

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES ATTRACT INVESTORS TO THE SULTANATE'S TOURISM SECTOR

The five archaeological sites of Oman that are enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage List not only showcase the strong heritage of Oman, but also strengthen its capability in attracting investments in the tourism sector, thus helping in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040. **>A4**



6 085010 120010

SULTAN QABOOS HOLY QURAN CONTEST WINNERS FETED

Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Dr. Mohammed Said Al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, presided over the felicitation of winners at 30th edition of Sultan Qaboos Contest for Holy Quran Memorisation 2022. The ceremony took place at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. **>A2**



Founded 1975 · Volume 47 No. 205 | 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

TIMESOFOMAN.COM

FACEBOOK.COM/TIMESOFOMAN

TWITTER.COM/TIMESOFOMAN

YOUTUBE.COM/USER/TIMESOFOMANONLINE

TIMESOFOMAN.COM/WHATSAPP

TIMESOFOMAN.COM/RSS

LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/TIMES-OF-OMAN

INSTAGRAM.COM/TIMESOFOMAN



Enjoy exclusive
lifestyle benefits with
Al Jawhar Privilege Banking
from Bank Muscat.



Bank Muscat. Better Everyday.

TWO ROYAL DECREES

Royal Decree sets up embassy in Singapore

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday issued two Royal decrees reading as follows:

Royal decree No. (97/2022) establishes an embassy for the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of Singapore.

Article (1) establishes an embassy for the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of Singapore.

Article (2) cancels Royal decree No. (111/2010) on establishing a consulate general for the Sultanate of Oman in the Republic of Singapore.

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

Royal decree No. (98/2022)

appoints ambassadors.

Article (1) grants the title of ambassador to the following and determines their placements:

1- Plenipotentiary Minister Sheikh Mohammed Ahmed Salim Al Shanfari (as Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia).

2- Plenipotentiary Minister Eng. Nasser Said Abdullah Al Manwari (as Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of the Philippines).

3- Adviser Issa Saleh Abdullah Al Shibani (as Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of India).

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. **-GNA**

MUNICIPAL POLLS SEE QUANTUM LEAP IN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY USE



Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi reaffirmed that the Ministry was keen to keep pace with the automation process, integration of data

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Municipal Council election for the third term held on Sunday saw a quantum jump in the use of modern technology, according to the members of the

Main Committee.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, the members detailed the first-of-its-kind use of smartphone application 'Intakhib' and the due process of elections that witnessed 126 candidates being elected.

Khalid bin Hilal Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior and Chairman of the Main Committee, reaffirmed that the ministry was keen to keep pace with the automation process, integration of data, and employment of digital technologies as part of the government's digital transformation programme in line with Oman Vision 2040.

He said that this time the elections were different as it was a fully online/electronic process, starting with registration in the election register, sorting of votes and the announcement of election results. **>A5**

'Will strive hard to meet the aspirations of my people'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The lone woman winner among the 126 candidates in the Sultanate of Oman, Fayza bint Khalfan bin Abdullah Al Shamsi, from the Wilayat of Al Sunina in Al Buraimi Governorate, said: "God willing, I will try hard to fulfil the needs of the people of the wilayat."

In an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*, Fayza Al Shamsi said there were not many media campaigns for



her candidacy, but her victory came from acquaintances and trust in the community. **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

SPORTS

Ahli-Sidab to meet Al Nasr in HM's Cup final

1 Ahli-Sidab and Al Nasr have been dominating the Oman hockey scene for decades and share a total of 20 titles between them in the 51-year history of the most prestigious competition in the Sultanate of Oman – His Majesty's Cup Hockey Championship. **>A8**

WORLD

US cold storm deaths

2 A severe winter storm that hit some 60% of the United States, alongside Canada, has killed at least 34 people as of Sunday. **>A6**

MARKET

Hotel revenues up

3 The revenues of 3 to 5-star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman have increased by 91.7% to reach OMR161 million by November end. **>B1**



Offer Valid From
27 December - 14 Jan 2023.



Download AL MEERA App with QR Code.





OMAN



SHOP NOW

rafeeq.om

PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:13pm
Asr.....	3:13pm
Maghrib.....	5:33pm
Isha.....	6:49pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:27am

DRAFT LAWS

State Council discusses provision of education laws

MUSCAT: The State Council expressed observations about draft versions of “School Education Law” and “Higher Education Law” in preparation for submitting the same to His Majesty the Sultan, along with the opinions of the State and Shura Councils.

The deliberations took place during the 4th session of the council’s annual convening of the 7th

term. The session was held under the auspices of Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council. The discussions highlighted the need to regulate the provision of education laws in line with Oman Vision 2040, as well as the aspirations of Omani society for an educational system that keeps pace with the requirements of the modern age. -ONA



ASSIGNED BY HM

Minister fetes winners of Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran contest



MUSCAT: Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Dr. Mohammed Said Al Maamari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, presided over the felicitation of winners at 30th edition of Sultan Qaboos Contest for Holy Quran Memorisation 2022. The ceremony took place at the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque.

The contest seeks to encourage Omani youth to memorise the Holy Quran and adhere to its teachings.

It also aims to groom a generation of Holy Quran reciters who can serve as an element of social reform and teach the Holy Quran in accordance with the norms set by scholars and

established reciters.

The guest of honour handed over the prizes to the top winners of 7 levels of the Sultan Qaboos Competition for Holy Quran Memorisation 2022, as well as the jury, the Holy Quran community and participants from the segment of the disabled.

The competition levels were stated as follows: Memorisation of the whole Holy Quran, memorisation of 24 successive parts, memorisation of 18 successive parts, memorisation of 12 successive parts, memorisation of 6 successive parts, memorisation of 4 successive parts and memorisation of 2 successive parts. Conditions of age groups apply to the last three categories. -ONA





ELANTRA



ACCENT



i10



30 years

EXPLORE OMAN WITH VLC

Available on
**DAILY
WEEKLY
MONTHLY
YEARLY**
rental basis



SANTAFE



TUCSON



CRETA



* Terms & Conditions apply on daily, weekly, monthly & yearly rentals



Call toll free
80050004



Whatsapp
97295158



GRAND MILLENNIUM

MUSCAT

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Gala Dinner

Special activities for kids will include

Special kids corner with NYE buffet, painting activities and NYE themed movie

Live cooking & carving stations, Live DJ entertainment

31st December 2022

Taybat Restaurant 7:00 pm - 01:00 am

Save 25 % when you book between 18th December - 28th December 2022

OMR 33 net per adult
OMR 15 per child from 5 - 12 years old
Complimentary below 5 years old

For Bookings call + 968 97 43 32 03

Scan To View The Festive Guide



Tupperware®



TUPPERWARE IS OFFICIALLY IN OMAN NOW!

CHANGE TO THE BETTER



Call Center Number
24 596 999



YOU ORDER WE DELIVER

Download the app

OMAN



For the first time in the Sultanate, BankDhofar introduces the PaySticker

Now you do not have to worry about forgetting your debit card. Place the sticker on your mobile phone and use it to pay by tapping your mobile phone on the POS machine.*

*The maximum payment via the PaySticker is OMR 40 per transaction, OMR 100 per day.

For more information
<https://www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/PaySticker.aspx>



مرور وادفع
ثانية
Tap & Pay
in 1 second



بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

*Terms & conditions apply



the best bank for you

24791111 | www.bankdhofar.com

DIGITALISATION

Oman Airports launches tender registration service electronically

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Airports endeavour to enhance digitalisation of the services and work procedures received a boost when the company launched the tender registration service electronically.

All suppliers, service providers and contractors have been urged to register their companies on a new link as Oman Airports move towards the electronic registration system for tenders and vendor management.

In an official tweet on Sunday, Oman Airports invited vendors for online registration and said that the process to switch to electronic registration system will maximise the efficiency and productivity.

Oman Airports said that once the system is in place it will help the vendors to participate in bidding and receiving notifications of new business opportunities. Vendors can also submit their bids and proposals digitally.

The vendors can complete their registration through a link: <https://apps.omanairports.com/ePortal>

Earlier this month, Oman Airports had launched their Documents Management Centre at Muscat International Airport.

The Documents Management Centre covers an area of 787 square meters, of which 430 square meters is dedicated to document storage, and 357 square meters for facilities such as a dedicated post office, documents sorting and viewing of area, meeting room, and reception area, in addition to staff offices and service facilities for personnel.

Oman Airports also signed an agreement with Bahwan Information Technology Company to provide an electronic system for managing records and documents.

The agreement reflects Oman Airports' ongoing digital trans-



formation efforts; in this case, through the automation of documents and records to facilitate their protection, and ease of management and retrieval

Oman Airports also aims to continue supporting the national vision for developing the aviation sector, while improving and enhancing the overall travel experience for flyers arriving and departing from all the country's airports.

The company's tasks include managing and operating the Sultanate of Oman's airports and leading the development of airport infrastructures. This infrastructure includes passenger buildings, freight service buildings, runways, aprons, parking lots, and other facilities managed and maintained in accordance

with the standards and practices adopted by the International Civil Aviation Organization and civil aviation regulations.

Oman Airports have continued to grow steadily towards success, and towards establishing solid principles and rules for its operations. The company is strengthening its position as a leading institution that continuously seeks to improve customer experience and achieve the highest degree of excellence in the travel experience at its airports. With the full support of its strategic partners, and with the concerted efforts of all partners involved to deliver value-added services, Oman Airports is providing customers a unique and seamless travel experience across all its airports.

ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

First phase of genebank project concludes

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority has finalised the first phase of establishing of a genebank to preserve genetic origins of wild animals through freezing (cryo-preservation). The project seeks to conserve the genetic material of endangered wild animals, to save them from extinction and ensure their sustainability.

The process involves providing backup genetic material to help restore the genetic origins in case the loss of animal breeds as a result of diseases or natural disasters. The specimens will also be available to students, researchers and people interested in wild animals' genetic resources. Genebanks serve as a unique source of genetic diversity that informs livestock rearing programmes. Genebanks provide storage facilities for genetic materials of all types. They constitute a set of genetic resources for living organisms like blood samples, eggs, tissue and cells. -OMA





Recall Campaign for Mercedes-Benz E-Class (213 platform) CLS (257 platform) with 48V-system

Model year: 2017-2023
Date of Campaign: 27.12.2022
Recall Segment: Mechanical
Recall Type: Safety
Product Description:

Number of vehicles	Chassis number	To	Chassis number	Sales Designation
4	WDD2130611A554533	TO	W1K2130611A999772	AMG E 53 4MATIC+
3	WDD2573611A020049	TO	WDD2573611A052541	AMG CLS 53 4MATIC+
2	W1K2573591A080878	&	W1K2573591A084143	CLS 450 4MATIC
20	WDD2573501A007140	TO	W1K2573501A108262	CLS 350
52	WDD2573501A007140	TO	WDD2130851A592004	E 350

Description of defect:
Mercedes-Benz AG has determined that on certain E-Class (213 platform) and CLS (257 platform) vehicles with 48V-system, the mounting of the 12V battery in the trunk might not withstand the loads in the event of a crash. In this case, the 12V battery could move in the spare wheel well. Thus, a detachment of the electrical connections from the battery cannot be ruled out. In that event, various post-crash functions (e.g. eCall, electric seat adjustment, hazard warning lights, automatic door unlocking) could be impaired or inoperative.

Procedure:
As a precautionary measure Zawawi Trading Company will install an additional fixation of the 12V battery on the affected vehicles. The expected workshop visit for the installation of the additional fixation will take around 30 minutes and will be free of charge.

For more information:
Sultanate of Oman customers affected by the recall who have not been contacted already will be telephoned by representatives of Zawawi Trading Company LLC, so that they can arrange a convenient time from 27.12.2022 to get their car inspected.

Contact details:
Toll free number: 80079777 on all working days between 08:00 to 17:30 hrs with effect from 27.12.2022.

Mercedes-Benz



World-class Quality. UNBELIEVABLE PRICE



ARE YOU TAKING LOAN? BUY LIFE INSURANCE TO PROTECT THE MORTGAGE



PROVIDING FLEXIBLE INSURANCE SOLUTIONS SINCE 1985 FOR ALL YOUR INSURANCE NEEDS, CHOOSE US



Oman United Insurance Company SAOG

Post Box 1522, Ruwi, PC 112 Sultanate of Oman
24477300 | info@omanutd.com | www.omanutd.com



Oman United Insurance Co.

SAOG



OMAN



SHOP NOW
rafeeq.om





OMAN’S UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES TO ATTRACT INVESTMENTS IN TOURISM SECTOR

The five archaeological sites of Oman that are enlisted in the UNESCO World Heritage List not only showcase the strong heritage of Oman, but also strengthen its capability in attracting investments in the tourism sector, thus helping in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

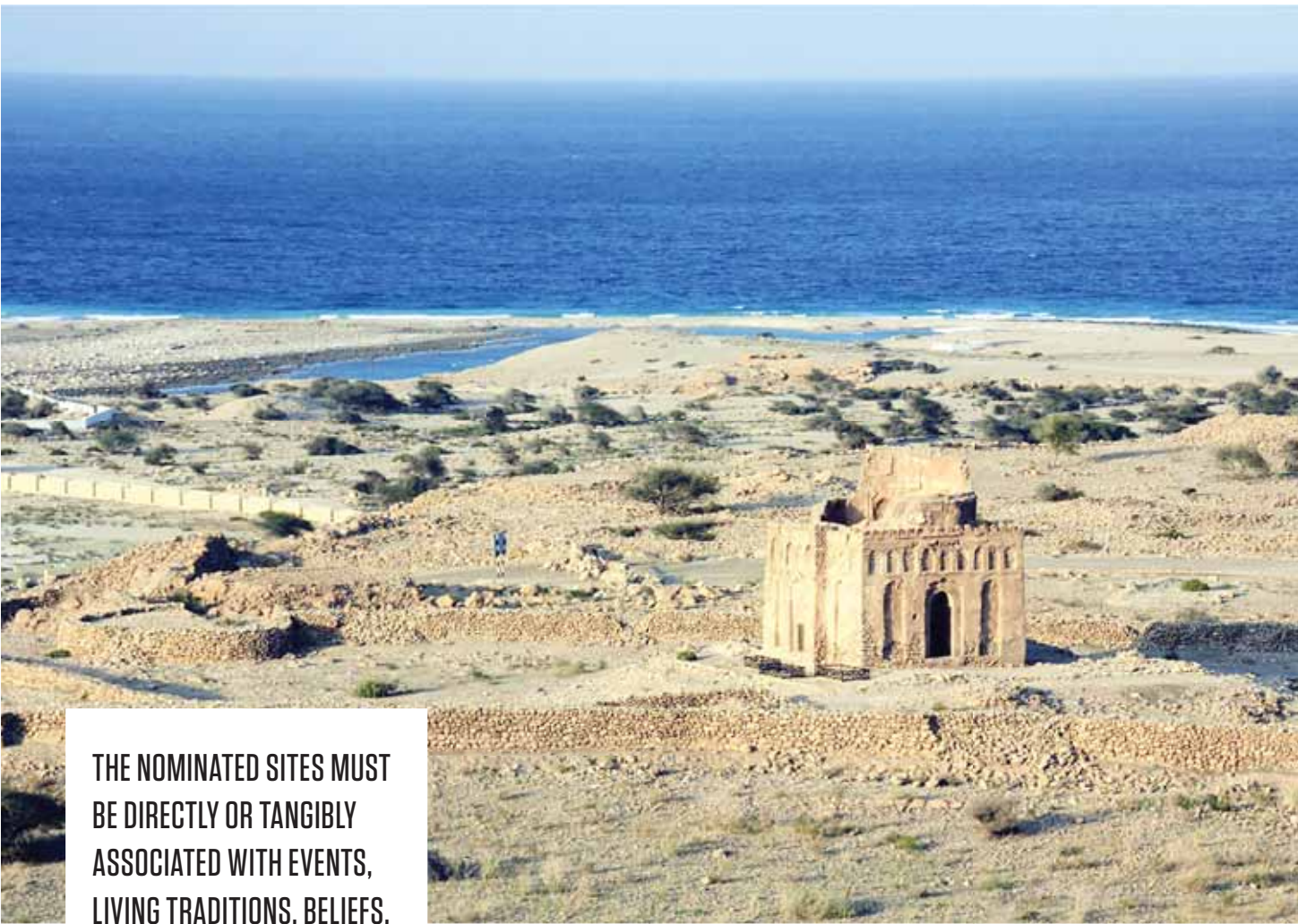
Ibtisam bint Abdullah Al-Mamari, Director of the Directorate General of the World Heritage at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said, “As heritage is a fundamental tool for creating identity, where it is considered as an indicator for the glories of nations, and an essential source of pride and inspiration, the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism joined the World Heritage Convention in 1981 in accordance with Royal Decree No 81/69.”

She added: “The acceding to the World Heritage Convention has paved the way for the Sultanate of Oman to nominate archaeological sites of exceptional value to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.”

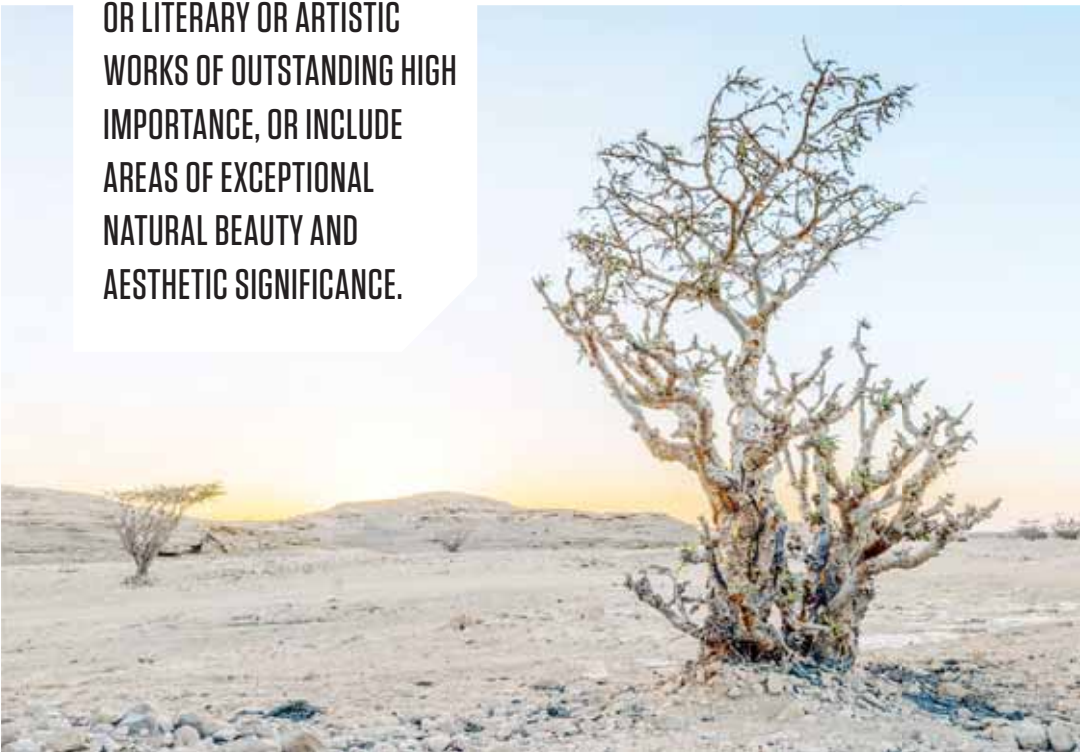
Ibtisam Al-Mamari clarified that being enlisted in the World Heritage List enhances the capability of the sites to receive the support and attention of the international community, and also enables the countries which are home to these sites to obtain assistance in protecting and preserving their heritage, through direct assistance from UNESCO.

Ibtisam Al-Mamari pointed out that there are several criteria that determine the inclusion of sites in the World Heritage List. First, the nominated sites must be of exceptional global value and represent one of the masterpieces of the creative human mind or manifest strong influences that took place over time or within a cultural area in the world, related to the development of architecture or technology, or to artistic edifices, town planning, or to landscape design.

The nominated sites also must be unique or exceptional witness to a cultural tradition or civilisation that is still alive or extinct, or that it represents an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement,



THE NOMINATED SITES MUST BE DIRECTLY OR TANGIBLY ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS, LIVING TRADITIONS, BELIEFS, OR LITERARY OR ARTISTIC WORKS OF OUTSTANDING HIGH IMPORTANCE, OR INCLUDE AREAS OF EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL BEAUTY AND AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE.



or a traditional method of using land or exploiting the seas, and represents a specific culture or interaction between man and his environment.

Also the nominated sites must be directly or tangibly associated with events, living traditions, beliefs, or literary or artistic works of outstanding high importance, or include areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic significance.

Mohsen bin Murtadha Al Lawati, a heritage specialist at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that the site of Bahla Fort in the Wilayat of Bahla at the Governorate of Al Dhahirah is considered the first site enlisted in the World Heritage List in 1987.

He added that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has signed an agreement with the Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN) to manage and operate the Bahla Fort site.

Mohsen pointed out that the Bahla Fort site contributes to strengthening investment in the tourism sector due to its capability to attract increasing investments, particularly after its inclusion in the World Heritage List. He emphasised that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has developed a precise plan for the restoration of the Wall of Bahla, whose path extends over a distance of 12km, as a project for which an annual budget is allocated to carry out the works of consolidation and restoration of the damaged parts of the wall.

Mohsen Al-Lawati added that the sites of Bat, Al-Khutm and Al-Ayn in the Wilayat of Ibri at the Governorate of Al-Dhahirah were included in the World Heritage List in 1988. The sites represent a prominent example of the settlements in the third millennium BC, as they include the largest gathering of archaeological towers and tombs. He emphasised that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is preparing a comprehensive management plan for the sites, taking into account the historical, archaeological and architectural aspects.

He confirmed that the restoration of the archaeological Al-Khutm Tower has been completed, where the electrical work, lighting the tower and the surrounding area, has been completed while the work on designing the identification panels is underway.

Mohsen added that the work on an investment project of the archaeological visitor centre at Bat is also underway.

The sites of the Land of Frankincense were included in the World Heritage List in 2000. The sites are located in the Governorate of Dhofar and are represented in four sprawling sites, namely Al Baleed, Samharam/Khawr Rawri, Wadi Dawkah and Al-Shasr.

Atheer bint Suleiman Al-Hajari pointed out that in 2006, five Aflaj irrigation systems were included on the World Heritage List.

The Ancient City of Qalhat site was included in the World Heritage List in 2018, as the city of Qalhat preserves all its elements on a land of 35 hectares.



YOU ORDER
WE DELIVER

Download the app

OMAN



Winter Special Offer

* Offer Valid Till: 25/1/2023

12 Tissue Boxes

60 5GB Refill Coupons

60 250 ml Bottle

FREE DELIVERY

For 50 OMR

* This Offer Only Available On Tanuf App

Download on the App Store

Available on the Google Play

Scan the code

Mwasalat operates first bus trip using biodiesel from date kernels

The trip, which kicked off from the SQU Cultural Centre in Al Khoudh, travelled along Sultan Qaboos Street and arrived at Al Alam Palace and back to the starting point



MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) succeeded in operating a trip onboard Oman National Transport Company (Mwasalat) bus powered by date

palm biodiesel. The fuel was extracted at SQU laboratories. The trip was flagged off by SQU Vice-Chancellor His Highness

Sayyid Dr. Fahd bin Al Julanda Al Said. The trip, which kicked off from the SQU Cultural Centre in Al Khoudh, travelled along Sultan

Qaboos Street and arrived at Al Alam Palace and back to the starting point. The project constitutes a scholarly research spearheaded SQU



team comprising Dr. Lamia Adnan Al Haj, Associate Professor at the College of Science, and Dr. Alia Hamid Al Muhtasib, Deputy Director of Sustainable Energy Research Centre at SQU. The project seeks to produce commercially competitive biofuel extracted from date palm kernels using an innovative recyclable chemical catalyst. It also opens inroads in the drive to cut down car-

bon emissions, find renewable and sustainable sources for economic and social growth and strike a balance between goals of sustainable development and climate change limitations. The project benefits from clean technology to achieve sustainable development and forge a diversified blend of renewable energy sources to help meet the targets of Oman Vision 2040. — OMA

FOR REVIEW

Shura Council makes comments about draft version of Maritime Law

MUSCAT: The Shura Council on Monday presented its comments about the draft version of the Maritime Law forwarded by the government for review. The Shura Council tasked its specialised panels to study and comment on a number of law drafts: A proposal to amend Article (1) of the law promulgated under Royal Decree No. 9/72 and a draft proposal to amend Article (12) of the Law on “Expropriation for Public Interest” and a draft proposal to amend the Foreign Capital Law by adding a term that requires a foreign investor to deposit OMR100,000 as a condition for exercising investment in Oman.



Draft air services pact The council also studied the views of the Services and Social Development Committee about the draft version of Oman-EU Air Transport Agreement, a draft version of an air services agreement between the government of Sultanate of Oman and the govern-

ment of Republic of South Africa, the draft version of an air services agreement between the government of Oman and the Republic of Rwanda and a draft version of the air services agreement between the government of Sultanate of Oman and the government of Republic of Cape Verde. — OMA

MEDIA BRIEFING

< FROM A1 App designed by Omani team from the Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior used its past experiences to make a qualitative shift in the use of digital techniques to facilitate submission of applications of candidates. Al Busaidi said: “The Ministry of Interior launched Intakhib Elect app in November, which helped with the sorting process, declaration of initial and final lists of candidates and other services.” “This application was useful in casting of votes both within and outside the Sultanate,” he added. Al Busaidi said: “A total of 39.42 percent of voters participated in the election process which is within the normal limits and that the Ministry is working on to evaluate this aspect.” Intakhib Elect app was designed by Omani team from the Ministry of Interior, he said pointing to that the use of the application has contributed to reduction of the financial cost of the elections process. “We have not noticed or received any objections so far on the results of the elections, he said, adding that objections can be submitted online through the website of the Ministry of Interior within the legally prescribed period.



He also added that the details related to the elections process were released on time through the application. Mohammed bin Said Al Balushi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information and Chairman of Information Committee for Elections of the Members of the Municipal Councils for the Third Term, said that the voting process through smartphones has contributed to speedy casting of votes, the interaction of the society and the announcement of the results of elections. Dr. Ali bin Amer Al Shizani, Undersecretary of the Ministry

of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology and Chairman of the Technical Committee for the Elections of Members of Municipal Councils for the Third Term said that “we have not seen any technical challenges in voting through smart phones and the only issue related to the use of the application by the voters.” The press conference was held at InterContinental on Monday and it was attended by a number of media persons and journalists from the local and international media and press.

FOR 2022-2027 PERIOD

27 women fought Municipal Council polls

< FROM A1 Fayza Al Shamsi is a job-seeker and an economics graduate from the College of Economics and Political Science at Sultan Qaboos University. She has made various contributions in the health, educational and other fields. She is also a member of the mu-

nicipal affairs in the wilayat and previously worked as a journalist for Oman newspaper. Al Shamsi stated that she received 68 votes out of a total of 232 votes. It may be noted that the number of women candidates for the first period elections (2012-2016)

reached 23, 4 of whom secured membership, and the number of women candidates for the second period (2016-2022) reached 23, 7 of whom secured membership. As for the third period (2022-2027), 27 women ran for the elections, but just one woman got council membership.



Neck

Shoulder & Arm

Elbow

Hand & Wrist

Back

Hip

Foot

Knee & Leg

Ankle

Apollo Hospitals
SULTANATE OF OMAN

RELIEVE YOUR PAIN
REGAIN YOUR MOVEMENT

24 HOURS

EMERGENCY & TRAUMA CARE

Joint Replacement
Knee, Hip and Shoulder

Revision Arthroscopy & Arthroplasty

Spine Surgeries

Arthroscopy of Knee
ACL reconstruction and repair, PCL reconstruction, MCL repair, Multiligament knee reconstruction

Revision ACL reconstruction

Arthroscopy of the Shoulder
Rotator cuff repair, Bankart repair, SLAP repair

Arthroscopy of the Ankle and Hip

Cartilage Repair for Knee

Complex fracture fixations

MEET OUR TEAM OF EXPERTS



MOH NO. 548/2022

2443 0303 | 2478 7766 | 7234 4455 | 9820 5922

www.apollohospitalmuscat.com



SHOP NOW
rafeeq.om



FIRST SIKH MAYOR

Mikey Hothi is first ever Sikh mayor in California city

CALIFORNIA: Mikey Hothi of Indian origin has been unanimously elected as the mayor of Lodi city in California, becoming the first Sikh to attain the highest position in the history of the American city to date, *LocalToday* reported.

Taking to Twitter, Hothi on Friday said, "Honored to be sworn in as the 117th Mayor of the City of

Lodi" After becoming the mayor, Hothi's main duty will be to chair the meetings of the Common Council and serve as the city's executive officer.

Local newspaper Lodi Times quoted the mayor as saying it was a safe city. Good people, good education, great culture and hard-working people live in this city, according to *LocalToday*

Mikey Hothi graduated from Tokay High School in 2008. For the first time in 2020, in November, he was elected to the Lodi Municipal Council from District 5.

Notably, Lodi is located in San Joaquin County, California, and the population of the city, according to the 2021 census was 67,021, *LocalToday* reported.

Local newspaper, The Lodi

News-Sentinel reported that Mikey Hothi's family were also instrumental in the construction of the Sikh Temple on Armstrong Road. Hothi told local media after his election that our experiences are similar to the Hispanic community, the Greek community that came before us, and the German community, according to *LocalToday*. **ANI**



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 Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
CIRCULATION: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24818270, E-mail: circulation@timesofoman.com

Taliban justifies women education ban amid criticism, says report

This comes at a time when the Taliban is attracting criticism over the matter from around the world

KABUL: The Taliban-appointed Acting Minister of Higher Education of Afghanistan Nida Mohammad Nadim said there is no opposition to the barring of women from university education in the country. This comes at a time when the Taliban is attracting criticism over the matter from around the world, Khaama Press reported.

The statement was given by Nadim while addressing a meeting with officials of private universities. According to the Khaama Press report, Nadim said "there has been no opposition to the education of girls as per the recent decree of this ministry". He further said that the Taliban does not intend to oppose the education of the new generation but wants to develop a system according to the Islamic Sharia law and the values of Afghanistan.

According to Khaama Press, the Taliban-appointed education minister also pointed out the formation of a joint commission between the education ministry and university professors for reiterating these sectors should prepare in accordance with the legal provisions of the ministry.



However, to express their frustration and anger on the issues of university education for female students banned by the Taliban, many male students from private and public universities have gone on strike chanting slogans like "education for all or none". Further Khaama Press report said that with Afghan women being deprived of getting an education, some university lecturers have resigned from their positions.

Contradicting Nadim's opinion on the education ban for female students in Afghanistan, Grand Imam of Egypt's Al-Azhar University, Ahmed El-Tayeb called for the Taliban to reconsider their decision to ban Afghan women from accessing university education, saying the decision contradicts Sharia.

The Grand Imam said that he "deeply" regrets the decision issued by the authorities in Afghanistan, preventing Afghan women's access to university education.

Tayeb said he warns "Muslims and non-Muslims against believing or accepting that banning women's education is approved in Islam. Indeed, Islam firmly denounces such banning since it contradicts the legal rights Islam equally guarantees for women and men," he said.

He called on authorities in Afghanistan to reconsider their decision for "the truth is more deserving of being followed." "I am deeply concerned. I wanted to resign as a protest and I hope these protests and actions by us will convey our voices to officials," said Raihana Halim, a lecturer from Kabul University.

"I have offered my resignation to the Ministry of Higher Education as a protest and in support of our sisters. There are some other lecturers who are trying to

continue their process of resignation," said Ihsanullah Rahmani, a lecturer from Kabul Polytechnic University who is in Turkey for his master's degree.

A group of students from different universities in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in response to the decision held a protest on Friday and demanded the reopening of universities for women in Afghanistan.

On Wednesday, the UN mission in Afghanistan expressed the outrage of millions of Afghans and the international community over the decision by the Islamic regime and called on the de facto authorities to revoke the decision immediately.

In a statement, the UN mission said "the UN and its humanitarian partners also urged the de facto authorities to reopen girls' schools beyond the sixth grade and end all measures preventing women and girls from participating fully in daily public life," the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) said.

"Banning women from attending university is a continuation of the systematic policies of targeted discrimination put in place by the Taliban against women," the UNAMA statement read.

Since 15 August 2021, the de facto authorities have barred girls from attending secondary school, restricted women and girls' freedom of movement, excluded women from most areas of the workforce and banned women from using parks, gyms, and public bath houses.

These restrictions culminate with the confinement of Afghan women and girls to the four walls of their homes. **ANI**

WINTER CHAOS



Dozens killed by Christmas Day winter storm in the US

WASHINGTON: A severe winter storm that hit some 60% of the United States, alongside Canada, has killed at least 34 people as of Sunday, bringing heavy snow, freezing rain and dangerously low temperatures.

The severe winter storm is nearly unprecedented, with people seeking heat shelters to survive it.

The scope of the storm stretched from the Great Lakes near Canada to the Rio Grande along the border with Mexico. It was expected to claim even more lives as the storm moved east on Sunday.

The storm hit Buffalo in the eastern state of New York hardest on Christmas Day, causing power outages and trapping people inside their cars.

What happened in Buffalo?

The blizzard devastated the city, bringing a total accumulation of snow to nearly 4 feet (1.2 meters) on Sunday.

Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said on Twitter that at least

10 people were killed in the county, which also includes Buffalo.

Poloncarz said some of those reported dead were found in cars, while other bodies were recovered in snow banks. He warned that the death toll could increase further.

County-wide driving bans were put in place to contain the situation, with the majority of the area rendered impassable.

"This is not the Christmas any of us hoped for nor expected, but try to have as merry a Christmas as possible today," Poloncarz said on Twitter on Sunday. "My deepest condolences to the families who have lost loved ones."

New York Governor Kathy Hochul addressed the blizzard, saying: "This will go down in history as Buffalo's most devastating storm. This one is for the ages and we're still in the middle of it."

The Reuters news agency cited Hochul as saying that the Biden administration would support the state's request for a federal disaster declaration.

How has the storm affected power?

Power outages persisted well into Christmas Day despite significant restorations. The power-tracking website "PowerOutage.US," reported that as of Sunday evening, less than 100,000 customers were without power across the US.

That figure was down from a peak of 1.7 million customers across the nation who were without electricity at one point due to the storm. On Sunday evening, over 26,000 residents of New York state remained without power.

In the northeastern state of Maine, 45,800 residents were still without power, the website reported, whereas further south in Virginia, over 9,700 residents were still affected by outages. Over 1,500 flights were canceled across the US during the Christmas weekend, as of midday on Sunday, crushing the hopes of many US citizens who looked forward to being reunited with family for the first time during Christmas since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. **ANI**

CORRUPTION AND MONEY LAUNDERING

Maldives former president sentenced to 11 years in prison

MALE: A court in Maldives found former President Abdulla Yameen guilty in a corruption and money laundering case and sentenced him to 11 years in prison and also fined him \$5 million, Avas, a Maldives-based newspaper reported.

The criminal court, in its verdict, found Yameen guilty of the charges and Chief Judge Ahmed Shakeel said that it is questionable that the money that documents show was deposited to Yameen's personal account from Yoosuf Naeem's account. Former president Yameen was accused of receiving one million USD stolen from state coffers in the country's biggest-ever corruption scandal, Avas reported.

Yameen abused his position and took one million USD from a private company to facilitate the sale of Aarah for resort development.

According to the charges, Yameen accepted a bribe of \$1 million from former MP Yoosuf Naeem, who is being tried on bribery charges alongside Yameen. The trial began at the Criminal Court on January 2, and hearings in the trial concluded on November 30, Avas reported.

The prosecution sought the maximum penalty for the conviction due to Yameen's position as head of State at the time of the crime. The prosecution requested 11 years in prison and a six-fold increase in the fine. However, as the law states that the fine can be increased up to five-fold at the maximum, the State requested to impose the maximum amount as a fine as under the law.

The verdict also found Yoosuf Naeem guilty of bribery, and the prosecution asked for the maximum penalty for the former MP.



The charges against Yameen relate to claims he received at least one million dollars through SOF Private Limited, a private company linked to his former deputy, which was used to launder tourism revenues from the state-owned Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Aljazeera reported.

The amount was deposited into the former president's personal bank account at the Maldives Islamic Bank in October 2015.

Lawyers for President Yameen and Yoosuf Naeem asked for ten days to speak on the sentence. However, the judge adjourned the hearing shortly after announcing

that the hearing would resume at 2:00 pm to decide on the sentence. He refused to provide the time requested by the defendants, reported Avas.

Earlier also, Yameen was convicted in November 2019, after his 2013-2018 presidential term, for the embezzlement of up to 1 million dollars in government funds using a private company. But, later on, in 2021, the Supreme Court revoked the five-year prison term.

According to local media outlet Sun Online, the verdict was cancelled by Yameen's appeal against the previous court ruling, in which he cited a lack of verified links between the private company and his bank accounts. **ANI**



SPORTS



COVETED HOCKEY CHAMPIONSHIP

12-time winners Ahli-Sidab to clash with Salalah giants Al Nasr in HM’s Cup final

Times News Service

MUSCAT: It is time for the powerhouses to regain glory. Both the clubs – Ahli-Sidab and Al Nasr - have been dominating the Oman hockey scene for decades and share a total of 20 titles between them in the 51 years of the history of the most prestigious competition in the Sultanate of Oman – His Majesty’s Cup Hockey Championship.

On Tuesday, last edition’s runners-up Ahli-Sidab will clash with Al Nasr, which finished third in the previous edition, for the coveted trophy in the 52nd edition at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. The match will kick off at 7 pm.

Sheikh Salim Mustahail Al Mashani, Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court, will be the chief guest and give away the trophy.

Earlier on Sunday, 11-time champions Seeb edged Salalah 6-5 in penalty shoot-out to finish third.

Over the past 51 years, clubs from Muscat and Dhofar have dominated the winners’ list until Sohar Club broke the hegemony on January 5, 2022 with a title, edging past Ahli-Sidab in a penalty shootout.

Ahli-Sidab have won the title a record 12 times, the last of which came in 2021, and the Muscat powerhouse will be aiming for the



13th trophy. Coming in their way for that bid would be Salalah giants, Al Nasr, who have to their credit eight titles.

The last time both the teams faced in the summit clash was in 2019 when Al Nasr beat Ahli-Sid-

ab 2-1 for their eighth title.

In the current edition, Al Nasr topped the group standings with 13 points after the final round of matches. Ahli-Sidab with 11 points came second to earn the right to meet Al Nasr in the summit clash.

Seeb finished in third place (7 points) while Salalah were in fourth place (6) and Bausher finished fifth (5). Bottom-placed Nizwa failed to open their account.

Speaking on the eve of the final, Al Nasr coach Mohammed al



Batrani said: “We want to win this edition of HM Cup final as we missed out in the semifinal of the Oman Hockey League (OHA).”

He added “All our players are in good shape for the final. We are ready to put up a good challenge.”

Ahli-Sidab would be aiming for a domestic double, having won the OHA League in October after beating Seeb 4-1 in the final.

Ahli-Sidab coach Aiman al Katheri said, “his team is in top form”. He said: “We want to conclude our good performance in this edition of HM Cup with the trophy. We expect a strong match and our players are prepared for it.”

Ahli-Sidab captain Salah bin Nasser al Saadi with their Indian recruit Ravinder Valmiki and Al Nasr skipper Bassim al Durbait with their Indian player Jasjeet Singh attended the pre-final press conference at the Oman Olympic Committee hall on Monday.

The oldest domestic tournament in Oman – His Majesty’s Cup Hockey Championship – has a glorious past and has stood witness to some of the most exciting and memorable matches, clubs’ rivalry, individual brilliance, foreign stars, fans’ love and fury.

Ahli-Sidab won the 50th edition in March, 2021, as the event was delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020

The winner of the prestigious competition receives a glittering trophy and a cash award of OMR40,000 while the runner-up team gets OMR25,000 with the third-placed club taking home OMR15,000.

Green’s fifer puts Australia on top against SA



At the end of the first day of play, David Warner (32*) and Marnus Labuschagne (5*) were unbeaten for the Aussies

MELBOURNE : A five-wicket haul from all-rounder Cameron Green put Australia in a position of comfort at the end of the first day’s play of the second Test against South Africa at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Monday, with the scoreboard reading 45/1 for the hosts at the end of day’s play.

At the end of the first day of play, David Warner (32*) and Marnus Labuschagne (5*) were unbeaten for the Aussies. South Africa was put to bat first by the hosts. The Proteas top-order was once again exposed in pace-friendly Australian conditions.

The pace trio of Green, Mitchell Starc and Scott Boland made merry, feasting on SA batters.

Except for skipper Dean Elgar (26), nobody could cross 20-run mark. At Lunch, SA was 58/4, with Khaya Zondo (0*) and Kyle Verreynne (0*) at the crease. The Proteas were left struggling at 67/5 after lunch.

Then it was wicketkeeper-batter Verreynne and bowling all-rounder Marco Jansen who came to the rescue, helping their side get to the 100-run mark. At Tea, Proteas were 144/5 with Verreynne 40* and Jansen 38*.

Both batters hit their respec-

tive half-centuries, with Jansen getting his maiden half-century in Tests.

They brought up their 100-run stand. The 112-run stand between the duo was broken by Green, who dismissed Kyle for 52 and Jansen for 59. SA was left reeling at 182/7.

Bundled out for 189

The rest of the lower order could not offer any fight and Proteas were bundled out for 189 in 68.4 overs. All-rounder Green was the pick of the bowlers for Aussies, taking 5/27. This is his first-ever five-wicket haul in Tests. Mitchell Starc took two wickets while Scott Boland and Nathan Lyon took a wicket each.

Brief scores: Australia: 45/1 in 12 overs (David Warner 32*, Marnus Labuschagne 5*, Kagiso Rabada 1/24) against South Africa: 189 (Marco Jansen 59, Kyle Verreynne 52, Cameron Green 5/27). -ANI

AUSTRALIAN SPIN GREAT

Australia rename top Test award in Warne’s honour

MELBOURNE : Late Australian spin great Shane Warne will be honoured with the Australia Men’s Test Player of the Year award to be renamed in his honour as ‘The Shane Warne Men’s Test Player of the Year’.

The award will be presented annually at the Australian Cricket Awards. It is the second most prestigious award for men behind Allan Border Medal.

The announcement of the award’s renaming coincided with the Boxing Day Test match between Australia and South Africa, the second match of the series at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), where tribute was paid to the ‘The King’ at the first Test at his favourite venue since his shocking demise in March this year.

Warne won the award once, back in 2006, a year in which he took a record 40 Test wickets in the iconic 2005 Ashes series in England. Batter Travis Head won the award last year, while for 2023, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne and Nathan Lyon are three of the biggest contenders.

Labuschagne is the Australian leading run-scorer in the voting period, with 837 runs at an average of 69.75 in eight Tests since the last summer’s Ashes. He is narrowly ahead of Khawaja, who has scored 824 runs at an average of 68.66.

Nathan Lyon is the leading wicket-taker with 39 wickets since last summer, ahead of Mitchell Starc (27) and Pat Cummins (24).

This summer’s Australian Cricket Awards will be declared on January 30.

Cricket Australia CEO Nick Hockley and Australian Cricket-



SPIN MAESTRO: Warne won the award once, back in 2006, a year in which he took a record 40 Test wickets in the iconic 2005 Ashes series in England.

ers Association CEO, Todd Greenberg made the announcement.

“As one of Australia’s all-time greats, it is fitting we acknowledge Shane’s extraordinary contribution to Test cricket by naming this award in his honour in perpetuity,” cricket.com.au quoted Hockley.

“Shane was a proud advocate of Test cricket and you only have to look around at all the fans who came out to the MCG in their floppy hats and zinc on Boxing Day to realise what a profound impact he had on the game,” he added.

Greenberg added: “I am proud that the ACA, along with Cricket Australia, is able to recognise the incredible impact Shane had on Test cricket with an award named in his honour.”

“While he was a once-in-a-generation player, he was very much a man who understood the important contribution all players made to Australian cricket. He

played an important role in the formative years of the ACA and never knocked back an opportunity to promote and grow the game... and once they came, nobody knew how to put on a show quite like Warne - particularly here at the MCG,” he added.

Men’s Test Player of the Year past winners: 2000: Glenn McGrath, 2001: Colin Miller, 2002: Matthew Hayden, 2003: Ricky Ponting, 2004: Ricky Ponting, 2005: Damien Martyn, 2006: Shane Warne, 2007: Ricky Ponting, 2008: Brett Lee, 2009: Michael Clarke, 2010: Simon Katich, 2011: Shane Watson, 2012: Michael Clarke, 2013: Michael Clarke, 2014: Michael Clarke, 2015: Steve Smith, 2016: David Warner, 2017: Mitchell Starc, 2018: Steve Smith, 2019: Nathan Lyon, 2020: Marnus Labuschagne, 2021: Pat Cummins, 2022: Travis Head. -ANI

OMAN CRICKET

OCT Ruwi stun Orient Travels, Design Group edge past Manis CT



Altaf Mohammed and Alif Khan of Design Group

Times News Service

MUSCAT: OCT Ruwi beat Orient Travels by 48 runs in the Oman Cricket A Division League game and Design Group brushed past Manis CT by 2 runs in a B Division League match.

Orient Travels elected to field after winning the toss and had OCT Ruwi down to 32/2 in powerplay. Zubair Al Balushi scored a half-century to hold the OCT Ruwi innings. Wasim Al Balushi’s 33 of 19 balls helped OCT Ruwi post 236 runs at the end of the innings. Ibrar Hussain bagged 3 wickets.

In response, Orient Travels lost 2 wickets within 5 balls in the 5th and 6th over but Adil Khan and



Zubair Al Balushi of OCT Ruwi

Ibrar Hussain stitched a 83-run partnership but Orient Travels was out for 188.

Zubair Al Balushi and Nawed Al Balushi claimed 3 wickets each.

Brief scores: OCT Ruwi 236/10 in 49.4 overs (Zubair Al Balushi

69 (91) 8x4; Ibrar Hussain 46/3, Tanveer Rana 30/2 , Syed Amir Ali 37/2 , Qayyum Mudassir 44/2) beat Orient Travels 188/10 in 45.2 overs (Adil Khan 56 (56) 6x4; Zubair Al Balushi 34/3 , Nawed Al Balushi 36/3).

In the B division clash, Design Group won the toss and elected to bat first. Design Group found themselves in trouble with 3 batters back in the hut within the powerplay. However, a 130-run stand and half centuries by Alif Khan and Altaf Mohammed and a quick fire 39 by Nishan S took them to a total of 225 runs.

Rana Zeeshan and Aneek Chakraborty picked 2 wickets each for Manis CT.

In response, Manis CT lost their top 3 batters within the power-play. However, Krishna Pradhan and Adnan UlHaq’s half-centuries helped Manis CT get back onto the chase. Samir Osman’s quickfire 34 of just 22 brought them close but left them 2 runs short of the target.

Akhil Anilkumar picked 4 wickets for Design Group.

Brief scores: Design Group 225/6 in 30 overs (Althaf Mohammed 81 (67) 12x4, Alif Khan 50 (46) 6x4; Rana Zeeshan 36/2 , Aneek Chakraborty 40/2) beat Manis Cricket Team 223/10 in 29.4 overs (Krishna Pradhan 69 (58) 8x4,1x6, Adnan UlHaq 50 (44) 9x4; Akhil Anilkumar 34/4 , Mithun Sathyan 32/2).

CHIP PRODUCTION CAPACITY
Samsung Electronics plans to increase chip production capacity at its largest semiconductor plant next year, despite forecasts of an economic slowdown. The move contrasts with the scaling back of investment by rival chipmakers amid falling demand and a glut of chips. -BNA

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,831.15 points, up by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.04 per cent at 498.68 points. Oman Chlorine, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman United Insurance, down 4.84 per cent, was the top loser.

3 TO 5 STAR HOTELS IN OMAN SEE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN REVENUES



The statistics indicated that the total number of guests in hotels with a rating of 3 to 5 stars in Oman increased by 33.9 per cent, to reach 1,449,511 by the end of November 2022

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The revenues of 3 to 5-star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman have increased by 91.7% to reach more than OMR161 million by the end of November 2022. The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), revealed that a significant increase in the revenues of hotels with a rating of 3 to 5 stars increased by 91.7

per cent until the end of November 2022, reaching OMR161,262,000. The statistics indicated that the total number of guests in hotels with a rating of 3 to 5 stars in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 33.9 per cent, to reach 1,449,511 by the end of November 2022, compared to 1,082,921 guests in the same period 2021; while the occupancy rate recorded a growth of 18.2 per cent. According to NCSI, the number

of Gulf guests grew significantly, amounting to 418.8 per cent, from 27,985 at the end of November 2021 to 145,192 guests until the end of November 2022, followed by European guests, whose number grew by 327 per cent from 71,951 guests to 307,268 guests during the same period. The number of Omani guests decreased by 14.9 per cent from 756,661 at the end of November 2021 to 643,859 until the end of November.

Statistics of NCSI showed that the number of American guests until the end of November 2022 reached about 52,625, an increase of 185.1 per cent compared to the same period in 2021, and the number of guests from the African continent reached 7,807, with a growth rate of 98.4 per cent. The number of Asian guests also increased by 53 per cent from 124,675 to 190,700 during the same period.

SEZAD

Forum to shed light on reducing carbon footprint in Duqm

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The management of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) is organising the Second Environmental Forum titled, "Together for reducing our carbon footprint in Duqm", which is to be held on January 9. A number of lecturers and specialists from government and private entities, concerned with climate change and carbon emissions reduction, will be participating, in the presence of the companies operating in the zone. The forum aims at finding innovative mechanisms to solve potential environmental challenges resulting from various construction and industrial works in Sezad. The forum will shed light on the necessity for combining efforts to raise awareness of preserving the environment, reducing environmental impacts and supporting and developing foundations of cooperation between various organisations and companies operating in the zone in aspects related to climate affairs. It will also highlight greenhouse gases inventory, setting up plans to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate changes, to achieve zero neutrality in Duqm. The forum comes as a comple-



ment to the continuing efforts of Sezad management represented by the Environmental Awareness Team of the Environmental Sustainability Department, in its com-

mitment to protect and preserve the environment and share with the world its emissions reduction plans, the success of the First Environmental Forum, which was

held in July 2022, and the consequent empowerment of the companies operating in the zone to develop procedures and find possible environmental solutions.

NEW RECORD



Toyota global vehicle production rises 1.5%

TOKYO: Toyota Motor Corp reported on Monday a 1.5 per cent rise in November global vehicle output, reaching a new record of 833,104. Domestic production slid 3.3 per cent to 266,174 vehicles, while overseas output rose 3.8 per cent to an all-time high of 566,930 for the month, Reuters reported. Global sales and production in November exceeded last year's levels due to solid demand, particularly in North America, and a recovery in parts supplies that

had been impacted by COVID-19 slowdowns, Toyota said. The automaker reported earlier this month it expected to produce 700,000 vehicles in January and held to a reduced goal of 9.2 million in the year through March. Toyota had previously expected to make 9.7 million autos this fiscal year but was forced to lower the target in November as it struggles with rising materials costs and a shortage of semiconductors. That's still ahead of last year's production of about 8.6 million units. -BNA

SHARE MARKET

Indian stock indices start fresh week on positive note, break 4-day losing streak



MONDAY'S SESSION: Sensex closed Monday's session at 60,566.42 points, up 721.13 or 1.20 per cent, whereas Nifty closed at 18,014.60 points, up 207.80 points or 1.17 per cent. -ANI

NEW DELHI: Indian stock markets opened the new week with gains as investors picked up positive cues from strong overseas markets. On Friday, US data showed inflation was continuing to ease - annual inflation reportedly increased at its slowest pace in 13 months, besides the US Federal Reserve's rate hikes were serving their purpose. Sensex closed Monday's session at 60,566.42 points, up 721.13 or 1.20 per cent, whereas Nifty closed at 18,014.60 points, up 207.80 points or 1.17 per cent. Among the Nifty 50 stocks, SBI, Indusind Bank, Hindalco, Coal India, and Bajaj Finserv were the top five gainers, while Cipla, Divi's Labs, Dr Reddy's, Nestle India, and Kotak

Mahindra Bank the top losers, National Stock Exchange data showed. "Markets started the week on a strong note and gained over a per cent, taking a breather after the recent slide. After the initial uptick, the Nifty index gradually inched higher as the day progressed. However, some profit taking in the last half an hour trimmed some gains. Research at Religare Broking. Participants shouldn't read much into a single-day rebound and wait for the sustainability of the move," said Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical. The benchmark stock indices - Sensex and Nifty - had witnessed losses for four days. "After a four-day selloff, the domestic market was refuelled by

bottom fishing and optimistic sentiment from global counterparts. PSBs led the rally, while mid-and small-cap stocks outpaced the benchmark. Contrary to the trend, global concerns over the recession and COVID spread continue to remain high, which will sustain volatility in the market," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. Meanwhile, Rupee closed at 82.65 against the US Dollar versus Friday's closing of 82.86. Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities, said, the rupee appreciated as the global markets were closed and anticipated dollar weakness and strong capital market participation. -ANI



MARKET



SHOP NOW

rafeeq.om



MSX index ends higher



Oman Chlorine, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman United Insurance, down 4.84 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,831.15 points, up by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.04 per cent at 498.68 points. Oman Chlorine, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman United Insurance, down 4.84 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 639 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR6.01 million, with more than 22.6 million shares changing hands. Out of 48 traded securities, 16 advanced, 18 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR218,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR189,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR28,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,817.97 points, up 0.05 per cent. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Global Financial Investments, United Finance, Al Omaniya Financial Services, and Ahli Bank were up by 2.70 per cent, 1.89 per cent, 1.56 per

cent, 1.44 per cent and 0.61 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman United Insurance, Oman Qatar Insurance, Muscat Finance, Al Anwar Investment, and Al Madina Takaful were down by 10.00 per cent, 4.52 per cent, 1.54 per cent, 1.18 per cent and 1.11 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,316.16 points, down 0.45 per cent. Prices of Oman Chlorine and Galfar Engineering were up by 10.00 per cent and 3.01 per cent respectively. Prices of Raysut Cement, A'Saffa Foods, Dhofar Cattle Feed, Oman Cement, and Oman Fisheries were down by 4.82 per cent, 4.27 per cent, 4.00 per cent, 1.31 per cent and 0.97 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.11 per cent before closing at 1,615.83 points. Prices of Dhofar Generating, Ooredoo, Oman National Engineering and OIFC were up by 9.80 per cent, 1.91 per cent, 1.82 per cent and 1.56 per cent respectively. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, National Gas, Renaissance Services, Oman Telecom, and Al Jazeera Services were down by 2.99 per cent, 2.78 per cent, 1.28 per cent, 0.86 per cent and 0.35 per cent respectively. — *United Securities*

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,855.95	4,826.81	4,831.15	4,830.77	0.38	0.01
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,840.12	7,806.05	7,817.97	7,814.05	3.92	0.05
Industry Index	6,360.54	6,299.09	6,316.16	6,344.41	-28.25	-0.45
Services Index	1,618.92	1,608.30	1,615.83	1,614.11	1.72	0.11
MSX Shariah Index	499.65	498.31	498.68	498.49	0.18	0.04
MSX TR INDEX	6,129.09	6,092.31	6,097.80	6,097.32	0.48	0.01
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,203.81	8,168.16	8,180.64	8,176.53	4.10	0.05
SERVICES TR IDX	1,711.05	1,699.84	1,707.80	1,705.98	1.82	0.11
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,622.11	6,558.14	6,575.91	6,605.32	-29.41	-0.45

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
22,606,728	6,010,956	639	23,702,021,807	16	18	14	48

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 26

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST HD	LAST OFFR	PRN VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
OM0000007407	DHOFAR GENERATING	1,200	61	2	0.050	0.056	0.050	0.056	0.051	0.005	9.804	0.056	0.050	0.056	0.100 ... 12,445,440
OM0000009868	GLOBAL INV. H	138,790	57,513	6	0.420	0.430	0.420	0.428	0.420	0.008	2,363	0.428	0.420	0.440	0.100 ... 278,604,130
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	52,000	2,808	5	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.053	0.001	1,887	0.054	0.053	0.054	0.100 ... 10,800,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	36,700	4,100	4	0.111	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.110	0.002	1,818	0.112	0.111	0.112	0.100 ... 15,680,000
OM0000001526	OMAN INVEST. FIN.	200,734	26,992	8	0.126	0.130	0.126	0.130	0.128	0.002	1,563	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.100 ... 30,810,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.	885,000	124,401	22	0.137	0.142	0.137	0.141	0.139	0.002	1,438	0.141	0.141	0.141	0.100 ... 45,753,123
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	690,380	115,050	9	0.166	0.167	0.166	0.166	0.165	0.001	0,606	0.166	0.166	0.167	0.100 ... 323,643,139
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	3,527	2,469	1	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.700	0.000	0,000	0.700	0.700	0.732	0.100 ... 110,250,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	2,697,852	783,429	39	0.291	0.291	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.000	0,000	0.290	0.291	0.291	0.100 ... 471,524,443
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	900,355	378,149	7	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.000	0,000	0.420	0.404	0.420	0.100 ... 280,713,479
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	200	16	1	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.079	0.000	0,000	0.079	0.076	0.079	0.100 ... 7,110,000
OM0000002786	BANK MUSCAT	5,880,922	1,648,334	129	0.280	0.280	0.278	0.280	0.280	0.000	0,000	0.280	0.279	0.280	0.100 ... 110,791,177
OM0000003000	AL MAHA PETROLEUM	7,457	6,705	9	0.900	0.900	0.892	0.900	0.900	0.000	0,000	0.900	0.892	0.900	0.100 ... 62,100,000
OM0000002226	AL JAZEERA SERVICES	72,656	20,852	4	0.287	0.287	0.287	0.287	0.288	-0.001	-0.347	0.287	0.286	0.287	0.100 ... 17,565,626
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,176,854	1,080,147	37	0.936	0.936	0.920	0.928	0.936	-0.008	-0.855	0.928	0.912	0.928	0.100 ... 896,000,000
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	72,780	15,707	11	0.215	0.218	0.215	0.216	0.218	-0.002	-0.917	0.216	0.216	0.220	0.100 ... 34,977,869
OM0000003388	SOHAR INT. BANK	5,312,928	578,748	45	0.109	0.110	0.107	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.926	0.107	0.107	0.109	0.100 ... 491,138,665
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	307,518	143,236	26	0.470	0.470	0.464	0.464	0.470	-0.006	-1.277	0.464	0.462	0.464	0.100 ... 109,894,240
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	12,800	3,886	2	0.304	0.304	0.302	0.302	0.306	-0.004	-1.307	0.302	0.302	0.308	0.100 ... 88,923,558
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	23,540	6,944	8	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.295	0.310	-0.015	-4.839	0.295	0.292	0.295	0.100 ... 29,500,000
Total		20			18,405,979	4,988,646	375								

Parallel Market

OM0000002341	OMAN CHLORINE	1,000	528	1	0.528	0.528	0.528	0.528	0.480	0.048	10,000	0.528	0.528	0.000	0.100 ... 35,958,732
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	235,900	39,411	39	0.167	0.171	0.166	0.171	0.166	0.005	3,012	0.171	0.167	0.171	0.100 ... 34,710,682
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	2,944	324	1	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.074	0.002	2,703	0.076	0.071	0.076	0.100 ... 9,262,500
OM0000003447	OMAN RET. FUND	553,000	47,385	20	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.087	0.085	0.002	2,353	0.087	0.085	0.087	0.100 ... 42,993,216
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	147,500	9,470	6	0.064	0.065	0.064	0.065	0.064	0.001	1,563	0.065	0.064	0.065	0.100 ... 22,694,387
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	1,000	172	1	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.171	0.001	0.585	0.172	0.172	0.175	0.100 ... 515,372,447
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	67,923	11,139	4	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.164	0.000	0,000	0.164	0.164	0.165	0.100 ... 328,051,298
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	218,768	9,226	33	0.042	0.043	0.041	0.042	0.042	0.000	0,000	0.043	0.043	0.042	0.100 ... 8,384,695
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	641,963	63,554	18	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0,000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100 ... 221,458,350
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	87,723	2,632	6	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.000	0,000	0.030	0.029	0.030	0.100 ... 20,246,623
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	1,748	52	2	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.000	0,000	0.030	0.027	0.030	0.100 ... 21,432,190
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	879	39	1	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.000	0,000	0.044	0.040	0.044	0.100 ... 64,354,464
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	49,420	5,085	6	0.103	0.103	0.102	0.103	0.103	-0.001	-0.971	0.103	0.103	0.103	0.100 ... 18,571,997
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	386,859	34,811	16	0.090	0.090	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.088	0.089	0.100 ... 15,575,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	484,000	40,637	12	0.084	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.084	0.082	0.084	0.100 ... 16,800,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	397,500	25,092	29	0.063	0.064	0.062	0.064	0.065	-0.001	-1.538	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.100 ... 19,657,365
OM0000001169	NATIONAL GAS	45,000	4,740	6	0.107	0.107	0.105	0.105	0.108	-0.003	-2.778	0.105	0.105	0.107	0.100 ... 9,262,500
OM0000004735	SEMPORCO MALALA	229,270	14,948	10	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.065	0.067	-0.002	-2.985	0.065	0.065	0.067	0.100 ... 6,047,177
OM0000001301	DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT	5,000	360	1	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.072	0.075	-0.003	-4.000	0.072	0.070	0.075	0.100 ... 5,821,200
OM0000002804	ASAFA FOODS	24,800	5,622	10	0.222	0.245	0.222	0.224	0.234	-0.010	-4.274	0.224	0.218	0.232	0.100 ... 26,880,000
OM0000006979	OMAN QATAR INSUR.	25,900	4,921	5	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.199	-0.009	-4.523	0.190	0.180	0.200	0.100 ... 19,000,000
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	255,957	40,453	25	0.156	0.160	0.156	0.158	0.166	-0.008	-4.819	0.158	0.151	0.158	0.100 ... 31,600,000
Total		22			3,864,054	360,482	252								

BANK OF JAPAN

BOJ Governor shuns near-term chance of exit from easy policy

TOKYO: Bank of Japan (BOJ) Governor Haruhiko Kuroda on Monday brushed aside the chance of a near-term exit from the ultra-loose monetary policy but voiced hope that intensifying labour shortages will prod firms to raise wages.

Kuroda said the BOJ's decision last week to widen the allowance band around its yield target was aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of its ultra-easy monetary policy, rather than a first step toward withdrawing its massive stimulus programme, Reuters reported.

"This is definitely not a step toward an exit. The Bank will aim to achieve the price target in a sustainable and stable manner, accompanied by wage increases, by continuing with monetary easing under yield curve control," Kuroda said in a speech delivered to a meeting of Japan's business lobby Keidanren.

He also said Japan's average consumer inflation will likely slow



below the BOJ's 2 per cent target next fiscal year as the effects of soaring import costs dissipate.

But Kuroda said wage growth will likely increase gradually due to intensifying labour shortages and structural changes in Japan's job market, which are leading to higher pay for temporary workers and a rise in the number of permanent workers.

"Labour market conditions, particularly for non-regular employees, are projected to tighten further," he said. "As Japan's economy recovers, labour demand is expected to increase, particularly in the face-to-face services industry," Kuroda said.

The BOJ shocked markets last week with a surprising tweak to its bond yield control. The move, which allows long-term interest rates to rise more, was aimed at easing some of the costs of prolonged monetary stimulus. — *BNA*

SULIGE GAS FIELD

Annual output of China's major onshore gas field exceeds 30bn cubic metres

XIFAN: The annual output of the Sulige gas field, owned by China's major oil and gas producer PetroChina, reached a domestic record of 30.04 billion cubic metres as of Monday, according to PetroChina's Changqing Oilfield.

The Sulige gas field is the first gas field in China to achieve an annual output exceeding 30 billion cubic metres. Its output accounts for one-seventh of the country's total natural gas production this year. Located in the Erdos Basin in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the Sulige gas field plays an important role in providing gas for Beijing and Tianjin, as well as the surrounding areas of Inner Mongolia. The gas field's cumulative gas production has hit 300 billion cubic metres. — *Xinhua*

REPORT

Billionaires eye India, Southeast Asia as investment destinations due to growth

SINGAPORE: Geographically, billionaires around the world are looking to put more of their money in India and Southeast Asia due to the strong growth enjoyed by economies in the region.

Sectorally, they favour energy, possibly due to today's supply constraints and the accelerating secular transition to renewables. This was revealed in the "UBS Billionaire Ambitions Report 2022" published earlier this month.

The report added, "North America, with its huge domestic market and vibrant entrepreneurial culture, also remains a popular region. While still ahead of the rest of the world, mainland China lags these regions somewhat." Few seem to be keen on investing in Western Europe despite it being a major global economic bloc.

From a sector perspective, technology and health continue to draw interest from the billionaires surveyed although these industries of late suffered declining valuations and interest in the public equity markets.

This is the eighth report from the Swiss bank covering billionaires, focusing on their wealth and ambitions during an era of historic wealth generation, business innovation and impact philanthropy. The report is based on surveys, questions and information from the UBS Evidence Lab on over 2,500 billionaires across 75 markets.



While 58 per cent of the billionaire respondents picked India and Southeast Asia as their chosen markets to invest in, only 42 per cent selected China, the world's second-largest economy. North America was picked by 50 per cent of those surveyed.

It is not only in investments that China has seen a fall from a year ago. The ranks of billionaires have also fallen. Mainland China's zero-COVID policy slowed the growth after many years as the world's fastest-growing large economy. There were 540 billionaires, down from 626 a year before. After a decade of significantly increasing, total wealth fell by a fifth (19.9 per cent) to \$2.0 trillion.

However, China is not alone. With the falling markets, the billionaire population around the



MUSIC THERAPY IS EFFECTIVE IN ANXIETY REDUCTION IN CANCER PATIENTS

THE MUSIC THERAPY PROGRAMMING PROVIDED AT SEIDMAN CANCER CENTRE OFFERS A UNIQUE AND EFFECTIVE MEANS OF SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT FOR PATIENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS THROUGHOUT THEIR CANCER JOURNEY

A recent study by University Hospitals (UH) Connor Whole Health found that patients with cancer and sickle cell disease (SCD) receiving treatment at academic cancer centres experienced much less pain and anxiety when receiving music therapy. Additionally, individuals with SCD who completed music therapy reported significantly higher baseline levels of discomfort and anxiety than patients with hematologic and/or oncologic disorders excluding SCD.

The music therapists at UH Connor Whole Health provided 4,002 music therapy sessions to 1,152 patients over the course of 2,400 encounters at UH Seidman Cancer Center for this retrospective study, making it the largest examination of the actual efficacy of music therapy in haematology and oncology to date. The study was published in the journal “Integrative Cancer Therapies.” Key music therapy studies at the University of Houston have previously been funded by the Kulas Foundation, the nation’s leading source of funding for scientific study in the field. These studies examined the efficacy of the treatment in palliative care, surgery, and sickle cell disease.

“The music therapy programming provided at Seidman Cancer Centre offers a unique and effective means of symptom management for patients and family members throughout their cancer journey. In particular, music therapy services are fully integrated throughout both inpatient and outpatient units to provide continuity of care through transitional periods of treatment,” said Seneca Block, The Lauren Rich-Fine Endowed Director of Expressive Therapies at UH Connor Whole Health. UH Connor Whole Health manages the largest health system-based music therapy program in the U.S. Board-certified music therapists collaborate with providers across the system to help patients and their families manage the physical and emotional toll of an illness or hospitalization.

Additionally, UH Connor Whole Health provides a diverse offering of integrative health and medicine modalities, including acupuncture, chiropractic, and integrative medicine consults, that are centered on patients’ entire well-being.

In “Clinical Delivery and Effectiveness of Music Therapy in Hematology and Oncology: An EMMPIRE Retrospective Study,” researchers examined the clinical delivery and effectiveness of music therapy at UH Seidman Cancer Center and compared the effectiveness of music therapy on pain, anxiety, and fatigue between adult patients with SCD as compared to adult patients with hematologic and/or oncologic conditions excluding SCD (the HemOnc group).

Music therapists provided interventions including live music listening, active music making, and songwriting to address patients’ needs including coping, pain management, anxiety reduction, and self-expression.

As part of clinical care, the music therapists assessed patients’ self-reported pain, anxiety, and fatigue on a 0 to 10 scale at the beginning and end of each session and documented their sessions in the electronic health record.

“What makes this research unique is our ability to collect all our data within the electronic health record and then extract and analyse it to understand the real-world impact of music therapy,” said Sam Rodgers-Melnick, a music therapist, first author of the study, and a co-investigator on the EMMPIRE project (Effectiveness of Medical Music Therapy Practice: Integrative Research using the Electronic Health Record) examin-

ing the effectiveness of music therapy throughout the UH Health System.

“This research highlights the increased symptom burden that adults with SCD face in the hospital and the significant impact that a single session of music therapy can have on their pain and anxiety.”

The present study was a 3-year grant funded from the Kulas Foundation to Jeffery A. Dusek PhD, Director of Research, UH Connor Whole Health, Block and Rodgers-Melnick.

Rodgers-Melnick served as the principal investigator for the first systematic research on the use of music therapy for individuals with SCD and has led multiple studies funded by the Kulas Foundation on the topic since 2014. These studies support the benefits of music therapy for managing acute pain, improving self-efficacy and quality of life, and improving sickle cell disease knowledge in adolescents and young adults transitioning from pediatric to adult care.

Results of the recent study showed that in the combined sample of patients in the SCD and HemOnc groups, statistically significant reductions in pain (1.48 units), anxiety (2.58 units), and fatigue (0.84 units) were observed, with changes in pain and anxiety exceeding clinically significant thresholds.

Music therapy sessions differed between the two groups, with interventions including active music making, songwriting, and song recording being much more prevalent in the SCD group than the HemOnc group. Furthermore, in an analysis of patients’ comments about music therapy, patients expressed themes including enjoyment, gratitude, and improvements in mood, pain, and anxiety.

“It helps me release the everyday pressure and stress that is going on,” said one patient featured in the study’s qualitative analysis. “I’ve had a lot of hard times, but this really gives me courage. You gave me a way to articulate my feelings.” Responses from patients highlight the importance of music therapists’ expertise in addressing patients’ needs. As Rodgers-Melnick states, “Our work goes beyond providing tailored receptive music interventions to address symptoms. The ways in which we build therapeutic relationships with patients and actively engage them in the musical process are essential for helping patients to express their thoughts and feelings and cope with extended series of treatments at the cancer centre.”

“Integrative Oncology utilises complementary therapies, such as music therapy discussed in this study, to improve well-being for those affected by cancer.

Using an evidence-based approach and building off research allows us to confidently build a programme around supporting patients with integrative modalities as part of a strategy to manage symptoms that they may encounter through therapies or from cancer,” explained Santosh Rao, MD, a board-certified medical oncologist and integrative medicine provider and Medical Director of Integrative Oncology at UH Connor Whole Health.

A genetic test can tell you if you’re certain to develop Alzheimer’s disease. Tests can only give an estimate of your likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s that may be higher or lower than average. Our study shows that these estimates will be more accurate if they incorporate more than just age and genetics. In Veterans, a history of head injuries and PTSD can also make a large difference in dementia risk, so using that information will allow for more accurate measurement of the chances of developing dementia.” -ANI



IN-PICTURES



SHOP NOW
 rafeeq.om



Migratory birds seen in Lhasa, Tibet

Picture shows migratory birds in Lhunzhub County of Lhasa, capital of southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region. Tibet has built 47 nature reserves covering a total area of about 412,200 square km. *Xinhua*



Visitors feed black-headed gulls at Haigeng Park in Kunming
 Visitors feed black-headed gulls at the Haigeng Park in Kunming, southwest China's Yunnan Province. *Xinhua*



Sidharth Malhotra and Rashmika Mandanna during the song launch 'Rabba Janda'
 Bollywood actor Sidharth Malhotra with actresses Rashmika Mandanna pose for a photo during the song launch 'Rabba Janda' from their upcoming film 'Mission Majnu', in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Christmas celebration in Tokyo, Japan
 People walk along a street with Christmas lights in Shibuya, Tokyo, Japan. *Xinhua*



Rail travel in SW China on fast track as new line opens
 This aerial picture shows a Fuxing high-speed train making a trial run before the opening of the new Chengdu-Kunming Railway in Mianning County, southwest China's Sichuan Province. *Xinhua*



Türkiye upbeat on tourism growth for 2023
 Picture shows the Bosphorus Strait in Istanbul, Türkiye. *Xinhua*



YOU ORDER
WE DELIVER

Download the app

ROUND-UP

STUDY SUGGESTS PEOPLE SLEEP LEAST



FROM
EARLY
30S
TO
EARLY
50S

The study, involving 730,187 participants spread over 63 countries, revealed how sleep patterns change across the lifespan, and how they differ between countries.

A NEW STUDY led by UCL, University of East Anglia and University of Lyon researchers has found that people sleep less in mid-adulthood than they do in early and late adulthood. Sleep duration declines in early adulthood until age 33 and then picks up again at age 53, according to the findings published in Nature Communications. The study, involving 730,187 participants spread over 63 countries, revealed how sleep patterns change across the lifespan, and how they differ between countries. Study participants were playing the Sea Hero Quest mobile game, a citizen science venture designed for neuroscience research, created by Deutsche Telekom in partnership with Alzheimer’s Research UK, UCL, UEA and game developers Glitchers. Designed to aid Alzheimer’s research by shedding light on differences in spatial navigational abilities, over four million people have played Sea Hero Quest, contributing to numerous studies across the project as a whole. In addition to completing tasks testing navigational ability, anyone playing the game is asked to answer questions about demographic characteristics as well as other questions that can be useful to neuroscience research, such as on sleep patterns. The researchers, led by Professor Hugo Spiers (UCL Psychology & Language Sciences) and Dr Antoine Coutrot (CNRS, University of Lyon) found that across the study sample, people sleep an average of 7.01 hours per night, with women sleeping 7.5 minutes longer than men on average. They found that the youngest participants in the sample (minimum age 19) slept the most, and sleep duration declined throughout people’s 20s and early 30s before plateauing until their early 50s and increasing again. The pattern, including the newly-identified key time points of age 33 when declining sleep plateaus and 53 for sleep to increase again, was the same for men and women, and across countries and education levels. The researchers say the decline in sleep during mid-life may be due to the demands of childcare and working life. Professor Spiers said: “Previous studies have found associations between age and sleep duration, but ours is the first large study to identify these three distinct phases across the life course. We found that across the globe, people sleep less during mid-adulthood, but average sleep duration varies between regions and between countries.” People who report sleeping the most are in Eastern European countries such as Albania, Slovakia, Romania and the Czech Republic, reporting 20-40 minutes extra sleep per night and the least in South East Asian countries including the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. People in the United Kingdom reported sleeping slightly less than average. People tended to sleep a bit less in countries closer to the equator. The researchers found that navigational ability was unaffected by sleep duration for most of the sample, except for among older adults (aged 54-70) whose optimal sleep duration was seven hours, although they caution that the findings among older adults might be impacted by underlying health conditions. -ANI



ROUND-UP



SHOP NOW
rafeeq.om



Honor X6 debuts in Oman with MHD-ITICS as exclusive distributor

The Honor X6 is equipped with a triple camera system that includes a 50MP main camera, a 2MP macro camera and a 2MP depth camera, an ultra-large 5000 mAh battery and expandable storage to go along with its 4GB+64GB memory

MUSCAT: MHD-ITICS officially announced its appointment as the exclusive distributor for Honor mobiles in Oman during an event held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Qurum on December 22 to launch the Honor X6.

Delegates present from Honor included House Ma - GCC CEO, Amol Govind Sonake - VP, GCC Sales, Jack Chen - Product Manager, GCC and Russell Huo - Country Manager, Oman who attended the event along with the management team of MHD-ITICS.

Addressing the event, House Ma, GCC CEO, Honor stated, "Honor team considers Oman as one of our key strategic markets in the Middle East. Our partnership with the consumer division of MHD-ITICS is the result of our study of their excellent distribution network, logistics capabilities, and infrastructure. Through this strategic partnership, we are targeting accelerated growth in market share for Honor. Their inherent zeal for business, responsible and practical distribution practices and an unwavering commitment to delivering best-in-class customer service is what inspired Honor to work with MHD-ITICS. This alliance will also improve the availability of our products in the market, enhance the shopping experience of our customers and will help us achieve our ambitious business goals," he added.

During the event, Honor launched its new smartphone - Honor X6, which is the latest addition to its state-of-the-art 'X series'. The Honor X6 is equipped with a triple camera system that includes a 50MP main camera, a 2MP macro camera and a 2MP depth camera, an ultra-large 5000 mAh battery and expandable storage to go along with its 4GB+64GB memory. Users can effortlessly capture, record and express themselves creatively through photography. Fitted out with a 6.5-inch Honor Full-View Display, it offers an excellent viewing experience.

Coupled with a host of eye care features including eye comfort mode and dark mode, the Honor X6 delivers an incredibly comfortable viewing experience in a variety of user circumstances, making it ideal for reading articles, streaming movies, or browsing images in sunlight or poorly lit environments.

MHD-ITICS, under the guidance of Lujaina Mohsin Darwish, has achieved commendable growth in recent years. Moreover, the company has been at the forefront of setting high benchmarks in the industry and supporting local talent. The core management team has devised a three-pronged business strategy that includes growing existing businesses, expanding into adjacencies and diversifying into new business areas. As a key part of the organisation, the consumer division has always endeavoured to bring customers in Oman the latest technologies and products. The strategic partnership with Honor represents a milestone for the company in this direction.



NEW TRADE PORTAL

Bank Muscat's DigiTrade well received by bank's corporate customers



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat's new trade portal DigiTrade, which was launched earlier this year has been well-received by the bank's corporate and institutional customers for facilitating online initiation of trade transactions and real-time tracking.

Introduced in line with the bank's customer-centric vision "To serve you better, everyday" and commitment to digital transformation in line with Oman Vision 2040, Bank Muscat DigiTrade helps corporate customers log in from their office or home and perform a number of paperless transactions for different trade products and services.

Corporate customers have particularly benefited from the single sign-on process using their Online Banking credentials instead of having to visit a branch and submit requests in person during regular banking hours.

In particular, the new trade portal enables speedier, efficient and highly-secure trade-financing solutions for corporate customers who will receive auto notifications and email alerts upon the processing of transactions by the bank, and can generate electronic copies of all transaction advice and related Swift messages. Easy-to-use templates, an in-built search tool for easy retrieval of records, and a calendar menu option to schedule transactions are some of the other salient features of the Bank Muscat DigiTrade, which is easily accessed through the bank's online banking platform.

Bank Muscat, which is recognised as one of the leading Trade Finance providers in the region provides tailor-made global trade products and services as part of its trade financing solutions, which are simple to use and come with a highly-competitive pricing structure. The bank issues Letters of Credit, all types of Guarantees, Standby LCs, handles documents under collection, offers document checking services under export Letters of Credit, confirms Letters of Credit and provides various trade financing solutions including receivable financing, trust receipt financing etc., and facilitates secured trade payments and receipts between buyers and sellers. With a strong network of over 500 correspondent banks across the globe and a highly-experienced pool of trade specialists, Bank Muscat offers a number of customised solutions to meet the varying demands of its customers.

KITCHEN FITTINGS

Danube Home's customised kitchen solutions combine great style and functionality

MUSCAT: Danube Home the region's leading one-stop-shop for home improvement and furnishing needs has a one-stop solution for customers looking for the perfect kitchen.

With a range of stylish and functional kitchen fittings, designed to suit the tastes and needs of every family - from space saving storage to state-of-the-art design innovation and beyond, Danube Home is setting a new standard for home kitchens. Apart from the stellar range of products, Danube Home also offers a Design and Develop service that helps customers design their dream kitchens, from scratch.

Danube Home offers free kitchen designing and consultation services. The in-house interior design expert starts with an initial consultation with the customer,



to understand their specific requirements in order to design a seamless workspace.

The team uses the blueprint of the kitchen provided by the customer and performs a site visit to take accurate measurements. The designers then create the perfect kitchen and present it to customers. Once the final design is locked, the customers can sign off on the project and watch their dream kitchen come to life.

The expert Danube Home Design and Develop team works with a wide variety of kitchen styles and can recommend the ideal solution based on the available space - from islands, to parallel and U-shaped kitchens and more. Customers can

also choose from a variety of natural or modern finishes like melamine finish, lacquer finish, acrylic finish and PVC finish, depending on their specific tastes. Danube Home products are affordably priced and our design team is expert in working within budgetary and time constraints.

To make the process even easier, Danube Home offers the option of kitchen designs that come with built-in appliances like refrigerators, ovens, stove, chimneys, dishwashers and washing machines so customers can maximise the use of their kitchens. What's more, all Danube Home Kitchens come with a warranty of up to 30 years so customers can be assured that Danube Home is just a call away in case of any issue and your kitchen will remain perfect for a long time.

5-STAR HOTEL

Sheraton Oman's GM shares 2022 journey

MUSCAT: After another busy and exciting year has just flown by, here we are again, counting down the final days until the New Year.

It is no secret that the past year for us has been quite inspiring, especially with all the improvement projects we have undertaken. We had plenty of meetings and events held at the hotel, proving the award by the International Travel Awards - "Leading Business Hotel 2022". Sheraton Oman Hotel has set the trends in terms of MICE and outside catering services in Oman. The hotel features meeting rooms with natural daylight and the largest hotel ballroom in the country. This along with high service standards make it a famous and favourite spot for different events, including but not limited to exhibitions, conferences, weddings, etc.

Our chefs and kitchen teams are well respected in the care sector and the wider catering industry. We offer a bespoke service that is unrivalled. Our Outside Catering Team is committed to delivering an exciting choice of food that doesn't cost the earth. And we are



Samir Messaoudi, General Manager, Sheraton Oman

proud to have been nominated in the Outside Catering Team of the Year category by Caterer Middle East Awards 2022.

Each outside catering is not just a service; it is a project for a Sheraton Oman Hotel team.

Some of you may have visited Cliff Deck in Muscat Bay, the Instagram-worthy café with stunning views. It started as a catered service, where the hotel delivered daily services to Muscat Bay villas and a Muscat Bay outlet. By

partnering with Oman Aquarium, the hotel catered to the guests for indulgent Iftar daily during Ramadan 2022 in an unmatched underwater setting. And now are serving afternoon tea every Friday and Saturday.

Speaking about Afternoon Tea, most of you must have tried it at Sheraton Oman. Our customised cakes and Omani Halwa are well known not only in Oman but UAE too. In the New Year, we will continue welcoming our guests to our theme nights: the newly launched Delhi-Lahori night with a fusion of Indian and Pakistani cuisines on Wednesdays, Thursday Gaucho Night in our signature Asado Steakhouse and Omani Sabla Night with traditional favourite Omani cuisine on Fridays.

Hotelier Power ME has marked us in the following categories: General manager, Executive Chef, Housekeeping Leader and Marketing Manager.

We have also won the World Travel Awards in the category of "Oman's Leading Hotel 2022". National Hospitality Institute

has awarded a few of our Oman talents in the category of Sales Person, Events Person, Concierge and Kitchen Assistant.

I would like to thank our associates for their continuous dedication and support. Thank you for your hard work and devotion to our common goals and we're excited to see what kind of work we'll achieve together this year!

Oman's market is emerging and we extend our gratitude to all our supporters who have been with us through thick and thin. I would like to thank them for their continuous support towards Sheraton Oman and I hope that our friendship grows many folds in the New Year.

I want to give my warmest thanks to our Marriott Bonvoy members for your support this year, to our event guests for attending, and to all our friends for following our journey. In 2023 we want to be able to serve you even better and provide you with as much value as possible. As always, your comfort, well-being, and safety continue to be our highest priorities.



Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water



HYDRATE SMARTLY

- ✓ Ultra-hydrating
- ✓ Revitalizing
- ✓ Energizing

pH 9.1 to 9.5



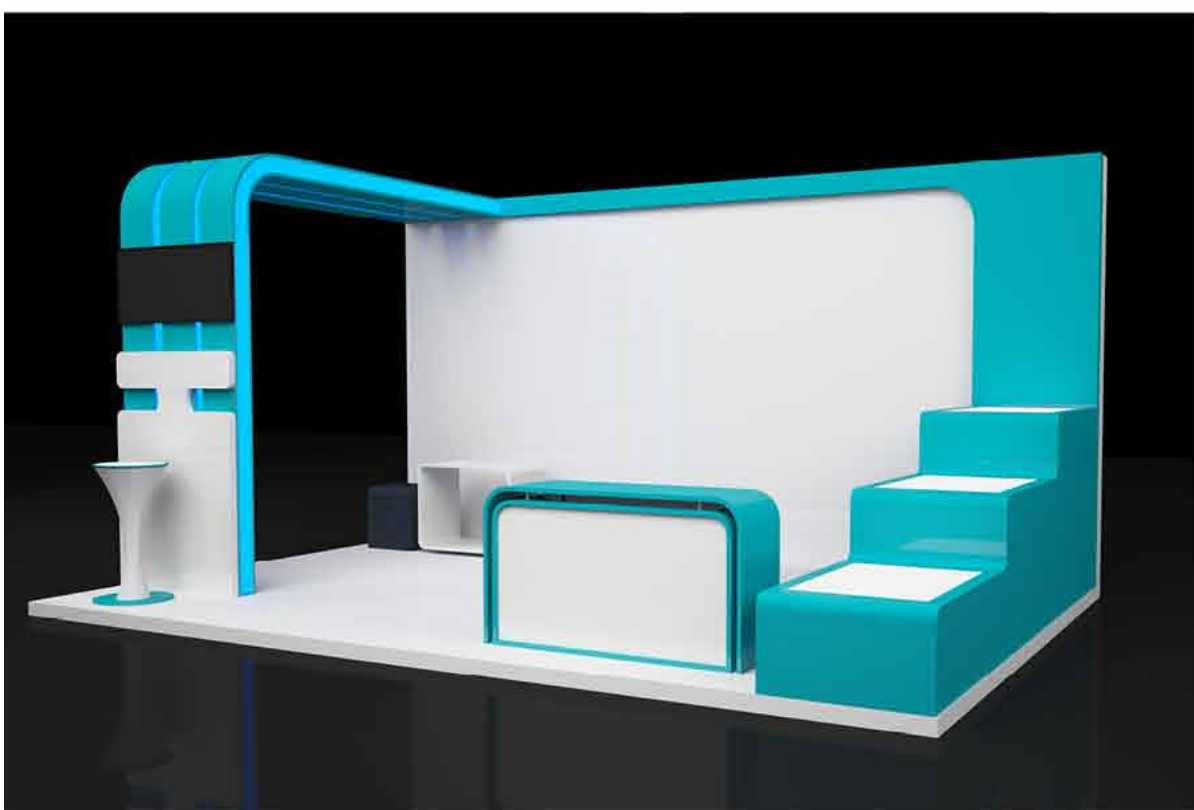
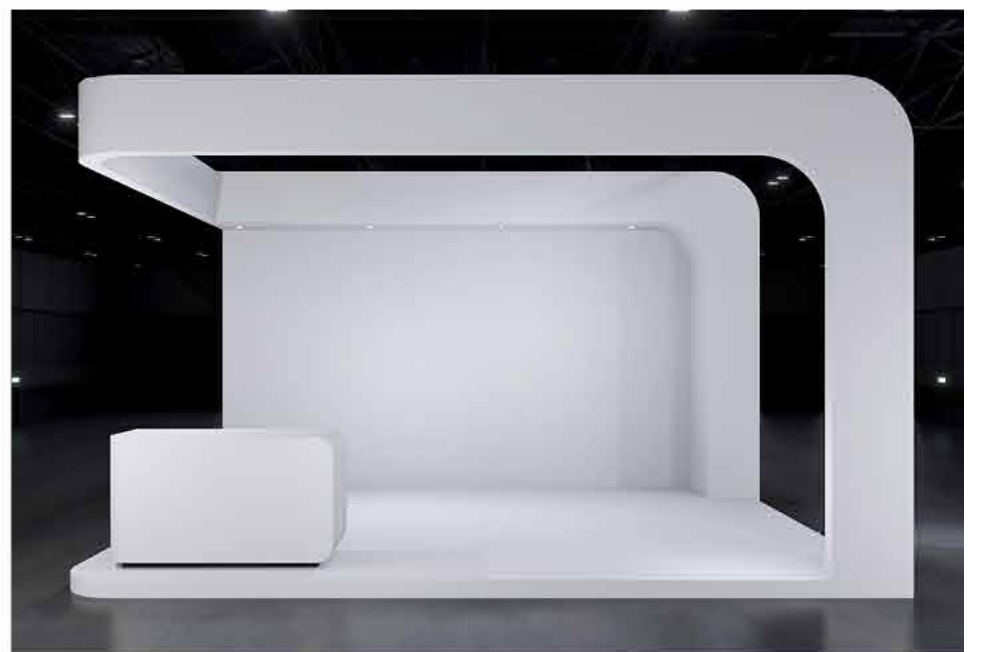
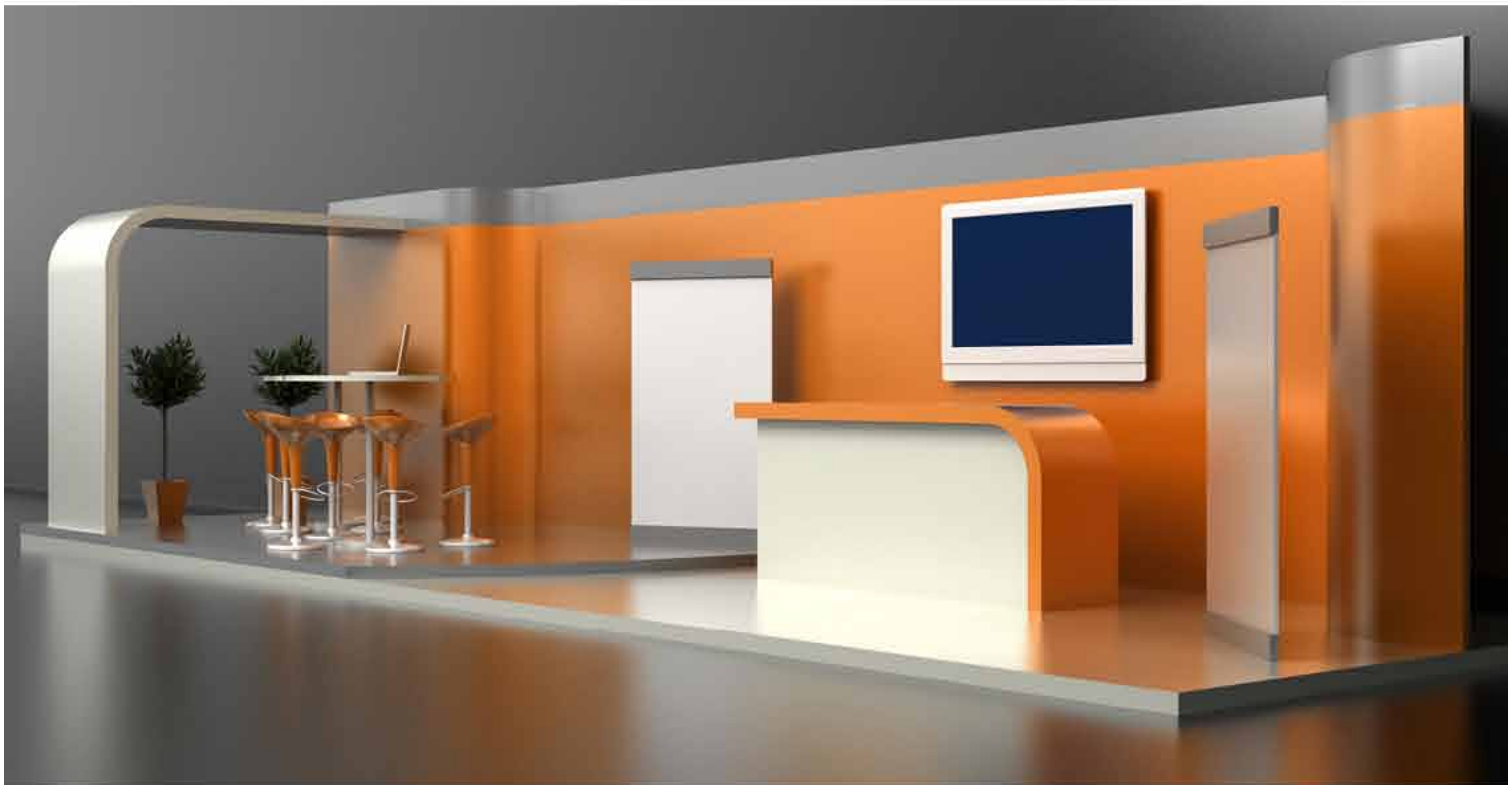
Toll-free
800 71 222 or
9275 5522

C.R. No.: 1365452

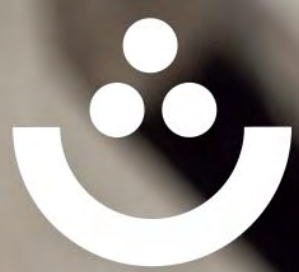


**FOR COST
EFFECTIVE
EXHIBITION
BOOTHS/
DISPLAY
STANDS**

**Call us on
99614066**



**Contact us on wefix@mmg.com
or call/whatsApp 99614066/ 95405033
to make customized exhibition booths**



thawani

The first e-Wallet with a card in Oman



www.thawani.om

Contact us:
merchant@thawani.om
+968 91304608

Click to download
and order your card for free



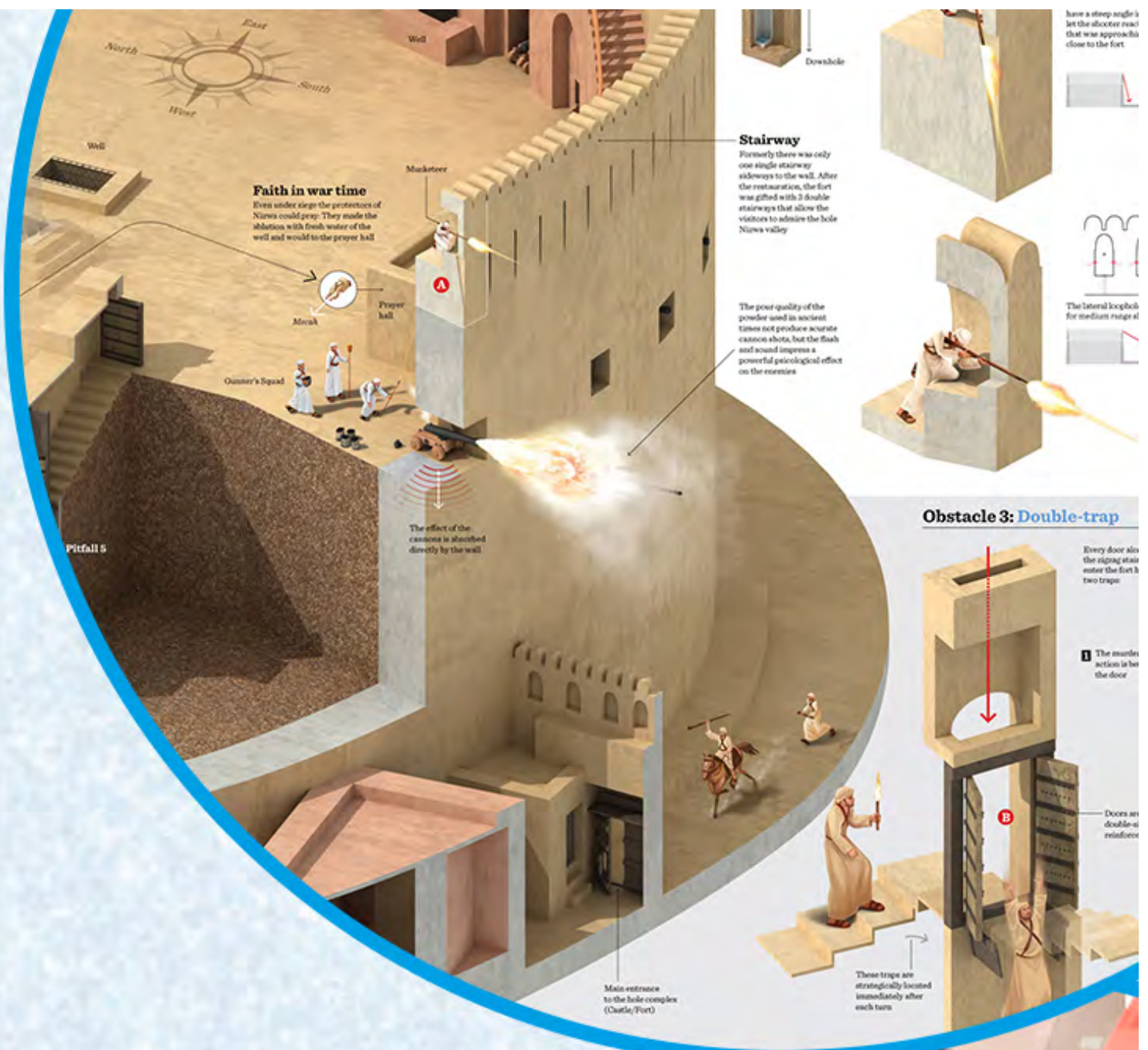
Download on the
App Store



GET IT ON
Google Play



novagram



Let Novagram tell your story

Infographics
Infomercials
TV Ads
Corporate Videos
Insta Reels
Video Editing
Multimedia & Animation
Studio Services

CALL US:
97211869

sales@novagram.om



مجموعة مسقط للإعلام
Muscat Media Group

