

**ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER
RECEIVES IRAQI AMBASSADOR**

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office received in his office on Sunday Qais Saad Al Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Sultanate of Oman. **>A2**



**HM THE SULTAN GREETES GOVERNOR
GENERAL OF NEW ZEALAND**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Cindy Kiro, Governor General of New Zealand on the occasion of her country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to Cindy Kiro, and the friendly people of New Zealand further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



Founded 1975 · Volume 47 No. 233 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group



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CULTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Sayyid Bilarab chairs Omani start-ups Supervisory Committee meeting



MUSCAT: The Supervisory Committee of Omani Promising Start-ups Programme held its first meeting for 2023 on Sunday. The meeting was chaired by HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said.

The programme seeks to activate the system of companies based on technology and innovation in Oman and contribute to spreading the culture of entrepreneurship in educational institutions. It also aims to impart social awareness about the importance of start-ups and upgrade them to operate in the

regional and global levels.

Other objectives of the programme include enhancing investments offered to start-ups, linking them with in-country value (ICV) and finding sustainable financing and investment solutions that suit the needs of nascent companies. The programme figures among the priorities of Oman Vision 2040 in the field of economic diversification and financial sustainability.

The meeting discussed the selection of representatives for start-ups in the Supervisory Committee, implementing a pro-

gramme of field visits to Omani start-ups, devising plans for the “Omani Promising Start-ups Programme”, espousing strategic performance indicators (for 2023-2025) and launching a package of incentives for Omani start-ups.

The Omani Promising Start-ups Programme is implemented in cooperation with the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Economy and the

Oman Information Communication Technologies Group.

The programme reflects the keenness of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to establish a vibrant and prosperous economy by furnishing proper environment for entrepreneurs and start-ups and supporting their projects and consolidating their presence regionally and internationally.

The programme focuses on three pillars of significance to start-ups: capacity building, funding and investment and providing legal support for start-ups. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN ASMED unveils plan for 2023

1 The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) held a press conference during which it outlined the accomplishments it made during 2022 and unveiled the salient features of its 2023 plan. **>A5**



WORLD Ex-Pakistan president Musharraf dies in UAE

2 Former chief of Army Staff and President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf passed away on Sunday at American Hospital in UAE after a prolonged illness, reported Daily Pakistan. **>A6**

SPORTS Pakistan threatens to pull out of World Cup

3 Pakistan threatened to pull out from ICC World Cup scheduled to be held in India later this year after Asian Cricket Council decided that a neutral venue will be announced for Asia cup 2023. **>A8**

OMAN FULLY PREPARED IN MITIGATING BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS





**National Bank of
Oman marks its 50th
anniversary**



B1

A national team has been set up to enhance the response to face biological risks

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is fully geared up to meet any biological threats or disasters, a senior officer at the Royal Oman Police (ROP) said.

Major Sarhan Al Mahrezi, Interpol Office in Muscat in the General Directorate of Inquiries and Criminal Investigation, spoke exclusively to Times of Oman

about the ways to meet the biological risks with the establishment of a national team.

Pact with Interpol

“The idea was summed up in partnership with the Interpol five years ago for creating a special Biohazards Unit,” he said.

The Sultanate of Oman was one of the first countries to take advantage of the Interpol initiative

related to biosecurity, he added.

“During the last few years, we have trained national cadres from various government, military and security agencies for the biosecurity initiative, and this year, Oman has participated in workshops related to biosecurity,” he added.

In the Governorate of Muscat, a workshop on strengthening national capabilities in mitigating the risks of biological accidents was organised by the Directorate General of Inquiries and Investigations, in cooperation with Interpol. The event began with the participation of a number of Royal Oman Police officers and specialists from government agencies.

The opening of the five-day workshop was sponsored by Brig-

adier Jamal bin Habib Al Qurashi, Director-General of Inquiries and Criminal Investigations at the Royal Oman Police, where he delivered a speech stressing the importance of raising the level of preparedness and building national capabilities for detecting and combating biological incidents and dealing professionally to reduce its severity or damages.

Brigadier Jamal Al-Quraishi also pointed out the importance of international cooperation to combat such incidents in the future.

Al-Mahrezi confirmed that despite the high level of security in Oman, this workshop has been organised to deal with similar cases and this does not mean that the Sultanate is under threat. **>A3**

WEATHER

Warm winds likely to raise temperatures in Oman

Times News Service

Muscat: The cool spell of weather may be over for a brief period with the daytime temperatures likely to climb and enter mid-30s in some parts of Oman this week.

An official from the Oman Meteorology confirmed to Times of Oman that most of the wilayats will witness a noticeable rise in temperatures from 7 February due to the southeasterly winds coming from the tropics and subtropics which are relatively warm.

He also added that on February 9-10 the Sultanate's atmosphere will be affected by a low tropical trough due to the northwesterly winds, which will again bring down the temperatures.

The official, however, said the temperature will start dropping

from February 9 or 10, after which the normal temperatures will return to the wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman.

Meanwhile, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has issued executive regulations for the Civil Aviation Law, including a ban on publication of unofficial meteorological data.

Saeed Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Civil Aviation Authority, issued Decision No. 116/2023 for the Civil Aviation Law. The regulations come three years after the issuance of the Civil Aviation Law by Royal Decree No. 76/2019.

The wilayats of North and South Al Sharqiyah governorates recorded the highest temperatures



with Bidiyah in North Al Sharqiyah, Al Kamil and Al Wafi in South Al Sharqiyah recorded the highest temperature in the Sultanate of Oman at 31.5 degrees Celsius.

The Wilayat of Dima and Al Tayin in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate recorded 31.4 degrees Celsius, Al Mudhaibi in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate recorded 32.1 degrees Celsius on Sunday.

As for the lowest temperature, it was recorded in Jabal Shams in the Wilayat Al-Hamra in Al-Dakhiliyah Governorate. The Wilayat of Seeq recorded 10.3 degrees Celsius, the Wilayat of Marmul and Yanqul recorded 12.5 degrees Celsius each.

The winter season for 2022/2023 began in Oman on December 22, 2022 and ends on March 21, 2023, so it will last for 89 days.



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Maghrib.....	6:01pm
Isha.....	7:13pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:28am



Oman promotes country’s tourism potential in US

The Travel and Adventure Exhibition was held in the US

WASHINGTON: The Sultanate of Oman has concluded its participation in the Travel and Adventure Exhibition, held in Washington, DC, during 3-5 February. The participation was organized by the Advanced Innovations

Foundation, and sponsored by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in coordination with the Omani Embassy in the US. The participation aimed to introduce Oman and promote its tourism potentials. During the participation, the focus was on promoting the selection of the Governorate of Dhofar by “The New York Times” as the best recommended destination to visit during 2023, in addition to highlighting the sports, deserts adventures, as well as various festivals organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in different governorates of Oman.

-ONA



MEETING

Royal Office Minister receives Iraqi envoy



DISCUSSION: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office received Qais Saad Al Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq. -ONA

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of Royal Office received in his office on Sunday Qais Saad Al Amri, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Sultanate of Oman. Gen. Sultan welcomed the guest who expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for enhancing means of co-operation to achieve the joint interests between the two countries. Cordial conversations were exchanged and matters of common concern were discussed during the meeting. -ONA

FAMOUS OPERA

ROHM to present Mozart’s opera Le Nozze di Figaro



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat is delighted to present Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s wonderful opera Le Nozze di Figaro, performed by the Accademia Teatro alla Scala conducted by Sestro Quatrini.

The opera features incredible young talent, artists from the academy associated with one of the most famous opera companies in the world, Teatro alla Scala.

Le Nozze di Figaro tells the story of Figaro, a servant to the Count who is marrying Susanna, another member of the household. The opera is a comedy, following the twists and turns of a plot which sees the Count trying to woo Susanna himself, the Countess trying to win back the

Count, a manservant who would woo anyone but in this case must don a disguise as a woman to confuse the Count, and a maid who thinks Figaro must repay a debt with marriage but turns out to be his mother.

Figaro is by turns tumbled by events and the chief puppet master of the story. Audiences love this opera.

Don’t miss this classical production, dressed with glorious period costume and staged by the acclaimed director Giorgio Strehler with revival director Marina Bianchi. Le Nozze di Figaro will take place at the Royal Opera House Muscat on Thursday, 16 February and Sunday 19 February at 7pm. A pre-performance talk will take place one hour ahead of the show.



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SEASON 2022 -2023

ROP

< FROM A1

Tips provided by international experts at workshops are vital

Regarding how national cadres benefit by organising these types of workshops, Major Sarhan Al Mahrezi, Interpol Office in Muscat explained that they gain through their practical and scientific experiences, as tips provided by international experts from Interpol allow them to learn about the best international practices in this field.



COMMENTARY

Jabal Shams: A winter gem in the desert



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

I was in Turkey's highest snow mountain when the temperature in Jabal Shams dropped to sub-zero degrees and I was wondering why I was taking a winter holiday in a foreign land when we have snow right here in the country.

I browsed the online pages of the international newspapers and Oman's highest mountain dominated the travel pages. The fascinating question they had is that how a land in a desert could snow like a European country?

I was asked the same questions by European tourists in Turkey when they found out that my country is Oman. I did not have to struggle with my answer. I told them that Oman has a diversity of weather that spins around tropical, to cold and the severe heat conditions.

I also told them that all they know of Oman is just about the desert where British travel writer Wilfred Thesiger immortalized the sands with his book written in 1949 about the harsh temperatures of the Empty Quarter.

Thousands of photos circulating in the social media, including of a snowman dressed up in Omani turban carrying the national flag, captivated the world. The photos also showed people skiing down the slopes of the Jabal Shams mountain.

One of the questions some social media users had whether the snowy peaks of



Jabal Shams were mistaken with the Swiss mountains. But I had to explain to fellow tourists in Turkey that snow in that part of Oman is an annual occasion and it is not a one-off incident. I could understand the surprise on their faces because here in Oman we do not take the time to promote the country in its finest glory.

They also asked me if there were any good hotels around the area or skiing facilities. I scratched my head and said sadly "not really."

I looked at the Turkey's snow mountain I visited and all the facilities around it, from cable cars that takes you to the top to the skiing stations and first class hotels, cafes and restaurants. Then I read in the social media of visitors to Jabal Shams who could not get to the top because of "dangerous and icy narrow roads."

The roads towards the towns of Jabal Shams were also packed with cars frustrating holiday makers from getting there. But the winners of the spectacular snow moun-

tain views were the owners of drones. They made a brisk business taking photos and videos for people who could not get to the top.

The international coverage of Jabal Shams will undoubtedly put Oman in the world tourism map as a winter destination that combines a multitude of attraction from snow peaks, desert, trekking, beaches, old villages, history and heritage in one holiday package. The best coverage was from the British newspaper, the Guardian, with a headline, "Arabian Tallest Peak Turns White. It is true that Jabal Shams, standing at a little over 3,000 meters, is the highest mountain in the Arabian Peninsula.

Another British newspaper, the Times, said in its travel pages, Oman's Jabal Shams is a winter gem in the desert. Such was an international euphoria of a mountain that most of us here in Oman take for granted and perhaps, not much is done to give it a privilege it deserves.

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Muscat Nights



LOOKING BACK AT 17 DAYS OF EXTRAVAGANZA

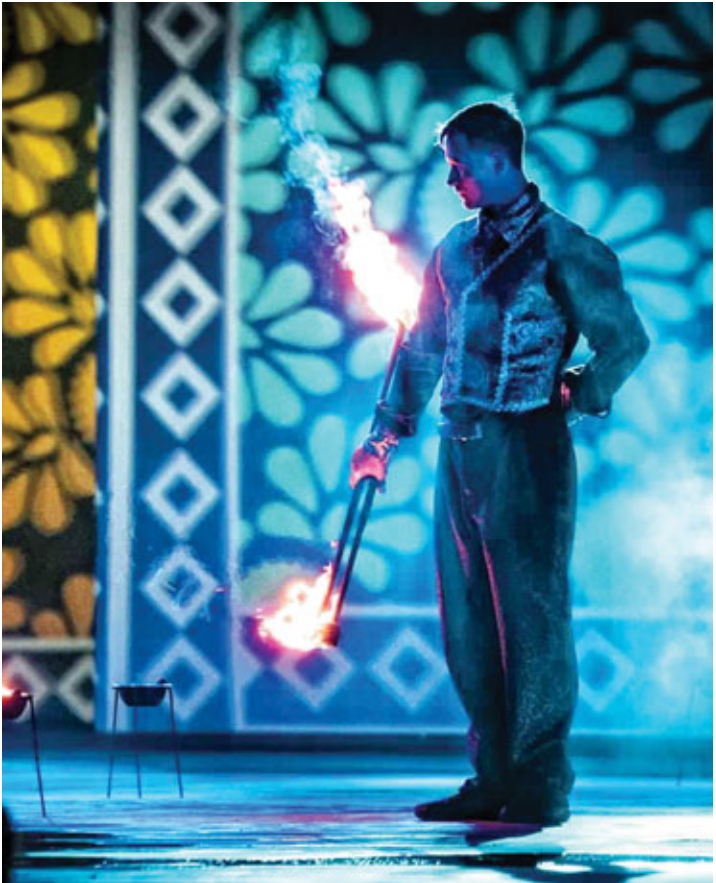


The 17 days of fun and fiesta of Muscat Nights came to an end on Saturday. The four venues earmarked for the festival had hosted innumerable activities and shows to entertain the visitors. While Qurum Natural Park wooed the audience with the Boats Lake Shows, Helium Shows, laser shows, drone shows and water shows, Naseem Garden showcased the depth of friendship between the participating countries and the Sultanate of Oman. The food trucks, horse shows, hurdles jumping competitions, open-air cinema and kids' games were the added attractions

The Oman Automobile Association had several activities and stage shows to attract visitors. A theatrical and lyrical performance was held by Ace the Whitebeards, an Omani youth troupe that presented theatrical art. Apart from that there were many electronic game rooms to keep pace with the interests of youngsters who love technology and play in the virtual world. There were a variety of artistic performances at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. 'Winter Show in the Forest', a circus that simulated the North Pole in a carnival style, was a huge hit among children. The show by Mr. Bob, opened up a world full of interaction, fun and

imagination for children. Another event that caught the attention of many was the Show jumping tournament that was held in Qurum Natural Park. The aim of the tournament was to involve private stables to implement various equestrian competitions, especially the Olympic Equestrian Sports and attract fans interested in equestrian sports. Movie lovers were in for a treat to catch their favourite film sitting under the stars. The open-air cinemas at Qurum Natural Park and Naseem Garden screened many popular films as part of the Muscat Nights events. "I really liked the decorative lights that illuminated the alleys that lead to the different venues.

It was nice to see men and women, clad in their traditional attire, dancing to the familiar folklore melody in perfect rhythm," Ayesha Ali said. The Heritage Village at Naseem Garden had various handicraft stalls that attracted the tourists. Carpets and handmade items found in bright colours, fine designs and unique texture were quite an attraction. Wearing traditional and colourful clothes, a number of women had won people's hearts by preparing and serving some traditional Omani cuisine. Having travelled from different governorates of Oman, they offered a variety of delectable traditional Omani dishes to the visitors.



ASMED unveils salient features of 2023 plan for empowering SMEs

Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development outlined its plan for empowering small and medium enterprises

MUSCAT: The total number of SMEs registered in Oman stood at more than 210,000 by September 2022 while among these 104,141 were registered at ASMED, a senior executive said.

Abdulaziz Said Al Raisi, Deputy Chairman of the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) said this on Sunday held a press conference.

He outlined the accomplishments made by ASMED during 2022 and also unveiled the salient features of its 2023 plan for empowering small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and ensuring their sustainability.

He added that the number of active SMEs that are holders of Riyada card stood at 37,489 and that SMEs generated exports worth more than OMR2 billion as per September 2020 statistics.

Al Raisi pointed out that, in 2022, a total of 28,445 Riyada



cards were issued for the first time, while applications for renewal of the same stood at 20,113.

Riyada card is a document that enables its holders to avail a set of incentives and exemptions from dues of different government and private establishments, he explained.

SMEs filed more than 200 applications for usufruct contracts to benefit from lands of 10 industrial charts announced in 2022, said Al Raisi, noting that 35 such applications have been approved so far.

Al Raisi also rolled out a number of programmes for honing the skills of entrepreneurs, including

one named “Entrepreneur Readiness Programme”, which was implemented by ASMED in all governorates of Oman to upgrade the efficiency of owners of SMEs wishing to get financing.

Al Raisi said that ASMED incubators host 56 start-ups and that the authority continues to provide professional support and offer licenses to home-based business activities, besides hosting the events of SMEs through its publicity committee.

Al Raisi added, “The preparation of ASMED’s 2023-2025 strategy affirms the significance of the SME

sector and fits with national visions on advocating the best international practices for implementing ambitious initiatives that keep pace with standard policies, legislations and rapid transformations in the field of entrepreneurship.”

Al Raisi underscored ASMED’s emphasis on easing SMEs’ access to financing, to regional and global markets and e-marketing programmes, as well as support for emerging companies based on innovation and technology.

“ASMED will this year launch a “Digital Academy for Entrepreneurship and Start-ups”. The

move will pave the way for partnerships with the government and private sectors and the introduction of a “Suppliers Development Programme”. This is in addition to studying and analyzing investment opportunities in Omani governorates,” said Al Raisi.

Younis Mohammed Al Nasri, ASMED Assistant Deputy Chairman for Funding and Investment, said that as many as 203 applications for funding were submitted to ASMED electronically, among them 20 applications that were sanctioned by the end of 2022.

The total projected sum stands

at more than RO 2.3 million, he explained.

Al Nasri pointed out that ASMED plans to finance 250 establishments and endorse the licensing of 70 new Sanad centres, depending on the needs of each wilayat in different governorates of Oman. On the sidelines of the press conference, ASMED announced the opening of a week-long subscription to the 2023 “Entrepreneur Readiness Programme”. It advised entrepreneurs to tap the services of the programme that include funding and land use (usufruct). – **ONA**

5TH SESSION

State Council gives feedback on draft marine law

MUSCAT: The State Council has given its feedback, along with the opinion of the Legal Committee, on the draft marine law, which is forwarded by the Council of Ministers. The step comes in preparation for submitting the same to His Majesty the Sultan.

The State Council also gave its feedback on a study conducted by the Technology and Innovation Committee on the allocations of a national award for investment in the technological innovations.

This was unveiled during the council’s 5th session of the 4th annual setting for the 7th term, which was held under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council. – **ONA**



CBO ANNUAL REPORT



Expat remittances dipped by 7.5% to OMR3.12bn in 2021

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Remittances by expatriates in Oman witnessed a decline of 7.5 percent to OMR 3.12 billion in 2021, according to a newly released Annual Report of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

This decline in remittances was over and above a 4.0 percent decline in 2020 mainly due to the sharp fall in the number of expatriate workers because of the massive disruptions due to COVID-19 pandemic and the overall sluggishness in global economy.

“The leakage of savings in the

form of current transfers (mainly workers’ remittances abroad) declined by 7.5 percent during 2021,” the CBO Annual Report said. “This reflected in the decline in expatriate workers, whereas the outflow of savings on account of net primary income increased by 14.5 percent in 2021,” the report added.

The report further elaborated that the gross domestic savings, on other hand, saw a significant improvement by 30.5 percent during 2021 after witnessing a contraction of 34.6 percent in 2020 when the pandemic severe-

ly affected employment conditions and business activities.

Increased National Savings

Increase in gross domestic savings and lower current transfers abroad led to a significant growth of 78.7 percent in gross national savings in 2021 against a decline of 55.4 percent in 2020.

Gross domestic savings to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio improved to 33.5 percent in 2021 from 29.9 percent a year ago, while gross national savings to GDP ratio increased to 17.5 percent from 11.4 percent in 2020.

SHERATON HOTEL OMAN

Tariq Al Barwani to speak at business conclave 2023



Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of celebrating 37th year of successful presence in Oman and recently being awarded as the most trusted brand, Shahi group, one of the leading suppliers of food and spices in Oman, has invited Knowledge Oman Founder and popular Motivational Speaker, Tariq Hilal Al Barwani, to motivate, engage and inspire at its up-coming Business Conclave 2023 scheduled for Tuesday at the Sheraton Hotel, Muscat.

“I am honoured to be invited to speak at Shahi’s Business Conclave and look forward to be sharing the journey of what it takes to create and maintain a successful brand,” said Tariq Al Barwani. Tariq who joined leaders of international repute at the world’s leading speaking agency, the London Speaker Bureau, will be delivering an engaging session on what it takes to create and maintain a successful brand.

DIGITAL COOPERATION ORGANISATION

Oman chosen as member of DCO’s Executive Committee

RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman was selected as member to the Executive Committee of the Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO). The decision was taken during the participation of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in DCO’s General Assembly’s meeting held in Riyadh. DCO was founded in November 2020 to accelerate economic growth in member states.

Oman’s delegation was headed by Eng. Said Hamoud Al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The meeting reviewed DCO’s programmes and projects for this

year (2023). It endorsed the membership of some countries and reviewed the achievements made by DCO last year.

Dr. Ali Amer Al Shidhani, Communications and Information Technology Undersecretary, affirmed that Oman’s active role in DCO’s activities stems from a deep conviction in the significance of international cooperation for the realization of digital economy’s goals. “Through our membership in this organisation, we seek to advance digital economy in Oman by consulting the expertise and experiences of member states, notably in devising policies and laws,” Al Shidhani said. – **ONA**

ANNOUNCEMENT



This is to inform all concerned that **Mr. Ebrahim Tayebali Dhaman Gaonwala**, holder of Indian Passport No. P5679022, Resident card No. 111030414 has resigned from our company from 15.01.2023. Therefore, all the concerned are requested to stop dealing with the above named in favour of the company. If anyone is dealing with him, it is at their own risk and company will not take any responsibility hereafter.

If anybody has any claim, he/she should report to the company within next 3 working days.

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WORLD

AFTER A PROLONGED ILLNESS

Ex-Pakistan president Gen Musharraf dies in Dubai

DUBAI: Former chief of Army Staff and President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf passed away on Sunday at American Hospital in UAE after a prolonged illness, according to media report.

Musharraf was the tenth president of the South Asian nation after the successful military coup in 1999. He served as the 10th Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan (CJCSC) from 1998 to 2001 and the 7th top general from 1998 to 2007. Local media reports quoting his family members said the former four-star general succumbed to Amyloidosis. He was hospitalized for a couple of weeks due to a complication of his ailment, as per reports.



Musharraf has been living in Dubai since 2016. The former president has been in UAE for the last eight years getting medical treatment.

Pakistan PM condoles demise

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday condoled the demise of ex-chief of army staff and former President Pervez Musharraf.

"I offer my condolences to the family of General (rtd) Pervez Musharraf. May the departed soul rest in peace!" tweeted Shehbaz.

Musharraf passed away on Sunday at American Hospital

in UAE after a prolonged illness, according to media report.

Reacting to the news, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) General Sahir Shamshad, and tri-services chiefs expressed heartfelt condolences on the former army chief's demise.



Printed and published by: Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zedjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

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ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

GIANT ROCKET SYSTEM



SpaceX likely to attempt Starship launch in March, says Elon Musk

Arctic blast brings record cold to the US

CARIBOU: Weather authorities say an "epic, generational Arctic outbreak" caused record cold temperatures and life-threatening conditions in the northeastern United States on Saturday.

The summit of Mount Washington in New Hampshire reported a wind-chill low of minus 78 Celsius (minus 108 Fahrenheit) — the coldest temperature ever recorded in the United States.

"Frostquakes." Meanwhile, the National Weather Service (NWS) in Caribou, Maine, said it received reports of "frostquakes."

"Just like earthquakes, [they] generate tremors, thundering sensations. These are caused by sudden cracks in frozen soil or underground water when it's very cold," the NWS office wrote on Twitter.

Strong winds also caused a tree branch in western Massachusetts to fall on a car, killing an infant, a district attorney said in a statement.

Several cities in the Northeast set or tied record low temperatures for that date on Friday and Saturday. This created a significant risk for homeless people.

In Massachusetts, Governor Maura Healey took the unusual step of keeping the South Station transit hub open overnight so roughly 60 homeless people had a safe place to sleep. — **AW**

WASHINGTON: SpaceX chief Elon Musk has announced that its giant Starship rocket system could go orbital for the first time next month if all goes according to plan.

Since last year, SpaceX has been looking to launch the pivotal demonstration flight of its next-generation deep-space transportation system as it aims to fly NASA astronauts to the moon. "If remaining tests go well, we will attempt a Starship launch next month," Musk tweeted on Saturday in response to a user's tweet about Starship.

Musk had in January said that there was a "real shot" at launching Starship in late February, adding that a March launch attempt appears highly likely.

"We have a real shot at late February. March launch attempt appears highly likely," SpaceX founder and CEO Musk said via Twitter on January 7, in response to speculation that the flight could come as early as January 31.

SpaceX is developing Starship to carry people and cargo to the Moon and Mars, among other jobs.

The upcoming test flight will lift off from Starbase. It will travel around Earth once and then splash down in the Pacific Ocean off the Hawaiian island of Kauai. Booster 7 will apparently make a splashdown of its own, in the Gulf of Mexico off the Texas coast.

The orbital trial will be the first Starship test flight since May 5, 2021. It will be the most powerful launch vehicle ever to fly, capable of lifting 100 tonnes of cargo to low Earth orbit.

Starship is the collective name for a two-component system consisting of the Starship spacecraft (which carries the crew and cargo) and the Super Heavy rocket. The rocket component will lift Starship to some 65km altitude before separating and returning to Earth. — **ANI**

NEWLY-FORMED GOVERNMENT



Ministers resign from Nepal's cabinet en-masse as rift in coalition intensifies

KATHMANDU: Nepal's Rashtriya Swatantra Party has decided to withdraw from the newly-formed government led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' with ministers resigning from the post en-masse as the rift inside ruling coalition intensifies.

The fourth largest party, RSP held a meeting on Sunday to leave the government and decided to walk out, announced the Party President Rabi Lamichhane. "The ministers also would submit their resignation to the Prime Minister today itself," Lamichhane said.

Rift inside the ruling coalition started last month after the Supreme Court invalidated the MP post of Lamichhane after his citizenship was termed "invalid" by the court.

Lamichhane also was the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs at the time the

court delivered the verdict.

Outthrown from the post, Lamichhane had held multiple rounds of meeting with PM Prachanda demanding his own reinstatement and had threatened to walk out if the demands are not met.

Lamichhane-led RSP had taken the General Election of November 2022 by storm emerging as an alternative power and hope for the people. But lately, it got embroiled in the power game and politicking as the authorities are investigating Lamichhane, the former Home Minister in the case of Passport fraud.

Lamichhane was found to be using an American and Nepali passport at the same time. An investigation is underway on the case.

On January 27, Nepal's Supreme Court stripped RSP Chairman Rabi Lamichhane of his

lawmaker position, saying that the citizenship certificate he produced to contest the parliamentary election was invalid. The cancellation of his citizenship certificate also cost him the positions of the home minister and party president, The Kathmandu Post reported.

The Supreme Court's verdict clearly says Lamichhane lost Nepali citizenship once he became an American national. However, in practice, he used the legally scrapped citizenship to get a Nepali passport and to contest the lower house election, according to The Kathmandu Post.

The RSP had been leading the portfolio of the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security, Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. It also had its MP as state minister of the Ministry of Health and Population. — **ANI**

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US 10,032,156 B2

Patent No. 10,032,156 B2
Date of Patent: Jul. 24, 2018

United States Patent
Al-Sahl

Abstract: A Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Chip Bank system and method for enabling users registered in the system to control their financial and telecommunications resources from their mobile device over a mobile communications network. The system includes a mobile network provider and financial services through for use of SIM chips without the need for modifying the user's mobile devices or SIM chip installed thereon. A SIM Chip Bank System Operator (SCBO) manages data flow between users, banks, mobile communications service providers, SIM Chip Automated Teller Machines and SIM Chip Service Providing Machines through a plurality of communications channels. Upon a user connecting to the SCBO to request a transaction, the SCBO connects to the appropriate bank to authenticate the requested transaction. Upon successful completion, reports are sent back and forth to users confirming the event.

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India, France, UAE discuss trilateral cooperation plan

The three foreign ministers discussed convergences and further collaboration in education, business, maritime, culture and green energy for a stable peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific



NEW DELHI: Noting that defence is an area of close cooperation, Foreign Ministers of India, France and UAE have decided that efforts will be undertaken to further promote compatibility, joint development and co-production while seeking out avenues for further collaboration and training defence forces of the three countries.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, France Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan held a phone call in which they discussed collaboration in areas such as education, business, maritime and green energy. “Discussed convergences and further collaboration in education, business, maritime, culture and green energy for a stable peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific,” Jaishankar said in a tweet.

The three foreign ministers had

met for the first time in a trilateral format in September last year on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

They agreed to establish a formal trilateral cooperation initiative, with the aim of expanding cooperation in various fields of mutual interest in acknowledgement of their shared desire to promote international stability and prosperity, and to further build upon the constructive and collaborative ties that exist between the three countries.

It is in this context that a phone call between the three Ministers was held on Saturday to adopt a roadmap for the implementation of this initiative.

During the phone call, the three sides agreed that the trilateral initiative will serve as a forum to promote the design and execution of cooperation projects in the fields of energy, with a focus on solar

and nuclear energy, as well as in the fight against climate change and the protection of biodiversity, particularly in the Indian Ocean region, a joint statement said.

For this purpose, the three countries will explore the possibility of working with the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) to pursue concrete, actionable projects on clean energy, the environment, and biodiversity, a statement said.

It said the trilateral initiative will serve as a platform to expand cooperation between the three countries’ development agencies on sustainable projects.

The three countries agreed that they will seek to ensure greater alignment of their respective economic, technological, and social policies with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

“In support of these endeavours, a range of trilateral events

will be organised in the framework of the Indian Presidency of the G20 and the UAE’s hosting of COP-28 in 2023, respectively,” the statement said.

The three countries also agreed to expand their cooperation through initiatives such as the Mangrove Alliance for Climate led by the UAE and the Indo-Pacific Parks Partnership led by India and France.

It was agreed that the three countries should seek to focus on key issues such as single-use plastic pollution, desertification, and food security in the context of the International Year of Millets-2023. The three sides also underlined their keen desire to cooperate in the field of the circular economy under the aegis of India’s Mission LiFE.

“It was acknowledged that defence is an area of close cooperation between the three countries.

Therefore, efforts will be undertaken to further promote compatibility, and joint development and co-production, whilst seeking out avenues for further collaboration and training between the three countries’ defence forces,” the statement said.

The three countries will seek to strengthen exchanges of views on emerging threats from infectious diseases, as well as on measures to fight against future pandemics.

“In this regard, cooperation in multilateral organisations such as World Health Organization (WHO), Gavi-the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Fund, and Unitaaid will be encouraged,” the statement said.

The three countries will also attempt to identify tangible cooperation on implementing the “One Health” approach, and support the development of local capacities in biomedical innovation and production within developing countries.

As countries at the very forefront of technological innovation, the development of trilateral cooperation between relevant academic and research institutions and efforts to promote co-innovation projects, technology transfer, and entrepreneurship will be encouraged, the statement said.

“In this context, trilateral conferences and meetings on the sidelines of high-level technology events such as Vivatex, Bengaluru Tech Summit, and GITEX will be arranged to support such cooperation,” it added.

The statement said that in recognition of the critical role social and human bonds play in their constructive partnership, France, India, and the UAE will ensure that this trilateral initiative will be leveraged as a platform to promote cultural cooperation, through a range of joint projects, including heritage promotion and protection. — ANI



Cyprus votes to elect new president

NICOSIA: Voting in the Cyprus presidential elections began on Sunday as the second term of incumbent conservative President Nicos Anastasiades comes to an end.

Polling stations opened at 7 a.m. (0500 GMT) on Sunday with voting ending at 6 p.m.

Opinion polls predict no contender will secure an immediate outright majority, thereby triggering a runoff vote to be held on February 12.

Three front-runners

Although there are a record 14 candidates, there are only two women contesting the elections. The winner needs 50% plus one vote to succeed President Anastasiades, who cannot run for a third term.

The forerunners in the elections are former Foreign Minister Nikos Christodoulides, right-leaning Democratic Rally (DISY) party leader Averof Neophytou, and career diplomat Andreas Mavroyiannis, backed by the leftist Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL).

“All polls indicate that Christodoulides is going to the second round. I would be very much surprised if he didn’t reach it,” said Andreas Theophanous of the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs. “And if he goes to the second round, he is predicted to win. Something radical has to happen to change this.”

All three main contenders have been close associates of Anastasiades. — DW

CONDOLENCES

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Jehad Abdul Rahim Mal Allah Al Zadjali,
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Rashad Abdul Rahim Mal Allah Al Zadjali
and Tariq Ziyad Abdul Rahim Al Zadjali
and their family on the sad demise of their brother
ZIYAD ABDUL RAHIM
MAL ALLAH AL ZADJALI
May His Soul Rest in Peace

SPORTS

Dyche gets winning start at Everton, Man United hang on

Manchester United had to dig deep to hold on for a 2-1 win at home over Crystal Palace

LONDON: Sean Dyche had an immediate impact as the new Everton boss, as his side won 1-0 at home to league leaders Arsenal in his first game in charge. James Tarkowski's 60th minute far-post header following Dwight McNeil's corner was a goal made by two players who had worked with Dyche at Burnley, and the now Everton boss brought some of the work-effort and defensive discipline his former club habitually showed.



The result leaves Arsenal five points clear of Manchester City, who play away to Tottenham on Sunday, while Everton are still in the bottom three after Wolver-

hampton beat Liverpool 3-0. Julen Lopetegui's side produced a sensational display to continue their recovery, while there was little sign of Liverpool's awful cam-

paign improving. Joel Matip's own goal after just five minutes, followed by new signing Craig Dawson's goal in the 12th minute, put Wolves into

an early lead and after Liverpool tried but failed to get back into the match, Wolves captain Ruben Neves added a third in the 71st minute. Manchester United had to dig deep to hold on for a 2-1 win at home over Crystal Palace after Casemiro was sent off with 20 minutes remaining. By then United led 2-0 thanks to Bruno Fernandes' seventh minute penalty and another goal from Marcus Rashford. Jeffrey Schlupp's snapshot got Palace back into the game in the 72nd minute and there were some nervous moments until Old Trafford was able to celebrate a 13th consecutive home win. That win lifted United above Newcastle, who were held to a 1-1 draw at home to West Ham. Callum Wilson gave Newcastle a flying start after just three minutes, but Lucas Paqueta saved a point for the visitors just after the half hour. Brighton move sixth after Kaoru Mitoma's 87th minute header

gave them a 1-0 win at home to struggling Bournemouth, while Brentford are seventh after thrashing bottom of the table Southampton 3-0. Ben Mee and Bryan Mbeumo scored two goals just before half-time, before Mathias Jensen added extra shine to the score with 10 minutes left to play. Leicester City won a thrilling match 4-2 away to Aston Villa to ease their own relegation worries after twice coming behind after goals from Ollie Watkins and an own goal from Harry Souttar on his Leicester debut. James Maddison, Kelechi Iheanacho, Tete (another new arrival) and Dennis Praet all scored in an impressive win for the visitors. Record signing Enzo Fernandez was in the Chelsea side that kicked off the weekend at home to Fulham on Friday night, but he couldn't inspire his side to a win, who were held to a 0-0 draw by an impressive Fulham at Stamford Bridge. legendary rivalries. **Xinhua**

DOMESTIC LEAGUE

Yalla Shabab trounce Majees CC by 108 runs



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Yalla Shabab beat Majees CC by 108 runs in the Premier Division of the Oman Cricket Domestic League 2022-23. Putting Yalla Shabab to bat first, Majees started off well picking two wickets in the powerplay. Hannan Rizwan (43 of 45; 7x4) set a base for the Shabab batsmen to put up a formidable total. Wasim Ali (101 of 94; 6x4,4x6) and Khalid Kail (101 of 107; 11x4,1x6) stitched a 207 run partnership. Both remained not out taking Yalla Shabab to 285 in 50 overs.

Sahil Shaik bagged 2/29 for Majees CC. In response, Majees CC was in a puddle as none of their batsmen could stand ground against the Yalla Shabab bowlers other than stalwart Zeeshan Maqsood (83 of 108; 2x4,5x6) who single-handedly drove Majees to fight for the chase. Majees CC bundled down for 177 in 42.5 overs, courtesy Mohammed Zahid (3/35), Wasim Ali (2/29) and Zikria Islam (2/30). Yalla Shabab registered their 4th win out of 5 games while Majees CC are yet to register a win in the league.

LEGENDARY RIVALRIES

Border-Gavaskar Trophy: A look at top four player-contests between India, Australia

NAGPUR: From the epic face-off between Sachin Tendulkar and Shane Warne to Harbhajan Singh's web over Ricky Ponting, Tests between India and Australia have witnessed several legendary rivalries. Here's a look at some of the ongoing battles which will be reignited during the upcoming Test series that will be key in deciding the ICC World Test Championship finalists, as per ICC. Virat Kohli-Nathan Lyon Virat Kohli's dream-like start as India Test skipper at Adelaide was ruined by Nathan Lyon's 7-152, which handed Australia a 48-run win in the opening Test of the series in 2014/15. Among his wickets was Kohli, who fell to a miscued pull after a masterly 141. Since then, Kohli-Lyon battles have become even more engaging. While Kohli has succeeded in scoring runs against the bowler, Lyon has gotten the better of Kohli on seven occasions. **Pujara-Hazlewood** Cheteshwar Pujara's defiance has tested and tormented Australia's bowling attack in recent years.



Few other bowlers have been more frustrated by Pujara's stonewalling than Josh Hazlewood. Hazlewood identified Pujara's resilience as one of the reasons why Australian pacers could not make regular breakthroughs in the Test series in 2018/19. The batter faced 1258 balls over the series and managed to tire the Australia bowlers with his obdurate batting. He repeated the feat in 2020/21, wherein he faced 928 balls, keeping the Australia bowl-

ly due to the presence of Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. He has dismissed Warner on 10 occasions in Tests, with five of these dismissals coming in India. **Rohit Sharma-Pat Cummins** Though the two skippers have not faced each other on many occasions in Tests, the match-up between them will be interesting. Both Rohit Sharman and Pat Cummins have had great success with their leadership so far. While Cummins has dismissed Rohit twice in Tests, they have never faced each other in India. India's captain, who will also open the India batting, will look to provide solid starts at the top while Cummins will try to get rid of Rohit early on to establish Australian dominance. **Jadeja-Smith** With a Test batting average of 60.89, Steve Smith is one of the modern-day greats. His record is exemplary across nations, and the same holds true against India. He has an overall Test average of 72.58 against India, and also averages 60.0 in India in Test cricket. **ANI**

FOOTBALL

Atletico Madrid drop two points in their home game against Getafe

MADRID: Atletico Madrid dropped two points on Saturday in their home game against Getafe, who kicked off the weekend second from bottom. Angel Correa opened the scoring with a few moments of suspense. The striker put the ball in the Getafe net in the 60th minute, only for the goal to be ruled out for offside. While the VAR was revising the play, Atletico coach Diego Simeone substituted the striker, who was in his tracksuit in the dugout when the VAR gave the goal as legal. Enes Unal saved a vital point for Getafe with an 82nd minute penalty after the ball hit Saul Niguez's outstretched arm in the penalty area. Gabriel Veiga scored twice as Celta Vigo climbed away from the bottom three with a thrilling 4-3 win away to Betis. The game got off to a flying start with Jorgen Strand Larsen putting Celta ahead in the fifth minute only for Juanmi to level three minutes later. Sergio Canales put Betis ahead in the 22nd minute, but Veiga's first goal of the night leveled the scores before halftime. Veiga's second and a further goal from Joseph Aidoo put Celta 4-2 up before Nabil Fekir scored in the 83rd minute. There was further drama in the 94th minute when Betis defender Luis Felipe was sent off after punching Celta's Iago As-



pas, with the tension spilling over to the dugouts. Pere Milla scored a hat-trick, which included two penalties as bottom of the table Elche claimed their first win of the season 3-1 at home to Villarreal. Villarreal produced a display packed with individual errors as they slipped to defeat against a rival that has improved since the arrival of Pablo Machin as

coach, even though they had less than 30 percent of the ball during the match. Espanyol and Osasuna drew 1-1 in a game which saw both teams play the second half with 10 players after Osasuna winger Ez Abde and Espanyol defender Ronael Pierre-Gabriel were both sent off for squaring up to each other. Ante Budimir had put Osasuna

ahead just before the sending off, but Martin Braithwaite equalized for Espanyol in the 59th minute. Oihan Sancet was the hero as Athletic Club Bilbao claimed their first league win of 2023, with a 4-1 victory at home to Cadiz on Friday night. Sancet scored a hat-trick in the win, with Yeray Alvarez also scoring in a result that leaves Cadiz struggling in the relegation zone. **Xinhua**

NEUTRAL VENUE



PCB threatens to pull out of World Cup 2023

NEW DELHI After Asian Cricket Council (ACC) decided that a neutral venue will be announced for Asia cup 2023, Pakistan threatened to pull out from ICC World Cup scheduled to be held in India later this year. The ACC has decided that a new venue for Asia cup 2023 will be finalised in the month of March this year. According to a source, "PCB isn't happy with this thinking that Asia cup could be relocated to some neutral venue, name of UAE is on top of the list which might get the hosting but if it happens then Pakistan will not travel to India for ICC World Cup 2023." The ACC chairperson Jay Shah

already revealed that India will not travel to Pakistan for the Asia cup due to security reasons and the tournament will be played at some neutral venue, the new venue will be decided in the second round of the Executive Board meeting of ACC members in the month of March. Last year the Asia cup was held in UAE and the probability of the nation hosting it again is high. Qatar has also shown interest in staging the tournament as a neutral venue amidst political tensions between the neighbouring countries. It has already hosted a few cricket tournaments and franchise-based cricket leagues. **ANI**

ZUBAIR EDC HOSTS FORUM

The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC) organised the 'Tajribati' Forum in Bait Al Zubair to discuss the concept of social intelligence and its importance to entrepreneurs' businesses.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,740.97 points, up by 0.45 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.05 per cent at 489.58 points. Oman Education & Training, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Qatar Insurance, down 4.76 per cent, was the top loser.

NATIONAL BANK OF OMAN

NBO celebrates 50 years of driving sustainable growth and progress

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) recently marked its 50th anniversary with a series of initiatives and events bringing together clients, team members and other stakeholders.

Ever since its inception in 1973 as the first local bank in Oman that introduced banking services, the customer-centric NBO has been at the forefront of creating value, smart solutions and ushering socio-economic development.

The bank highlighted its contributions and the opportunities it has unlocked, benefitting not only its customers but also the entire nation during three dedicated events. With the presence of the bank's Board of Directors, the first event witnessed the recognition of 65 of the longest-serving team members with 30-plus years of contributions.

The second event was dedicated to celebrating with the bank's partners. As for the third, close to 20 small and medium enterprises were invited, and over 1000 team members and their families participated to mark this milestone. During these celebrations, participants enjoyed a virtual showcase



of NBO's 50-year journey and future plans, which was produced as the biggest digital show of its kind in Oman.

Abdullah Zahran Al Hinai, Chief Executive Officer of the National Bank of Oman, said, "Ever since our establishment five decades ago, we have always been driving sustainable growth and progress by making our customer experiences an absolute priority."

"Being a customer-centric bank has enabled us to continuously ad-

dress the rapidly and ever-changing needs of our clients, while we have been expanding our array of services and integrating digital technologies into our operations. With the renewed renaissance under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, we renew our promise to our customers to continue nurturing our partnership and ensure it soars to new heights."

Meanwhile, putting its customers at the core of its operations,

NBO entered a partnership with the telecom provider Vodafone, to further facilitate the bank's services and digital solutions, while both entities will also cooperate in other initiatives benefiting customers and team members alike.

In addition, the bank also signed an agreement with Abraj Energy Services, an integrated energy company in Oman. The bank also partnered with Ottu, a Kuwait-based company offering Computer Integrated Solutions, to further

streamline online payment processes for the bank's customers.

Creating value that feeds into the overall progress of Oman, NBO also announced other initiatives. One of the initiatives was with the Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO), in which NBO donated to the non-governmental organisation to support national social welfare projects and programmes benefitting children, orphans and disabled people.

Over the past 50 years, NBO has

focused on its role as a primary contributor to growth in Oman's banking and finance industry, while positioning itself as a people-focused workplace that has created numerous opportunities. Through its comprehensive CSR strategy, the bank has also been supporting projects that create value for society. Meanwhile, NBO has continuously been improving its resilience, while staying ahead of the curve in regard to technological advancements.

Total refinery products in Oman increased by 4%

Oman's production of petrol (M-95) rose by 12.6 per cent to stand at 14,838,700 barrels till the end of December 2022 compared to the same period in 2021

MUSCAT: The total refinery products in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 4 per cent till the end of December 2022 compared to the same period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Oman's production of petrol (M-95) rose by 12.6 per cent to stand at 14,838,700 barrels compared to the same period in 2021. Sales of M-95 fuel dropped by 0.3 per cent to reach 12,574,900 barrels, while exports reached 3,111,600 barrels, comprising a surge of 118.8 per cent till the end of December 2022.

The production of standard grade petrol (M-91) rose by 0.5



per cent by the end of December 2022 to stand at 13,816,900 barrels compared to the same period in 2021. Sales of M-91 fuel reached 13,171,800 barrels, comprising a rise of 44.7 per cent, while exports declined by 59.6 per cent to reach 1,605,600 barrels.

Gas oil (diesel) output fell by 5 per cent compared to the same period in 2021, reaching 32,569,300

barrels. Sales of diesel increased by 12.2 per cent to reach 14,975,100 barrels, while exports decreased by 17.2 per cent compared to the same period in 2021 to stand at 17,288,000 barrels.

As far as petrochemicals are concerned, the exports and production of polypropylene went up by 22.4 per cent and 43.3 per cent, respectively. Sales of polypropylene

dropped by 48.2 per cent at the end of December 2022 compared to the corresponding period in 2021.

On the other hand, the production and exports of benzene decreased by 59.7 per cent and 63 per cent, respectively, until the end of last December, while the production and exports of paraxylene decreased by 66.1 per cent and 66.6 per cent, respectively. -ONA

MERGER DEAL



CBO approves merger of HSBC Bank Oman with Sohar International Bank

Times News Service

MUSCAT: HSBC Bank Oman SAOG has received approval from the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) for its proposed merger with Sohar International Bank SAOG. The announcement came on Sunday through the official Twitter account of the Muscat Stock Exchange.

The merger deal is expected to be completed in the second half of 2023, as HSBC Bank Oman awaits approval from other relevant regulators and shareholders of the two banks.

Any substantial developments

will be announced in due course.

What does the merger of banks mean?

The merger of banks is often the union of two banks that merge into one entity under one management in an amicable and agreed-upon manner.

If the method is not friendly and there is opposition in the merger negotiations from the board of directors of the merged bank, it is called an acquisition process. The acquisition process takes place by submitting purchase offers and getting approval from the other bank.

2023

Consumption sector posts strong recovery in China: Fitch

BEIJING: China's consumption sector posted a strong recovery in early 2023, with the high-end and mid to high-end discretionary service sectors performing impressively, according to a report from Fitch Ratings.

China's offline consumer service sectors, including tourism, movies and catering, that were hit severely by the COVID-19 epidemic, saw a strong rebound in demand during the Spring Festival holiday, it said.

Domestic tourist trips recovered to around 90 per cent of the 2019 level, while tourism spending was at 73 per cent due to ticket discounts.

China's box office achieved the second-highest take on record, and the number of cinema visits was only slightly below the 2019 level, said Fitch Ratings. Catering dine-in consumption grew by 15.4 per cent year on year during the holiday. -Xinhua

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MARKET

MSX index ends higher



Oman Education & Training, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Qatar Insurance, down 4.76 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,740.97 points, up by 0.45 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.05 per cent at 489.58 points. Oman Education & Training, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Qatar Insurance, down 4.76 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Galfar Engineering were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 429 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.75 million, with more than 6.55 million shares changing hands. Out of 38 traded securities, 17 advanced, 7 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net sellers for OMR295,000 while

foreign investors were net buyers for OMR249,000 followed by GCC and Arab investors for OMR46,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,588.81 points, up 0.43 per cent. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, National Finance, Sohar International Bank, National Bank Oman, and Bank Muscat were up by 6.17 per cent, 5.22 per cent, 2.00 per cent, 1.82 per cent and 1.79 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Qatar Insurance and Bank Dhofar were down by 9.47 per cent and 3.33 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 5,981.32 points, up 1.07 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Raysut Cement, Galfar Engineering and Oman Cement were up by 9.47 per cent, 5.51 per cent, 4.74 per cent and 0.66 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Fisheries, Oman Flour Mills and Oman Redfreshment were down by 1.11 per cent, 0.62 per cent and 0.40 per cent respectively. Services Index was up by 0.65 per cent before closing at 1,699.48 points. Prices of Oman Education & Training, Renaissance Services, Muscat Desalination, Al Suwadi Power, and Oman National Engineering were up by 10.00 per cent, 3.11 per cent, 3.06 per cent, 2.94 per cent and 2.48 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Power were down by 2.78 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

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STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,759.83	4,718.14	4,740.97	4,719.71	21.26	0.45
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,603.67	7,551.80	7,588.81	7,556.13	32.68	0.43
Industry Index	5,984.63	5,917.75	5,981.32	5,917.75	63.57	1.07
Services Index	1,699.48	1,686.61	1,699.48	1,688.56	10.92	0.65
MSX Shariah Index	490.50	489.26	489.58	489.35	0.23	0.05
MSX TR INDEX	6,010.09	5,957.44	5,986.28	5,959.43	26.85	0.45
FINANCIAL TR IDX	7,956.39	7,902.12	7,940.84	7,906.65	34.19	0.43
SERVICES TR IDX	1,802.93	1,789.27	1,802.93	1,791.34	11.59	0.65
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,230.74	6,161.11	6,227.29	6,161.11	66.19	1.07

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
6,557,205	1,748,631	429	23,627,899,328	17	7	14	38

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	PUR VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SER.	114,461	52,270	23	0.452	0.468	0.452	0.464	0.450	0.014	3.111	0.464	0.442	0.464	0.100	109,694,240
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	256,700	31,532	31	0.121	0.124	0.121	0.124	0.121	0.003	2.479	0.124	0.123	0.126	0.100	17,360,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	201,368	20,641	5	0.102	0.103	0.102	0.102	0.100	0.002	2.000	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.100	468,186,354
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	29,047	8,131	18	0.279	0.280	0.279	0.280	0.275	0.005	1.818	0.280	0.270	0.280	0.100	455,264,960
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	944,220	288,559	55	0.302	0.305	0.302	0.305	0.290	0.005	1.796	0.295	0.285	0.290	0.100	21,188,323,163
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	3,000	912	4	0.304	0.304	0.304	0.304	0.302	0.002	0.662	0.304	0.304	0.332	0.100	100,585,304
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	101,517	44,149	26	0.436	0.438	0.430	0.430	0.428	0.002	0.467	0.430	0.428	0.432	0.100	279,906,019
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST&FIN.	239	30	3	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.000	0.000	0.127	0.126	0.132	0.100	30,099,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	11,238	2,517	3	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.224	0.000	0.000	0.224	0.224	0.235	0.100	27,977,143
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	589,664	573,430	32	0.972	0.980	0.972	0.976	0.976	0.000	0.000	0.976	0.964	0.976	0.100	732,000,000
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	14,000	9,016	3	0.644	0.644	0.644	0.644	0.648	-0.004	-0.617	0.644	0.600	0.648	0.100	101,430,000
Total	11	2,265,454	1,011,188	203												
Parallel Market																
OM0000002580	OMAN EDU. TRAINING	3,884	854	1	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.220	0.200	0.020	10.000	0.220	0.216	0.000	0.100	15,400,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	17,850	1,760	9	0.095	0.104	0.095	0.104	0.095	0.009	9.474	0.104	0.100	0.104	0.100	8,465,886
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	25,635	2,191	5	0.082	0.086	0.082	0.086	0.081	0.005	6.173	0.086	0.085	0.086	0.100	17,200,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	14,082	1,848	7	0.127	0.138	0.127	0.134	0.127	0.007	5.512	0.134	0.130	0.136	0.100	26,800,000
OM0000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	47,423	6,477	8	0.134	0.141	0.134	0.141	0.134	0.007	5.224	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.100	76,313,494
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	3,311,363	654,857	114	0.193	0.200	0.193	0.199	0.190	0.009	4.737	0.199	0.197	0.199	0.100	40,394,303
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	438	44	1	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.101	0.098	0.003	3.061	0.101	0.096	0.101	0.100	15,710,590
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	53,400	1,816	5	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.001	2.941	0.035	0.031	0.035	0.100	25,004,222
OM0000004948	SMN POWER HOLDING	217,600	11,977	10	0.055	0.056	0.055	0.056	0.055	0.001	1.818	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.100	11,179,294
OM0000004735	SEMCOOR KALALAH	48,200	3,653	7	0.075	0.078	0.075	0.078	0.077	0.001	1.299	0.078	0.076	0.078	0.100	74,456,612
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	64,643	6,594	12	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.101	0.102	0.100	8,670,000
OM0000001301	DHOFA FOODS AND INVESTMENT	6,572	414	4	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.060	0.003	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.068	0.100	5,093,550
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEV.	1,666	70	3	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.042	0.100	1,260,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	216,168	13,186	6	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.055	0.061	0.100	21,297,809
OM0000002911	FINANCIAL CORP.	990	71	3	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.000	0.072	0.100	5,042,157
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	125,076	12,358	4	0.098	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.099	0.101	0.100	223,695,303
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	20,000	1,840	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.100	16,100,000
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	21,389	2,524	3	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.115	0.118	0.100	196,960,380
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	19,760	1,084	6	0.055	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.054	0.060	0.100	80,443,080
OM0000004926	OMAN REFRESHMENT	501	619	2	1.235	1.235	1.235	1.235	1.240	-0.005	-0.403	1.235	1.240	1.235	0.100	41,750,000
OM0000003888	THE PEARL REIT	700	83	1	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.120	-0.001	-0.833	0.119	0.116	0.119	0.100	50,547,655
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	5,000	445	3	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.088	0.099	0.100	16,204,978
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	40,000	1,361	5	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.035	0.036	-0.001	-2.778	0.035	0.033	0.035	0.100	23,621,060
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFA	4,485	650	1	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.150	-0.005	-3.333	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.100	434,470,958
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	3,000	480	1	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.168	-0.008	-4.762	0.160	0.153	0.167	0.100	16,000,000
Total	25	4,269,825	727,257	222												

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESERVES

India's forex reserves continue to rise for three weeks: RBI data

MUMBAI: India's foreign exchange reserves (forex) rose by \$3.03 billion to \$576.761 billion in the week ending on January 27, according to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) latest data. The reserves are currently at their multi-month highs with the latest three consecutive weeks' rise, the RBI's Weekly Statistical Supplement Bulletin said. During the week that ended on January 20, the reserves rose by \$1.727 billion to \$573.727 billion. According to RBI's latest data, India's foreign currency assets, the biggest component of the forex reserves, rose by \$2.660 billion to \$509.018 billion. Gold reserves rose by \$316 million to \$44.027 billion. At the start of last year - 2022, the overall forex reserves were at about \$633 billion. Much of the decline can be attributed to RBI's intervention and a rise in the cost of imported goods. In October 2021, the country's foreign ex-



change reserves reportedly touched an all-time high of about \$645 billion. Typically, the RBI, from time to time, intervenes in the market through liquidity management, including through the selling of dollars, with a view to preventing a steep depreciation in the rupee. Meanwhile, in the Economic Survey for 2022-23 tabled in the Parliament on January 31, the government said foreign exchange reserves are comfortable and external debt is low. -ANI

GLOBAL TECH EVENT

LEAP 23 to showcase international companies' technologies

RIYADH: LEAP 23, global tech event, will start tomorrow in Riyadh for four days, with the participation of several experts, talented innovators, and world-leading companies in the fields of technology and innovation. Under the slogan 'Into New Worlds', the event will witness a presentation of the latest technology, and give exhibition visitors an enjoyable experience by exploring the latest global industries and innovations. AuveTech will also showcase the world's first autonomous hydrogen-powered vehicle. For the best physical interaction with virtual reality, the event will host bHaptics, a company specialising in the manufacturing of virtual reality game accessories. -SPA

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'TAJIRIBATI' FORUM

Zubair EDC discusses social intelligence and its importance for entrepreneurs

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC) organised the 'Tajribati' Forum in Bait Al Zubair to discuss the concept of social intelligence and its importance to entrepreneurs' businesses. The Center hosted Dr Ahmad Al Shaibibi, the owner of 'Zulfa centre for family services' who discussed with entrepreneurs the role that social intelligence can have in enhancing the success and growth of their businesses. During the forum, entrepreneurs were introduced to the concept of social intelligence looking at its main benefits and the way it can be applied to an organisation. All participants were able to understand the importance of a socially intelligent approach to business and how it can be used during conflict management for instance. The onus was put on the benefit of social intelligence: the ability to form meaningful social relationships in the business world, enabling businesses to create more dialogue with their stakeholders. Said Bin Salim Al Sahib, Director of The Zubair Enterprise Development, commended the importance of the 'Tajribati' Forum as a space where entrepreneurs can learn thanks to a variety of interesting discussions. He reiterated the vision of the centre to provide entrepreneurs with chal-



lenging and insightful talks from top-level experts and speakers, helping them grow their businesses to the next level. "Social intelligence and its importance for entrepreneurs' is considered a worthy subject as entrepreneurs need to be in tune with all the socio-economic development at local, regional and international levels. "Social intelligence in a business enables all entrepreneurs to be more responsive and sensitive to these developments and adapt their business models accordingly. Besides, it is also an important tool for conflict management and self-reconciliation. I hope attend-

solid social network that contributes to increasing his visibility in his sector." "I would like to thank The Zubair EDC for inviting the 'Zulfa centre for family services' to participate in this valuable forum as well as its pivotal role in supporting entrepreneurs to advance their careers through such distinctive training events and activities." He added. The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC)'s Tajribati Forum is a networking space for entrepreneurs with small and medium companies to discuss relevant topics for their professional development. It enables all entrepreneurs to exchange on the difficulties and challenges associated with their entrepreneurial life and how to best overcome them. Hosting specialists from both the public and private sectors also explores the opportunities available in various industry sectors. Since its establishment, the centre has sought to provide a suitable environment for the growth of entrepreneurship by providing a package of procedures and opportunities for entrepreneurs to develop their businesses, either through initiatives established by the centre or participation in seminars and mutual visits with a number of the centre's partners within and outside the Sultanate of Oman.



LOWER YOUR CANCER RISK BY ADDING THESE FOODS TO YOUR DIET

In Oman more than 2000 cases of cancer were diagnosed in 2019, according to the Ministry of Health (MOH). It is time to be aware of nutrition and other lifestyle changes that can be implemented to reduce the risk of some cancer recurring or a new one developing.



World Cancer Day, which is observed to spread awareness, inspire change and reduce the global impact of cancer, is celebrated on February 4, every year.

Till date, researchers are experimenting, studying, researching and developing new methods, technologies, medications and injectable solutions to cure and prevent cancer.

In Oman more than 2000 cases of cancer were diagnosed in 2019, according to the Ministry of Health (MOH).

The Ministry of Health has released the latest cancer statistics in the Sultanate of Oman for 2019, where the total number of diagnosed cases reached 2,307 (Nationals and Non-Nationals). It is worth noting that the average age at diagnosis is 54 years, which increases among males to reach 60 years compared to 50 years for females. Breast cancer still ranks first among all cancers in general and among women in particular, as the number of cases has reached 350, and 31 percent were diagnosed in the third and fourth stages. Thyroid cancer ranked second among all cancers of both sexes.

It is important that we must take good care of our health and take a pledge to spread as much awareness about cancer prevention measures as possible.

Let's look at the food that helps to lower the risk of the deadly disease.

Cruciferous Veggies

Nutrient-rich foods including kale, cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli may help minimise the chance of developing cancer. Studies have indicated that certain types of cancer can be prevented by the chemicals found in these veggies.



Berries

Strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries include significant levels of anthocyanins, plant pigments with antioxidant characteristics that may lower the risk of cancer.



Tomatoes

Lycopene, an antioxidant found in tomatoes, may help prevent cancer, particularly prostate cancer. Both raw and cooked tomatoes are efficient sources of potent antioxidants.



Nuts and Seeds

Eating nuts helps to reduce your risk of developing some cancers. These are regarded as among the healthiest foods for avoiding cancer and other serious illnesses. The anti-inflammatory and antioxidant qualities of peanuts, almonds, and walnuts may help lower the chance of developing cancer.



Fatty Fish

Adding fish to your diet each week may reduce your risk of cancer. Food items high in omega-3 fatty acids have anti-inflammatory properties. Several different kinds of fish, such as salmon and mackerel.



Grains

Whole wheat bread, quinoa, brown rice, and oatmeal are high in fibre and have potent anti-cancer properties. Chemicals in these superfoods inhibit the growth of cells linked to colorectal, pancreatic, breast, and prostate cancers.



Veggies with allium

One substance found in foods like leeks, garlic, and onions may help stop the development of cancer cells.



The Ministry of Health has released the latest cancer statistics in the Sultanate of Oman for 2019, where the total number of diagnosed cases reached

2,307

Breast cancer still ranks first among all cancers in general and among women in particular, as the number of cases has reached

350

Making changes in your diet and adding healthy foods can help lower the risk of developing cancer.

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IN-PICTURES



ASEAN Tourism Forum 2023 concludes in Indonesia

Tourists visit the Prambanan temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The four-day ASEAN Tourism Forum 2023 concluded on Sunday.

Xinhua



Giant panda Le Le dies at Memphis Zoo

People mourn in front of an image of giant panda Le Le at the Memphis Zoo in Memphis, the United States. The zoo in Memphis said that giant panda Le Le had died. Le Le, a male born in 1998, came to the Memphis Zoo with a female giant panda, Ya Ya.

Xinhua



Scenery of cherry blossoms in Xiamen

Tourists view cherry blossoms in a tea garden in Xiang'an District of Xiamen, southeast China's Fujian Province.

Xinhua



Venice Carnival 2023 kicks off in Italy

Revellers pose during the Venice Carnival in Venice, Italy. The carnival kicked off in the Italian lagoon city on Saturday, and will last until February 21.

Xinhua

Various folk cultural activities held to celebrate Lantern Festival

Folk artists perform dragon dance in Chenggu County of Hanzhong City, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. Various folk cultural activities were held across the country to welcome the upcoming festival.

Xinhua



Kriti Sanon and Kartik Aaryan during the promotion of their upcoming film 'Shehzada'

Bollywood actors Kriti Sanon and Kartik Aaryan during the promotion of their upcoming film 'Shehzada', at the Taj Mahal, in Agra.

ANI Photo

Bank Muscat Premier banking holds special customer networking event

The event in Sur, which was attended by Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager – Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, and other bank officials, saw excellent participation from a large number of Premier Banking customers

MUSCAT: Asalah Priority Banking from Bank Muscat recently hosted a special networking event in Sur, in line with the bank's customer-centric vision and commitment to further strengthen its partnership and communication



channels with its customers. The event, which was attended by Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager – Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, and other bank officials, saw excellent participation from a large number of Premier Banking customers. They follow recent customer meets in Duqm, Nizwa and Sohar, which were organised by the bank to strengthen its partnership with customers and get their feedback regarding new services, products and offers.

On the occasion, Taya Eid Bait

Sabeea, Deputy General Manager – Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, thanked Asalah and Al Jawhar customers for their whole-hearted support and confidence in Bank Muscat's various hi-tech services and products, which are backed by its customer-centric vision. He said that promptly responding to customer feedback and keeping pace with global banking trends were key to Bank Muscat's continued leadership in the financial services sector in Oman. He added that the bank would further work towards realising customer



aspirations and expectations in line so as to continue providing a world-class banking experience. Customers having a monthly salary of OMR 5,000 or those who maintain a savings deposit of OMR 30,000 are eligible for Asalah Priority Banking and enjoy a range of unrivalled benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 39 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre. Asalah customers also enjoy access to an integrated wealth management platform that allows

them to invest in global asset classes through a single touchpoint. They also get the latest updates and reports on local and international investment opportunities. Other exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 "Buy 1, Get 1 Free" offers in Oman and at international destinations as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments. The Asalah Debit Card offers

access to 50 lounges worldwide and has a higher ATM withdrawal limit of OMR 1,000. Meanwhile, Asalah Visa Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges worldwide, and a 24/7 global concierge service. The Credit Card also offers 1% cash-back on purchases as well as free multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their direct family members. Cardholders can also enjoy complimentary chauffeur service to and from the Muscat International Airport.

SUV

First Maserati Grecale arrives in Oman

MUSCAT: The new Maserati Grecale SUV is now available in Oman. Grecale strikes the right balance between versatility, elegance, performance, and innovation. These features are combined with off-road capabilities and uncompromising driving pleasure. An extremely wide range of engines is available on the Grecale: conventional internal combustion, hybrid and in future Grecale will also be the first full-electric SUV in Maserati history. The three versions of the Grecale are: GT, powered by a four-cylinder mild hybrid engine capable of delivering 300 hp; Modena, with a four-cylinder 330-hp mild hybrid engine; and the powerful Trofeo, equipped with a high-performance 3.0L 530-hp petrol V6 based on the Nettuno engine fitted to the MC20. Completing the range will be the Grecale Folgore, the 100% electric version with 400V technology. Experience unparalleled driving dynamics with the Grecale's eight-speed automatic transmission, all-wheel drive, and a variety of drive modes that can be adjusted to the driver's preference, including: COMFORT, GT, SPORT, CORSA (Trofeo only) and OFF-ROAD. Hamdy Elshantoury, General



Manager of Maserati Middle East & Africa, noted: "Maserati continues to accelerate audaciously into a brave new future with revolutionary new cars, innovations and exclusive projects. The all-new Grecale SUV embodies Maserati's all-Italian audacity in making

luxury and exceptional performance part of the daily routine, transforming every journey into a unique driving experience." The arrival of the Maserati Grecale in Oman marks a new era of luxury and performance. Our discerning customers can expect

nothing but the pinnacle of opulence in the Grecale," said Charly Dagher, Regional General Manager of Alfardan." We are confident that the Grecale's exceptional blend of luxury and versatility will surpass the expectations of even the most discerning customers."

PRESTIGIOUS

Waleed Al-Obaidani appointed as Head of International Socca Federation in Middle East and member of Executive Board

MUSCAT: Omani Waleed Bin Juma Al-Obaidani has been appointed as President of the International Socca Federation in Middle East region and a member of the Executive Board for his active role during the last period. The announcement was made in Birmingham, United Kingdom after the successful participation of the Sultanate during the past years in the Socca World Cup 6 aside football, and the active presence of the Omani role in developing the sport of 6 aside football for the corporate sector and amateur teams at the local and Middle East levels. The announcement of Al-Obaidani's appointment came on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the member states joining the Federation, in the presence of more than 80 members representing their countries from different continents of the world. Waleed Al-Obaidani said, "We have long sought to develop sports activities for the amateur and corporate sectors in the Sul-



tanate of Oman by introducing periodic local competitions that qualify for international championships that have contributed to make an impact on the interest in this sector at the level of the Sultanate. Our annual participation in Socca World Cup comes in as an extension of this trend, which would achieve many goals that contribute, in one way or another, to the development of football sector for companies and amateurs."

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' SKILLS



University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Musannah to host 22nd Rovers Camp

MUSCAT: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Al Musannah is preparing to host the 22nd Rovers Camp of the university, which will take place from 7-11 February with the participation of 110 rovers and leaders from all its branches. The Rovers Camp is part of the joint activities organised among its branches with the aim of enhancing the spirit of cooperation and solidarity, and developing the spirit of voluntary initiatives among the rovers. Dr Ahmed bin Ali Al-Shahri, Dean of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Al-Musannah said, "The university administration is proceeding with

plans to specifically develop and hone students' skills in various crucial activities as represented by the Rovers Camp, currently in its twenty-second edition under the motto, Rover Scouting, Revival and Giving." The university branch in Musannah is hosting this event for the first time, which is an opportunity to express the meaning of interdependence and to exchange experiences and skills in various cultural, social, and scientific fields. It will also emphasise the role of scouting in meeting the needs and aspirations of the youth through its well-established principles and innovative programmes full of passion, challenges, and adventure.

GROCERY AND CONVENIENCE STORE

The Sultan Center launches newly-branded 'Sultan Market' concept

MUSCAT: The Sultan Center retail chain launched its re-branded 'Sultan Market' grocery and convenience store in the burgeoning suburb of Amerat Al Nahda, just outside of Muscat's city centre recently. The launch took place under the patronage of Mohammad bin Hameed bin Mohammad Al-Ghabshi, the Wali of Amerat, and in the presence of a number of Sultan's top management and associated personnel. The Sultan Market's launch in the heart of Amerat Al Nahda represents another milestone in the retail brand's evolution as a trusted and iconic name in the Sultanate of Oman's supermarket and convenience store landscape. The Sultan Market is the retail chain's second store in Al Amerat, and the eighth branch outlet in Oman's capital Muscat. The Sultan Market concept is designed to elevate the shopping experience through a value-focused customer journey catering to a large community of diverse cultures and backgrounds. Furthermore, the Sultan Market promises an experience that builds on community in a friendly



and attractive environment, and that brings customers together to shop in a large-scale store that offers an assortment of ethnic ranges for all their household needs. Sultan Market customers can enjoy easy access to fresh foods, and see the latest assortment of products and eye-catching displays. While the Sultan Market will stock and supply a complete range of foreign and local consumer goods and groceries for the home

and household, the Sultan management says they look forward to placing a greater emphasis on providing high-quality fresh produce for customers. To mark the opening of the Sultan Market, the store plans to offer a number of exciting in-store promotions and specials in the coming weeks for the people of Amerat Al Nahda, and for customers travelling through the area from all over Muscat and Oman. Speaking at the new store's

launch, Fawaz Fouad Diab – Sultan, General Manager, stated: "This launch of our new Sultan Market in the rapidly-developing Amerat Al Nahda neighborhood is another 'first' for the Sultan brand. As a retail concept, the Sultan Market will shift its focus to being more of market-style supermarket, with an emphasis on fresh goods and fresh produce delivered daily to the store by local suppliers – for the people of Amerat Al Nahda. This will come in addition to the usual high-quality grocery items and household goods – and excellent customer service – that Sultan stores in Oman have become synonymous with." "I welcome everyone to our new store, and I am confident we will give you a wonderful retail experience – with the best value, the best quality products, and the service excellence that Sultan is famous for," Diab, the General Manager added. Accompanying Diab at the launch was Ishaq Salim Al Siyabi – Business Development Manager, Hani Arafeh – Country Operations Manager, and Aziz Ashraf – Senior Store Manager; who welcomed many of the first-time customers to the store.

ROUND-UP

Badr Al Samaa Hospital launches Badr SOI IVF and Fertility Centre

The centre is powered with advanced infrastructure and a multidisciplinary team of infertility specialists and embryologist

MUSCAT: Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals launched infertility treatment services in collaboration with Seeds of Innocence (SOI), one of the largest IVF chains in India in a soft launch ceremony at Badr Al Samaa Medical Centre, Mabelah.

Badr SOI IVF and Fertility Centre, a state-of-the-art Invitro Fertilisation (IVF) and fertility centre, is all set to spread smiles on the faces of wish-to-be mothers. The centre is powered with advanced infrastructure and a multidisciplinary team of infertility specialists and embryologist.

On this occasion Badr Al Samaa announced 100 free consultations for childless couples.

The soft launch of the IVF centre was attended by managing directors of Badr Al Samaa, Abdul Latheef and Dr. P A Mohammed, Dr. Gauri Agarwal, specialist gynaecologist and IVF, Sameer PT, CEO of Badr Al Samaa, Jacob Oommen, COO of Badr Al Samaa, Chetan Kohli, CEO of Seeds of Innocence, senior management of



Badr Al Samaa, doctors, staff and other guests.

The centre is developed adhering to International Standards of medical infrastructure and facilities, and specializes in Assisted Reproductive Technologies, treatment of infertility, management of high risk pregnancies and genetic diagnostics. It offers high-end genetic diagnostic tests for embryos such as Preimplantation Genetic Screening (PGS) and Preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) to eliminate genetical anomalies or inherited genetic diseases like down syndrome and other chromosomal disorders in the fetus.

Speaking on the occasion Abdul Latheef, Managing Director of Badr Al Samaa said that launching Infertility services is a reassurance of their vision of introducing

advanced medical programs at regular intervals to ensure eventually no one has to travel outside the country for healthcare needs. He counted much on Seeds of Innocence expertise to ensure better results in IVF.

Dr. P A Mohammed, Managing Director of Badr Al Samaa said Oman has recently seen the surge in infertility cases and it was an appropriate time to start IVF for the first time in our group. He said with extraordinary skills of Dr Gauri Agarwal and other doctors, embryologist and the state-of-the-art infrastructure Badr Al Samaa will be delivering best possible treatment for infertility at affordable prices

Dr Gauri Agarwal, specialist gynaecologist and IVF, on this occasion shared her experience of

treating many complex and successful IVF cases she had witnessed in her 12 glorious years of treating thousands of infertile couples. She said, "Being a GCC country, Oman also has a lot of consanguineous marriages which leads to an increased risk for recessive disorders in the resulting offspring. This is where our expertise in IVF with reproductive genetics can be a boon for such couples."

Sameer PT, CEO of Badr Al Samaa congratulated the team for this landmark success in taking Badr Al Samaa to new heights. He said we understand the pain and expectations of the childless couples and we are ready to handhold them through the journey of infertility treatment and do our best to bring smiles on their faces. He said Badr Al Samaa and SOI have em-

ployed the best technology, manpower and clinical know-how in this centre.

Chetan Kohli, CEO of Seeds of Innocence said, "The roadmap plan of Badr SOI IVF and Fertility Centre in the region is to deal with the lack of access faced by couples in getting global standard quality and reliable treatment of infertility at affordable prices. He said the centre is all set to render high-end clinical services to childless couples with high success rates in their treatment.

Jacob Oommen, COO of Badr Al Samaa thanked all the people who have been a part of the journey from ideation till launching IVF services. He said our policies have strict adherence to MoH policies and they are ready to render best clinical services which

are safe and reliable.

Asif Shah, Head Branding and Communication, Badr Al Samaa said Badr Al Samaa's vision is to grow not just vertically by launching newer centres now and but horizontally as well by introducing new clinical program and advanced diagnostic and treatment modalities and addition of infertility treatment services is one more step towards that vision.

Badr SOI IVF and Fertility Centre at Badr Al Samaa Medical Centre, Mabelah will be rendering services of Invitro Fertilization (IVF), Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI), Blastocyst Transfer, Intrauterine Insemination (IUI), Oocyte Freezing, PRP & Ovarian Rejuvenation and facility for sample collection of reproductive genetics.

FUN-FILLED EVENT

Zubair Automotive celebrates 50th anniversary with staff and families

MUSCAT: Commemorating five decades of success and growth in the country, the Zubair Automotive Group (ZAG) recently celebrated its 50th anniversary with a special event for its dedicated staff and their families.

The casual and fun-filled event took place at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah on 3 February 2023 and was a memorable experience for all who attended.

Present at the event were Mohammad Al Farei, Chief Operating Officer of the Zubair Automotive Group, together with Several executive management members and personnel from Zubair Automotive Group companies. The event also saw the attendance of over 800 of staff from across the group and their families.

"At Zubair Automotive Group, our employees are a part of our family and the backbone of our success. We are both honoured and proud to have celebrated this milestone alongside them," said Mohammad Al Farei, Chief Operating Officer of the Zubair Automotive Group. "On behalf of the entire group, I would like to thank them for their tireless dedication and commitment, which has helped us reach where we are today. This event was a testament to our commitment to them, and we are grateful for everyone who attended and shared this special day with us."

The celebration included a variety of exciting activities, including bouncing castles for children, fun and entertaining shows, and several mini-games and contests for



both children and adults, providing a fun and competitive atmosphere for people of all ages to enjoy. There was also live music by an Omani band for everyone to enjoy. The event was an excellent opportunity for the staff and their families to come together, have a good time, and celebrate the Zubair Automotive Group's achievements over the past 50 years.



CONCERT



Malayalam Wing organises Sarga Sangeetham 2023

MUSCAT: Sarga Sangeetham 2023 - A grand concert conducted by Indian Social Club (ISC) Malayalam Wing was held on January 27, Friday at Grand Hall Al Falaj, Ruwi Muscat. ISC Malayalam Wing's General secretary and Observer of Malayalam Wing Babu Rajendran presided over the function.

The event was honoured by the presence of the inspiring Malayalam writer KR Meera who was the chief guest of the event. She received the prestigious Pravasa Kairali Sahithya award from Convener P. Sreekumar.

In his welcome address, P Sreekumar spoke highly about the extensive awards received by KR Meera for her novel *The Hang woman (Arachar)*.

The famous playback singer Unni Menon was felicitated for his contributions to the Indian music industry for the last 41 years. The Malayalam wing co-convener Lekha Vinod and Treasurer Ajith Menon also shared their valuable thoughts.

This was followed by a magnificent musical ensemble presented

by Unni Menon. He enthralled the audience with several old and new songs which brought about nostalgia and eager excitement. Singers among the Malayalam wing members namely Sangeetha Praveen, Riji Vinoj, Preethi Rajeev, Smrithy Rakesh and Beena Anil had the opportunity to join the artist Unni Menon and performed a few songs together. There was dancing too amongst the crowd wherein the artist himself did not forget to step to the beats. The dance performances by the wing members also added to the spectacle of Sarga Sangeetham 2023.

Lekha Vinod, Treasurer Ajith Kumar, Literary Secretary Sunil Kumar Krishnan Nair, Music and Drama Secretary Satish Kumar and other members of the management committee Babu Thomas, Krishnendu, Athira Girish and Teena babu took up leadership roles during the event.

KR Meera also participated in a literary conference held on January 28 at the Malayalam Wing office. Malayalam wing members and other literary personnel participated in a packed audience.



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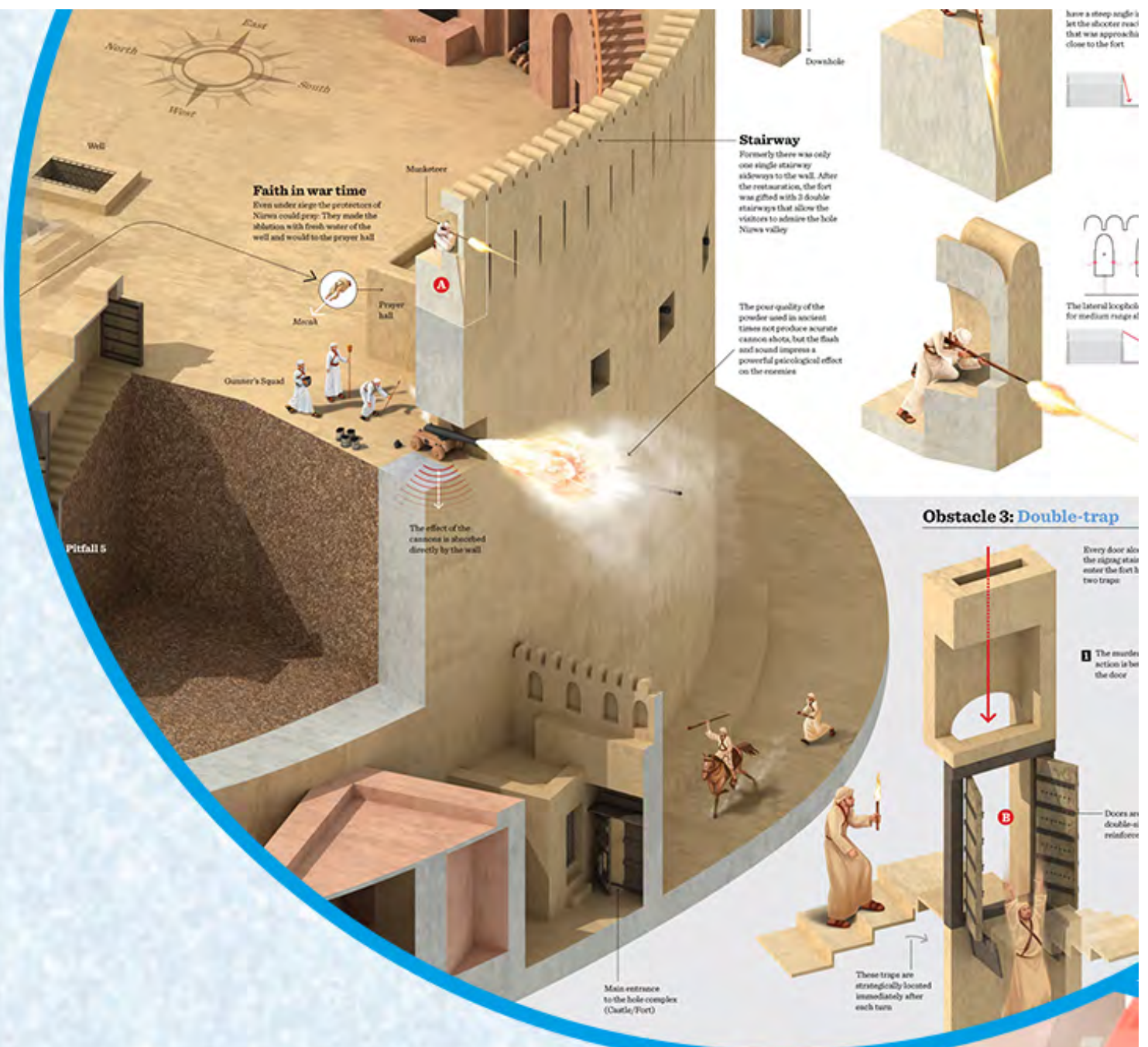
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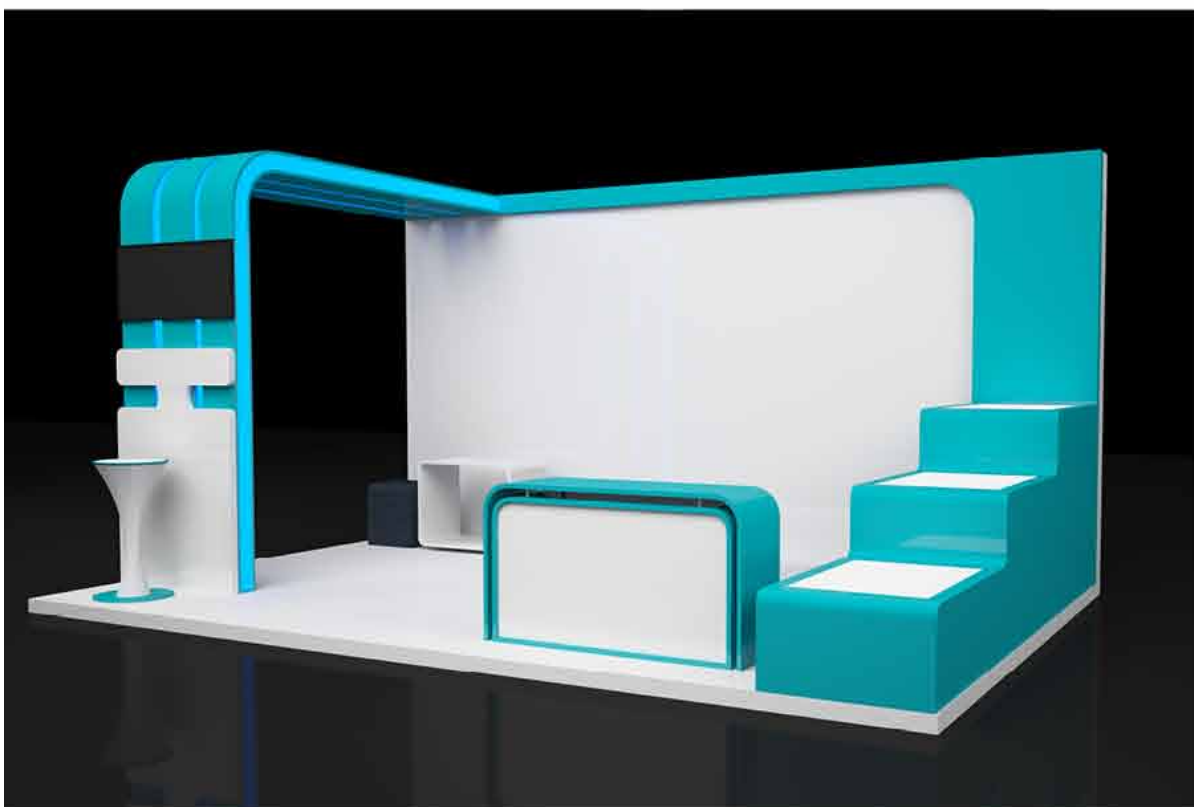
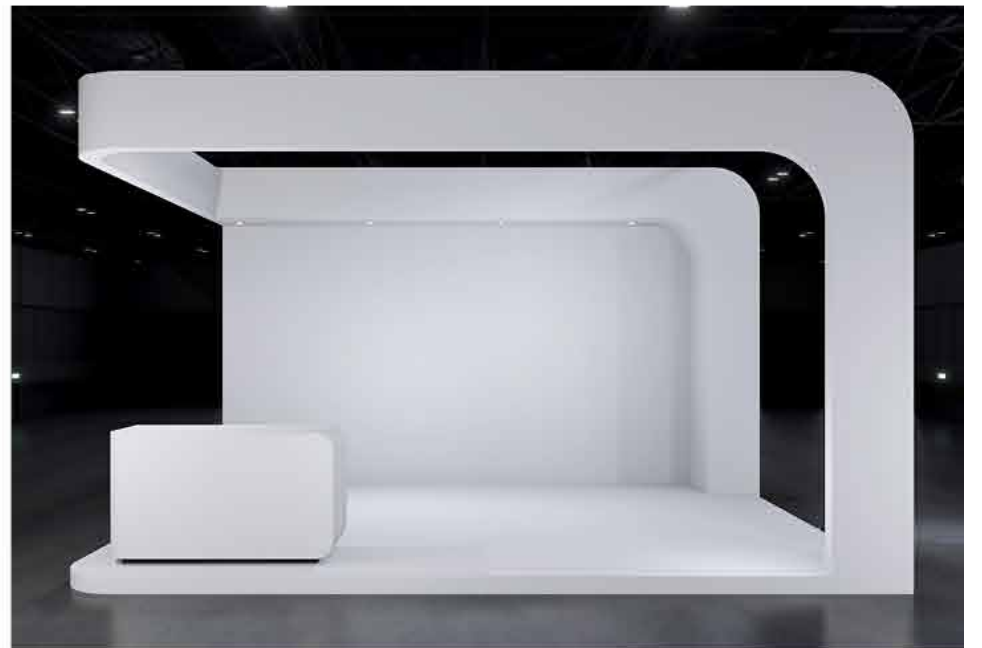
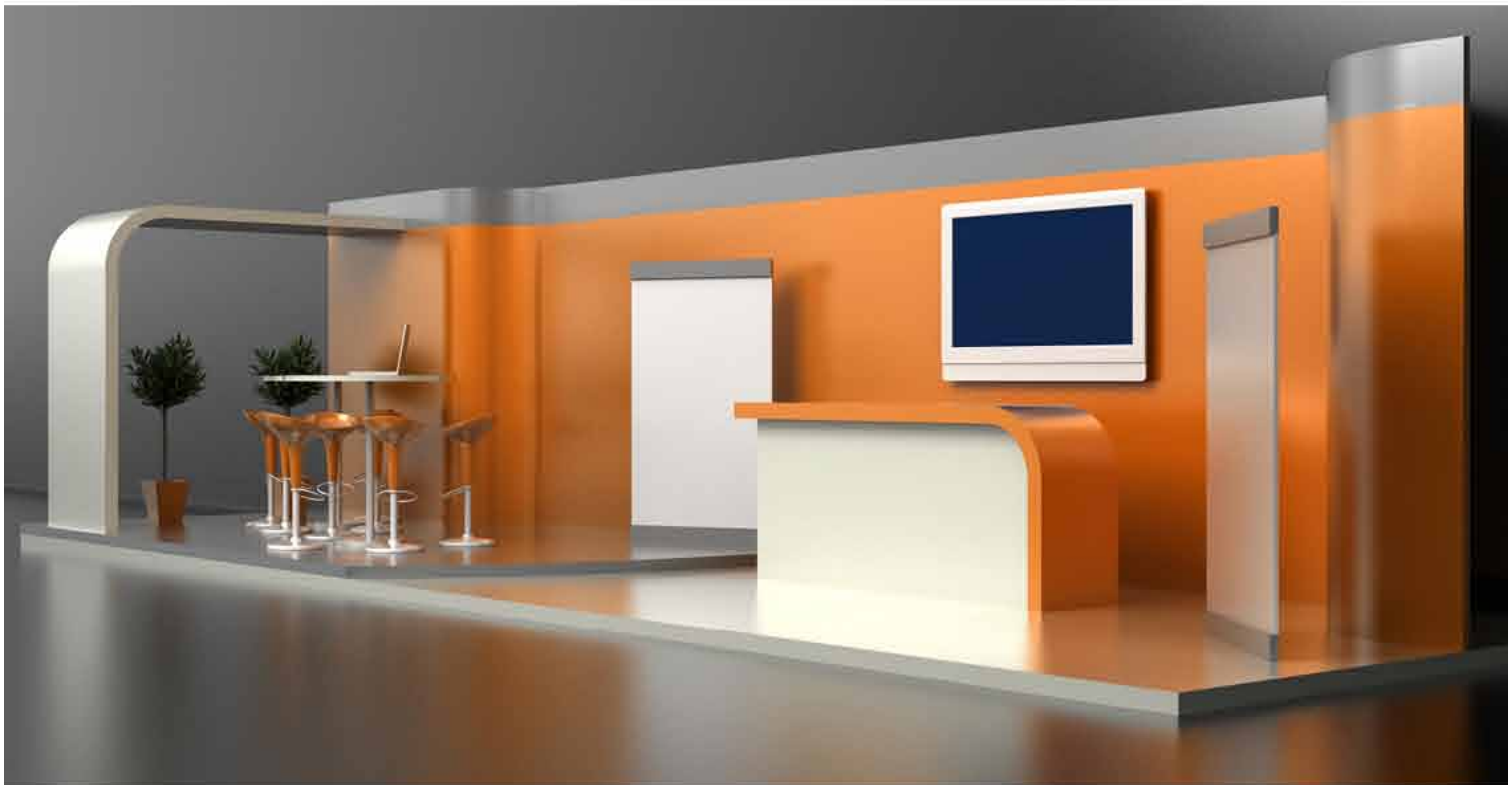


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