

NEW CABINET FORMED IN KUWAIT

A decree was issued on Sunday to form the Kuwaiti cabinet, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Ahmad Al-Sabah. The premier presented the names of his cabinet to His Highness the Crown Prince. **>A6**



RAMADAN PRAYER TIMINGS

DHUHR	12:13pm
ASR	3:41pm
MAGHRIB	6:31pm
ISHA	7:43pm
FAJR (APRIL 11)	4:33am



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NCSI FIGURES

Crime rate in Oman falls by 14% during 2017-2021

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is considered one of the safest countries in the world.

With one of the lowest crime rates around the world, the latest bulletin released by National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) reveals that there has been a 14 percent reduction in crime rate between 2017 and 2021. The latest report also finds the maximum crime offenders in 2021 were expatriates as they constituted 51 percent while Omani offenders made up the remaining 49 percent.



In 2017, the number of criminal offences reached 14,826 while the number of offenders reached 20,797. The next year, the number of crimes reached 14,726 with the offenders reaching 21,318. It

was the highest number between 2017 and 2021.

In 2019, the number of offenders recorded were 14,871. However, a sharp decline was witnessed in 2021 with the number of crimes falling to 11,312, the lowest during 2017-2021 period. The number of offenders in 2021 were 16,672, also the lowest during the four-year cycle.

In 2021, the number of crimes witnessed a slight increase as 12,812 offences were registered, which meant 3 criminal acts per 1,000 population. The number of offenders rose to 18,357. **>A5**

OIA OFFERS INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES WORTH OVER OMR1.5BN



The list features many IT projects such as blockchains and programming

these investment opportunities will potentially ensure better alignment and synergy between OIA and other government and private entities. He noted that the opportunities are distributed across several key investment sectors, including technology, utilities (electricity), tourism, fisheries, and food, as well as mining and health.

In an interview published in OIA's first quarter 2023 newsletter 'Injaz & Ijaz', Al Sheedi pointed out that the investments on offer are just an initial list that is likely to increase based on the current and future viability studies. He also noted that specialists in the lounge will explain investment opportunities to the investor as a first step.

The list features numerous IT projects such as programming, engineering solutions, and blockchains, in addition to tourism projects, including the 3rd phase of Yiti and Yankit Sustainable City, a multi-facility entertainment destination in Barka, and a Logistic Gate project at the Economic Free Zone within Muscat International Airport.

There are also several food security and fisheries projects, including fish and shrimp farming, the fattening of tuna in large floating cages, three factories for canning and packaging marine products, and the production of fish feed. The list also includes mining projects such as industrial minerals, copper, magnesium, and silicon. **— OMA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Expats in Oman urged to dress modestly

1 Dressing modestly is essential during the holy month, and men and women are expected to dress more appropriately. Revealing and tight clothing should be avoided by people out of respect for the cultural sensitivities of the Omani people. **>A3**

WORLD

27 missing as boats sink off Tunisia coast

2 Twenty-seven people are dead or missing after two migrant boats sank off the east coast of Tunisia. The first boat left Tunisia for Italy on Friday, with 37 on board. **>A6**

MARKET

Oman's hotel revenues exceed OMR 49mn

3 The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in Oman recorded a rise of 68% to reach OMR49.427mn by the end of February 2023 compared to same period in 2022. **>B1**

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Oman’s economy set to overcome challenges

Financial, economic indicators during the first quarter of 2023 show marked improvement

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Economy has affirmed that financial and economic indicators for 2022 and during the first quarter of 2023 reflect the potential of Oman’s economy to overcome challenges and set the economy as a basis for thriving and competitiveness.

Dr. Nasser Rashid Al Ma’awali, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy, said that the current economic indicators are important gains for Oman’s economy, which will reflect positively on the economic development process.

In a press statement, Al Ma’awali said that the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current prices for 2022 posted an increase of 30 percent, to reach OMR44,089.5 million, thus achieving a growth rate at constant prices of 4.3 percent during 2022, compared to a growth of 3.1 percent in 2021.

He added that the Omani economy has achieved an interim gain by reaching about OMR44 billion during 2022, which is an indication of the strength of recovery.

He explained that this boom was driven by the growth of oil and gas production at rates of 9.6 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively, in 2022, compared to 2021. This growth is also attributed to the



government’s initiatives that target activating sectors of production particularly those related to economic diversification sectors, he said.

He referred to the direct increase in added value, especially for non-oil activities, by 1.6 percent, to reach OMR24.70 billion during 2022. He pointed out that there is a remarkable growth in the converting industries by about 17 percent, the transport and storage activity by 16.3 percent and the mining activity by 10.5 percent.

Despite the increase in inflation rates, which reached about 2.8 percent during 2022 compared to about 1.5 percent during 2021, Al Ma’awali stressed, it is still within the internationally accepted rates.

With regard to the financial surplus achieved by the general budget, the undersecretary explained that the state’s general budget posted a financial surplus of OMR1.18 billion in 2022. He pointed out that the public debt went down to 43 percent to the GDP by the end of 2022, thanks to the government’s policies to

channel surplus to cut down the debt and achieve financial sustainability.

He highlighted the importance of the increase in the trade balance surplus as a result of the growth of commodity exports and the increase in the cumulative value of foreign direct investments, to reach about OMR18.14 billion until the end of the third quarter of 2022.

The Undersecretary of the Ministry of Economy expected that the current indicators and outlook reflect a positive situation. Focus is laid on maintaining inflation at safe limits, specifically between 2 percent during 2023, he added.

He said that with the stability of global oil prices at the limits of locally drawn expectations, it is hoped that financial conditions will continue to improve through increased revenues, especially oil ones, and thus increasing the surplus of the general budget.

The International Monetary Fund expected the Omani economy to grow by 4.1 percent in 2023, Al Ma’awali concluded. **-OMA**

COMMENTARY

The true spirit of Ramadan in Al Ashkhara town



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

In an open courtyard of a mosque in the eastern town of Ashkhara, there is a sense of solidarity for everybody where creed, nationality or the content of your wallet does not take precedence.

The thing that surprised me most, villagers do not even ask whether you are Muslim or not when you sit on the mat eating the Iftaar. If you are hungry, just turn up and eat. Not one individual really caters for the food. All villagers contribute in their own capacity and bring trays of food from home to the mosque every evening of the Ramadan.

The air in that courtyard has no arrogance but the true spirit of togetherness. After the Taraweh prayer time, they sit inside the tiny mosque to listen to the speech of the Imam. Most would be in the courtyard, in total about 150 people. I noticed that each one of them was in complete peace, both physically and spiritually.

I was expecting some of them would take out their mobile phones, like we do in Muscat, but none had one in their hands. Their thoughts were in unison and not distracted by the urge of checking their messages. The same spirit is extended on the streets of the village. There



are only six shops there and one souk. That’s all they need. A far cry from the sprawling malls we have in Muscat. I also noticed they have no ATM machines in sight nor a restaurant.

Almost all of the houses had open courtyards where women gather around sitting on a mat. They would share all kinds of fruits, drinks and talk about anything under the night sky. They are all dressed up in colorful dresses and shawls and there is plenty of laughter in the air. Again, like the men in the mosque, women bring their own delicatessen shared by all.

My visit to the town coincided with the Qarraqasho. All homes, including the front doors and sometimes the external walls, are decorated with lanterns, silver and gold ribbons in the shape of the crescent moon. Qarraqasho also involves the exchange of gifts where children visited homes in the neighbourhoods and warmly welcomed in each house.

But it is not only in the evenings that Ashkhara comes alive. During daytime, the sprawling souq is full of shoppers looking for bargain, from

ready-made food to items of clothing. But that is not all. The animal market is full, too. You can get a goat or chicken for a bargain in an auction in the open courtyard. Traders also encouraged shoppers with bargains by slashing down prices. With the weather surprisingly cooler in April, the shops in the souq are full day and night.

With the Ramadan year past the half way mark, the Ashkhara townspeople are now looking forward for the Eid. They are already talking about the festivals and how to celebrate the occasion. They are now planning to have tents pitches on the beach for a grand Eid Festival in all four days of Eid. The town is well known for marking the Ramadan month as well as Eid days with joyous events. The spirit of togetherness has been a tradition for more than a hundred years, according to village elders.

“We all become one family in Ramadan and Eid and we put our resources together to celebrate the two occasions in a happy atmosphere,” Sheikh Salim Al Ghashmi, one of elders in the town told Times of Oman.



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Date of Campaign: 10.04.2023
Recall Segment: Mechanical
Recall Type: Safety



Product Description:

Number of vehicles	Chassis number	To	Chassis number	Sales Designation
20	WDC46326*1X307419	TO	W1N46326*1X425717	G 500- G 55 L
252	WDC4632761X297822	TO	W1N4632761X433762	AMG G 63

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Mercedes-Benz AG has determined that on certain G-Class (463 platform) vehicles, the front axle wiring harness might come in contact with the auxiliary oil cooler.

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Procedure:

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For more information:

Sultanate of Oman customers affected by the recall who have not been contacted already will be telephoned by representatives of Zawawi Trading Company LLC, so that they can arrange a convenient time from 10.04.2023 to get their car inspected.

Contact details:

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Expatriates in Oman urged to dress modestly

Tight clothing should be avoided by people out of respect for the cultural sensitivities of the Omani people

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Dressing modestly is essential during the holy month of Ramadan, and men and women are expected to dress more appropriately.

Revealing and tight clothing should be avoided by people out of respect for the cultural sensitivities of the Omani people.

There has been a growing concern on social media by the locals on the indecent way people dress up, be in the shopping malls, public places, parks and beaches.

Few of the officials have called for stronger enforcement of the dress codes laid out for expatriates in the country, after many were found to be flouting these regulations.

Foreign nationals in the country have been urged to respect the cultures, traditions and dress codes of the Sultanate of Oman, to avoid hurting local sentiments and to ensure that they follow the law in this regard.

“Citizens, residents, and visitors to Oman must abide by the rules by wearing modest dress in public places and respecting the rules of the community,” according to Amer Salem Al Hasani, a member of the Municipal Council in Muscat Governorate and a representative of the Wilayat of Bausher.

He added: “At the entrance of most shopping malls, you find reg-



ulations calling for the need to adhere to modest clothing in respect of the traditions of Omani society. You find signs that say, ‘please wear respectful clothing’, and in this context, we advise covering one’s shoulders and knees.”

Al Hasani’s comments were directed at those customers who do not follow the dress code, after shopkeepers and other patrons complained about rules being broken.

He added: “Wearing indecent dress in public places is not an expression of personal freedom because it offends others and does not reflect our culture and identity.

Al Hasani added: “I hope the Ministry of Tourism will set up a counter at the Muscat International Airport to advise the tourists on the dress code, customs

and traditions of the Sultanate of Oman.”

“The Royal Oman Police (ROP) should ensure that action is taken on people who flout the norms of decency in public places, streets, beaches and parks, as punishment is stipulated in the Omani Penal Code.

According to the Omani Penal Code which was made law by Royal Decree 7/2018, the enforcement of wearing proper clothing in public is governed by Article 294a, which lays down a prison sentence of between one and three months and a fine of between OMR 100 and 300 for those who break it. This applies to “anyone who appears in public roads or places in a manner that is prejudicial to public decency or contrary to the traditions and customs of society.”

Salah Al Muqbali, a lawyer, said that any person has the right to inform the judicial control officers if he sees a breach of dress that offends public decency.

Shedding more light on the laws surrounding observing the correct dress codes in Oman and the societal norms surrounding them, Al Muqbali said: “The originality, values, customs, and traditions of society must be preserved, but some exploit this in their desire to stimulate tourism and facilitate the entry of foreigners by waiving social controls. This should not be at the expense of Oman’s community culture.”

Nasr Al Farsi, a member of the municipal council representing the Wilayat of Saham, said: “We do not demand that tourists abide by our style of Omani clothing, we only ask that visitors respect public tastes by wearing respectful and moderate dress, which is accepted by people and does not bother them and takes into account the privacy and traditions of our society.”

Rashid Al-Sudairy from the Wilayat of Yanqul in Al Dhahirah Governorate, said: “Despite the notices put up by most commercial centres (malls) urging modest clothing while shopping, we find people fail to respect our traditions and our society.”

Nasser Al Wahaibi from the Wilayat of Muttrah in Muscat Governorate, was upset on finding “women shopping in indecent clothing in malls and the failure of mall management to stop or warn them.”

Thamer Al-Amri from the Wilayat of Sadah in the Dhofar Governorate remarked: “As Omanis, when we travel to other countries, we adhere to the laws, customs and traditions of these countries. Unfortunately, we find that expatriates overlook our traditions and culture as I experienced during the Khareef season in Dhofar.”

HEAVY RAIN



Debris from mountain hits passing vehicles

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Debris from a mountain came down due to heavy rains and hit two passing vehicles causing traffic jams in the Wilayat of Al-Amerat.

Heavy rains in the Wilayat of Al-Amerat in the Governorate of Muscat led to fall of rocks on Al-

Amerat-Quriyat road, hitting vehicles and blocked traffic.

An official at the Royal Oman Police (ROP) confirmed exclusively to Times of Oman that debris hit two vehicles.

Oman has been witnessing an air depression since the evening of Friday, April 7, 2023. It reached its climax on Sunday, April 9, 2023.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Arabic guidebook on social media interaction released

Times News Service

MUSCAT: First Arabic guide to provide the basic theoretical knowledge of successful interaction on social media platforms has been published recently. The book named ‘Guidebook to e-publishing on social media platforms for public and private entities’ has been authored by Khalid ZayidAl-Khanbashi.

The content of the 52-page book is based on a solid scientific base for communication and to engage current account managers and hobbyists interested in this field.

Readers can learn how to write a communication strategy, as it is the first thing that should be learned before proceeding to publish on social media sites. It teaches how to write effective content and interact on social networks.

They will also come to know the importance of these platforms for public entities in raising people’s confidence and getting them acquainted with media crisis management.

The book reveals the 15 most famous mistakes made by account managers in the Arab world, especially in government entities, which, in return, will protect them from many prob-



Khalid ZayidAl-Khanbashi.

lems, and guarantee successful interaction on these platforms.

The guide is written in a simple way for everyone to understand. It is unique in the sense due to the scarcity of Arabic and English literature in this field, knowing that many of them are superficial and do not dive into the core issues.

Even English literature does not have many online specialists who can teach how to communicate on social media platforms and how to evaluate social media accounts in an easy, simplified and organised way.

The guide is available on Kobo Books app in google play or iPhon store under the Arabic name.

Ramadan Mubarak



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Ramadan

» IFTAR TIMING

6:31 pm



» PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:13 pm
Asr	3:41 pm
Maghrib	6:31 pm
Isha	7:43 pm
Fajr (April 11)	4:43 am

» IFTAR RECIPE

POTATO BREAD CHAAT

Recipe by Oneza Tabish



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp oil
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 1 1/2 tsp red chilli powder
- 1/2 cup grated boiled potato
- 1/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/4 cup finely chopped tomato
- 2 tbsp crushed peanuts
- 2 tbsp sev
- 2 tbsp pomegranate seeds
- Salt, to taste
- 10 pieces bread toasts
- 1/4 cup date-tamarind chutney
- 1/4 cup mint chutney
- 1/4 cup fresh coriander leaves

PREPARATION

- In a small pan over medium heat, heat the oil.
- Add garlic and red chilli powder. Sauté well till fragrant. Add the potato. Cook, stirring, for 2-3 minutes.
- In another bowl, combine the onion, tomato, peanuts, sev, and pomegranate seeds. Season to taste with salt. Toss well to mix.
- Break the toasts in small squares and add to the tomato mixture. Let them rest in the mixture for a few minutes to soften a bit.
- Add the spiced potato mixture and mix well with the toasts.
- Drizzle the date-tamarind and mint chutneys over the toasts. Serve garnished with coriander leaves .

» WORDS OF WISDOM

“He created the heavens and earth in truth and formed you and perfected your forms; and to Him is the [final] destination” [Quran 64:3]

By reminding us all that the final destination for everyone on earth is back to Allah, the Quran emphasizes that our entire being and meaning of life revolves around this very fact: Allah has perfected us in our own unique form, and we will ultimately be returned to our Creator. By remembering that our final goal and destination should be about the return to Allah, this verse of the Quran serves as a timely source of inspiration whenever you feel lost in life.

» SHOPPING TIP

ONLINE SHOPPING IS A REAL TIME-SAVER

Nowadays most supermarkets offer online shopping options with minimal delivery charge. Check with your nearest supermarket if they provide delivery service to your area. It is not only convenient but helpful for those who feel tired to go to the supermarket while fasting. It also helps you to curtail your impulse buying.



» HEALTH

FOCUS ON BRINGING BACK A BALANCED AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



Ramadan is all about enhancing one's spiritual credence and detoxing the body by fasting from dawn to sunset. During this time, people have two main meals - the 'suhoor' just before dawn and the 'iftar' after sunset. So, it's important to focus on our health and focus on how to improve our stamina. This auspicious month is a great opportunity to focus on bringing back a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

Our bodies require at least 1.5 litres of water a day. So, drink as much liquid as you can during Suhoor and Iftar. You can go for fresh juices, smoothies, protein shakes, and other similar beverages to spice it up. Avoid coffee, tea, or sugary aerated drinks as they may actually cause increased thirst and, eventually, dehydration.

Reduce your intake of fatty foods because they can block red blood cells and reduce the flow of oxygen. This might make you feel sleepy all day. Consume a moderate amount of sugary food and drinks throughout the fast-breaking period to restore your energy. Prior to having a main meal, wait one to two hours.

Consuming protein is one approach to reducing hunger. Protein is processed and absorbed by the body gradually, making the stomach feel fuller for longer. Consume a lot of fruits and veggies as well for balance.

When we fast, our vitamin needs increase. The fundamental vitamins that we require are C, D, and E. Vitamin D helps increase the absorption of vital nutrients, Vitamin E can prevent dry skin, and Vitamin C increases our stamina.



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."

The Oman Charitable Organization is pleased to announce that it will receive donations for Ramadan Iftar Program in Sultanate of Oman for the year 1444 AH AD 2023

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DECREE ISSUED

New cabinet formed in Kuwait under Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf

KUWAIT: A decree was issued on Sunday to form the Kuwaiti cabinet, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Ahmad Al-Sabah.

According to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), the premier presented the names of his cabinet to His Highness the Crown Prince, in accordance with the constitution.

The names of the new cabinet are as follows:

■ Talal Khaled Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister and Acting Defence Minister.

■ Dr. Khaled Ali Mohammad Al-Fadhel, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs.

■ Dr. Bader Hamed Al-Mulla, Deputy Prime Minister and Oil Minister and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs.

■ Fahad Ali Zayed Al-Shala, Minister of State for Municipality Affairs and Minister of State of Communication Affairs.

■ Abdulrahman Bedah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

■ Dr. Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Awadhi, Minister of Health.

■ Amani Suleiman Buqammaz,



Minister of Public works.

■ Dr. Hamad Abdulwahab Al-Adwani, Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

■ Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

■ Mai Jassem Al-Baghli, Minister of Social Affairs and Societal Development and Minister of State for Women and Childhood Affairs.

■ Dr. Aamer Mohammad Ali Mohammad, Minister of Justice

and Minister of Endowments and Islamic Affairs.

■ Mutlaq Nayef Omar Abo Raqba Al-Otaibi, Minister of Electricity, Water, Renewable Energy, and Minister of State of Housing Affairs.

■ Mohammad Othman Mohammad Al-Ayiban, Minister of Commerce and Industry.

■ Manaf Abdulaziz Al-Hajrey, Minister of Finance, Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs. -BNA

MIDDLE EAST

US-Iran tensions rise as Pentagon deploys nuke submarine

WASHINGTON: Tensions escalated between Tehran and Washington after US Navy has launched a submarine capable of carrying a large payload of missiles into the Middle East in an apparent warning directed toward Iran, Fox News reported.

Bab el Mandeb strait at the southern end of the Red Sea serves as the main conduit between the Arabian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and the Suez Canal. The nuclear-powered submarine is deployed to the US 5th Fleet, which has a patrol that includes the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal.

"It is capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles and is deployed to US 5th Fleet to help ensure regional maritime security and stability," said Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins.

US-Iranian relations have further soured in recent years following former President Donald Trump's successful order to kill Iran's top military commander, Qasem Soleimani.

-ANI



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SHIPWRECK

27 missing as migrant boats sink off Tunisia coast

TUNIS: Twenty-seven people are dead or missing after two migrant boats sank off the east coast of Tunisia.

The first boat left Tunisia for Italy on Friday, with 37 on board. Twenty are missing while 17 have been rescued.

On Saturday, four bodies were recovered from a beach after a second boat sank, BBC news reported. Thirty-six people who were on the second boat were rescued and three are missing.

Since the start of March, there have been at least seven similar shipwrecks off Tunisia, with around 100 people dead or missing. Parts of the Tunisian coastline are only about 150 kilometres

from Lampedusa, an Italian island frequently used as a crossing point to the mainland.

Its proximity to Italy has seen Tunisia overtake Libya as the main departure point for people fleeing conflicts, seeking a better life in Europe.

Tunisia is frequently used as the main departure point for people escaping poverty and conflict in hope of a better life in Europe. Its shores are only about 150 kilometres (90 miles) from the Italian island of Lampedusa. Migrants from West Africa, Sudan and other parts often use it as a springboard during dangerous attempts to cross over.

-ONA

CRIME FIGURES

Musandam records lowest crime rate

<FROM A1 Despite the relative rise in numbers in 2021, the number of offenders were still far less than what was seen in 2017, when 20,797 cases were registered.

The Sultanate also recorded an increase in the number of crimes in 2021 by 13% compared to 2020.

Muscat Governorate recorded the highest number of crimes at a rate of 37.3 percent, with offenders making up 34.4 percent.

North Al Batinah Governorate had the second highest crime rate

of 16.4 percent and the offenders made up 16.5 percent.

Dhofar Governorate recorded a crime rate of 13.2 percent and 15.6 percent was the number of offenders. South Al Batinah Governorate recorded a crime rate of 8.9 percent and had a total of 9 percent of offenders. Al Dakhiliyah Governorate was among the governorates that had a low percentage of crime rate (6.8 percent) and offenders (6.3 percent).

The governorates of North and South Al Sharqiyah had a crime rate of 4.7 percent followed by Al

Buraimi Governorate with 3 percent crime rate.

Al Dhahirah Governorate witnessed 2.6 percent crimes and an equal number of offenders while Al Wusta Governorate had a crime rate of 1.5 percent and 1.9 percent of offenders.

Musandam Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman had the lowest percentage of crime rate, amounting to 0.9 percent and only 1.2 percent of offenders.

Among the crimes committed in 2021, money-related offences were the highest with 32.2 per-

cent. Crimes against individuals were second with 22.6 percent, law violations were 17.3 percent and drug-related crimes stood at 13.4 percent.

Among the lowest crimes in the Sultanate of Oman in 2021 were crimes against public administration and breaching public trust as they amounted to 4.9 percent, drinking and alcohol crimes were 2.9 percent, crimes against honour and public morals were 2.2 percent, and unlawful use of weapons and ammunition were 0.2 percent.



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I just want to back myself: Rahane

Have never tried to be someone else, says Chennai Super Kings batter after his 27-ball 61 set up win against Mumbai Indians on Saturday

MUMBAI: Chennai Super Kings' Ajinkya Rahane was the star of his team's seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians on Saturday night. The win made it two wins in a row for Chennai Super Kings. Rahane was included at the last minute after Ben Stokes and Moeen Ali were unfit for the match. He capitalised the opportunity as he slammed 61 off just 27 balls to help MS Dhoni's Super Kings cruise to victory with 11 balls to spare.

In the match, Ravindra Jadeja led the way with the ball with a momentum-changing spell of 3/20 as Chennai spinners restricted Mumbai Indians to 157/8. Rahane's whirlwind knock was supported well by Ruturaj Gaikwad's unbeaten 40 off 36 balls.

Rahane came in at No. 3 after Devon Conway fell to Jason Behrendorff in the first over of Super Kings' run chase. He started aggressively during his partnership with Ruturaj Gaikwad and struck 23 runs off a single over from Arshad Khan, the fourth of the innings, to get his new franchise ahead of the required rate.

"When we were bowling, we got the idea of how the wicket was playing and how the ball was behaving," Rahane said.

"When you're chasing 150 or 160, it's important to bat with intent in the first six overs. If you get a good start, it becomes really easy. When I went in, it was all about playing my normal game, backing my strengths."

Rahane had been a peripheral figure across the last two IPL seasons, playing twice for Delhi Capitals in 2021 and seven times for Kolkata Knight Riders



last year, and had not made a half-century in the tournament since November 2020.

Super Kings signed him at December's auction, and Rahane said that he had been encouraged by captain Dhoni to be himself.

"Every player is different," Rahane said. "I don't want to be someone else; I just want to be Ajinkya Rahane. The way I know how I play, my strengths, my timing. I just want to back myself. I've never tried to be someone else. It's all about trying to remind myself that if I can just be Ajinkya Rahane and play like Ajinkya Rahane, I think I'll be fine."

"The preparation we had as a team before the IPL started... we came to Chennai on March 2. Mahi bhai [Dhoni] was there and the instructions from him were pretty simple: back your game, play to your strengths rather than trying to do something else. It's all about knowing your game and, when you get an opportunity, just back that game."

"Mahi bhai's instruction was completely clear, just play with intent, back yourself, don't change anything else. If your intent is good, I have the shots that I can play at any ground so it was

all about keeping it simple for me. I'm happy to bat anywhere. It's all about your mindset and what you want to do for your team."

Speaking on *ESPNcricinfo's T20 Time-Out*, former Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Tom Moody suggested that Rahane's innings owed in part to the fact he had prepared for the IPL with a strong Ranji Trophy season, hitting two hundreds for Mumbai. "It's a great story," Moody said. "I think everyone enjoys when Jinks [Rahane] scores runs because he's just one of those likeable characters."

"He's always got a smile on his face and he's been a great servant to Indian cricket. In recent years, he's had his ups and downs in the IPL for whatever reasons. The thing that first came to mind was that I believe he's had a very good first-class season leading into this, so he's clearly got some good form behind him."

"He was gifted a few balls early on which just lit the fire and he then just took it on from there. He wasn't doing anything out of the ordinary. He was just playing proper cricketing shots, cuts and drives and flicks off his pads. But it was vintage Rahane on show tonight." - Agencies

COLLECTIVE FAILURE

Ponting calls for 'soul-searching' after Delhi's third defeat in a row

GUWAHATI: The Delhi Capitals are "a long way off right now" but their head coach Ricky Ponting can't fathom the reasons behind their collective failure just yet.

On Saturday, they went down for a third straight time in IPL 2023 after the Rajasthan Royals posted 199 on their way to a 57-run win.

"We are a long way off right now," head coach Ricky Ponting assessed after their 57-run loss in Guwahati. "I can't put my finger on why because I watch these boys train and prepare. Their work has been really good, their training has been great, but it hasn't come across in terms of results yet on the field."



"If I could put my finger on it, I'd do something to change it. We need to do some more soul-searching as a group and talk about it. Maybe not tonight. I'll just let the

guys have a think about it. We may address it the next day, but we need to turn it around pretty quickly. Three games in and no wins...you can't afford to get off to bad starts in the IPL."

"In the first two games, we sort of got to none for 40 early on and then lost wickets in the back part of the powerplay. Today was completely different," Ponting said.

The former Australian skipper said: "We're not going to point fingers at one person, we don't do that at Delhi Capitals. We're all in this together and have to play better as a group of 11-12 to get the results we're after." - Agencies

REF: OFM/TD-23/-003

Tender for Annual Maintenance Contract for the Miscellaneous Civil works

Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) invites qualified contractors to participate in our tender for the 'Annual Maintenance Contract for the Miscellaneous Civil works' as per the scope of work and specifications.

Tender Documents: Bidders wishing to participate in this tender are required to provide all details of their company, contact details and bank details no later than the date shown below via email tender-civil@omanflourmills.com
Oman Flour Mills SAOG, (OFM) will send all the tender documents to participants after receiving a tender fee depositing receipt copy via email.

Tender fee shall be deposited directly to the Oman Flour Mills SAOG bank account as mentioned below.

Account Name: Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG
Bank: Sohar International
Account Number: DO1020032407
Swift code: BSHR6MRLJXXX

Tender Ref no.	OFM/TD-23/-003
Tender subject	Annual Maintenance Contract for the Miscellaneous Civil works
Tender fee	RO 25/- (non-refundable)
Start date for tender collection	09.04.2023
Last date for tender collection	19.04.2023
Last date for receiving the technical queries	20.04.2023
Closing date of the tender	23.04.2023
Mode of payment of tender fee	By cash
Email address for communication	tender-civil@omanflourmills.com
Mode of submission	All bidders are required to submit their proposals addressed to the Chairman of Tender Committee and deposited in the tender box located at the reception of our Ayah Investment building on the 23 April 2023.

• Vendor selection will be based on "best and final offer". OFM is not bound to select the lowest bidder
• All tender communication must be addressed to: tender-civil@omanflourmills.com
• Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents, Tender fee is not refundable
• Bids submittal shall consist of 2 separate sealed envelopes (Technical) & (Commercial), with bidder name on each and tender reference number (OFM/TD-23/-003 Annual Maintenance Contract for the Miscellaneous Civil works).

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P.O. Box: 1020, P.C. 211, Salalah,
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Tender code	RCC/PRO/2023-002-MINING WORL-RCC OLD QUARRY LIMESTONE EXTRACTION & TRANSPORTATION & FEEDING TO CRUSHER
Tender title	MINING OF LIMESTONE BY USING SURFACE MINER FROM THE RCC OLD QUARRY, TRANSPORTATION & FEEDING TO CRUSHERS
Collection Start Date	
Collection End Date	WITHIN 15 DAYS
Submit Date	15 DAYS
Tender Brief	MINING OF LIMESTONE BY USING SURFACE MINER FROM THE RCC OLD QUARRY, TRANSPORTATION & FEEDING TO CRUSHERS
	TENDER FEE:
	Payment type:

Scope of Work for Mining of limestone with Surface Miner:

- The location of work in Old Limestone Quarry belong to Raysut Cement Company (RCC), adjoining to the RCC plant at Raysut, Salalah, Dhofar Region.
- Working on Mechanical extraction of the limestone, i.e., by Surface Miner.
- Primary extraction of the limestone (Generation of loose limestone), heaping, loading and transportation to crusher hopper.,
- Daily Production, generation of limestone: 6,000 Tons/day (+/-10%), 6 days a week. Friday off/Maintenance of machine. Work will continue of public holidays as per the company requirement at the same rate.
- Surface miners can work in 24 hours for generation of loose limestone, but loading and transportation to crusher hopper timings is are between 7 am - 8 PM
- The size of the limestone should be less than 200 mm.
- Mine working and extraction work in Old Quarry in coordination guidance with RCC Mining Officials.
- The price quoted should be on a per ton basis, inclusive of all the expenses like fuel, lube, spares, and other consumable
- Maintain the machine in good condition and ensure the limestone fed to crusher does not have any metal pieces.
- RCC will not be responsible for the performance of the Surface Miner, if required the interested party can carry out needful tests/ study.
- Comply with all the health and safety regulations, ensuring all activities are carried out safely without any undesired incidents and complaints.
- Diesel, Water, and other consumable are in contractor scope.

RCC will provide the following:

- RCC will provide NOC & Quarry Permit from the relevant Ministries and government bodies.
- RCC will grant the contract as per both party mutual agreement basis only.
- Contractors must extract limestone by Surface Miner only, drilling & blasting is not allowed

RCC will not be responsible for issues with working of surface miner.

B. Loading and Transportation

- Carry out loading and transportation of limestone from old quarry and unloading/feeding at crusher
- Old Quarry is adjoin to RCC Crushers. (Interested party can inspect the site to understand the working and unloading point at Crusher site with distance before offering the Quote.)
- Achieve the loading and transport quantity of 6,000 Tons/day (+/-10%).
- Maintain the smooth floor level by maintaining proper operation.
- The work timings will be from 7 AM to 7 PM, 6 days a week,

Friday off. Work should continues on public holidays as per company requirement at the same rate.

- Engaging suitable size of equipment's for loading and transportation
- Loading limestone of the trucks with maximum gross weight of 110 Ton per vehicle.
- Weighing of quantity will be based on belt weight scale install at crusher belt.
- Price offered should be in per ton basis inclusive of all expenses like manpower, fuel, lube, maintenance of the vehicle etc.
- Contractor should maintain the vehicle in good condition with good reliability.
- Vehicles should be operated in a safe manner following all the rules and regulations of ROP
- All equipment shall have the needful permits as per ROP rules.
- Site office, workshop, water, electricity will be under contractor scope.

RCC will provide the following:

- RCC entry pass, belt weight scale availability, etc.,
- RCC will grant the contract as per both party mutual agreement basis only.
- The contractor is independent to choose the mode of transportation equipment.
- RCC is not liable for the transportation of special equipment's reliability or any additional investment if any.

Contract period: ONE YEAR.

Commercial Terms & Conditions

- Price. Prices be quoted on delivery at our site DDP/CIF Salalah site basis.

Payment: 30 days credit.

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QUOTE OF THE DAY



“It was a nail-biting finish and extremely happy with the way we won. Our coach has maintained that we can score 200 from any position. Tonight was another example that we will never give up as a team. The wicket was quite good to bat and I was just trying to execute my plans. When the target is 200, you cannot have silent overs.”

VENKATESH IYER
KOLKATA BATTER AFTER THE WIN ON SUNDAY

TODAY'S MATCH



Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Lucknow City Giants

6pm, Bengaluru

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	T	NR	NRR	PTS
RR	3	2	1	0	0	+2.067	4
KKR	3	2	1	0	0	+1.375	4
LSG	3	2	1	0	0	+1.358	4
GT	3	2	1	0	0	+0.431	4
CSK	3	2	1	0	0	+0.356	4
PBKS	2	2	0	0	0	+0.333	4
RCB	2	1	1	0	0	-1.256	2
MI	2	0	2	0	0	-1.394	0
DC	3	0	3	0	0	-2.092	0
SRH	2	0	2	0	0	-2.867	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



RINKU PULLS OFF A HEIST

In one of the greatest thrillers in the IPL history, Kolkata's Rinku Singh smoked five consecutive sixes in the final over to snatch the victory from Gujarat Titans

AHMEDABAD: Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh's unbeaten 48 off just 21 balls that included an unthinkable five sixes in a row, with 28 needed off five balls, led his team to a breathtaking three-wicket win over Gujarat Titans at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday.

In a roller-coaster match that saw Kolkata's Impact Player Venkatesh Iyer sizzle with 83 off 40 balls, captain Nitish Rana's 45 off 29 and Titans' Rashid Khan take the first hat-trick of IPL 2023, it was Rinku's heroics that will be

talked about for years to come.

Defending 204, Mohammed Shami struck early for the Titans as he had the Rahmanullah Gurbaz caught brilliantly at short fine leg by Yash Dayal off a short ball.

Kolkata sent in Impact Player Venkatesh Iyer at No.3 replacing Suyash Sharma but Josh Little sent the other Kolkata opener - N Jagadeesan - back in the next over.

Venkatesh hit a six and a couple of fours to take Kolkata to 43/2 at the end of the powerplay. Iyer and captain Rana took Kolkata to 86/1 at the halfway mark. The duo took



the attack to Rashid Khan and hit him for 23 runs in two overs. Iyer brought up his fifty off 26 balls and the two brought up the 100-run stand off just 54 balls.

However, Joseph struck to have Rana caught at mid-off for 45 (29). Iyer brought the equation down to 56 needed off 30 balls before being dismissed by Joseph.

With 50 needed off 24, Rashid turned the tables with a hat-trick. He had Andre Russell caught behind, Sunil Narine caught at deep

mid-wicket and then trapped Shardul Thakur leg-before. Rashid gave away just two runs in the over to finish with 4-0-37-3.

With 48 needed from the last three overs, Shami gave away just five. Rinku came up with a six and a four off the final two balls of the penultimate over from Little to bring it down to 29 needed off the last over. Umesh Yadav picked up a single off the first ball bowled by Dayal and with 28 needed off the last five balls, Rinku did the unthinkable.

Earlier, Titans stand-in captain Rashid, who was leading the side in absence of unwell Hardik Pandya, elected to bat. Gujarat openers - Wriddhiman Saha and Shubman Gill - got the team off to a steady start as they reached 31/0 in four overs. Sunil Narine struck immediately on being brought in, sending back Saha (17 off 17).

Titans reached 54/1 at the end of the powerplay. Gill and Sai Sudharsan shared a 50-run stand off 32 balls before Narine got Gill out in the 12th over for 39 (31).

Abhinav Manohar came off 14, with three fours in a row, did not last long. Sudharsan scored his third IPL fifty off 34 balls and along with Vijay Shankar, they brought up the 150 in the 17th over.

Narine had Sudharsan caught at long off for 53 (38) to leave Titans at 159/4 after 18 overs.

Shankar had his eye in by then and had moved to 22 off 13. He then brought out his biggest hit, smashing two fours and two sixes off Lockie Ferguson before launching three successive sixes off Thakur. The last two overs of Titans' innings produced 45 runs; 41 of those came from Shankar's bat. In all, Shankar scored 63 not out off 24 balls, hitting four fours and five sixes along the way, to haul Titans past 200.

Brief scores: Gujarat Titans 204/4 (Shankar 63 n.o., Sudharsan 53, Narine 3-33) lose to Kolkata Knight Riders 207/7 (Venkatesh 83, Rinku 48 n.o., Rana 45; Rashid 3-37, Joseph 2-28).

RINKU THE ROCK STAR

‘I just kept hitting, I had the belief’

AHMEDABAD: Following an absolute last-over carnage that yielded 31 runs to power Kolkata Knight Riders to a dramatic win over Gujarat Titans on Sunday, Knight Riders' captain Nitish Rana described it as one in a hundred matches.

And for the star of the show, Rinku Singh, on how did he do it, his simple answer was, “I just kept hitting.” Rinku hit five consecutive sixes off Yash Dayal to seal Kolkata Knight Riders' chase of 205.

“To be honest I was not thinking much. Just reacting to every ball,” Rinku said at the post-match presentation. “I never thought I would hit five sixes. I just kept hitting, I had the belief. And we won the match.”

Rinku finished unbeaten on 48 off 21 deliveries, with 40 of those runs coming off the last seven balls he faced. “I had the inner belief that I can do it because I had also played [a similar] innings last year against Lucknow [Super Giants]. There also I had such a belief and today, too, I showed that belief. Rana *bhai* told me: “*belief rakhiyo, aakhri tak kheliyo*” (keep the belief, stay till the end),” he said.

Umesh Yadav had similar words of advice for Rinku as he handed the strike over to the 25-year-old left-handed batter. “*Bhaiya* also told me, ‘*laga Rinku, sochiyo mat*’ (hit it, don't think).”



“If you see, when we were bowling, we did well,” Rana said.

“It was just the last two overs [where they gave away 45 runs]. After bowling 18 good overs, we had two bad overs. The same thing happened while we were batting with the Rashid Khan over, which completely put us on the back foot. But credit goes to Rinku Singh. If we have two points today, it's all because of Rinku Singh.

“People have asked me why Rinku Singh doesn't come in the top rankings and always plays smaller roles or secondary roles.

Today, I would like to say, that if this is a secondary role, then you imagine what primary role he can play. And how important a player Rinku Singh is for me.

“In the last game, we saw that it was important to hold up one end and keep batting and he did that and today... If I were out there batting, then maybe I would have thought that I could chase it down, but in your heart you know what you are capable of and what you can't do. I don't have words to describe Rinku's innings.”

The reason Knight Riders even

believed in the impossible was that they had seen the same man (almost) pull it off once before.

“Rinku had done it last year as well, although we didn't win the game then. But when he hit the second six [against Titans], the belief increased.

Because Yash Dayal wasn't being able to execute, so somewhere, I did believe,” Rana said. “As a captain, no matter what total we are chasing, it's very important to keep faith, but to be honest, out of a hundred matches, you will win one like this.” - Agencies

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Injured Chahar to undergo scans

MUMBAI: Deepak Chahar will undergo scans this week to determine the extent of the left-hamstring injury he sustained during Chennai Super Kings' seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium on Saturday night, according to *ESPNcricinfo* report.

Chahar, the leader of Super Kings' seam attack, pulled up injured after five balls of his first over before receiving treatment from Tommy Simsek, the franchise's long-serving physio, who appeared to tape up his left hamstring.

He completed his over, tentatively bowling a 73mph/118kph half-volley which was hit for four by Rohit Sharma, but was then replaced by substitute fielder Subhanshu Senapati for the rest of the innings. During Super Kings' run chase, Chahar was replaced by Ambati Rayudu under the Impact Player rule.

Chahar has struggled with injuries over the last 18 months, and admitted recently that he had found it “mentally... very tough” to deal with missing so much cricket. “Chahar will undergo scans to identify the extent of the injury once the team returns to



Chennai,” the franchise said in a statement on Sunday.

Ben Stokes was also ruled out of Saturday night's game with what the franchise described as “a minor toe injury”, which is understood to be unrelated to his ongoing left knee issue.

Stokes travelled to the ground with the rest of the squad on Saturday night but only played a minor role in the warm-ups. “Stokes played Chennai Super Kings' first two matches of IPL 2023 before injuring his toe during training ahead of the third game, which the Super Kings won by seven wickets,” the franchise said.

“The Chennai Super Kings medical staff are closely monitoring both the players and will provide all support necessary for their recovery.” - Agencies

CONSUMER PRODUCTS EXPO

The sheer scale of China's consumer market is still a big appeal to multinationals, backed by buoyant economic figures and the Chinese government's commitment to higher level opening up, noted brand representatives who will be attending the upcoming third CICPE.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) gained 8.9 points, comprising a rise of 0.18 per cent to close at 4765.30 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4765.36 points.

Oman's hotel revenues exceed OMR49 million

The number of 3-5 star hotel guests stood at 357,810, comprising an increase of 37.4 per cent till the end of February 2023 compared to 260,450 guests during the same period in 2022



MUSCAT: The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a rise of 68 per cent to reach OMR49.427 million by the end of February 2023 compared to the corresponding period in 2022 when it stood at OMR29.429 million, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of 3-5 star hotel guests stood at 357,810, comprising an increase of 37.4 per cent till the end of February 2023 compared to 260,450 guests during the same period in 2022.

The occupancy rate also recorded a surge of 37.2 per cent to reach 61.5 per cent compared to 44.8 per cent during the corresponding period in 2022.

period in 2022.

The number of guests from Oceania recorded a significant surge of 320.8 per cent from 2,069 guests by the end of February 2022 to 8,706 guests by the end of February 2023. Asian guests followed by recording a rise of 70.4 per cent going from 24,458 guests by the end of February 2022 to 41,674 guests

by the end of February 2023.

GCC guests stood at 22,365 by the end of February 2023, going up by 62 per cent compared to the same period in 2022. The number of other Arab guests increased by 54.4 per cent from 9,122 by the end of February 2022 to 14,084 by the end of February 2023. **-OMA**

MENA'S FLAGSHIP FORUM



Omani firm inks pact to organise forum on carbon capture, utilisation and storage

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Birba, Omani events, media and intelligence agency, has signed a two-year strategic partnership with the Global Carbon Council (GCC) and the Gulf Organisation for Research and Development (GORD) to deliver the Mena region's first-ever Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage forum.

Scheduled to be hosted at Le Royal Meridien Hotel in Qatar's Lusail City from May 29 - 31, the forum will promote CCUS technologies and share how innovation is spearheading global efforts to decarbonise and reverse legacy emissions.

"Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) can play a critical role in addressing the environmental challenges faced by the Mena region, which is heavily reliant on fossil fuels. By capturing and storing carbon dioxide emissions from oil and gas production, CCUS can help minimise the impact of these carbon-intensive industries on the environment and support the transition to a more sustainable energy system. Our support in organising the region's first CCUS Forum is motivated by our belief that the development and implementation of CCUS technologies will be instrumental and imperative in achieving a carbon-neutral future and ensuring a livable planet for generations to come. By partnering with Birba, GCC and GORD are steadfast in their commitment to environmental sustainability which we hope to catalyse at the CCUS Forum in May," said Dr Yousef Alhorri, Founding Chairman of GCC and GORD.

With a line-up of global speak-



ers, masterclasses and a buzzing networking hub, the CCUS Forum will showcase groundbreaking technologies being developed to capture and remove CO2 from the atmosphere, create commercial markets for utilising the captured CO2, and advance its permanent storage via geological sequestration.

The global shift to energy efficiency and zero-carbon energy is one of the most important industry transformations driving sustainable development strategies around the world. Collaborative efforts to scale up practical decarbonisation solutions are opening pathways to meet 2050 emissions targets as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

"The first-ever regional CCUS Forum will accelerate the push for decarbonisation in the region where economies have traditionally been heavily dependent on the energy sector. CCUS has immense potential to bolster economic diversification and generate new jobs and revenue streams that preserve our planet and facilitate the realization of our global vision, making Birba's partnership with GCC and GORD all-important to our mission. This forum allows us to collaborate, knowledge-share and build institutional capacity to enable a viable future for the next generation," said Abdullah Al Harthy, CEO of Birba.

MUSANDAM FISH FARMING COMPANY

Agreement signed for integrated marine fish farming project

MUSCAT: Musandam Global Investment Company and foreign investors signed a memorandum on binding commercial conditions and incorporation documents of Musandam Fish Farming Company.

Inked at Invest Oman Lounge, the memorandum provides for establishing an integrated marine fish farming project in open waters in Musandam Governorate.

Export

The project, scheduled to begin this year, is aimed at producing an annual amount of more than 3,500 tonnes of various types of fish intended for export to regional and international markets.

The project will include an open water farm, a fish breeding unit, a pre-growth stage, a fish packing and processing unit and a research



and development laboratory, in addition to stores, logistic sections and support services.

The project will adhere to the

application of sustainable farming and it will be subject to external auditing so that it could achieve the best standards of ma-

rine environment protection and product quality.

The memorandum's signing was attended by Sayyid Ibrahim Said Al Busaidi, Governor of Musandam and Dr Saud Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The memorandum reflects the efforts undertaken by the branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Musandam Governorate to attract investments and economic diversification in the governorate. It will also generate employment opportunities for the local community.

Musandam Global Investment Company is the largest local community company in Musandam. This closed joint stock company is listed on Muscat Stock Exchange's third market. **-OMA**

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

Crowdfunding platforms finance 21 companies, financing volume touches nearly OMR2 million

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nine companies were licensed to carry out crowdfunding activity in Oman, according to the latest statistics by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) on the crowdfunding platforms.

The companies were Ethis Investment Platform, Beehive Financial Technology, New Sphere, Ithbar, Alwadiaa for Commercial Operations, Rawafid Finance, Smart Group for Finance, Mamun Financial Technologies and Sharek Investment.

Meanwhile, 21 companies received financing since their establishment; as the total financing volume is nearly OMR2 million (OMR1,804,169) which was provided by Ethis Investment Platform and Beehive Financial Technology at the end of 2022.

Through launching crowdfunding platforms, the CMA aims to expand the financing options in the market, facilitating access to financing and finding alternatives that cope with the technological revolution in the global capital markets.

The crowdfunding platforms are considered a breakthrough in the sector since they are dependent on one of the innovative financing types and they provide four financing options: donations, products, equity or investment note.

It is worth mentioning that in 2022, the Capital Market Author-



ity launched the mechanism for financing initiatives and projects through crowdfunding platforms which, in their turn, enabled project owners to present their projects through such platforms to get the required financing.

This translates to the CMA's plan to enhance the role of the capital market as an instrument for financing projects in all their volumes and types.

Additionally, such platforms will enable small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in particular and other projects, in general, to get their required financing from a wide base of national and foreign investors. Finally, crowdfunding platforms play a key role in driving economic development and injecting liquidity into the market; in line with the Oman Vision 2040.

POSITIVE OUTLOOK

Unchanged interest rate by RBI a boon for India's housing sector

NEW DELHI: The pause in interest rates by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is positive for the real estate market, which faced headwinds amid layoffs by large corporates globally, said real estate consultancy firm Anarock.

Anarock's chairman Anuj Puri said India is not decoupled from global economic fundamentals and their invariable impact on the housing markets here in India.

"The RBI's decision to keep the repo rates unchanged comes as a welcome respite to homebuyers," Puri said.

Mid-segment homebuyers

"This particularly gives relief to affordable and mid-segment homebuyers who feared a possible rate hike, making property buying via home loans even harder. As is, affordable housing has been under stress since the pandemic," Puri said.

The affordable housing segment, (units priced lesser than Rs 40 lakh) saw its overall sales share dip between 2019 and 2022 and further in Q1 2023.

Anarock Research indicates that back in 2019, out of the total sales of nearly 261,400 units across the top seven cities nearly 38 per cent of sales were in the

affordable segment.

Affordable category

But in 2022, out of the total 364,880 units sold across the top 7 cities altogether, about 26 per cent were in the affordable category, it said.

The RBI in its first monetary policy review meeting in 2023-24, decided to keep the key benchmark interest rate - the repo rate - unchanged at 6.5 per cent, to assess the effects of the policy rate tightening done so far.

The central bank conducts six bi-monthly reviews of its monetary policy in a financial year.

Barring Thursday's pause, the RBI has raised the repo rate, the rate at which it lends to banks, by 250 basis points cumulatively since May 2022 in the fight against inflation. It had made real estate assets relatively costlier.

"It bears keeping in mind that after the remarkable performance in Q1 2023, the housing market is now staring at major headwinds with layoffs, rising property prices, etc. which will pose a challenge in the short-term. The respite of home loan rates remaining unchanged is therefore very welcome," Anarock chairman said. **-ANI**

KDI REPORT

South Korean economy remains lacklustre amid ailing exports

SEOUL: South Korea's economy continues to remain sluggish due to weak exports, but its financial market remains relatively stable despite global uncertainties, a state-run think tank said.

"Manufacturing-led economic stagnation lingers as exports contract due to the global slowdown," the Korea Development Institute (KDI) said in its monthly report.

The assessment came after the country's exports fell for the sixth consecutive month in March due to weak global demand for semiconductors, with the country suffering a trade deficit for 13 months in a row, according to South Korean News Agency (Yonhap).

"Consequently, the manufacturing industry faces elevated inventory levels and reduced capacity utilisation rates, with production experiencing a marked decline," it added.

The KDI, however, said the downturn in domestic demand has been "somewhat alleviated" on the back of the service sector, with the financial markets maintaining "relative stability."

South Korea's main index closed at 2,476.9 points on the last trading day of March, up 2.65 percent from end-February. **-BNA**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher



The market value went up by 0.044 per cent to reach about OMR23.75 billion

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) gained 8.9 points, comprising a rise of 0.18 per cent to close at 4765.30 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4765.36 points.

The trading value stood at OMR1,311,407, comprising a decline of 9.7 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR1,452,485.

The report released by MSX

pointed out that the market value went up by 0.044 per cent to reach about OMR23.75 billion.

The report added that the value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached OMR194,000, comprising 14.82 per cent. The value of shares sold by non-Omani investors reached OMR65,000, comprising 4.98 per cent. The net non-Omani investment increased by 9.84 per cent to OMR129,000. — OMA

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4773.65	4,301.89	4,765.30	4,756.36	8.94	0.19
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,650.23	7,602.65	7,645.27	7,612.90	32.36	0.43
Industry Index	6,231.30	5,653.67	6,147.83	6,181.20	-33.38	-0.54
Services Index	1,717.96	1,685.79	1,686.59	1,711.41	-24.82	-1.45
MSX Shariah Index	485.50	480.52	481.82	484.43	-2.62	-0.54
MSX TR INDEX	6,275.93	5,655.70	6,264.95	6,253.20	11.76	0.19
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,333.69	8,281.86	8,328.28	8,293.03	35.26	0.43
SERVICES TR IDX	1,887.00	1,851.66	1,852.54	1,879.81	-27.26	-1.45
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,656.58	6,039.52	6,567.41	6,603.06	-35.65	-0.54

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
6,000,869	1,311,407	455	23,747,030,480	15	14	21	50

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 9

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRM VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	40,300	17,322	7	0.428	0.430	0.428	0.430	0.410	0.020	4.878	0.430	0.420	0.430	0.100	287,397,133
OM0000001535	OMAN INVEST & FIN	503,248	61,857	36	0.120	0.124	0.120	0.122	0.120	0.002	1.967	0.122	0.122	0.123	0.100	30,359,700
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,224,557	334,199	34	0.273	0.275	0.272	0.275	0.273	0.002	0.733	0.275	0.269	0.275	0.100	2,064,259,192
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	35,930	14,563	8	0.406	0.406	0.402	0.402	0.400	0.002	0.500	0.402	0.402	0.404	0.100	95,038,820
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	6,000	1,740	2	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.288	0.290	0.100	29,000,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	4,884	537	1	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.000	0.000	0.110	0.105	0.110	0.100	16,500,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	4,683	1,212	1	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.255	0.265	0.100	423,746,053
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.S	95,000	13,754	5	0.142	0.145	0.142	0.145	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.135	0.142	0.100	44,612,789
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	5,000	870	1	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.000	0.000	0.174	0.174	0.180	0.100	339,240,399
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	1,150	299	1	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.253	0.260	0.100	15,913,111
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	110,400	6,413	8	0.058	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.059	0.000	0.000	0.059	0.058	0.059	0.100	11,800,000
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	3,741	1,549	6	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.000	0.000	0.414	0.414	0.414	0.100	22,770,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	46,910	15,466	6	0.330	0.330	0.328	0.328	0.330	-0.002	-0.606	0.328	0.328	0.328	0.100	108,526,249
OM0000005398	SOHAR INT. BANK	105,586	10,977	7	0.102	0.102	0.101	0.101	0.102	-0.001	-0.980	0.101	0.101	0.102	0.100	463,596,291
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM	700	694	1	0.992	0.992	0.992	0.992	1.005	-0.013	-1.294	0.992	0.992	1.030	0.100	68,448,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	45,760	47,636	10	1.050	1.050	1.040	1.040	1.050	-0.010	-1.422	1.040	1.040	1.100	0.100	780,000,000
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV	55,000	4,210	8	0.077	0.079	0.075	0.078	0.080	-0.002	-2.500	0.078	0.076	0.080	0.100	7,020,000
Total	17.	2,288,629	532,999	142												

Parallel Market

OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	574	1,515	5	2.640	2.645	2.635	2.645	2.405	0.240	9.979	2.645	2.405	2.640	1.000	7,935,000
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	750	759	2	0.956	1.165	0.956	1.165	1.060	0.105	9.906	1.165	0.956	1.165	0.100	71,385,375
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	28,496	2,042	5	0.070	0.072	0.070	0.072	0.068	0.004	5.882	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.100	33,925,420
OM0000001418	RAISUT CEMENT	631,495	102,871	37	0.170	0.170	0.160	0.160	0.155	0.005	3.236	0.160	0.170	0.160	0.100	32,000,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	10,000	1,406	3	0.140	0.144	0.140	0.144	0.140	0.004	2.827	0.144	0.138	0.142	0.100	10,875,168
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	3,600	411	3	0.115	0.115	0.114	0.114	0.112	0.002	1.786	0.114	0.114	0.115	0.100	3,420,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	31,384	3,804	2	0.121	0.123	0.121	0.123	0.121	0.002	1.653	0.123	0.125	0.128	0.100	205,337,430
OM0000002386	AL BATINAH DEV	33,100	4,397	5	0.082	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.082	0.001	1.230	0.083	0.083	0.083	0.100	2,490,000
OM0000004789	MADINA TAKAFUL	41,610	3,624	12	0.087	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.087	0.001	1.149	0.088	0.087	0.095	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	20,000	1,960	2	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.098	0.100	0.100	219,221,397
OM0000007984	MCT DESALINATE	12,368	1,218	5	0.100	0.100	0.098	0.099	0.098	0.001	1.020	0.098	0.098	0.099	0.100	15,399,490
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	11,570	1,114	4	0.098	0.098	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.095	0.097	0.100	17,397,448
OM0000001681	AL SUWADI POWER	20,000	620	3	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	AMAN REAL ESTATE	13,000	1,300	3	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.090	0.100	0.100	20,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,068,508	598,978	162	0.291	0.291	0.290	0.291	0.291	0.000	0.000	0.291	0.291	0.291	0.100	224,128,200
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	9,900	1,167	2	0.117	0.118	0.117	0.117	0.118	-0.001	-0.847	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	49,066,115
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	80,500	6,890	4	0.086	0.087	0.085	0.086	0.087	0.001	1.149	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.100	17,200,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	10,000	610	1	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.062	-0.001	-1.613	0.061	0.060	0.063	0.100	18,735,926
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	45,500	5,096	4	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.114	-0.002	-1.754	0.112	0.112	0.116	0.100	9,520,000
OM0000001897	MAJAN COLLEGE	4,000	528	1	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.135	-0.003	-2.222	0.132	0.132	0.130	0.100	11,880,000
OM0000004925	ALBATRAH POWER	200,000	6,200	12	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.000	0.000	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.100	22,923,510
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	21,369	1,198	7	0.056	0.057	0.056	0.056	0.058	-0.002	-3.448	0.056	0.053	0.057	0.100	81,905,682
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	395	533	1	1.350	1.350	1.350	1.350	1.450	-0.100	-6.897	1.350	1.355	1.400	0.100	67,500,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK	244	199	2	0.816	0.820	0.816	0.820	0.900	-0.080	-8.889	0.820	0.820	0.900	0.100	77,900,000
Total		3,661,686	789,343	301												

CONSUMER PRODUCTS EXPO

Multinationals cast vote of confidence in Chinese consumer market

HAIKOU: The sheer scale of China's consumer market is still a big appeal to multinationals, backed by buoyant economic figures and the Chinese government's commitment to higher level opening up, noted brand representatives who will be attending the upcoming third China International Consumer Products Expo (CICPE).

After participating in the first edition of CICPE, Tapestry, Inc., a New York-based company which owns the Coach, Kate Spade and Stuart Weitzman brands, decided to base its China travel retail headquarters in Haikou, Hainan's capital city, in April 2022.

Thus far the company has opened nine duty-free stores and four retail stores in Hainan.

"The expo is an important window for global high-end brands to accelerate their entry into and expansion in the Chinese market. It has also created new opportunities to boost the development of the



global market," said Charlie Hou, senior director of travel retail at Tapestry (Hainan) Group Co., Ltd.

Hou added that Hainan's tourism retail market has huge potential and strong resilience, and Tapestry is full of confidence in its layout in Hainan's travel retail sector.

The optimistic view Tapestry

has of its prospects in Hainan is a result of China's unremitting efforts in furthering higher-level opening up.

In 2020, China released a master plan to build Hainan into a globally influential and high-level free trade port by the middle of the century. Since then, a slew of favourable

policies has been issued to support the development of the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP), including zero tariffs and easing market and foreign investment access.

The island province, which aims to become an international tourism and consumption centre by 2025, and a globally influential tourism and consumption destination by 2035, is striving to boost consumer demand and raise its offshore duty-free sales to over 80 billion yuan (about \$11.6 billion) in 2023, according to the province's government work report.

Vigorous development, combined with a continuously optimized business environment in the province, has attracted and encouraged many multinationals like Tapestry to make great strides in Hainan.

"We plan to open more than 10 new retail and duty-free stores in the next three years," Hou said. —Xinhua

SPRING MEETINGS

World Bank, IMF chiefs to discuss complex challenges facing global economy

WASHINGTON: World Bank Group President David Malpass and IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva on Monday, April 10, will kick off the Spring Meetings with a discussion on the complex challenges facing the global economy.

2023 Spring Meetings will be held in Washington, D.C., from April 10 to 16 under the theme "The Way Forward: Building Resilience and Reshaping Development".

Three years since the pandemic started, uncertainties and risks still weigh heavily on the global economy, according to the World Bank.

Stubborn inflation, the cost-of-living crisis, and slower growth effects all of us, but especially hurts the poor and most vulnerable. Record high debt is holding back developing countries, and the effects of climate change are threatening lives and livelihoods around the world. On top of all this, the crisis in Ukraine and ge-



opolitical fragmentation makes international coordination even more challenging.

This conversation will explore how to better finance global public goods and address these challenges together.

The 2023 Spring Meetings brings together government officials from the IMF and WBG's member states, observers and representatives of international, regional and economic organisations, as well as central bank governors and representatives of civil society organisations. —WAM

LAWSUIT

Groundbreaking verdict in unpaid Cuban loan dispute

LONDON: It is rare that after a judge's verdict both sides — plaintiff and defendant — talk of victory. The High Court in London on Tuesday ruled that private investment firm CRF I had unpaid debt from the Banco Nacional de Cuba (BNC), the country's former central bank. At the same time, the court said that the Cuban government is not responsible.

CRF was established in the Cayman Islands in 2009, and sued Cuba and BNC in 2020, demanding repayment of around €72 million (\$78 million) for two loans and overdue interest.

These loans go back to 1984 and were granted by European banks Credit Lyonnais and Istituto Bancario Italiano. After a 2018 out-of-court settlement didn't materialise the case ended up before the British court.

A scramble around the courthouse

The High Court case was about four issues: can CRF sue in the UK, did CRF properly acquire the debts, can the Cuban central bank be sued, and is the Cuban government the final guarantor of these debts.

Before the trial began, the new central bank, Banco Central de Cuba, called CRF a "vulture fund" and claimed that it had illegally acquired the debt, even bribing a senior bank official in the process.

It also claimed that the debtor, BNC, was no longer a central bank. Banco Central de Cuba was founded in 1997 and took over many of the functions of the old central



bank, still, it is a separate entity.

CRF denied the allegations, saying it had tried for years to negotiate a debt restructuring deal with Cuba without receiving a response.

The CRF fund was set up to invest in distressed Cuban government bonds. Today, it is now Cuba's largest private creditor and had a bond portfolio worth €1.2 billion in 2017, according to court documents. Such investors typically buy up debt portfolios cheaply and then try to sue the debtor in international courts for full repayment. It can be a very profitable business.

In her ruling, Justice Sara Cockerill said that CRF had lawfully acquired the debt from ICBC

Standard Bank, a UK subsidiary of Chinese bank ICBC.

At the time, BNC consented to the assignment of its rights and obligations under the agreement



SMARTWATCHES MIGHT PREDICT WHETHER THERE'S HIGHER RISK OF HEART FAILURE

A recent study performed by UCL researchers claimed that wearable gadgets such as smartwatches might be used to predict a higher risk of developing heart failure and abnormal heart rhythms in later life.

The peer-reviewed study, published in The European Heart Journal - Digital Health, looked at data from 83,000 people who had undergone a 15-second electrocardiogram (ECG) comparable to the kind carried out using smartwatches and phone devices.

The researchers identified ECG recordings containing extra heartbeats which are usually benign but, if they occur frequently, are linked to conditions such as heart failure and arrhythmia (irregular heartbeats).

They found that people with an extra beat in this short recording (one in 25 of the total) had a twofold risk of developing heart failure or an irregular heart rhythm (atrial fibrillation) over the next 10 years.

The ECG recordings analysed were from people aged 50 to 70 who had no known cardiovascular disease at the time.

Heart failure is a situation where the heart pump is weakened. It cannot often be treated. Atrial fibrillation happens when abnormal electrical impulses suddenly start

firing in the top chambers of the heart (atria) causing an irregular and often abnormally fast heart rate. It can be life-limiting, causing problems including dizziness, shortness of breath and tiredness, and is linked to a fivefold increase in risk in stroke.

Lead author Dr Michele Orini (UCL Institute of Cardiovascular Science) said: "Our study suggests that ECGs from consumer-grade wearable devices may help with detecting and preventing future heart disease.

"The next step is to investigate how screening people using wearables might best work in practice.

"Such screening could potentially be combined with the use of artificial intelligence and other computer tools to quickly identify the ECGs indicating higher risk, as we did in our study, leading to a more accurate assessment of risk in the population and helping to reduce the burden of these diseases."

Senior author Professor Pier D. Lambiase (UCL Institute of Cardiovascular Science and Barts Heart Centre, Barts NHS Health Trust) said: "Being able to identify people at risk of heart failure and arrhythmia at an early stage would mean we could assess higher-risk cases more effectively and help to prevent cases by starting treatment early and providing lifestyle advice



Such screening could potentially be combined with the use of artificial intelligence and other computer tools to quickly identify the ECGs indicating higher risk, as we did in our study, leading to a more accurate assessment of risk in the population and helping to reduce the burden of these diseases

about the importance of regular, moderate exercise and diet."

In an ECG, sensors attached to the skin are used to detect the electrical signals produced by the heart each time it beats. In clinical settings, at least 10 sensors are placed around the body and the recordings are looked at by a specialist doctor to see if there are signs of a possible problem. Consumer-grade wearable devices rely on two sensors (single-lead) embedded in a single device and are less cumbersome as

a result but may be less accurate.

For the new paper, the research team used machine learning and an automated computer tool to identify recordings with extra beats. These extra beats were classed as either premature ventricular contractions (PVCs), coming from the lower chambers of the heart, or premature atrial contractions (PACs), coming from the upper chambers.

The recordings identified as having extra beats, and some recordings that were not judged to have extra beats, were then reviewed by two experts to ensure the classification was correct.

The researchers first looked at data from 54,016 participants of the UK Biobank project with a median age of 58, whose health was tracked for an average of 11.5 years after their ECG was recorded. They then looked at a second group of 29,324 participants, with a median age of 64, who were followed up for 3.5 years.

After adjusting for potentially confounding factors such as age and medication use, the researchers found that an extra beat coming from the lower chambers of the heart was linked to a twofold increase in later heart failure, while an extra beat from the top chambers (atria) was linked to a twofold increase in cases of atrial fibrillation. -ANI

SPORTS

Haaland's stunner in City's victory over Southampton

His [Haaland] ability is incredible, says Man City manager Guardiola after his team's big 4-1 win

SOUTHAMPTON: Manchester City kept their title hopes alive after recording a 4-1 win over Southampton in their English Premier League match at Saint Mary's Stadium on Saturday.

Erling Haaland struck twice in the game to put his team in a comfortable position. Haaland's acrobatic skills were on display as he struck an overhead kick to secure his second goal of the match.

The 22-year-old Norwegian goal-scoring machine scored his 30th goal in the Premier League.

Kevin de Bruyne registered his 100th Premier League assist as he set up Haaland to give dominant City a half-time lead at St Mary's, before Jack Grealish continued his impressive post-World Cup form as he beat Gavin Bazunu at the second time of asking.

Sekou Mara emerged from the Saints bench to reduce the deficit following Haaland's acrobatic second, but just 75 seconds later City were awarded a penalty for a foul on De Bruyne which Julian Alvarez calmly converted.

"Erling is here for these types of games. He has a big heart and he was on the end of the assist from Kevin [De Bruyne]. His ability is incredible," said Manchester City



manager Pep Guardiola in the post-match conference.

He added: "The second goal was brilliant. We adjusted something in the first half and started the second really well and start-



- equalling the most by a Premier League player in a single campaign.

City reduced the gap to leaders Arsenal to five points. Southampton remain four points adrift of safety at the bottom of the table.

Chelsea lose

Frank Lampard made a losing return to the Chelsea hot-seat as Wolverhampton Wanderers eased their Premier League relegation worries with a hard-earned 1-0 victory on Saturday.

Chelsea legend Lampard was predictably given a rapturous reception from the travelling fans at Molineux following his appointment as caretaker manager 27 months after being sacked from the role.

Wolves were on the front-foot throughout and deserved their win which came after a sweet finish

by Matheus Nunes, the Portugal midfielder's first goal for the club since joining from Sporting Lisbon last August.

In another match, Alexander Isak scored a superb winner as Newcastle came from behind to beat Brentford 2-1 and strengthen their position in the Premier League's top four.

The fight between Newcastle and Manchester United is getting tighter for the top-four place as United beat Everton 2-0 at Old Trafford on Saturday.

Scott McTominay's well-taken first-half effort and Anthony Martial's first Premier League goal since December were enough to give United victory.

Other results: Aston Villa 2 Nottingham Forest 0, Fulham 0 West Ham United 1, Leicester City 0 Bournemouth 1, Tottenham Hotspur 2 Brighton 1. - Agencies

FRENCH LIGUE 1

Messi stars as PSG triumph

PARIS: Goals from Lionel Messi and Sergio Ramos gave Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) a 2-0 victory at Nice as they moved six points clear of Lens at the top of Ligue 1.

The Argentina playmaker, who was whistled by his own fans last week, scored with a first-time finish from a low cross into the box by Nuno Mendes.

Sergio Ramos headed home from a Messi corner to make sure of the victory.

PSG keeper Gianluigi Donnarumma made excellent saves to deny Hicham Boudaoui and Nicolas Pepe in the first half.

Nice captain Dante latched on to a loose ball and saw his shot hit the bar and post before bouncing out, while Youssouf Ndayishimiye struck from the edge of the area but Donnarumma was down quickly to parry his effort away.

PSG have won eight of the last 10 Ligue 1 titles, and returned to winning ways after two league defeats. - Agencies



LA LIGA

Villarreal shock Real Madrid

MADRID: Real Madrid's slim La Liga title hopes were dealt a huge blow as Samuel Chukwueze's stunning strike secured 3-2 victory for Villarreal at the Bernabeu Stadium.

Chukwueze hit a curled finish late on to leave Real 12 points behind leaders Barcelona, having played a game more.

The hosts had taken the lead through a Pau Torres own goal but Chukwueze slotted in an equaliser.

Vinicius Jr's solo strike put Real ahead but Jose Luis Morales equalised before Chukwueze stunned the hosts.

With just ten La Liga games remaining, Real would need a strong finish to the season and an unlikely Barcelona collapse to defend their title.

Real thought they had an opportunity for a late equaliser when they were awarded a penalty after the referee felt Aissa Mandi handled the ball as he fell to the ground inside his own box.

However, Javier Alberola Rojas



overtaken that decision after going to the pitchside monitor following a VAR review.

The win moves Villarreal up to fifth in the table, four points off the top four.

Barcelona, meanwhile, could move 15 points clear at the top when they host Girona on Monday.

Other results: Osasuna 2 Elche 1, Espanyol 1 Athletic Bilbao 2, Real Sociedad 2 Getafe 0. - Agencies

SERIES AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

PCB names Bradburn as interim head coach

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Sunday that they have roped in Grant Bradburn as the interim head coach of the men's team for the home series against New Zealand.

Abdul Rehman has been named as the assistant head coach, while Andrew Puttick and Umar Gul have been appointed as the batting and bowling coaches respectively.

Former NZ cricketer Bradburn was Pakistan's Head of High Performances Coaching for three years before stepping down from the position in 2021.

He had also served as Pakistan's fielding coach from September 2018 to June 2020 before taking on the development of coaching responsibilities.

Babar Azam's men will contest a five-match T20I and five-match ODI series against the Black Caps, starting April 14 in Lahore. Pacer Shaheen Afridi will return to international cricket in this series.

The PCB will name the permanent replacements for the coaching staff after the white-ball games against the Black Caps.



"Mr Bradburn and Mr Puttick have been appointed for the New Zealand series and will arrive in Lahore on 11 April.

"The PCB will confirm the Pakistan team management for the post-New Zealand series following the completion of the relevant recruitment processes,

which are presently ongoing," the PCB stated.

The first T20I match will be played on April 14 in Lahore.

Pakistan T20I squad: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Zaman Khan, Haris Rauf, Faheem Ashraf, Ihsanullah, Imad Wasim, Saim Ayub,

Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Fakhar Zaman, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood, Mohammad Rizwan and Iftikhar Ahmed.

Pakistan ODI squad: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Ihsanullah, Imam-ul-Haq, Mohammad Rizwan, Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, Haris Sohail, Usama Mir, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Salman Ali Agha, Shan Masood and Mohammad Wasim Jnr.

New Zealand T20I squad: New Zealand: Tom Latham (c), Mark Chapman, Matt Henry, Cole McCrindle, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi, Will Young, Chad Bowes, Dane Cleaver, Ben Lister, Adam Milne, James Neesham, Henry Shipley, Blair Tuckner.

New Zealand ODI squad: Tom Latham (c), Henry Nicholls, Tom Blundell, Cole McCrindle, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi, Will Young, Chad Bowes, Ben Lister, Adam Milne, James Neesham, Henry Shipley, Blair Tuckner. - ANI

BREACH OF ICC CODE OF CONDUCT

USA's Khan banned for two matches

DUBAI: USA's pacer Ali Khan has been banned for the team's next two games for a Level 1 breach of the ICC Code of Conduct. Khan committed the offence during USA's World Cup Qualifier Play-off match against Jersey in Windhoek last week.

He was fined 15 percent of his match fee. He had earlier received three demerit points for two separate incidents during a T20I game against Bermuda in November 2021 during the ICC T20 World Cup Qualifier Americas Final in Antigua. His team-mate Jasdeep Singh and Jersey's Elliot Miles were also penalised for a Level 1 breach. Singh was handed two demerit points and stripped of 30 percent of his match fee.

The incidents occurred after the fall of the ninth and 10th wickets, both taken by Khan, at the conclusion of Jersey's chase. Khan ended with figures of 7 for 32, the best ever by an Associate pace bowler in men's ODIs. Miles



was fined 15% of his match fee and had one demerit point docked for the use of an audible obscenity.

According to ESPNcricinfo, the pair of sanctions against Khan and Singh means that USA have now accumulated a total of 16 reprimands since the ICC's points demerit system for code of conduct breaches came into play in 2016. It is the most of any Associate country in that timespan, six more than Oman and UAE. Jersey have accumulated eight reprimands in that same stretch, tied for fourth most of any Associate country. - Agencies

FEATURE



HOW BIODIVERSITY LOSS JEOPARDISES HUMAN HEALTH

Animals, plants, fungi — biodiversity holds a treasure trove of chemicals that can be used to treat disease from malaria to cancer. But its loss is driving species to extinction, dashing many hopes for medicine.

Bright reds, yellows and blues — the colour of poison dart frogs offer a stark warning to curious predators: “eat me and you’ll be sorry,” it says. The amphibians are toxic. When eaten, the chemicals on their skin can cause convulsions, muscle contractions and even death.

For humans, these colours mean something more hopeful. Those same poisonous chemicals could provide the key to medications that treat infections now resistant to the antibiotics we have already developed.

“Poison dart frogs have important medical compounds that are good anaesthetics,” said E.J. Milner-Gulland, a professor specialising in biodiversity at Oxford University in the UK. “They have good antibiotics that are on their skin that we are using now. And many that haven’t even been discovered or commercialized yet.”

Basis for much needed medicine
Natural compounds found on frogs, plants and many other species provide the basis for many of our medicines. Paclitaxel, a drug used to treat cancer, for example, is

derived from the bark of the Pacific yew tree, and ziconotide, a drug that is used to treat severe pain comes from cone snails. Around 70% of cancer medications are based on nature, according to the UN’s Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

But biodiversity, which includes the plants, animals, fungi and bacteria found on Earth, are disappearing — and so, too, are the possibilities they hold.

“Climate change, and chytrid fungus have decimated our frog populations and led to a large number of extinctions,” Milner-Gulland told DW. Chytrid fungus causes a disease in amphibians that has wiped out as many as 90 species, according to some estimates.

“Maybe we don’t need so many different hundreds of species of frog. But on the other hand, that potential kind of treasure trove is still there,” she added.

Human-driven extinction
Around 1 million animal and plant species are currently estimated to be threatened with extinction, according to a 2019 report published by IPBES, although estimates vary wildly according to the source.

Experts say species are disappearing 1,000 to 10,000 times faster than the normal rate of extinction and that humans are to blame.

“The two things that threaten biodiversity the most at the moment are overharvesting and land conversion. That’s not just clearance of land for livestock to graze, but also clearance of land for food and clearance of oceans,” said Milner-Gulland.

Since 1990, around 420 million hectares of forest — an area almost the size of the European Union — has been lost — turned into farmland and cleared for other uses. Meanwhile, fish stocks are also diminishing, with figures from 2017 estimating that we’ve overfished a third of global stocks.

Human-driven climate change is also having an impact. Growing carbon dioxide levels are leading to increased ocean acidification, bleaching corals and destroying vast habitats. Rising temperatures and unsustainable harvesting are also pushing some plant species to the edge of extinction.

Traditional medicine
While the loss of biodiversity is making it more difficult to discover new medications, it is also affect-

ing how communities access traditional medicine. An estimated 4 billion people still rely primarily on natural remedies to heal themselves — whether it’s using latex from fig trees to treat intestinal parasites in the Amazon or neem oil to treat skin disorders in India.

“They don’t go to the pharmacy, they go to what they’ve collected and store. So when those plants are difficult to access, that’s putting their health at risk,” said Cassandra Quave, a medical ethnobotanist at Emory University.

Around 40% of the world’s plant species are threatened with extinction, according to a report published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in London, which is home to one of the most diverse botanical collections in the world. Among the threatened plants are 723 species that are used medicinally. The Pacific yew tree — the source of the paclitaxel, the chemotherapy drug, is now classified as near threatened under the IUCN Red List, which tracks the status of different species.

“It’s not just a question of the implications of drug discovery, which is my passion, but also the implications for human health across the globe,” Quave told DW.

The future of drug discovery
When thinking about drug discovery, it’s hard to know exactly what humans stand to lose through the loss of species that make up a diverse natural world. There’s still so much to investigate. The ocean, for example, remains still largely undiscovered.

Scientists are looking to chemicals produced by sponges to provide treatment for cancers, for example. But it is more complex than simply finding and examining single species.

“Biodiversity is more than just the species. It’s all the species taken together and the interactions they have,” said William Gerwick, a professor at the University of California San Diego.

Gerwick is investigating the symbiotic relationship between the weaver shrimp and cyanobacteria. The shrimps weave the bacteria into nests, which provide protection from predators because of the toxic molecules the bacteria produce — molecules that have potential as a treatment for pancreatic cancer in humans.

“So the bacterium produces these compounds and the shrimp derives benefit from it and maybe

humans do as well,” he told DW. “If we lose biodiversity, we’re losing access to molecules that we know nothing about. And some of those molecules might be compounds that would save the life of one of our children from an infectious disease, from cancer.”

Planetary health equals human health
Humans are almost completely dependent on the natural world to stay healthy. Beyond drug discovery, we rely on trees to take pollutants, like carbon dioxide, out of the air. We need working wetlands to keep water clean and we need insects to pollinate our crops to provide us with food. And those are just a few examples.

Measures are being taken to protect biodiversity and reverse the loss. In December, 188 governments agreed to take action to put 30 percent of the planet under protection by 2030. But it is not clear whether it will be sufficient and come quickly enough.

“If there’s anything that I’ve learned, it’s really that human health and planetary health are intricately intertwined,” said Quave. “You can’t have one without the other.”

ROUND-UP

JAC’s ‘Season of Giving, Just got Better’ offers exciting benefits

JAC Motors Oman is offering amazing cash gifts on all JAC models, ranging from OMR1,400 to OMR2,500

MUSCAT: In celebration of this special time of year, JAC Motors Oman announced its latest campaign - ‘Season of Giving, Just Got Better’ - with an exciting display of offers and benefits that you won’t want to miss out on.

The campaign started on March 13 and will continue till July 12, JAC Motors Oman is offering amazing cash gifts on all JAC models, ranging from OMR1,400 to OMR2,500. This means that you can now save more on your favourite JAC vehicles and get the best value for your money. Whether you’re looking for a compact SUV like the JAC S3, a sporty and versatile SUV like the JAC JS4, a sleek and sophisticated sedan like the JAC J7, or a tough and durable pickup truck like the JAC T8, JAC Motors Oman has got you covered.

But that’s not all! For those who purchase a new JAC vehicle



from Towell Auto Centre, you’ll also receive three-year AAA roadside assistance package and a JAC IINJAZ service package for 3 years/50,000Kms (whichever comes first) for an unbeatable price. The service package cost varies depending on the JAC model, starting from OMR100 on JAC S3, OMR115 on JAC J7, OMR120

on JAC JS4, and OMR190 on JAC T8 (VAT extra).

With JAC Motors Oman, you can rest assured that you’re getting a reliable, high-quality vehicle that is backed by a manufacturer’s warranty of 6 years / 200,000km (Whichever is earlier) for passenger cars and 5 years / 250,000km (Whichever is earlier) for light trucks.

The JAC S3 is a compact SUV that comes equipped with a range of features that make it an excellent choice for drivers who want a practical and fuel-efficient vehicle. With its spacious and comfortable interior, advanced safety features, and impressive fuel economy, the S3 is a great option for those who value practicality and reliability.

The JAC JS4 is a sporty and versatile SUV that offers excellent performance and handling, making it ideal for drivers who want a vehicle that can handle any terrain. With its powerful engine, responsive handling, and advanced safety features, the JS4 is perfect for those who want a vehicle that can keep up with their active lifestyle.

The JAC J7 is a sleek and sophisticated sedan that combines luxury and performance, making it an excellent choice for drivers who want a vehicle that is both stylish and practical. With its refined interior, advanced technology, and smooth handling, the J7 is perfect for those who want a vehicle that is as comfortable as it is capable.

The JAC T8 is a tough and durable pickup truck that is designed to handle heavy-duty tasks with ease. With its rugged exterior, powerful engine, and impressive towing capacity, the T8 is the perfect option for those who need a vehicle that can handle anything they throw at it. Additionally, the T8 comes with a range of advanced safety features, making it a reliable and safe choice for drivers.

JAC Titan trucks are built with unbeatable durability and designed to handle heavy loads and rough terrain. These trucks are the perfect choice for businesses in need of reliable transportation. Enjoy the comfortable cabin with a variety of convenience features, while knowing that safety is a top priority with ABS, electronic stability control, and airbags.

As the authorised dealer of JAC Motors in Oman, Towell Auto Centre is committed to providing exceptional customer service and support. With a network of dealerships and service centers across the country, you can easily find the assistance you need to purchase and maintain your JAC vehicle.

PROMOTION

Lincoln Navigator now available with exclusive wish list benefits

MUSCAT: Own a luxury Lincoln Navigator and get exclusive wish list benefits. Service 5 years / 100,000km and 1-year registration. The campaign will end on May 10. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Lincoln showroom Wattayah.)

The Lincoln Navigator takes luxury to the next level with space, features, technology and more. The SUV that pioneered the concept of large SUV for large families have always been a popular choice for many.

The Lincoln Navigator is powered by a twin-turbo V6, 3.5L engine with auto start-stop technology, that produces 440 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed automatic transmission with Select-Shift paddle activation. The Navigator has a bold look highlighted by adaptive pixel projector LED headlamps with signature lighting, predictive curve lighting and sign-based lighting. The Navigator is also equipped with a panoramic vista roof with power sunshade



and Lincoln Embrace: LED-illuminated exterior door handle pockets, Lincoln approach detection system, Lincoln logo illuminated mats and Lincoln signature lighting with fade on/off.

For comfortable and fun drives, the Navigator is equipped with an impressive interior which includes 1st-row passenger seat memory, 3rd-row PowerFold 60/40 split

and SYNC® 4 enables clients to manage audio, phone, navigation and more from the vehicle touch screen or steering wheel-mounted controls.

To navigate your drives safely, the Navigator easily adapts to changing conditions with adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go and lane centring assist, auto high-beam headlamps, blind spot information system with cross-traffic alert and trailer coverage, evasive steering assist, lane-keeping system with blind-spot assist which includes lane-keeping aid, lane-keeping alert, driver alert system and a pre-collision assist. The Navigator is also equipped with driver and front passenger-dual-stage front airbags, front-seat side airbags, safety canopy side-curtain airbags with rollover sensor, AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control), MyKey technology and SecuriCode invisible keypad.

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

FESTIVE SEASON

Kalyan Jewellers celebrates Akshaya Tritiya festival with mega giveaways

MUSCAT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most trusted and leading jewellery brands, has announced the commencement of its Akshaya Tritiya celebrations with exciting offers for customers across the country.

To mark the auspicious occasion of Akshaya Tritiya, Kalyan Jewellers is providing customers with appealing discounts and valuable giveaways on their jewellery purchases.

With these one-of-its-kind offers, Kalyan Jewellers aims to ensure that customers get maximum value on their jewellery purchases, across categories – from gold and diamonds to uncut and precious stone jewellery. Customers making gold jewellery purchases worth OMR500 will receive a half gram gold coin, whereas those who purchase precious/uncut jewellery worth OMR 500 will get a 1-gram gold coin. On purchase of diamond jewellery worth OMR 500, customers will be rewarded with a 2-gram gold coin. These bumper offers are valid until May 30 across showrooms in Oman.

Talking about Akshaya Tritiya offer announcement, Ramesh Kalyanaraman, Executive Director of Kalyan Jewellers, said, “Over the years, we have taken significant strides and accomplished major achievements towards creating a comprehensive ecosystem that elevates the overall customer shopping experience. As we kick start our 2023 Akshaya Tritiya campaign, we aim to ensure that patrons receive the highest possible benefit from their jewellery purchases.

Kalyan Jewellers is providing customers with appealing discounts and valuable giveaways

Our commitment to delivering the finest shopping experience to our valued customers remains steadfast, and we will always uphold the company’s fundamental principles of trust and transparency in the future.”

The jewellery retailed at Kalyan Jewellers goes through multiple purity tests and patrons also receive the Kalyan Jewellers 4-Level Assurance Certificate which guarantees purity, free lifetime maintenance of ornaments, detailed product information and transparent exchange and buy-back policies. The certification is part of the brand’s commitment to offering the very best to its loyalists.

Kalyan Jewellers’ popular house brands, such as Lila – diamonds & semi-precious stone jewellery, Tejasvi – Polki jewellery, Mudhra - handcrafted antique jewellery, Nimah – temple Jewellery, Glo – dancing diamonds, Ziah – Solitaire-like diamond jewellery, Anokhi – uncut diamonds, Muhurat – wedding jewellery, and Rang – precious stones jewellery.

SPECIAL MOMENT

Al Maha Petroleum Company celebrates Qarraqasho with children at Royal Hospital



MUSCAT: In yet another touching display of togetherness, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company, in line with its vision “With you Everywhere”, joined children at the Royal Hospital for Qarraqasho celebrations.

The visits aimed to bring a smile to the faces of so many young children who were not able to join in their community festivities by sharing special moments with Al

Maha volunteers as they distributed gifts and toys.

The celebration was carried out as a part of Al Maha’s ‘Hilal Al Khair’ initiative.

Al Maha said that it is important for them as a community-oriented service provider that the children admitted to the hospital are included in the celebrations and this was just one way they could make their day a little brighter.





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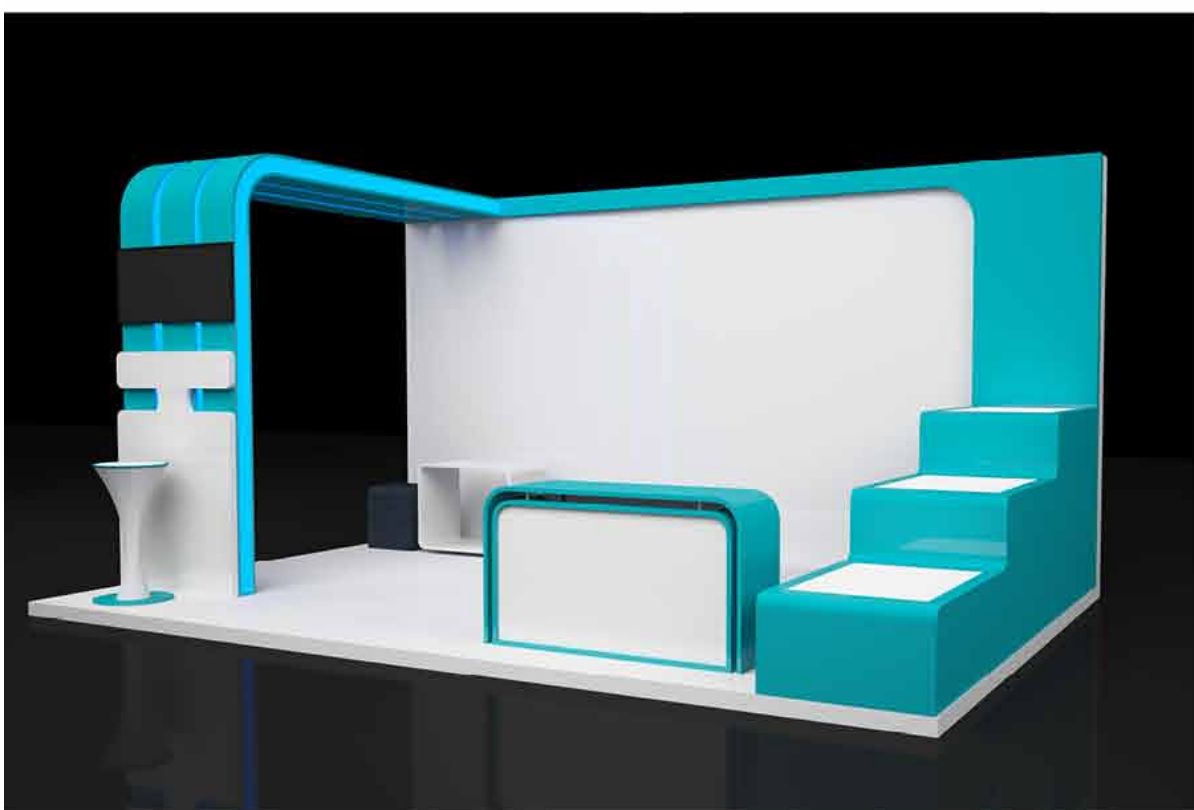
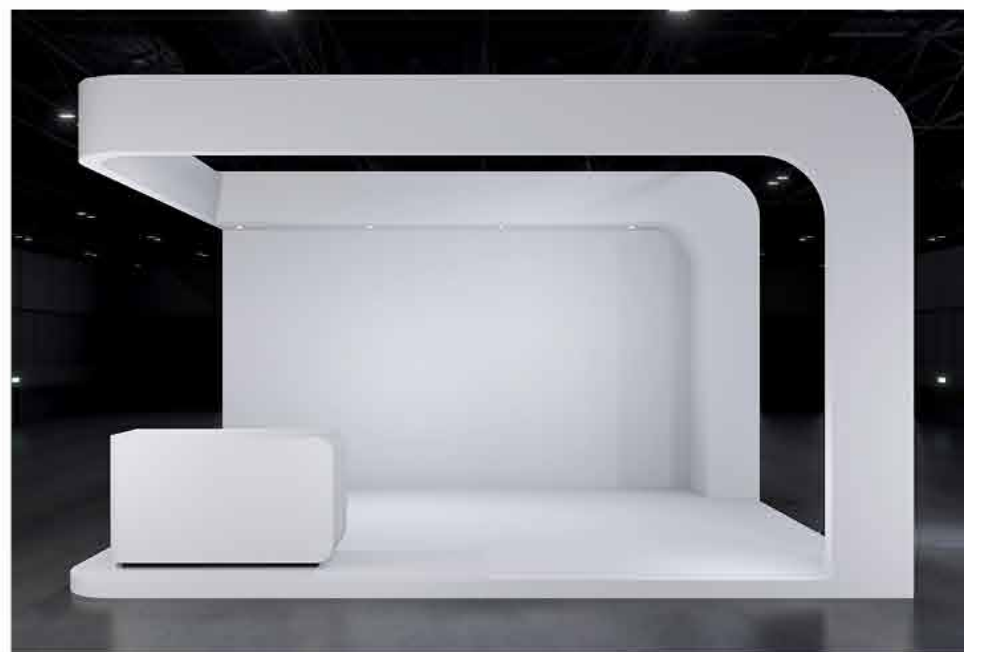
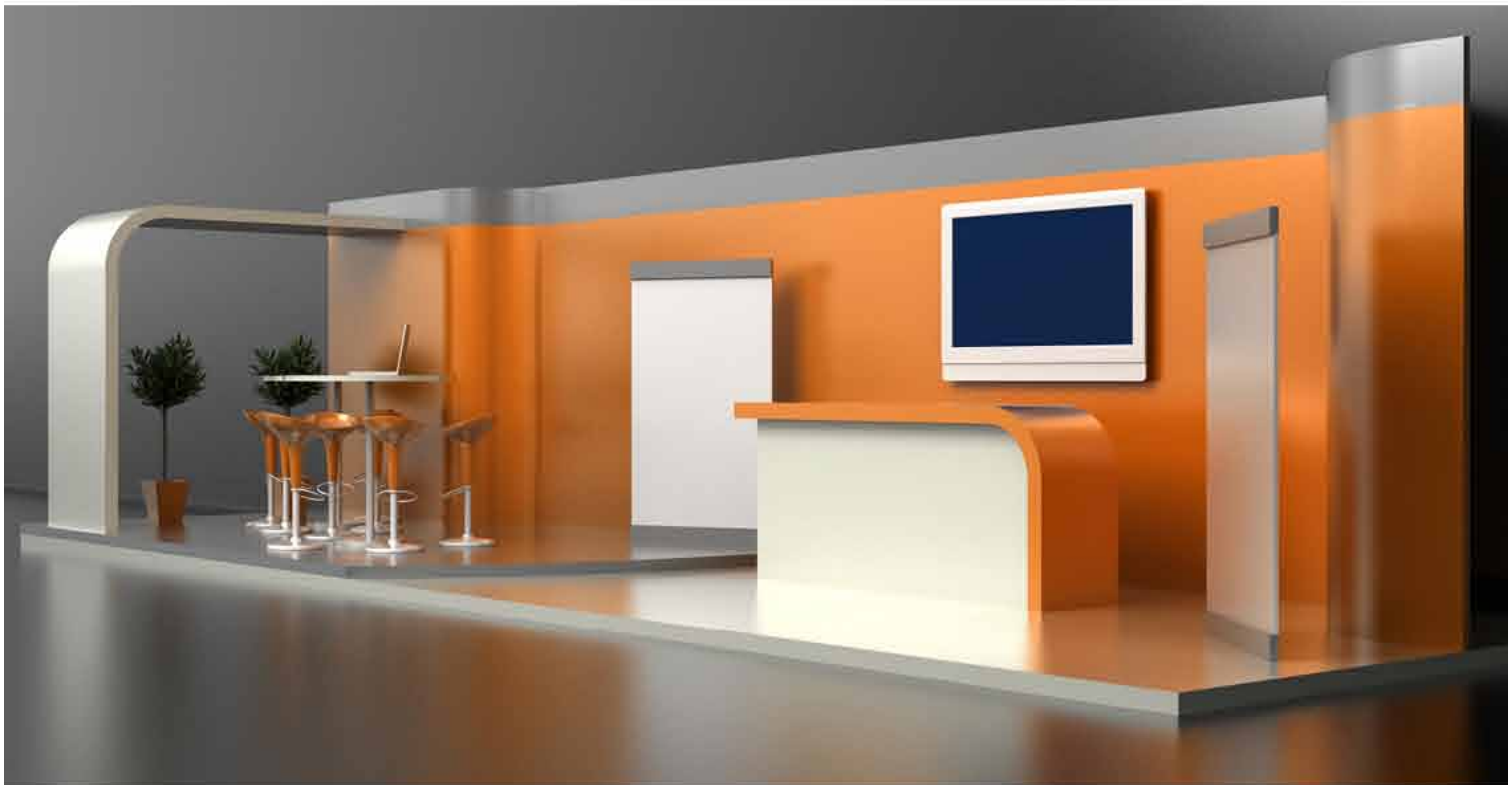
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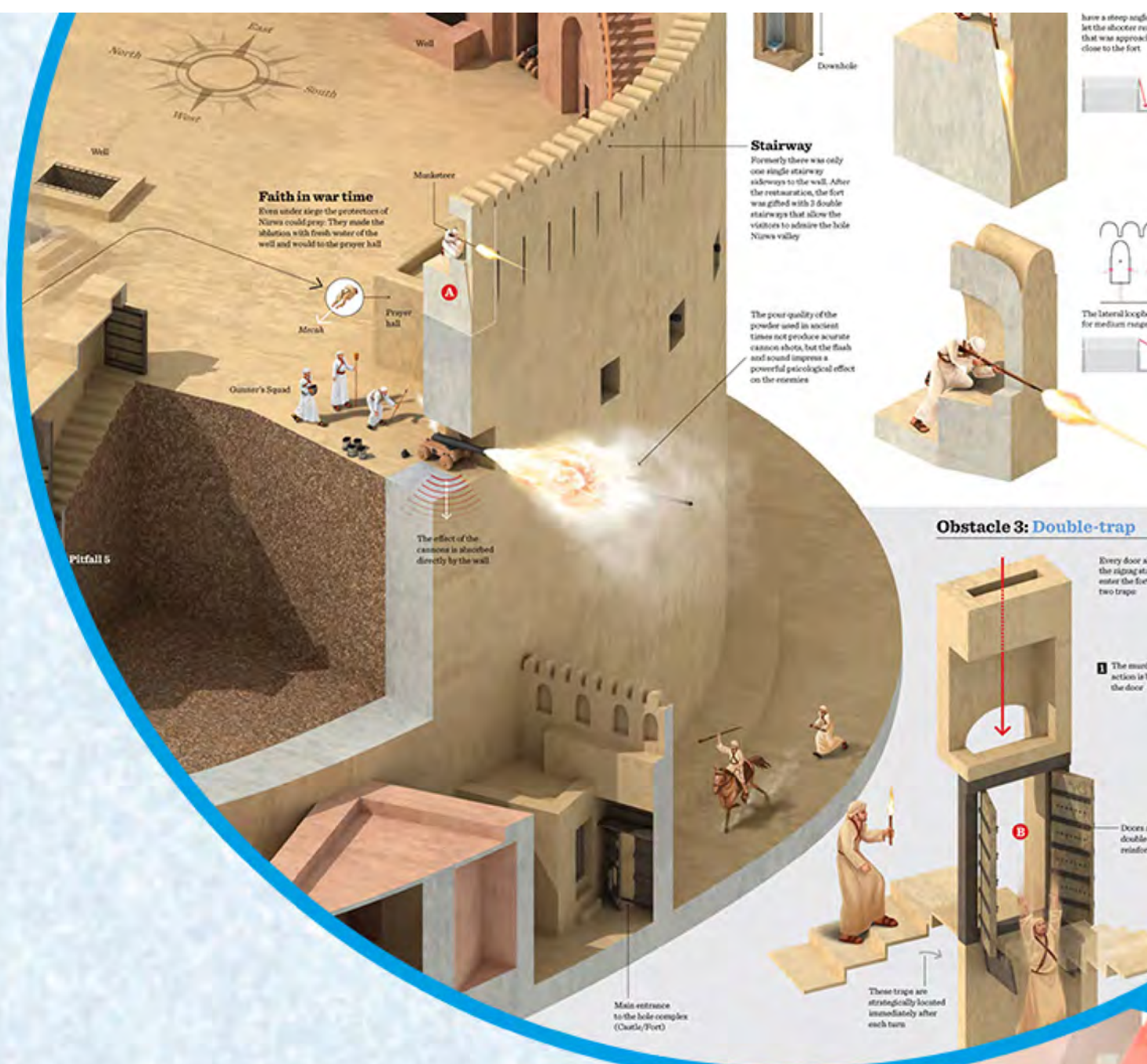
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