

**CIRCUS ARTISTS
ENTHRAL SPECTATORS**

After entertaining people in Muscat, Al Naseem International Circus is set to perform in Salalah during the Khareef season. One of the highlights of the circus was when the trainer performed tricks with seven big lions. **>A3**



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HM SENDS GREETINGS TO FRANCE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Emmanuel Macron of the French Republic on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Macron. His Majesty also wished the people of France further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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HH the Honourable Lady congratulates General Education Diploma students



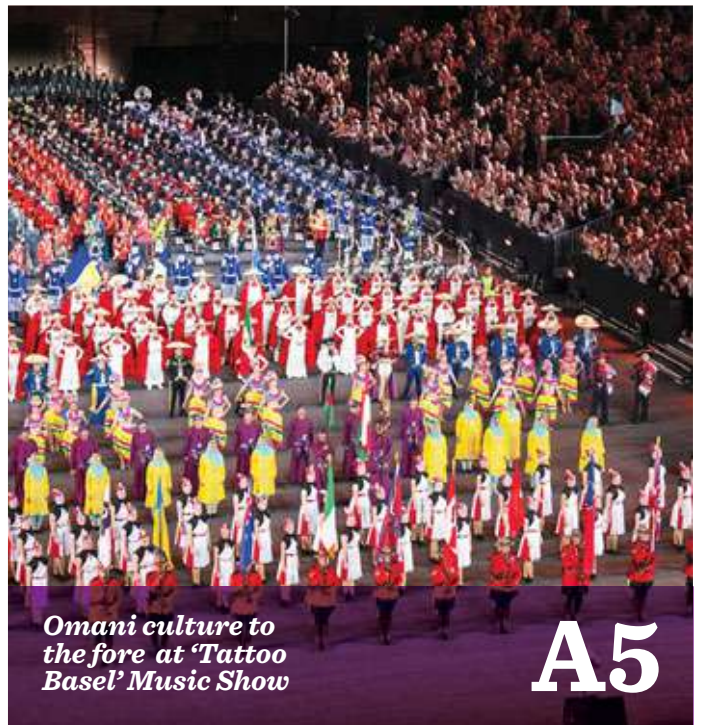
MUSCAT: Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed Al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, has congratulated students on their outstanding results of the General Education Diploma.

A statement issued by ONA said that Her Highness the Honourable Lady congratulated students for their outstanding results of the General Education Diploma and its equivalent.

In the message Her Highness the Honourable Lady said: "We are pleased to congratulate our sons and daughters who have achieved outstanding results in the general

education diploma, and also extend our congratulations to their families and faculty members, who motivated them in achieving this goal that we are all proud of. We wish that our sons and daughters may fulfil all their aspirations and desires at the university level."

In addition, Her Highness the Honourable Lady said to students: "You have persevered and worked hard for this achievement, so may God Almighty bless your efforts, and we pray to God to always grant you help and success in your future life to contribute to the service of your country, and to raise its banner high." **-ONA**



Omani culture to the fore at 'Tattoo Basel' Music Show

A5

OMAN'S FIRST PHARMACEUTICAL UNIT IDENTIFIES KEY MARKETS FOR EXPORTS



30mn

Omani rial is the estimated investment in the first phase to get the technology and equipment, while the second phase would cost OMR60-70 million

Besides the local market, the company will be eyeing the GCC, Yemen, Iran, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh for sale of medicines

Times News Service

MUSCAT: In a big boost for Oman's pharmaceutical industry, Opal Bio Pharma, which organised the ground-breaking ceremony of its vaccine factory recently, has identified India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran and other countries as potential markets to export its products.

Speaking to Times of Oman's sisterly radio channel Al Shabiba, Saad bin Musa Al-Junaibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Opal Bio Pharma Company, said: "The drug and vaccine factory under construction in Khazaen Economic City (KEC) will target the local market as well as the Gulf market, Republic of Yemen, in addition to East Africa, Iran, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh."

"The importance of the factory can be understood from the fact that it is the first-of-its-kind in the Sultanate of Oman as well as in the region to produce the latest

vaccines which will contribute to achieving our goal of 'Made in Oman' to the world," he added.

Al Junaibi confirmed that the factory will aim to produce four different types of vaccines. It includes vaccines for colds, leukaemia and other types, all of which will be available in Oman at competitive prices or at a price much lower than the price in the foreign markets.

Shortage of medicines

Regarding the reasons for establishing the factory, Al Junaibi said that the idea of setting up a factory for medicines and vaccines came after the recent COVID-19 pandemic when the country faced shortage of medicines. This led us to fixing an appointment with the Minister of Health and presenting this idea to him.

"The idea of setting up the vaccine factory was strongly encouraged by the health minister and this was ably supported by the management of Khazaen Eco-

nomic City and with their fruitful cooperation work has begun for the first phase of the factory.

He further added that the second phase of the project began with laying the foundation stone by Qais bin Mohammed Al-Youssef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al-Sabti, Minister of Health.

The factory will be coming up over an area of 22,000 square metres, which will include four lines for the production of vaccines and medicines. It will also be a special centre for scientific research and development. He explained that the first phase investment was approximately OMR30 million for the purchase of necessary technology and equipment, while the second phase would cost OMR60-70 million.

He pointed out that the project will also include a research and development (R&D) centre, which will provide hundreds of jobs for graduates from medical specialities in Oman.

Al-Junaibi further said that the importance of the factory location in Khazaen is one of the strategic locations because of its proximity to the ports, the airport and the main streets, in addition to the railways in the future, as well as the facilities provided by the Khazaen Economic City to investors.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

5,000 tonnes of wheat bought from farmers

1 As part of the wheat purchase subsidy programme, Oman Flour Mills is keen to buy Omani wheat from local farmers annually. The company confirmed that it has received nearly 5,000 tonnes of Omani wheat from Omani farmers so far. **>A2**

WORLD

Indian PM meets Abu Dhabi Crown Prince

2 Kickstarting the final leg of his two-nation visit on Saturday, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi met with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). **>A7**

MARKET

LNG reserves up 7% by 2022 end

3 The reserves of liquefied natural gas (LNG) rose by 7 percent to 24 trillion cubic feet in 2022 compared to the corresponding period of 2021. The expected total reserves of crude and condensate oil by the end of 2022 amounted to 4,905 million barrels. **>B1**

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MUSCAT

'LOGOS HOPE' SHIP

Book lovers wait over, floating library docks in Muscat

Times News Service

MUTTRAH: The long wait for the book lovers is over as the 'Logos Hope' ship opened its doors for the masses on Friday. Having the largest floating library in the world, the ship docked at Port Sultan Qaboos in the Wilayat of Muttrah, on Thursday.

There was a huge rush of book connoisseurs near the port to board the bus for ferrying them to the ship at the port. People of all age groups were seen jostling to have a seat on the bus. One of the visitors who had to wait for almost an hour to board the bus, said: "It was worth waiting. These are once in a lifetime opportunities. The craze among the crowd for the ship

library was amazing. You need to be there to feel the enthusiasm among the crowd. I am fortunate that I got an opportunity to see the library," he said.

Another visitor said, "You can visit restaurants, malls daily, rather every week. But the opportunity of visiting a library on a floating ship comes only in a decade."

Announcing the arrival of the ship, the Children's Public Library said: "You are on a date with an inspiring journey to the world of books and knowledge, on an exceptional journey through the sea waters, as the world's largest floating library 'Logos Hope' will dock from July 14 to 22, 2023. The book fair gives visitors an opportunity to explore the world of knowledge



and learning under the roof. Logos Hope carries with it a huge collection of books and educational resources on a variety of subjects.

"The ship offers an opportunity for quiet reading in its cozy nooks or taking in the stunning views from its beautiful balcony. Visitors can also participate in writing workshops and interesting cultural activities that are held on board the ship."

The ship will continue to receive visitors daily from four in the afternoon until ten in the evening, after which it will leave for the Dhofar Governorate, where it will stay for seven days.

The 'Logos Hope' ship is one of the most famous mobile book fairs in the world. **>A2**

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:18pm
Asr.....	3:38pm
Maghrib.....	7:01pm
Isha.....	8:22pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:05am

MEETING

UN official praises Oman

Times News Service

NEW YORK: Dr. Rola Dashti, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), expressed her admiration for what the Sultanate of Oman has achieved as part of the sustainable development process to achieve the goals of Oman's Vision 2040.

The rising ratings reflect positive credit and financial status of the Sultanate. This came during her visit to the headquarters of the Sultanate of Oman's delegation to the United Nations and meeting with Dr Mohammed bin Awadh Al Hassan, the Permanent Repre-



sentative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations.

During the meeting, areas of cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the ESCWA were reviewed in a number of fields, including the statistics sector, women and children, supporting youth capabilities, and raising the competitive capabilities of Oman in the field of science and technology.

Dr. Rola Dashti indicated that Oman is among the promising countries in which young people constitute a high percentage of the total population, and that this will reflect positively on the Omani economy, give it the required vitality, and diversify the sources of income of Omani citizens.

5,000 tonnes of wheat bought from farmers

This move is part of the governemnt efforts to enhance food security, support farmers and enable them to enter the market for food products



support farmers and enable them to enter the market for food products.

This programme aims to encourage farmers to expand wheat cultivation as one of the important strategic crops in Oman, in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The CEO of Oman Flour Mills confirmed to Oman News Agency that the company will continue its plans to purchase wheat products from farmers during the coming years, and sell it in local and regional markets, pointing out that Omani wheat is accept-

able to consumers due to its high quality.

Haitham bin Muhammad Al Fannah, CEO of the Oman Flour Mills Company, said: "The company appreciates the supreme interest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the directives of the government for private investments aimed at strengthening the food security system in the Sultanate of Oman. This interest is a great motivation for all parties and investors to double investment in areas of food in order to achieve self-sufficiency and export the surplus abroad."

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Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of the wheat purchase subsidy programme, Oman Flour Mills is keen to buy Omani wheat from local farmers annually. The company confirmed that it has received nearly 5,000 tonnes of Omani wheat from farmers so far.

This move is part of the framework of the government efforts to enhance food security efforts,

TOURISM

Roads leading to Dhofar governorate repaired

Times News Service

SALALAH: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announced the readiness of the roads leading to the Dhofar Governorate, after the completion of maintenance and traffic safety work, starting from the border crossings to the various tourist sites in the Dhofar Governorate.

The ministry also carried out maintenance work for roads and their components, which consisted of repairing damage to a number of roads due to the climatic conditions, maintenance of the mountain and desert dirt road network, filling of potholes, removing dust, and levelling works for roads, in addition to maintaining and replacing guiding regulations and concrete paint and protection works.



The Ministry's work teams continue to monitor the roads 24 hours a day, especially with regard to removing sand accumulated on some roads as a result of the monsoons during the fall season.

With regard to public transport, Mawasalat operates a number of buses from the Dhofar Governorate, with its commitment to providing high-quality services at competitive prices that are accessible to all, in addition to a number of private sector operators.

In addition, taxi applications in the Dhofar Governorate, licensed by the Ministry, provide the 'on demand' service, with the ability to track and monitor the path. The prices are fixed and specified before the trip, while ensuring the user's privacy and security.

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LOGOS HOPE

Ship is a learning treasure trove

<FROM A1 It is a learning treasure trove as it travels around the world to transfer knowledge through a series of seminars and cultural events that are offered to visitors inside the ship.

The 'Logos Hope' ship includes a wide range of titles and books and their numbers are more than 5,000, suitable for all age groups, children, youth and adults. A storehouse of information, it has novels, books on history, science, arts, medicine, languages, and dictionaries among others.

It is worth noting that the "Logos Hope" ship had previously visited the Sultanate of Oman twice, first in 2011, and the second time in 2013. It is owned by the German charitable organization (Good Books for All), and annually receives



nearly one million visitors since its establishment. In 1970, it visited more than 150 countries around the world, and the number of its visitors has reached 49 million since its launch as a library in 2009, while their staff includes volunteers from more than 70 nationalities, numbering 400 people.



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Circus artists enthrall spectators

With artists of eight nationalities and having more than half a dozen lions, Al Naseem International Circus was a treat to watch at the Amerat Park

Times News Service

MUSCAT: After entertaining people in Muscat, Al Naseem International Circus is set to perform in Salalah during the Khareef season. With artists of eight nationalities and having more than half a dozen lions, Al Naseem International Circus was a treat to watch at the Amerat Park.

“We arrived from Iran and we were going to Salalah. So during the transit, we performed for a few days in Muscat,” the organisers said on Saturday – on the last day of the show.

One of the biggest highlights of the circus was when the trainer performed tricks with seven big lions.

The lions have different traits and abilities. “However, none of the animals perform acts that they find it difficult,” the organisers said.

The big cats’ tricks range from simple commands, such as sit, stay and roll over, to complicated feats such as soaring leaps, wild flips and a reverse-pyramid in which they stand on shoulders.

The performers at Al Naseem International Circus hail from eight countries including India, Colombia, Africa, Egypt and America.

The circus presented a cornucopia of world-class acts – from flying trapeze artistes to trained

lions. “The show created joy and happiness among the spectators,” people who came to watch the show said.

In addition to lions, snakes and monkeys were presented during the show.

Other attractions of the circus include the Globe of Death, it’s a cage, with two high speed motorcycle riders racing around.

Each show enthralled the crowd especially the children, receiving loud applause and cheers for well

executed moves.

Clowns and jugglers were also a big hit with their witty and humorous performances on stage.

“Circus never fails to captivate us, me, my husband, my son and my daughter, we all love to watch

these kinds of shows here,” said a mother while waiting for the second part of the circus. She also lauded the venue for its design, giving every spectator a good view even from afar.

Some stilt walkers wearing col-

ourful and unique costumes welcomed families and other visitors at the circus gate. “From Salalah, we want them back again in Muscat,” was the common answer of the children, who came to watch the show.

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Dhofar Municipality

First activities of Khareef Dhofar season 2023 launched

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The first activities of the Khareef Dhofar season 2023 were launched on Saturday evening.

Organised by the Dhofar Municipality, the activities kicked off at the Awqad Public Park in Salalah, and at several locations to provide opportunities to citizens, residents and visitors to experience the full excitement and suspense until August 31.

The activities for this year are being held at various locations, including Salalah Park, Awqad and Al Saada Parks, as well as the Return of the Past in Al Hafah area and Attin Square in the Attin Plain.

In this regard, Eng. Ammar bin Obed Ghawas, Director of the Events and Awareness Department at Dhofar Municipality, said: The “Kiddy Time” activities, which were launched today in Awqad Park, include an entertainment city for children that includes various villages for entertainment and sites for games and restaurants.”

He added that the Children's City in “Kiddy Time” includes the Smurfs Village, the Masha and the Bear Village, the Panda Village, the “Alice in Wonderland” Carnival, the candy museum, interactive games, ice skating rink, in addition to various international events.

He indicated that the activities of the ‘Return of the Past’ site in Hafah region will be launched on July 25 and include a number of events, activities to simulate the environments of the Dhofar Governorate, in addition to setting up a field for arts and events, restaurants for traditional food, various heritage markets and products for



craftsmen and craftsmen.

He pointed out that the activities of the “Attin Square”, which will open on July 20, include a shopping site, an arena dedicated to electric games, lighting and laser shows in the “Arc Theatre”,

drone shows, and “Teslenco” family circus, in addition to a number of various restaurants and cafes.

He added, “The ‘Lights Park’ event in Salalah Park, which will open on July 20, includes a theatre, the illuminated garden, the

bird corner, and the ‘The Park’ site, which will include an open cinema corner, another corner for cafes and restaurants, and various games.

He pointed to the participation of many international restaurants and cafes and a group of international chefs in the activities of “Salalah Eight - People's Kitchen”, which will be held in Al Saada Park in early August, in addition to organising the “Salalah Chef” cooking competition.

Regarding the events accompanying the Khareef Dhofar Season 2023, the Director of the Events and Awareness Department in Dhofar Municipality said a number of sporting events and activities, such as the Dhofar International Drag Racing Competition, a football sports event, and a karting event would also be held.



Oman Sail claims five medals at the 2023 Pan Arab Games in Algeria

The 15th edition of the Pan Arab Games featured 3,800 athletes from 18 countries competing in 20 sports across five cities

MUSCAT: Oman Sail capped off an excellent week of racing at the 2023 Pan Arab Games by claiming five medals across all classes class. The Omani team occupied the top four spots in Optimist with Tameem Suleiman Al Balushi taking gold after eight superb races, Hassan Nasser Al Wahaibi winning silver, Feras Haitham Al Nabhani picking up bronze and Soud Talib Al Shaqsi winning the last race of the competition to move up to fourth. The team scored an overall team gold in the Optimist class following their fantastic performance.

This success was followed by an equally impressive performance in ILCA 4 where Hatem Mohsin Al Oreimi finished in second behind Waleed Daraan of Bahrain who led throughout, and teammate Abdulatif Zaid Al Qasmi ended the race in fourth.

Ahmed Hassan Al Balushi finished fourth in the ILCA 7 competition, level on points with Bous-souar Abdelkhalid of Algeria in third. The event was won by Abdulla Janahi of Bahrain who won eight of the 10 races to seal victory with a day to spare.

The Oman team ends the 2023 Pan Arab Games in Algeria with one gold medal, two silver medals and a bronze, as well as the team prize.

Dr Khamis Al Jabri, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Sail, praised the team's efforts. He said, “We are very proud of the entire team. This is an excellent achievement for the sailors, the technical staff, coaches, and everyone at Oman Sail who has supported their journey. Competition within the region is very tough and it takes a strong character to maintain such a high level of performance day after day. We hope this is just the start of a successful career on the water for our young talents and will serve as motivation

to reach the very top of the sport.”

Following the conclusion of racing in Algiers, the fleets came together to celebrate each other's achievements at a prize giving ceremony attended by His Excellency Saif Al Badai, Oman's Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, and Sheikh Khalifa Abdullah Al Khalifa, President of the Arab Sailing Federation.

The 15th edition of the Pan Arab Games featured 3,800 athletes from 18 countries competing in 20 sports across five cities.

Upon returning to Oman, the busy season will continue for the youth squad. First on the schedule is the Oman Sailing Championship in Ras Al Hadd from 24-28 August 2023, and then the team will prepare for this year's Mussanah Race Week taking place from 18-24 October 2023 at Barceló Mussanah Resort.

The Oman team ends the 2023 Pan Arab Games in Algeria with one gold medal, two silver medals and a bronze, as well as the team prize.



Oman Across Ages Museum marks anniversary of foundation laying

Oman Across Ages Museum seeks to highlight the history of Oman over time through audio and visual presentation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The memory of Oman Across Ages Museum, the foundation stone of which was laid by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimur, was celebrated on Friday under the patronage of Her Highness Mian bint Shihab Al Said.

Engineer Al-Yaqzan bin Abdullah Al-Harthi, Director General of Oman Across Ages Museum, said: “The memory of the Oman Across Ages Museum is etched in our mind, which corresponds to July 14, 2015, when the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said laid the foundation stone, which represents an icon



of modern architecture in the Sultanate of Oman.” “This wonderful design was the result of an international architectural competition that was endorsed by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said who ordered the foundation stone-laying ceremony to be held under his generous patronage, emphasising the importance of this project, his supreme interest in preserving Omani history, and highlighting the achievements

of its blessed renaissance, as well as presenting a message to the Omani youth to take pride in the Omani identity,” Al Harthi added.

National project

Al Harthi said: “The foundation stone of Oman Across Ages Museum was part of a national project to present great efforts made by Omani youth in various fields. The museum was inaugurated this year under the patronage of

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. His Majesty emphasised the importance of looking forward to the future of Oman that meets the aspirations of every Omani.”

A documentary film was shown that embodied the construction stages of the building of the museum, its design and multiple halls with the latest systems and modern technologies, the design of educational content, the historical narration, the selection of images



and film materials, the method of displaying holdings, models, among others.

It is worth noting that the Oman Across Ages Museum seeks to highlight the history of Oman over time through audio and visual presentation. It aims to highlight the ancient eras witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman, up to the era of the blessed Renaissance. It targets the young generation primarily to create appreciation for what

their predecessors have achieved, while thinking about their role in the future.

It also represents a symbol of the Renaissance, Oman and its history, a translation of Omani architecture to a modern style, and carries with it knowledge based on educating the Omani people as an element for achieving development and excellence, as well as consolidating the Omani identity in an interactive manner.

ROYAL CAVALRY

Omani culture to the fore at ‘Tattoo Basel’ Music Show



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Royal Cavalry of the Royal Court Affairs and the Royal Omani Guard, participated in the opening ceremony of the 2023 Tattoo Basel Military Music Show.

With the participation of military bands from various countries of the world, the show is being held in Basel, Switzerland, from July 14 to July 22. This is an affirmation of Omani-Swiss relations and highlights the Omani cultural heritage.

During the show, the musicians of the Royal Cavalry and the Royal Guard of Oman played Omani and international music pieces, and presented a variety of musical compositions, highlighting the civilisational and cultural heritage of the Sultanate of Oman.

To celebrate 50 years of Omani-Swiss relations, the musicians formed the number 50 on horseback.

The opening ceremony was attended by a large audience of music lovers from different countries of the world, due to its distinctive variety of musical performances representing different world cultures. This will continue to be presented within the programme until July 22 in the morning and evening.

Mahmoud bin Hamad Al-Hasani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Swiss Confederation, said that the relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Swiss Confederation are based on constructive cooperation, respect, exchange of common interests and peaceful co-existence, and witness visits of distinguished official to strengthen and develop bilateral relations in all fields.

He explained that the participation of the Royal Cavalry and the Royal Guard of Oman



in the Tattoo Basel show for the year 2023 comes with the aim of strengthening the relations between the two friendly countries, which have reached fifty years of joint cooperation, as well as to promote the Sultanate of Oman and its cultural heritage.

Cultural cooperation

In his part, Brigadier General Ramis bin Jamaan Al-Aweera, Director General of Music at the Royal Guard of Oman and supervisor of military music in the Sultanate of Oman, said that participation in the 2023 Basel Tattoo show comes within the framework of joint cultural cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Swiss Confederation, and to highlight Omani music, which is an opportunity to promote tourism for the Sultanate. Oman is in one of the most prominent music venues in the world.

The Brigadier General indicated that the musicians of the Royal Cavalry and the Royal Guard of Oman will play Omani pieces of music specially prepared for this global event, as they are being played for the first time. This is in order to introduce the public to the uniqueness of Omani music. During the various international participations, many requests are received to play Omani musical pieces due to the fine taste

that characterises the Omani rhythms.

He added that the musicians will play Arab and Swiss pieces of music alongside the Omani musical compositions on horseback, stressing that participation in such performances contributes to refining the skills of the musicians through enriching international experiences.

Dr. Sarhan bin Salem Al-Zaidi, Director General of the Royal Cavalry at the Royal Court Affairs, said that the participation of the Royal Cavalry and the Royal Guard comes in response to the invitation submitted by the Swiss Defence Union, and the participation confirms the strong relations between the two friendly countries.

He added that the participation of the Royal Cavalry and the Royal Guard of Oman at the Basel Show with various equestrian performances, formations and musical compositions will highlight the cultural and civilisational heritage of the Sultanate of Oman and the modernity and interest that this sector has reached.

It is noteworthy that the Tattoo Basel Military Music show has been held annually since 2006, with participation of many international military bands. It is considered one of the largest military music shows in the world.

SUMMER TOURISM

Heritage museum opened for visitors at Jalan Bani Bu Ali

Times News Service

JALAN BANI BU ALI: ‘Al Hameedi Heritage Museum’ which is one of the tourist attractions in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, was inaugurated on Saturday under the patronage of Mohamed bin Humaid Al Ghabshi, Wali of Jalan Bani Bu Ali.

Humaid bin Saleh Al Humaidy, the owner of the museum, said that the inauguration of this museum coincides with the summer tourism and the events of Ajwa Al Ashkhara forum to show the traditional heritage for which the wilayat is famous among visitors. The museum consists of many



corners, including a corner for specialised weapons such as old swords and daggers, a corner for books and newspapers, a corner

for Omani traditional dress. Another corner displays book collections, pottery, currencies and old coins.



Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Tender

Oman chamber of commerce and industry would like to announce the following public tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Tender Fees (irrevocable)	Specialized companies	Deadline for Obtaining Documents	Deadline for Tender submission
2/2023	Electronic devices supply	25 /-R.O	Companies specialized in selling computers and electronic devices	27 July 2023	Before 12 pm 6 August 2023

Companies specialized may obtain the tender documents from the Administration Department at the Second Floor of the chamber's Headquarters in Ruwi , during the official working hours against the payment of tender fees.

Tender Terms:

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- The bids should be submitted in red waxed envelopes addressed to - Head of main tendering Committee , OCCI, written outside the Number and title of the Tender. No indication about the bidder is allowed on the envelope.
- Offers should be deposited in the tender box kept at the Administration Department in the Second floor of OCCI Head office.
- OCCI is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bids. It has the right to accept or reject any bids without showing reasons

Interested companies should submit the Tenders before 12 pm on 6 August 2023

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SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES

US appeals court blocks district judge order

WASHINGTON: A US appeals court temporarily blocked a lower court order limiting President Joe Biden administration officials' communications with social media companies.

The ruling in New Orleans-based 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals paused an order by US

District Judge Terry Doughty in Monroe, Louisiana that found that officials' efforts to limit the spread of posts they considered to be misinformation violated the right to free speech. The Department of Justice appealed his order.

Friday's ruling means that Biden's administration is not

bound by Doughty's order until the appeal is considered. The 5th Circuit Court said it would be heard as soon as possible by a panel of three judges. The panel will decide whether to keep the order on hold or allow it to go into effect during deliberations.

Meanwhile, Doughty is yet to

make a final ruling on a lawsuit brought by the attorneys general of Louisiana and Missouri in 2022.

They alleged the US government went too far in encouraging social media companies to address posts that contributed to either vaccine hesitancy during the COVID-19 pandemic or upend elections. — **mw**



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Hollywood actors join writers on strike seeking better compensation

The SAG-AFTRA strike, supported by thousands of Hollywood stars and other actors, came after negotiations for a new contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers broke down

LOS ANGELES: As Hollywood actors took to the picket lines outside major studios, two of Hollywood's most powerful labour unions are striking simultaneously for the first time over 60 years.

To the echoes of "One day longer, one day stronger," being chanted on the strikers' picket lines, 160,000 members of the Screen Actors Guild-American Federa-



tion of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) went on strike on Thursday at midnight, joining the 11,000 members of the Writers Guild of America (WGA) who have been on strike since May.

"We feel that our wages, our craft, our creative freedom, and the power of our union have all been undermined in the last decade. We need to reverse those trajectories," said SAG-AFTRA in a public letter signed by many of the most famous names in Hollywood.

The SAG-AFTRA strike, supported by thousands of Hollywood stars and other actors, came after negotiations for a new contract with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers

(AMPTP), the entity that represents major studios and streamers including Amazon, Apple, Disney, NBCUniversal, Netflix, Paramount, Sony, and Warner Bros Discovery, broke down.

In the last dual strike in 1960, it was Ronald Reagan, as president of the Screen Actors Guild (and future president of the United States of America), who led the labour walkout. The latest labour action has industry creatives going head-to-head with the "Big 5" Hollywood studios as well as big-money streamers and brought the 134-billion-US-dollar American entertainment industry to a grinding standstill while their differences are ironed out and imbal-

ances addressed. The strike comes at a challenging time for the entertainment industry, which is still grappling with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid technological advancements.

Streaming services have disrupted traditional revenue models, while the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) poses both opportunities and threats to creative professionals. On one side, the actors and writers are seeking improvements in compensation, better benefits, and safeguards against the growing use of AI in the industry.

Actors also want greater transparency from giant streamers so they can share fairly in the revenues generated from their work.

Streamers do not share any metrics of their audience viewership and project sales revenues even with the creators of those works. SAG-AFTRA wants to bring in neutral third parties to perform analytics to help determine fair payments to actors.

These issues reflect the industry's changing landscape, including the meteoric rise of streaming services, and the potential impact of AI on the creative professions.

On the other hand, studio executives argue that increased spending on content creation to meet consumer demand has negatively impacted profits, leading to job cuts. The AMPTP asserts that it has offered historic contract improvements, including increased pay and residual payments for certain shows streaming overseas. The studios maintain that they are committed to reaching a deal and getting the industry back to work.

"A strike is certainly not the outcome we hoped for as studios cannot operate without the performers that bring our TV shows and films to life," said the AMPTP on Twitter. "The Union has regrettably chosen a path that will lead to financial hardship for countless thousands of people who depend on the industry."

The ongoing WGA strike, which began in May, has already caused

significant disruptions in Hollywood, with many TV shows and movies having to cancel or delay production.

However, the actors' strike will have an even more profound impact. In the realm of public opinion, it will certainly make an impact to see many famous actors joining the strike effort, including Meryl Streep, Jennifer Lawrence, Eva Longoria and Glenn Close.

TV series will be forced to an indefinite hiatus, and movie theaters, already struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changing viewing habits, will face another major financial challenge, when movies that have already been shot are unable to be released.

Both writers and actors are prohibited from promoting their projects during the strike. This restriction means no premiers, talk show appearances or magazine cover stories that haven't already been scheduled.

The strikes will also impact industry events, such as San Diego Comic-con for actors, where writers and directors usually interact with fans and promote their work. Award shows like the Emmys and potentially the Oscars may be delayed if the strikes continue into 2024. — **mw**

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BORDER SECURITY



Mexico files complaint over US barrier plan on Rio Grande

TEXAS: Mexico said it has complained to the United States government over the deployment of floating barriers by the US state of Texas on the Rio Grande River.

The Rio Grande is 1,896 miles (3,051 kilometres) long, running from Colorado to the Gulf of Mexico and is the effective US-Mexican border through most of Texas.

Every day, hundreds of migrants attempt to cross the river to try to enter the United States. In response, Texas has begun a multibillion-dollar effort to shore up border security, which includes erecting buoys and barbed wire in the river.

What action has Mexico begun?

Mexican Foreign Minister Alicia Barcena said her country has formally complained to US authorities about the barrier plan.

Barcena questioned whether the barriers could impede the flow of water in the river, which she said would violate bilateral 1944 and 1970 treaties on boundaries and water.

The treaties require that the river remain unobstructed.

"We have sent a diplomatic letter [to the US] on 26 June because in reality what it is violating is the

water treaty of 1944," she told reporters in Mexico City.

Barcena added that Mexico would send an inspection team to the Rio Grande to see whether any of the barrier extends into Mexico's side of the border river.

She also complained about US efforts to put up barbed wire on a low-lying island in the river near Eagle Pass, Texas.

The US State Department and the office of Texas Governor Greg Abbott did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

What is Texas doing?

Last month, Texas Governor Greg Abbott ordered the construction of the floating barrier off the town of Eagle Pass to make border crossings more difficult.

"In addition to razor wire, we now have buoys in the water to prevent people from even crossing the middle part of the Rio Grande River and coming into the state of Texas," Abbott told Fox News.

Many migrants have drowned trying to cross the rivers, and some experts fear the buoys may only increase the risk to life.

Earlier this month, four migrants drowned in the Rio Grande and last September nine migrants

died and 37 were rescued as they tried to cross the rain-swollen river near Eagle Pass. Other experts have questioned the environmental impact on the river from the barriers.

Once installed, the above-river parts of the system and the webbing they're connected with will cover 1,000 feet (305 meters) of the middle of the Rio Grande, with anchors in the riverbed. As well as Mexico's complaint, a Texas businessman has filed a lawsuit against the barriers, saying it will hurt his firm's river tours.

Abbott regularly accuses US President Joe Biden of failing to stem the flow of undocumented migrants entering the country.

The Texas governor's multibillion-dollar effort to fortify the US border also includes busing migrants to liberal-run US states and authorizing the National Guard to make arrests.

Mexico is a key stop for people trying to reach the US from Central and South America — many fleeing poverty, violence and political crises in their home countries.

Between October 2021 and October 2022, the US Border Patrol recorded more than 2 million attempts to reach the US. — **mw**



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Indian PM Modi meets Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Al Nahyan in UAE

The UAE-India non-oil trade is expected to reach \$100 billion a year by 2030



ABU DHABI: Kickstarting the final leg of his two-nation visit on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Khaled bin Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Upon his arrival in Abu Dhabi, PM Modi was welcomed by Sheikh Khaled Bin Mohamed Bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, at the airport.

Expressing his gratitude over a warm welcome to the Gulf nation, PM Modi took to Twitter to post, “Grateful to Crown Prince HH Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan for welcoming me at the airport today.”

On his arrival at the Abu Dhabi airport, PM Modi received a ceremonial welcome.

“Furthering - partnership! PM @narendramodi arrives in Abu Dhabi to a ceremonial welcome. Warmly received by Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, HH Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the airport,” the official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs, Arindam Bagchi tweeted.

During his visit, the Prime Minister will meet with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on critical bilateral issues.

The PM emplaned for the UAE earlier on Saturday after concluding his two-day visit to France.

PM Modi called his France visit

“memorable”, adding that it was more remarkable as he participated in the Bastille Day celebrations. He also expressed gratitude to French President Emmanuel Macron and the people of France for their warmth and hospitality.

PM Modi, who was on a two-day official visit to France, participated in the Bastille Day celebrations as the Guest of Honour, on Friday. He visited France at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron.

“To mark the 25th anniversary of the India-France Strategic Partnership, a 241-member tri-service Indian armed forces contingent led by a military band also participated in the Parade,” the PMO said in a statement.

Just hours before Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said that its economic partnership with India “is a significant milestone in the history of both nations”.

The UAE’s Minister of State for Foreign Trade, Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, said in an interview that the UAE-India non-oil trade is expected to reach \$100 billion a year by 2030.

Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi

noted that UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was designed to deliver a new era of growth and opportunity.

CEPA is an agreement signed between India and UAE on February 18, 2022, and came into force on May 1, 2022. The agreement was signed between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Speaking about the success of the CEPA between India and the UAE, Dr Thani Al Zeyoudi said, “There is little question that the UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement will come to be regarded as a significant milestone in the history of both nations.”

“By removing or reducing tariffs on 80 per cent of goods, eliminating unnecessary barriers to trade, creating new platforms for investment, and opening government procurement to each other’s private sector, the UAE-India CEPA was designed to deliver a new era of growth and opportunity – and, ultimately, boost bilateral non-oil trade beyond \$100 billion by 2030,” he added.

— ANI

Floods, landslides kill seven

SEOUL: At least 22 people have died and 14 were missing after heavy rain in South Korea, officials said on Saturday. Hundreds more were displaced as heavy rains over three days triggered floods and landslides.

Local media reports say that the death toll might rise going ahead.

The country’s Ministry of Interior and Safety said that 1,567 people had been evacuated from their homes nationwide as of Saturday morning — a figure that is likely to increase as water overflowed from the Goesan Dam in North Chungcheong province.

As of 9am local time, more than

2,700 tonnes of water was flowing into the dam per second which is the maximum unit it can discharge. The minister said that over 6,400 residents in Goesan were ordered to leave their homes as the Goesan Dam began to overflow submerging several low-lying villages in the region. — **nw**

Sultan Qaboos University ANNOUNCEMENT

Sultan Qaboos University announces their desire to sell used furniture and their in sealed envelopes. Those wishing to enter the auction must adhere to the following conditions:

- Interested parties can view used furniture in auction stores and receive the bidding on Tuesday and Wednesday 18/07/2023 - 19/07/2023 from 03:00 pm to 05:00 pm.
- Deposit of (200) Omani riyals in cash as an insurance. This amount will be refunded to the unsuccessful bidders.
- Submitting the offer in a sealed envelope after viewing the used furniture, entitled by the name of the head of the committee for selling used furniture, and put the envelope in bid box.
- The presented offer is binding on its owner if it is placed on it, and in the event that the buyer does not pay the purchase price on time, the insurance amount will be forfeited, and the sale will be awarded to another applicant.
- Those who win the bidding will be contacted. They must pay the remaining sum, and they are responsible for moving their items on Wednesday and Thursday 23/07/2023 - 24/07/2023 from 09:00 am to 03:00 pm.
- The used furniture are sold in their current condition, and SQU is not responsible for any loss or damage to the sold material if the moving is not completed after the end of the sale, and (10) Omani riyals will be imposed for each day after 25/07/2023.

- Notes:**
- Prices are sorted according to groups and the higher price is taken.
 - Funds will be collected electronically through visa cards.
 - Entering the auction stores through Gate No. (2).
 - For more information, please contact 24141272.

Killer bear wins again amid legal fight

ROME: A bear that killed a jogger in the Alps in April has been given another stay of execution after an Italian court ruled against its euthanasia on Friday.

The bear named JJ4, but is more commonly known as Gaia, was due to be put after it attacked and killed a 26-year-old man who was jogging public nature reserve in the Trentino-Alto Adige region of northern Italy in April.

Regional president Maurizio Fugatti ordered the bear shot, but lower courts stopped Fugatti’s decree after urgent petitions by animal rights activists.

On Friday, Rome’s administrative court, known as the Council of State, handed Gaia another reprieve from execution. It’s the third time Italian courts have offered the bear, known as JJ4, a reprieve. Authorities said it also attacked two other people in 2020, but not fatally. — **nw**

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SPORTS

Ashwin spins magic in India’s victory over WI

Most of the wickets fell into Ashiwin’s account as he ended Day-3 with the figure of 7-71

ROSEAU : Ravichandran Ashwin’s spin magic guided India to an emphatic victory against West Indies, sending visitors one-up in the series at Windsor Park on Friday.

In the final session on Day-3, India won the Test with an innings and by 141 runs as West Indies bundled out on a scanty score of 130. It was Ashwin who utilised every bit of the extra bounce and spin that was on offer, making it difficult for the entire middle-order batters to read his variations, as well as line and length, and really a hard task to stay on the crease.

Most of the wickets fell into Ashiwin’s account as he ended Day-3 with the figure of 7-71. He solely ripped apart the entire middle order as well as the lower setup of the visitors.

His efforts with the ball ensured that the Indian team kick off the WTC25 cycle with 12 points in their bag.

Ashwin also set the tone of the final session of the day by dismissing Jermaine Blackwood with a flighted delivery which turned sharply once it landed on the sur-



face. His delivery struck him on the pads and dismiss him at a score of 5(8).

Jadeja came in to inflict further wounds as he got the better of Reifer with a sharp delivery. The Windies were stuck to a score of 34 for a while as Indian spinners increased their dismissal count from 2 to 4.

Athanaze, who was West Indies’ saviour with the bat in the first innings, came in with hopes of playing another crucial knock for his team. Fate was also on his side as debutant, Jaiswal, dropped his catch in Ashwin’s over.

The spin duo tried to shake off the chance and once again made attempts to get a breakthrough. Siraj was brought into the attack and it took him just three balls to make his mark.

The pacer pinned Da Silva in front of the stumps to end his innings for a score of 13(27). After

this, it was Aswi’s magic show as he dismissed the rest of the team to begin India’s West Indies tour and the WTC25 cycle on a positive note.

Earlier on Day 3, Virat Kohli and Jadeja resumed the second session with a bit of luck as they tried to further increase India’s lead.

Kohli once again rode on his luck and survived for the second time as he tried to drive the ball but found an edge that the wicket-keeper eventually dropped.

However, even with another lifeline Kohli failed to extend his stay for a long period as Cornwall forced the right-handed batter to play the flick shot, but the extra-bounce factor kicked in to surprise Kohli and his shot went straight into the hands of Athanaze.

Jadeja and Ishan Kishan from that point took over to extend India’s lead. India finally decided to declare for a score of 421/5. **-ANI**

Ashwin becomes second highest wicket-taker for India

ROSEAU : Spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Saturday surpassed Harbhajan Singh to become the second-highest wicket-taker for India in international cricket.

Aswhin did so during the first Test of two-match series against West Indies in Dominica. He recorded one of his finest away performances, taking 5/60 in the first innings and 7/71.

With this performance. Ashwin has 709 wickets in 271 international matches. These wickets have come at an average of 25.67 and his best bowling figures are 7/59. He has 27 four-wicket hauls, 34 five-wicket hauls, and 8 ten-wicket hauls in international cricket.

India’s best bowler in international cricket is Anil Kumble, who has taken 953 in 401 matches at an average of 30.06 with best figures of 10/74.

-ANI



Vondrousova clinches Wimbledon crown

LONDON: Unseeded Czech Republic player Marketa Vondrousova clinched her maiden Wimbledon title, defeating No.6 seed Ons Jabeur of Tunisia 6-4, 6-4 in the 2023 Wimbledon final on Saturday.

In a major upset, Vondrousova won her first Grand Slam title. Marketa Vondrousova has captured the attention of tennis enthusiasts worldwide by becoming the first unseeded women’s finalist at Wimbledon since the legendary Billie Jean King in 1963.

Vondrousova’s remarkable journey to the final is a testament to her exceptional skills and determination. Having been a finalist at Roland-Garros in 2019, she brings valuable experience to this high-stakes encounter. The Czech lefty showcased her prowess by decisively defeating fan favourite Elina Svitolina in the semifinals, winning 6-3, 6-3.

Jabeur avenged her 2022 final setback by defeating Elena Rybakina in three sets in the semifinals, while Czech Vondrousova stopped Elina Svitolina’s fairytale run by sweeping through the Ukrainian.

The Tunisian tennis star has showcased her exceptional talent by overcoming formidable opponents, including a hard-fought victory over Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka in the semifinals. **-ANI**

WIMBLEDON CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ambition is always to win the title: Djokovic after reaching final

LONDON: Following his win over Jannik Sinner to reach the final of the ongoing Wimbledon championships in London on Friday, Serbian tennis star Novak Djokovic said that he would not be approaching the title clash in a relaxed manner despite having a record 23 Grand Slam titles to his name.

Djokovic on Friday produced a masterclass performance on

Center Court, overpowering the big-hitting threat of Sinner to reach the Wimbledon 2023 final. Djokovic won his 34th straight match at the grasscourt major with a usual excellent all-around semifinal effort against the Italian, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6(4). Djokovic’s smooth, deep return was a constant threat to Sinner’s serve, and he was rock-solid under pressure, saving all six break points he faced in his two-

hour, 46-minute victory.

35th major final

This is Djokovic’s 35th major final that he will be playing. Despite all his past laurels and records, Djokovic will be more motivated than ever when he meets world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the title clash, who will also decide the topper of the ATP Rankings on Monday.

“Ambition is always the high-est for me: always to win the title. It is not changing regardless of the place in history books. Maybe some people think that it would be a huge relief for me winning Roland Garros, being the only men’s tennis player with 23 slams. It is not,” said Djokovic in a post-match press conference.

Djokovic will tie Swiss legend Roger Federer’s eight Wimbledon

titles and will become the only men’s player after Federer and Bjorn Borg to clinch five successive titles in the lawns of London if he beats Alcaraz.

Despite Djokovic’s rich experience of playing and thriving in finals, he still feels the pressure, the “goosebumps and butterflies”.

Djokovic’s prioritises bringing his absolute A-game during the four major titles of seasons. **-ANI**



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RESILIENT ECONOMY
Some of the largest US banks said on Friday they got a profit boost from higher rates and painted a picture of a resilient economy, with sparks of hope in some businesses like deal-making that have been in the dumps of late.

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MSX MAINTAINS UPTREND
The Muscat stock exchange's main index recorded a relatively positive week and extended previous gains although trading was somewhat volatile during daily sessions, according to an industry expert.

Bank Muscat posts net profit of OMR104.3mn

Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at OMR184.71 million for the six months ended 30 June 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the flagship financial institution in the Sultanate, announced its preliminary unaudited results for the six months ended 30 June 2023. The bank posted a net profit of OMR104.32 million for the period compared to OMR99.26 million reported during the same period in 2022, an increase of 5.1 per cent. The key highlights of the results for the period are as follows: Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at OMR184.71 million for the six months ended 30 June 2023 compared to OMR166.25 million for the same period in 2022, an increase of 11.1 per cent. Non-interest income was OMR66.48 million for the six months ended 30 June 2023 as



compared to OMR71.04 million for the same period in 2022. Non-interest income for the previous comparative period included a one-time gain from the sale of investments of OMR7.9 million. Excluding this, non-interest income has witnessed an increase of 5.3 per cent. Operating expenses for the six months ended 30 June 2023 was OMR97.44 million as compared to OMR92.30 million for the same period in 2022, an in-

crease of 5.6 per cent. Net Impairment for credit and other losses for the six months ended 30 June 2023 was OMR30.11 million as against OMR28.40 million for the same period in 2022. **Net loans and advances** Net loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables increased by 9.7 per cent to OMR9,878 million as against OMR9,002 million as of 30 June

2022. Customer deposits including Islamic Customer deposits increased by 2.8 per cent to OMR9,083 million as against OMR8,834 million as of 30 June 2022. The full results for the six months ended 30 June 2023 along with the complete set of unaudited financial statements will be released following the approval of the Board of Directors of the bank at its meeting scheduled later during July 2023.

ANNUAL REPORT

Reserves of LNG in Oman rise by 7% at end of 2022

MUSCAT: The reserves of liquefied natural gas (LNG) rose by 7 percent to 24 trillion cubic feet in 2022 compared to the corresponding period of 2021. The annual report issued by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals indicated that the expected total reserves of crude oil and condensate oil expected by the end of 2022 amounted to 4,905 million barrels, up by one percent compared to the previous year, while The annual report issued by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM) further indicated that the expected total reserves of crude oil and condensate oil expected at the end of 2022 amounted to 4,905 million barrels, up by one percent compared to the previous year. At the end of last year, the number of companies operating in concession areas in the field of oil and gas exploration and production was 18 and 37 respectively. The total oil exports of crude oil and condensate during the year amounted to about 318 million barrels, with China ranked first in the list of countries importing Omani oil with a rate of 81.7 percent. **New agreement** The Ministry of Energy and Minerals in a statement on Saturday said that it also signed one new petroleum agreement in the year 2022 with Shell Integrated Gas Oman in Concession No. 11, where the value of the agreed investment for the first period amounted to \$105 million. Oil production in the Sultanate of Oman increased during the year 2022, with an average daily production of 1.64 million barrels, compared to 971,000 in 2021, an increase of 9.6 percent, as the Sultanate of Oman maintained the same production levels of oil, in line with the production reduction agreement signed with the countries. Members of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and other countries outside the organisation, to achieve a balance between global supply and demand for oil. **Total production** The total production of natural gas, plus imports, amounted to 52,61,870,000 cubic metres, with an average daily production of 142.6 million cubic metres.



The average price of Omani crude oil during the year 2022 was about \$36.95 per barrel, recording a 48 percent increase from what it was in 2021, while the price of a barrel of Omani crude oil ranged between \$14.73 per barrel as a minimum in February and \$112.93 per barrel as a maximum in August of the same year. The percentage of Omanisation among operating companies in the upper and lower parts of the oil and gas sector increased to about 89 percent in 2022, with an increase in the number of Omani employees of about 1.3 percent compared to that of 2021.

Net electricity With regard to electricity, the total production in 2022 amounted to about 41.8 terawatts/hour, with a net production of 40.4 terawatts/hour, an increase of 2 percent compared to the previous year. The net electricity produced from natural gas amounted to 37.2 terawatts/hour, constituting 92 percent of the total. Energy sources are used to produce electricity, and the production of electricity from solar energy continued to increase by 138 percent compared to 2021, with the continued operation of the Ibri 2 station of the Shams Al Dhahirah Company for electricity generation. The sector witnessed a number

of basic projects, most notably the electrical interconnection project between the north and south of the Sultanate of Oman, the project to connect Masirah Island to the main electricity grid, the project to establish the Barka plant to produce energy from waste, wind energy projects, and the solar energy stations Amin, Qabas, Ibri 2, and the two stations. **Minerals sector** With regard to the minerals sector, the total exports of the Sultanate of Oman of mineral ores amounted to approximately 36.5 million tonnes, registering a decrease of 2 percent compared to 2021, as the amount of building materials exports decreased by 3 million tonnes, and building materials constitute 54 percent of the total amount of raw materials exports. While exports of gypsum and dolomite ore increased by two million tonnes compared to 2021. The total number of mining licenses issued in 2022 amounted to about three, while 18 exploration licenses were issued. The Ministry of Energy and Minerals, along with its partners, made great efforts in regulating the hydrogen sector in order to achieve the targeted results, as the ministry took important steps towards accelerating the procedures for

regulating this sector, setting the legal frameworks and policies necessary for its growth, and working to study the sites of its production and storage in order to attract and localise investments. The ministry announced the launch of investment opportunities and incentives in the green hydrogen sector. The ministry is working with partners to strengthen the role of the Sultanate of Oman with the countries of the world in energy transition plans towards reducing carbon emissions, achieving a balance between sustainable development and limiting the repercussions of climate change, which were produced by the Carbon Management Laboratory, which was supervised by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, in line with the steps taken. Taken under the directives of the Supreme to declare the achievement of zero carbon neutrality in 2050. Regarding production in the minerals sector in the Sultanate of Oman, the report indicated that the total production of mineral ores during the year 2022 amounted to 63.6 million tonnes, registering a decrease of 8 percent compared to 2021, as the amount of gypsum and building materials production decreased by 6 million, which constitute 79 percent of the total production. These decreases

are attributed to the contraction in the demand for these materials, and the total sales of minerals amounted to 573 million tonnes, at a value of OMR98.974 million.

Supporting small and medium-sized companies The Ministry of Energy and Minerals continues its efforts by enhancing the participation of local companies in contracts and procurement, as electronic bidding has been activated by companies operating the supplier registration system to support small and medium-sized companies obtaining business in contracts with service companies and contractors. The number of contracts awarded through electronic bidding reached 242, in addition to achieving a number of achievements in the field of localisation of business opportunities and supplier development programmes for the oil and gas sector. In addition, a supervisory committee was formed for the governance of local added value, and task forces for contracts, procurement and human resources were formed, to develop plans and initiatives that help support local companies and employ Omani cadres. The projects that were inaugurated in 2022 in the field of energy, represented by OQ liquefied petroleum gas plant in Salalah, which is the first of its kind for gas processing in the Sultanate of Oman, with a total investment value of approximately OMR318 million, and the plant came as one of the most important energy projects as it contributes to strengthening the value chain gas in the Sultanate of Oman through the extraction of natural gas liquids through gas networks and pipelines. In addition, the Ibri solar energy project was inaugurated for OMR155 million (about \$400 million) with a capacity of 500 megawatts. The Rima water treatment plant has also been put into operation, which represents an environmentally friendly solution to replace the discharge of water associated with production in the deep layers. The plant will be able to treat about 65,000 cubic litres of water per day, save energy consumption by 10 megawatts, and reduce greenhouse gases by 53,000 tonnes annually. - **ONA**

Overall imports in April-June 2023 are estimated to decline by 10.18 per cent over April-June 2022 at \$205.29 billion. The trade deficit in April-June 2023-24 period too narrowed from \$31.49 billion to \$22.59 billion, data showed. After witnessing high growth in 2022-23, India's trade performance has shown declining trends compared to the high base of last year in the backdrop of a global slowdown, the commerce ministry said. "Post Covid calendar year 2022 globally there was lots of inventory built up which fueled high trade growth. It will take some time to come down inventory (which is already being) built up. Now Orders are starting to pick up from July, it happens that will be good for us. (However) the trade sector is completely in the hands of global factors," commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal said. - **ANI**

CBO BULLETIN



Credit granted by banks in Oman rises to OMR24.28 billion

MUSCAT: The total credit granted by commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman during the first quarter of 2023 increased by 5.5 percent to OMR24.28 billion compared to OMR23.10 billion in the same period of 2022. The quarterly statistical bulletin issued by the Research and Statistics Department of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicated that the personal loans sector received OMR46.9 billion. The services sector received OMR2.65 billion or 8.5 percent of the credit granted, followed by the construction sector at OMR1.88 billion or 7.8 percent, and the industry sector at OMR1.88 billion or 7.7 percent of the total bank credit. The CBO bulletin further indicated that the electricity, transportation and water sector received OMR669.9 billion, or 6.9 percent of the volume of credit granted to commercial banks during the first three months of 2023. The transportation and transportation sector received OMR497.2 billion, or 6.2 percent of the total volume of credit. The financial institution sector received OMR341.1 billion, or 5.5 percent, and the mining

sector (mines and quarries) received OMR182.1 billion, or 4.9 percent, followed by the wholesale and retail trade sector (retail) and received OMR129.2 billion, or 4.6 percent. The quarterly bulletin of the Central Bank of Oman indicated that the volume of bank credit granted to the import sector during the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR932.8 million, or 3.8 percent, followed by the government sector, which amounted to OMR710.7 million, or 2.9 percent of the total bank credit. During the first quarter of 2023, the agricultural sector and related activities received OMR54.3 million, or 0.2 percent, and the export sector received OMR36.1 million, or 0.1 percent of the volume of bank credit to commercial banks. The bulletin indicated that the volume of bank credit to commercial banks in the Sultanate for other economic activities amounted during the first quarter of 2023 to about OMR655.4 million, or 2.7 percent, while the volume of bank credit to non-residents amounted to OMR197.8 million, or 0.8 percent of the total volume of bank credit. - **ONA**

GLOBAL SLOWDOWN



India's overall exports decline 13% in June

NEW DELHI: India's overall exports, both merchandise and services combined, in June 2023 are estimated to be \$60.09 billion, registering a decline of around 13 per cent from June 2022, official commerce ministry data revealed on Friday. In June 2022, the exports were \$69.20 billion. Overall imports in June 2023 are estimated to be \$68.98 billion, down about 14 per cent from 2022 figures of \$80.12 billion. In June, however, the trade balance, meaning the difference between exports and imports, narrowed from \$10.92 billion to \$8.89 billion. India's overall exports (merchandise and services combined) in April-June 2023 quarter is estimated to exhibit a 7.29 per cent decline over April-June 2022 at \$182.70 billion. Overall imports in April-June 2023 are estimated to decline by 10.18 per cent over April-June 2022 at \$205.29 billion. The trade deficit in April-June 2023-24 period too narrowed from \$31.49 billion to \$22.59 billion, data showed. After witnessing high growth in 2022-23, India's trade performance has shown declining trends compared to the high base of last year in the backdrop of a global slowdown, the commerce ministry said. "Post Covid calendar year 2022 globally there was lots of inventory built up which fueled high trade growth. It will take some time to come down inventory (which is already being) built up. Now Orders are starting to pick up from July, it happens that will be good for us. (However) the trade sector is completely in the hands of global factors," commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal said. - **ANI**

MARKET

Omani stock market maintains uptrend despite volatility

This week traders will continue to closely follow companies' earnings releases in Oman and the US where strong figures could encourage risk-taking and push stock markets to the upside

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Muscat stock exchange's main index recorded a relatively positive week and extended previous gains although trading was somewhat volatile during daily sessions, according to an industry expert.

"While it remains exposed to the downside to a certain extent in light of the mitigated performance of the first half of the year, the market could potentially see more gains with sentiment improving on the global and local stages," said Ahmed Negm, Head of Market Research MENA at XS.com.

The release of slightly lower-than-expected inflation data in

the US this week has fuelled uncertainty regarding the trajectory of interest rates and their impact on the Omani economy and stock market, he further said. "Expectations of a softer monetary policy stance from the Federal Reserve could also nurture traders' appetite for risk among local and international investors which could target markets like Oman. It could also affect banks and other sectors," he added.

While the Federal Reserve could still raise interest rates at their next meeting at the end of this month, the central bank could abandon its aggressive stance that resulted in a rapid tightening in financing costs in the US and the



Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). "If inflation continues to decline, the market could see a gradual return to lower interest rates next year which could create more favourable conditions for the Omani stock market among others," said Ahmed Negm.

Omani stocks could also respond positively to the current developments in energy markets where oil prices have been recovering this month. Traders have been taking into account a potential tighten-

ing in the market with production levels being reduced by Saudi Arabia and Russia. "At the same time, demand from China, the largest importer of Omani crude, could remain under scrutiny as the country's economic recovery remains weaker than it previously hoped for," he added.

This week traders will continue to closely follow companies' earnings releases in Oman and the US where strong figures could encourage risk-taking and push stock markets to the upside. The start of earnings season has seen US banks release above-estimated results while Omani banks also recorded strong figures. "Local banks have been able to improve revenues and profits which could help strengthen traders' sentiment and the market's direction as a whole," said Ahmed Negm.

With a more stable outlook on interest rates, banks in Oman and the economy as a whole could see fewer risks as financing costs stabilise and pressures on businesses abate to a certain extent.

"Over the medium to long term, economic conditions could improve further as a result, helping the stock market see more strength," he further added.

MSX records new gains

MUSCAT: Last week, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded new gains, with the market value rising above OMR23.9 billion, recording weekly gains of more than OMR40 million.

Also, the main index of the stock exchange managed to break the barrier of 4,800 points throughout Tuesday and Wednesday, but it gave up these gains on Thursday, concluding the trading week at 4,796 points, recording a weekly increase of six points, up for the second week in a row.

Last week, the Muscat Stock Exchange benefited from an atmosphere of optimism, with the public joint stock companies announcing their initial financial results for the first half of this year, and the prices of 27 securities increased compared



to 25 securities whose prices fell and 24 securities that settled at their previous levels, and the service sector index was able to record gains of about 17 points. However, the other three sectoral indices closed down at 10 points for the financial sector index, 4 points for the Sharia index, and 3 points for the financial sector index. - **ONA**

GERMANY

Interest in starting business declines

BRUSSELS: People in Germany are showing less and less interest in starting a business or becoming self-employed. The number of consultations for potential founders at the regional Chambers of Industry and Commerce fell by 3 per cent to 154,785 in 2022 compared to the previous year.

It is the lowest level since counting began in 2002, the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) said on Saturday. In 2010 there were still 431,000 consultations.

"After the coronavirus pandemic, there was no start-up push, for example in retail or in the catering trade gastronomy," it added. Compared to the pre-crisis year of 2019, there was even a drop in start-up consultations about more concrete projects by a significant 42 per cent.

What keeps Germans from starting a business?

The long-term new business trend is also downward. According to the annual DIHK report,



for the past 13 years, except for 2016 and 2019, fewer and fewer people have been asking questions about starting a business from year to year.

DIHK President Peter Adrian described this trend as "a serious threat" to the German economy.

"Many people are insecure and shy away from taking the step into self-employment," he said.

In addition to demographic changes, the DIHK also sees uncertain framework conditions for founders as a cause. Adrian called on politicians to provide targeted incentives so "more people would be happy to start a business again." - **dw**

INVESTMENT

ITHCA invests in InnoTech to expand use of 3D printing technology in real estate

Times New Service

MUSCAT: ITHCA Group has announced its investment in the "InnoTech" company, intending to expand the use of 3D printing technology in real estate development.

This investment will enable the exploration of innovative solutions, and the integration of knowledge and technology to enhance the real estate sector. InnoTech is a specialised Omani company that focuses on innovation, 3D printing services, and educational technologies. It has achieved a significant milestone as the first company in the Middle East to construct a building using a locally developed 3D printer and building materials sourced from the local market.

Saif bin Abdullah Al-Abri, the Senior Director of Investments and Business Development at ITHCA Group, emphasised the group's intention to invest in InnoTech, which specialises in 3D printing technology. The aim is to revolutionise the industry by deviating from conventional methods.



Al Abri added: "This technology presents various advantages, including the localisation of specialised technicians in real estate development, support workers in the sector, and keeping pace with global technological advancements. By leveraging the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, ITHCA Group aims to contribute to economic growth and expedite project completion."

Eng. Othman bin Maktoum Al-Mandhari, Founder and CEO of InnoTech, expressed satisfaction with the partnership and investment from ITHCA Group. They look forward to expanding the utilisation of 3D technology in real estate development. Considering that cement is one of the most extensively used materials in construction globally, the field of real estate development faces sig-

nificant challenges, such as high labour costs and expensive traditional building materials.

"Consequently, there is now a global race to automate this sector. InnoTech has taken on the responsibility of becoming the pioneering company in the Middle East by developing this technology, aiming to become one of the leading companies in the field," Al-Mandhari added.

UNUSUAL ENVIRONMENT

US banks point to resilient but slowing economy, flag risks ahead

NEW YORK: Some of the largest US banks said on Friday they got a profit boost from higher rates and painted a picture of a resilient economy, with sparks of hope in some businesses like deal-making that have been in the dumps of late.

But they also warned of risks ahead, with US consumers pulling back on spending and losses building up in areas such as credit cards and office commercial real estate, Reuters reported.

Investors brushed aside their initial enthusiasm for results from JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, and Citigroup, fearing things were as good as they would get for a while.

"We're in a very unusual environment - higher inflation, these rate levels, and a strong labour market," Citigroup CEO Jane Fraser said. But she added, "I don't think we should be overly concerned here about the health of the US consumer."

JPMorgan Chase and Wells Fargo reported sharp increases in net interest income, which measures the difference between what banks earn on loans and pay out on deposits that drove up profits.

For Citigroup, however, weakness in its trading business overshadowed gains in interest income. That's a headwind that other banks more dependent on Wall Street businesses, such as Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stan-



ley, are also likely to face when they report results next week.

Separately, BlackRock, the world's biggest asset manager, handily beat second-quarter profit estimates but showed a slowdown in money inflows.

US custodian bank State Street Corp beat profit estimates for the second quarter after interest income climbed 18 per cent year-on-year, though it fell on a quarterly basis by 10 per cent due to lower average non-interest-bearing deposit balances.

State Street warned of a further decline of 12-18 per cent in net interest income on a sequential basis on its earnings call, driven by lower deposit levels. Deposits at large banks have been dropping as consumers move money in search of higher yields.

State Street shares closed 12

per cent, while JPM's shares rose 0.6 per cent. Wells shares were down 0.3 per cent, while Citi fell 4 per cent and BlackRock fell 1.5 per cent.

"If interest rates rise, loan demand could continue to deteriorate," said Brian Mulberry, client portfolio manager at Zacks Investment Management.

The bank results provide the latest insights into the health of the US economy. Investors have been worried that an aggressive rate hike campaign by the US Federal Reserve to fight inflation will tip the economy into recession but the outlook remains highly uncertain.

"The US economy continues to be resilient," JPMorgan Chief Executive Jamie Dimon said. But he added that consumers are "slowly using up their cash buffers."

Some bank executives said

US consumers, who are the key drivers of the economy, still have healthy finances but warned spending was slowing and there had been a modest deterioration in some consumer debt.

Weekly data from the Federal Reserve has shown consumer borrowing slowing. Bank credit card lending saw its growth rate peak in October 2022 after two years of strong increases and has moderated since. The main drag on consumer lending is auto loans.

Annual growth peaked there in early 2022 and turned negative in April. Wells Fargo said consumer charge-offs, meaning debts that a bank has written off and does not expect to recover, continued to modestly deteriorate. Citi flagged that delinquency rates in credit cards and other retail lines are rising and expected to reach "normal levels" by the end of the year.

Wells CEO Charlie Scharf said the range of scenarios for the economy should narrow over the next few quarters. For now, the economy is performing better than many expected but will likely continue slowing.

Larry Fink, BlackRock's chief executive, said in an interview with CNBC he expects the economic environment to remain challenging. "Inflation will be stickier than the market is assuming," he said, adding it will bounce around 2 per cent and 4 per cent. - **BNA**

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A day in the life of... Samyuktha Arun,

the heart and mind behind Yoga City Oman



Samyuktha Arun

1. Can you briefly introduce yourself and your background?

I'm Samyuktha Arun, the VP of Operations and Training of Yoga City Oman, a yoga studio nestled in the heart of Qurum. With a passion for wellness and a deep understanding of yoga, I have dedicated my career to helping individuals improve their physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing through the practice of yoga. I have received professional training in various styles of yoga, allowing me to cater to a wide range of preferences and needs. Recently, I've also been exploring the transformative power of sound therapy and healing, integrating it into my yoga sessions to provide a holistic experience for my students.

2. What led you to pursue this profession?

My connection with yoga began during childhood when my grandfather, a yoga Instructor, first introduced me to it. Over time, my passion for yoga deepened, especially when my mother also chose to follow the yogic path. Recognising my love for this transformative practice, I made the decision to become a certified yoga instructor over 5 years ago and continue to keep learning.

3. Describe a typical day in your life?

My day kicks off at 5:30 AM as I get ready for my sessions. Typically, I have an average of 5-6 classes sched-

I'm not someone who tends to dwell on the past. My focus lies more on the present moment and planning for the future. Therefore, I don't have a desire to go back in time and change anything.

uled throughout the day. I prioritise finding pockets of time between sessions for my personal yoga practice and other physical activities that bring me joy, such as animal flow. Alongside running the yoga studio, I'm currently pursuing my masters degree, which adds an extra layer of challenge in maintaining a work-life balance.

4. What challenges do you face in your role, and how do you overcome them?

One of the biggest challenges, I would have to say, is the operations part of running a yoga studio. Being a small business, I find myself taking on various roles within the company, such as content creator, customer service representative, yoga instructor, accountant, and more. What has worked for me is dedicating specific times of the day or week to each role

and working through them systematically. If I need assistance with any of the tasks, I don't shy away from seeking advice from more experienced individuals.

5. If you could choose, what are the three most traits in yoga?

Three traits of yoga that truly resonate with me are compassion, friendliness, and joyfulness. I have always learned to be compassionate and friendly towards my students, which allows me to establish a stronger connection with them. As a result, they have made remarkable progress in their practice, and I feel grateful to be able to share the joy they experience through their yoga journey.

6. What is the best advice you received and from whom?

The advice that resonates with me the most is the importance of lifelong learning, which I have received from both of my parents. This mindset has been a driving force in my journey, inspiring me to delve into different yoga styles and expand my expertise, not only in the field, but also to experience and learn about new passions. I am deeply grateful for this guidance because it serves as a reminder that age should never limit our capacity to learn and grow.

7. What are the most rewarding aspects of your job?

The most fulfilling part of my job is witnessing my students leaving each session with smiles on their faces. Additionally, observing their progress and dedication in their yoga practice is like the cherry on top, which brings me immense happiness.

8. What accomplishments in your life are most appreciative of?

I am most appreciative of the accomplishments in my life that have shaped me into the person I am today. Firstly, obtaining my certification as a yoga instructor was a significant milestone for me. It not only allowed me to pursue my passion for yoga but also empowered me to positively impact the lives of others through teaching. Secondly, establishing and successfully running my own yoga studio has been an incredible achievement. It required hard work, dedication, and overcoming various challenges. Seeing the studio thrive and witnessing the positive impact it has on the well-being of my students brings me a tremendous sense of fulfilment. Lastly, I am grateful for the opportunity to continuously learn and grow, both personally and professionally. Engaging in further education, attending workshops,



shops, and expanding my knowledge in various aspects of yoga and wellness has been a rewarding accomplishment.

It has not only deepened my understanding but also enabled me to offer a higher level of guidance and support to my students.

9. If you could have a superpower, what would it be and why ?

If I were to choose a superpower, I would love to have the ability to teleport. Exploring new cities and immersing myself in different cultures is a great passion of mine. Just imagine the joy of skipping airport queues and traffic jams, appearing in a new city in the blink of an eye!

10. If you could go back in time to change something, would you do it?

I'm not someone who tends to dwell on the past. My focus lies more on the present moment and planning for the future. Therefore, I don't have a desire to go back in time and change anything.

11. Who has been your biggest influence or mentor?

My biggest influence and mentor would undoubtedly be my mother. She has played a significant role in shaping my journey in the field of yoga. I have learned a great deal from her, and her guidance, motivation, and support have been instrumental in guiding me to where I am today.

12. Talk to us about work life balance- myth? Necessity? Or both?

Absolutely, it's not a myth but a necessity! Yoga teaches us the importance of balance. Too much of anything isn't good for our wellbeing. When we achieve a balance between work and personal life, we become more productive, feel less exhausted, and can maintain a healthy social life, which is essential for everyone.

15. Why Yoga?

Yoga is the art and science of a healthy lifestyle, building a con-

nection between body and mind. It offers more than just physical exercise; it is a way of life. So the true question should be: 'Why not Yoga?'

14. Can you tell us about any significant turning points or defining moments in your life?

In December 2020, a significant turning point occurred when I made the life-changing decision to embark on a new career path. I chose to join Yoga City as the driving force behind its operations. This pivotal moment not only shaped me into the person I am today but also influenced my core beliefs and values. Embracing this opportunity has allowed me to transform my own life in profound ways. It has granted me the privilege to share my love for yoga and extend its incredible benefits to a wider audience. Teaching yoga has become my passion, and I am dedicated to spreading its positive impact far and wide.

15. Do you have any future goals or aspirations you are working towards?

I am determined to promote the widespread benefits of yoga across diverse communities in and around Oman. My long term goal is to expand its reach beyond the current location and extend it to various cities in the Middle East. Although this presents a formidable challenge, I am fully committed to this endeavour and actively working towards making it a reality.

16. If you could wish for one thing, what would it be?

If granted one wish, I would sincerely hope for a society where every individual has access to basic necessities and equal opportunities. I feel fortunate to have had access to both, but I am acutely aware that many people around the world still suffer from their absence. This wish stems from a genuine concern for the wellbeing of all. While it may seem like an ambitious aspiration, it is a vision worth pursuing.

17. Is there anything else you would like to share or highlight about yourself or your profession?

I feel truly blessed to be able to teach yoga in a country where the people have accepted and welcomed it with open arms. It brings me immense joy to witness its embrace by individuals from diverse communities, which serves as proof to yoga's ability to transcend borders and cultures.

18. If you were to write a book about your life- what would the title be?

My approach to life is living in the present and taking things as they come. Therefore an apt title for a book about my life would be, 'One day at a time'.



SPORTS

FOOTBALL



Arsenal complete signing of Dutch defender Jurrien

LONDON: One of the most decorated clubs in the history of the Premier League, Arsenal completed the signing of defender Jurrien Timber, from Ajax on Friday.

The versatile 22-year-old defender has signed a long-term contract with the Gunners. Ajax confirmed that both clubs agreed on a transfer fee of USD 45 million which could further increase due to variables. Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta expressed his excitement on the club's latest recruit said in a statement, "We're really excited that Jurrien has joined us. He is a versatile young defender, who will fit into our system and provide our squad with so much added quality. Jurrien is a young player but has already achieved so much. He has experienced what it's like to go to a major international tournament on more than one occasion, as well as the trophies he has won with Ajax. We look forward to welcoming and integrating Jurrien into the squad."

Timber was heavily linked to a move to Manchester United last season but his move never went

through. This season he will feature for Arsenal who have had a neck-to-neck rivalry during the 2000 era.

While speaking to the club's website, Timber revealed the factor that played a crucial role in influencing his move and said, "It was because of my brothers. They were always Arsenal fans, and I just loved seeing Arsenal play. They had big players, the way they played, the style. I just love the club."

"I had this from a young age, but my brothers kind of put that in me. I liked watching Robin van Persie of course, and Thierry Henry. They were my favourite players," Timber added.

Arsenal have been active throughout the transfer market as they managed to secure the signature of Kai Havertz and they are on the verge of completing a deal for young defensive midfielder Declan Rice in the coming weeks. The club also extended the contracts of youngsters Aaron Ramsdale, Bukaro Saka and William Saliba to further boost their squad for the 2023/24 campaign. **-ANI**

Some ‘nasty stuff’ said to me, says Alex Carey

Talking about the debate of the "spirit of cricket", Carey said that everyone is entitled to their opinion

MANCHESTER: Australian wicketkeeper Alex Carey reflecting back to his infamous stumping of Jonny Bairstow on the final day of the second Ashes Test match at Lord's and said that some "nasty stuff" were said about him in the past few days.

Speaking for the first time after the whole episode of Bairstow's dismissal, Carey said that some "nasty stuff" was said about him, however, the whole team is together. "There's some nasty stuff said but...it is the Ashes, there was nasty stuff said before that as well. I feel really well supported. I think the whole group does. From Australia I still think we've got lots of fans and from England, I don't think we've made any, but we probably didn't lose any," he said as quoted by ESPNcricinfo.

Australian players were booed in the Lord's Long Room and as a measure, some restrictions were imposed and three MCC members were suspended.

Talking about the debate of the "spirit of cricket", Carey said that everyone is entitled to their opinion.

"It's one of those things where a stumping that's given out on the field is turned into a massive story. Everyone is entitled to their opinion and I absolutely respect that. Everyone's entitled to their opin-



ion on the spirit of cricket as well. Not just myself, the whole group had some stuff spoken about them. But we're really tight. We understand what's important and who matters and those guys definitely have our back," he added.

"We're all in it together, we were all out there, all walked through the Long Room together, post-match we all discussed it together. Don't think the group would do anything differently," the Australian wicketkeeper further added.

Carey also said that Bairstow was not attempting any shots so he thought to stump him down.

"We were switched on to the fact that it was a bounce plan and it felt like Jonny was pretty switched on to getting out of the way, he wasn't playing any shots. When

he ducked, his first movement was pretty much out of his crease, so I instinctively grabbed the ball, threw the stumps down and the rest is history,"

"I've definitely been out to that a few times and I've tried to do it in the past as well. My first A-grade game in South Australia, I was out that way. And when I walked off, I was pretty disappointed. [The] captain came up to me, he said, 'you'll remember to keep your foot behind the line next time.'

"From my point of view, I wasn't called [out] on it back when I'd have tried it about the spirit of cricket and when I was given out in the same sort of manner, I didn't question it either," he said.

When asked about Nathan Lyon's injury, he said, "Nathan Lyon

was bowling beautifully before he got injured and creating lots of opportunities. Murph [Todd Murphy] obviously didn't have as much opportunity last game but that will certainly change I think in Manchester.

"The quicks have bowled beautifully...[I've been] just trying to adapt on the go as well with a little bit of wobble that we haven't seen. Feeling good, I feel pretty solid in front of the wicket, the last game wasn't one that I would have loved, but you can see over here that when the clouds come over it's a different game."

Australia will play their fourth Ashes Test at Old Trafford Cricket Ground starting on July 19 to claim the series. Australia is leading the series by 2-1. **-ANI**

FRANCE NATIONAL PLAYER

France never appreciated talent, never understood Messi: Former French striker

NEW DELHI: Former France national player and Word Cup winner David Trezeguet was critical of his nation's lack of appreciation of talent. Ligue 1 giants Paris Saint Germain signed Lionel Messi two years ago.

The Argentinian maestro was supposed to be the final piece of the puzzle to complete the French club's UEFA Champions League elusive dream. But the moment never came and Messi was on the receiving end of most of the critics for PSG's failure in the European competition.

Trezeguet hit back at those critics and while speaking to ESPN Argentina as quoted by Goal.com, Trezeguet said, "France never appreciated talent and, therefore, the country never understood Messi. His arrival in Ligue 1 was an opportunity to make a less attractive championship more attractive than the Premier League, Serie A, La Liga and I would even say the Bundesliga. However, France has never appreciated Messi's talent. A player who changes hierarchies at all levels in football, guaranteeing you a comeback in terms of image and prestige as few others can."



"Ligue 1 rarely had the chance to host a player of this stature. Myself, Henry, Dugarry and Lizarazu, who have a history, have been severely criticized for defending Messi. Our fault? Siding with talent and the magic of football," Trezeguet added.

Even though spending most of the time on the receiving end of the critics individually, Messi still had a pleasing time at PSG. Even though he fell short in his first season, last season he struck 16 goals while contributing the same number of assists.

Two weeks ago he was also awarded the Best Foreign Player in Ligue 1 for the 2022-23 season. After leaving the French club, the seven-time Ballon d'Or will now join Inter Miami, which is owned by former England football legend David Beckham. **-ANI**

BADMINTON

US Open: Lakshya Sen into semifinals, Sindhu bows out

WASHINGTON: Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen stormed into the semifinals of the ongoing US Open badminton tournament on Friday.

Sen, who had recently won the Canada Open, defeated compatriot Sankar Muthusamy 21-10, 21-17 in two straight games in the quarterfinals. Sen was at his most dominant, clinching the first set effortlessly. While Sankar showed some fight in the second set, it was still not enough to deny the Commonwealth Games champion his semifinal spot. In the semifinals, Sen will face Li Shi Feng, a world number seven player.

On the other hand, two-time Olympic medalist PV Sindhu continued her patchy form this season, losing to Gao Fang Jie in the quarters.

Sindhu, who had slipped down to number 15 in Badminton World Federation (BWF) rankings recently, lost the match 22-20, 21-13. The World number 36 had to fight really hard to win in



the first game but won the second game easily.

The US Open tournament started on July 11 and will go on till Sunday. **-ANI**

CRICKET

Yashasvi: How southpaw grew from Azad Maidan to Dominica

NEW DELHI: From an under-19 sensation to a centurion on Test debut, Yashasvi Jaiswal has truly emerged as the man for the big stages for Indian cricket.

Not one to rest on his laurels is an attribute that young Jaiswal aptly demonstrated during his master-class knock on debut against the West Indies in Dominica. Jaiswal was meant to be a star. At every step of his career, it was his bat and constant desire to improve himself that proved it. Challenges grew in intensity, so did Jaiswal's batting numbers. The rise of Jaiswal has been comparatively slow. He was not thrown among the big wolves of international cricket immediately like other once U-19



stars like Virat Kohli and Prithvi Shaw. The step-by-step build-up of Jaiswal's to the highest level of the game makes his journey even more beautiful because of how he did more than enough at every level to warrant him a spot at the next.

Many fans consider him to be the 'Next Big Thing' for Team India. While he has a long way to go despite a debut century to live up to this tag, his admirers have been given every reason to believe so by this young man from UP who has travelled from Mumbai's Azad Maidan to colourful Caribbean conditions with some unbelievable numbers in his resume.

Here is how Jaiswal has performed at big occasions so far in

his career:

-2020 Under-19 Cricket World Cup (South Africa)

Though India ended up as runners-up after losing to Bangladesh, Jaiswal established a buzz around himself with some strong performances. Jaiswal ended India's Under-19 WC campaign as the leading run-scorer, scoring 400 runs in six matches at an average of 133.33, with one century and four fifties. This included an unbeaten century in the semifinal against Pakistan and a knock of 88 in the final against Bangladesh in a losing effort. He was given the 'Player of the Tournament' for his efforts.

In 27 Youth ODIs, he scored 1,386 runs at an average of 69.30

and a strike rate of almost 84. He scored three centuries and 12 fifties in 27 innings, with a best score of 114*. He also scored 198 in two youth Tests with a century and an average of 98.50 in two innings.

Jaiswal also gained valuable experience in overseas conditions. In seven matches in testing England conditions, Jaiswal has scored 294 runs at an average of 42.00 and a strike rate of 74.05.

He has four half-centuries, with the best score of 78. He also scored plenty of runs in South Africa. In 12 matches in South Africa, he scored 602 runs at an average of 75.25. He has scored a century and six half-centuries, with a best score of 105*. **-ANI**

IN PICTURES



Egrets seen in Assam, India
Egrets perch on a branch of a tree in Guwahati city of India's northeastern state of Assam. *xinhua*



Exhibition of paintings spanning six centuries opens to public
Visitors view paintings at the exhibition 'The Greats of Six Centuries: Masterpieces from the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza' at the Museum of Art Pudong (MAP) in east China's Shanghai. The exhibition, featuring a selection of 70 paintings spanning six centuries, opened to the public at MAP on June 22, 2023 and will last till November 12 this year. *xinhua*



32nd International Festival of Arts 'Slavianski Bazaar' held in Belarus
Actresses perform folk dance during the 32nd International Festival of Arts 'Slavianski Bazaar' in Vitebsk, Belarus. *Xinhua*



Dog wedding ceremony held in Indonesia
This photo shows dogs as bride and groom during a dog wedding ceremony in Jakarta, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



Gippy Grewal, Binu Dhillon, Sonam Bajwa during the promotion of their upcoming movie
Punjabi actors Gippy Grewal and Binu Dhillon along with actress Sonam Bajwa, Kavita Kaushik and others during the promotion of their upcoming Punjabi movie 'Carry on Jatta 3'. *ANI Photo*



Nusantara Aquatic 2023 held in Tangerang, Indonesia
A betta fish is pictured during the Nusantara Aquatic 2023 in Tangerang, Banten Province, Indonesia. The Nusatic is an exhibition and a contest for ornamental fish in Indonesia. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Family getaway: Spacious bliss at Grand Millennium Muscat

Grand Millennium Muscat presents the perfect opportunity to indulge in spacious interconnecting family rooms, ensuring comfort and convenience for the entire family

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lennium Muscat is located in the heart of the city, close to the airport, and is seamlessly connected to the Muscat Grand Mall. Centrally located in the business, government and diplomatic districts, our luxury hotel is uniquely convenient. The airport is just 15 minutes away, and we are within easy reach of beaches, the Avenues Mall and the Royal Opera of Muscat.

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apartments are all luxuriously appointed with contemporary Omani design and everything the guest need for a pleasant stay.

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Millennium & Copthorne Hotels (M&C) is a London-based global hotel company, which owns, manages and operates over 135 hotels across some 80 locations world-

wide. Its properties are in key gateway cities such as London, New York, Los Angeles, Paris, Dubai, Doha, Beijing, Shanghai, Seoul, Singapore and Hong Kong. M&C is the hotel arm of Singapore-listed global real estate company City Developments Limited (CDL). M&C's global brand - Millennium Hotels and Resorts (MHR) has four distinct hotel collections - Leng's Collection, M Collection, Millennium Collection and Copthorne Collection - throughout Asia, Europe, the Middle East, New Zealand and the United States. Occupying the best locations around the world, MHR has the perfect address for business and leisure travellers. Listed on the London Stock Ex-

change in 1996, M&C was delisted on 11 October 2019 following a successful privatisation exercise launched by CDL.

Millennium Hotels & Resorts Middle East & Africa currently operates 45 hotels with almost 15,000 keys in addition to 32 hotels in the pipeline across the region. From a single property in Abu Dhabi, Millennium Hotels & Resorts, Middle East & Africa has expanded into various neighbouring destinations and is now recognised as one of the fastest-growing regional hotel management companies in the Middle East & Africa. Along the way, the company has cultivated partnerships with reputable and respected owners.

Demystifying keratoconjunctivitis sicca or dry eye



Dr. Priya Rangarajan DNB, MRCSEd Ophthalmology, Specialist Ophthalmologist of Al Hayat International Hospital explains this condition for the lay person.

How does one know if he/she could be suffering from dry eyes?

Burning sensation in the eyes, decreased vision, foreign body sensation and even excessive tearing are some of the symptoms which are suggestive of dry eye.

How does the Ophthalmologist confirm the diagnosis of dry eye?

Apart from comprehensive eye examination, specific tests include measurement of tear



break up time and Schirmers test which measures the tear secretion in the eye in 5 minutes.

These simple office based tests gives the doctor an idea that he or she is dealing with dry eyes.

What are the reasons for dry eyes?

Apart from common causes like excessive screen time, blocked oil glands in the eyelids, there are more serious conditions like connective tissue disorders, which need to be ruled out. Many commonly used drugs like those for heart ailments and mental illness can also cause dry eyes.

After lasik surgery which is commonly performed these days and vitamin A deficiency are just a few of many conditions which can cause dry eyes.

What is the treatment of dry eye?

Just as no one size fits all, dry

eye treatment varies depends on the severity. Also, treating the underlying cause is very important for long term relief.

Apart from a wide range of eye drops, treatment could involve several procedures like punctal occlusion which is basically blocking the tear ducts to preserve the tears longer in the eyes. and even botox injections in certain cases.

A word of caution here adds Dr. Priya. Self medicating with over the counter medications could cause corneal toxicity. Dry eyes should never be neglected as they can lead to other eye diseases like infectious keratitis or corneal infections as there is an imbalance in the environment in the tear film.

Thus, a timely visit to the eye doctor can not only tell you the reason for your dry eyes but also save you from future problems and protect your eyes from long term damage.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth launches Youth Ambassadors Programme

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has launched the Youth Ambassadors Programme; With the aim of building young national capacities for effective participation in regional and international forums.

The programme seeks to build young national capacities in order to encourage effective participation in regional and international forums, such as United Nations organisations in all its branches, as well as membership in official delegations participating in events organised by external parties and international and regional organisations throughout the year. This will provide young people with the opportunity to exercise leadership and have community roles that help them achieve their goals and those of Oman Vision 2040.

Hilal bin Saif Al Siyabi, Director General of the General Directorate of Youth, said that the Youth Ambassadors Programme targets an age group from 18 to 25 years, and seeks to provide young people with the necessary skills to represent the Sultanate of Oman in regional and international forums, through 3 main activities:

- Launching an electronic platform on the website. The Ministry offers a number of registered



training courses in a number of fields (diplomatic field - leadership - media - cultural identity)

- Secondly, by organising a training simulation session for regional and international meetings such as the United Nations Youth Model (MUN), in which the most important global and regional issues are raised by youth in various countries of the world, as well as the mechanism of their solutions.

- The programme also focuses on holding meetings between youth and diplomatic leaders in the Sultanate of Oman, which is the third main activity.

Al Siyabi pointed out that the aim of presenting the Model United Nations (MUN) for international meetings is to teach and disseminate the basic principles of the work of the UN and

its affiliated councils, and to increase knowledge in economic, social, political and environmental fields. It also aims to qualify young people to attend high-level meetings, as well as provide them with critical thinking skills, public speaking and negotiation skills. In addition, it seeks to enhance their communication skills with others, link young people to the international world, introduce them to international and regional organisations, and create a developmental link between young people and the world of international diplomatic relations.

He added that the desired return from this programme is to qualify young cadres in the diplomatic field and empower the youth to represent the Sultanate of Oman in regional and international forums.



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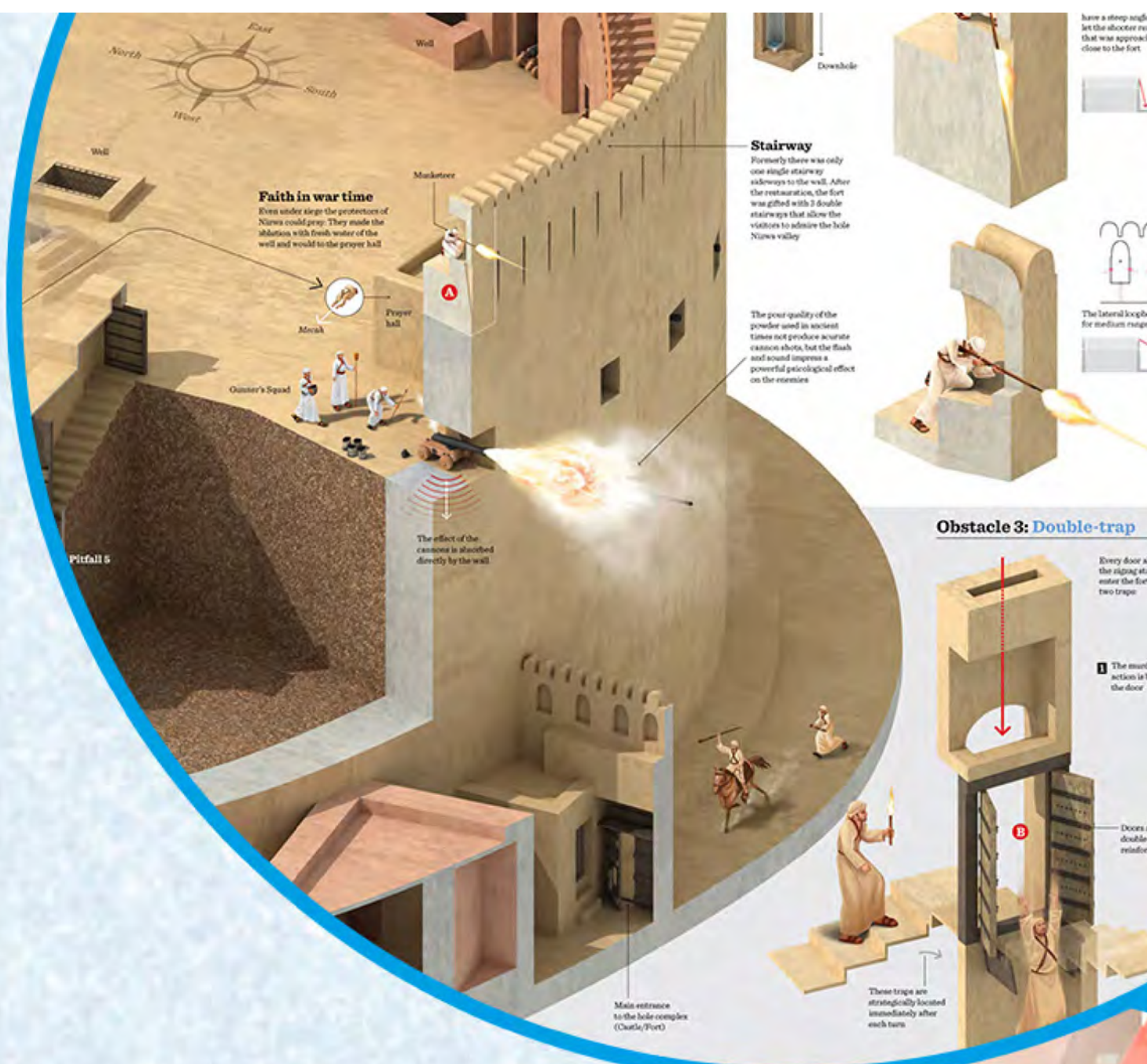
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