

HIS MAJESTY SENDS GREETINGS TO REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Dr. Nikos Christodoulides President-elect of the Republic of Cyprus. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere greetings and wishes of success to the president in leading his country's people to further progress and prosperity and for the relations between the two countries development and progress. **ONA**



معرض مسقط الدولي للكتاب - ٢٠٢٣
Muscat International BOOK FAIR - 2023
(محافظة جنوب الباطنة (ضيق الشرف)
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MUTTRAH CORNICHE

Muttrah cable cars to become a reality soon

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Muttrah cable car project is going to become a reality soon, said a member of the Municipal Council of the Wilayat of Muttrah in the Muscat Governorate. The project, along the Muttrah Corniche, is expected to become a big draw for tourists.

Speaking Exclusively to Times of Oman, Hamad Al Wahaibi, a member of the Municipal Coun-

oil of the Wilayat of Muttrah, confirmed that the cable car project will be implemented this year. We are awaiting the permits from the Muscat Municipality and once it is cleared, the vital tourism project will be implemented soon."

Al Wahaibi said that the departure point of the cable car project will be at the fish market stands at the Corniche in the Wilayat of Muttrah. **>A5**



OMANI RESCUERS REJOICE AS TURKISH CITIZENS EMERGE FROM QUAKE RUBBLE

The CDAA has been carrying out relief and rescue operations in earthquake-hit Türkiye

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Coming out alive after lying under the earthquake rubble for over 176 hours is nothing short of a miracle, but the National Search and Rescue Team of the Sultanate of Oman made the country proud by rescuing two Turkish citizens on Monday.

The woman, aged 60, was rescued alive from the rubble in the

city of Hatay while another person was extricated in the Turkish city of Antakya, nearly a week after the devastating earthquakes rattled Türkiye and Syria, said the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA).

The two persons received the necessary treatment from the medical team at the site and was transferred to the hospital for further examination.

In a statement, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority said that extensive searches in a number of areas affected by the earthquake has resulted in the recovery of a number of bodies.

Since their arrival in Türkiye, the CDAA has been continuing with the search and rescue operations, providing medical care to the injured in southern Türkiye.

Colonel Mubarak bin Salem Al-Araimi, Director General of Operations and Training at the authority, general supervisor of the team, said that they have set up a camp in the Turkish city of Hatay, in coordination with the Emergency and Disaster Management Authority of Türkiye.

He pointed out that the team

has carried out many searches for survivors in different locations through the use of advanced devices and equipment to detect lives under the rubble, in addition to providing medical care to those affected by medical personnel in coordination with the local authority, LEMA, and the International Field Operations Centre, working alongside with other teams.

The Colonel General Supervisor of the National Search and Rescue Team added that despite the challenges faced by the international teams, such as the heavy congestion of vehicles, and freezing cold, the team continues to provide assistance and humanitarian services to the affected people.

OMAN Muscat International Book Fair from Feb. 22

1 The 27th edition of Muscat International Book Fair will kick off on 22 February 2023 under the patronage of Sayyid Hamoud Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior. **>A2**

OMAN Jorgenson wins

2 Young American Matteo Jorgenson claim victory and the overall lead in the third stage of Tour of Oman. **>A2**

SPORTS Le Mans Series

3 Al-Faisal Al-Zubair wrapped up his first appearances together in the Asian Le Mans Series. **>B6**

Grand Opening

February 14, 2023.

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Asr.....3:41pm
Maghrib.....6:06pm
Isha.....7:18pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:24am



27TH MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

Muscat International Book Fair to begin on 22 February

MUSCAT: The 27th edition of Muscat International Book Fair will kick off on 22 February 2023 under the patronage of Sayyid Hamoud Faisal Al Busaidi, Minister of Interior.

The 11-day literary extravaganza will be held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Sayyid Said Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, Deputy Chairman of the organizing committee of Muscat International Book Fair, said, “The Governorate of South Al Batinah will be honorary guest of the 27th version of the book fair and will carry out a number of cultural, technical and artistic activities.

He added that artificial intelligence will be used in this year’s edition of the book fair, notably to analyse various data about



the guests and accompanying programmes.

He further said that the book fair will include a Bahraini cultural week, and we hope that it will be a successful experience to continue in the upcoming sessions.

As usual, the book fair will provide a number of cultural halls, like Ahmed Bin Majid Gallery, Al-Farahidi Gallery, Ibn Dureid Gallery and Al-Awtabi Gallery.

Al Busaidi pointed out that the book fair will also host a group of

prominent intellectuals and media professionals, in addition to directors of GCC and Arab book fairs and the Chairman of the Arab Publishers Union.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Said Al Balushi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Chairman of the Book Fair’s Media Committee, said “Various media programmes will be conducted during the book fair, which will also host media professionals and scholars who influenced Arab literary life.”

He explained that, though freedom of expression is guaranteed by law, publications that compromise national or religious values are not welcomed in the book fair.

On his turn, Ahmed Saud Al Rawahi, Director of Muscat International Book Fair, said that this year’s edition of the book fair

will showcase the publications of 826 publishing houses from 32 countries.

As many as 533,063 titles and publications will appear at the book fair, he added.

He further said that the number of Omani publications at the book fair stands at 22,950 alongside 5,900 fresh publications, in addition to 204,411 foreign books and 260,614 Arabic books.

The event will also see 165 cultural events and 166 children’s activities—all to come up in 1,194 pavilions, Al Rawahi added.

A special corner will be dedicated to Omani authors and publications, including those written in Zanzibar, Arab countries or European countries.

Events to be held in conjunction with Muscat International Book Fair, including a Children’s

Corner where an area has been allocated for family activities, a theater, scholarly theses and reading corners and workshops. This is in addition to the establishment of cultural cafes in a number of pavilions.

Authorities having expertise in the book industry will participate in the book fair, while authors will sign their respective publications.

The book fair will provide an electronic application and a mobile catalogue. It will also promote volunteering activities to offer an opportunity to hone the skills of interested segments.

A corner will be allocated to signing cultural and literary publications. The management of the book fair provided electronic payment solutions at all its participants’ platforms in coordination with a local bank. -OMA

A Venetian Evening with ‘I Solisti Veneti’

Conducted by Giuliano Carella

17th February | 7:00 PM

I Solisti Veneti is an Italian chamber orchestra made famous throughout the world under their founding director Claudio Scimone for their performances of Vivaldi. The orchestra is acclaimed for promotion of Venetian musical heritage and credited with reviving hundreds of previously works. The concert features a programme including the highlights of the Baroque repertoire, conducted by Giuliano Carella.

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SEASON 2022-2023

RED JERSEY

Jorgenson wins third stage of Tour of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Young American Matteo Jorgenson (Movistar) saw off the challenge of the chasing pack with a powerful uphill sprint at Jabal Haat to claim victory and the overall lead in this year’s Tour of Oman.

The 23-year-old climber made the most of the steepest sections leading to an unprecedented finish in Al Hamra to edge out another young rising talent, Belgium’s Mauri Vansevenant (Soudal Quick-Step), and France’s Geoffrey Bouchard (AG2R Citroën).

Heading into the stage, it always seemed likely that the race would be decided by the 4.6km haul to the finish, and so it proved. Jorgenson was the first to gain any meaningful traction on an acceleration, but he was unable to open a gap – although it did break up the front group, with yesterday’s winner Jesus Herrada left behind.

With 300 metres to go, Jorgenson timed his sprint for the line perfectly and this turn of pace secured victory. Vansevenant had to settle for second and Bouchard for third.

Jorgenson said, “It is a super special moment, it really is. A huge moment, a relief. Those things start to cross your mind; maybe I am not the type of rider that can win, but today I proved that to myself. It was mostly about legs; that climb was steep at moments, and I wanted to test everyone. It took a second or so for the others to get back to me so I knew I had the legs. We made it to the sprint, and I didn’t look back. The team did well, we stayed in front all day. All in all,

just a really nice day!”

Stage 3 pushed the riders to their limits with a series of climbs and descents starting from Al Khobar and twisting through the foothills of Jabal Al Akhdar past the towns of Samail, Izki and the outskirts of Nizwa before ending in Jabal Haat just outside Al Hamra – a total distance of 151.8km.

Matteo Jorgenson’s amazing performance earned him the Individual time and points awards, as well as ‘Best Young Rider’ to go with his first placed finish. Dutchman Jeroen Meijers (Terengganu Polygon Cycling Team) won ‘Most Active Rider’ for the third day in succession.

Meijers said, “Our main tactic is to get me in the breakaway, and it is then up to me to beat the others in the sprints. The Tour is very well organised, the roads are excellent, and we are very happy to be here. This is the first time the team has competed in Oman. It is very hot when you’re riding with no shade, and tomorrow I will try to save my energy over the long distance and aim to finish strongly.”

Stage 4 on Tuesday 14 February kicks off close to today’s finishing line in Izki, heading towards Al Jarda and through the Al Hajar Mountains to Bidbid and Fanja.

The cyclists will enter Muscat close to Sultan Qaboos University and travel through Al Mawaleh and Bousher to Al Wattayah and the hills of Al Jissah. After a series of turns around Qantab and Yeti, the riders will race for the line at Yitti Hills. Tomorrow’s penultimate stage is the longest of the entire Tour of Oman 2023, a total of 204.9km.



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Interactive art exhibition ‘Growth’ to be organised at Stal Gallery in Muscat

‘Growth’ is a cross-cultural programme, initiated and supported by the Embassy of Austria in Oman

MUSCAT: On the occasion of the celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between Oman and Austria, the Austrian Embassy in Oman, in collaboration with Stal Gallery and Studio, presents a cross-cultural initiative, stimulating a dialogue between both countries, through the interactive art programme at Stal Gallery.

‘Growth’ is a cross-cultural programme, initiated and supported by the Embassy of Austria in Oman. The programme is focused on the cultural aspect and will culminate in a public exhibition with an inauguration on 14 February 2023 at 7:00 pm and Art Talk on 15 February 2023 at 6:00 pm.

The opening ceremony is attended by the guest of honour Sayyid Saeed bin Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and is held under the auspices of Christian Brunmayr, Ambassador of Austria to Oman.

The programme is curated by the Austrian artist Marjan Habibian, and featuring artworks of Austrian artists Elisabeth Gschiel, Marlene Gollner, Walter Kratner and Marjan Habibian.

“Growth is always accompanied by pain. Be it the growth of a plant seed, or the physical growth of a human being or an animal, or the intellectual growth of a human being, or even the growth of a culture, society, and civilisation. All of



Exhibition on display at Stal Gallery in Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos: 14.02.2023-28.02.2023

this requires awareness and steps of which pain is an integral part. Prosperity, beauty and progress reach higher levels, achieving results requires effort, perseverance, tolerance and awareness,” said exhibition curator Marjan Habibian.

They are four artists living in Austria presenting their art by using the tools of different forms of art. This includes words, photos, space, materials, lines, shapes, colors or hybrid mixtures of these. From the individual works and groups of works in this exhibi-

“

The celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between Austria and the Sultanate of Oman represents an excellent framework to work together on contemporary art projects, such as the exhibition ‘Growth’ at Stal Gallery in Muscat

Christian Brunmayr, Austrian Ambassador

tion you can easily recognise that the artists primarily understand “growth” as an aesthetic transformation process. Elisabeth Gschiel, whose motifs do not draw with a pen, but sew them like threads on paper with a sewing machine, invites you to witness a craft traditionally attributed to women from the female point of view.

The sculptures, vessels or body volumes by Marlene Gollner allow a resonance and interaction between the visible and the hidden to be experienced. Wild silk fibres are the material of these body shells, obtained from the cocoons of silkworms in the metamorphosis between chrysalis and butterfly.

Walter Kratner’s work is about standardised portraits which have been retouched with graph-

ite and oil. The viewer will realise that nationality or cultural background cannot even be guessed at a second glance.

Finally, Marjan Habibian’s drawings and paintings are interspersed with painterly elements and also contain influences from Persian ornamentation. In the context of the exhibition “Growth”, the artists all strive to soften traditional media boundaries and open them up for discussion.

The Artists’ Talk is the introduction to the one week art residency programme in Oman, with four established artists from Austria. The artists will share some work-in-progress and their thoughts on Austrian contemporary art, as well as on the exciting exhibition in Stal Gallery.

NATIONAL MUSEUM

Symposium hosted on discoveries of French archaeologists in Oman



MUSCAT: The National Museum on Monday hosted a symposium on the latest discoveries of French archaeological missions the Sultanate of Oman.

The symposium is organised by the French Embassy in Oman in conjunction with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the French Centre for Research in the Arabian Peninsula.

The symposium highlighted remarkable discoveries of four French researchers in the field of archaeology within the Sultanate of Oman.

It also focused on relevant research development and promoted the richness of the Omani archaeological heritage.

Further, the symposium showed that archaeology is essential in promoting cultural tourism in Oman, and raising awareness on the importance of heritage conservation and restoration. Véronique Aulagnon, French Ambassador to Oman said that historically, France is Oman’s first partner with Italy, encouraging and supporting excavations missions in the country.

Their presence dates back to the years 1980’s. Five French archaeological missions are active today in Oman, covering the map of the country from Al Dakhiliyah to Al Sharqiyah coastline and down the Governorate of Dhofar.

The French ambassador com-



mended the fruitful collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and with the local authorities, as well as their work hand in hand to guarantee the preservation of such an ancient heritage and its environment.

Christophe Sévin-Allouet, Director of the mission, presented the latest discoveries on the necropolis of Khor Jarama, located in the Wilayat of Sur, Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah. He brought to light the results of his five years campaign, which led to the discovery of a much probable new prehistoric culture, so far unknown in Oman.

Then, Corinne Castel over-viewed the results obtained from the extensive surveying, the excavations and the different studies carried out by the multidisciplinary team of French ar-

chaeologists and specialists in the two sites of “Bât” and “Al Arid”, in the Wilayat of Ibri, Governorate of Al Dhahirah.

The French archaeological mission in Central Oman (FAMCO), directed by Mathilde Jean and Martin Sauvage, shared their studies’ results on the settlement of one of the main archaeological areas of the Omani peninsula “Bisya”, in the southern foothills of Al Hajar Mountains, Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah).

The symposium included a panel session that focused on two main topics, namely the importance of conservation and restoration of the Omani heritage in terms of cultural, economic and tourism, in addition to the significance of strengthening bilateral cooperation and supporting archaeological missions. — ONA

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Al Bashayer Camel Festival kicks off

The 6-day event is organised annually by the Department of Al Bashayer Square for Arabian Camels

ADAM: Competitions of the 6th Al Bashayer Camel Festival kicked off in the Wilayat of Adam in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah. The 6-day event is being organised annually by the Department of Al Bashayer Square for Arabian Camels. A large number of camel owners and slimmers from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman and the GCC states are taking part in the festival. As many as 74 rounds are organized during the festival where competitors contest for 20 vehicles and many other prizes allocated



for these camel races. Monday witnessed 25 rounds for 150 different categories of camels. These races were held during the morning and afternoon times. At the end of Monday's races, Sheikh Dr. Faisal Ali Al Zeidi, Wali of Manah honoured winners of top places during the rounds. On Tuesday, competitions of the festival will continue by organizing 20 rounds for different categories of camels.



CABLE CAR PROJECT

Cable cars

<FROM A1 The middle point will be in front of Al-Riyam Park, which will also work as a stopover where riders can take rest and have drinks such as coffee/tea/juices while the end point will be in Kalboubh Park." He said that the shape of this cable car project will be like the letter V for a distance of around 5 km and the cost will be about OMR4-6 OMR per person. Hamad Al Wahaibi confirmed that the number of cable cars will be 34 and this project will be implemented by an Omani company in partnership with a foreign company. When asked about the starting date, the member of the municipal council said that definitely this year, adding that the procedures are being completed for approval by the Municipality.



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Tender No.: ISD/ T-001/2023

Indian School Darsait invites interested companies to quote for the following tender:

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تنويه
Attention

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announces to postpone a public e-auction, 2023 for "government items auctioned", which supposed to be on February 12th and 13th, 2023 until further notice.

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böwola

OBITUARY



With profound grief we announce the sudden demise of
Ms. TAIMA K BIBY (20 years)
Daughter of Mrs. & Mr. Biby K Jacob (Mem.No.B-103)
on 12.02.2023

We express our heartfelt condolences to the members of the bereaved family and pray that God gives them the strength to bear the irreparable loss and comfort them in this time of deepest grief.

Funeral service will be held on 14.02.2023
at Immanuel Mar Thoma Church, Eraviperoor, Kerala
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Auction Announcement

Muscat Electricity Distribution Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following Auction.

Auction No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Site Visit	Tender Price (OMR)
Auction No. 01/2023	Auction for the sale of consumable electrical materials and scrap for Muscat Electricity Distribution Company	23/02/2023	07/03/2023	26/02/2023 to 28/02/2023	52.500

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Auction fees - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - To obtain the Auction document and payment procedure, please contact Contract@medcoman.com or call 24588600 – Ext: 8577 & 8726
Enquiries	Any inquiry can be sent to MEDC using the inquiry form in the Auction document to the company one week before auction submission date. Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
Tender Submission	Auctions shall be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to the Chairman of Minor Tenders Committee - Muscat Electricity Distribution Company SAOC with the name and number of the auction written from outside only.
Guarantee	- The Auction should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (3%) of the Auction value valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of auction submission and addressed to the Chairman of Minor Tenders Committee, Muscat Electricity Distribution Company S.A.O.C. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. - Any auction does not include a bond shall be rejected.
Terms and Conditions	- Do not mention your name or what refers to you on the envelope. - For any reason, bids received after the auction deadline, including any extension, will not be considered. - The Auction shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of auction submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - MEDC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Auction. - The contractor/bidders must obtain an approved permit from Be'ah to practice an economic activity (waste management) if the group submitted contains hazardous materials (transformer oils, batteries). - The materials to be sold in the auction can be inspected on 26/02/2023 (Bowsher – old office) , 27/02/2023 (Azaiba Store) & 28/02/2023 (Al Mabailah) at MEDC Stores) during official working hours from 09:00 am until 12:30 pm at mentioned areas. - HSE Requirement: please refer to the Auction document. - The Basement & Ground Cables are not included in the sale.
Bid Placement	Should be deposited in the Tender Box No. 1 in the ground floor of MEDC Head Office building at Airport Heights, before 10 am or the assigned date of Auction submission.

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ON 13 FEBRUARY EVERY YEAR

Oman celebrates World Radio Day

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman celebrated the World Radio Day, which falls on 13 February every year.

In an interview with Radio the Sultanate of Oman (Oman Radio), Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harassi, Minister of Information, affirmed that Oman Radio has developed wide-ranging experience since its inception in 1970.

The minister valued Oman Radio's broadcasting tenure, describing it as "great and rich experience, both in terms of technical performance and artistic media content".

He noted that Oman Radio's role recently merged well with other forms of media like television, the press and the Internet.

Dr. Abdullah said, "Omani media combined both freedom and responsibility and this sets its message aside."

He added that media in Oman boasts a level of freedom that empowers people "to express what they believe is good for the nation and future generations". In this context, he said that Omani social and cultural history was built on solid foundations of



diverse opinions.

Dr. Abdullah spoke about "Al Shabab Radio" or (Youth Radio) and the content that serves the largest segment of the population in Oman, thanks to the radio service's innovative programmes that respond to the aspirations of youth and encompass their interests, like technology, sports and science, among other fields.

The minister also touched on the Ministry of Information's plans, which, he said, envisage that "the future of Omani society

be based on sound knowledge and proper media fundamentals, and that this future be built on strong foundations of awareness."

The minister pointed out that the role of Omani media has been crucial to spreading awareness about Oman Vision 2040.

Omani media, he said, played major roles, both in the period of preparations for Oman Vision 2040 and through the stages of its implementation. The media elaborated on the Vision's different programmes. This resulted in raising

awareness and confidence in the Vision's outputs and programmes, he observed.

Dr. Abdullah stressed that radio was once a means of communicating with the world, long before the advent of the Internet and its use as a gateway for following up global events. He added that Omani radio stations kept pace with the developments of the modern age and the opportunities it offered to users.

In this context, the minister underlined the project of "digital TV and radio broadcasting" and he referred to the utilization of the Internet through various channels, including "Ayn platform", "podcasts" and "Omani Audio Book"—which, he asserted, have all contributed to the propagation of knowledge about Omani civilization and the publication of Omani books. The Minister of Information said that the media is making good progress and that the projects undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in this aspect are marked by deep-rootedness. — ONA

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman



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INAUGURAL CEREMONY

Armed Forces Hospital inducts OLLIF technique in spine surgeries

MUSCAT: Represented by the Orthopaedics and Spine Department, the Armed Forces Hospital in Al Khoudh, Muscat launched the Advanced Interventional Surgical Technique of OLLIF in spine surgeries that it conducts.

The technique was introduced in cooperation with Inspired Spine Hospital in the United States.

The technique was inaugu-

rated by a medical team from the departments of orthopedics, anesthesia, operations and radiology.

The inaugural ceremony was held under the auspices of Col. Dr. Ahmed Saif Al Jahwari, senior consultant and head of the Spine Surgery Department at the Armed Forces Hospital, Al Khoudh.

— ONA

GOVERNMENT SUMMIT

Oman participates in 9th World Government Summit in Dubai



DUBAI: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, is taking part in deliberations of the 9th edition of World Government Summit 2023 being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Oman's delegation is led by Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance.

The World Government Summit 2023 is held under the theme of "Shaping Future Governments".

The Summit brings thought

leaders, global experts and decision makers from around the globe to share and contribute to the development of tools, policies, and models that are essential in shaping future governments.

The World Government Summit 2023 hosts a set of interactive dialogue sessions within 6 main themes, including Accelerating Development and Governance, Future of Societies and Healthcare.

Exploring the Frontiers, Gov-

erning Economic Resilience and Connectivity, Global City Design and Sustainability, and Prioritising Learning and Work.

The current edition of the World Government Summit hosts a number of international forums and dialogues aiming to discuss the most important global trends in various vital sectors that contributes to the development of the government work and future policies and strategies.

— ONA

OUTSTANDING 2022 RESULTS



Oman Air reports 36% rise in cargo transport

MUSCAT: Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the introduction of its first freighter by the end of 2023, while celebrating outstanding 2022 results at its annual cargo workshop, under the theme 'Journey to Success'.

Eng. Abdulaziz Al Raisi, Oman Air's Chief Executive Officer, stated, "In spite of a challenging environment, Oman Air Cargo continues to deliver numbers ahead of its budget."

In 2021, our revenues were 86 percent above target. In 2022, we achieved another 44 percent increase, exceeding our budget revenue by 37 percent, as well as a 36 percent increase in the amount of cargo transported compared to the previous year. This underscores the success of our many policies to ensure we remain ahead of the curve in an ever-changing industry and meet the growing demand for air cargo."



He added, "In 2023, we are keeping up the momentum. In the coming months, we look forward to introducing our first ever freighter and we will also be launching several new markets. This will offer exciting new opportunities for our guests and cargo alike, while continuing to unlock Oman's potential as a global logistics hub in line with Oman's 2040 Vision."

Among its notable achievements in 2022, Oman Air Cargo

added several new destinations and introduced its innovative 'Cargo-in-Cabin' service to Europe, the Far East and Indian Subcontinent.

It also modified its A330-300 passenger aircraft by removing the seats, allowing it to raise capacity to 40 tonnes per aircraft. Moreover, it has improved its services to ensure shorter acceptance and dwell time with express connections through its hub in Muscat. — ONA

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BASIC (First Trimester) OMR 70

- OBG Consultation – 3 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Creatinine
- Sickie Cell
- HIV
- HCV
- VDRL
- HBSAg
- Urine Routine
- Blood Grouping
- TSH
- Antenatal Scan

PREMIUM (First Trimester) OMR 99

- OBG Consultation – 3 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Creatinine
- Sickie Cell
- HIV
- HCV
- VDRL
- HBSAg
- Urine Routine
- Blood Grouping
- TSH
- Antental Scan
- Dietitian Consultation – 3 visits
- Physiotherapy Consultation – 1 visit

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BASIC (Second Trimester) OMR 40

- OBG Consultation – 4 visits
- CBC
- GTT
- Urine Routine
- Growth Scan

PREMIUM (Second Trimester) OMR 101

- OBG Consultation – 6 visits
- CBC
- GTT
- Urine Routine
- TSH
- Growth Scan
- Dietitian Consultation – 3 visits
- Physiotherapy Consultation – 3 visits

BASIC (Third Trimester) OMR 40

- OBG Consultation – 6 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Urine Routine
- Cardio Tocography
- Growth Scan

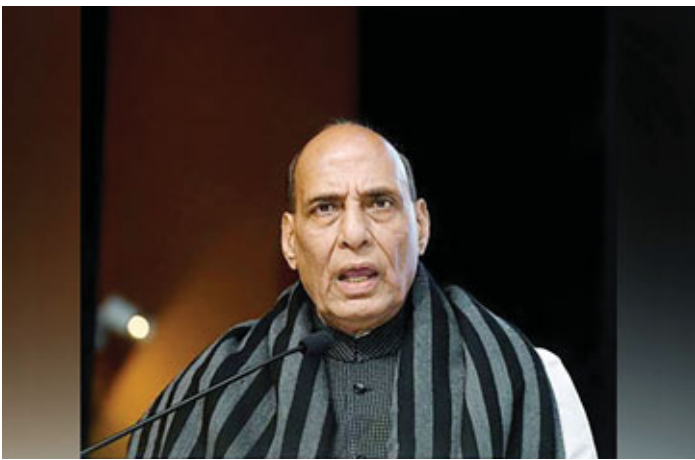
PREMIUM (Third Trimester) OMR 99

- OBG Consultation – 6 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Urine Routine
- TSH
- Cardio Tocography
- Growth Scan
- Dietitian Consultation – 3 visits
- Physiotherapy Consultation – 1 visit

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Defence industry a key driver of India’s growth

The government has brought far-reaching reform measures intended to create a business-friendly climate, India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday



BENGALURU: India’s Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Monday said that the central government’s aim is to nurture a vibrant and world-class defence manufacturing industry in the country. The Defence Minister made this statement while addressing the ‘CEO’s Round Table Conclave’ on the inaugural day of Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru

“To realise this goal, our government has brought far-reaching reform measures in the last few years, intended to create a business-friendly climate,” he said. Rajnath Singh also highlighted how the government and private entrepreneurs were working together for the country. He said, “The government with its democratic legitimacy and social mandate is performing the job of policy formulation, facilitation and regulation. On the other hand, responsibility for the optimum utilization of society’s resources at the firm level

is being discharged by private entrepreneurs.” **India’s vision** The defence minister further stated India’s vision is to become the third-largest economy in the next five years. “India is the fifth largest economy in the world and marching on towards an exciting future. We hope to become the third-largest economy in the next five years. The Indian defence manufacturing industry is one of the key drivers of our galloping economy,” he said.

“A country of India’s size and global prominence cannot afford to rely on imported arms, for such reliance will inevitably compromise the strategic autonomy of our country. Since 2014, the goal of Atmanirbhar Bharat or self-reliance has been vigorously pursued,” he added. Mentioning that the government was open to new ideas, the defence minister said, “We are committed to harnessing the energy, entrepreneurial spirit and capability of our private sector partners in the area of defence production.” Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday inaugurated the 14th edition of Asia’s biggest aero show - Aero India 2023 - at Air Force Station in Yelahanka in Bengaluru. The five-day event, on the theme ‘The runway to a billion opportunities’, will showcase India’s growth in aerospace and defence capabilities. It will display indigenous equipment/technologies and forge partnerships with foreign companies, in line with the ‘Make in India, Make for the World’ vision for a secure and prosperous future. — ANI

EMERGENCY COORDINATION CENTRE SAKOM

Earthquake death toll in Türkiye, Syria surpasses 34,000

ANKARA: The death toll from the earthquakes in Türkiye and northwestern Syria has gone past 34,000 as rescue efforts continue, according to media report. It reached at least 34,179 on Sunday. The death toll in Türkiye has reached 29,605, said the Turkish Emergency Coordination Centre SAKOM. The confirmed death toll in Syria is 4,574. That number includes more than 3,160 in opposition-held parts of northwestern Syria, according to the health ministry of the Salvation Government governance authority. The Syrian death toll also includes 1,414 deaths in government-controlled parts of Syria, according to the state news agency SANA. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) says it is waiting for final approval to send crossline deliveries into north-west Syria, where rebel groups in the country’s long-running civil war control territory and aid deliveries have faced obstacles, reported CNN. The WHO hopes its Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus will soon be able to travel



into the rebel-held areas hit by the devastating earthquake, the organisation said Sunday. Tedros and a team of top WHO officials arrived in Aleppo on Saturday on a humanitarian aid flight carrying over USD 290,000 worth of trauma emergency and surgical kits. Rick Brennan, a regional emergency director with the WHO, said in a media briefing from Damascus Sunday that there have been “no crossline deliveries” into north-west Syria since the earthquake struck last Monday. “We have one scheduled in the next couple of days. We are still negotiating for that to go ahead,” Brennan said, adding that before the earthquake the WHO was “planning a significant expansion of our crossline work.” — ANI

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SPORTS

Manchester City reduce points deficit with Arsenal, down Aston Villa 3-1

Manchester City's star striker Erling Haaland was taken off with an apparent injury

MANCHESTER: Manchester City reduced the points deficit with table-toppers Arsenal, as they defeated Aston Villa 3-1 on Sunday at Emirates Stadium in a match that saw their star striker Erling Haaland taken off with an apparent injury.

After a troublesome week which saw the club being hit with 100 charges of rule-breaking by the Premier League, Pep Guardiola's side roared back with a massive win. But Haaland, who has scored 25 goals for the side this season, was withdrawn at the break due to an apparent thigh injury, which puts his status for Wednesday's clash against Arsenal in doubt.

At the start of the match, the Premier League anthem was met with heavy boos by City fans and there was clear determination in the players to prove a point following allegations of financial fair-play breaches.

Rodri scored in the fourth minute, celebrating his goal by thumping the club badge on his chest. City continued to dominate Aston for most of the first half. Rodgri also almost set up a second goal shortly after his goal, but Ilkay Gundogan's effort was saved.

The hosts continued to make chances for themselves, including Jack Grealish, who got close to scoring twice. In the 39th



minute, Gundogan doubled City's lead. Haaland, who had not even registered a shot against Tottenham, caused massive damage to Aston after he accelerated onto a loose ball after a poor header from Chambers and made an assist to Gundogan at the far post.

City won a penalty just minutes before the break and Riyad Karim Mahrez stepped in to beat Emiliano Martinez to score. The scoreline read 3-0 at 45+1 minutes. By this time, Haaland also picked up a thigh issue and did not come out for the second half. Ruben Dias

was also withdrawn and Julian Alvarez and Manuel Akanji joined the side on the pitch.

In the second half, City's defence became a little sloppy and Ollie Watkins made full use of it to score in the 61st minute, making the scoreline 3-1.

But Aston failed to make a comeback further into the game and lost the match.

After the match, Man City boss Pep was quoted as saying to Sky Sports, "We played a really good game. We played better in the second half. I had the feeling we were going to score more but after we concede always at 3-1 in the Premier League it is open, but in general we played a good game."

On Erling Haaland's injury scare, he said: "He had a big knock, he was comfortable and we did not want to take a risk. We will see and assess in the next days. If he is not ready [for Arsenal], we will play another one. Hopefully, he is ready like everyone - we will see in the next days."

"His presence is really good, he has to take a look a little bit more when we have pressure on the ball. When the opponent has a high line, we need to find him a bit more. That is a process, we will do it in the future." -ANI

SPANISH LALIGA SANTANDER

Barca grab narrow win over Villarreal

BARCELONA: Pedri goal before the break was enough to hand Barcelona a narrow 1-0 victory over Villarreal at the Estadio de la Ceramica in the Spanish La-Liga Santander.

Barcelona had the first clear chance of the duel, with Robert Lewandowski receiving the ball at the edge the box but failing to beat Pepe Reina in a one-on-one situation two minutes into the first half.

The Polish striker performed a quick one-two outside Villarreal's box with Pedri, who sent the ball past Reina, this being his sixth La-Liga Santander goal this season.

Lewandowski could have doubled Barcelona's lead in the 25th minute, but Reina stopped his low effort from inside the box.

First chance

Villarreal's first quality chance didn't come until two minutes into the first half's stoppage time, when Jose Luis Morales sent the ball just wide of Marc-Andre Ter Stegen's left post.

For yet another match, Barcelona struggled to put it to bed, as neither Lewandowski nor Raphinha capitalised on their respective chances.



Meanwhile, Villarreal lacked a spark in the final third due to the absence of Gerard Moreno through injury. They looked dangerous at times but lacked a final pass in their bid to push for an equaliser.

Hence, Villarreal failed to punish Barcelona, as Samuel Chukwueze found the back of the net late in the game, but his goal was disallowed for offside in the build-up.

With this victory, Barcelona increased the gap on second-placed Real Madrid to 11 points, with Los Blancos having one game in hand. As for the Yellow Submarine, they sit eighth with 31 points from 21 games. -ONA

BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY

Third India-Australia Test shifted to Indore

MUMBAI: The third Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test between India and Australia has been shifted from Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium (HPCA) Stadium in Dharamshala to Holkar Stadium in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, announced the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Monday.

"The third Test of the Mastercard Australia tour of India for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, originally scheduled to take place at the HPCA Stadium, Dharamshala from 1st to 5th March has now been moved to Holkar Stadium, Indore," the BCCI said in a statement. Owing to harsh winter conditions in the region, the outfield lacks sufficient grass density and will need some time to develop fully, the BCCI further said.

The second Test of the series will be held in Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium from February 17-21.

The fourth and final Test of the series will be hosted in Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad from March 9-13.

India is currently leading the series 1-0.

In the first Test, Australia was no match for the Indian spin trio Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel, who delivered brilliant all-round performances to guide the home side to a memorable win by an inning and 132 runs. India skipper Rohit Sharma also scored a majestic hundred in testing conditions at Nagpur.

Electing to bat first, Australia was bundled out for 177 runs in

their first innings. Aussies were no match for Indian spinners as Labuschagne (49), Smith (37), Carey (36) and Handscomb (31) were the only ones who could score something decent and resist the Indian spin web. Jadeja took a five-wicket haul, ending with figures of 5/47. Ashwin got three scalps while Siraj and Shami took one wicket each.

India came out to bat and the top order, except skipper Rohit Sharma, failed again. KL (20) continued his frustrating show with the bat and was dismissed by debutant Murphy. Nightwatchman Ashwin scored a handy knock of 23. Pujara fell for just seven while attempting a sweep. Virat also continued his worrisome string of low scores in Tests, falling victim to spin once again. Murphy got the crucial wicket of Virat.

Debutants Suryakumar Yadav (8) and KS Bharat (8) could not touch double digits. Rohit however, kept the other end steady and scored 120 off 212 balls with 15 fours and two sixes. On a tough surface which was nightmarish for the batters, the Indian skipper put on a batting masterclass. India was reduced to 240/7 after Rohit and Bharat's dismissals.

Jadeja and Axar then took the baton and guided India to a dominant position at the end of day two, ending at 321/7 on the second day. Jadeja's knock of 70, Axar's 84 and an entertaining knock of 37 runs by Mohammed Shami took India to 400 runs before they were bundled out. -ANI



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OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by April 2023 reaching \$84.47, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 83 cents from the price of Friday, which was at \$83.64. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,739.65 points, down by 0.37 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.37 per cent at 490.31 points. Al Sharqia Investment, up 8.45 per cent, was the top gainer while Oman Qatar Insurance, down 9.52 per cent, was the top loser.

OQ signs agreement to sell 20% of Abraj's shares to SOIC



This investment agreement demonstrates Saudi Omani Investment Company's confidence in Abraj's future as a financially resilient and high-growth business with enormous potential to grow regionally

MUSCAT: OQ Group, represented by its Upstream-sector, and Abraj Energy Services (Abraj, under transformation) signed an agreement with the Saudi Omani Investment Company (SOIC) by which SOIC buys 20 per cent of Abraj's shares that are being offered in an initial public offering.

This step comes as part of the joint economic and investment cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia. It reflects the efforts exerted by Oman Investment Authority to attract foreign investments in various production and service sectors, as well as the plans of OQ, the global integrated energy group, to expand the shareholders' ownership in some of its assets.

The signing of this anchor investment agreement reflects the regional growth strategy adopted by OQ Group and its commitment to attract foreign direct invest-

ment, in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

This investment agreement demonstrates SOIC's confidence in Abraj's future as a financially resilient and high-growth business with enormous potential to grow regionally. The agreement signed with strategic investors would increase the confidence of other segments of corporate and individual investors to invest in Oman.

It is worth noting that this agreement would accelerate and strengthen the business scope of Abraj as a quality oilfield services provider that enhances the in-country value and supports the development of Oman's capital markets.

According to the stock prospectus of Abraj approved by the Capital Market Authority, the shares of Abraj will be listed for trading at the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) on March 14, 2023. Abraj intends to offer 49 per cent of its share capital, equal to 377,398,000 shares for public subscription. - **ONA**

POSITIVE PERFORMANCE

GCC bourses uptrend to continue on high oil prices



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The positive performance of the Gulf stock exchanges coincided with the issuance of new legislations and laws that contributed to increasing liquidity and attracting foreign investors, according to an industry expert.

"Transactions in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) witnessed a wave of rise in recent times that was supported most notably by the rise in oil and gas prices, in addition to providing the Gulf markets with real investment opportunities in light of their relative stability compared to global markets," said Eman Al Ayyaf, CEO of Eman Alayyaf Trading, in an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*.

An increase in oil and gas prices,

geopolitical differences between Russia and Ukraine, high interest on the dollar and exponential growth will have a significant impact on energy markets, especially oil prices, Eman said.

Besides, there are political matters that will also affect oil prices in 2023, including the Russian-Ukrainian war and the possibility of resolving this crisis. The most logical expectation is that oil prices will range during the first six months of 2023 between \$85 and \$90 per barrel. But in the event of a multiplication of crises and a production cut, a barrel of oil is expected to rise to \$110. "Here we have to wait and watch for how the oil-producing countries outside the Organisation of Oil Exporting Countries (Opec) will behave," she said

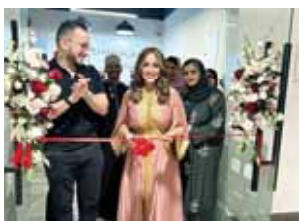
Omani investors have a passion for online trading

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Eman Alayyaf (EA) Trading, a regulated company, opened its branch in Oman to serve its client base better in January 2023 after successfully setting up its offices in Kuwait and Bahrain.

"Opening an Oman office was a must because we already have a very strong client base. Oman is one of the best GCC countries where people have passion and ambition in online trading and are always open to learning new things," Eman Al Ayyaf, CEO of Eman Alayyaf Trading said.

"There are some suggestions about opening our fourth branch, probably in



another GCC country, which we will announce when everything is ready, for now, we are foxing at our three offices," she added.

The company makes trading financial markets more accessible to investors of all types and abilities. Its vision is to simplify access to the financial markets by providing educational tools and by hosting events for investors.



CBO's High Sharia Supervisory Authority holds first meeting

MUSCAT: The High Sharia Supervisory Authority (HSSA) of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) held its first meeting of 2023 at CBO head office yesterday. The meeting was chaired by Sheikh Dr Kahlan Nabhan Al Kharousi and attended by all the members.

HSSA held detailed deliberations on various issues presented to it, which included, among others, Sharia aspects relating to the Islamic banking business and the review of different matters related to the Islamic liquidity man-

agement project. In light of the discussions, HSSA provided its Sharia opinion and recommendations. HSSA was also briefed on the actions taken, with regard to issues discussed in its previous meeting.

In addition, Dr Kahlan Nabhan Al Kharousi and Sheikh Dr Abdullatif Mahmoud Al Mahmoud have been re-elected as the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of HSSA, respectively, for another term of four years up to December 2026. - **ONA**

NCSI DATA



Oman's inflation stands at 1.89% in January

MUSCAT: The inflation rate of the Consumers Price Index (CPI) in the Sultanate of Oman stood at 1.89 per cent during January 2023, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data indicated a rise in the prices of main groups in January 2023 compared to the corresponding period in 2022. Food and non-alcoholic beverages rose by 4.78 per cent, restaurants and hotels by 3.91 per cent, furniture, household equipment and routine household maintenance by 3.42 per cent, health by 2.73 per cent, miscellaneous goods and services by 2.04 per cent, recreation and culture by 1.96 per cent, clothing and footwear by 1.00 per cent, transport by 0.77 per cent, education by 0.05 per cent, housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels by 0.03 per cent. Meanwhile, inflation declined in the group of com-

munications by 0.15 per cent and stabilised in the tobacco group.

Prices also went up for oils and fats by 19.60 per cent, milk, cheese and eggs by 7.53 per cent, meats by 5.70 per cent, bread and cereals by 5.50 per cent, non-alcoholic beverages by 5.18 per cent, other foodstuffs by 3.45 per cent, fruits by 3.28 per cent, sugar, jam, honey and sweets by 2.61 per cent, fish and seafood by 2.14 per cent.

Prices dropped in the group of vegetables by 0.12 per cent. As far as governorates are concerned, Al Buraimi recorded the highest inflation rate (2.91 per cent), followed by Al Dakhiliyah (2.13 per cent), Al Dhahirah (2.11 per cent), North Al Batinah (1.94 per cent) and Muscat (1.89 per cent). The lowest inflation rate was recorded in the Governorate of Dhofar, as well as the Governorates of North and South Al Sharqiyah by 1.83 per cent and 1.36 per cent respectively. - **ONA**

NEW FREIGHT SERVICE

Europe-Asia cargo service via Jeddah Islamic Port launched

RIYADH: The Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) and Saudi shipping giant Bahri have jointly announced the addition of a new freight service connecting Europe and Asia via Jeddah Islamic Port.

Besides increasing Bahri's shipping network coverage and bolstering international supply chains, the new route is set to expand and empower the Kingdom's maritime connectivity while consolidating its leadership as a global logistics hub, as directed in the vision set out by the National Transport and Logistics Strategy.

Vessels on the new service will set sail from the ports of Bremerhaven, Antwerp, and Montoir, in Europe, before calling at Jeddah enroute to the Indian port of Ennore and the Chinese ports of Taicang and Shanghai. The Kingdom's busiest port is set to welcome the route's first ship in early February.

Mawani and Bahri sealed an agreement last year to build a 95,436 sq.m world-class logistics park as part of the national maritime regulator's drive to partner with major names in the industry to increase the footprint of purpose-built logistics facilities across the Kingdom to 30. - **SPA**

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender title	Last date for tender purchase online	Bid submission date
04/2023	Purchase of protection equipment for the directorates and branches of the Ministry	Sunday 19/02/2023 2:00 pm	Monday 27/02/2023 10 a.m.
05/2023	Advanced contract to support the Human Resource Management System (Resource Plus)	Sunday 19/02/2023 2:00 pm	Monday 27/02/2023 10 a.m.
06/2023	Maintenance of Marmul Labour Department	Sunday 05/03/2023 2:00 pm	Sunday 26/03/2023 10 a.m.
07/2023	Maintenance of the external wall of the Directorate General of Labour in Nizwa	Sunday 05/03/2023 2:00 pm	Sunday 26/03/2023 10 a.m.

- Specialized establishments may obtain the tenders' documents online through the following link, starting from Tuesday 14/02/2023 at 08:00 am: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- Each bid shall enclose a tender bond for 1% of the total bid value in the form of a bank guarantee or certified cheque issued by a local bank in favor of the Ministry of Labour and valid for 90 days from the date of bid submission.
- Bids shall be submitted online along with the bank guarantee by the bank, provided that the original bank guarantee shall be submitted upon request by the Ministry.
- Bids shall be opened at 11:00 am on Monday 27/02/2023.

(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

labour_OMAN

CELEBRATING THE DAY OF LOVE IN A HEALTHY MANNER



The day of love is here. Apart from celebrating with roses, chocolates, and flowers, why not spend more time doing things you enjoy like spending time with your loved ones and staying healthy? This Valentine's Day, take a walk through Muscat's natural and architectural highlights, with an aim to stay fit for life.

As one promises to share the warmth and love on Valentine's Day, one can also take a vow to get fitter. Valentine's day is a perfect opportunity for people to make positive lifestyle alterations as a commitment to one another, for a healthier and happier life together. A combination of a healthy diet and a good workout is like a dream team.

Pick on a workout regime that would be fun to do with your partner and can be followed realistically. Working out with the one you love is not only more fun but you are also more likely to stick to it since you have a responsibility to ensure your loved one does not give up because of you. It works for both and you end up getting fitter, together.

And when it comes to staying fit, nothing's better than going for a walk. In Muscat walking along the Corniche is perhaps one of the most favourite pastimes of those living in Muscat. This Valentine's Day go for an evening walk with your loved ones at Muttrah Corniche where you can walk the complete stretch that starts from the Fish Market right up to the Al Alam Palace.

The busy walkway is crowded with tourists, expats, and locals enjoying the oceanic views and the proximity to the historic Muttrah Souq. After your walk, you can relax at one of the restaurants and cafes.

For those living in Shatti, the love street is a very popular walkway. With its beautiful palms, BBQ areas, and plenty of restaurants and cafes, it is perfect for an afternoon chill or for a leisurely evening walk. The lush green stretch situated at Al Izdihar Street, near Al Ghubra lake garden is another great place to take a stroll.

SPORTS

Al-Zubair, Stolz and Konrad finish third and seventh in first two rounds

Al-Zubair took the hot seat for the final session of the second race on Sunday to guide the GT3 to seventh place, after the trio had rounded off the podium places in race one on Saturday

DUBAI: Oman's Al-Faisal Al-Zubair, Germany's Luca Stolz and Austrian Martin Konrad wrapped up their first appearances together in the Asian Le Mans Series by finishing third and seventh in the two four-hour races at the Dubai Autodrome at the weekend.

Driving the Al-Manar Racing by Haupt Racing Team Mercedes AMG GT3 under the Omani national flag, Al-Zubair took the hot seat for the final session of the second race on Sunday to guide the GT3 to seventh place, after the trio had rounded off the podium places in race one on Saturday evening.

Al-Zubair said: "We had a good qualifying with P2 for both races. On Saturday, we converted P2 into P3 in the race. So that was a podium finish on our first race in Asian Le Mans. That was amazing."

"For the second race fortunes did not go on our side. It was great until the final hour. Unfortunately, we messed up something with the drive time. I drove a little less than the minimum, 45 minutes, and we had to come back to the pits. Because of that, we also had a drive-through penalty as well. I had to do the double stint. Finishing seventh is decent out of 24 but, knowing that we should have been on the podium, I am not really happy with the result to be honest. Hopefully next week we come back stronger in Abu Dhabi."

The weekend's action started strongly for the HRT Team in the



first of two practice sessions on the 5.39km, 16-turn Dubai Autodrome circuit on Friday.

The Mercedes ran for 35 laps and clocked the second fastest lap in the GT class of 1min 58.324sec. Victory in the session went to the Getspeed Mercedes of Raffaele Marciello, Fabian Schiller and Florian Scholze.

The Getspeed Mercedes again topped the times in the second practice stint with a fastest run of 1min 58.105sec. Al-Zubair's HRT car came home in sixth with a best tour of 1min 59.068sec.

Al-Zubair added: "Practice went off quite well. Martin (Konrad) was quite strong from the start, our bronze driver. We were all quite happy with Martin's performance, myself and Lucas. We knew we had a good package."

But the HRT crew saved their best performances for the qualifying session on Saturday morning and a fastest lap of 1min 58.016sec by Konrad enabled them to line up in second place on the grid for the evening's first four-hour race. Pole position went to the Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW M4, crewed for the weekend by Chandler Hull, Nicky Catsburg and Thomas Merrill.

The Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW actually managed to win

the first race from pole position after finishing 112 laps 15.126 seconds in front of the Getspeed Mercedes. Al-Zubair, Stolz and Konrad rounded off the podium finishers with an excellent third place out of the 22 finishers in the GT class. The race started in bright sunshine and finished in darkness with the leading four crews completing 112 laps.

The HPT crew were also in good form during Sunday morning's warm-up stint and set the second quickest lap in the session behind the TF Sport Aston Martin of John Hartshorne, Jonathan Adam and Henrique Chaves.

Konrad lined up in second on the grid for the start of the second of the weekend's four-hour races. The team held a top four place for long periods, but dropped back to seventh after the timing mix-up and the drive-through penalty and maintained the position to the finish after completing 109 laps.

Victory in the second of the races again fell to the Walkenhorst Motorsport BMW, while the Getspeed Mercedes was second and an AF Corse Ferrari came home in third.

Races three and four in the Asian Le Mans Series take place at the Yas Marina circuit in Abu Dhabi next weekend.



FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT



Royal Bengal Ayan Qurum lift Gulf Exchange Gold Cup

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Royal Bengal Ayan Qurum has clinched the Gulf Exchange Gold Cup Football Tournament organised by the Bangladesh Social Club Oman.

Royal Bengal Ayan Qurum defeated Al Hail Club by 4-3 in the tiebreaker.

The final match was held at Muscat Club Stadium on 10 February 2023.

Rawshan Ara Poli (First Secretary Passport & Visa Wing) of Bangladesh Embassy Muscat and the chief guest witnessed the final match and distributed prizes to the winners.

Sirajul Haque, Chairman of Bangladesh Social Club Oman, presided over the programme and NM Amin General Secretary anchored the event.



The CEO of Gulf Overseas Exchange, Iftakher Ul Hasan Chowdhury attended the final event as the Guest of Honour and Shariful Islam, Country Manager of Biman Bangladesh Airlines attended as the special guest.

Club Vice President Rezaul Karim, Azimul Hoque Babul CIP,

Joint Secretary Mohammad Anwar Hossain, Abdul Rahim, Organising Secretary Abul Bashir Sarkar, Sports Secretary Sirajul Hoque, Publicity Secretary Hafez Mohammad Nazim Uddin Chowdhury, Convening Committee members of Greater Noakhali Wing, Executive members Tauhid, Man-

ik, Jasim, commentator Ohidul Hoque were also present.

The event was also attended by prominent people of the community named Kibria Kalam Chowdhury, Sabuj Sikder, Engineer Abdul Hamid, Nur Hossain Talukder, Isa Chowdhury, Mohammad Yunus, SM Haroon, Gulf Exchange officials and other renowned community leaders.

On the occasion of Victory Day of Bangladesh, Bangladesh Social Club Oman had organised the "Gulf Exchange Gold Cup" football tournament. The tournament, kicked off on 30 December 2022 at Muscat Club Stadium with the participation of eight teams.

Club Chairman Sirajul Hoque expressed his satisfaction and thanked the teams, players and participants for the success of the tournament.

CAPE TOWN

'All smile': India-Pakistan players interact after the entertaining Women's T20WC 2023 match

CAPE TOWN: There were plenty of smiles and lots of laughter as players from India and Pakistan mingled in the changing rooms following an entertaining match between the arch-rivals at the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in Cape Town.

Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh struck an unbeaten partnership of 58 runs for the fourth wicket after the fall of captain Harmanpreet Kaur's wicket. Rodrigues scored an unbeaten 53 off 38 balls and Richa Ghosh scored an unbeaten 31 off 20 balls helping India chase down a 150-run target with an over to spare. <https://twitter.com/TheRealPCB/status/1624990588327063554>

India won earlier in the day because of a brilliant unbeaten half-century from emerging star Jemimah Rodrigues, but the exchanges between the teams after the game were friendly as players from both teams mixed at the Newlands field.

Players from both teams posed for a big group photo, while India skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and Pakistan all-rounder Nida Dar

were all smiles as they exchanged jerseys.

While Dar failed to score in the highly anticipated T20 World Cup match between the two rivals, Pakistan skipper Bismah Maroof stood up on the big stage to play an unbeaten knock of 68 to help her side compile a competitive total of 149/4 from their 20 overs.

Harmanpreet was out for 16 in the 14th over of the run chase, giving Pakistan some hope, but Rodrigues' stunning 55* ensured India won with six balls to spare.

Rodrigues smashed eight boundaries during her 38-ball stay, with the right-hander combining well with Richa Ghosh (31*) to put on 58 for the fourth wicket in a match-winning partnership.

India will have the opportunity to make it two wins in a row at the competition when they face the West Indies at the same venue on Wednesday.

Pakistan will also be in action at the same venue on the same day, looking to get their T20 World Cup campaign back on track against Ireland.



Enticing offer on 2023 Lexus ES to end soon



The Lexus ES makes a fine impression with its stylish and sleek exterior, thoughtfully detailed interior and a list of advanced safety features and technology

MUSCAT: Lexus is offering luxury automotive enthusiasts in Oman a perfect opportunity to own the 2023 Lexus ES with exclusive benefits. Service 3 years / 30,000 km (whichever is earlier) and 1 year free registration.

The campaign ends on 16 February 2023. (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

The Lexus ES makes a fine impression with its stylish and sleek exterior, thoughtfully detailed interior and a list of advanced safety

features and technology. The Lexus ES is available with two powertrain options.

The ES350 is powered by a 3.5-liter 24-valve V6 engine that produces 298hp and 36.3 kg-m of torque. While the ES250 is powered by, high-efficiency 2.5-liter 16-valve DOHC engine that produces 204 hp and 24.8 kg-m of torque. The two powertrains on ES350 and ES250 are paired to an eight-speed direct-shift automatic transmission.

The ES is also available as an ES hybrid electric model. It has a hybrid battery that is available with 8 years /160,000km warranty and is automatically charged either by petrol engine or during braking or decelerating, eliminating the need to plug in a power cord. Furthermore, it hosts number of advanced technologies, yet drives like any other conventional car and does not require special fuel. The ES300h offers an impressive 24.1 km/L mileage.

On the other hand the ES350 F Sport version, gives a new dimension to how thrilling driving experiences can be. In addition to a thrilling exterior that highlights its bold and aggressive personality, the Lexus ES350 FSPORT has features such as a retuned suspension, 19-inch wheels and tyres, and unique aluminium interior trim that gives the machine a more dynamic look and feel.

Completing the Lexus ES' distinct

personality is its exquisite interior that invites the driver and passengers to enjoy a range of advanced features offering a refined cabin experience.

They include Dual Zone Auto Air-conditioning, Voice Recognition, Power Rear sunshade, Premium Touchscreen Audio System, Android Auto & Apple CarPlay and much more.

Highlighting Lexus' unrelenting focus on safety, the vehicle ensures complete peace of mind with an advanced safety technology package that includes Anti-Lock Braking System (ABS) / Traction Control (TRC) / Brake Assist System (BAS) / Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD) / Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) among many others.

In Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as manufacturer's warranty of 4 years/100,000km (whichever is earlier) and 24 hours on-road assistance from AAA.



Bank Muscat invites customers to take advantage of special offers on home and personal finance

MUSCAT: In response to the positive feedback from customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has invited all customers to take advantage of the extension on discounted offers on Baituna and Personal Finance for first time borrowers till March 31.

The bank's special offer featuring highly-competitive interest rates starting at just 4.25 percent for Baituna home loans and 4.5 percent on Personal Loans is available to Omani employees of government and quasi-government institutions as well as Tier 1 companies with salaries of OMR500 or more. Also, the bank offers reduced interest rates on short term personal loans starting at just 4 percent for 12 months.

Bank Muscat is keen to follow up on the latest developments in the sector to meet the needs of customers and address feedback on the bank's various services. Customers who wish to benefit from the current offer on Baituna home financing can easily apply for home finance by visiting any of the Bank's Baituna Sales Centres in Qurum, Maabelah, Barka, Sohar, Saham, Sur, Ibra, Nizwa, Ibri, Buraimi and Salalah or any Bank Muscat branch in Oman. Financing up to OMR500,000 and for a period up to 25 years is available to customers to construct or purchase new homes as well as to buy land for residential construction. Baituna is one of the best home finance options in Oman thanks to its fast processing, documentation and prompt disbursement of financing.

Similarly, those would like to apply for personal loans can visit their nearest Bank Muscat branch with the required documents including a salary transfer letter from their employer and their ID cards. Financing up to OMR200,000 is available to customers based on fulfilment of the eligibility criteria and the bank is well known for its speedy processing of applications and loan disbursements.

Bank Muscat offers a wide choice of financing products, considering the different needs of customers and as part of its aim to enhance financial inclusion.

As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate for the last four decades, Bank Muscat has the largest banking network in Oman with 146 retail banking branches. With over 800 ATMs, CDMs and FFM's and state-of-the-art Internet and Mobile Banking, customers can meet the vast majority of their financial needs 24/7 from the ease of their homes or offices.

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ROUND-UP

Bank Nizwa marks 10th anniversary; highlights growth strategy, outlook

To celebrate its decade-long success, the bank recently hosted a distinguished media roundtable to commemorate its 10th anniversary. The event provided valuable insights into the bank's strategies, operations and plans for the future, further solidifying Bank Nizwa's position as a leader in the industry

MUSCAT: As the fastest-growing Islamic bank in the country, Bank Nizwa has consistently set new benchmarks and established itself in the fastest-growing bank in the country.

To celebrate its decade-long success, the bank recently hosted a distinguished media roundtable to commemorate its 10th anniversary. The event was attended by renowned journalists from various media outlets, who were given the chance to engage in meaningful discussions with the bank's Chief Executive Office Khaled Al Kayed and other top executives from Bank Nizwa.

This provided valuable insights

into the bank's strategies, operations and plans for the future, further solidifying Bank Nizwa's position as a leader in the industry.

During the gathering, Al Kayed expressed his gratitude for the support received from customers, the community and shareholders over the past decade. He stated, "Celebrating our 10th anniversary is both an exciting and humbling experience, as we reflect on the numerous achievements of Bank Nizwa during this time. Our commitment to Islamic finance goes beyond being a prominent player and industry leader; it allows us to make a positive impact on people's lives and uphold the trust of our



valued customers. At Bank Nizwa, we remain dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of excellence, integrity, and transparency, values that have been crucial to our success."

Kayed highlighted the remarkable journey of Bank Nizwa since its establishment. He emphasised how the bank has strategically aligned its growth with that of conventional banking, while also contributing to the overall

enhancement of the banking ecosystem in Oman. The total market share of Bank Nizwa stands at 24 per cent in the Islamic Banking sector according to the Central Bank of Oman's recent report. Bank Nizwa has recorded a positive trajectory of growth as reflected in its financial results in the last quarter of 2022.

As a testament to its progress, Bank Nizwa has turned in a commendable financial performance

by registering a 20 per cent growth in net profit. The bank's total assets also increased by 6 per cent, reaching OMR1.486 billion in December 2022 from OMR1.405 million in December 2021. The gross financing portfolio improved by 10 per cent to OMR1,242 million, whilst the total customer deposit portfolio rose by 7 per cent to OMR1,189 million. The bank's operating income witnessed a growth of 18 per cent.

Bank Nizwa has driven significant expansion and development in the Islamic banking sector. The bank recognises the importance of maintaining sustainable business practices and is focused on increasing margins through responsible decision-making. Additionally, Bank Nizwa is committed to diversifying its income streams by exploring new products, clients, and segments. The bank also places a strong emphasis on keeping its cost-to-income ratio in check and ensuring that it operates as efficiently as possible. To achieve these goals, the Islamic institution is dedicated to continuously monitoring its performance and making necessary adjustments to drive growth and success.

Top of form

In addition, Bank Nizwa has achieved significant growth in its retail and wholesale business and also has showcased its strong dedication to maintaining

a people-centric approach and spearheading initiatives that add value to the lives of its employees as well as the community at large. The bank's increased emphasis on integrating ESG into operations and its unwavering commitment to the digitalisation agenda were strongly applauded at the event. As a bank that has advocated the principles of Sharia, Bank Nizwa reiterated its keen focus on nurturing a knowledge economy that is financially conscious, pragmatic and reserves a savings mindset. The bank was also able to share interesting insights and statistics from the various Islamic banking awareness campaigns it conducted across several wilayats.

As the Islamic banking sector continues to evolve and expand, Bank Nizwa remains at the forefront, driving innovation and setting new standards for excellence. With a deep understanding of its customer's needs and a steadfast commitment to ethical and transparent banking practices, Bank Nizwa has become a trailblazer in the industry, delivering a range of cutting-edge financial products and services that are fully aligned with Islamic values and principles. The bank's team of knowledgeable and experienced professionals is dedicated to providing personalised and efficient solutions, ensuring customers receive the highest level of service and support.

STARCARE HEALTH TICKET PROGRAMME



Starcare Hospitals and SalamAir join hands to provide round air tickets at no cost to Muscat for patients

MUSCAT: Starcare Hospitals and SalamAir will work together to serve patients in Oman from different countries and different parts of Oman with the 'Starcare Health Ticket' programme.

Starcare Health Ticket programme will offer various surgery packages to people who want to come to Oman for their medical treatment.

The surgery package will also cover a two-way air ticket cost

inclusive to the patient.

Starcare Health Ticket Services covers high-end surgeries like bariatric surgery, head & neck surgery, laser treatments, and laparoscopic surgeries.

Currently, this service will be launched in Salalah and people who want to travel to Muscat for high-end and advanced treatments can contact Starcare Hospitals Al Seeb for further guidance.

PRIME LOCATION

BankDhofar opens new branch in Nizwa

MUSCAT: In line with its attempt to make BankDhofar accessible to its customers across the Sultanate, the bank has announced the official opening of Nizwa branch in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

The official opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Saif Nasser Al Tiwani, Chairman Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch at Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, in the presence of BankDhofar executive management team.

On the opening ceremony of the branch, Amjad Iqbal Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar noted: "We are glad to expand our footprint in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. The launch of Nizwa branch will make our products and services easily accessible to our customers nearby, which will ensure a convenient banking experience. We plan to further expand our branch network to reach more customers across the Sultanate."





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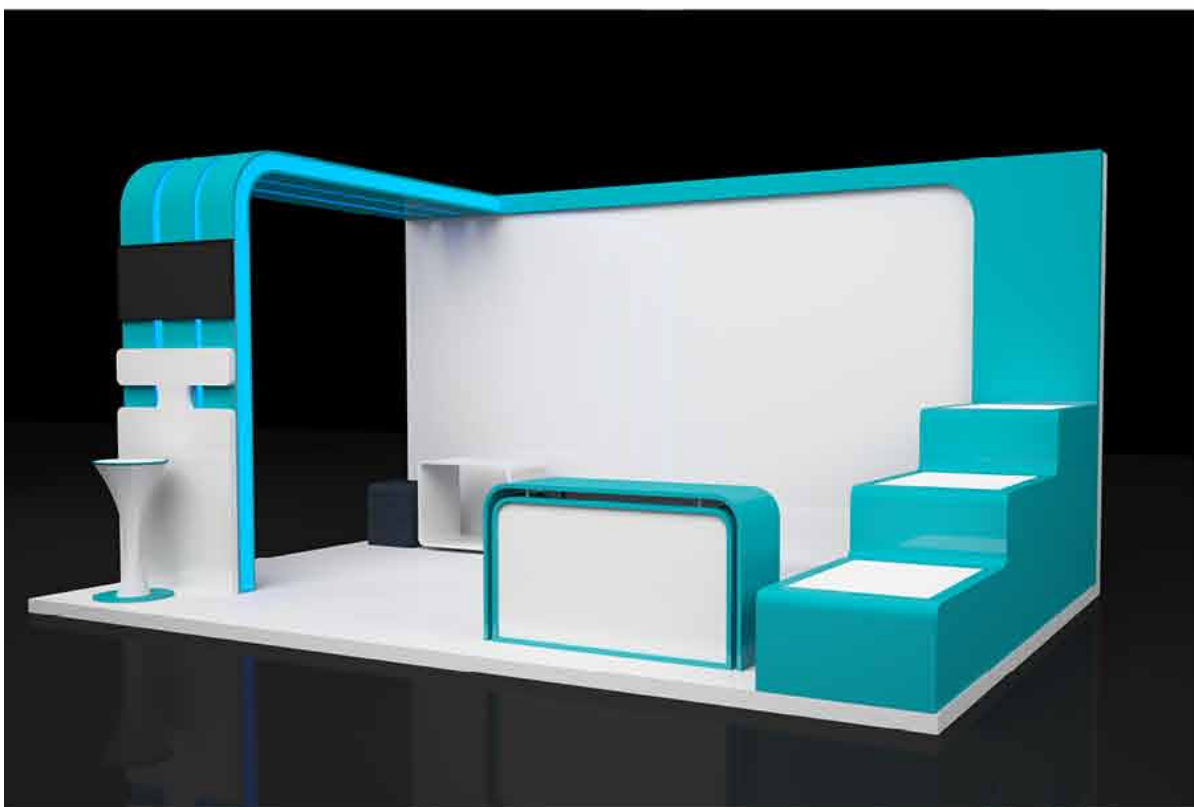
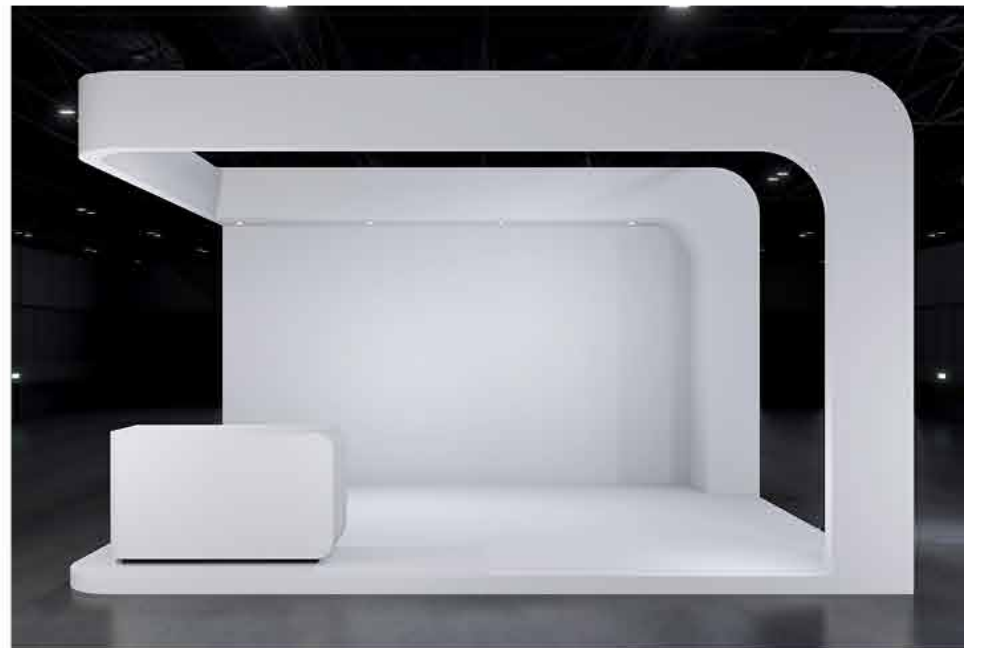
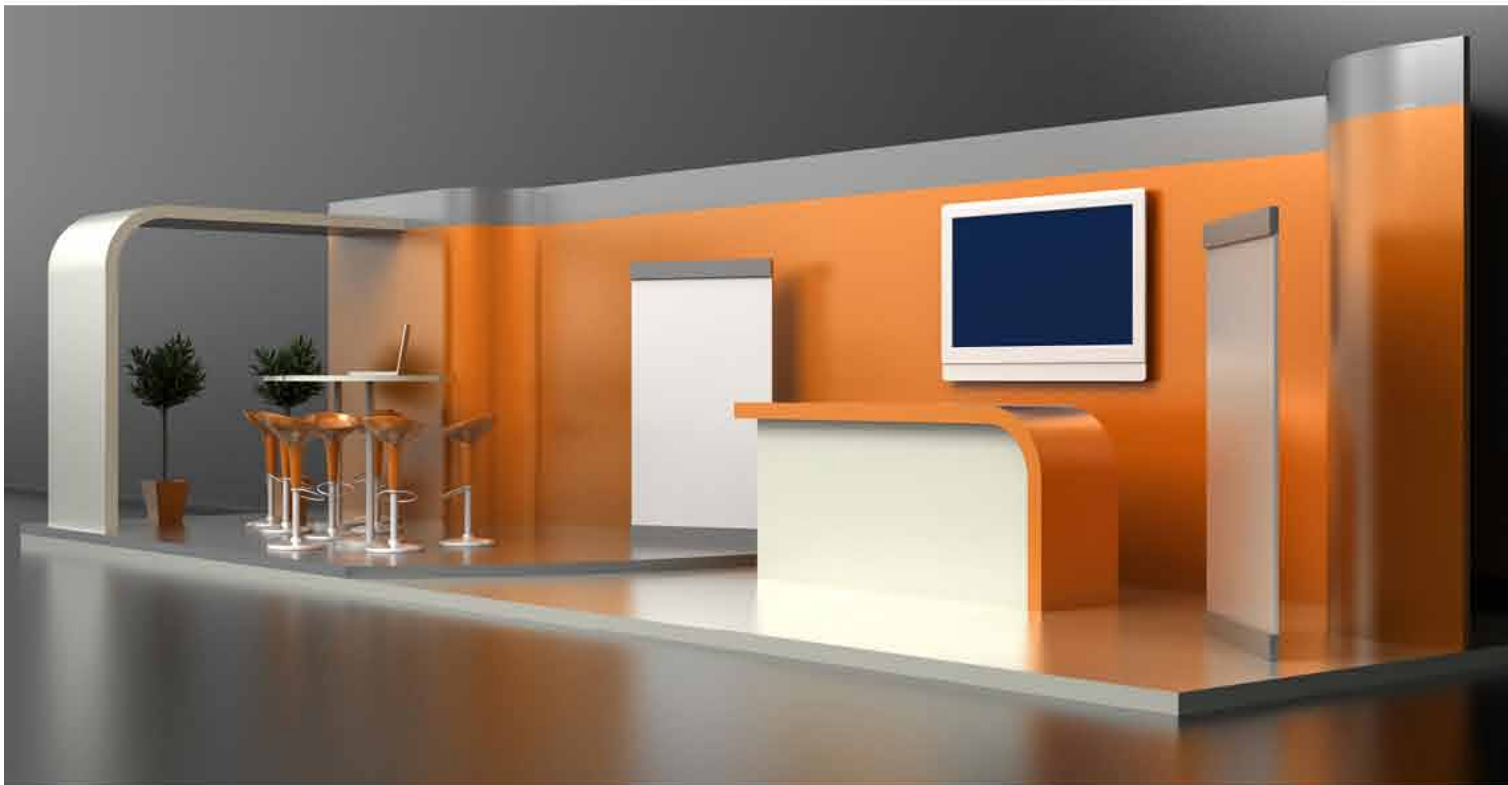
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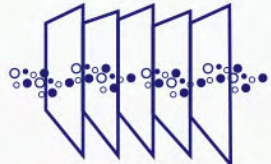
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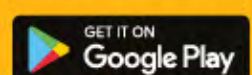
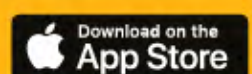
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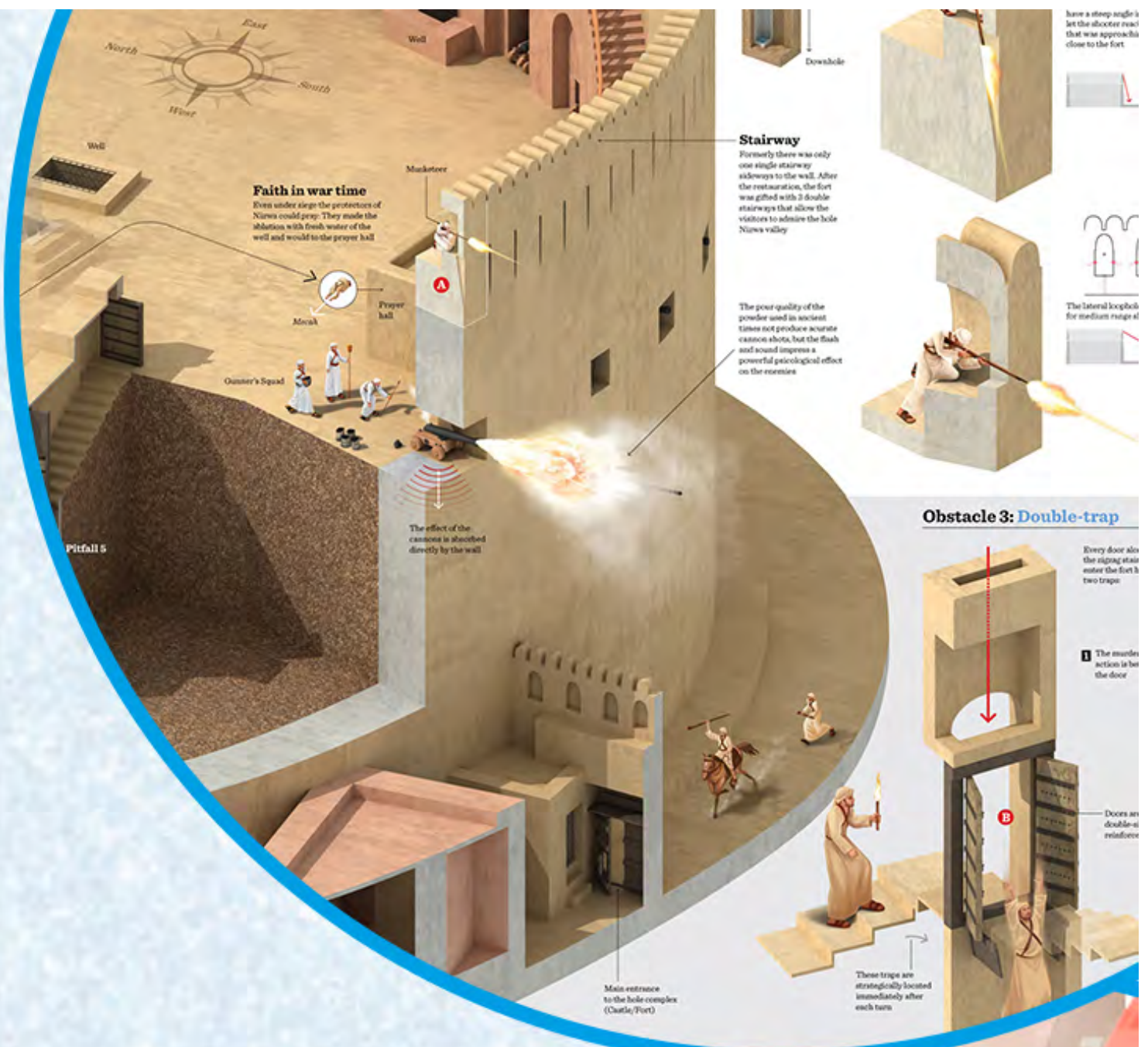


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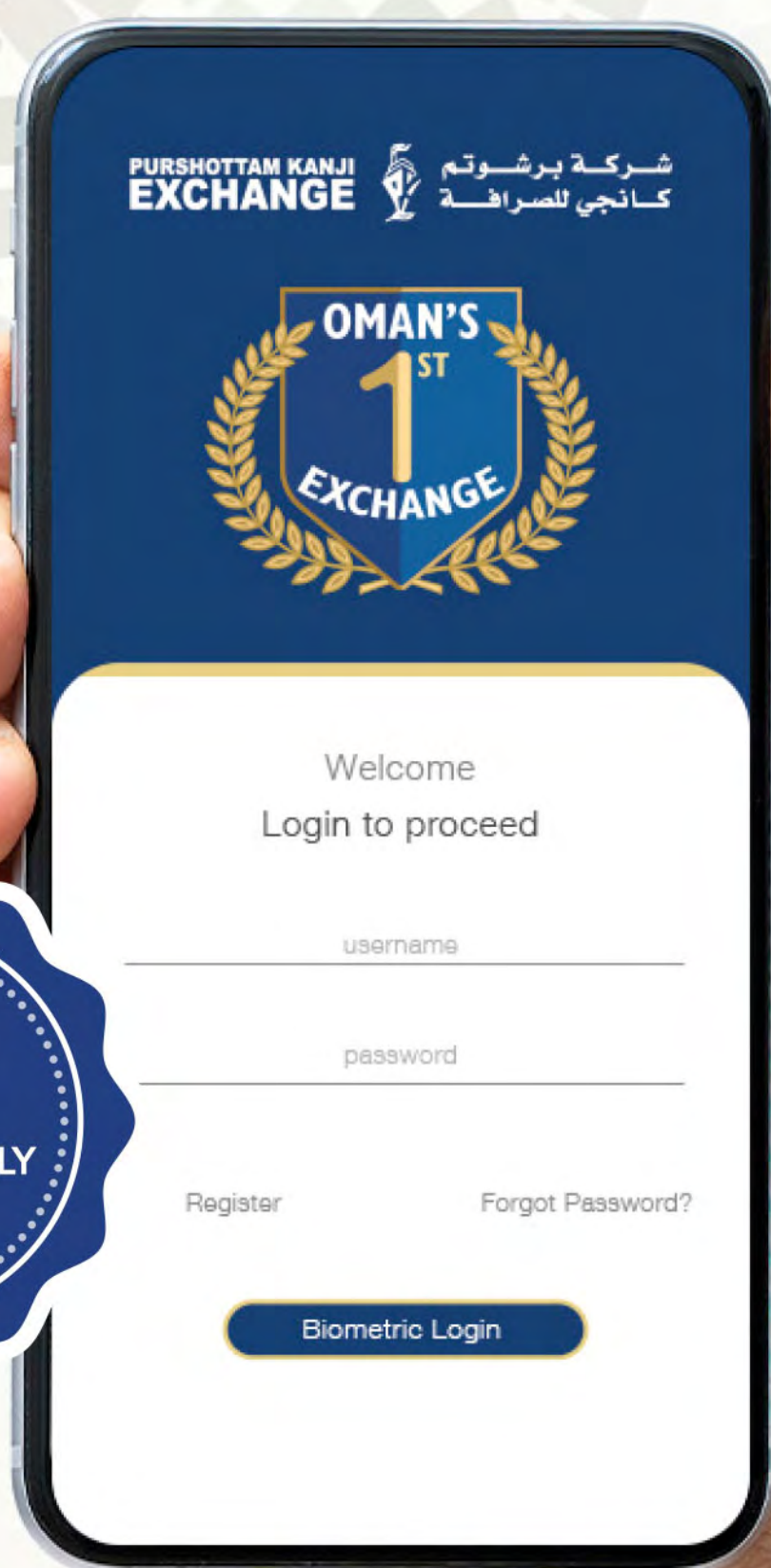
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