.950	2.200	0.100	OCAT	174,915,000
ALANWAR INVESTMENT	582,438	46,521	19	0.080	0.081	0.079	0.079	0.080	0.080	-0.001	-1.250	0.079	0.079	0.080	0.100	AAIC	16,274,000
MAJAN COLLEGE	35,950	3,415	4	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.090	0.095	0.100	BACS	8,550,000
AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	96,549	14,928	3	0.154	0.155	0.154	0.155	0.154	0.155	0.001	-0.649	0.155	0.140	0.166	0.100	AOPS	387,693,533
AHLI BANK	514,980	85,012	10	0.165	0.166	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.000	0.000	0.165	0.165	0.166	0.100	ABOB	387,693,482
SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,000	894	2	0.892	0.894	0.892	0.894	0.895	0.895	-0.001	-0.112	0.894	0.859	0.894	0.100	SOMS	84,930,000
BARKA WATER AND POWER	29,950	1,238	3	0.042	0.042	0.041	0.041	0.043	0.042	-0.002	-4.651	0.041	0.041	0.042	0.100	BWPC	6,560,000
GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	26,000	4,164	3	0.160	0.162	0.160	0.161	0.160	0.161	0.001	-0.625	0.161	0.159	0.168	0.100	GECS	32,680,818
VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,482	170	1	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.000	0.000	0.115	0.115	0.126	0.100	VOES	9,361,316
BANK NIZWA	574,260	56,852	14	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.100	0.100	BKNZ	221,458,350
SEMOBCH SALALAH	325,000	34,775	2	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.098	0.108	0.100	SSPW	102,139,199
ALBATINAH POWER	100,000	2,200	3	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.020	0.022	0.100	BATP	14,847,523
AL SUWADI POWER	8,000	176	3	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.020	0.022	0.100	SWUP	15,716,939
DHOFAH GENERATING	102,000	4,087	6	0.040	0.041	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.040	0.037	0.044	0.100	DGEN	8,880,600
OMAN RET FUND	25,000	2,150	3	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.090	-0.004	-4.444	0.086	0.082	0.086	0.100	OMRF	40,522,029
ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	140,718	41,687	48	0.294	0.300	0.294	0.299	0.295	0.300	-0.004	-1.356	0.296	0.296	0.296	0.100	ABRJ	230,289,800
Total	18		2,749,606	384,749	152												

NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY

NEA, ENEC to explore innovative financing approaches at COP28 through Net Zero Nuclear

PARIS: The OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) announced that it will cooperate with Net Zero Nuclear, the platform that the global nuclear industry has recently launched, to deliver a Financing Nuclear work stream during the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai.

The announcement followed a meeting between William D. Magwood, NEA Director-General, with Mohamed Ibrahim Al Hammadi, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (ENEC) and Chair-Elect of the World Nuclear Association, on the sidelines of the first Roadmaps to New Nuclear ministerial meeting held in Paris.

The NEA and ENEC plan to develop work around the theme of "Financing for New Nuclear" ahead of the upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) in Dubai. Discussions between Magwood and Al Hammadi dur-



ing Roadmaps to New Nuclear focused on the policy consequences of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change pathways to limiting global warming to 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels. To achieve net zero by 2050, NEA projections show that total nuclear energy capacity will need to triple by 2050.

Magwood congratulated Al Hammadi on the success of the Net Zero Nuclear initiative and on

developing the Barakah nuclear power plant in the UAE.

He stated "ENEC's successful construction of the Barakah nuclear power plant is a tremendous model for the international community. Nuclear energy is a powerful option for countries seeking to make substantial reductions in carbon emissions and the Barakah project shows that it can implemented cost effectively."

Al Hammadi emphasised the pivotal role of nuclear energy in achieving global climate goals. "Nuclear energy plays a vital part in the transition to a low carbon future," he noted. "We are honoured to collaborate with NEA and other international partners at the Net Zero Nuclear Summit during COP28 to advance the peaceful use of nuclear energy."

The ongoing engagement between NEA and ENEC will serve to bring together government, industry, and financial sector leaders to discuss innovative strategies that can open greater access to finance for nuclear energy projects. These range from large-scale Generation III and Generation IV reactors to small modular reactors.

The collaboration between the NEA and ENEC at COP28 holds significant promise for identifying strategies that will enhance financial pathways for new nuclear energy projects. -WAM

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RESERVE BANK OF INDIA

RBI monetary policy review meeting begins, another pause in repo rate likely

MUMBAI: The three-day bi-monthly monetary policy committee (MPC) meeting of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) started on Wednesday with financial market participants set to closely monitor the outcome and the policy stance of the central bank.

RBI typically conducts six bi-monthly meetings in a financial year, where it deliberates interest rates, money supply, inflation outlook, and various macroeconomic indicators.

According to SBI Research, the Indian central bank is expected to yet again pause the key repo rate this week.

"Domestically, we believe at 6.50 per cent, we are in for a prolonged pause as seasonality of inflation is tapering first..." SBI Research report, authored by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, said recently.

"We believe the (RBI's) stance should continue to be withdrawal of accommodation as inflation is unlikely to tread below 5 per cent in rest of 2023-24," the SBI Research report said.

RBI in its past three meetings - April, June, and August - held the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. -ANI

DOMESTIC BEAUTY BRANDS

China's homegrown beauty products shine bright

BEIJING: Domestic cosmetic products have become staples in the daily beauty routine of Jia Yaxin, a 21-year-old university student in Beijing.

"For students and young women entering the workforce, the domestic beauty brands offer products that are not only reasonably priced but also with a good user experience," Jia said. "They have built a loyal customer base, and it seems like their growth is stable."

Jia is among a growing number of consumers who have taken a liking to Chinese homegrown beauty brands in recent years.

Statistics from global market research firm Euromonitor International showed that Chinese beauty brands, or C-beauty brands, have seen their sales grow 51 percent between 2017 and 2022, outperforming the overall beauty and personal care market's 42 percent growth in the same period.

"I learned about these products mainly through live-streaming sessions by social media influencers on platforms, such as Xiaohongshu, or Little Red Book, and Sina Weibo," said 21-year-old Qiu Ting, another avid consumer of Chinese homegrown cosmetics.

China's cosmetics industry has been highly influenced by social media and e-commerce platforms.

In 2022, the sales of domestic Chinese brands on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, grew by 110 percent year on year.

Live broadcast views of emerging brands, such as the beauty brand Perfect Diary, soared by 2,328 percent during the same



period, according to a report released by Douyin.

In the international arena, Chinese beauty brands are also gaining popularity. In the first half of this year, China's exports of cosmetics and personal care products reached \$3.03 billion, up 23.7 percent year on year, according to data from the General Administration of Customs.

Chinese cosmetic brand Florasis, known for its traditional Chinese aesthetics and savvy social media marketing, opened its official store on Amazon Japan in March 2021. Several products quickly sold out upon their debut, said the company's branding director Lin Zengsheng. Through cross-border e-commerce sites and channels, Florasis has reached consumers in over 100 countries



LIFESTYLE

**WEIGHT LOSS
TIPS FOR BUSY
PARENTS**

For parents, juggling the demands of work and home life can no doubt take a toll on physical health. In fact, a Cornell University study of 50 working moms and dads found that more than half turned to unhealthy eating options – pizza, chocolate and fast food, because they were too busy to start a new healthy eating plan.

With the weather changing and kids back in school, there is no better time to focus on your health. Here are five tips to fall back into a healthier routine and conquer your weight loss goals:

Eat enough protein. Protein is the key to feeling full and satisfied, especially when you're trying to lose a few pounds. That's why finding a high-protein plan like Nutrisystem is so important. Nutrisystem is easy to follow, and offers a variety of protein-rich meals and snacks that taste great and are made in minutes – a great choice for the busy mom or dad on the go.

With up to 30 grams of protein, Nutrisystem's Hearty Inspirations meals will control your appetite for up to five hours. With menu items like Sesame Beef & Broccoli and Bourbon-Style Chicken, you're going to enjoy what you're eating and lose weight.

Get moving with fun, 15-minute workouts. As a busy parent, finding time to exercise may not be top of mind. Committing to just 15 minutes daily will do wonders for your health and help you stay on track with your weight loss goals. Look for new and exciting workouts to try, such as Pilates, dance and boxing, so that you don't get tired of doing the same exercises.

You can also get the family involved. Go on an evening walk together or take all the boredom out of exercise and have a dance competition!

Stock your fridge with healthy, seasonal options. Fall is the perfect time to enjoy in-season fruits and vegetables. During the cooler months, you'll find mouth-watering produce like apples, squash, salad greens, broccoli and Brussels sprouts that will satisfy your tastebuds. If you like trying new things, consider beets. Low in calories and high in fiber, vitamin C and potassium, beets make a great vegetable to add to your grocery list.

Nutrisystem plans allow you to add a variety of fruits and vegetables to your day, and offer hundreds of recipes, including some seasonal favorites, on its lifestyle blog, The Leaf.

Plan your menu for the week. You're busy, so opt for easy, convenient options. That's where planning your weekly menu using healthy and simple ingredients comes in. Make sure to include variety so you don't risk getting bored. If you find yourself saying, "I had this last week. I don't feel like having that again," you may find yourself ordering takeout.

Another option is to look for a service that will deliver nutritionally-balanced, portion-controlled meals to your door. Nutrisystem offers delicious, easy to prepare options that you can be confident will not only taste good, but help you lose weight.

Prioritize yourself. Being a busy parent can be exciting, but it could also mean having difficulty prioritizing yourself. Write yourself encouraging daily reminders and hang them around your home and workplace. Set aside time to read a book before bed. Do yoga for 15 minutes in your living room to unwind. Finding something new you love – be it meditation, crafting or listening to a podcast – can motivate you to stay committed to yourself.

For more great weight loss tips, healthy recipes and more, check out <https://leaf.nutrisystem.com>.

Utilizing these simple tips will help you balance your busy work and home life and guide you on your successful weight loss journey. If you slip up, don't harp on your mistake instead, forgive yourself and start again.

-StatePoint



SPORTS

Bellingham scores as Real Madrid edge Napoli in a five-goal thriller

Bayern Munich come from behind to beat Danish side Copenhagen, go top of Group A as Man United drop to bottom after defeat to Galatasaray in Champions League

NAPOLI: Jude Bellingham further enhanced his status as Real Madrid's star player, scoring and then assisting as they beat Italian champions Napoli 3-2 at Stadio Diego Armando Maradona in the Champions League Group C game on Tuesday night.

The England midfielder carried the ball from 40 yards out, charged deep into Napoli's defensive third and then proceeded to weave his way through their backline before curling a shot cutely into the bottom right corner to give his side a 2-1 lead at half-time.

Defender Leo Ostigard had earlier put Napoli in front in the 19th minute, reacting quickest to head in after Natan's effort came back off the crossbar, but Vinicius Jr levelled for Real when he was played through on goal by Bellingham.

Napoli came out with intent in the second period and their hard work was rewarded when Piotr Zielinski equalised from the penalty spot.

Referee Clement Turpin did not initially give the penalty when Victor Osimhen's shot was blocked by



Nacho Fernandez but, following a video assistant referee check, the French official was told to take another look on the pitch side monitor and he overturned his decision.

Real grabbed the winner with just over 10 minutes left when Federico Valverde's thunderbolt of a shot cannoned off the crossbar and went in via the back of goal-keeper Alex Meret.

The victory puts Carlo Ancelotti's side at the top of Group C with six points from their opening two games, having beaten Union Berlin 1-0 in their first outing.

Napoli - who had gone 14 games unbeaten at home in the Champions League - are second and only clear of third-placed Braga on head-to-head after beating the Portuguese side 2-1 last month. Braga came from two goals down to win 3-2 at Union Berlin earlier on Tuesday.

It was another enthralling chapter in the ever-exciting career of Bellingham as the former Birmingham City midfielder continues to show he is one of the world's best players. "What surprises me is that he's only 20 years old," said Real Madrid head coach Carlo Ancelotti. "He has extraordinary qualities and he's showing how much talent he has."

Bellingham now has eight goals and three assists in nine games for Real Madrid this season.

Victory sent Real top of Group C, where Union Berlin went down to another stoppage-time goal as Andre Castro sealed a 3-2 triumph for Braga, who hit back from 2-0 down to win in the German capital.

Sheraldo Becker's brace put the hosts in charge but Sikou Niakate and Armindo Bruma drew the Portuguese side level before Castro struck in the fourth minute of time



added on to break Union hearts.

Muller shines for Bayern

Thomas Muller came off the bench to set up the winning goal for fellow substitute Mathys Tel in Bayern Munich's 2-1 comeback win over Denmark's FC Copenhagen to put the German champions on top in Group A.

With his side struggling to create against the Danish champions, the 34-year-old Muller entered the game in the 77th minute and used his vast experience to first outrun the defence and then out-muscle it before teeing up Tel to take all three points.

The home side had taken a shock lead in the 56th minute when Bayern failed to clear Viktor Claesson's shot, and midfielder Lukas Lerager followed up with a clever bouncing drive to put the Danish champions in the driving seat.

Bayern struck back in the 67th minute as Jamal Musiala jinked left and right on the edge of the area before dispatching a low shot into the corner of the net beyond the dive of Kamil Grabara before Tel's goal sealed the win.

The victory left Bayern top of the group on six points, two ahead of Galatasaray, who beat Manchester United 3-2 at Old Trafford to leave United bottom.

Despite two goals from Rasmus Hojlund, United suffered their sixth defeat in 10 games in all competitions, meaning more pressure on manager Erik ten Hag.

In the space of 10 minutes, United gave up a 2-1 lead and had midfielder Casemiro sent off as Ten Hag's team fell apart late against its Turkish opponent. Galatasaray scored in the 71st, won a penalty and missed it - with Casemiro picking up a second yellow card in the



process - then scored again in the 81st. The winning goal was scored by Mauro Icardi, who had missed the spot kick shortly before.

PSV strike in stoppage-time

It was a forgettable night for Premier League teams as Arsenal lost 2-1 at Lens in Group B.

Gabriel Jesus put the Gunners ahead but Adrien Thomasson and Elye Wahi gave Lens all three points.

Jordan Teze's stoppage-time goal lifted PSV Eindhoven to a 2-2 draw at home to Sevilla, who twice went ahead through Nemanja Gudelj and Youssef En-Nesyri only to be pegged back.

Marcus Thuram gave Inter Milan a 1-0 Group D victory over Benfica, while Mikel Oyarzabal and Brais Mendez ushered Real Sociedad to a 2-0 win at Red Bull Salzburg. - Agencies

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Saka injury a worry for Arsenal: Arteta

LONDON: Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said Bukayo Saka's latest injury is "a worry" - but does not regret picking him to play in Arsenal's 2-1 Champions League defeat at Lens on Tuesday.

Saka set up Gabriel Jesus' goal, but went off with a muscular problem in the 34th minute as his side lost for the first time this season.

"We don't know anything more," said Arteta. "It was big enough not to allow him to continue to play the game and that's a worry for us."

Saka, 22, had started his side's past two games before being withdrawn with injury concerns - and is now a doubt for Sunday's crucial Premier League game with champions Manchester City at Emirates Stadium.

But asked whether he regretted picking Saka against Lens, Arsenal boss Arteta said: "No. It was a knock that he had the other day



and he was perfectly fine.

"It was a backheel, an action that can produce that kind of injury. He tried to backheel a ball in the first half and felt something muscular. He felt uncomfortable carrying on so we had to take him off."

"He hasn't really missed games. We gave him a break against Brentford [in the Carabao Cup] last week and that was all."

England forward Saka has been an ever-present in Arsenal's side and has started 87 consecutive league games. - Agencies

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Larsen gives Clarets their first win of season

LONDON: Burnley manager Vincent Kompany said it "felt great" and was "very proud" of his side after they gained a dramatic 2-1 win at Luton Town for their first Premier League victory of the season on Tuesday.

Jacob Bruun Larsen cut in from the right and unleashed a stunning shot into the far top corner in the 85th minute for what proved to be the winner, BBC Sport reported.

That came only 65 seconds after Luton had equalised, substitute Elijah Adebayo finishing after Reece Burke had headed on Tahith Chong's cross.

Burnley had only gained one point from a tough opening six games of the season and went ahead at Kenilworth Road when Lyle Foster produced a composed finish after fine work from Sander Berge in first-half stoppage time.

"We had to battle for it and I am proud of the team for what they showed," said Kompany following



his first Premier League match victory as a manager after helping Manchester City win the title four times as a player.

"It feels great, three points in the Premier League. This is a team that enjoys this type of work. We loved everything about it," he said.



"It is a game that deserved its place in the Premier League, with two teams who showed they will give everything this season."

"It's nice to win as a manager. I've had the experience of winning [as a player] so I'm alright." Burnley's win means Bourne-

mouth and Sheffield United are the only sides yet to win in the top flight in 2023-24. Kompany's team won the Championship last season, before Luton also earned promotion from the second tier by beating Coventry City on penalties in the play-off final. - Agencies

CHINA OPEN

Sinner stuns Alcaraz to set up title clash with Medvedev

BEIJING: Italian Jannik Sinner upset top seed Carlos Alcaraz of Spain 7-6, (7-4), 6-1 on Tuesday to set up the China Open summit clash with Russian Daniil Medvedev.

The 22-year-old Italian said his performance was at the "very top" of those he had produced in big matches.

In the other semi-final Medvedev beat Alexander Zverev 6-4, 6-3 and the Russian world No.3, will be the favourite for the title, having won all six of his previous matches against Sinner.

Alcaraz said he went "out of my mind" during the second-set collapse against Sinner. The world No. 2 had chances to take a decisive lead in a breathless first set but it tipped Sinner's way when he cracked a blistering return off the Spaniard's second serve to take the all-important tie-break.

Alcaraz, the Wimbledon champion and tournament favourite in Novak Djokovic's absence, then



fell apart, gifting Sinner three service games in an error-laden second set to give the world No. 7 an easy victory.

"In the second set, I was out of my mind," said Alcaraz at a post-match news conference.

"I was just complaining a lot, (and) it's really difficult to play your best if you're complaining or

mad at yourself," the 20-year-old added.

Sinner pointed to a key turning point when, serving at 2-1 in the second set, he recovered from 0-40 to open up a healthy lead.

"There are a couple of points (that) can change the momentum completely," the 22-year-old said. "I managed somehow to win



these kinds of moments today, which obviously helped me in the following games to stay very calm mentally and play with a lot of confidence," he said.

Earlier, third-ranked Medvedev hailed a "perfect service match" against Zverev. "I don't think there was one bad thing I can say about my serve (today)," Medvedev said.

Swiatek races into quarters

Iga Swiatek dropped just two games against Magda Linette to win an all-Polish derby in the third round of the China Open on Wednesday.

The No.2 seed had little trouble with it, racing through her second tour-level match against a compatriot 6-1, 6-1 over Linette to reach

the China Open quarter-finals.

The former World No.1, who is making her debut in Beijing, will next face either No.9 seed Caroline Garcia or Anhelina Kalinina, who play their third-round match on Thursday.

Also Jelena Ostapenko earned her second top-5 win of the season after defeating No.4 Jessica Pegula 6-4, 6-2 in the Round of 16. The win is the Latvian's first over Pegula since 2015.

A semifinalist in 2017, Ostapenko will face Liudmila Samsonova in the quarterfinals. No.22 Samsonova came through a physical 2-hour and 55-minute effort to defeat Marta Kostyuk 6-4, 6-7, 7-5.

"I think I always play quite well in China," Ostapenko said. "Finally tournaments are back here and with a lot of fans, which I like a lot. I felt like some matches, even during the year, they were close matches. I was losing them but they were very close. I felt like at some point they have to go my way. It's working now."

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ROUND-UP

Media representatives visit Bank Muscat contact centre in Ruwi

The visit aims to acquaint the media people with the centre's roles

MUSCAT: Targeting more than two million customers, the Bank Muscat contact centre continues its successes and achievements in providing a full range of banking services and facilities as an essential communication channel with customers to obtain banking services and raise inquiries about the services and products provided by the bank.

Based on its customer-centric strategy, Bank Muscat's contact centre has become one of the most important and largest centres in the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman, supervised by a specialized and highly efficient Omani team. It operates all days of the week and throughout the year.

Coinciding with the Global Customer Experience Day, and to highlight these successes and the important role played by the centre in the field of enhancing communication with customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organised a media visit for a number of media representatives to the



bank's contact centre located in Ruwi commercial district, Muscat.

The attendees got acquainted with the sections of the centre and its various operations, and learnt about the services provided by the bank to customers. The visit included a presentation featuring the quality of banking services, facilities offered to all customers and the most important achievements of the contact centre over the past years. During the visit, journalists met with the centre staff and held discussions about the work mechanism of the centre.

Since its inception in 2000, Bank Muscat's contact center has been working to provide the best banking services and facilities to customers at all times. Its experienced Omani staff receives calls 24/7 and efficiently handles the different issues faced by customers. The number of employees in the centre stands at 160 employees. Also, the centre provides an automatic answering service through its dynamic and intelligent



gent IVR systems. It further handles about 8.24 million calls, alerts and mentions per annum in Arabic, English and Hindi languages. Besides, the centre team manages 12 social media accounts affiliated to the bank on various social networking sites, with the aim of introducing customers to the services and products of Bank Muscat, displaying the latest developments in the field of banking services, in addition to communicating with all customers from different segments of society and responding to



their queries all the time. On this occasion, Talal Abdul Hameed Al Zadjali, Deputy General Manager-Operations, Bank Muscat, said: "I would like to thank our media partners for their attendance and their continuous support for all events, activities and initiatives organized by the bank in various fields. Media is an essential partner in the success of the bank's career and plays a big role in enhancing communication with customers and members of the community in general. The

contact centre represents a vital link between the bank and its valued customers accessible 24/7. Featuring the less waiting period, Bank Muscat contact centre is one of the most important contact centres in the banking sector in Oman. We are proud of the achievements it accomplished in fostering the best services and facilities.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the centre's employees for their tireless and sincere efforts to ensure that work goes seamlessly and smoothly. The bank will continue to enhance the contact centre's role through attracting the competencies and equipping it with the state-of-art technologies."

The contact centre services are very important due to the frequent frauds that occur all over the world in different and new ways with the aim of exploiting people for financial gains. The fraud control team at the contact centre is always on the lookout for suspicious operations as the centre is well equipped

to detect fraudulent transactions. It closely and intensively observes and protects transactions related to individuals and merchants at points of sale. The centre deals with reports on loss of cards and any other urgent matters especially during holidays and vacations, so that the card can be blocked in case of loss or theft. This service can be availed through the centre and Bank Muscat digital channels.

The Bank Muscat contact centre offers a range of services, including money transfer, information about the bank's products and services, inquiries about account opening procedures, credit card balance details and statements, loan details, interest rate on fixed deposits and currency exchange rates.

Also, Bank Muscat customers can apply for cards cancellation, account statements, cheques requests, credit card statements, utility bills payments (such as electricity and water bills) and many other services aimed at completing customer transactions accurately and quickly. These services can be availed by dialing 24795555 or via the WhatsApp.

Customers can add the contact centre number to their contact list and the number will then appear automatically in their WhatsApp. These services are available throughout the week from 8am to 10:30 pm. As for the IVR service is available throughout the day and all days of the week for inquiries related to various products and services.

CREATING BETTER JOURNEYS



Shell Oman inaugurates new service stations and celebrates 50th Shell Select opening

MUSCAT: Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) is on a mission to make life journeys better for everyone by actively participating in serving the country's mobility needs. In a significant step forward, Shell Oman has introduced two new service stations, raising the total number of its strategically located sites to 211 across the Sultanate of Oman.

Simultaneously, the company is celebrating the inauguration of its 50th Shell Select store, reinforcing its commitment to delivering top-notch services to its expanding customer base of motorists. The newly opened service stations, New Mabelah Industry and Ghala Industry, along with Shell Select shops, mark a pivotal moment in Shell Oman's mission to enhance convenience, fuel accessibility, and meet the needs of the society serving their mobility needs throughout the country.

Aligned with Shell Oman's broader Mobility mission, and enabling superior journeys for its customers, the strategic placement of these new service stations is poised to meet the growing demand for fuel and automotive services. With the ad-

dition of these sites, Shell Oman has successfully launched six new locations this year, underlining its dedication to providing accessible hubs for its customers. The service stations boast a wide array of fuel options, including the high-performance Shell V-Power, powered by Shell's cutting-edge DYNAFLEX Technology. This premium fuel offering from Shell is designed to provide motorists with its best performance and efficiency, complementing other fuel choices such as Shell Mogas 95, Shell Mogas 91, and Shell Diesel.

Mahmoud Al Abri - General Manager - Corporate Relations at Shell Oman, commented, "At Shell Oman, we believe that service stations are more than just a place to refuel; they are the catalyst for happy motorists. You can be sure that at Shell, our commitment is to provide valued customers at our service stations with a seamless and unique experience, which includes quality fuels, a place to refresh and rejuvenate, and Select Stores filled with snacks and drinks. These strategically positioned stations are curated to meet the ever-evolving needs of our customers."

POPULAR SUV

Exclusive benefits on Ford's Territory SUV

MUSCAT: Now is a good time to own the Ford Territory SUV with exclusive benefits. On offer is service 3 years / 60,000 km and registration 1 year. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Ford showroom.). The campaign will last until November 8.

The Territory is mix of modernity, style and space. It is a perfect choice for young professionals and small, busy families. The Ford Territory was envisioned through Ford's new 'Progressive Energy in Strength' design philosophy, which is based on the rich heritage of the brand and its iconic aesthetics.

It embodies three fundamental design principles: commanding, agile, and responsive. The Ford Territory is equipped with an integrated



grille and signature light - balanced with lower graphics, with full LED lighting, which drives the focal point higher and communicates purpose, stability, and capability.

The headlamps show off a unique design, with daytime running LED lights incorporated with a strong horizontal grille bar, which adds to the eye-catching appearance.

The form also has function, with the headlamps lowered towards the ground for expanded lighting areas that also creates a more powerful front look. The bold grille bar is manufactured with high quality materials that help to reflect Ford's global design DNA on the car.

Adding comfort and indulgence on every journey is the territory's impressive interior. The horizontal coast-to-coast design evokes a connecting space in an embracing gesture, creating openness and spaciousness. Comfort and function are maximised through Premium Leather seats, with a 10-way adjustable ergonomic driver's seat.

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

MALABAR GOLD LAUNCHES ALLURE-FANCY SHAPE JEWELLERY COLLECTION

Malabar Gold & Diamonds launched its Allure-fancy shape diamond jewellery collection at its showroom in Oman Avenues Mall. The collection launch was held in the presence of Najeeb K - Regional Head of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Muhsin P - Branch Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Udesh P T - Branch Manager, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other team members from Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers and well-wishers. - Supplied picture





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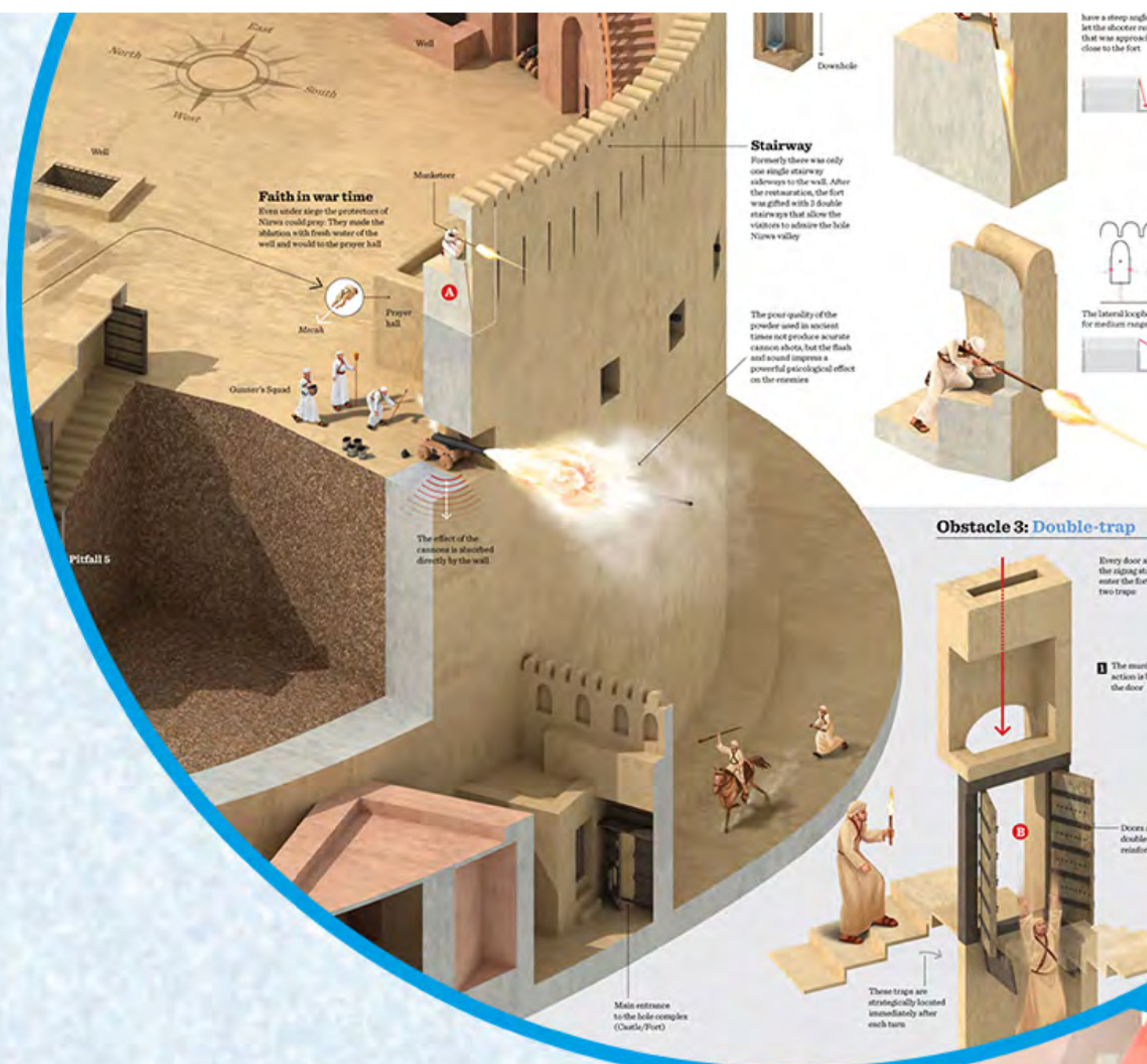
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