

TREASURY BILLS WORTH OMR44 MILLION ISSUED

The total issuance of Government Treasury Bills amounted OMR44 Million. The value of the allotted Treasury bills amounted to OMR24 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. **>B2**



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RAMADAN PRAYER TIMINGS	
DHUHR	12:13pm
ASR	3:40pm
MAGHRIB	6:32pm
ISHA	7:44pm
FAJR (APRIL 13)	4:31am



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RATING AT 'BB'

Fitch revises Oman's outlook to positive

MUSCAT: Fitch Ratings has revised Oman's outlook to positive from stable and affirmed the rating at 'BB', in a report issued on Tuesday.

According to Fitch, the positive outlook reflects a significant reduction in Oman's debt to GDP as a result of fiscal consolidation measures, high oil prices and the associated reduction of external liquidity risks.

The agency said that the measures taken by the government helped to contain public debt, stating that the debt to GDP fell from 61 percent at the end of 2021 to 40 percent at the end of 2022. Fitch now expects the pub-



lic debt to decline to 37 percent at the end of 2024, compared to 48 percent previously projected by the agency in its report issued in August 2022. Fitch forecasts a budget surplus of 2.3 percent of GDP and 0.1 percent in 2023 and 2024, respectively. **>A2**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Urgent appeal for 'O' negative blood donation

1 An urgent appeal has been made for the donation of 'O' negative blood due to high demand of this group for saving the lives of patients. The department of blood bank services said: "The demand for 'O' negative blood group is increasing dramatically." **>A2**

SPORTS

Al Harthy makes a welcome return

2 Oman Racing's Ahmad Al Harthy makes a welcome return to action as the FIA World Endurance Championship arrives in Portugal. **>B7**

MARKET

Committee to monitor development project

2 Opaz has issued a decision to form a panel to oversee the development project of the integrated economic zone in Al Dhahirah. **>B1**

HM APPROVES CONSTRUCTION OF 3 DAMS FOR FLOOD PROTECTION

The dams will be located in Wadi Al Ansab, Wadi Tahwa, and Wadi Al Zuhaimi

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday issued three Royal decrees reading as follows:

Royal decree No. 20/2023 ascribes the public utility status to the project of constructing dams for protection against flood water (ANS02 & ANS03) in Wadi Al Ansab in the Wilayat of Bawshar, the Governorate of Muscat.

Article (1) states that the project of constructing dams of protection against floods (ANS02 & ANS03) in Wadi Al Ansab in the Wilayat of Bawshar, the Governorate of Muscat, as defined in the memo and diagram attached to this decree, is henceforth deemed a public utility project.

Article (2) stipulates that authorities concerned may expropriate, through direct implementation, the properties and lands necessary for the project aforementioned in article (1), along with all the installations therein in accordance with the Public Utility Expropriation Law promulgated by Royal Decree 64/78.



Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal decree No. 21/2023 ascribes the public utility status to the project of constructing a dam for protection against flood water in Wadi Tahwa, in the Wilayat of Al Kamil Wa Al Wafi, the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah.

Article (1) states that the project of constructing a dam of protection against floods in Wadi Tahwa, in the Wilayat of Al Kamil Wa Al Wafi, the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, as defined in the memo and diagram attached to this decree, is henceforth deemed a public utility project.

Article (2) stipulates that authorities concerned may ex-

propriate, through direct implementation, the properties and lands necessary for the project aforementioned in article (1), along with all the installations therein in accordance with the Public Utility Expropriation Law promulgated by Royal Decree 64/78.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal decree No. 22/2023 ascribes the public utility status to the project of constructing a dam for protection against flood water (Z4C) in Wadi Al Zuhaimi in the Wilayat of Liwa, the Governorate of North Al Batinah.

Article (1) states that the project of constructing a dam of protection against floods (Z4C) in Wadi Al Zuhaimi in the Wilayat of Liwa, the Governorate of North Al Batinah, as defined in the memo and diagram attached to this decree, is henceforth deemed a public utility project.

Article (2) stipulates that authorities concerned may expropriate, through direct implementation, the properties and lands necessary for the project aforementioned in article (1), along with all the installations therein in accordance with the Public Utility Expropriation Law promulgated by Royal Decree 64/78.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — **ONA**



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'O' NEGATIVE BLOOD

Call for blood donation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An urgent appeal has been made for the donation of 'O' negative blood due to high demand of this group for saving the lives of patients.

The department of blood bank services said: "The demand for 'O' negative blood group is increasing dramatically. We are urging people of this group to donate as soon as possible at the Central Blood Bank Bausher."

It may be mentioned that 'O' negative blood is in high demand due to its universal ability to save lives. This blood can be given to any patient, regardless of blood type, which is why they are so important. Every day, trauma patients, cancer patients, and premature babies require 'O' negative blood.

FITCH

Investment in renewables, hydrogen to boost growth

< FROM A1 Fitch also projects Oman's fiscal breakeven oil price to decline from 77 US Dollars per barrel in 2022 to 67 US Dollars per barrel in 2025, in light of ongoing fiscal measures and the implementation of the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP).

The agency expects non-oil sector growth of 2.3 percent in 2023, pointing out to the recovery of the construction sector after being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency also projects non-oil revenue to rise from 5.2 percent of non-oil GDP in 2022 to 5.6 percent in 2024.

Moreover, it assumes the average Brent oil price to fall to 85 US Dollars per barrel in 2023 and 75 US Dollars per barrel in 2024. In its report, Fitch said that Oman's Sovereign net foreign assets are expected to improve in 2023. It further added that investment in renewables and hydrogen sector are likely to support growth from 2024.

The agency indicated that Oman's credit rating could be upgraded in case of medium-term stabilization of public debt and sovereign net foreign assets (as a percentage of GDP), as well as a continued decline in net external debt to GDP.

The positive outlook is a significant indicator of the Government performance. It helps to foster the investors' confidence in the national economy and improve the creditworthiness. The credit ratings show the reliability of the Government to meet its obligations.

It is worth noting that S&P Global Ratings revised Oman's outlook to positive and affirmed its ratings at "BB" in a report issued last month (March). It commended the efforts exerted by the Government towards fiscal and economic reforms. -ONA



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‘Skilled local workforce a big advantage for tourism sector’

Operated by Valor Hospitality Partners, Four Points by Sheraton Muscat is set to open its doors in Muscat in 2024, according to Tapan Piplani, Valor Hospitality’s Chief Operating Officer



“Adventure sports in Jabal Akhdar and nearby mountain ranges can be a massive tourist attraction in Oman

Tapan Piplani
Valor Hospitality’s Chief Operating Officer

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With large-scale hospitality and tourism projects coming up across various governorates in the Sultanate of Oman, these are good times for this beautiful country to woo visitors, according to Tapan Piplani, Valor Hospitality’s Chief Operating Officer.

The top boss of one of the leading hospitality groups said: “A state-of-the-art marine-biology experiential centre with focus on growing coral reef in the Sea of Oman would boost marine tourism while thrill-seeking tourists could enjoy adventure sports in Jabal Akhdar and nearby mountain ranges.”

In an exclusive interview with the *Times of Oman*, Piplani spoke about the tourism sector in Oman and outlined what more could be done to attract tourists to the Sultanate.

Excerpts from the interview:

How is the tourism sector shaping up in Oman?

Oman is blessed by nature and hence tourism should be the obvious economic driver. Omanis are naturally hospitable, welcoming and friendly people. They are also hardworking and willing to learn.

Hence, availability of a willing, skilled local workforce is a big advantage for the tourism sector. Investment in the airport infrastructure was a bold move by Oman and even though the pandemic may have impacted the arrivals to the country, the recent decision to provide Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) residents visa on arrival access for 14 days without any costs is again a mas-

sive step in the right direction. Additional flights especially from India, Pakistan, Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and China would give a boost to the tourism sector in Oman. Oman Air can then provide better internal connectivity to Salalah and Duqm whilst the private sector can initiate affordable transportation to Sohar, wadis and mountains.

What brings you to Oman?

Finding the right partners to collaborate with is very important to the Valor business ethos. We have been fortunate on that with our first hotel in Oman i.e. Four Points by Sheraton, Muscat which is currently undergoing a full-refurbishment and we hope to open it in the fourth quarter of 2024. We are exploring further opportunities in Duqm, Sohar, Muscat, Salalah and Jabal Akhdar with multiple ongoing discussions and negotiations. We are totally committed to expanding the Valor portfolio to at least 500 keys under management in Oman over the next 2 years.

What difference can you bring into the Oman market?

While Franchised hotels constitute almost 70 percent of the world’s hotel inventory approximately in the Middle East including Oman, the concept is still very new. We help owners have a greater say and involvement in their own business under the advice and supervision of a highly skilled and experienced team of hotel professionals.

Whilst we provide a business model which improves the investor returns significantly, we are also protective about the brand equity and hence train our hotel teams to deliver

exceptional service levels.

Our presence in Oman will help hotel owners improve their investment yields thus encouraging financial institutions, family offices and foreign funds to invest in the country within the tourism projects whilst providing an avenue to global hotel companies in introducing a wide-array of brands spread across Premium, Mid-scale, Economy and extended stay segments.

What will be the USP of Four Points by Sheraton?

Four Points by Sheraton in Qurum, Muscat has a unique location in the heart of a business and retail district that will offer fully refurbished new age hotel rooms; suites both for short-stay and extended-stay guests and combine that with a well-lit co-working lounge, multiple bars and dining options and leisure amenities including a 24x7 fully equipped gymnasium. The hotel is ideally located close to business houses, international corporations, international airports, malls and beaches. However, what will stand-out in the hotel would also be the service culture and the training we intend to provide to both the local Omani talent and the expatriates in conjunction with Valor Global’s partner institute the Kemmons Wilson School of Hospitality from the Memphis University, US.

When are you opening your first hotel in Oman?

The Four Points by Sheraton is expected to open in the fourth quarter of 2024.

What has been the impact on tourism sector after COVID?

Post-COVID, the tourism sector

has made better use of technology in hospitality and consumers have adapted to these technological advances. App-based check-in provisions, the use of QR coded menus in restaurants, cafes, spas, and in-room guest directories has reduced paper and material wastage.

There is also a greater focus on hygiene in high-traffic areas, such as elevator buttons and main doors. Delivery of F&B, QSR style is now an integral part of hotel food and beverage as well. Reduced availability of skilled hospitality workforce around the world also meant that hotel companies had to evolve delivering more with less thus improving margins as business volumes improved. Everybody wins in the above scenario, including the investor and the consumer.

What lessons have you learnt from COVID?

Never take anything for granted, prepare for the uncertainty and have faith in your people because they are the ones who can make or break a company. We have focused increasingly on providing our hoteliers an opportunity to learn more, do more and grow quicker. We have re-evaluated our operations and adapted to changing market conditions. Cross-training staff have enabled businesses to be more agile and responsive to customer needs, while face-to-face interactions have become even more valuable in a world where remote work and online communication have become the norm. The survival of genuine businesses has also instilled greater trust and confidence in the industry, as customers seek reliable and trustworthy partners for their travel needs. As a business we did not exit from various global markets, and were able to retain 98 percent of our global

talent pool and have only expanded since the peak of the Covid.

What are the benefits of working with Valor Hospitality Partners?

Valor Hospitality offers owners flexibility for their assets, allowing them to be highly or less involved in day-to-day operations while maintaining insight and transparency. We are able to operate multiple hotel brands under franchise from global hotel companies for same or multiple owners, which allows both portfolio and individual asset owners operating efficiencies with shared resources and cross selling within the Valor portfolio. We also deploy our proprietary BI tools that allow owners to have access to information and data in real time. Besides, an owner is no longer relying only on an individual such as the GM or the Director of Sales but a whole team that works seamlessly at all times even if there is a change in personnel at the hotel level. Business risks from loss of personnel are mitigated to a large extent.

How did your company respond to COVID-19?

Valor Hospitality followed local legislation in each market we operated in and did not let go off any staff globally as we believed they would need them as soon as there was an uptick in the tourism sector. This was the right choice as we were ready in each market as they started to open. In the Middle East, we opened our first hotel in Dubai in 2021 and significantly grew the team between 2020-2022. During this period, we also entered new markets like CIS with an office in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, North-Africa with an office in Casablanca, Morocco and Paki-

stan. Working in diversified markets geographically yet being connected through a common thread helped us a lot as an organisation and we were also grateful for some support provided by the regulatory authorities in the US, the UK and the UAE.

What needs to be done to bring more tourists to Oman?

Building the new airport was a great start. Taking that forward is important by improving the airlift to the country from various important source markets in Asia, the UK, Europe, CIS, ME and Africa. The recent initiative of giving 14-day free visa on arrival to all residents in GCC is wonderful, it needs to be marketed aggressively via public-private partnership especially through global hotel companies already doing business in Oman. Domestic flight connectivity within Oman is also important to drive tourists beyond Muscat.

Diversification in hotel concepts by introducing both the mass all-inclusive group tourism as well as boutique lodges and resorts would help reach a wider audience both geographically and spending power wise. Setting up of hotel training academies in partnership with global hotel schools and hotel companies with quality internships would boost the Omanisation efforts and provide seasonal workforce to the hotels thus improving service levels and experience of visiting tourists.

A state-of-the-art marine biology experiential centre and focus on growing the coral reef in the Sea of Oman would also help drive marine tourism enthusiasts.

Adventure sports in the Jabal Akhdar and nearby mountain ranges can be a massive attraction.

ARABIAN ORYX

Oman accords importance to its environment, wild animals

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman accords great importance to preserving its environment, endangered animals and the associated ecosystems which are of historic importance.

Apart from the interest is evident in the work and achievement made in the environment sector during the past five decades.

From the establishment of natural reserves, the adoption of laws, regulations and controls that regulate their management and criminalise their violators in all its forms, it has also worked to prepare action plans for their preservation, and development.

Sultan bin Muhammed Al Balushi, Director of the Arabian Oryx Department at the Environment Agency, told Oman News Agency (ONA): “The Arabian Oryx is considered a major environmental identity of the Omani natural history, and one of its valuable environmental legacies.

“The most important achievement in this regard is the launch of the project to conserve the Arabian Oryx in Oman. Its spread and natural habitats have received care in all its stages, namely: propagation, healthcare, re-release into the wild, and monitoring its movement.”

He added that the issuance of Royal Decree No. (18/2023) amending the name of the Re-



serve of Living and Wildlife in Al Wusta Governorate to the “Arabian Oryx Reserve” as the first natural reserve in the Sultanate of Oman, amply shows the care it has received. It is home to many species of wildlife, most notably the Arabian Oryx which has deep connection to the region and local community.

The Director of the Arabian Oryx Department at the Environment Agency stressed the necessity of preserving the Omani wild environment symbols, stressing the need to include their names in the sites and accompanying projects to preserve them for the present and the future generation.

He stated that economic and industrial expansion does not contradict with preserving the environmental ecosystem, as the natural environment (natu-

ral reserves) has become one of the main enablers of economic development.

He indicated that protecting, preserving, preserving and transferring the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value to future generations can make a significant contribution to protecting the environment, its natural diversity and its interactions between people and the environment.

The Director of the Arabian Oryx Department at the Environment Agency concluded his statement by saying: “Preserving the world heritage helps address some of the major environmental issues today, especially the increasing number of endangered and extinct plant and animal species, and the resulting decline in environmental diversity.”

With ONA inputs

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» IFTAR TIMING

6:32 pm



» PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:13 pm
Asr	3:40 pm
Maghrib	6:32 pm
Isha	7:44 pm
Fajr (April 13)	4:31 am

» IFTAR RECIPE

SAMOSAS BITES

Recipe by Anupma Nagvanshi

INGREDIENTS

- All-purpose flour: 270g
- Salt: 1/2 tsp
- Carom seeds: 1/2 tsp
- Oil: 40ml
- Water: 100ml
- Coriander seeds: 2 tsp
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Oil: 2 tbsp
- Ginger: 2 tsp
- Green chilli: 2 tsp
- Onions: 60g
- Turmeric: 1/4 tsp
- Boiled green peas: 50g
- Salt: 1 tsp
- Red chilli: 1 tsp
- Garam masala: 1/4 tsp
- Dry mango powder: 1 tsp
- Boiled mashed potatoes: 500g
- Coriander: 1 tbsp
- All-purpose flour: 80g
- Water: 200ml
- Oil: for frying
- Ketchup: 70g
- Sev: 40g
- Green chutney: 2 tbsp

PREPARATION

- In a bowl, add all-purpose flour, salt, carom seeds, oil and mix it well.
- Add water and knead it into a dough. Cover it with cloth and rest for 20 minutes.
- In a pan, add coriander seeds, cumin seeds and dry roast for 2 - 3 minutes.
- Remove it from heat. Transfer this into a muddler and muddle them with the help of a muddler. Keep aside.
- Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a pan, ginger, green chilli and stir



- well. Add onions and cook for 2 - 3 minutes.
- Add turmeric and stir well. Add boiled green peas and cook for 1 minute.
- Add salt, red chilli, garam masala, dry mango powder, crushed spices and cook for 1 - 2 minutes.
- Add boiled mashed potatoes, coriander and cook for 1 - 2 minutes.
- Remove it from heat and cool for 10 minutes. In a bowl, add all-purpose flour, water and mix it well. Keep aside.
- Take a ball from the dough and flatten it with the help of a rolling pin.
- Add the prepared potato mixture and brush the edge with water. Roll it and cut it into pieces.
- Dip it into the prepared slurry from both sides.
- Heat sufficient oil in a heavy skillet and deep fry these until golden brown and crispy.
- Remove it from heat and drain it on an absorbent paper.
- In a bowl, add ketchup and dip the prepared samosa roll in it.
- Now, coat it with sev and place it on a plate.
- Add some green chutney to it. Serve hot with chutney.

» WORDS OF WISDOM

“My mercy encompasses all things” [Quran 7:156]

Another verse that reminds us of the mercy of Allah, this can help those who are fearful of not being forgiven despite sincere prayer and repentance. As this verse from the Quran states, Allah’s mercy encompasses everything and is boundless, meaning that no matter what we are asking forgiveness from, we should always ask for it with sincerity and inshallah we will be answered.

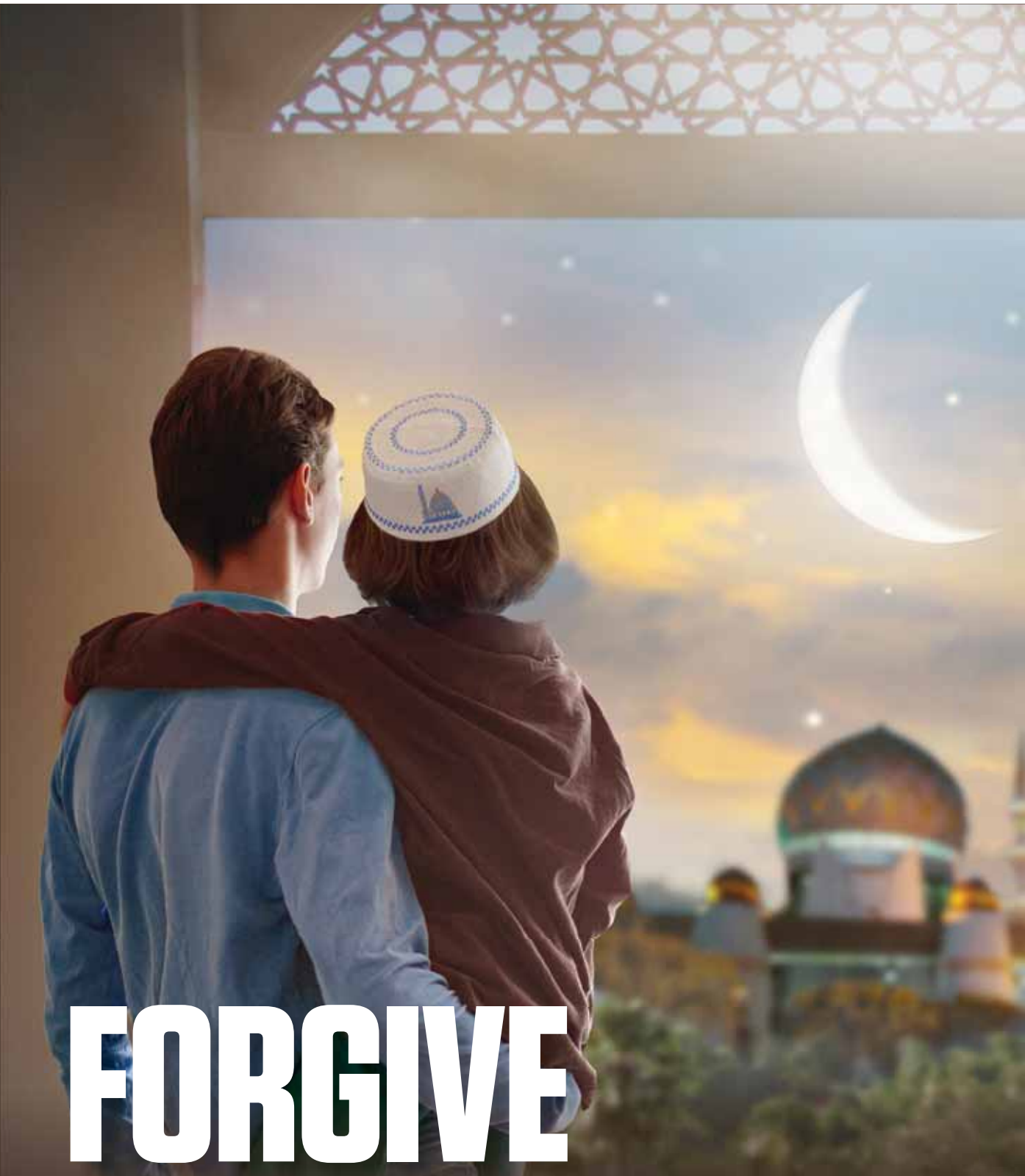
» FASTING TIPS



MAKE YOUR IFTAR MEALS COLOURFUL

Iftar is the time when you should make up for all the essential nutrients that you missed during fasting hours. So try to make your meals colourful by including different fruits and vegetables. Also don’t miss out on whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread or brown rice.

» GOOD DEED



FORGIVE THOSE WHO WRONGED YOU

“And Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness” [Quran 8:33]

IN THE ABOVE VERSE, Allah reminds us of the power of his mercy and the importance of asking for forgiveness. Mercy and compassion are some of the most awe-inspiring acts of Allah, and as Muslims, we should take hope in the fact that with constant and sincere prayers for forgiveness, we can all be forgiven. This verse reminds us that we should always hold onto the hope that we can always ask for forgiveness and mercy.

It’s been proven that forgiveness really plays an important role in our lives. It is true that forgiveness isn’t always easy. Perhaps you

have been hurt badly enough that you feel it has poisoned your heart. Forgiving others and sometimes yourself can take a long time, but once you do so the virtues rewarded from God are immense.

The Holy Month of Ramadan is the perfect time to forgive others. List down the names of those who wronged you and try to forgive them. Once you do so, you will feel that a heavy weight has been lifted off your chest, because your forgiveness weighs a great deal to Allah the Almighty, who in return will offer you his forgiveness and cleanse you from sins, especially in this blessed month.



NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR

Awareness drive for vocational, technical education in schools

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the School Education Development and Restructuring Project Office, is organising visits to raise awareness in the four schools that will apply for vocational and technical education for the next academic year 2023/2024.

These visits kicked off on Sunday and are up until Wednesday. They aim to introduce the tracks of business administration, information technology, study materials, teaching methods, and evaluation.

The vocational and technical education will be applied from the next academic year in the fields of business administration and information technology in the two schools in Muscat Governorate namely: Nusseibeh Bint Kaab for basic education, and Hafs bin Rashid for basic education, and in two schools in North



Al Batinah Education, namely: Halima Al Saadia School in the Wilayat of Suwaiq, and Kaab Bin Barsha School in the Wilayat of Saham.

The introductory programme began with a briefing presented by Ms. Mona Al Yahyai, from the Ministry of Education about the BTEC programme, which is an international technical vocational programme from Pearson Educational Company in part-

nership with the Modern College of Commerce and Science, as it qualifies students to obtain A2 level, which is equivalent to two subjects in the British Certificate GCE A LEVEL.

Dr. Said Al-Kitani, Assistant Dean at the Modern College of Commerce and Science, presented a paper in which he talked about the education ladder and levels and the importance of various educational systems.

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Registration still open for science forum

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Registration for the London International Youth Science Forum 2023, organised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, is still open for those interested until 16 April.

For this year, the forum will be held from July 26 to August 9, 2023, under the theme 'Science for Unity'. Students between the

ages of 19 to 21 years will get the chance to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the London International Youth Science Forum for the fifth time.

To register, the applicant should be fluent in speaking and writing English, enrolled in one of the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in university, active in research projects or scientific competitions, pass

the personal interview with the evaluation committee, and able to represent the Sultanate of Oman in international forums.

Participants of the London International Youth Science Forum 2023 will be able to attend lectures, workshops and field visits to the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London, and visit scientific laboratories.

TENTH EDITION

Fak Kurba campaign

MUSCAT: A number of private sector institutions gave support for the Fak Kurba initiative to release the prisoners in its tenth edition.

The initiative comes under the slogan "Because we believe that a person deserves a second chance" to meet his families but are languishing in jails due to claims in civil, commercial, litigancy and labour cases. -ONA

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Principal

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

A Real Estate Development Company would like to invite experienced companies to participate in the 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) for the Investment, Maintenance, Managing and Operation of Laundry Services at Al Sawadi Village, Barka.

The existing laundry setup (equipped with laundry machines) is located at our site, in Barka. Interested companies are requested to send their Expression of Interest by email, together with contact details of the focal point, latest by 16th April 2023 at quotation@gbc.om.

Interested companies shall attend the mandatory site visit for the visual inspection, scheduled on the 18th & 19th of April 2023. The complete details of the laundry setup will be shared with the interested companies coming for a visual inspection at the site. Both technical and commercial proposals shall be submitted in a sealed envelope on the 17th of May 2023.

Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)
93/2023	The annual contract work for the maintenance of the air conditioning system and the building management system for the Ministry's General Office building	Companies specialized in the field of industrial workshop services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with an excellent or first degree	Wednesday 26-4-2023 02:00 PM	Thursday 11-5-2023 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) On Wednesday 12/4/2023
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website (rag@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

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Ramadan Iftar Program

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter."

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OMAN/WORLD

AN IFTAR EVENING IN FANJA

People of Fanja in the Wilayat of Bidbid in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, break their fast during the holy month of Ramadan on Monday. The religious fervour is evident as a group of people gather for an Iftar in the evening. —ONA



‘Determined to find FTA that helps UK, Indian businesses’

The Times in its April 10 edition cited senior British government sources to report that the Indian government has ‘disengaged’ from talks for a FTA with the UK

NEW DELHI: British deputy high commissioner Christina Scott on Tuesday said that negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement between India and the United Kingdom are continuing and both countries are “determined” to work together.

The remarks by the senior UK diplomat in India came after Indian officials dismissed as “baseless” a report in *The Times*, which claimed that New Delhi had stalled negotiations due to its concerns that the British government had failed to condemn the recent attack on the High Commission in



London by pro-Khalistan supporters.

In an interview with ANI, Scott said, “I can’t comment on yesterday’s report, I have not seen those reports but what I can say is that negotiations are continuing on free trade agreement. We are determined that we can continue to work together to find a free trade agreement that supports British and Indian businesses.”

London-based newspaper *The Times* in its April 10 edition cited senior British government sources to report that the Indian government has “disengaged” from talks for a free-trade agreement with the UK and had made it clear that there would be no progress “without a public condemnation of the Khalistan movement.”

However, government sources in New Delhi denied the “baseless” report.

A spokesperson of the UK Department for Business and Trade on April 10 said that British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has condemned the recent acts of violence at the Indian High Commission in London adding that Metropolitan Police were reviewing security and changes were being made to ensure safety.

Cleverly also said that both UK and India are committed to delivering an ambitious and mutually beneficial FTA and concluded the latest round of trade talks last month, the spokesperson said.

Speaking on the current situation in London following the recent incidents of vandalism, British deputy high commissioner Christina Scott said, “The situation right now is calm but let me just repeat the assurances that my ministers have made that we take extremely seriously the Security

of the Indian High Commission in London. We are working very closely with them to make sure that the security is maintained.”

On March 19 this year, protesters holding Khalistan banners staged a demonstration outside the Indian High Commission in London. One of the protesters climbed up its balcony and pulled down the Indian national flag.

In a video of the incident, which has since gone viral on social media, a protester is seen on the balcony attempting to bring down the Indian flag. At the end of the video, another man is seen reaching the balcony and wrestling the Tricolour back from the Khalistan supporter.

The British High Commissioner to India Alex Ellis had also condemned the attack on the Indian High Commission in London as “disgraceful acts” and called it “totally unacceptable.”

After the incident, India had summoned deputy high commissioner Christina Scott, to lodge a protest.

“It is expected that the UK Government would take immediate steps to identify, arrest and prosecute each one of those involved in today’s incident, and put in place stringent measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents,” according to an official release by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). —ANI



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INTERVIEW WITH NBC

President Biden plans to run for 2nd term in 2024



WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden on Monday said that he plans to run for president in 2024 but was not prepared to announce it yet.

In an interview with NBC’s “Today” show before the White House Easter Egg Roll, Biden said, “I plan on running ... but we’re not prepared to announce it yet.” Biden is the oldest US president in history. If he wins re-election, he will be 86 at the end of his second term.

Biden has said he intends to be the Democratic candidate in 2024 but has not made a formal announcement. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris said they will run together, NBC News reported.

Biden, 80, has consistently stated his plans to run for re-election. “I’m going to do it again,” Biden said last year as he posed for a photograph in the Roosevelt Room with Sharpton.

Top White House advisers are set to make final decisions on launching Biden’s re-election campaign, NBC News reported, citing several unidentified sources.

“The decision part is over, but he resents the pressure to have to announce what he’s already decided,” one source familiar with the matter told NBC.

Several considerations in the decision-making process include that no major Democratic challenger has emerged; that former

President Donald Trump, who is running for the GOP nomination, has been indicted and is consuming the political spotlight; and that there’s a major clash coming with congressional Republicans over spending.

Last week, the former president pleaded not guilty in a Manhattan court to falsifying business records.

There are currently two announced candidates for the 2024 Democratic presidential nomination - best-selling self-help author Marianne Williamson and anti-vaccine activist Robert Kennedy Jr.

No prominent Democratic officeholders appear to be considering a challenge to the incumbent, however.

Despite lacklustre approval ratings, Democratic power brokers have indicated that they are all in for Biden’s re-election bid even before he has officially declared his intention to seek it, reported NBC News.

Biden’s remarks come as he broke with progressives on some hot-button issues ahead of the expected launch of his re-election campaign, including on crime, immigration policy and the environment.

However, Democrats from across the party, from progressives and moderates to leadership and rank-and-file members — have said they plan to stick with Biden heading into 2024. —ANI

NOTICE FOR AVIATION



Russian volcano spews ash plume across Kamchatka

MOSCOW: The Shiveluch volcano in Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula erupted early on Tuesday and sent up an ash plume 12.4 miles high into the air, the Kamchatka Volcanic Eruption Response Team (KVERT) said.

The team issued a code red Volcano Observatory Notice for Aviation, noting that further ash explosions 15 kilometres high could occur at any time.

“Ongoing activity could affect international and low-flying aircraft,” it said.

Thick layer of ash

The ash cloud following the eruption drifted to the west and south and measured 400 by 270 kilometres, the Kamchatka branch of the Geophysical Survey of the Russian Academy of Sciences said on Telegram.

Residents in the village of Klyuchi were faced with an 8.5-centi-

metre-thick layer of ash covering homes, cars, and the ground, director of the Institute of Volcanology and Seismology of the Russian Academy of Sciences Alexei Ozerov said.

They also reported the water coming out of their taps had turned ash-grey. A military base was reportedly organizing drinking water.

Russian media reports indicated the ash cloud was continuing to spread with experts warning it could even reach the regional capital Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, around 450 kilometres away.

It was not yet clear how dangerous the eruption and ash cloud could prove to be to the region’s sparse population.

Local authorities closed schools and ordered residents in nearby villages to stay indoors, the head of the Ust-Kamchatsky municipal region Oleg Bondarenko said in a

Telegram post.

Kamchatka has about 160 volcanoes

Shiveluch is one of the largest volcanoes on the Kamchatka peninsula with an altitude of over 3,000 metres.

The peninsula that juts out into the North Pacific Ocean has about 160 volcanoes, but only about two dozen of them are active. UNESCO lists the Volcanoes of Kamchatka as a World Heritage Site.

Volcanologists had been predicting an eruption at Shiveluch for months. It comes days after the nearby Bezmianny volcano sent a 10-kilometre plume of ash into the air.

One of Kamchatka’s largest and most active volcanoes, Shiveluch has had an estimated 60 substantial eruptions in the past 10,000 years, the last major one being in 2007. —nw

GLOBAL GROWTH

China, India ‘two exceptions’ to global slowdown this year

WASHINGTON: China and India are “two exceptions to the slowdown” that the global economy is expected to experience this year, World Bank Group President David Malpass has said.

Malpass made the remarks in a media call ahead of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Spring Meetings week, according to a press release posted at the worldbank.org on Monday.

“Global growth is expected to be weak this year, slowing to 2 percent from 3.1 percent in 2022. For the U.S., we’re expecting a slowdown to 1.2 percent from 2.1 percent in 2022,” said Malpass.

“Several factors are weighing on the second half outlook: Oil prices have jumped back above 80 U.S. dollars a barrel. The recent banking sector stress dampens activity. And inflation pressures persist. The U.S. month-over-month core inflation has been rising over the last five months,” he said.

“I’ll note two exceptions to the slowdown: China and India. China’s GDP growth is rebounding to over 5 percent in 2023, with strong private investment,” said Malpass.

“I note the stability of China’s currency and the countercyclical nature of its monetary policy,” he said.

“India continues to be one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world. We’re looking



for growth of 6.3 percent in their FY23/24,” said Malpass.

Malpass noted that, looking to the big picture, the global economy faces two problems.

“First, the normalization of interest rates after an artificial decade near zero. This creates problems in terms of the duration mismatch as we’ve seen in the bank failures, liquidity shortages, and how to allocate the losses. The duration mismatch will take time to digest. With inflation persistent and the dollar weakening, the risk is that the losses will be allocated to those with lower incomes, including through inflation,” he said.

A second major problem is that the available global capital is being absorbed by a narrow group of advanced economies that have extremely high government debt levels, said Malpass.

“I’ll call them ‘sinkholes.’ To make matters worse, their populations are aging rapidly and the peace dividend of the 1990s was used up,” he said.

“I’ve advocated a range of new policies that would spur production to combat inflation and currency weakness, but the likelihood is a long period of slow growth, asset repricing, and capital moving in the wrong direction - toward a narrow group of governments and big corporations rather than to the small businesses and working capital that could add to global growth,” said the World Bank chief.

China and India are “two exceptions to the slowdown” that the global economy is expected to experience this year, World Bank Group President David Malpass has said.

—Xinhua



‘To watch Pooran in full flow is an absolute pleasure’

England’s World Cup-winning captain Morgan was among many stars impressed by the West Indian’s blitz

BENGALURU: Nicholas Pooran struck a blistering 62 off only 19 balls (4x4, 7x6) while Marcus Stoinis hammered 65 off 30 balls (6x4, 5x6) as Lucknow Super Giants pulled off a nail-biting one-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore at a capacity M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, in a league match of the 2023 IPL on Monday. West Indies’ Pooran also hit the fastest half-century this season, with his 50 coming off only 15 balls.

Speaking on *JioCinema* England’s World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan was impressed by Pooran’s performance, and said: “He has such fast hands. To watch him in full flow is an absolute pleasure. Tonight, he got huge rewards at this ground.”

Meanwhile, former India cricketer Suresh Raina needed some time to process the events panning out on the ground. “I need my heart to rest first. Almost 450 runs were scored in 40 overs, so we’ve received full entertainment tonight in the IPL.

“The way the match went down to the last ball and how Dinesh (Karthik) missed the wicket, RCB had almost won the match. They



also tried the Mankad rule and it wasn’t successful, so it was full of entertainment. Full credit goes to Pooran and Stoinis for the way they built their partnership,” said Raina.

Raina was also full of praise for Pooran. “He is a dangerous batter. We’ve seen this finishing from MS Dhoni, Stoinis, Mitchell Marsh, Kieron Pollard, and Hardik Pandya, but he’s very different.

“To score a 50 off 15 balls for the fastest 50 of the season, especially at the time he did it. Even bigger than the 50 off 15 balls, Pooran got the win for his team. To win a match from that position, there must be a lot of positivity and belief that he can win matches at

any time. The way he hit the ball around the ground, it was a spectacular innings.”

Former India pacer RP Singh spoke of wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik’s error on the last ball. “Mistakes like this happen from anyone but mistakes like this shouldn’t happen, especially when you’re an experienced player with the tag of a finisher. This was something the finisher had to do. Once Parthiv Patel had run out MS Dhoni in the same situation, but he didn’t miss and won the match for his team. These things count a lot and maybe Dinesh couldn’t understand it or couldn’t control his pulse in that situation.” - **ANI**

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Want to score more runs at higher strike rate: KL Rahul

BENGALURU: After his side scraped to a nervy, one-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) on Monday, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) skipper KL Rahul expressed disappointment with his innings, saying that “it was not ideal for him and he wants to score more runs at a higher strike rate”.

“Unbelievable. This is the Chinnaswamy, the only venue where so many last-ball finishes are possible. From the position we were in, to end up winning it, is superb. We had to go hard and the ball swung early, and they got 2-3 wickets to put the pressure on us. The only



reason we got two points today is for the way the lower order batted,” said KL Rahul during the post-match presentation.

On his knock, he said: “Not ideal for me, I want to score more runs and get the strike rate up as well. We have played on two tough Lucknow wickets, and, today, we lost 3 wickets so I went slower. I wanted to stay till the end and play with Nicky [Nicholas Pooran]. Batting at Nos. 5, 6, and 7 are the toughest positions to play and that is where games are won and lost.

“We know about the power in Marcus [Stoinis] and Nicky, and Ayush [Badoni] has come along as well. He has played 2-3 knocks last year, and he has continued to perform well for us.”



SULTANATE OF OMAN

TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender no.	Description	Tender documents price (R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
517/2022/MAFWR/HQ-57-Recall-1	Construction of the central fish market at Mahot	65/-	Specialized	Sunday 16/4/2023	Wednesday 26/4/2023
521/2022/MAFWR/HQ-58-Recall-2	rental of (45) vehicles for the Directorate General for Fisheries Development	25/-	Specialized	Sunday 16/4/2023	Thursday 27/4/2023

- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources. And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@mtcl.gov.om.
- Note: Bid Submission will be online only. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system.

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Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources



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QUOTE OF THE DAY



"I think bowling at the death is something that comes with great responsibility. I've been working on yorkers. I feel it does not come naturally. Even if it comes naturally, you need to have the guts to execute that when you are under pressure. So I feel staying in the moment helps."

TUSHAR DESHPANDE
Chennai Super Kings seamer

TODAY'S MATCH



Chennai Super Kings vs Rajasthan Royals

6pm, Chennai

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	T	NR	NRR	PTS
LSG	4	3	1	0	0	+1.048	6
RR	3	2	1	0	0	+2.067	4
KKR	3	2	1	0	0	+1.375	4
GT	3	2	1	0	0	+0.431	4
CSK	3	2	1	0	0	+0.356	4
PBKS	3	2	1	0	0	-0.281	4
RCB	3	1	2	0	0	-0.800	2
MI	3	1	2	0	0	-0.879	2
SRH	3	1	2	0	0	-1.502	2
DC	4	0	4	0	0	-1.576	0

CSK: Chennai Super Kings, DC: Delhi Capitals, GT: Gujarat Titans, KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders, LSG: Lucknow Super Giants, MI: Mumbai Indians, PBKS: Punjab Kings, RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore, RR: Rajasthan Royals, SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad



MUMBAI WIN A CLIFFHANGER

Skipper Rohit slams half-century as Mumbai collect their first points after a last-ball thriller against Delhi Capitals

NEW DELHI: Another day, another last-over thriller, the IPL 2023 season hasn't disappointed. And on Tuesday, Mumbai Indians ended their disappointment of two successive losses as they edged past Delhi Capitals to open their account with a thrilling last-ball six-wicket victory at the Arun Jaitley Stadium.

Chasing a competitive target of 173 to win, Mumbai got off to a flying start with skipper Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan adding 71 runs for the opening wicket.

Both Rohit Sharma and Ishan Kishan took the risks despite the odd ball turning a long way. Rohit's 37 off 17 and Kishan's 30 off 19 took Mumbai to 68 at the end of the powerplay.

A mix-up got rid of Ishan for 31

(26) but there was no change in the momentum as Tilak Varma joined Rohit. The duo added a crucial 68 runs for the second wicket, before Mukesh Kumar opened the contest yet again in the 16th over.

The pacer removed Tilak for 41 (29) and then removed Suryakumar Yadav for a first ball duck, to continue his poor form.

Rohit, who scored his first half-century in 25 innings in the competition, was dismissed in the next over for 65 (45) with wicket-keeper Abhishek Porel grabbing a sensational catch off Mustafizur Rahman.

Rohit had brought up his fifty in 29 balls and the centre piece of the innings were the two sixes off Anrich Nortje.

Mumbai Indians needed 26 off the last three overs with two new batters at the wicket. Tim David and Cameron Green then took Mumbai home in the final ball of the match as they ran the needed two for win with David making a desperate dive on the second to bring joy for Mumbai. Agony for Delhi as they suffered their fourth consecutive defeat.

Earlier, skipper David Warner's fifty and Axar Patel's blitz of 54 runs helped Capitals post 172.

Axar's knock of 54 came off 25 balls while Warner's 51 came in 47 balls. For Mumbai Indians, Jason Behrendorff and Piyush Chawla bagged three wickets each while Riley Meredith claimed two wickets.

Delhi Capitals got off to a fine start as their openers, David Warner and Prithvi Shaw, gathered 33 runs in 3 overs. However, the 43-run partnership was broken by Hrithik Shokeen when he sent back Shaw for 15. Manish Pandey started in style as he slammed Meredith for back-to-back two fours in the fifth over.

Chawla got the big wicket of Pandey whose cameo of 26 came



off 18 deliveries. Yash Dhull departed after scoring just 2 runs on his debut. Delhi soon lost their fourth wicket as Chawla had Rovman Powell leg before.

Warner continued his red-hot form and slammed Mumbai bowlers all around the park and was joined by Axar. The latter hit Shokeen for back-to-back two sixes to collect 13 runs in the 15th over of the innings. Warner's crucial half-century came off 43 balls in the next over while Axar kept the momentum with some big hits.

Axar targeted Behrendorff as he launched him for two sixes to bring up a 50-run partnership with Warner in the 17th over. Axar's maiden IPL half-century

also came with a six.

Behrendorff, however, then struck in the 19th over by picking up three wickets in the same over.

He first got rid of Axar off the first ball and then dismissed Warner two balls later and Abhishek Porel off the last ball.

Delhi Capitals also lost Kuldeep Yadav in the same over as he was run out to make it four wickets for just one run.

Meredith took the wicket of Nortje to bundle out Delhi for 172 in 19.4 overs.

Brief scores: Delhi Capitals 172 in 19.4 overs (Axar 54, Warner 51; Behrendorff 3/23, Chawla 3/22) lost to Mumbai Indians 173/4 in 20 overs (Rohit 65, Kishan 31, Varma 41; Green 17; Mukesh 2-30).

FORMER INDIA COACH RAVI SHASTRI'S PREDICTION

'Gill can break Kohli's record for most runs in IPL season'

MUMBAI: Former India coach Ravi Shastri has put his money on Gujarat Titans opener Shubman Gill to break Virat Kohli's seemingly impregnable record of amassing most runs — 973 — in a single season of Indian Premier League (IPL).

Royal Challengers Bangalore's Kohli achieved the milestone in IPL 2016, where he slammed 973 runs at an average of 81.08. Gill completed 2,000 runs in IPL on Sunday.

He accomplished this milestone during his side's defeat against Kolkata Knight Riders at Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad.

In the match, Shubman played a handy knock of 39 runs in 31 balls. His knock consisted of five boundaries. His runs came at a strike rate of 125.81. In his 77 matches in IPL career, which has seen him represent Gujarat and formerly Kolkata Knight Riders, Gill has scored 2,016 runs at an average of 32.52.

He has scored his runs at a strike rate of 126.24. Fifteen half-centuries have come out of his bat in IPL with the best score of 96.

Gill's best season came last year when he played a key role in Gujarat Titans' triumph in their maiden IPL 2022 season. Last season, he scored 483 runs in 16 innings at an average of 34.50. He scored four half-centuries last season, with the best score of 96.



On who might break Kohli's record for the most runs in a single season, Shastri told Star Sports: "It has to be an opening batsman, because only then will he get many opportunities to score runs."

"I feel it is Subhman Gill because he is in good form and also

because he plays top of the order. So he will get a good number of opportunities to score runs. The pitches are good, so if he can score 80-100 runs consecutively in two or three innings, then at that point in time only he will already have 300-400 runs."

Shastri added: "I believe that it is very difficult to break the record, because 900 plus runs is huge but one thing is opening batsmen will get two extra matches and two extra innings, so opening batsmen can only break this record if it is possible."



On the IPL matches so far in the 2023 season, Shastri said: "If we look at what's happened till now, then the two left-handers, Tilak Varma and Sai Sudharshan, one is 20 years old, the other is 21, they have been a lot of fun to watch. Because they seem to have

a future, their temperament and maturity which we can see shows the potential they have to be good players."

Tilak Varma was the find of the season for Mumbai Indians in IPL 2022. He scored 397 runs in 14 matches at an average of over 36 and SR of over 131 with two fifties and the best score of 61. In the first game of IPL 2023, he scored an unbeaten 84 off 46 balls against RCB in a losing cause, carrying the entire Mumbai Indians batting lineup on his back.

In 37 T20s, he has scored 1,159 runs at an average of 38.63 with a strike rate of over 139.30. His best score in the format is an unbeaten 84. He has 10 half-centuries in the format.

Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan also was impressed with Varma in the IPL 2023 so far besides Dhruv Jurel.

"One is definitely Tilak Varma, he has impressed us a lot. He batted well last year and has performed this year as well. Even his attitude is very good. He looks like he can be a leader in the future. And the second is Rajasthan Royals' Dhruv Jurel. The way Jurel has batted from his first innings, I couldn't even imagine the quality of his shots under pressure. So that is one boy who has impressed, even though it's still in the early stages, but these are promising signs." - ANI

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by June 2023 reaching \$84.54, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 17 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$84.71. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,768.55 points, up by 0.62 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.55 per cent at 478.46 points. Voltamp Energy, up 9.57 per cent, was the top gainer while Financial Corporation, down 9.72 per cent, was the top loser.





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OPAZ

Executive committee formed for Integrated Economic Zone project

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) has issued a decision to form an executive committee to oversee the development project of the Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate, chaired by Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Deeb, Opaz Deputy Chairman.

The committee includes a number of officials from Opaz and from the Saudi side members from the Ministry of Investment, Economic Cities and Special Economic Zones Authority and the Saudi Development Fund.

The committee is responsible for several tasks, most notably supervising the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed between Opaz and the Saudi Economic Cities and Special Economic Zones Authority, in the field of economic development for special economic zones and free zones. The committee will also develop a plan for the development, execution and management of the project, including all programmes and initiatives, and monitoring their implementation. Additionally, the committee will oversee the establishment of the Omani-Saudi Company



that will manage and operate the Integrated Economic Zone.

The committee will work towards exchanging successful experiences and practices in the management and operation of economic zones between the two countries. It will also coordinate to hold informative workshops for traders and investors about the Zone in both countries.

Mahmoud bin Hamoud Al-Rawahi, General Manager of Opaz Planning and IT Sector, and a member of the committee said, "Opaz has completed the consultancy studies related to the Integrated Economic Zone project in Al Dhahirah Governorate, which has been allocated 388sq. km of investment land. Opaz has also provided the relevant documents, which support providing the funding required for developing the project's first phase, covering an area of 20sq km."

Ramadan Mubarak



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MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Voltamp Energy, up 9.57 per cent, was the top gainer while Financial Corporation, down 9.72 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,768.55 points, up by 0.62 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.55 per cent at 478.46 points. Voltamp Energy, up 9.57 per cent, was the top gainer while Financial Corporation, down 9.72 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of HSBC Bank Oman were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 486 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR3.39 million, with more than 19.01 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 13 advanced, 21 declined, and 14 remained unchanged.

Financial Index closed at 7,646.17 points, up 0.39 per cent. Prices of Bank Dhofar, National Bank Oman, HSBC Bank Oman, Al Batinah Development Com-

pany and Bank Nizwa were up by 3.23 per cent, 3.08 per cent, 1.25 per cent, 1.19 per cent and 1.03 per cent respectively. Prices of Financial Corporation, Oman Arab Bank, Global Financial Investments, Ominvest and Muscat Finance were up by 9.72 per cent, 4.00 per cent, 3.39 per cent, 3.30 per cent and 1.64 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,184.13 points, down 0.22 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Al Anwar Ceramics and Oman Cement were up by 9.57 per cent, 2.94 per cent and 0.61 per cent respectively. Prices of National Mineral Water, Galfar Engineering, Raysut Cement, Oman Fisheries and Jazeera Steel Products were up by 9.52 per cent, 2.56 per cent, 2.47 per cent, 2.11 per cent and 1.89 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.17 per cent before closing at 1,683.36 points. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

OMAN STOCKS

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,768.55	4,739.23	4,768.55	4,739.28	29.27	0.62
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,646.17	7,608.14	7,646.17	7,616.26	29.91	0.39
Industry Index	6,197.78	6,085.01	6,184.13	6,197.94	-13.81	-0.22
Services Index	1,692.29	1,676.17	1,683.36	1,686.18	-2.82	-0.17
MSX Shariah Index	479.15	475.32	478.46	475.86	2.60	0.55
MSX TR INDEX	6,269.22	6,230.67	6,269.22	6,230.74	38.48	0.62
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,329.26	8,287.83	8,329.26	8,296.68	32.58	0.39
SERVICES TR IDX	1,858.80	1,841.10	1,849.00	1,852.09	-3.09	-0.17
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,620.77	6,500.30	6,606.19	6,620.94	-14.75	-0.22

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
19,010,245	3,387,687	486	23,751,136,455	13	21	14	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 11

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRE VALUE	MARKET CAP
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REGULAR MARKET

OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	157,391	41,976	6	0.280	0.268	0.280	0.268	0.260	0.008	3.077	-0.268	0.286	0.268	0.100	435,753,623
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	50,963	17,522	7	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.340	0.010	2.941	0.350	0.324	0.350	0.100	77,000,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	75,254	78,673	7	1.030	1.050	1.030	1.050	1.030	0.020	1.942	1.050	1.050	1.050	0.100	787,500,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	611,453	202,436	25	0.330	0.332	0.330	0.332	0.330	0.002	0.606	0.332	0.332	0.338	0.100	109,849,740
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	5,000	2,020	1	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.404	0.402	0.002	0.488	0.404	0.400	0.418	0.100	95,509,640
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT BANK	905,885	92,192	9	0.101	0.102	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.100	0.102	0.100	463,598,291
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	79,488	33,385	2	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.000	0.420	0.462	0.420	0.100	273,396,577
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	947,546	258,207	52	0.274	0.274	0.272	0.272	0.273	-0.001	-0.366	0.272	0.272	0.100	2,041,740,001	
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT ENG	32,982	3,572	6	0.109	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.109	-0.001	-0.917	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	16,200,000
OM0000002236	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	10,000	2,500	3	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.253	-0.003	-1.186	0.250	0.250	0.258	0.100	15,301,068
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	14	6	1	0.408	0.408	0.408	0.408	0.414	-0.006	-1.449	0.408	0.408	0.414	0.100	22,440,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	14,000	3,656	2	0.260	0.264	0.260	0.260	0.265	-0.005	-1.887	0.264	0.264	0.270	0.100	32,473,470
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN	70,063	8,437	10	0.121	0.121	0.119	0.119	0.122	-0.003	-2.459	0.119	0.115	0.120	0.100	29,613,150
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	164,100	47,335	16	0.418	0.418	0.410	0.410	0.424	-0.014	-3.302	0.410	0.410	0.410	0.100	274,029,635
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	20,136	1,148	3	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.059	-0.002	-3.390	0.057	0.056	0.059	0.100	11,400,000
Total		3,141,355	813,064	150												

Parallel Market

OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	58,335	7,350	1	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.115	0.011	9.565	0.126	0.126	0.126	0.100	10,256,747
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MKR	20,332	16,834	10	0.824	0.860	0.824	0.860	0.824	0.036	4.369	0.860	0.820	0.900	0.100	81,700,000
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	4,276	684	4	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.155	0.005	3.226	0.160	0.160	0.170	0.100	479,416,230
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	12,621,787	2,044,729	1	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.160	0.002	1.250	0.162	0.160	0.164	0.100	324,050,672
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEV	11,000	918	2	0.078	0.085	0.078	0.085	0.084	0.001	1.190	0.085	0.085	0.086	0.100	2,550,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	169,335	16,595	5	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	22,950	2,567	6	0.111	0.113	0.109	0.113	0.112	0.001	0.893	0.113	0.112	0.113	0.100	9,605,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	4,500	531	2	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.117	0.001	0.855	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.100	50,122,885
OM0000001509	DHOFAH INT	30,272	5,013	3	0.164	0.168	0.164	0.168	0.168	0.000	0.000	0.168	0.164	0.184	0.100	68,753,381
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	93,299	7,277	6	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.076	0.078	0.100	9,506,250
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	95,500	5,900	7	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.100	21,723,705
OM0000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	88,994	7,169	9	0.078	0.081	0.078	0.080	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.080	0.080	0.081	0.100	16,325,556
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	185,500	16,137	19	0.087	0.087	0.086	0.087	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.086	0.087	0.100	75,225,000
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	232,900	7,453	15	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.000	0.000	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.100	21,596,398
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	224,225	6,951	13	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.000	0.000	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.100	22,146,597
OM0000007910	OMAN REAL ESTATE	2,200	220	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.094	0.100	0.100	20,000,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	10,000	723	2	0.073	0.073	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.079	0.100	33,925,420
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	745,517	216,682	129	0.290	0.291	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.100	22,358,000
OM0000008710	BANK DESALINATION	20,100	2,874	2	0.144	0.144	0.143	0.144	0.144	-0.001	-0.694	0.143	0.143	0.143	0.100	10,789,646
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	1,125	109	1	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.098	-0.001	-1.020	0.097	0.097	0.101	0.100	15,088,389
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	474,190	40,373	37	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.083	0.094	0.100	17,000,000
OM0000002338	SALALAH PORT SR	70	32	1	0.454	0.454	0.454	0.454	0.460	-0.006	-1.304	0.454	0.000	0.000	0.100	81,646,180
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	213,176	12,791	10	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.061	0.100	18,428,790
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	5,000	465	1	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.095	-0.002	-2.105	0.093	0.096	0.092	0.100	16,933,291
OM0000004118	RAYSUT CEMENT	5,600	885	6	0.155	0.158	0.155	0.158	0.162	-0.004	-2.469	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.100	31,600,000
OM0000003821	GALFAR ENGINEER	305,121	57,989	15	0.191	0.191	0.190	0.190	0.195	-0.005	-2.664	0.190	0.190	0.191	0.100	38,567,425
OM0000003260	OMAN ARAB BANK	4,100	512	2	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.125	-0.005	-4.000	0.120	0.121	0.125	0.100	200,329,200
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	45,110	2,439	9	0.057	0.057	0.054	0.054	0.057	-0.003	-5.263	0.054	0.054	0.062	0.100	78,980,479
OM0000001285	MINERAL WATER	1,133	65	1	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.063	-0.006	-9.524	0.057	0.057	0.000	0.100	1,539,173
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORP.	1,430	93	2	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.072	-0.007	-9.722	0.065	0.000	0.078	0.100	4,551,947
Total		15,697,077	2,482,257	323												

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR44 million

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR44 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR24 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.638 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.635 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.71458 per cent and 4.73170 per cent respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR20 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.746 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR89.745 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 5.02978 per cent and 5.09366 per cent, respectively.



Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks with the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the inter-

est rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.50 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.00 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. — ONA

RECOGNITION

Abraj becomes first API Q2 2nd Edition Certified Company in Oman for integrated fracturing services

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Abraj Energy Services, a leading provider of oil and gas services, announced that it has become the first company in the Sultanate of Oman to receive the Q2 2nd Edition Certification for Integrated Fracturing Services from the American Petroleum Institute (API).

This milestone marks Abraj's commitment to providing high-quality services that adhere to global industry standards and its dedication to serving as a market leader within the oil and gas service industry.

The API Q2 2nd Edition Certification covers all of Abraj's services and validates the company's ability to consistently meet customer needs, industry standards, and regulatory requirements.



This certification is a testament to Abraj's robust quality management system, which focuses on competency, service design, contingency planning, supply chain controls, preventive maintenance,

inspection, service quality plans, and change management.

"We are thrilled to have achieved this significant milestone, and we are proud to be the first company in Oman to receive this certification," said Eng. Saif Al Hamhami, Abraj CEO. "This recognition is a testament to our team's hard work and dedication to providing high-quality services that meet and exceed our customers' expectations."

Abraj Energy Services is committed to delivering reliable, cost-effective, and sustainable solutions to its customers while maintaining the highest levels of safety, quality, and environmental stewardship. With this certification, Abraj Energy Services demonstrates its continued commitment to achieving excellence in all aspects of its operations.

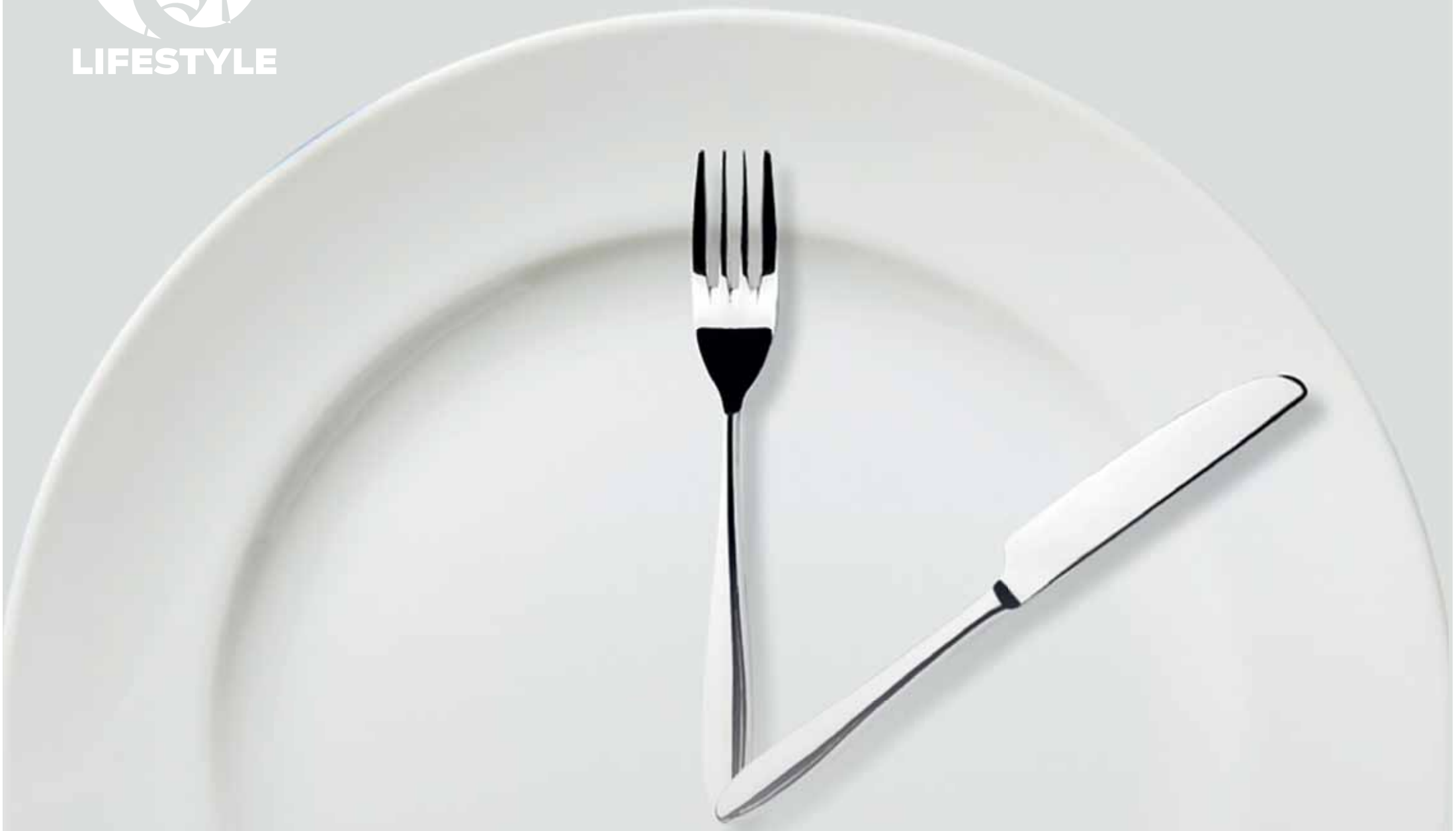
DISPLAY OF OMANI PRODUCTS

Souq Al Wathbah witnesses excellent participation from SMEs and visitors

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The annual Ramadan Souq Al Wathbah, organised by the SMEs Development Authority and Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, witnessed exceptional participation from entrepreneurs, small enterprise owners as well as visitors.

The souq, which was held from April 6 to 8, at Bank Muscat's head office, Airport Heights



FASTING DIET DECREASES TYPE 2 DIABETES RISK

A fasting diet that promotes eating early in the day might be the key to lowering the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Researchers from the University of Adelaide and South Australian Health and Medical Research Institute (SAH-MRI) compared two different diets: a time restricted, intermittent fasting diet and a reduced calorie diet to see which one was more beneficial for people who were prone to developing type 2 diabetes.

“Following a time restricted, intermittent fasting diet could help lower the chances of developing type 2 diabetes,” said senior author the University of Adelaide’s Professor Leonie Heilbronn, Adelaide Medical School.

“People who fasted for three days during the week, only eating between 8am and 12pm on those days, showed a greater tolerance to glucose after 6 months than those on a daily, low-calorie diet.

“Participants who followed the intermittent fasting diet were more sensitive to insulin and also experienced a greater reduction in blood lipids than those on the low-calorie diet.”

Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body’s cells don’t respond effectively to insulin and it loses its ability to produce the hormone, which is responsible for controlling glucose in blood.

It’s estimated that nearly 60 percent

of type 2 diabetes cases could be delayed or prevented with changes to diet and lifestyle.

Almost 1.3 million Australians are currently living with the condition, for which there is no cure.

There were more than 200 participants recruited from South Australia in the 18-month study, which was published in scientific journal, Nature Medicine.

Participants on both the time restricted, intermittent fasting diet and the low-calorie diet experienced similar amounts of weight loss.

“This is the largest study in the world to date and the first powered to assess how the body processes and uses glucose after eating a meal, which is a better indicator of diabetes risk than a fasting test,” said first author Xiao Tong Teong, a PhD student at the University of Adelaide.

“The results of this study add to the growing body of evidence to indicate that meal timing and fasting advice extends the health benefits of a restricted calorie diet, independently from weight loss, and this may be influential in clinical practice.”

Further research is needed to investigate if the same benefits are experienced with a slightly longer eating window, which could make the diet more sustainable in the long term. **ANI**

“The results of this study add to the growing body of evidence to indicate that meal timing and fasting advice extends the health benefits of a restricted calorie diet, independently from weight loss, and this may be influential in clinical practice.

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FREE
2TRY





Al Harthy eyes podium finish in Portimao race

The Omani racer along with his teammates, Micheal Dinan and Clint Eastwood, will be going into the second round of FIA WEC in Portimao with confidence after their impressive fightback in Sebring opener

MUSCAT: Oman Racing's Ahmad Al Harthy along with his teammates, Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood, will go into the second round of 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship in Portimao, Portugal, will a lot of confidence after their impressive fightback in the opening round in the USA last month.

The 6 Hours of Portimao will see the Aston Martin Vantage trio head to the Algarve region with optimism after a competitive showing during the championship

curtain-raiser in Sebring, USA.

Marking the Omani's maiden outing in FIA WEC, and his first-ever visit to the unique Florida track, Al Harthy delivered from the outset in the GTE Am class – first producing an excellent top three showing in qualifying, before racing impressively during the eight-hour contest.

Ninth place at the finish, though, wasn't indicative of the pace and performance shown by the Oman Racing with TF Sport trio, as the squad had to battle back from

a costly puncture early in hour two – while Dinan was running in the podium battle. Losing a huge amount of time, the three points for ninth position were the best they could have achieved.

Al Harthy is now aiming for a big haul of points with the focus on mounting a challenge for a maiden FIA WEC podium finish in only his second weekend in the globe's biggest endurance racing championship.

It's worth mentioning that *Portimao's Autodrome Internacional do Algarve* provided one of highlights for the Omani driver last year when he came second in the LMGTE class during the final race of the 2022 European Le Mans Series (ELMS). Notably, it was Al Harthy's debut at the track.

The Aston Martin brand ambassador. Al Harthy. is being backed by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS.

Ahead of his second race in FIA WEC, Al Harthy said: "Portimao, obviously, holds happy memories for me from last season in the

European Le Mans Series. It would be fantastic to be challenging for the podium this weekend in only Oman Racing's second race at the FIA World Endurance Championship. The level of competition is incredibly high in WEC. We competed well in America during the first race and there were so many positives to take from there.

"In Portimao, qualifying will be important, as always. I was happy with my performance in round one. The whole team learnt a huge amount from the Sebring race and we're all determined to build on that and hope to have the strongest weekend. Portimao is a completely different challenge to Sebring, but it's a track we went very well at last year in ELMS so confidence is high."

The opening two free practice sessions for the second event of the FIA World Endurance Championship season will take place on Friday. On Saturday, the third free practice begins in the morning followed by qualifying. Race two of the season, the 6 Hours of Portimao, will get underway on Sunday.

Leaders Barcelona held 0-0 by Girona



BARCELONA: La Liga leaders Barcelona missed the chance to go 15 points clear at the top as they were frustrated at home by Girona with a goalless draw on Monday.

Robert Lewandowski had a golden chance to open the scoring after four minutes, but put his effort onto the roof of the net.

Girona keeper Paulo Gazzaniga, on loan from Fulham, made a number of good saves, including one to deny Raphinha at his near post. Taty Castellanos also shot wide when through on goal for the visitors.

It is only the third time this season that Barcelona have dropped points at home.

But despite the disappointment of failing to win, Xavi's side increased their advantage over Real Madrid to 13 points after their title rivals were beaten by Villarreal on Sunday.

Villarreal's Baena receives death threats

Meanwhile, Villarreal's Alex Baena said that he and his family received death threats after claims he "wished harm" on the family of Real Madrid's Federico Valverde.

On Sunday, Baena filed a complaint with police after being assaulted following Saturday's 3-2 La Liga win in Madrid.

Villarreal say the 21-year-old was attacked on his way to the team bus after the game. It has been widely reported that Real Madrid midfielder Valverde was the alleged offender. "Last Saturday I was assaulted by a colleague from this profession after the game against Real Madrid ended," Baena said on Monday, not mentioning Valverde.

"After it happened, some comments came to light, presumably made by his entourage, which said that I had wished harm on his family. Since then, and it couldn't be otherwise, no evidence has been published that proves the deeds attributed to me."

Valverde's partner Mina Bonino said in February the couple thought they had lost their baby, before the pregnancy was found to be healthy, and some reports in Spain have alleged that Baena referred to this during the game. Winger Baena, who called the accusations "totally false", said his family had received insults and death threats.

"They took advantage of a misfortune to justify the attack, and there are lies that hurt more than punches," he added. "The damage being done to my family is unreparable and unjustifiable, there are threats, insults and even private messages wishing death on my family."

In a statement on Sunday, Villarreal said: "Villarreal CF player Alex Baena was assaulted last night while on his way to the team bus after the match against Real Madrid CF at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium. Faced with this situation, the player has decided to file a complaint against the aggressor with the police." - Agencies

LIVERPOOL VS ARSENAL

Assistant referee Hatzidakis stood down during 'elbow' investigation

LONDON: Assistant referee Constantine Hatzidakis will not be involved in any matches while the Football Association (FA) investigates an incident in which he appeared to elbow Liverpool defender Andy Robertson on Sunday.

Hatzidakis made contact with Robertson's chin after the Scotland international approached him at the end of the first half in Sunday's 2-2 Premier League draw with Arsenal.

An angry Robertson and several team-mates approached referee Paul Tierney, who booked Robertson.

Refereeing body PGMOL said it "will not be appointing Constantine Hatzidakis to fixtures in any of the competition" during the FA investigation.

PGMOL (Professional Game



Match Officials Limited) said it would "review the matter in full".

Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic is serving an eight-

game ban for pushing referee Chris Kavanagh in their FA Cup defeat at Manchester United last month. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Leicester City appoint Smith as manager until end of season

LONDON: Dean Smith was named Leicester City boss until the end of the season on Tuesday.

Smith, 52, left Norwich earlier this season after previous spells at Aston Villa and Brentford.

Leicester are in huge trouble in the relegation zone following Saturday's home defeat by Bournemouth, two points from safety with eight games left.

"The challenge in front of us is clear, but it's one myself and my coaching team have experienced before," Smith told the club website.

"With the quality in this squad and the number of games remaining, it's very much achievable."

Smith's first game in charge of Leicester is away to Premier League champions Manchester City on Saturday.

Craig Shakespeare returns



to the King Power Stadium as Smith's assistant manager.

Shakespeare was part of Claudio Ranieri's backroom team when Leicester famously won the

Premier League title in 2016. He subsequently replaced the Italian as manager.

Smith's coaching line-up also includes former England captain John Terry, who served under him at Aston Villa, along with the club's current first team coaches Adam Sadler and Mike Stowell.

Smith's appointment means there are five interim managers at Premier League clubs - Frank Lampard at Chelsea, Cristian Stellini at Tottenham, Southampton's Ruben Selles and Roy Hodgson at Crystal Palace are in place until the summer, while Leeds boss Javi Gracia is on an "flexible contract".

There has been a record 13 managerial changes in the Premier League this season - three more than in any previous campaign - with 11 of those being sackings. - Agencies

GOLF

Tiger Woods' ball from title-winning 1997 Masters fetches \$64,000



AUGUSTA: A golf ball Tiger Woods gave to a young fan during the final round of his title-winning 1997 Masters tournament has sold for more than US\$64,000, auction house Golden Age Auctions said on Sunday.

Woods bogeyed the fifth hole and handed the ball to Julian Nexsen, who was nine-years-old at the time. Bidding for the Titleist ball, which has "Tiger" stamped on it, began at US\$500 when Nexsen put it up for auction on March 27, the auction site said.

The ball was put up for auction on 27 March - after a starting bid of \$500, it fetched US\$64,124.40

when the auction closed on Sunday.

Woods, then 21, won the first of his 15 major titles in stunning fashion at the 1997 Masters with a record margin of 12 strokes and became the youngest golfer to triumph at Augusta National.

The victory set the tone for Woods' record-breaking career. His four-day score was 270, 18 under par - breaking the previous record held by Jack Nicklaus.

"Unless Tiger himself or his caddie Fluff intentionally saved a ball from this historic final round (which we doubt), this may be the only confirmed golf ball from the final round of 'Tiger Woods' first

major championship victory," Golden Age Auctions said.

According to the auctioneers, "dozens of people" witnessed the moment Woods handed the ball to Nexsen. It also featured in the *Washington Times* newspaper the next day.

"After making his first bogey in 36 holes yesterday, Woods stopped on his way to the sixth tee to give a ball to 9-year-old Julian Nexsen of Greenville, SC [South Carolina]," the paper reported.

The newspaper cutting, Mr Nexsen's badge from the 1997 Masters Tournament, pairings sheets from the Sunday final round

and the golf ball have been framed together ever since.

Nexsen has signed a legal declaration certifying the authenticity of the golf ball and the story of his final round interaction with Woods.

Woods, 47, withdrew from this year's Masters due to injury before the resumption of the third round, saying he had re-aggravated a tissue inflammation that causes pain in the heel.

In November last year a signed Woods ball sold for a record \$186,000, Heritage Auctions said. Woods hit a hole-in-one with the ball on his professional tournament debut in 1996. - Agencies

ROUND-UP

Break your fast at Al-Futtaim IKEA's first-ever Iftar buffet

The Iftar buffet menu caters to all taste buds with a fusion of Middle Eastern, Indian, and Continental for everyone to indulge in

MUSCAT: This Ramadan, gather your friends and family for a hearty Iftar buffet meal at the region's favourite Swedish home furnishing retailer, Al-Futtaim IKEA serving up a delicious spread at the IKEA Muscat Restaurant available until April 21 from 6pm to 9pm.

The Iftar buffet menu is priced at OMR9.9 for adults, OMR5.9 for kids aged 5-10 while kids under 5 dine for free but IKEA Family Members and Blue Reward members can enjoy the Iftar Buffet for only OMR7.9.

The Iftar buffet menu caters to all taste buds with a fusion of Middle Eastern, Indian, and Continental for everyone to indulge in

tal for everyone to indulge in. The menu features a wide variety of mouth-watering main dishes with appetisers and refreshing beverages at the juice station.

Start your iftar at the soup station serving Oriental lentil soup then make your way to grab your favourite mezzehs from the cold mezzeh station including classics like hummus, baba ghanouj, tabouleh and more or cheese samusek and Punjabi samosa from the hot mezzeh live station.

Look out for seasonal favourites and signature dishes in the Iftar buffet menu including traditional Arabic dishes like local lamb harees, chicken maktoubah with eggplant, lamb and chicken kebabs, chicken biryani and so much more. Back by popular demand, the customer favourite Ouzi live station will serve ouzi with rice, fried nuts, yoghurt, and cucumber sauce.

To end your iftar on a sweet note, customers can indulge in loukaymat, umm ali, assorted cakes, rice pudding and seasonal fruit salad.

Make your reservations by calling 800 45321 to surprise your loved ones with a delicious Iftar buffet meal at Al-Futtaim IKEA. Come and enjoy a delightful meal with your loved ones and make your iftar experience a special one to remember.



PREMIER INTEGRATED TOURISM COMPLEX

Muscat Bay announces limited availability of freehold rental units



MUSCAT: Muscat Bay, Oman's premier integrated tourism complex, has announced the limited availability of freehold rental units with lifetime residency and guaranteed ROI.

These properties offer a hassle-free living with world-class amenities and services designed to make life as convenient and enjoyable as possible. Buyers can own these homes with just a 10% down payment and a flexible 3-year payment plan. The announcement was made during the Annual Broker Awards Ceremony for 2022 hosted by Muscat Bay to celebrate the achievements of its valued partners in the real estate industry. Sheikh Hamood bin Sultan Al Hosni, CEO of Muscat Bay, and the company's esteemed brokers and partners were in attendance.

Speaking about the launch Jawad Sajid, Vice President of Sales & Marketing at Muscat Bay, said "Muscat Bay is committed to providing its residents with the best possible living experience. Our rental units offer a hassle-free living experience with lifetime resi-

dency and guaranteed ROI, along with access to 5-star Jumeirah Residents Club and hotel services. We invite everyone to experience the best of Muscat Bay with our limited availability of rental units."

Muscat Bay is a landmark development situated in a prime location in Oman, overlooking the azure waters of the Gulf of Oman. The complex is spread over a sprawling area and offers a mix of residential, commercial, and leisure facilities. The development is the perfect blend of modern luxury and traditional Omani culture, with its architecture and design inspired by the country's rich heritage.

The community at Muscat Bay is a vibrant and multicultural mix of people from all over the world. The complex is designed to provide a safe and secure environment for families, with 24-hour security and community management. With the availability of these rental properties, Muscat Bay is the perfect investment opportunity for those seeking a high-quality lifestyle and a profitable return on investment.

HOLY MONTH



Kairali Ruwi Association distributes Iftar packets

MUSCAT: Iftar kits were distributed at Ruwi High Street on Friday, April 7 under the leadership of the Kairali Ruwi Association. Organisers said they were able to deliver Iftar kits to around 500 people.

Surendran, the owner of Falcon Printers, a leading printing company in Oman, inaugurated the distribution by providing the kit. Kairali is conducting Iftar

gatherings in various areas of Oman in a very extensive manner. The organisers informed that there is no greater social welfare work than feeding the hungry.

This is the second time that the Kairali Ruwi Association is distributing the kits at Ruwi High Street. The officials informed that they will come forward with various social service programmes.

PROMOTION

Enticing benefits on powerful luxury sedan Lexus IS

MUSCAT: Lexus IS the sleek and powerful luxury sedan from Lexus is now available with exclusive benefits. Service from 5 Years / 50,000km (Whichever is earlier), 1 year free registration and scratch and win 1 out of 70 battery operated ride-on toy Lexus LX SUV. (Conditions apply. For details visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom).

The IS offers a stunning look with its lower, wider proportions with muscular fenders. The sleek lines are also complemented with aggressive sharpness carved into the side and shoulder character lines.

Making the IS a joy to drive is a 2.0-litre, turbocharged and intercooled inline four-cylinder engine delivering 241 hp and 35.7 kg.M of torque. And a sophisticated 3.5-litre V6 engine that produces 312 hp and 38.5 kg.M of torque. Both engines are paired to an eight-speed sport direct-shift automatic transmission that offers superb drivability, together with outstanding fuel efficiency and quietness even at high speed.

The IS offers occupants relaxing and luxurious moments with its thoughtfully planned interior. These include a new 10.3-inch

touchscreen multimedia system featuring Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, a 4.2-inch colour multi-information display (MID), and a dual-zone automatic climate control system with touch-sensitive controls. The vehicle also offers SmartAccess with push-button start, a 17-speaker Mark Levinson sound system, a power moonroof, power adjustable and ventilated front seats, as well as ample luggage space thanks to the 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

In the Lexus IS, drivers can enjoy complete peace of mind thanks to the Lexus Safety System+, an

advanced safety technology package that includes Pre-Collision System which include Emergency Steering Assist, Daytime Pedestrian Detection, all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control, Lane Departure Alert, Lane Tracing Alert and Automatic High-beam System.

For those seeking to experience the ultimate in thrilling responsiveness, the IS, is also available in an F Sport version. Engineered for exhilaration, the F brand DNA has trickled down from the legendary LFA, which represents the pinnacle of refined performance.





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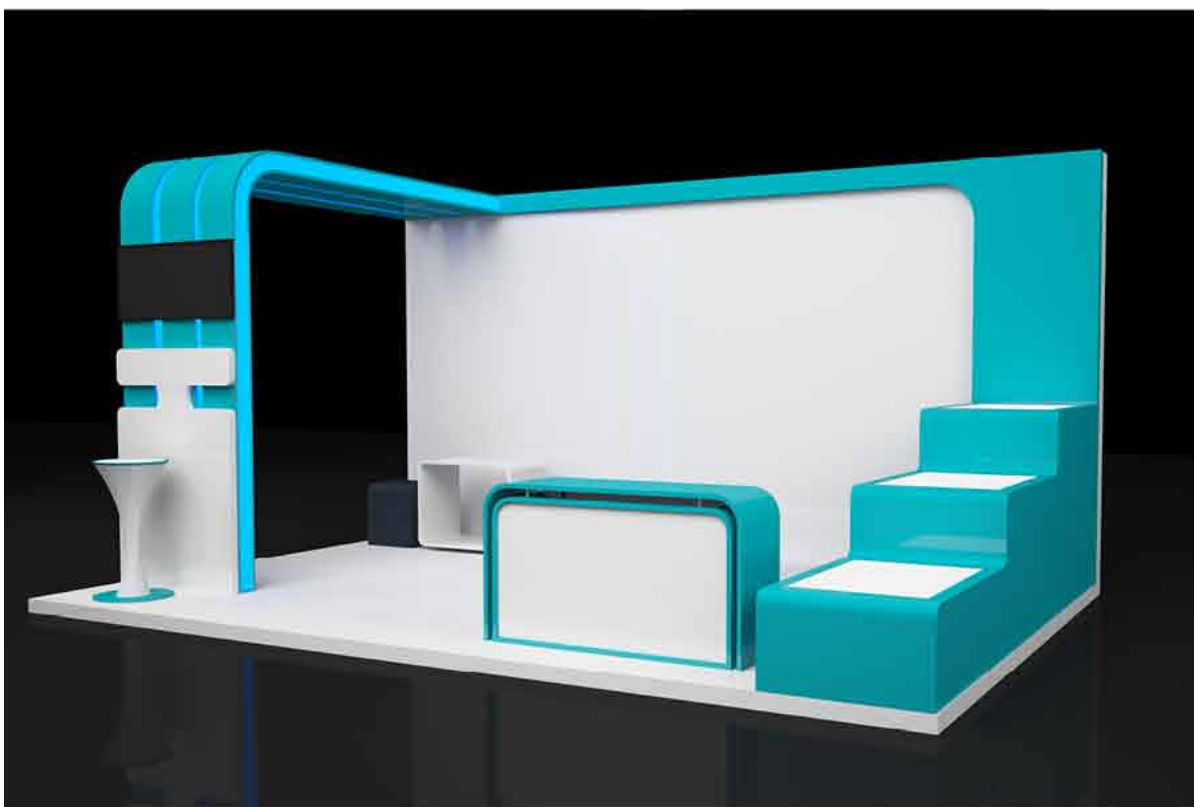
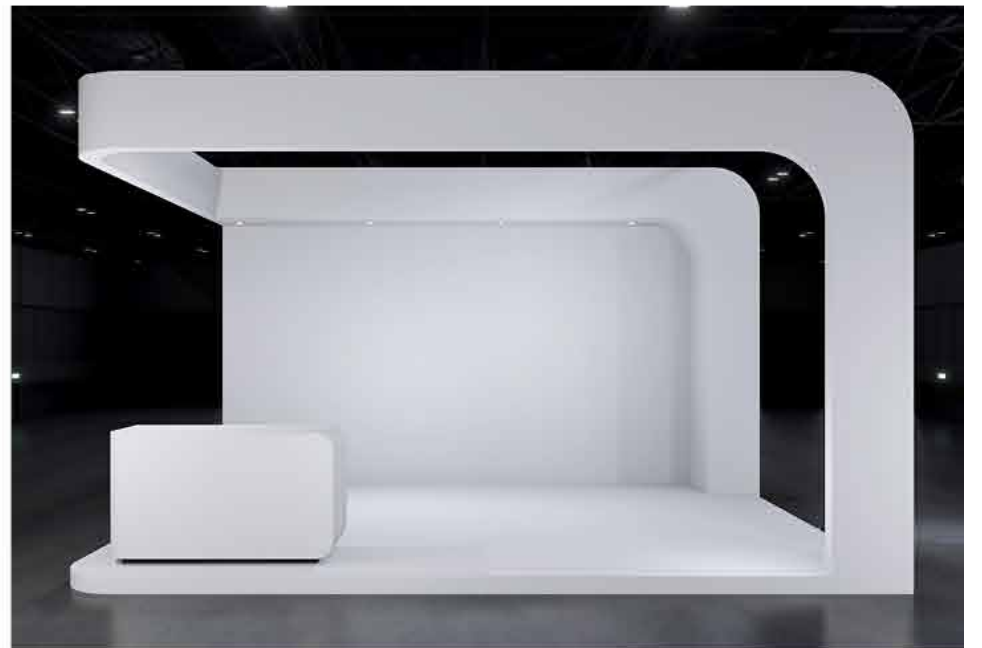
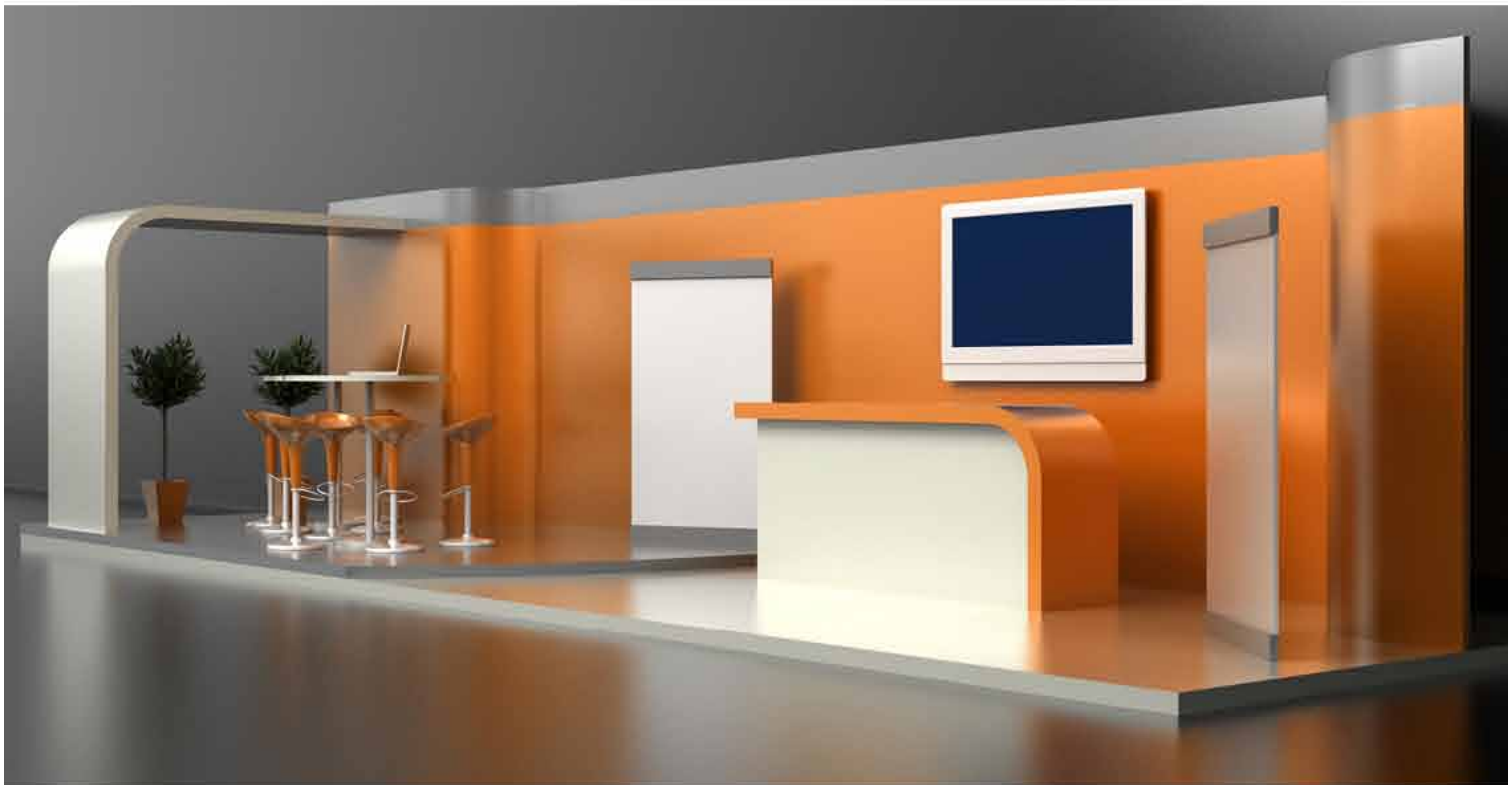
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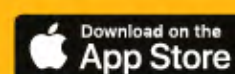
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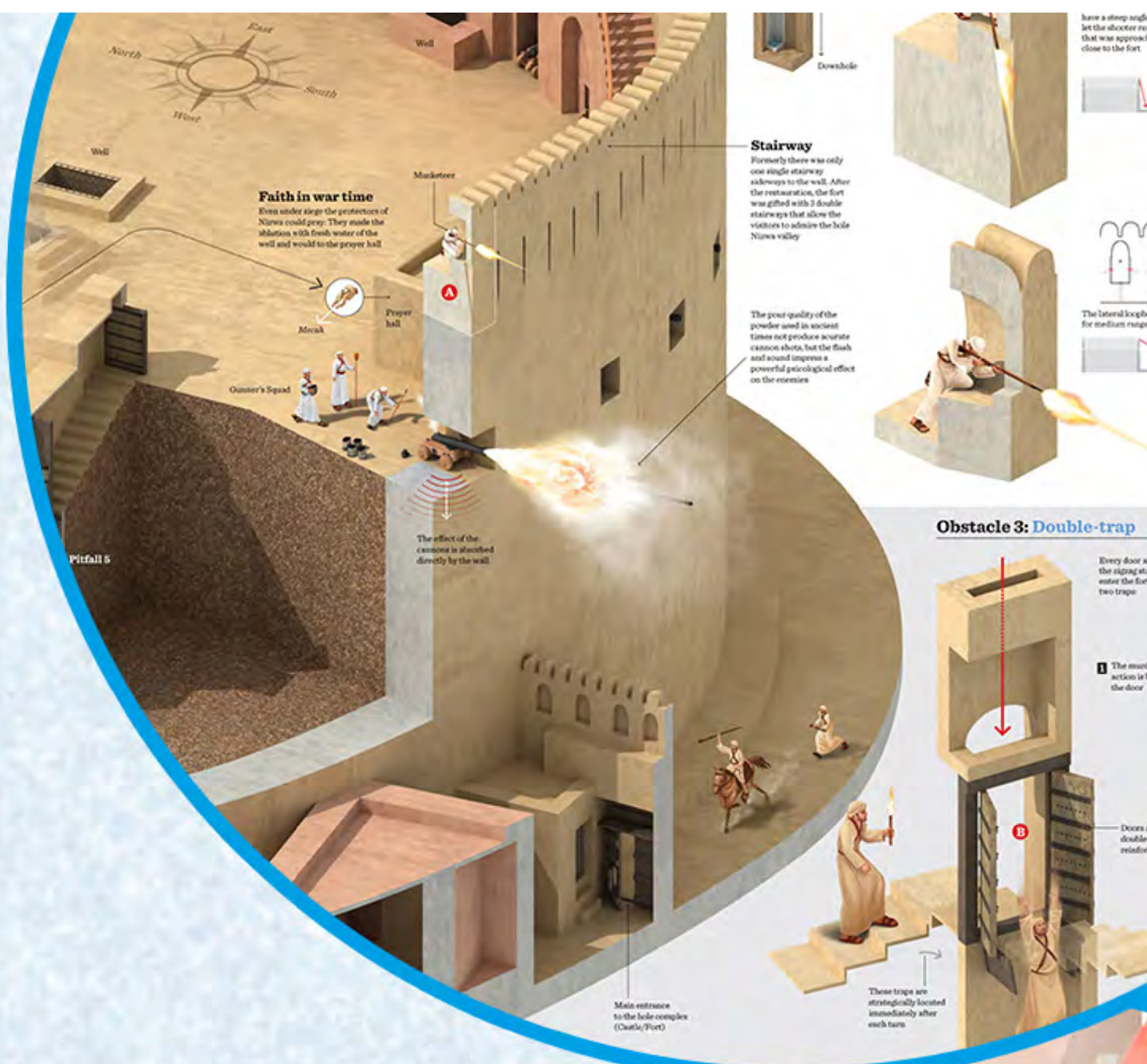


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