

HOLIDAY NOTICE

The next edition of Times of Oman will be on Sunday, July 2, 2023 due to Eid Al Adha holidays.



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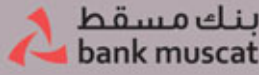
HM SENDS GREETINGS TO MADAGASCAR

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Andry Rajoelina of the Republic of Madagascar on his country's Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Rajoelina and the people of Madagascar. **-ONA**



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ORDER OF FELICITATION

Russian Union of Museums' President honoured

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has conferred the Order of Felicitation on Prof. Mikhail Piotrovsky, President of the Union of Museums of Russia, Director-General of the State Hermitage Museum and member of the Board of Trustees of the National Museum of Oman, in appreciation for his efforts and contributions to promoting cultural cooperation between the National Museum and the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg.

The order was handed over by Sayyid Khalid Hilal Al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, in the presence of Jamal Hassan Al Musawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum and the chargé d'affaires of the Russian Embassy to Oman.

The conferment underlines Piotrovsky's role in boosting cultural and civilisational promotion between Oman and Russia. **-ONA**



Royal Decree ratifies tax pact between Oman and Egypt

See story on >A3

LEADERS OF ARAB, ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

HM exchanges Eid Al Adha greetings

MUSCAT: On the advent of Eid Al Adha 1444 AH, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has exchanged cables of greetings with leaders of Arab and Islamic countries.

In his cables, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to them and the peoples of their countries.

His Majesty the Sultan prayed to Allah the Almighty to grant the leaders happiness and success to achieve further progress and prosperity for their peoples and for the return of this and similar

occasions on all Muslims with blessings and well-being.

In their turn, the leaders expressed their sincere greetings and best wishes to His Majesty the Sultan and the Omani people. They prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect his Majesty and grant him good health, well-being and a long life.

They also prayed to the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions on His Majesty, the Omani people, the Islamic and Arab nations welfare and blessings. **-ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Steps taken for safety of Khareef visitors

1 The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has confirmed its readiness to provide firefighting, rescue and ambulance services to citizens, residents and visitors to the Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season 2023. The CDAA also advised people not to swim in undesignated places such as water springs and pools for their safety. **>A2**

OMAN

Over 93,000 invasive birds eliminated

2 More than 93,000 invasive birds have been eliminated in Dhofar Governorate. The number of invasive birds, the 'myna and Indian crow', that were eliminated in the Dhofar Governorate reached more than 93,000 as part of the national campaign to combat them, which was implemented by the Environment Authority. The campaign last lasted for six months. **>A4**

WORLD

Abu Dhabi welcomes Tom Cruise



3 Tom Cruise, the Hollywood star returned in style on Sunday to Abu Dhabi International Airport's Midfield Terminal, where key parts of the movie were shot, ahead of the film's Middle East premiere at the Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental on Monday night. Tom Cruise unveiled custom Mission: Impossible livery on an Etihad Airways Boeing 787 Dreamliner. **>A6**

OMAN SEEKS INVESTMENT IN GREEN ENERGY FROM ITALY, SWITZERLAND

Oman is now

considered among the world's leading players in the green energy industry

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, blessed by vast sun-soaked desert expanses and rugged wind-swept terrain, is emerging as one of the main destinations for renewable resources and green hydrogen.

With the government's emphasis on renewable energy and green hydrogen, the Sultanate of Oman is now considered among the world's leading players in the green energy industry as it has already kick-started the development of a green hydrogen based sector in line with the government's net zero strategy.

In line with the development of the sector, a high-level Omani delegation, led by Mohsin bin Hamad Al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, recently concluded a mission to Italy and Switzerland.



In Italy, the delegation discussed with their counterparts areas of cooperation in renewable energy and green hydrogen besides consolidation of bilateral ties.

They talked on ways to bring in investments to Oman and exchanged knowledge with leading companies, institutions and research institutes in Italy.

The delegation included participants from the Ministry of

Energy and Minerals and the Authority for Public Services Regulation, (APSR), in the presence of representatives of the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Italy.

The primary focus was to identify potential areas of synergy and establish joint ventures across various sectors of the energy industry with the focus on sustainable technologies and innovations.

The delegation then visited Switzerland to participate in the Business Forum of the Omani-Swiss Friendship Association, which aims to highlight best practices and discuss future prospects in key sectors such as renewable energy, green hydrogen, storage systems and carbon neutrality.

In his address at the forum, Al Hadhrami emphasised the Sultanate of Oman's unwavering commitment to transitioning into a sustainable economy and creating an environment conducive to green investments.

Dr. Firas Al Abduwani, Director General of the Directorate General of Renewable Energy and Hydrogen at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, spoke about Oman's strategic approach to green hydrogen through an insightful presentation. **>A3**

FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT

Oman Investment Authority allocates OMR100mn to boost liquidity at MSX

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has announced the allocation of OMR100 million to support Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) through a "liquidity fund" initiative launched by the OIA in cooperation with the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development.

Aoun Abbas Al Bahrani, Director General of Public Market Investments at the OIA, said that the Liquidity Fund initiative, launched by OIA in cooperation with the National Programme for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector



Development last week, is a portfolio worth OMR100 million aimed to support the market maker and liquidity provider in MSX.

He added that the Liquidity Fund portfolio will constitute a percentage of the daily trading volume on the stock exchange—considering the activity of investors and their interaction with economic news and the disclosure of listed companies.

Al Bahrani told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the initiative is a financial instrument that enables the OIA to participate in a percentage of the daily

trading at MSX. He affirmed OIA's keenness to cooperate with companies that will work in market making and attracting new investments and liquidity to MSX.

The initiative emerges as an embodiment of priorities of Oman Vision 2040. It comes in pursuance of initiatives aimed at expanding MSX, realising sustainability in the stock market, enhancing its attractiveness to investors and augmenting client confidence therein. This will reflect positively on increasing trading volumes and attracting new companies. **-ONA**



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35⁰ MUSCAT



PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:15pm
Asr.....3:32pm
Maghrib.....7:02pm
Isha.....8:25pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....3:55am



CDAA takes measures for safety of Khareef visitors

The authority has approved its operational plans for the Dhofar Khareef season for the year 2023



Colonel Mubarak bin Salim Al Araiimi

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority(CDAA) has confirmed its readiness to provide firefighting, rescue and ambulance services to citizens, residents and visitors to the Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season 2023.

Colonel Mubarak bin Salim Al Araiimi, Director General of Operations and Training, in charge of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, said. “The authority has approved its operational plans for the Dhofar Khareef season for the year 2023. The plan included strengthening its current centres and publishing other points on the roads leading to the Dhofar Governorate in each of the governorates (Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah, and Al Wusta) to deal with communications received at the points through the Police Operations Centre and other operations centres in the governorates.”

The Colonel indicated that two points have been added on the coastal road linking the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah with Al Wusta Governorate to Dhofar Governorate, and four other points on the road from the Dakhiliyah and Al Dhahirah Governorates to Dhofar Governorate in order to provide services to users of those roads.

Al Araiimi stressed the need for



institutions, companies, and property and building owners to adhere to the requirements of civil protection by undertaking necessary maintenance of facilities and following safety procedures against accidents. He indicated that the authority’s civil protection efforts will be doubled by inspecting fa-

cilities, monitoring violations and taking appropriate measures.

The Director General of Operations and Training at the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority stated that the authority is constantly seeking to raise the level of awareness among all segments of society by using its official plat-



forms on social media and other medium, distributing educational brochures, holding events, and publishing field teams in various locations for awareness and guidance.

Al Araiimi appreciated the great role played by the media in order to enhance preventive awareness among the various

segments of society.

Safety precautions

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority called on visitors during the Khareef season to follow safety instructions while visiting the governorate, prepare well for the trip, maintain the vehicle, pre-

pare a first aid bag, and ensure that the fire extinguisher is valid. In addition to identifying resting sites and vehicle supply service stations on the itinerary, choosing the appropriate time for movement and standing for a rest in case of feeling tired and exhausted, and adhering to safety rules.

The Authority stresses the need to follow safety guidelines during their trip in Dhofar Governorate and not to swim in undesignated places such as (water springs and pools) and beaches due to high sea waves and water currents that increase in intensity with the advent of the Khareef season. Also to stay away from dangerous sites, waterfalls, and dangerous heights. In addition to monitoring children and not leaving them in vehicles while the guardian goes out to shop or otherwise, in order to preserve the safety of everyone.

14-YEAR-OLD PATIENT

Doctors at SQU Hospital conduct surgery to restore hearing ability

Times News Service

MUSCAT : In a first, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital has successfully implanted the latest hearing-aid on a 14-year-old patient suffering from severe hearing loss.

The operation was performed by a specialised surgical team headed by Dr. Khalid bin Said Al Zaabi, Consultant Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Surgeon at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital.

Al Zaabi confirmed that the team did not face any difficulties during the surgical procedure, which lasted about two hours, as it was well -prepared for. The team had also contacted the device manufacturer and undertaken appropriate measures before the operation.

Al Zaabi explained to Oman News Agency that the device is the latest of its kind by the manufacturer, and was implanted for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman, indicating that there is a potential to implant such specific devices for patients in the coming time. He also mentioned there was a continuous coordination with the manufacturers of such devices.

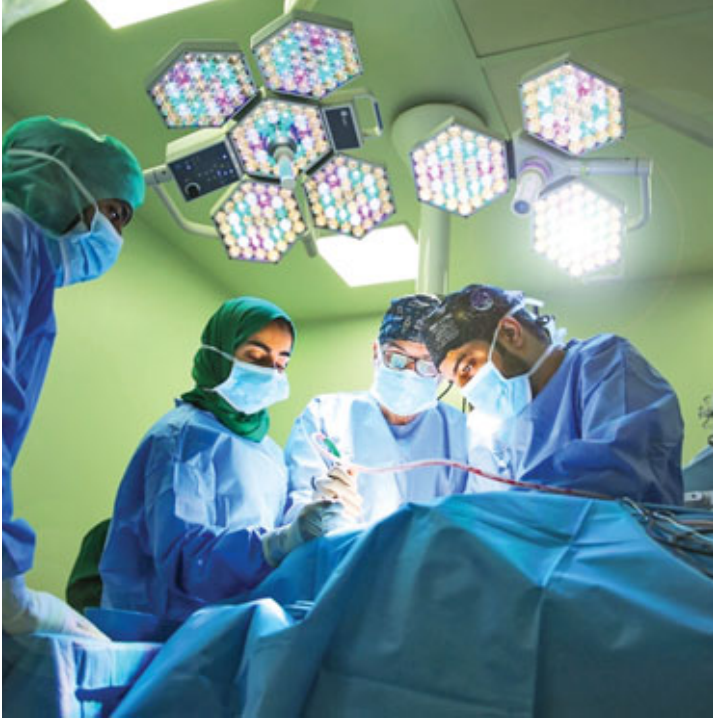


The patient had been suffering from a hearing loss in the left ear for a long time, which affected her daily life and her academic achievement, especially in sub-

jects that depend on a good degree of hearing.

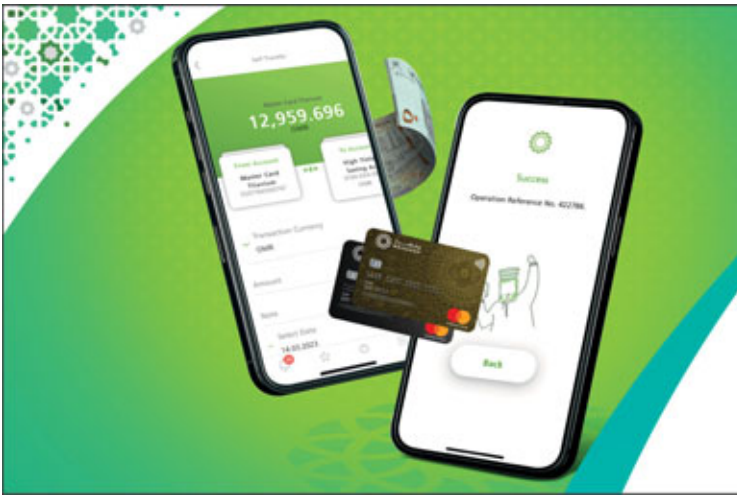
After the surgery, the patient was interviewed in the presence of her parents, and the device was

turned on for the first time. The device could successfully restore hearing in the affected ear for the first time since the patient had lost it several years ago.



It is noteworthy that this type of hearing aid is ideal in many cases of hearing loss but is not applicable to cases of conductive hearing loss after ear decay operations in

which the ossicles of hearing are eroded, and cases of congenital anomalies at birth such as congenital obstruction of the ear pinna from birth.



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COMMENTARY

We need to be kind to ‘idiots’



SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

If you are looking for a cure for idiots then you will be waiting for quite a long time because the medical world see them as a nuisance only.

I have come to a conclusion that we must be kind to idiots. They do not really mean to upset any one. They just voice their opinions though not in a coherent way like we expect. They deserve to have their opinions just like the rest of us.

But how do you define a person who you think is an idiot? Do these people have no intellect? I don't think so. It all depends who we define a person as an idiot. If they do not conform to our way of thinking or speak in the same wavelength we are used to, then we need to adjust with their conversation when we are talking to them. To dismiss them as idiots is not a kind way to relate with them.

We are not all born equal. It is not what we see with our eyes is important but we see in the eyes of our minds. Yes, there is a cure for people we see as “idiots” but the medicine is not available for prescription. They can be helped by people around them when they remove conditions while they are with them. One word comes to mind about it. Tolerance.

Therefore, not everyone who talks ‘randomly’ is an idiot. Albert Einstein, the academic ‘genius’ used to talk ‘loosely’ when he was in social circles. It is an established fact that the famous scientist ‘never knew when to stop’ once he started going when he was with friends. As a matter of fact, not all his words were ‘coherent.’ But no one called him an idiot when he was alive and certainly not after his death.

So sometimes, there is a thin line that divides an ‘idiot’ and a ‘genius.’ It all depends in the perception of listeners when they talk. And of course the amount of tolerance we reserve for them. People like Einstein can command a lot of tolerance just because of their professional status. But your next door neighbor, unfortunately, who just had a rough day at work, cannot be forgiven when they start talking what we think as ‘nonsense.’

When you come to think of it, ‘loose talk’ as we see it, comes out of the mouths of people who have been treated unfairly or let down by people around them. If we think they should be a cure for whom we see as an idiot, then the remedy is simple. They just need a listening ear. In other words, they need people to be there for them when they hit the hard times.

But then, as proven by the likes of Einstein, we all fall into the trap of an idiotic path sometimes. No one is really spared from it. We are all idiots at one time or another when the stress level hits the roof of our heads.

So next time when you sit with someone talking out of turn, then you must understand that the person just need a listening ear to get back on the right track. That is the cure for people we wrongly dismissed as ‘idiots’.

STATE COUNCIL

Draft Tourism Law discussed

MUSCAT: The State Council yesterday held its 10th session of the 7th term. It discussed the draft Tourism Law and two studies; the first on legislative controls and regulations of e-commerce and the second on electric vehicles. The session was held under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council. He valued the constructive discussions to come up with unified visions on draft laws referred by the government. -ONA



RENEWABLE ENERGY

Efforts to promote green hydrogen

<FROM A1> He highlighted the country's efforts to promote the use of green hydrogen as a means to achieve sustainability in the energy sector, as well as the opportunities for investment in renewable energy and green hydrogen in the Sultanate of Oman.

Investment opportunities

The forum also discussed the investment opportunities, expertise and capabilities that the Sultanate of Oman possesses to achieve success in the field of hydrogen and renewable energy.

Participants presented practical models for cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and Switzerland in the field of green hydrogen and negative emission technologies.

During the forum, a session entitled “Oman and Switzerland: Best Practices of Technology Transfer, Investment and Cooperation” was held, in which a group of experts and specialists participated, during which they reviewed best practices in technology transfer and investment and enhancing cooperation between the two countries in these fields.

Al Hadhrami stressed the paramount importance of cooperation, experience sharing, and knowledge exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and Switzerland, particularly in the energy sector.

This Omani Business Forum in Switzerland is an example of the unwavering dedication to augmenting economic and investment collaboration between the two nations in renewable energy and green hydrogen.

The event presented an invaluable opportunity to exchange experiences, forge strategic alliances between corporations and institutions, and ultimately contribute to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

Oman's keen interest in the sustainable sector, coupled with its strategic commitment to net zero, aligns harmoniously with the nation's ambitious aspirations of emerging as a global leader in hydrogen exports by 2030.

Leveraging its natural and geographical advantages, Oman is poised to spearhead advancements in this promising sector, which holds tremendous potential for sustainability and significantly contributes to the realisation of Oman's Vision 2040.

The new renewable sector is expected to propel economic diversification and secure a prosperous future for Oman's energy landscape.

DECREE

Royal Decree ratifies tax pact between Oman, Egypt

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued Royal Decree No. 43/2023 on the ratification of an agreement between the governments of the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The decree deals with the elimination of double taxation for income tax, as well as the prevention and avoidance of tax evasion, signed in Cairo on 22 My 2023—after presenting the same before the Shura Council.

It reads as follows: Article (1) ratifies the above-mentioned agreement in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and takes effect from its date of issue. -ONA



BUSINESS FORUM

Oman, Switzerland focus on boosting private sector role

LUCERNE: Represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Sultanate of Oman participated in 3rd edition of Oman-Switzerland Business Forum, being held in the city of Lucerne with the objective of enhancing the role of the private sector, achieving economic diversification and financial sustainability and attracting foreign investment.

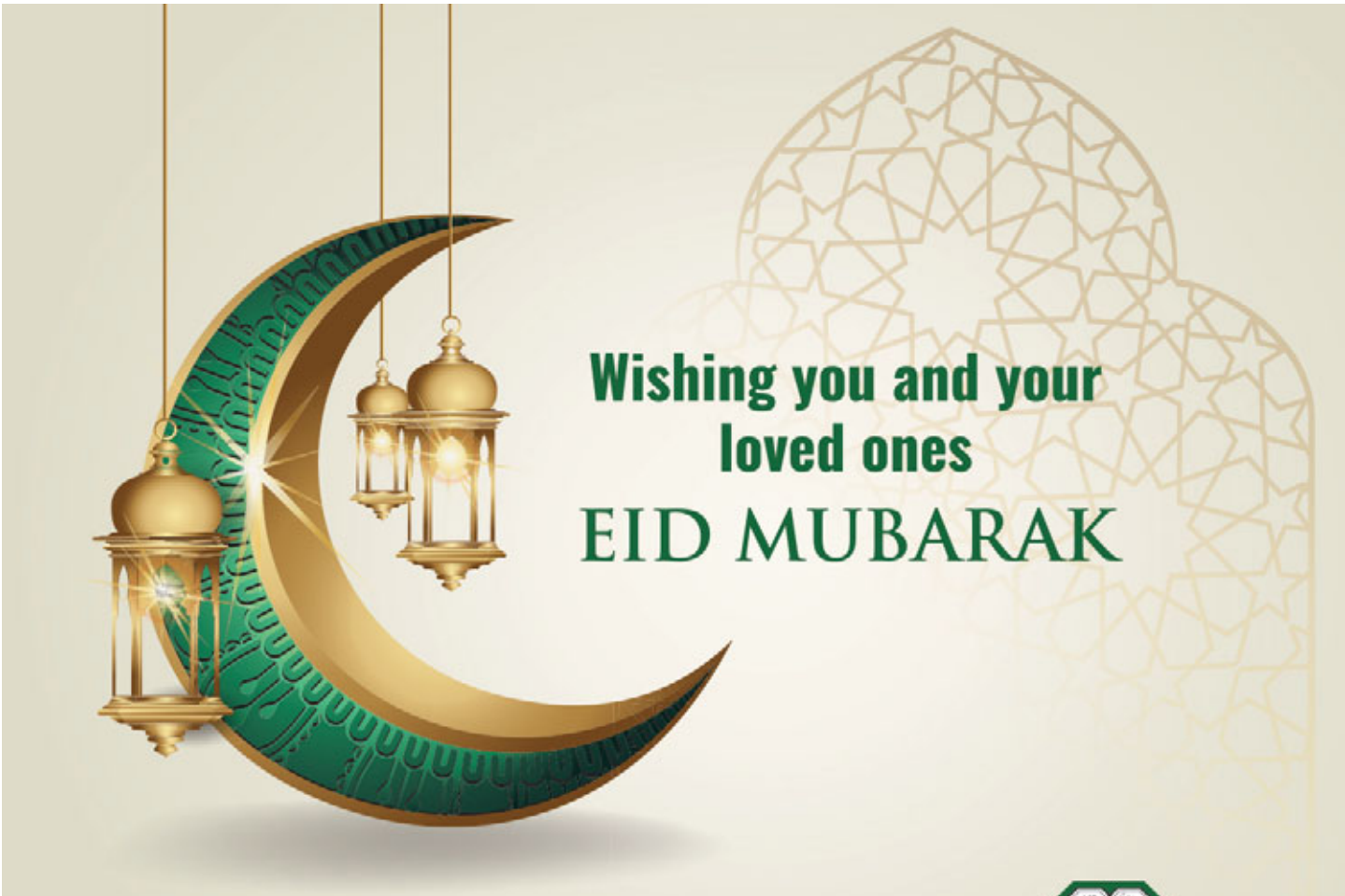
The forum was organised by Oman-Switzerland Friendship Association and the Advisory Organization for the Swiss Export and Investment Programme in Lucerne.

The forum is held under the theme of “Opportunities for Investment and Cooperation in Renewable Energy, Infrastructure and Tourism”.

In a speech on the occasion, Eng. Khamis Mohammed Al Shamakhi, Transport Undersecretary at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, outlined the business advantages offered by the infrastructure sector in Oman, notably investment opportunities in the field of transport and logistics.

During a workshop on the sidelines of the forum, Eng. Khamis Al Shamakhi spoke about other unique advantages such as Oman's geographical location, its developing infrastructure, its ports and other facilities. -ONA





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OVER 93,000 INVASIVE BIRDS ELIMINATED IN OMAN



Times News Service

MUSCAT: More than 93,000 invasive birds have been eliminated in Dhofar Governorate.

The number of invasive birds, the 'myna and Indian crow', that were eliminated in the Dhofar Governorate reached more than 93,000 birds as part of the national campaign to combat them, which was implemented by the Environment Authority. It lasted for six months.

This came during a review of the results of the campaign at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah, under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki Al Said, Governor of Dhofar, in the presence of Dr. Abdullah bin Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority and Chairman of the Main Committee for Combating Invasive Birds.

Eng. Sulaiman bin Nasser Al Akhzami, Director General of the Directorate General of Nature



Conservation at the Environment Authority, delivered a speech in which he referred to the authority's efforts in the field of combating invasive species in general, and in particular the invasive birds "myna and Indian crow" as a result of their spread in different areas of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. They have come to Oman through ports on cargo ships and steamships, in addition to their release in the wild after keeping as ornamental birds.

"In light of the initial indications and field observations, invasive birds were dealt with and

solutions were found to limit their spread in the Sultanate of Oman due to the effects they cause on the Omani environment, including the effects on the ecosystem and the balance of its components by targeting local birds as prey for them and cause an ecological balance. In addition to the diversity of its sources of nutrition for wildlife, which negatively affects the economic resources and sources of income in the Sultanate of Oman," Al Akhzami added.

Al Akhzami confirmed that these types of invasive birds are concentrated in the coastal areas, espe-

cially the governorates of North and South Al Batinah and Muscat, all the way to the Dhofar Governorate, where they were observed in large numbers in the coastal areas and neighbouring villages

The event included two visual presentations. The first dealt with the field work of the national campaign to combat invasive birds in Dhofar Governorate, while the second reviewed the field surveys that were carried out to determine the hotspots of the spread of these birds and the sites where they exist. In addition to the signing of a cooperation program between the Environment Authority and the University of Dhofar in the field of nature conservation and environmental preservation.

In conclusion, the Governor of Dhofar, the sponsor of the occasion, honoured a number of relevant authorities, institutions and individuals participating in the national campaign to combat invasive birds in Dhofar Governorate.

EUROPEAN UNION

‘EU and GCC have dynamic relationship’

MUSCAT: The European Union and the GCC have a dynamic relationship, and both regions are working together in many fields such as trade, innovation, multilateralism, democracy and social transformation.

Human rights issue has been an important factor for both the regions and they are working on it through dialogues.

In an exclusive interview with the *Times of Oman*, Luis Miguel, the spokesperson of the EU for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, said that the EU wants to have dialogues to see how both the regions can understand each other's issues better through regular interactions.

The EU and GCC regularly hold meetings on the human rights is-

sue. Both regions seek a stronger partnership on human rights to solve conflicts and achieve peace and prosperity.

The EU has 140 offices around the world which help it to better engage with other countries. Miguel stated that the EU will open an office in the Sultanate of Oman soon.

— Times News Service



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SENIOR EU OFFICIAL

Oman is a beautiful country and a role model of development

MUSCAT: The European Union and the Sultanate of Oman have been engaged in political discussions to promote security, stability, and sustainability around the world, said Roberto Bendini, Principal Administrator and Directorate-General for External Policies of the European Union and Middle East.

In a special interview to the

Times of Oman, Roberto Bendini, said that the Sultanate of Oman is a beautiful country and a role model of development.

Bendini said that Oman is not only a beautiful place to visit, but also a country that spreads peace in the world.

“It was Oman's efforts that brought together Iran and Saudi Arabia for talks and the world

knows what it has done to bring peace in the strife-torn Yemen. Even the GCC neighbours have re-established their ties with Qatar, courtesy Oman. It's a great peace of diplomacy,” Bendini added.

The European Union is working on a visa waiver scheme for the people of Oman and the GCC countries. “As we discussed in

the Muscat meeting, steps have been taken to allow Omani citizens to get faster and longer period visas. Some issues included in the visa waiver scheme have been solved,” he said.

“After late Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimur took power, Oman became an oasis of peace. Now, a number of development projects have been started to promote

green energy and tourism,” said Bendini.

He stated that it was a mistake that no one from the EU had come when late Sultan Qaboos passed away. However, a team from the EU came after a week and they apologised for not showing up. “It was basically a lack of understanding,” he added.



ONE KILLED



Roller coaster car derailed at theme park in Sweden

STOCKHOLM: Several people were injured and one reportedly killed on Sunday in the Swedish capital when part of a rollercoaster train derailed and got stuck, with some people subsequently falling from it.

Swedish police said that nine people were taken to a hospital, and three of them were seriously hurt.

Stockholm's regional authority later said that three children were in hospital among those nine wounded, but with only minor injuries.



Park official also reports one death

Swedish public broadcaster SVT and news agency TT both cited the Gronska amusement park's spokeswoman as saying that one person had also died in the crash.

“It is incredibly tragic and shocking,” park spokeswoman Annika Troselius told SVT. “Unfortunately we have been informed that one person is killed and many are injured.”

Neither Swedish police or its government immediately confirmed the death.

First video footage from the scene soon after the crash seemed to show most cars of the train still

on the roller coaster tracks and even one adult male sitting on a metal pillar that was part of the ride's structure several meters off the ground, apparently awaiting rescue.

Eyewitnesses told Swedish media that part of the train had derailed.

Other passengers were stuck in their seats on the ride and had to wait to be extracted.

The steel-tracked Jetline roller coaster reaches speeds of up to 90 kilometers per hour (56 mph) and a height of 30 meters (almost 100 feet), according to information on the Gronska website. More than one million people ride it each year. — DW

Earlier, on Sunday, PM Modi held a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi during which they signed an agreement to elevate the bilateral relationship to a “Strategic Partnership”



CAIRO: Concluding his first State visit to Egypt and the US, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday emplaned for India. Earlier, on Sunday, PM Modi held a meeting with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi during which they signed an agreement to elevate the bilateral relationship to a “Strategic Partnership”. Both the leaders discussed ways to further deepen the partnership between the two nations, including in trade, investment, defence, security, renewable energy, cultural and people-to-people ties.

The two sides signed an agreement to elevate the bilateral partnership to a “strategic partnership.” In addition, three Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of agriculture, archaeology and antiquities and competition law were also signed between India and Egypt.

Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi tweeted, “PM @narendramodi held a productive meeting with President @AlSisiOfficial in Cairo on 25 June 2023. The leaders discussed ways to further deepen the partnership between

the two countries, including in trade & investment, defence & security, renewable energy, cultural and people to people ties. An agreement to elevate the bilateral relationship to a “Strategic Partnership” was signed by the leaders. Three MoUs in the fields of Agriculture, Archaeology & Antiquities and Competition Law were also signed.” PM Modi also visited the Al-Hakim Mosque in Cairo. Taking to Twitter, he said, “Honored to visit the historic Al-Hakim Mosque in Cairo. It's a profound testament to Egypt's rich heritage and culture.”

Later in the day, PM Modi, who arrived in Cairo on Saturday, went to Heliopolis War Cemetery and paid tribute to the Indian soldiers who made supreme sacrifices during the First World War.

On Saturday, PM Modi held a roundtable meeting with his Egyptian counterpart Mostafa Madbouly in Cairo. He also met thought leaders in Egypt as a part of his two-day visit to the Arab nation. — ANI

PM Modi receives Egypt's highest state honour

CAIRO : Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on Sunday conferred Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Egypt's highest state honour, the ‘Order of the Nile’ award, in Cairo.

International awards

This is the 13th such highest state honour that various countries across the world have conferred upon PM Modi and is a moment of pride for India. In the past nine years of his tenure, PM Modi has received many international awards including Companion of the Order of Logohu, Companion of the Order of Fiji and

Ebaki Award by the Republic of Palau among others.

The Prime Minister on Sunday visited the Heliopolis War Cemetery in Egypt's Cairo and paid tribute to the Indian soldiers who made supreme sacrifices during the First World War.

PM Modi on Sunday also visited the Al-Hakim Mosque in Cairo.

The Al-Hakim Mosque is an 11th Century significant historical and cultural site in Egypt's Cairo. The mosque stands as a testament to the rich cultural heritage shared by India and Egypt.

— ANI

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE-DEAD RECKONING PART ONE

Tom Cruise arrives in Abu Dhabi ahead of premiere of new movie

ABU DHABI: Tom Cruise arrived on Sunday to Abu Dhabi International Airport's Midfield Terminal, where key parts of the movie “Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One” were shot, ahead of the film's Middle East premiere at the Emirates Palace Mandarin Oriental on Monday night.

The star of the highly anticipated seventh instalment of the Mission: Impossible franchise arrived on the first flight into the new Midfield Terminal at Abu Dhabi International Airport.

In celebration of the film, Tom Cruise unveiled custom Mission: Impossible livery on an Etihad Airways Boeing 787 Dreamliner. As the official airline of the movie,

Etihad will now carry the movie branding on this aircraft as it flies to destinations worldwide.

Midfield Terminal's iconic structure was also decorated with a similar theme to recognise its role in the movie, with one of the film's most thrilling and technically complex action scenes having been shot on the building's 315 metre roof.

The movie marks the first time that the terminal's interior will be seen by the public when it releases in cinemas on 13th July, 2023. Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One also features purpose-built sets at the airport, including an Etihad First Class Lounge, as well as scenes set in the

stunning Liwa Desert.

Elena Sorlini, Acting Chief Executive Officer of Abu Dhabi Airports, said, “We are delighted to welcome Tom Cruise, the cast and crew of Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One back to Abu Dhabi. We are proud of our role in the film and our contribution to Abu Dhabi as a destination that attracts global talent. The scenes showcased in the movie are a testament to the architecture, scale and design of the iconic Midfield Terminal, which is inspired by the cultural elements of Abu Dhabi.”

Antonaldo Neves, Group Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Aviation Group, commented, “Partner-

ing with Mission: Impossible is a great testament to destination Abu Dhabi and what it has to offer. I could not be more proud of Abu Dhabi and our team in showcasing the unique attractions of the emirate, our new airport and Etihad in the movie.”

The scenes filmed at the Midfield Terminal required 21 days of preparation, seven days of filming production, and involved 762 cast, crew and suppliers. This is the second Mission: Impossible movie to be filmed in Abu Dhabi. In 2018, a HALO sky-diving scene was shot in the emirate with help from the UAE military, Abu Dhabi Film Commission and twofour54.



— WAM

Hughes breaks Christie’s 30-year British record for the 100 metres

The 27-year-old took 0.04sec off the previous mark of 9.87sec, set by Linford Christie during his victory at the worlds in 1993

NEW YORK: When Great Britain’s Zharnel Hughes woke up this morning, he wrote down ‘9.83’ as his predicted time for the men’s 100m at the USATF New York Grand Prix.

His guess turned out to be 100 percent accurate as he posted that exact time to win at the World Athletics Continental Tour Gold meeting in New York on Saturday. But even so, the 27-year-old was as shocked as anyone with his performance.

Jamaica’s Ackeem Blake got off to the best start, then 2019 world champion Christian Coleman soon caught up.

But Hughes started motoring in the second half and breezed past Blake and Coleman, opening up a healthy lead by the time he crossed the finish line in 9.83 (1.3m/s). Blake was second in 9.93 and Coleman third in 10.02.

Not only is Hughes’ 9.83 the fastest time in the world this year, it also takes 0.04s off the British



100m record that had stood to Linford Christie for almost 30 years. It also makes him the second-fastest European man of all time behind Olympic champion Marcell Jacobs of Italy, who ran 9.80 to win Olympic gold in Tokyo in 2021.

Christie’s previous mark of 9.87sec was set when he won the World Championships back in 1993.

Hughes’ winning time is the second-fastest 100m ever recorded in New York. The only man to have gone quicker is world record-holder Usain Bolt, whose 9.72 clocking here in 2008 was a world record at the time. Both men were coached to their performances by Glen Mills.

“I saw them ahead of me and I

thought, ‘I’m coming for you,’” said Hughes.

“So I just relaxed, and I could hear my coach’s voice in my head, ‘Zhaaaarnel, shoulders down!’ So I just trusted myself, maintained my speed, relaxed and let it flow.

“9.83 is a dream – I wrote this down this morning,” added Hughes, the 2018 European champion.

“I can’t believe it. My coach also told me that I was going to run a PB in New York.

“I’m not rushing anything, though. Patience, patience, patience. The job is not done yet.”

“I always give respect to Linford,” Hughes said of Christie. “He always supports me every time I’m in the UK, and sometimes he helps

out with my training sessions. I’m looking forward to seeing him, shaking his hand, and telling him that this is long overdue.”

Two-time world champion Noah Lyles may not have clocked a world-leading time to win the 200m, but his 19.83 victory in the final event of the day was well received by the sell-out crowd.

Both sprint hurdles races were decided on the line, with Kendra Harrison and Daniel Roberts getting the verdict.

Harrison got off to a strong start, but so too did 2015 world champion Danielle Williams and USA’s Alaysha Johnson.

Williams had a slight advantage at half way, but former world record-holder Harrison then edged

ahead and maintained her advantage until the end, holding off a fast-finishing Johnson.

Harrison won in a wind-assisted 12.29 (2.8m/s) from Johnson (12.30) with Williams a close third (12.33).

Just moments later, there was a similarly close finish in the men’s 110m hurdles.

Daniel Roberts held off a strong challenge from Devon Allen, the winner here last year, to win in 13.01 (1.6m/s), just 0.01 shy of Roberts’ lifetime best set four years ago. Allen was second in a season’s best of 13.04.

US indoor champion Aleia Hobbs notched up her fifth 100m victory this year, doing so with another sub-11-second clocking. She

broke the tape in 10.98 to win from Jamaica’s Briana Williams (11.04) and 2022 US 100m champion Melissa Jefferson (11.06).

In other track action, Abby Steiner uncorked a season’s best of 22.19 to win the women’s 200m from Tamara Clark (22.43), while Jamaica’s Zandrión Barnes won the men’s 400m in 45.05.

Perez dominates discus

Cuba’s 2019 world champion Yaime Perez produced her best throw for two years to win the women’s discus.

Her opening throw of 67.44m stood up as the best of the day, and her series included three other throws that were better than Veronica Fraley’s runner-up effort of 63.51m, a PB.

Jamaica’s Traves Smikle won the men’s discus with 65.36m from Samoa’s Alex Rose (64.63m).

Maggie Ewen came out on top in a competitive women’s shot put contest, throwing 19.68m to beat Jamaica’s Danniell Thomas-Dodd (19.38m) and world champion Chase Ealey (19.25m).

The men’s shot put was even closer as Payton Otterdahl threw 21.50m to win the men’s shot put by seven centimetres from Chukwu Enekwechi.

Elsewhere in field event action, Rudy Winkler maintained his good run of form to win the men’s hammer with 78.70m from fellow world and Olympic finalist Daniel Haugh (75.75m).

Thea Lafond took the women’s triple jump with a wind-assisted 14.47m (2.8m/s) and Vashti Cunningham was a comfortable winner of the high jump, clearing 1.95m. (worldathletics.org)

TENNIS ROUND-UP

Alcaraz to face De Minaur in final

LONDON: Carlos Alcaraz will face Alex de Minaur in the Queen’s final for the chance to win a first grass title and return to world No. 1 before Wimbledon.

Spanish top seed Alcaraz, 20, swept past American Sebastian Korda 6-3, 6-4 on Saturday. Earlier, Australian De Minaur beat Danish second seed Holger Rune 6-3, 7-6 (7-2).

A win at the London tournament would lift Alcaraz above Novak Djokovic in the rankings and make him top seed for Wimbledon, which starts on July 3.

“At the beginning of the week I didn’t know that a good result would put me number one but in the press conference yesterday they told me and I thought ‘oh my god - it’s in my mind, I’m going to go for it,’” Alcaraz said.

Lifting the Queen’s trophy would be quite an achievement for someone playing only their third tournament on grass, with this the Spaniard’s first final on the surface.

“I’m getting better, feeling better every match and right now I feel like I’ve played for 10 years on grass,” Alcaraz said.



“I didn’t expect to adapt my movement and my game so fast on grass and I’m really happy with that.”

Sunday’s final will be a first at this tournament for both players but De Minaur boasts more grass experience than his Spanish counterpart.

Having won at Eastbourne in 2021, De Minaur has proved this week his quick feet and efficient style of play are a good match for the surface.

The 24-year-old becomes the first Australian to reach the final of Queen’s since 2006 when Lleyton Hewitt won the title after de-

feating American James Blake in straight sets.

“I’m having an amazing week, let’s just hope I can do just one better tomorrow,” De Minaur said.

Bublik to face Rublev in Halle Open title clash

Kazakhstan’s Alexander Bublik will take on Russian third seed Andrey Rublev in the final of the Halle Open in Germany after shocking home favourite and French Open semi-finalist Alexander Zverev 6-3 7-5. The 26-year-old’s run to the final will lift him 15 spots to number 33 in the world rankings

before Wimbledon as he aims for a first title on grass.

World No. 7 Rublev, who reached the final in Halle in 2021, comfortably beat eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut 6-3 6-4 in his semi-final on Saturday after the Spaniard had knocked out top seed Daniil Medvedev on Friday.

Bublik, who won his only tour-level trophy in Montpellier in 2022, has found form on grass and advanced to the last four when quarter-final opponent Jannik Sinner of Italy retired injured in their second set.

Krejcikova, Ostapenko to vie for Birmingham crown

The top two seeds at the Birmingham Classic, No. 1 Barbora Krejcikova and No. 2 Jelena Ostapenko, will square off for the title in Sunday’s championship match.

Top-seeded Krejcikova of the Czech Republic stormed into the final with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over China’s Zhu Lin on Saturday while Latvia’s Ostapenko overcame No. 4 seed Anastasia Potapova 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 in Saturday’s second semifinal. - Agencies

FORMULA ONE

German giants Audi to enter F1 in 2026

BAVARIA: Audi will be entering the Formula 1 sport in the year 2026. They will be taking over Alfa Romeo for their entry into the sport. Audi also signed Swiss racing professional driver Neel Jani as a simulator driver.

According to the official website of Formula 1, “German brand Audi announced that they would enter F1 from 2026, when new regulations come in, and would be building their own power unit. They soon struck a deal to take over the Sauber works team - currently Alfa Romeo - for their entry.”

Audi has started new projects in the build-up to their entry into the sport. They have signed Swiss racing professional driver Neel Jani as their new simulator driver as they take the next step in developing a power unit for their Formula 1 project.

Neel Jani, 39, is a former test and reserve driver for Red Bull Racing and, as a member of the Porsche factory team, he won the

FIA World Endurance Championship in 2016 as well as the famous 24-hour race at Le Mans.

As per the official website of Formula 1, “Jani, who has also driven in GP2 and Formula E, will now have his own important role to play for Audi as he supports the development of the power unit with his vast experience. An update of the dynamic driving simulator for the work on the F1 hybrid powertrain is also being run at Audi’s Neuberg site in parallel.”

On joining Audi, Neel Jani expressed his feelings. He said, “I am delighted to accompany Audi on their way into Formula 1. It is both an honour and a great responsibility to be involved in a project of this magnitude at an early stage,” according to the official website of Formula 1.

He further added, “I am sure that with my experience from Formula 1 and sportscar projects, I can forge good links between theory and practice.” - ANI

KARATE

Al Shehaibi to hold camp in Burundi

MUSCAT: Renowned Oman karate coach Farid bin Muhammad Al Shehaibi has been invited to hold a training course in Bujumbura, capital of Burundi from July 5-9.

Al Shehaibi received the invitation from Burundi Karate Federation to host the eighth international training course in the capital, Bujumbura, with other leading coaches of Tanzania, Uganda, Congo and Rwanda.

Al Shehaibi is considered to be one of the founders of karate in Oman and is a well-known coach. In the past, he has hosted training courses in East and West Africa countries.

The Omani coach will also supervise the belt upgrading tests from 1st to 5th Dan. He will supervise the preparation of Burundi national team in kata and kumite during a camp that will last for two weeks, as the team prepares to compete in an international eight-nation African competition.

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SPORTS

Oman reach Super Six stage

Despite the defeat to Scotland on Sunday, Duleep Mendis' men are through to the Super Six, aided by Sri Lanka's big 133-run victory over Ireland in Group B

MUSCAT: Oman made it to the Super Six stage of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 on Sunday despite going down to Scotland by 76 runs in their concluding Group B match at the Bulawayo Athletic Club, Bulawayo in Zimbabwe. Oman's path to the Super Six was helped by Ireland's 133-run defeat to Sri Lanka earlier in the day.

Oman and Scotland will carry the flag of the Associates in the Super Sixes from Group B while the Netherlands are the other Associate nation, having qualified from Group A. Test-playing nations Zimbabwe, West Indies (both from Group A) and Sri Lanka complete the Super Six line-up.

Oman will not be carrying any points to the next stage, with points only against fellow qualifying teams from the same group considered.

'Proud to be in Super Sixes'
After the loss, Oman captain Zee-shan Maqsood said: "We haven't done well in the last games. Need to take the positives. Bilal and Fayyaz bowled well. We didn't bat well in the first half, but later Naseem's [Khushi] innings was a positive. Very proud of making the Super Sixes. We need to come back stronger. We have hope, we have done hard work. Our goal is to play in India, we will do well."

On Sunday, Scotland ran out easy winners against Oman with Brandon McMullen's brilliant century setting them up for victory, their third win in a row. McMullen began this tournament with a first five-wicket haul, and he now has a maiden ODI hundred.

Christopher McBride was pinned leg before for a duck off the third ball by Oman's pacer Bilal Khan to bring McMullen to the crease, where he joined Matthew Cross (27) to add 82 runs for the second wicket.

When the keeper was bowled by Jay Odedra (2/68), skipper Richie Berrington came in, fresh from his century against the UAE. He raced to a 62-ball 60 before a mix-up after a misfield saw the skipper run out, bringing a 138-run stand to a close.

McMullen followed for 136, the second of Bilal Khan's five victims as Oman fought back, although Tomas Mackintosh (32) and Mark



Oman's Bilal Khan celebrates of his five dismissals against Scotland in Bulawayo on Sunday - ICC/Getty Images



Oman's Naseem Khushi in action during his knock of 69 against Scotland on Sunday. - ICC/Getty Images

Watt (25) chipped in with some handy late runs. Bilal kept chipping away though, finishing with figures of five for 55, before two wickets in the final over, including Adrian Neill's run-out off the last ball, saw Scotland finish on 320 all out.

Oman never threatened to chase it down, with the opening pair putting on just 25 for the first wicket in ten overs. McMullen ended that partnership when he had Kashyap Prajapati bowled for 12, with Neill then adding Jatinder Singh for 14.

Bowled was the preferred method of dismissal, with skipper Zee-shan Maqsood (8) and Aqib Ilyas (31) also succumbing to Michael Leask and Watt respectively, leaving Oman on 72 for four.

Chris Greaves (5/53) then joined the party, dismissing Mohammad Nadeem (15) and Ayaan Khan (30) to make it 120 for six.

A 105-run stand between Shoaib Khan (36) and Naseem Khushi (69) reduced the margin of victory, but Greaves dismissed both before bowling Fayyaz Butt as Oman finished on 244 for nine from their 50 overs.

Sri Lanka canter to win
A convincing win for Sri Lanka ended Ireland's hopes of reaching the Super Six. Ireland needed to beat Sri Lanka to have any chance of reaching the next stage, but fell to a 133-run loss as Dimuth Karunaratne added a century to the fifties he had made in the first two games.

Sri Lanka, like Scotland, are a perfect three from three in Zimbabwe, and it is the same men who have stepped up time and again.

Dimuth Karunaratne had enjoyed knocks of 52 and 61 not out in wins over the UAE and Oman, and produced his best performance yet with 103 as Sri Lanka made 325 after being put in.

In a tournament where big chases have come thick and fast, Wanindu Hasaranga again made the difference with the ball, collecting a third five-wicket haul in as many matches in the 133-run win. Barry McCarthy had earlier taken two wickets in as many balls in the ninth over as Ireland restricted Sri Lanka to 48 for two, but that brought Sadeera Samara-

wickrama (82) to the crease to join Karunaratne.

The duo proceeded to add 168 for the third wicket to set the platform for a huge score. Samarawickrama eventually fell off the bowling of Gareth Delany, failing to take advantage of being put down moments earlier. Karunaratne followed in the 38th over, bowled by Mark Adair after bringing up his maiden ODI hundred.

Sri Lanka kept the pressure on though, Charith Asalanka (38) and Dhananjaya de Silva (42 not out) providing some valuable runs.

However, Adair (4/46) chipped in with three further wickets as Sri Lanka stumbled down the stretch, leaving Ireland requiring 326 to keep their World Cup hopes alive.

Any Irish momentum from the end of the innings quickly dissipated. The chase never really got going, Paul Stirling caught behind off Lahiru Kumara in the fourth over. Kasun Rajitha then took the other opener, Andy McBrine (17) before Hasaranga came up with the crucial wicket of skipper Andy Balbirnie (12).



Scotland's Brandon McMullen celebrates his century. - ICC/Getty Images

The wickets kept tumbling as Ireland were reduced to 116 for six. Hasaranga then added two more in the space of three balls before completing his five-wicket haul with the final ball of his tenth over, ending a 30-run stand for the tenth wicket by taking Josh Little (20) with a return catch.

That made Hasaranga just the second bowler in men's ODI history to record three successive five-wicket hauls – an impressive return considering he had never previously achieved the feat before this tournament.

WI, Netherlands face off
Like Group B, the three qualifiers for the Super Six in Group A are already decided, with Zimbabwe, Netherlands and the West Indies all safely through.

Three is still plenty on the line for the latter two sides however, when Windies and Netherlands face off for Super Six points at the Takashinga Cricket Club in Harare on Monday.

With both sides having lost to Zimbabwe, they will need a win in

this one to take any points through to the Super Six stage. Considering that only the top two from the Super Six will reach the final and qualify for the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, those two points could have huge ramifications.

In the group's other game, Zimbabwe will look to make it a perfect four wins from four against the USA at the Harare Sports Club.

Brief scores: Scotland 320 all out in 50 overs (Brandon McMullen 136, Richie Berrington 60; Bilal Khan 5/55, Fayyaz Butt 2/68) **beat Oman 244 for nine in 50 overs** (Naseem Khushi 69, Shoaib Khan 36; Chris Greaves 5/53, Michael Leask 1/10).

Sri Lanka 325 all out in 49.5 overs (Dimuth Karunaratne 103, Sadeera Samarawickrama 82; Mark Adair 4/46, Barry McCarthy 3/56) **beat Ireland 192 all out in 31 overs** (Curtis Campher 39, Harry Tector 33; Wanindu Hasaranga 5/79; Maheesh Theekshana 2-29).

June 26 fixtures: Group A: Zimbabwe vs USA; Netherlands v West Indies. (Inputs from icc-cricket.com)

INDIA MARKS 40 YEARS OF GLORIOUS WORLD CUP TRIUMPH

Indian team needs to foster collective mindset: Kapil Dev

AHMEDABAD: India's 1983 World Cup-winning skipper Kapil Dev said that in preparation for ICC Cricket World Cup 2023, it was important for the team to foster a spirit of the collective mindset centred on wholeheartedly committing to giving their absolute best.

On June 25 in 1983, India clinched its first-ever Cricket World Cup title by defeating a dominant and defending champion side West Indies by 43 runs in the final at The Lord's. This was the win that caused a massive wave of cricket craze that is still alive to this very day.

"In preparation for the World Cup 2023, it is imperative for the team to foster a collective mindset that centers on wholeheartedly committing to giving their absolute best. The true measure of success lies not solely in the outcome, but in the unwavering dedication to the relentless pursuit of personal excellence," said Kapil Dev.

Roger Binny, the current Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) chief and the star all-rounder who ended up at the top of the wicket-taking charts of the tournament with 18 scalps, said, "Being part of the 1983 World Cup-winning team was an incredible journey filled with determination



and team spirit. Together, we believe in the potential of our current players to bring back the coveted trophy. Let's unite as fans and inspire them to create history!."

On the 40th anniversary of the title triumph, some of the players recalled some of their favourite moments from the tournament.

Sandeep Patil, the all-rounder who had scored a match-winning fifty in the semi-final, recalled that the day of semi-final against England (June 22) happened to be his mother's birthday as well.

"It was my late mother's birthday as well on the day of the semi-final. She told me that she had never asked for anything in

her life from me, but wanted me to win the trophy. I told myself that no matter if it's Bob Willis or his father (laughs), I was going to smash them," said Patil.

Patil recalled that a partnership between Jimmy (Mohinder Amarnath) and Yashpal Sharma proved to be instrumental in India's win in the semi-final.

Mohinder Amarnath, who had taken the match-winning wicket in the final, also revealed that when he ran to take the wicket as a souvenir of the memorable win, it was so stuck inside the ground that he could not take it.

"But I was too happy about us becoming world champions. For-



get about the wicket, it could not have been bigger than winning the World Cup for us," he added.

Legends recollect the epic title triumph

As India celebrated the 40th anniversary of its World Cup victory, legendary cricketers like Virender Sehwag and VVS Laxman took to their social media accounts to thank the 1983 World Cup legends for inspiring many to represent the country someday.

Former Indian opener Virender Sehwag in a tweet said, "The catch that changed Indian Cricket forever. Kapil Paaji with that catch of Viv Richards and with

his team of great contributors and a passionate dream led India to World Cup glory. What a day!"

"25th June, 1983 - 40 years since that landmark day when Kapil Paaji and his boys won India the World Cup and it inspired an entire generation of youth to take up Cricket and was an instrumental moment in making Cricket what it is in India. #WorldCup," wrote Former India batter and current National Cricket Academy (NCA) chief VVS Laxman in a tweet.

Former India batter Yuvraj Singh tweeted, "They did it first! A team of legends who defied expectations with their courage

and conviction. Congratulations on #40Years to that great day and thank you for an unforgettable journey that paved the way for countless dreams."

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) also remembered the historical day and tweeted, "#OnThisDay in 1983 A historic day & a landmark moment for Indian cricket #TeamIndia, led by @therealkapildev, clinched the World Cup title."

1983 World Cup winner Kirti Azad too shared a post where the squad was spotted in an airplane together.

Azad took to twitter and wrote, "The World Cup champion 1983 team travelling together to celebrate our 40th anniversary victory on 25th June, 35,000 feet up in the air. We are proud Indians and love India Bharat Mata Ki Jai [?]"@therealkapildev @RaviShastriOfc @BCCI @JayShah."

West Indies won the first two World Cup titles (1975, 1979) and was the runner-up in 1983. India has won the title two times, in 1983 and in 2011.

M S Dhoni captained the 2011 team to win their second title after 28 years. Australia has won the tournament five times (1987, 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2015). -ANI

POWER TARIFFS AMENDED

The Indian central government has made changes to the prevailing power tariff system through an amendment in the existing rules, introducing a 'Time of Day'-based power tariff mechanism. Rather than being charged for electricity at the same rate at all times of the day, the price you pay for electricity will vary according to the time of day. — ANI

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,747.56 points, up by 0.35 percent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.35 percent at 469.91 points. Al Omaniya Financial Services, up 9.56 percent, was the top gainer while, Sembcorp Salalah, down 3.03 percent, was the top loser. > B2

SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS



OMR3mn handling contracts signed in Sur Industrial City

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Sur Industrial City, which pertains to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), organised a handling session for various public services between the investing companies at the industrial city and local companies.

This handling session comes in line with Sur Industrial City's efforts to support entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) within and beyond South Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

The session witnessed the signing of handling contracts between Hay Al Sharooq International School (owned and operated by

Oman LNG Development Foundation) with Shaheen Sur Company and Al Berwaz Trading to provide general services and support.

These contracts, valued at approximately OMR3 million, will run for three years and are expected to generate 80 job opportunities for Omanis.

As part of its annual plan for 2023, Sur Industrial City remains committed to its efforts in empowering and supporting SMEs through facilitating multiple handling contracts, in addition to localising supply chains, promoting economic sustainability, creating employment opportunities, and achieving added value in alignment with Oman Vision 2040.

The announcement stems from the stock market's keenness to enhance the attractiveness of investment and boost activity and volumes of trading

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) announced changing the bidding unit to become (one baisa) for all securities, with effect from 2 July 2023.

The announcement stems from the stock market's keenness to enhance the attractiveness of investment and boost the activity and volumes of trading, thus better serving investors and securities dealers, besides reviving the debt market.

In particular, the decision is expected to contribute positively to investors' decisions by narrowing the gap between supply



and demand. It enables investors to submit buy and sell orders in smaller units.

International standards

This step, being one of the practices applied regionally and internationally, makes the stock exchange compatible with international standards, augments and

regulates the stock market's continuous competitiveness.

The amendment constitutes a step forward after the stock exchange unveiled a set of initiatives, including the market industry activity and granting license to two companies to practice the activity so far.

Henceforth, modifying the bid

unit will influence the movement and performance of market-making activity in a positive manner, since it provides liquidity within a comfortable price range and strikes a balance between buying and selling orders on a security.

The amendment covers all securities, including debt instruments (bonds and sukuk). — ONA

SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AT DUQM



Sezad signs usufruct pact to set up aqua feeds project

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) signed a land usufruct agreement with the Blue Feeds Company, a jointly formed company between United Fish and Seapride to establish the first Aqua Feed Manufacturing Unit in the Zone in an area of over 20,000 square metres.

The agreement was signed by

Eng. Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, Acting CEO of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, and Mohammed Ameen, Executive Director of the Blue Feed Company.

The \$20-million project will be established in the Fisheries and Food Industries Zone, which is located near the multi-purpose Fishing Port in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, with a production capacity of 60,000 metric

tonnes annually of shrimp and fish feed for the project's first phase, which can be increased in the future. It is worth noting that this project supports the government's efforts towards achieving food security by maximising the yield from the fish wealth that the Sultanate of Oman is rich of, localising the value-added chain of fish products and producing fishmeal and oil.

ON 30TH JUNE

Magic Events to organise Eid Night Show at Grand Millennium Muscat

MUSCAT: Magic Events has announced that it organise the Eid Night Show at Grand Millennium Muscat on Friday (30th June).

This event promises an evening of enjoyable entertainment and celebration.

Guests are invited to immerse themselves in an charming atmosphere and witness performances by two artists, the Lebanese singer Iwan and the Egyptian singer Shahnaz, whose voice and stage presence are sure to leave the audience spellbound.

As the night show unfolds, guests can indulge in a delectable



buffet dinner, offering a sumptuous array of culinary delights. While adults savor the exquisite dining experience, children can partake in a variety of exciting ac-

tivities in a dedicated kids area, ensuring a memorable time for the whole family.

Doors for the concert will be open from 7:00 PM to 12:30 AM.



SAUDI FOOD SHOW

Omani companies sign contracts and MoUs in Riyadh

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), concluded its successful participation at the Saudi Food Show held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia amid a great response from the visitors flocking to the Sultanate's pavilion.

The event, which witnessed a high demand for Omani products, provided a platform for Omani companies to sign contracts and memoranda of understanding, explore potential deals, and engage in productive bilateral meetings with key business owners, investors, commercial agents and suppliers.

Representatives of the participating government bodies emphasised the emerging opportunities offered by the Saudi market and its neighbouring markets in recent years, and the role played by the event in further strengthening robust economic and investment ties between the Sultanate and Saudi Arabia.

Eng. Abdullah Al Kaabi, Acting Head of Strategy and Institutional Support Sector at Madayn,



stressed the significance of the Sultanate's participation at the Saudi Food Show, which reflects the ongoing economic and investment ties between the two countries. "These ties are highly valued and supported by the leaderships of both nations, demonstrating commitment to fostering strong bilateral cooperation and facilitating increased trade exchanges," Al Kaabi said, adding, "The exhibition presented a great opportunity to enhance the global presence of

Omani companies and their products, thereby making a valuable contribution to the national economy. Moreover, we have observed interest from investors and businessmen in exploring investment prospects in the Sultanate and familiarising themselves with the incentives and facilities provided by Madayn to promote an ideal business environment."

Saleh Al Balushi, Director of Exhibitions and Product Promotion at Oman Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (OCCI), reaffirmed OCCI's commitment to supporting Omani companies in their participation at such exhibitions in terms of promoting their products and assisting them in securing deals.

"We aimed through this event to introduce the services of OCCI and provide essential trade information to the visitors, including potential investors and those interested in the Omani market, as well as establish fruitful communication channels with foreign



markets," Al Balushi pointed out.

Alaa Al Ghallani, Marketing Specialist at the SMEs Development Authority, said: "The event offered an opportunity for the Omani SMEs to present their products to visitors from around the globe."

"These events allow Omani businesses to interact with international participants and visitors, exchange expertise, promote products, and explore potential partnerships and collaborations."

The Saudi Food Show also offered an opportunity for Madayn to promote Omani products, explore new markets for these products, introduce its lineup of

incentives to attract investors to the industrial cities, and hence attract and localise new investments and bolster the national economy, aligning with the objectives outlined in Oman Vision 2040.

The Sultanate of Oman's pavilion at the Saudi Food Show featured a number of government bodies including Madayn, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the SMEs Development Authority, in addition to companies including Areej Vegetable Oils and Derivatives, Oman Foodstuff Factory, Salalah Mills, Majan Glass, Pragati Glass Gulf, and several small and medium enterprises.

OSCARS’ NEW RULES ANNOUNCED, CHECK OUT

ACCORDING TO VARIETY, THE ACADEMY’S BOARD OF GOVERNORS HAS APPROVED NEW THEATRICAL RELEASE REQUIREMENTS TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE BEST PICTURE OSCAR BEGINNING AT THE 2025 CEREMONY. THE MOVIES WILL NO LONGER BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR THE BEST PICTURE OSCAR WITH JUST A ONE-WEEK THEATRICAL RELEASE IN AN APPROVED CITY, BUT WILL REQUIRE A LENGTHIER STAY IN THEATRES. A FILM MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING MENTIONED ADDITIONAL AREAS REGARDING ITS THEATRICAL RELEASE TO BE NOMINATED AND WIN THE HIGHLY COVETED BEST PICTURE STATUETTE.

1

Expanded theatrical run of seven days, consecutive or non-consecutive, in 10 of the top 50 U.S. markets, no later than 45 days after the initial release in 2024.

2

For late-in-the-year films with expansions after January 10, 2025, distributors must submit release plans to the Academy for verification.

3

Release plans for late-in-the-year films must include a planned expanded theatrical run, as described above, to be completed no later than January 24, 2025.

4

Non-U.S. territory releases can count towards two of the 10 markets.

5

Qualifying non-U.S. markets include the top 15 international theatrical markets plus the home territory for the film.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Oscars temporarily suspended eligibility rules for theatrical releases due to shutdowns. These changes do not affect any film contending in the 2023 calendar year and won’t go into effect until January 1. As with all rules and changes, the Board assesses and meets annually to discuss any practical changes to its eligibility and processes. To be clear, this is only for movies to qualify for the best picture category. Films will be eligible in various categories, such as directing, acting and technical achievements, without meeting this standard. This is the same rule regarding movies and studios that don’t meet the diversity and inclusion standards in their first year of effect. — ANI



LIFESTYLE



“

In a joint statement, Academy CEO Bill Kramer and Academy President Janet Yang said, “As we do every year, we have been reviewing and assessing our theatrical eligibility requirements for the Oscars. In support of our mission to celebrate and honor the arts and sciences of moviemaking, it is our hope that this expanded theatrical footprint will increase the visibility of films worldwide and encourage audiences to experience our art form in a theatrical setting. Based on many conversations with industry partners, we feel that this evolution benefits film artists and movie lovers alike.”

FEATURES

POST-COVID VACCINATION SYNDROME: What do we know?

Every vaccination, including the COVID-19 shot, can cause side effects like fatigue and muscle pain. But it is difficult to diagnose so-called post-vaccination syndrome. What do we know about vaccine damage?

Like long COVID, post-COVID vaccination syndrome is characterized by a wide variety of symptoms and clinical pictures including chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS/ME), migraines, muscle pain or cardiovascular diseases.

As multifaceted as the symptoms may be, they have one thing in common: They can occur in those affected shortly after COVID vaccination.

Many people think they have post-COVID vaccination syndrome be-

cause they developed such symptoms after their shot.

From the point of view of those affected, this is completely understandable, says Harald Prüss from Berlin's Charité hospital and the German Center for Neurodegenerative Diseases (DZNE). But, he adds, just because the symptoms occurred after the shot doesn't mean it caused them.

Prüss explains that post-COVID vaccination syndrome "is totally overestimated in its dimensions."

By October 31, 2022, almost

51,000 suspected cases of serious side effects after the COVID vaccination had been reported to the Paul Ehrlich Institute, the federal authority responsible for vaccines and medicines in Germany. The institute has published regular safety reports on COVID vaccines but experts like Prüss believe the vast majority of these cases are due to something other than vaccine side effects.

Still, some injured parties want to sue some vaccine manufacturers for alleged damage.

Vaccine side effects not unusual

It is not uncommon for vaccines to cause negative side effects for a small number of people. For example, studies show the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine as well as the illness itself caused narcolepsy — a chronic inability to regulate sleep-wake cycles — in a very small number of patients with similar, predictable genetic factors.

This response to the vaccine was easier to prove, said Prüss, because fewer people were actually contracting H1N1 at the time. This wasn't the case with COVID, when millions of people were becoming infected — and getting vaccinated — more or less at once.

How can post-COVID vaccine syndrome be diagnosed?

Prüss sees many people who believe they are suffering from post-COVID vaccine syndrome during the neurological post-COVID-19 consultations he conducts at the Charité's neurology clinic.

The first indication that a person's headache, fatigue or muscle weakness could actually have something to do with the vaccination is the time frame: If the symptoms appear a few days to weeks after the injection, there could be a connection he says.

But even then, post-COVID vaccine syndrome is nearly impossible to prove, says the neurologist. "There is not a single biomarker that is widely accepted by science."

A biomarker might be a specific antibody that the body produces in response to vaccination. For example, researchers discovered a special antibody in the blood of people who had developed inflammation of the heart muscle (myocarditis) after getting vaccinated. Myocarditis is considered a possible, rare side effect after vaccinations.

Problems that occurred after the administration of some vaccines offer another rare example of researchers being able to definitively conclude early on that the vaccine itself was the source of problems.

"It happened rarely, but it was clear the vaccine had caused a very specific pattern of cerebral vein thrombosis that is otherwise unknown, because it was associated with a very specific type of antibody that developed in response to a cross-reaction with the vaccine," Prüss says.

All of this is complicated by the fact that people across Germany (and the world) experience headaches, chronic fatigue syndrome and cardiovascular disease on a daily basis — and not just since the pandemic and the major vaccination campaigns.

"Every day, 30 new multiple sclerosis diagnoses are made in Germany alone," says Prüss. Attributing all of these things to vaccination without hard evidence would do little to help people. An incorrect diagnosis of post-COVID vaccination syndrome could even hinder efforts to get patients with other diseases the therapy they actually need.

Additionally, one of the only ways to say with any degree of certainty that a person is suffering from post-COVID vaccination syndrome rather than long COVID is if that person started experiencing symptoms shortly — weeks, not months — after getting the jab and had not been diagnosed with COVID at any point before. This can be difficult, because people may have had a COVID infection yet not known it.

Prüss and others who deal with the topic suspect that a real post-COVID vaccination syndrome is probably very rare. The clinical pictures with which those affected come to the Charité consultation generally have other causes.

What happens in the bodies of post-COVID vaccination patients?

There is currently little conclusive medical understanding of what exactly is happening when patients develop post-COVID vaccination syndrome, but there are some theories.

Dr. Christine Falk, president of the German Society of Immunology, says the link between long COVID and post-COVID vaccination syndrome could be a cross-reaction with the spike protein — which is created by a vaccine or is an element of it — and the infection itself.

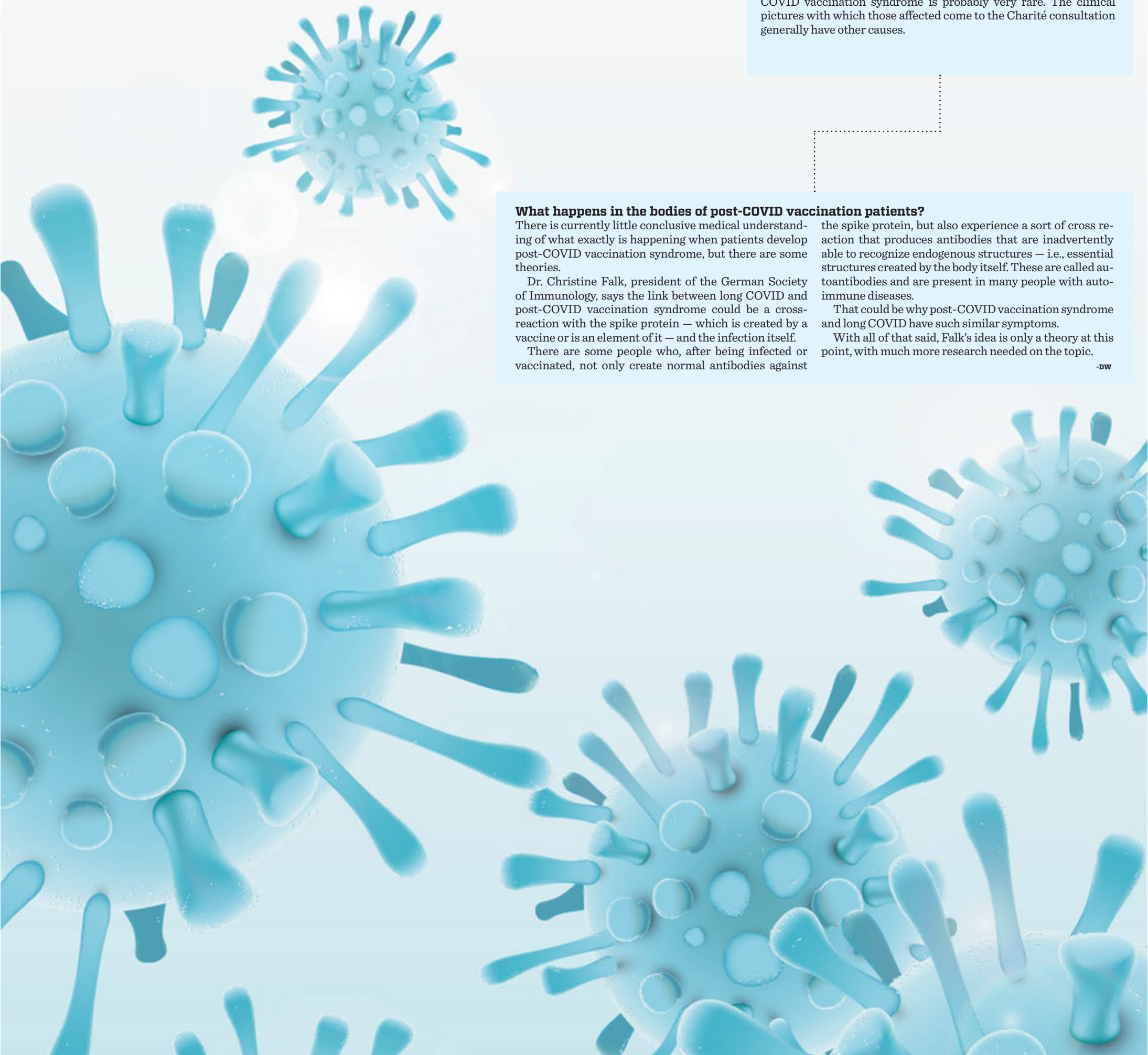
There are some people who, after being infected or vaccinated, not only create normal antibodies against

the spike protein, but also experience a sort of cross reaction that produces antibodies that are inadvertently able to recognize endogenous structures — i.e., essential structures created by the body itself. These are called autoantibodies and are present in many people with autoimmune diseases.

That could be why post-COVID vaccination syndrome and long COVID have such similar symptoms.

With all of that said, Falk's idea is only a theory at this point, with much more research needed on the topic.

-DW



IN PICTURES



Participants compete during dragon boat race in Vladivostok, Russia
Participants compete during a dragon boat race in the Amur Bay in Vladivostok, Russia. A total of 25 teams participated in the event. *xinhua*

Traditional folk festival Sanziene celebrated in Bucharest, Romania
Young girls dressed as fairies attend the traditional folk festival 'Sanziene' in Bucharest, capital of Romania. Ancient traditions mention 'Sanzienele' as gentle fairies that come around summer solstice to bring good luck and good harvest. *xinhua*



Spring/Summer 2024 Men's collection of Dior Homme
A model presents a creation from the Spring/Summer 2024 Men's collection of Dior Homme during the Paris Fashion Week in Paris, France. *xinhua*



MLB London Series: St Louis Cardinals vs Chicago Cubs
Chicago Cubs' Christopher Morel (right) hits the ball during the MLB London Series match between St. Louis Cardinals and Chicago Cubs at London Stadium in London, Britain. *xinhua*



Bridge guardian in SW China's Yunnan Province
This aerial picture shows a train driving across the Wujiazhai railway bridge in Pingbian Miao Autonomous County, southwest China's Yunnan Province. The Yunnan-Vietnam Railway is the first railway in Yunnan Province and narrow-gauge trains have been running on the railway for over a century. *xinhua*



ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat’s Asalah customers can now access Entertainer offers through mBanking

This means that there is no need for customers to request their Relationship Manager for the Entertainer link or download an additional app for the same



MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to provide time-saving services and enhance banking convenience to its valued customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has updated its mBanking app to include Asalah Entertainer offers.

Automatically appear
This means that there is no need for customers to request their Relationship Manager for the Entertainer link or download an additional app for the same. The link will instead automatically appear

within mBanking. Customers can then enjoy many offers as the access button is placed on the main page itself.
The Asalah Entertainer App provides great value to Priority Banking customers with exclusive

lifestyle benefits including more than 3,500 “Buy 1, Get 1 free” offers in Oman and at international destinations, as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty

and wellness segments. The app offers the option of exploring new restaurants or treating children to fun holidays 7 days a week, all year round.

Asalah Visa Signature
Asalah Visa Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges worldwide, up to 12 times a year, and a 24/7 global concierge service.
Also available are exciting airport experience and dining offers across the world courtesy the free DragonPass. Asalah customers also enjoy access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 41 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre (24779999). For more details on Asalah Priority Banking, please visit <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/premier-banking/pages/asalah-priority-banking.aspx>.
Bank Muscat's ongoing digitalisation drive and the continuous updating of its applications and e-platforms are aimed at offering the customers an unprecedented

banking experience.
The bank's customers are at present benefiting immensely from the latest devices, solutions and technological advances made available to them through the implementation of cutting-edge technology. Bank Muscat has announced plans to keep introducing new digital services and features that further enhance banking convenience and security in the future.
Its efforts in customer centricity and digitalisation have been well recognised by local and international media with the bank winning multiple awards across its different lines of business regularly.
In recognition of the bank's commitment to provide innovative digital solutions to its customers Bank Muscat has won a number of prestigious awards including the Best Retail Bank in Oman from MEED as well as the Best Corporate/Institutional Digital Bank (Oman) and the Best Consumer Digital Bank (Oman) awards from Global Finance.

AT EUROMONEY AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

Sohar International receives ‘Best Investment Bank in Oman 2023’ award

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to spearhead innovation in the dynamic banking sector within the Sultanate, Sohar International has won the “Best Investment Bank in Oman award for the year 2023, at the Euromoney Awards for Excellence.
The Euromoney Awards for Excellence celebrates outstanding innovations and contributions in banking and finance at national, regional, and global levels.
Through a rigorous evaluation process, the awards are presented to banks based on various criteria such as investment leadership, product diversity, financial performance, asset and revenue quality, customer satisfaction, and digital offerings.
Sohar International emerged as the recipient of the Best Investment Bank in Oman Award, showcasing its market-leading investment banking offerings and adherence to best practices. The bank's customer-centric approach reflects its significant contributions to the financial and banking sectors.
The Euromoney Awards for Excellence was held on June 21, 2023, at the Shangri-la, Dubai. The evening witnessed the attendance of key delegates, top officials from leading corporate houses, and industry experts from different sectors. The esteemed



event also brought together top banks and institutions from the Middle East who have made significant contributions to the banking industry. Sohar International stood out among its peers and received recognition for its exceptional performance and pioneering position in Oman's banking sector.
Expressing gratitude for receiving the award, Ahmed Al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, commented, “We are truly honored to receive this esteemed award. It reaffirms our commitment to excellence, innovation, and customer-centricity in the dynamic banking sector of the Sultanate. At Sohar International,

we strive to lead the way in investment banking, delivering market-leading offerings and adhering to best practices. This recognition reflects the dedication and expertise of our team, which consistently goes above and beyond to meet our customers' evolving financial needs. As we continue our journey of growth and transformation, we remain focused on driving sustainable economic development in Oman, and this award serves as evidence of our steady assurance to our customers and the nation.”
The Euromoney Awards for Excellence, established in 1992 as the first of its kind in the global banking industry, hold

immense prestige.
They recognise institutions that demonstrate exemplary leadership, innovation, and momentum in the markets they operate within.
This year, Euromoney received an overwhelming number of submissions from banks participating in the regional and country awards programme, which encompassed over 50 regional awards and best bank awards in 100 countries.
Sohar International has firmly established itself as a prominent bank in the Sultanate and has been recognised by various publications this year.
Recently, the bank was presented with ‘Industry Leader in Digital Banking’ and ‘Best Bank in Growth’ at the renowned Oman Banking & Finance Awards 2023. The OER Business Summit 2023 honored Sohar International with the ‘Key Enabler of Sustainable Economic Growth’ award. Furthermore, the bank was also acknowledged as the ‘Top Omani Brand in the Banking Sector’ at the Alam Iktisad Awards.
These accolades further strengthen Sohar International's position as one of the prominent banks in the Sultanate, dedicated to delivering exceptional services and contributing to the sustainable economic growth of Oman.

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

CMA issues statement on OIFC merger with Dhofar International

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) closely monitored the discussions about the resolutions of the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) of Oman Investment and Finance Company SAOG held on Wednesday June 21, 2023, which considered the proposal to dissolve Oman Investment and Finance Company SAOG through merger and acquisition by Dhofar International Development and Investment Holding Company SAOG.



Small shareholders
CMA would like to emphasise that the protection of the interests of investors and small shareholders specifically is key priority by taking all required measures to ensure they exercise their rights in attending the general meeting and participating in the voting on the strategic resolutions of the company or objecting them. CMA is also keen to guarantee full implementation of all legal procedures regulating the convening of the general meetings of public joint stock companies.
Hence, the law, to protect the shareholders, granted them the right to appeal and object the resolutions of the general meeting pursuant to Article (174) of the Com-

mercial Companies Law, which confer the right of objection on any shareholder who holds severally or jointly not less than 5 percent of the company's shares, to request within five working days from the date of the general meeting to suspend the resolutions adopted by the general meeting if detrimental to them or if it is established they were issued in favour of specific category of shareholders or to benefit the members of the board of directors or others.
CMA warns from any violation of the applicable laws and regulations or circumventing the laws to avoid any financial or administrative penalties, thanking all the concerned for their cooperation and understanding.

TAX AUTHORITY

Violation of refraining from issuing the tax invoice

MUSCAT: As part of the tireless efforts exerted by the Tax Authority to educate taxpayers about the application of various types of taxes, and within the framework of the Tax Authority's efforts to combat tax evasion crimes, one of the reports received by the Tax Authority via the call center which is received a report about the refusal of a taxpayer (company) to issue tax invoices including VAT in order to evade the payment of VAT.
In light of this, a team was formed consisting of a number of judicial control commissioners in the Tax Authority to go to the site of the violating company and ver-

ify the validity of the report.
The judicial control commissioners of the Tax Authority found that the shop is already registered as subject to VAT and therefore must apply the provisions of the VAT Law on goods and services, including issuing a tax invoice to the customer. After verifying all the data of the taxpayer and his violation of the provisions of the law, an administrative violation report was issued in the amount of OMR3,000, and the responsible worker was summoned to attend the headquarters of the Tax Authority.
The Tax Authority calls on all

VAT registrants to abide by the provisions of the VAT Law, submit tax returns on the legally specified dates and disclose the tax. It should be noted that in the event of non-compliance with registration in the VAT system for those whose annual revenues or supplies exceed the amount of OMR38,500, or if the tax return does not include the real data of VAT, it is considered a crime under the text of Article (101) of the Value Added Tax Law No.121/2020, and its punishment is imprisonment for a period of up to three years, and a penalty of up to OMR20,000.
Moreover, failure to submit a tax

return for any tax period, failure to issue a tax invoice, or failure to keep tax documents and invoices are also considered as a crime under Article (100) of the Value Added Tax Law, and its punishment is imprisonment that may reach one year and a penalty that reach OMR 10,000.
It is worth mentioning that the Tax Authority has started widespread awareness campaigns targeting all taxpayers in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman to confirm on the importance of tax compliance by taxpayers in order to preserve their rights and avoid getting penalties and fines.





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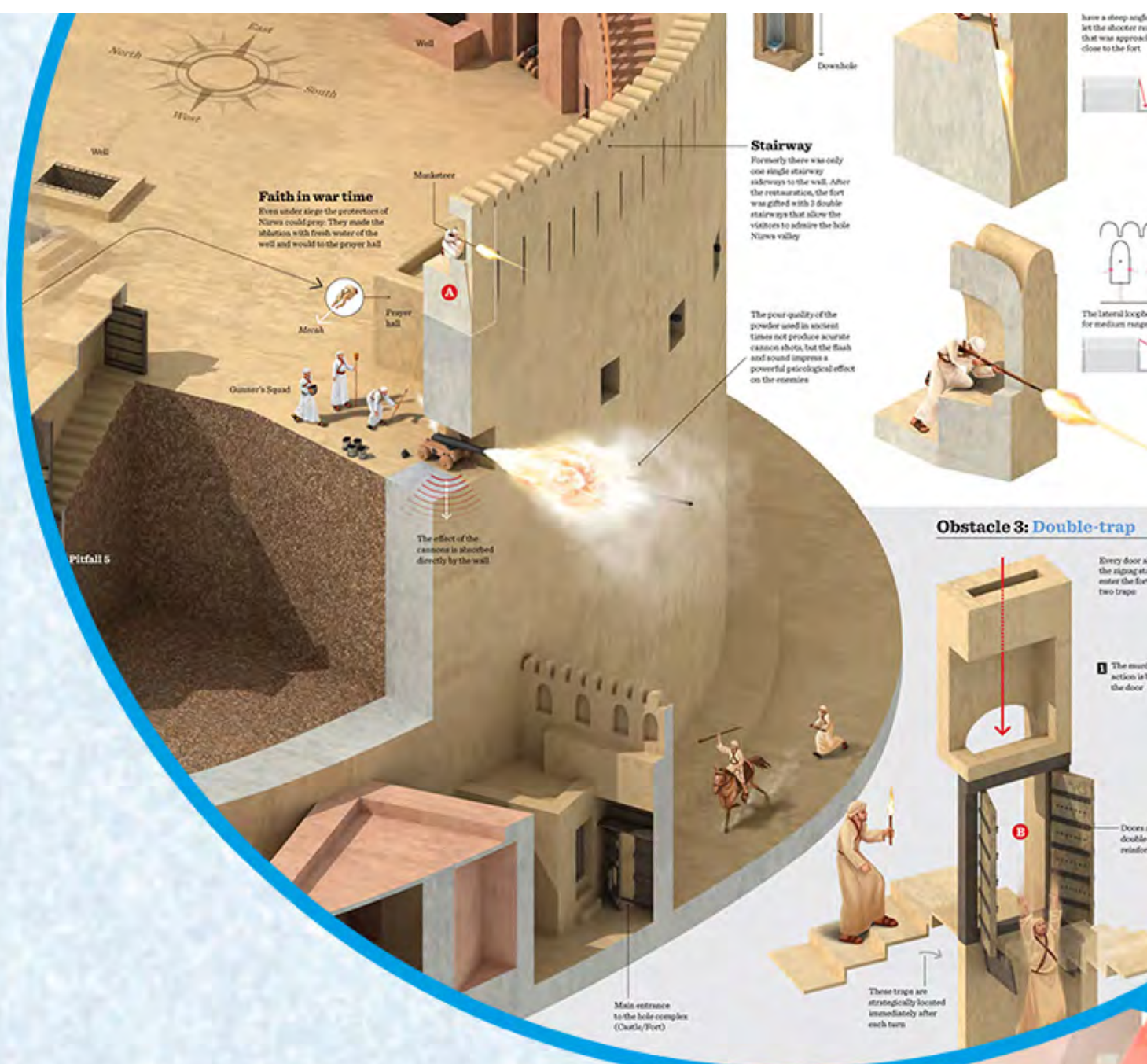
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