

**RNO COMMANDER RECEIVES
SENIOR MILITARY OFFICIALS**

Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Tuesday Commodore Mishal Jaber Al Khalifa, Commander of the Unified Maritime Operation Centre. **>A5**



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CHRONIC PAIN OF CANCER PATIENT TREATED

A pioneering surgery was performed by a team of doctors to ease the chronic pain of a cancer patient in Oman. A team from the Interventional Pain Management Team at the Palliative Care Department of the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre confirmed the success of the first-of-its-kind surgery which involved injecting medication on the target to control the chronic pain. **>A2**



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AL BARAKAH PALACE

His Majesty the Sultan receives credentials of ambassadors



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received, separately, at Al Barakah Palace on Tuesday, credentials of Ambassador of several Arab and friendly countries accredited to the Sultanate of Oman. His Majesty the Sultan received credentials of the following ambassadors:

- Mohammed Nakhira Juma Al Dhaheiri, Extraordinary and

Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

- Dr. Muhammet Hekimoğlu, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of the Republic of Türkiye, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

- Pierluigi D'Elia, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Sergio Mattarella of the Italian Republic, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Greetings conveyed

During their meeting with His Majesty the Sultan, the ambassadors conveyed greetings of their countries' leaders and their best

wishes of good health, happiness and a long life to His Majesty. They also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

The ambassadors also expressed their great honour and delight to present their credentials before His Majesty the Sultan. They affirmed to exert sincere efforts to promote relations of their

respective countries with Oman in various spheres in a manner that serves the joint interests of the Omani people and their countries' citizens.

His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the ambassadors, expressing his gratitude for their leaders' greetings and best wishes. His Majesty affirmed that they would receive all support

from him, the Government and the Omani people to facilitate carrying out their duties.

The credentials presentation ceremony was attended by the Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, the Foreign Minister, the Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman, the Head of the Royal Protocols and the Military Aides to His Majesty the Sultan. — **ONA**

ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Decree ratifies Oman's joining Arab Charter on Human Rights

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday issued a Royal Decree No. (16/2023) on ratifying the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Arab Charter on Human Rights.

Article (1) ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Arab Charter on Human Rights according to the version attached to this Royal decree, while taking into consideration a reservation on the provision of paragraph (2) of article (19) of the aforementioned charter.

Article (2) stipulates that departments concerned shall deposit the document of joining the abovementioned charter as per its provisions, while taking into consideration the aforementioned reservation.

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

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Shura Council

1 Shura Council has referred the draft Social Protection Law to the State Council during the 11th session of the 4th annual sitting. **>A2**

WORLD Humanity on thin ice

2 United Nations Chief Antonio Guterres in a video message said that it is high time to fast-track the climate efforts as humanity is on thin ice in the present times. **>A7**

MARKET Rakiza infra fund

3 Rakiza (Oman Infrastructure Investment Fund) announced that its subscription closed at more than \$1 billion. **>B1**

RAMADAN 2023

FLEXIBLE TIMINGS AND REMOTE WORK OPTION FOR GOVT EMPLOYEES IN OMAN

**TIMINGS FOR MUSCAT HEALTH CENTRES, CENTRAL FRUITS
AND VEGETABLES MARKET AND SLAUGHTERHOUSES ANNOUNCED**



Official working hours to be from 9am to 2pm at all government offices in Ramadan

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the Holy Month of Ramadan likely to start on Thursday, the official working hours for administrative staff of the government and employees

of private sector establishments were announced on Tuesday with an option to be flexible with working hours for the government employees.

According to Oman News Agency, the official working

hours, announced by the Ministry of Labour, for the departments of the administrative apparatus of the civil state will be from 9am to 2pm.

However, the ministry said that the department heads could implement flexible working hours or remote work schedules during Ramadan in line with their specific requirements.

The flexible working hours could be in either of the following options: 7am to 12pm, 8am to 1pm, 9am to 2pm and 10am to 3pm.

As for the private sector establishments, the working hours for Muslims will be 6 hours a day but not exceeding more than 30 hours a week.

As for the provision to 'work remotely' the head of the respective departments shall decide on who could avail it ensuring there are no hurdles in the workflow.

However, the circular said that in all cases the number of employees who are required to attend their workplaces may not be less than 60 percent of the total employees of the department.

Meanwhile, Muscat Municipality announced the working hours at the Central Fruits and Vegetables Market in Al Mawaleh during Ramadan.

The wholesale stores will be open from 4am to 1pm while the retail shops and local produce outlets will be open from 4am to 5pm.

The regulation for entry for wholesale vegetables and fruit transport vehicles will be from Gate No.1 from 4am to 10pm while entry of customer cars will be from Gate No.2 from 7am to 10pm. **>A3**

WEATHER UPDATE

Rains, strong winds lash parts of Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat residents were in for a surprise on Tuesday evening as strong winds along with rains lashed most parts of the city on a day when most of the other governorates across the Sultanate of Oman also experienced medium to heavy rainfall.

The Directorate General of Meteorology's forecast predicted heavy to moderate rainfall in various parts of Oman, and on Tuesday, the governorates of Al Dhahirah, South al Batinah, North Al Batinah, and Al Dakhiliyah experienced rains of varying intensity along with hail storms



and strong winds due to the effect of low-pressure air trough.

Active northerly to northwesterly winds blew between 20-25 knots over most of the governorates

in the Sultanate of Oman with strong winds lashing Muscat in the evening.

Earlier in the day, other areas witnessed increased dust levels

and low visibility. The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) has called for caution and to follow safety instructions during rains and crossing of flowing wadis.

Oman Met department

The Oman Met department said that the low-pressure air trough will continue to impact the Sultanate of Oman till Thursday. More thunderstorms and heavy to moderate rains are expected to affect governorates of South and North Al Sharqiyah, Al Dhahirah, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Dakhiliyah, Muscat, and Dhofar. **>A3**

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PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:19pm
Asr.....	3:45pm
Maghrib.....	6:23pm
Isha.....	7:34pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:53am

11TH SESSION

Draft Social Protection Law referred to State Council



MUSCAT: The Shura Council has referred the draft Social Protection Law to the State Council. The draft law was referred following discussions on its articles during the 11th session of the 4th annual sitting of the 9th term held under the chairmanship of Khalid Hilal Al Maawali, Chairman of Shura Council.

The draft Social Protection Law included 163 articles divided into seven chapters.

The Shura Council made many observations on various articles. A set of development proposals was presented for several articles and provisions of the draft law.



TEAM OF DOCTORS



Pioneering surgery performed to control cancer patient's pain

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A pioneering surgery was performed by a team of doctors to ease the chronic pain of a cancer patient in Oman.

A team from the Interventional Pain Management Team at the Palliative Care Department of the Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre (SQCCCRC) confirmed the success of the first-of-its-kind surgery which involved injecting medication on the target to control the chronic pain.



The implant of an intrathecal pump in the patient is one of the advanced procedures that offer a radical solution to chronic pain in cancer and non-cancer patients.

This pain cannot be relieved by giving narcotic pain medication orally or through intravenous procedures.

Professor Roberto Aricioni, Senior Consultant for Interventional Pain Management at SQCCCRC, stated that the medical team performed the surgical procedure by implanting an intrathecal pump that delivers medication to the spinal fluid to ease pain.

This was implemented as a final solution after the medical staff exhausted all standard pain management therapies, which did not work with the patient.

The Senior Consultant further explained that the pump is implanted under the skin, and it is connected to the spinal canal where the medication goes through a catheter into the in-

trathecal space around the spinal cord accurately.

The pump is filled with a drug such as morphine, Ziconotide (painkillers), or Bupivacaine (local anesthetic), and is programmed by a computer to continuously release a specified dose determined by the physician.

Professor Aricioni added: "This treatment is favourable and most appropriate for the patient's case as the morphine released around the nerves gives immediate result."

Samah Said Al Sarmi, Advanced Nurse Practitioner specialised in Pain Management indicated that after implanting the device in the patient's body and pumping it with necessary medicines, the device is programmed and operated electronically and remotely. This is done through a tablet used specifically to programme appropriate doses for each patient, as well as to control the pumping of these doses round the clock and monitoring other

vital indicators.

Dr. Amna Al-Harasi, a palliative care and cancer pain consultant at SQCCCRC, said that this procedure helped reduce over 50% of overall morphine equivalent daily dose of the patient, and the side effects encountered with very high doses of narcotic pain medications like nausea and hallucinations from which he suffered without any pain relief. This procedure contributed to the patient's ability to continue sessions for cancer. In addition, it improved the patient's quality of life, and he was successfully discharged from the hospital to practice daily activities with his family.

It is worth noting that the Palliative Care Department is striving to provide the latest recommended treatments, to deal with difficult cases of pain and symptoms associated with cancer or its treatments, and to carry out the necessary interventions to help the patients overall quality of life.

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On the trail of rare minerals and fossils remains in Oman

The 23-year old Tujan is writing a book to document her find in Oman’s rocks, fossils

SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

MUSCAT: Tujan Al Hajry, a fresh Geosciences graduate from the Germany University of Technology (Gutech), is aiming to learn more about the rare minerals and fossils in Oman for more clues of the natural wealth in the geological build-up of the country.

The 23-year old Tujan is writing a book to document her find

in Oman’s rocks, fossils and minerals as a continuation of her degree thesis last year on the same subject.

“My degree thesis, is about general fossils, rocks and minerals. But now, I am working on a book specifically documenting about the fossils, rocks and minerals in Oman and my prime target is to learn more about the riches hidden under the rocks and soil,” Tujan said in an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*.



Tujan Al Hajry, fresh Geosciences graduate from Gutech.

She also said that her book would also shed light on minerals and rocks of Oman that date back millions of years ago.

Fossils remain form the basis of oil production and natural gas. Oman, as a fuel producer, pumps about a million barrels a day of crude oil. Oman’s formidable mountains have rich minerals like diamond, zinc, copper, platinum and gold.

“The world of geology is exciting and I am aiming to carefully document these kind of discoveries to shed more light to researchers,” Tujan explained.

More than 50 per cent of the land in Oman is covered by rocks,

which is rich of minerals, which Tujan hopes that she would be part of the team in the exploration projects.

“We still have far to go when you take the size of the land and rocks that sit on top of all these rich minerals. It will lead to investments and job opportunities if we proper plan the exploration processes to boost our economy,” Tujan said.

She is also keen to see that the Ministry of Energy and Minerals is part of the academic researches.

“When the Ministry collaborate actively with academic researches such as the Gutech, it will speed up the process by shedding more light into the rich resources of minerals and fossils in Oman,” Tujan concluded.

RAMADAN TIMING

Ministry of Health working hours

< FROM A1 All entry gates for individuals will be open from 4am to 10pm and the market will be closed on Friday.

Ministry of Health working hours in Muscat

The Ministry of Health said that the working hours of health centres and specialised complexes (Bausher and Al Seeb) in Muscat Governorate during the blessed month of Ramadan will be in shifts from Sunday to Thursday.

The morning shift for health centres and specialised complexes will be from 8am to 1pm while the evening shift at health centres will be from 7pm to 12am, and in specialised complexes from 1pm to 7pm. During the night period, the working hours in the specialised complexes will be from 12am to 8am.

The Directorate General of Health Services in the Governorate of Muscat said that Qurayyat Hospital will receive emergency cases 24 hours a day during the holy month of Ramadan. The working hours of health centres and specialised complexes (Bausher Specialist Complex and Al Seeb Specialist Complex) in Muscat Governorate during weekends and official holidays will be as follows: 8am to 7pm (specialised complexes) and 7pm to 12am (health centres).

The night shift for the specialised complexes during weekends and holidays will be from 12am to 8am. Muscat Municipality has announced new working hours for Seeb and Amerat slaughterhouses for the month of Ramadan.

A statement issued by Muscat Municipality said, ‘Working hours of Seeb and Amerat slaughterhouses from Monday, March 20, 2023 tell the end of the month of Shaban will be from 7am to 1pm for individuals and from 6:30 pm till midnight for companies.’

WEATHER UPDATE

Downpour leads to several wadis overflowing

< FROM A1 On Tuesday, rains fell in the governorates of Musandam, Al Buraimi, North Al Batinah, North and South Al Sharqiyah, and Dhofar, ranging from heavy to medium with few areas also experiencing hailstorms. The downpour led to the overflow of a number of wadis and led to traffic chaos on the streets in some wilayats of the governorates.

As a result of the rains, the Directorate General of Education in North Sharqiyah suspended classes in schools in all wilayats on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources published the rainfall distribution in the Sultanate of Oman from March 19 to 21, 2023 until 9am. The wilayat of Al Jazir in Al Wusta governorate recorded the highest amount of rainfall with 35 mm.



Wilayats of Ja’alan Bani Bu Ali and Ja’an Bani Bu Hassan also recorded a good amount of rain in the South Al Sharqiyah governorate with 30 mm each, the same as recorded in the wilayat of Duqm.





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BLUE AQUA INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS WITH BSTL AND MIH

AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY SET FOR MAJOR GROWTH WITH BLUE AQUA INTERNATIONAL, BAHWAN SERVICES AND TRADING LLC AND MUSCAT INVESTMENT HOUSE PARTNERSHIP

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Blue Aqua International, Bahwan Services and Trading (BSTL), and Muscat Investment House (MIH) have announced a strategic partnership to develop major aquaculture projects in Singapore and Oman.

The partnership aims to support the sustainable growth of the aquaculture industry and address food security concerns globally.

Blue Aqua International will partner with BSTL and MIH on a multi-phase aquaculture development project in Oman. This includes the country's first state-of-the-art aqua feed mill with a production capacity upwards of 30,000 tonnes of feed, a high-tech trout farm capable of producing 3,000 tonnes and a super-intensive shrimp farm using Blue Aqua's patented Mixotrophic System (in 8 countries) to produce 1,000 tonnes of shrimp annually.

With this partnership, Blue Aqua International, BSTL and



MIH aim to support Oman's Vision 2040 by creating a world-class aquaculture project in the country, which will contribute to the economic diversification and growth of Oman while also addressing the increasing demand for sustainable

seafood products globally.

"This partnership is a significant step towards the development of Oman's aquaculture sector and underscores the potential of the country to become a major player in the global seafood market," said

Dr. Farshad Shishehchian, CEO of Blue Aqua International. "With our cutting-edge technology and BSTL's expertise in project management and execution, we are confident that we can create a sustainable and profitable aquaculture project in Oman."

BSTL representative in Oman said, "We are thrilled to announce our new aquaculture project partnership. By combining our expertise and resources, we are poised to make a significant impact in sustainable seafood production. Our shared commitment to responsible aquaculture practices will not only benefit the environment but also provide high-quality, nutritious seafood to consumers in Oman and around the world. We are confident that this partnership will drive innovation and growth, and we look forward to the positive impact we will make together."

In addition to Bahwan Service & Trading LLC's stake in Blue Aqua Singapore Pte. Ltd., MIH

owns a 10 percent stake in the same entity established under Blue Aqua International. Together, these investments will support the development of Singapore's first high-tech trout farm, which is expected to produce upward of 3,000 metric tonnes annually in a space of 1.6 hectares using super-intensive technology. The project is expected to be completed in 2024 and will contribute to Singapore's '30 by 30' food security initiatives.

The Aquaculture Stewardship

Council Blue Aqua Singapore Pte. Ltd is currently operating The Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certified super-intensive shrimp farm producing Kuruma Shrimp (*Marsupenaeus japonicus*), Tiger Shrimp (*Penaeus monodon*) and White Shrimp (*Litopenaeus vannamei*) using Blue Aqua's patented aquaculture method, a multi-species, zero waste, super-intensive cul-

ture system. The partnership aims to create a sustainable model for urban aquaculture and address food security concerns globally. With this partnership, Blue Aqua International, BSTL, and MIH are committed to contributing to the development of the aquaculture industry and supporting economic diversification in the regions.

The MIH representative in Oman said, "We are excited to announce our new partnership in the aquaculture industry. Our mission is to provide sustainable and responsible seafood to meet the growing demand while preserving our oceans' delicate ecosystems. With this partnership, we are committed to leveraging our collective expertise to drive innovation and efficiency in our operations, delivering top-quality products that meet the highest standards. Together, we will create a brighter, more sustainable future for both our business and the environment."

BECKONING THE SEASON OF APRICOTS IN OMAN



FARMERS in Wadi Mistal in the Wilayat of Nakhal harvest the fruits of apricot trees and mountain berries in the villages of the valley. The valley hosts various types of agricultural crops, whether in the mountains or the green oases that are frequented by tourists and visitors. The season of apricot starts with the appearance of apricot flowers in mid-March and is harvested in mid-April and lasts only for two weeks.

On the Western slopes of the Hajar Mountains, lies the oasis-like village of Wakan perched 2,000 metres above sea level and overlooking Wadi Mistal near Nakhal in Al Batinah South. The farming community harvests pomegranates, corn, apricots, dates, and more. The village is

home to local inhabitants and the orchards are their livelihood. Al Qoura Village is one of the villages in Wadi Mistal, in addition to a number of other villages, such as Al Hajjar, Wakan, Misfat Al Qoura, Al Shis, Al Aqar, Haddish, Al Khadad, Al Khadra, Ard Al Shawaa, Al Misfat and Al Dhahir.

The village has a number of seasonal crops, such as grapes, garlic, pomegranates, apricots, figs, bergamot orange, peaches, and berries, and is watered by Falaj Al Aqar, Falaj Al Mafra, and Falaj Al Wasta'a, which start at the top of the mountain.

It is marketed in the Souq of Nakhal and other neighbouring markets in the Governorate of South Al Batinah.



HM RECEIVES CREDENTIALS OF AMBASSADORS

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- Pierluigi D'Elia, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Sergio Mattarella of the Italian Republic, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman. — **ONA**



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RNO Commander receives senior military officials

MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Saif Nasser Al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison on Tuesday Commodore Mishal Jaber Al Khalifa, Commander of the Unified Maritime Operation Centre.

The two sides exchanged views on a number of maritime issues. They also discussed means of enhancing cooperation.

The meeting was attended by Commodore Jassim Mohammed Al Balushi, RNO Director of Operations and Plans.

The Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) also received in his office at Al Murtafa'a Garrison Rear Admiral Ko Seung-bum, Commander of the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) and his accompanying delegation. During this meeting, the two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Commodore Jassim Mohammed Al Balushi, RNO Director of Op-

The two sides exchanged views on several maritime issues

erations and Plans. Moreover, the Commander of CTF-151 and his accompanying delegation visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

Upon his arrival at the centre, he was greeted by the Acting Head of the MSC.

The guest was briefed on the roles and tasks carried out by the centre in maintaining the safety of the maritime environment. The delegation also toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies that are used in carrying out its national duties. — **ONA**

3RD SESSION

Oman, Romania hold political talks

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Romania held yesterday the 3rd session of political talks in Muscat. During the session, the Omani

side was headed by Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, while the Romanian side was headed by Traian Hri-

stea, Secretary of State for Global Affairs and Diplomatic Strategies of Romania's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

-ANI

MOc

Tashgeel signs pacts to boost business opportunities



MUSCAT: The National Employment Programme (Tashgeel) signed two memorandums of co-operation (MoC) with research (Bhthy) and Wholesale Souq platforms to support and develop independent businesses and promote the culture of self-employment in the Sultanate of Oman.

The first memorandum signed with Bhthy platform, which is specialised in supporting scientific research and generating job opportunities for specialists in this aspect of employers.

The second memorandum signed with the Wholesale Souq, aims to enhance food security and market the products of Omani farms by providing a digital milieu linking the consumer and the producer.

The two memorandums were signed by Eng. Azhar Ahmed Al Kindi, Technical Director of Tashgeel programme, Mohammed Khalfan Al Saadi, CEO of Bhthy platform, and Majid Sultan Al Abri, CEO of the Wholesale Souq. — **ONA**

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Ramadan Iftar Program

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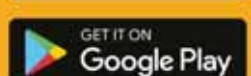
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‘High time to fast-track climate efforts as humanity on thin ice’

The Secretary-General also outlined a strategy to accelerate work towards the Climate Solidarity Pact that he had previously proposed to the G20

NEW YORK: United Nations Chief Antonio Guterres on Mon-



day in a video message said that it is high time to fast-track the climate efforts as humanity is on thin ice in the present times. He made the remarks at the press conference to launch the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on Monday and underlined to ramp up climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe, the Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, Farhan Haq said in an official statement. “He warned that humanity is on

thin ice -- and that ice is melting fast. He said that the latest IPCC report is a survival guide for humanity and a clarion call to massively fast-track climate efforts by every country and every sector and on every timeframe,” the UN statement read. The Secretary-General also outlined a strategy to accelerate work towards the Climate Solidarity Pact that he had previously proposed to the G20. The statement added that the plan asks leaders of developed countries to commit to reaching net zero as close as possible to 2040 and to end all international public and private funding of coal. According to the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), In urban areas, observed climate

change has caused adverse impacts on human health, livelihoods and critical infrastructure. The report highlighted that due to global warming, the hot extremes have intensified in cities. Urban infrastructure, including transportation, water, sanitation and energy systems have been compromised by extreme and slow-onset events with resulting economic losses, disruptions of services and negative impacts on well-being. “In all regions increases in extreme heat events have resulted in human mortality and morbidity. The occurrence of climate-related food-borne and water-borne diseases and the incidence of vector-borne diseases have increased,” the report read. Moreover, the report based on

data and statistics observed how human activities, principally through emissions of greenhouse gases, have unequivocally caused global warming, with the global surface temperature reaching 1.1°C above 1850-1900 in 2011-2020. Global greenhouse gas emissions have continued to increase, with unequal historical and ongoing contributions arising from unsustainable energy use, land use and land-use change, lifestyles and patterns of consumption and production across regions, between and within countries, and among individuals. “Climate change has reduced food security and affected water security, hindering efforts to meet Sustainable Development Goals,” the synthesis report of IPCC read. —ANI

MEETING

WARRANT

PARIS

Xi Jinping and President Putin praise ‘close ties’

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin welcomed his “dear friend” — and Chinese counterpart — Xi Jinping to Moscow for talks Monday. The highly-anticipated two-day visit is Xi’s first to the Russian capital since Putin launched his war against Ukraine in February last year. He is also the first leader to meet the Russian president since the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for him on Friday. During informal talks in the Kremlin, Putin told China’s premier he welcomed Beijing’s proposals to bring the war in Ukraine to an end. China has called for a cease-fire and put forward a 12-point peace plan that has been criticized by the West. “We are always open to negotiations,” Putin told Xi. “We will certainly discuss all these issues, including your initiatives which we treat with respect, of course.” “We have plenty of common



tasks and objectives,” Putin said, adding it was “symbolic” that the Chinese leader chose to travel to Russia for the first foreign visit of his new term. Xi highlighted China’s “close ties” with Russia, saying: “We are partners in comprehensive strategic cooperation. It is this status that determines that there should be close ties between our countries.” Putin told Xi that he was “slightly envious” of China’s “very effective system for developing the economy and strengthening the state.” Xi praised Putin and predicted he would be elected next year. “Under your strong leadership, Russia has made great strides in its prosperous development,” Xi said. Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry said it was “closely” following Xi’s visit and urged him to use Beijing’s influence to push for an end to the war. The trip was expected to give Putin a political boost at a time when he is increasingly isolated internationally and has been accused by the ICC of committing war crimes in Ukraine. —DW

US man brings live bullets on flight to South Korea

INCHEON South Korean police on Tuesday requested a warrant to apprehend an elderly US man accused of bringing two live bullets on a Korean Air aeroplane, South Korean News Agency Yonhap reported. The two 9-millimetre pistol bullets were found on the plane bound for Manila on March 10 before takeoff from Incheon International Airport, grounding the aircraft and causing more than 200 passengers to be evacuated. Yonhap reported that after looking into CCTV footage and airport security X-ray photos, the police tracked down the suspect, an American in his 70s, responsible for the bullets and requested a court warrant Monday to detain him, officials said. The court is expected to decide whether to grant the warrant on Tuesday. Records show the American flew in from Las Vegas and left for the Philippines when the bullets were found. —ANI

Demonstrators clash with police as Macron survives pension votes

PARIS: Demonstrators clashed with police in Paris as President Emmanuel Macron’s government survived pension votes, according to Al Jazeera. After President Emmanuel Macron’s recent pension reform, protests broke out in the heart of Paris and other French cities as demonstrators clashed with police who used tear gas to clear some areas. The administration narrowly avoided two votes of no-confidence. On Monday night, protests were recorded in Dijon, Strasbourg, where demonstrators broke the windows of a department store. Several students also protested across Paris to show discontent over pension reform. After tense confrontations between protestors and security personnel, police said that more than 100 people were detained in Paris alone, reported Al Jazeera. Firefighters fought to extin-

guish stacks of flaming trash that had been set on fire by demonstrators and left uncollected for days on some of the most famous avenues in the French city. According to Al Jazeera, the protesters have time and again claimed that the government has raised the state pension age without a parliamentary vote, which has now become a cause of major concern over growing unrest in the country. The agitators have taken to the streets of Paris to oppose the reform and multiple refinery strikes are also taking place across France. The escalating unrest and the mounting trash piles on Paris’ streets as a result of refuse workers joining in the action, have now put Macron in a tough state. Macron pushed the unpopular pension reform scheme which proposed to raise the retirement age for most workers to 64 from 62. —ANI

RIYADH

India-Gulf Cooperation Council hails progress in trade talks

RIYADH: The first round of the India-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Senior Officers Meeting (GSC) was held in Riyadh. The two sides conveyed happiness over the progress in trade and investment between India-GCC countries. They also agreed for an early finalisation of the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in the press release. The Indian delegation was led by Ausaf Sayeed, Secretary (CPV&OIA)

while the GCC delegation was led by Abdul Aziz bin Hamad Al-Owaishaq, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Negotiations, GCC. Ausaf Sayeed called for more collaboration between India and GCC countries in renewable energy, food security, health, IT sector and counter-terrorism. The two sides proposed the formation of Joint Working Groups to cater to particular areas of cooperation between India and GCC countries.



“Secretary (CPV&OIA) invited for more collaboration between India and GCC countries in renewable energy, food security, health, IT sector and counter-terrorism,” the Ministry of External Affairs said in the press release. It further said, “Both sides proposed formation of Joint Working Groups to cater to particular areas of cooperation between India and GCC countries. These joint working groups would be headed by experts and would ensure regular

and continuous progress across priority sectors.” The two sides looked forward for an early convention of the India-GCC TROIKA meeting at Foreign Minister level. All six member countries of the GCC attended the meeting. The India-GCC SOM meeting was held pursuant to the MOU signed on the India-GCC Mechanism of Consultation during External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar’s visit to Riyadh in September 2022. —ANI

SAN FRANCISCO

India lodges protest with US over attack on its consulate

NEW DELHI: In a meeting with the US Charge d’Affaires in New Delhi on Monday, India conveyed its strong protest at the vandalism of the property of the Consulate General of India, San Francisco. “The US Government was reminded of its basic obligation to protect and secure diplomatic representation. It was asked to take appropriate measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. Our Embassy in Washington D.C. also conveyed our concerns to the US State Department along similar lines,” read the Ministry of External Affairs press release. Khalistan supporters have started creating chaos across the world. After vandalism in London, Khalistan supporters allegedly attacked Indian Consulate in San Francisco. Videos of supporters breaking the doors and

barging into the office surfaced on social media. Visuals shared online showed a huge mob brandishing Khalistan flags mounted on wooden poles, using them to smash glass doors and windows of the consulate building. They raised pro-Khalistan slogans as they broke through makeshift security barriers raised by the city police and installed two Khalistani flags inside the premises. The senior-most UK diplomat in New Delhi was summoned to convey India’s strong protest at the actions taken by separatist elements against the Indian High Commission in London. An explanation was demanded the complete absence of British security that allowed these elements to enter the High Commission premises. —ANI

Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 10:00 am Sunday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
2885/2022/MOH/ NIZH-5- Recall - 2(33633)	Supply, Delivery and Installation of Medical Curtains in Nizwa Hospital	09/April/2023	23/April/2022	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 25.000 Per set

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> enclose **Electronic Bank Guarantee** issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Hughton named Ghana national team coach



ACCRA: Former Brighton & Hove Albion manager Chris Hughton has been named the new head coach of Ghana's national football team. The Ghana Football Association said at a ceremony in Kumasi, the country's second-largest city that Hughton would be in charge of the team until December 31 next year. The former Black Stars technical director shared his excitement and said he hoped to lead the four-time African champions back to their glory days. "To represent Ghana and the Black Stars as the head coach is

something I am incredibly proud of. I'll give everything to make the team as successful as possible," said British-born Hughton, who is the son of a Ghanaian father, and also won 53 caps for Ireland. The former Brighton manager was named last month as the replacement for Otto Addo, who resigned following Ghana's group stage exit from the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The 64-year-old's first task will be leading Ghana in their Africa Cup of Nations qualifiers against Angola on Thursday in Kumasi, before traveling to Luanda for the return encounter on March 27. -Xinhua

Hodgson reappointed as Crystal Palace manager

Former England boss replaces Patrick Vieira at Selhurst Park until the end of the season

MUSCAT: Former England manager Roy Hodgson was on Tuesday reappointed as Crystal Palace boss until the end of the season. Patrick Vieira, who replaced Hodgson at Selhurst Park in July 2021, was sacked by Palace on Friday after a 12-match winless run in all competitions. Hodgson, 75, managed Watford from January to May 2022, leaving after they were relegated to the Championship. "It is a privilege to be asked to return to the club, which has always meant so much to me," said Hodgson. "Our sole objective now is to start winning matches, and to get the points necessary to ensure our Premier League status." Ray Lewington also returns to Palace as first-team coach with Paddy McCarthy, who took charge of Sunday's 4-1 defeat at Arsenal, named assistant manager.



"I would like to welcome Roy and Ray back to the club," said Palace chairman Steve Parish. "We are obviously in a very challenging period but we believe that Roy's and Ray's experience, knowledge of the club and players, alongside Paddy can help fulfil the immediate requirement of keeping us in the league." Palace are 12th in the top flight but only three points above the

relegation zone following their defeat at Emirates Stadium. Hodgson's first game in charge during his second spell will be at home to Leicester on 1 April. His managerial career has spanned more than 45 years and includes stints at Inter Milan, Blackburn, Fulham, Liverpool, West Brom and Palace, while he has also led the national teams of Switzerland, United Arab

Emirates and Finland. Hodgson has managed six clubs in the English Premier League, taking charge of 382 games and already holds the record for being the competition's oldest manager. He led England from 2012 to 2016, but they failed to qualify from their group at the 2014 World Cup and Hodgson resigned after a shock 2-1 defeat by Iceland in the last 16 of Euro 2016.

DOMESTIC CRICKET

Second edition of all-Omani T20 tourney from March 25



MUSCAT: The second All-Omani T20 Tournament of the Oman Cricket domestic league season 2022-23 will be played from March 25 to April 10 at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds. All matches will be played from 8pm. Seven teams - OCT Ruwi, OCT

Al Mabela, OCT Al Amerat 'A', OCT Al Amerat 'B', OCT Al Hail 'A', OCT Al Hail 'B' and OCT Al Nahdah - are participating in the tournament that will be played on a round-robin format. Oman Cricket chief development officer Duleep Mendis said, "It gives me great pleasure to an-

nounce the hosting of the second edition of the All-Omani T20 tournament. "One of Oman Cricket's main goals has been to build on successful staging of events and further cultivate an active interest among the Omani youths towards the game of cricket."

He added: "I believe that grassroots cricket and the inclusion of ethnic participation is the foundation that holds up the game in any country. We have already taken multiple steps to ensure its robust health in Oman and this tournament is another milestone on that same path."



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CRICKET

Exciting action awaits final day of Muscat Sixes tournament

MUSCAT: An exciting last day of Muscat Sixes cricket tournament awaits the fans on Wednesday as four teams will battle out in the semi-finals with the winners vying for the trophy at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds in Al Amerat. The four semi-finalists are Design Group, Israr Ghala, Bank Muscat and Manis Azad and will be in action on the concluding day with the winners contesting the final later in the evening. The second edition of this fast-paced event began on February 28, with the organisers introducing a new and attractive format. Abbas al Balushi, an organising committee official, said: "Muscat sixes is a celebration of cricket. On display is game spirit, team coordination and the best of the player emerges in this format. What better way than to celebrate this beautiful game." Organisers said that the tournament is planned to be a bi-annual event, with the next edition likely

to take place next January or February 2024. Teams from the UAE are also expected to take part in the next edition. The second edition also witnessed the participation of an all-Omani team (OCT Seeb) and inclusion of Omani players in corporate teams. Besides the semi-finalists, the other teams that took part were Vanderlande, OCT Seeb, Bombay Blues, Muscat Teenagers, Bank Muscat Synergy & Six Offenders. Praveen Kumar, Second Secre-

tary and head of sports activities in Indian Embassy to the Sultanate of Oman, will be the chief guest and hand over the prizes. The event, managed by Orbit Events Management, has been backed by Bank Muscat, Oman Oasis Water and Boushar Sports Center. The tournament can be viewed on social media sites: YouTube (Muscat Sixes channel), Facebook and Instagram. Live scoring of the tournament is available on cricclubs.com.

SPANISH LEAGUE

Sevilla sack manager Sampaoli

SEVILLA: Spanish club Sevilla have dismissed coach Jorge Sampaoli following Sunday's 2-0 defeat to Getafe which left them just two points clear of the bottom three in Spanish top-flight league (La Liga) with 12 games to play. The decision comes just two weeks after they were beaten 6-1 by Atletico Madrid and with a two-week window until their next league game, away at fellow strugglers and 15th-placed Cadiz Cadiz on April 1. The former Chile and Argentina coach, 63, is the second manager Sevilla have fired this season. He only replaced Julen Lopetegui in October, who was sacked following a disappointing start to the campaign. "We have taken the decision to terminate Sampaoli's contract following the loss to Getafe which leaves us on the brink of the relega-

tion zone," Sevilla said in a statement. "The fact that the team has not managed to move clear of bottom of the table since he took over as coach, in addition to the team's performances in the last few games, have led to this decision." Sampaoli returned for a second spell as Sevilla coach in October having previously led them to a

fourth-place finish in 2017-18 before leaving to take the Argentina job. He has won 13 out of his 31 matches in charge this season, helping Sevilla reach the Europa League quarterfinals, where they will meet Manchester United. Wins over Getafe, Cadiz, Elche and Mallorca at the start of the calendar year had signalled a good start, but they have won just one of their last five league games since, against Almeria. They are 14th in La Liga but just two points ahead of Valencia and Almeria, who occupy 18th and 19th-place in the standings. Sevilla have finished in the top four in Spain in each of the last three seasons, qualifying for the Champions League in the process, and have not ended a campaign outside the top 10 since they returned to the top flight in 2001.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by May 2023 reaching \$73.90, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$3.55 from the price of Monday, which was \$74.93. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,859.36 points, down by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.00 per cent at 477.09 points. Al Anwar Investment, up 5.41 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Cattle Feed, down 7.69 per cent, was the top loser.

Rakiza closes its first infra fund at over \$1bn

The fund deployed 25 per cent of its capital in three projects, namely a stake of 30 per cent in the portfolio of telecom towers in Oman, a stake of 31 per cent in Oman International Container Terminal in the Port of Sohar and a majority stake in Khazaen Central Vegetable and Fruit Market

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Rakiza, Oman Infrastructure Investment Fund, co-managed by Oman Infrastructure Investment Management (OIM) and Equitix, announced that its subscription closed at more than \$1 billion.

A statement issued by Rakiza said that the fund deployed 25 per cent of its capital in three projects, namely a stake of 30 per cent in the portfolio of telecom towers in the Sultanate of Oman, a stake of 31 per cent in Oman International Container Terminal in the Port of Sohar and a majority stake in Khazaen Central Vegetable and Fruit Market.

Muneer Al Muneeri, OIM CEO, said, "Our target of raising over \$1 billion is an important milestone, which will help Rakiza in further growing our infrastructure fund initiatives in the region. The success of an appetite for the Fund demonstrates the need for sophisticated financial investors for this asset class. We look forward to supporting our investors and stakeholders in meeting their requirements."

Hugh Crossley, Equitix Co-Founder and CEO, said, "The GCC is an attractive home for smart capital and an exciting investment destination for those with local access. We are pleased to have such strong and growing partner-



Muneer Al Muneeri



Hugh Crossley

ships with the region's leading institutional investors. Driven by Rakiza's local investment teams in Muscat and Riyadh offices, we aim to deliver on the Fund's return objectives, by investing in and developing, compelling essential infrastructure projects."

Rakiza investments in Oman that focus on telecommunications, energy, water, transportation, logistics, infrastructure and renew-

able energy sectors, aim at achieving stable returns.

The fund seeks to create value through its investments while supporting the achievement of financial sustainability goals set by its main investors by considering environmental, social and institutional governance factors, in addition to making a positive long-term impact on financial performance, society and the environment.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN



CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR79.8 million

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR79.8 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR10.30 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.650 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.650 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.55870 per cent and 4.57470 per cent, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR69.5 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.783 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR89.750 per OMR100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.88100 per cent and 4.94116 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks with the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.25 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 5.75 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

MEETING



Opaz allocates industrial lands in Duqm to be under Madayn's management

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) held its first meeting for the year 2023, chaired by Dr Ali bin Masoud Al-Sunaidy, Chairman of the board, at the authority's headquarters in Muscat.

During its meeting, the Board of Directors approved the allocation of industrial land for the Public Establishment of Industrial Estates (Madayn) within the lands of the Special

Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad).

The board also reviewed the proposed amendments project of the bylaw of Urban Planning and Building Permits, to facilitate investment and ensure the consistency of the overall appearance of existing buildings with the development of this regulation to be applied in new economic zones, free zones and various industrial zones. The board also discussed the controls, rules and registration of engineering consultancy offices and their classification in Sezad, to

be applied to the rest of the special economic zones, free and industrial zones in the future.

The Board of Directors also approved a mechanism for signing usufruct contract agreements with government entities in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and unifying the usufruct fees for commercial lands allocated for petrol station projects and their annexes located in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm for five years to come, so that all contracts are evaluated during this period.

BOURSE

Most Gulf stock markets inch higher in early trade

DUBAI: Most stock markets in the Gulf rose slightly in early trade on Tuesday, tracking global peers as fears about a global banking crisis eased, while investors awaited the US Federal Reserve's two-day policy meeting starting later in the day.

The market estimate of the most likely size of the next Fed move has fallen to 25 basis points from 50 bps since the banking strife began this month.

Most Gulf currencies are pegged to the US dollar, while Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar usually mirror US monetary policy changes, according to Reuters.

The Qatari Stock index (QSI) rose 0.7 per cent, led by finance and materials. Qatar National Bank, the region's largest bank, and Qatar International Islamic Bank climbed 2.1 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively.

In Abu Dhabi, the benchmark stock index inched up 0.1 per cent, aided by a 1.2 per cent gain in Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank and a 1.47



per cent rise in Multiply Group.

Dubai's benchmark stock index was up 0.2 per cent, helped by gains in the industry and utilities sectors. Cooling services providers Emirates Central Cooling Systems and National Central Cooling rose 1.3 per cent and 3.5 per cent, respectively.

Diversified investment firm Dubai Investments gained 1.3 per cent after it raised its full-year cash dividend from 12 fils per share to 20 fils.

Saudi Arabia's benchmark stock index rose 0.7 per cent in broad-based gains, led by the finance, materials and energy sectors. Al Rajhi Bank gained 0.5 per cent and Saudi National Bank, the Kingdom's largest commercial bank, rose 1.9 per cent.

Shares of Saudi Company for Hardware slid 1.8 per cent after the retailer reported a full-year net loss of 142.5 million riyals compared to a 28.5 million riyals loss a year earlier. - **BNA**

MILESTONE

Saudi's King Abdulaziz Port breaks container handling record

RIYADH: King Abdulaziz Port in Dammam has logged in yet another milestone by handling 18,553 TEUs on a single vessel, making it the highest throughput ever recorded across Saudi ports.

Beating the previous record of 18,021 TEUs set in Q2 2022, the historic feat was achieved aboard CSCL Indian Ocean, a 400-metre, 20,000-TEU container ship arriving from the Far East, through the efforts of container terminal operator Saudi Global Ports.

Besides realising the strategic objectives of the Saudi Ports Authority (Mawani) and the National Transport and Logistics Strategy (NTLS), the latest achievement brings to light the advanced operating capabilities and leading-edge logistics solutions at the Dammam-based hub, which has increasingly served as a port of call for leading container carriers boasting mega fleets. - **SPA**

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MARKET



MSX index ends lower

Al Anwar Investment, up 5.41 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Cattle Feed, down 7.69 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,859.36 points, down by 0.01 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.00 per cent at 477.09 points. Al Anwar Investment, up 5.41 per cent, was the top gainer while Dhofar Cattle Feed, down 7.69 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Ominvest were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 791 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.34 million, with more than 8.14 million shares changing hands. Out of 44 traded securities, 6 advanced, 17 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR247,000 while foreign investors were net sellers for OMR143,000, followed by domestic investors for OMR104,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,802.41 points, up 0.11 per cent. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, Al Batinah Development Com-

pany, United Finance, Sohar International Bank and Bank Muscat were up by 5.41 per cent, 1.61 per cent, 1.61 per cent, 0.96 per cent and 0.35 per cent respectively. Prices of Global Financial Investments, Muscat Finance, Al Sharqia Investment, Oman United Insurance and Ominvest were up by 5.56 per cent, 1.70 per cent, 1.33 per cent, 0.64 per cent and 0.40 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,102.69 points, down 0.31 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Oman Fisheries, Oman Cement and Jazeera Steel Products were up by 7.69 per cent, 4.44 per cent, 1.21 per cent and 0.35 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.83 per cent before closing at 1,700.08 points. Prices of Musandam Power were up by 1.27 per cent respectively. Prices of Phoenix Power, Al Suwadi Power, National Gas, Oman National Engineering and Abraj Energy were up by 5.00 per cent, 3.23 per cent, 0.96 per cent, 0.93 per cent and 0.34 per cent respectively. -

United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,865.58	4,855.88	4,859.36	4,860.01	-0.65	-0.01
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,806.17	7,788.56	7,802.41	7,794.16	8.25	0.11
Industry Index	6,121.74	6,102.69	6,121.69	6,121.74	-19.06	-0.31
Services Index	1,714.69	1,696.76	1,700.08	1,714.39	-14.31	-0.83
MSX Shariah Index	480.53	476.53	477.09	477.09	0.00	0.00
MSX TR INDEX	6,178.46	6,166.14	6,170.56	6,171.38	-0.82	-0.01
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,195.31	8,176.82	8,191.36	8,182.70	8.66	0.11
SERVICES TR IDX	1,841.40	1,822.15	1,825.71	1,841.08	-15.37	-0.83
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,409.73	6,389.78	6,389.78	6,373.49	16.29	0.26

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
8,145,098	2,344,686	791	23,893,883,579	6	17	21	44

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 21

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (KD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFR	PRI VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT BANK	399,368	41,923	16	0.104	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.104	0.001	0.962	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	481,965,540
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	790,058	227,846	19	0.288	0.289	0.288	0.289	0.288	0.001	0.947	0.289	0.288	0.289	0.100	1,169,345,751
OM0000000155	OMAN INVST&FIN	122,230	14,666	7	0.120	0.125	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.110	0.110	0.128	0.100	28,440,000
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	2,912	757	1	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.000	0.260	0.100	15,913,111
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM	4,087	4,659	4	1.140	1.140	1.140	1.140	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.140	1.070	1.140	0.100	78,660,000
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	26,383	27,806	11	1.050	1.060	1.050	1.050	1.050	0.000	0.000	1.050	1.050	1.100	0.100	787,500,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	722,639	298,540	8	0.404	0.418	0.404	0.412	0.412	0.000	0.000	0.412	0.404	0.412	0.100	97,400,920
OM0000003968	QOUREDOO	3,072	1,266	2	0.412	0.412	0.412	0.412	0.412	0.000	0.000	0.412	0.412	0.414	0.100	288,159,023
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PROD	4,775	1,375	2	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.289	-0.001	-0.346	0.288	0.288	0.288	0.100	35,970,612
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	1,758,000	878,994	28	0.500	0.500	0.498	0.498	0.500	-0.002	-0.400	0.498	0.492	0.498	0.100	332,845,982
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	17,301	5,466	5	0.316	0.316	0.312	0.312	0.314	-0.002	-0.637	0.312	0.314	0.320	0.100	31,200,000
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	21,563	2,264	4	0.104	0.107	0.104	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.926	0.107	0.107	0.107	0.100	16,050,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	5,000	1,648	2	0.332	0.332	0.328	0.328	0.332	-0.004	-1.205	0.328	0.304	0.330	0.100	108,526,249
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV	46,401	3,445	8	0.075	0.076	0.073	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.075	0.077	0.100	5,660,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	6,500	332	1	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.051	0.054	-0.003	-5.556	0.051	0.051	0.059	0.100	10,200,000
Total	15	3,931,189	1,510,988	118												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	178,479	13,853	13	0.075	0.078	0.075	0.078	0.074	0.004	5.405	0.078	0.078	0.081	0.100	15,600,000
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEV	100,534	6,299	7	0.062	0.063	0.062	0.063	0.062	0.001	1.613	0.063	0.061	0.064	0.100	1,890,000
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	356,000	22,119	7	0.062	0.063	0.062	0.063	0.062	0.001	1.613	0.063	0.062	0.063	0.100	21,996,098
OM0000000781	MUSANDAM POWER	700	223	1	0.318	0.318	0.318	0.318	0.314	0.004	1.274	0.318	0.318	0.318	0.100	22,384,020
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	32,390	4,442	3	0.137	0.139	0.137	0.137	0.137	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.100	27,400,000
OM0000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	120,000	19,201	4	0.181	0.181	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.000	0.000	0.180	0.180	0.180	0.100	320,340,656
OM0000002335	SALALAH PORT SR	200	88	1	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.440	0.000	0.000	0.440	0.000	0.440	0.100	79,129,456
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	34,067	5,280	1	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.155	0.156	0.159	0.100	464,434,473
OM0000002572	OMAN OIL MARKETING	15,944	15,944	4	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.100	61,275,000
OM0000002804	ASAFA FOODS	4,700	893	1	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.190	0.000	0.000	0.190	0.185	0.192	0.100	22,800,000
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	27,500	2,805	3	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.000	0.000	0.102	0.096	0.102	0.100	20,362,831
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	65,438	6,478	8	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000004609	SHARQIAH DESALIN	7,000	993	2	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.132	0.139	0.100	12,616,479
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	298,887	27,063	20	0.090	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.100	15,925,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	5,000	195	1	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.000	0.000	0.039	0.039	0.000	0.100	9,750,000
OM0000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	10,000	1,400	1	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.140	0.140	0.100	10,573,800
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,289,355	665,424	547	0.283	0.285	0.282	0.284	0.285	-0.001	-0.339	0.284	0.294	0.295	0.100	226,438,800
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	128,000	13,138	5	0.101	0.103	0.101	0.103	0.104	-0.001	-0.962	0.103	0.103	0.104	0.100	8,755,000
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	34,547	2,084	1	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.059	0.001	1.695	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.100	17,514,497
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	2,000	234	2	0.118	0.118	0.117	0.117	0.120	-0.003	-2.500	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.000	49,698,115
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	428,311	12,839	21	0.030	0.030	0.029	0.030	0.031	-0.001	-3.226	0.030	0.029	0.030	0.100	21,432,190
OM0000001566	OMAN FISHERIES	29,133	2,605	8	0.080	0.080	0.086	0.086	0.080	-0.004	-4.444	0.086	0.086	0.090	0.100	15,658,742
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	14,300	815	2	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.060	-0.003	-5.000	0.057	0.057	0.060	0.100	83,368,283
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	25,205	796	3	0.032	0.032	0.030	0.032	0.032	-0.002	-6.250	0.030	0.030	0.031	0.100	20,246,623
OM0000001301	DHOFAH FOODS AND INVESTMENT	12,287	737	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.065	-0.005	-7.692	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.100	4,851,000
Total	55	4,199,977	825,779	667												

REPORT

India among small set of countries able to reduce core debt of corporate sector

New Delhi: India is among a small set of countries that have been able to reduce their debt burden when it comes to core debt of the corporate sector in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Monthly Economic Review February 2023 of the Department of Economic Affairs.

The report said while comparing the core debt of the corporate sector in both advanced economies (AEs) and emerging market economies (EMEs), it increased in both categories, reaching 175 per cent of GDP in EMEs and 185 per cent of GDP in AEs at the end of 2020. The data on the core debt of the corporate sector was collected by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

The report, which was released on Monday evening, said this was a result of the banking sector's balance sheet clean-up and the corporate sector's deleveraging exercise undertaken over the last decade.

India's relatively lower debt burdens will help limit the impact of financial contagion that may arise as rising borrowing costs trigger debt sustainability concerns.

The BIS data allows for an analysis of the core debt of the corporate sector across a large set of countries and country groupings.

In the context of the current monetary tightening cycle, the report said it was useful to compare the latest core debt as a percentage of the GDP of this sector across countries with their values in the quarter ending September 2008.

According to the report, trends in India's corporate core debt since the pandemic indicated a healthy recovery from a one-off shock.

India's corporate sector debt began increasing a year before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and reached its peak at the beginning of 2021.

During the pandemic, the monthly report said corporates

were forced to borrow more to keep operations running, and some businesses were compelled to invest in technology to support remote work, supplemented by the pandemic's economic response and loosening financial conditions further pushed the debt levels higher still.

On a sectoral level, as per a study by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), financial stress in the manufacturing sector increased the most, followed by 'hotels and restaurants', real estate, construction and electricity, it added.

However, the debt ratio has witnessed a declining trend since mid-2021, the report said, adding the same is reflected in the improvement in the debt service ratio of the corporate sector.

The improvement is mainly due to a steady recovery from the economic effects of the pandemic-induced lockdowns. -ANI

Bitcoin passes bank stress test

HONG KONG: As crisis stalks the traditional world of stocks and bonds, bitcoin is suddenly looking like a safe haven. The infamously volatile cryptocurrency seems positively hale and hearty, just as a banking meltdown drives markets into the arms of a recession. Bitcoin has risen 21 per cent this month, while a choppy S&P 500 has lost 1.4 per cent and gold has gained 8 per cent.

"If you were going to describe an environment where there were successive bank runs because central banks are trying to fight inflation with fast rate increases, that is pretty close to as spot-on a thesis for owning bitcoin as you've ever heard," said Stéphane Ouellette, CEO at digital asset investment platform FRNT Financial.

Bitcoin's 30-day correlation with the S&P 500 has slid to negative 0.12 over

THE BASICS OF FIRE SAFETY



You have smoke alarms in your home, you check them regularly and you practice your emergency escape plan with your family - but are you overlooking an essential component of home fire safety as you check your spring to-do list? Having fire extinguishers can give you peace of mind and help ensure your home and family are prepared in the event of a fire.

"We all lead busy lives, but it's essential that people understand how to protect themselves from the dangers of fire," explained actress and advocate Eva Longoria, who has teamed up with First Alert by Resideo in the US as a brand ambassador to encourage families to install proper protection, discuss whole home safety and develop their own fire safety plans.

Home fires can occur anywhere, but cooking is the leading cause of home fires and fire injuries. Having fire extinguishers in the kitchen is an important first line of defence. Knowing where else to place them and how to use them can make the difference between minor damage and a potential tragedy.

You can keep in mind both in and out of the kitchen as you tackle your to-do list:



KNOW HOW TO USE IT

Once your home is equipped, it's important to know how to use a fire extinguisher so you can act quickly should a fire start.

Every fire extinguisher includes instructions on proper usage — but when you need to act quickly, a simple way to remember is with the acronym PASS:

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Pull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you and release the locking mechanism. | 2 Aim low. Point the nozzle of the extinguisher at the base of the fire. | 3 Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly. |
| | | 4 Sweep the nozzle from side to side. |

ASSESS THE FIRE

In the event of a fire, it's important to assess the situation before grabbing your fire extinguishing device. Fire extinguishers should only be used when a fire is contained. If the fire is small enough for you to manage, use the PASS technique to put the fire out. However, if smoke fills the room or the fire is quickly spreading, exit your home immediately and call emergency.

INSPECT EXTINGUISHERS REGULARLY

When doing routine home checks, make a point to also check that your fire extinguishers are in good condition. Be sure they are not blocked by anything that could impact your access, and ensure the devices are not damaged, dented or rusted. Additionally, check your extinguisher's pressure gauge. If the pointer is in the green zone, your extinguisher is properly pressurised and ready for use. If the pointer is in the red zone, your fire extinguisher should be serviced or replaced. Remember, a fire extinguisher that has been discharged should never be stored without proper recharging by a certified professional. -**BPT**

LEARN YOUR ABC

Fire extinguishers have specific ratings that indicate what kind of fire(s) they are designed to extinguish. Extinguishers with a Class A rating can put out fires caused by wood, paper, fabric and other common materials, while Class B rated extinguishers are intended for fires fuelled by flammable liquids like cooking oils or gasoline. Class C rated extinguishers are meant for fires caused by electrical equipment, such as frayed cords. For trusted reliable protection, it's recommended to choose a multi-purpose, or ABC rated, extinguisher, which is ideal for common household fires and can easily be placed in the kitchen and around the home.

EQUIP YOUR HOME

Whether you are preparing gourmet meals or simple dishes, it is crucial to have a fire extinguishing device in the kitchen. Experts recommend placing fire extinguishers in readily accessible locations in the kitchen and garage, and on every level of the home. An easy spring DIY project is to place extinguishers where each adult member of the household can easily reach them, like under a kitchen sink or mounted to a wall, and ensure members of the household know these locations. Remember that most home fires and fire casualties result from accidents involving cooking, heating, electrical distribution and lighting equipment, and smoking.

ROUND-UP



State-of-the-art showroom opened for premium automotive brand Changan Auto at Sohar

The state-of-the-art showroom will cater to the rising demand for premium Changan models and the luxurious UNI series in Sohar and North Al Batinah region

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE) announced the inauguration of a flagship showroom for the premium automotive brand Changan Auto at Sohar.

The state-of-art showroom will cater to the rising demand for premium Changan models and the luxurious UNI series in Sohar and Al Batinah north region.

Changan Sohar showroom key highlights are:

Spread over an area of 1,200 square metres with ample parking area and display of 11 Changan and UNI Models, the facility is newly built exclusively for Changan auto which can display 11+ cars.

Designed following global standards, the showroom's façade holds a glass fascia with an inside height of six metres and a front elevation of nine metres which provides excellent visibility to the customer.

The showroom location has easy access to customers residing in Sohar and is on Al Bhaja street (inside Suhail Bahwan premises, where all new car automotive showrooms have been situated. The showroom has ample sitting places for customers to discuss and look at the display cars.

The large showroom area also provides customers with sufficient place to look at the entire model range of Changan and UNI models, Eight different model variants in Changan and three models in the UNI range need such a large state of the art showroom to meet customer choices.

The state-of-the-art showroom also has an exclusive new car delivery area, customer lounge, wheelchair access, ample car parking and comes with prayer room facilities etc.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, "We have always believed in

strengthening our relationship with our customers across Oman including Al Batinah North Governorate, we are elated to expand our network and come closer to all of them. We have a great partnership with the Changan brand and are very happy to extend this further with the inauguration of our new facility in Sohar. We look forward to welcoming new buyers to the Changan family and establishing a fruitful, long-term relationship."

He also added that Bahwan group showroom standards are very well maintained for buying convenience like test-drive to satisfy the customer on the quality of drive, easy financing and also offers low instalments through banks and finance companies, insurance and registration to support the customers to buy their favourite Changan and UNI models.

The premium automotive brand Changan has received an overwhelming response among Oman customers. Changan Automobile boasts a comprehensive portfolio of a range of products including Sedan, Crossovers, SUVs and Pickups like Changan Alsvin- Entry level sedan, EADO Plus - Family Sedan, CS35 PLUS Crossover, CS75 Plus Crossover, CS85 Coupe, CS95 7 Seater 4WD and Hunter Pickups.

UNI Series

Changan Auto Luxury brand is called UNI and it's positioned as futuristic and fashionable, the UNI range features progressive design and smart technologies offered only in luxury brands. Changan UNI's range of automobiles is devoted to creating a new experience with highly technological and sporty exterior design coupled with avant-garde interiors. For a luxury model to be 'sporty at a glance', the UNI range adopts



a short overhang and long axle design, adding a sporty feeling to a luxury range. This improves the overall handling of the UNI range having high agility and high-speed stability when driving.

The UNI range has adopted pure, precise and agile exterior design elements. The hidden door handle design blends in with the body, making it simple and sophisticated. The UNI family's classic borderless grilled design is combined with the narrow, sharp headlamps on both sides for an intense look. The aerodynamic airship-shaped spoiler improves driving stability and is fashionable in aesthetics. The space battleship gear shift knob has a sporty design, giving the user a sense of exploration on every trip.

Equipped with the IACC system, the UNI range can achieve L2 autonomous driving having features

of FCW+AEB+LDW+LAS+TJA+AEB+LCDA. UNI range is equipped with four high-definition wide-angle cameras giving 360-degree view around the vehicle in real-time to park your vehicle safely.

The UNI range adopts a simplistic yet avant-grade interior design. It uses an asymmetrical design in the instrumentation and centre console as well as bright colours that create technically dynamic interiors. It adopts the Intelligent Cockpit Interaction System which appears to be two screens staggered on the surface, but internally they are connected as one has a high-resolution display and adaptive backlight control to protect the eyes from fatigue to the max while reading and driving.

The UNI range features newly designed seats with fuller side wings which also provide more

reliable support and confidence when cornering. The wireless charging provides ultra-fast charging with wide-range compatibility.

Changan Auto

One of the 'big four' Chinese automakers of the world and a top-selling brand, Changan Automobile boasts of a comprehensive portfolio of products which includes sedans, crossovers and SUVs. With an inspiring history of 160 years, Changan Automobile Group traces its corporate origins way back to 1862 with 62 years of automobile making and 40 years experience of in manufacturing Changan vehicles.

With world-class R&D facilities, Changan develops products which are Advanced, High-Tech, Innovative, fashionable, Safe and deliver a Strong Performance. Each year Changan invests 5% of the annual

sales revenue for product R&D and with continuous efforts has built a global collaborative R&D network with various priorities. Changan has been ranked No. 1 in R&D capability in China's automotive industry for the past ten years. It has 3 R&D centres in China Chongqing, Shanghai and Beijing and 4 overseas facilities in Turin of Italy, Yokohama in Japan, Nottingham in the UK and Detroit USA. Supported by intelligent driving, intelligent interconnection and intelligent interaction technologies, it is building an intelligent vehicle platform in stages.

Changan has been vigorously developing new energy and intelligent vehicles. Changan uses Bluecore Powertrain technology based on the principles of power, cleanliness and quiet to provide customers with a highly efficient product and energy saving.



WARNING OF PATENT INFRINGEMENT

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(12) **United States Patent**
Al-Sahli

(10) Patent No.: **US 10,032,156 B2**
(4) Date of Patent: **Jul. 24, 2018**

(54) **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONDUCTING FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS USING A MOBILE DEVICE**

(56) **References Cited**

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(71) Applicant: **Mahmoud Anass Mahmoud Al-Sahli, Mississauga (CA)**

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(72) Inventor: **Mahmoud Anass Mahmoud Al-Sahli, Mississauga (CA)**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

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(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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(Continued)

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Primary Examiner — Hai Tran

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(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**

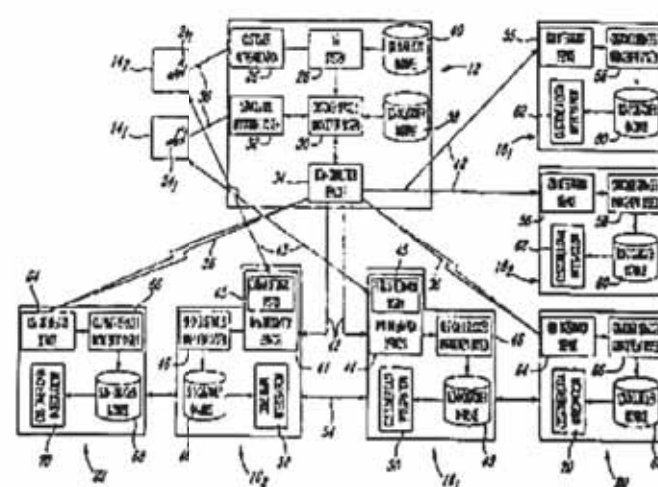
Mar. 9, 2008 (JO) P.110/2008

(51) Int. Cl.
G06Q 40/00 (2012.01)
G06Q 20/32 (2012.01)
(Continued)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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

18 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



US 10,032,156 B2

Page 2

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G06Q 20/18 (2012.01)

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CPC G06Q 20/32 (2013.01); G06Q 20/40 (2013.01); G06Q 20/4014 (2013.01)

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
USPC 705/35-45
See application file for complete search history.

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ROUND-UP

Redtag announces its Ramadan offerings

Redtag, in line with its long-standing tradition of Ramadan bonanza, has announced gifts and vouchers, along with the launch of modest festive wear

DUBAI: Redtag, the Middle East's leading value-fashion and homeware brand, announced its Ramadan offerings, which include a new line of modest festive wear, gifts, and vouchers. The limited-period offers will run between March 19 and April 22, bearing Redtag's promise of uncompromising value and embodying its time-honoured tradition of specialized offerings during Ramadan.

Starting March 19, shoppers will receive an AED-40 gift voucher on a purchase worth AED 200 or more. The limited-period offer, applicable across Redtag's apparel and homeware categories, will continue till April 1. The voucher offer will be followed by gifts on a purchase worth AED 250 or more, from April 2 to 22. Offers are valid across all Redtag outlets and on-



line in the UAE.

"Over the years, in line with Ramadan's spirit of gratitude, we have made solemn efforts to thank our customers, whose patronage has eclipsed us to the top of the fashion industry. As Ramadan transcends cultural and geographical frontiers, we have ensured the offers are accessible across the region with country-specific distinctions. Overall, the objective is to

ensure that every Redtag shopper feels appreciated during the holy month," explained Shehbaz Shaikh, Chief Retail Officer, Redtag.

Accordingly, from March 19 to April 1, Redtag shoppers in KSA, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Qatar, too, will receive a gift voucher of SAR 50, KWD 4, BHD 4, OMR 4, and QAR 50, respectively, for a purchase worth SAR 250, KWD 20, BHD 20, OMR 20, and QAR 250 or

more. Subsequently, from April 2 to 22, a purchase worth SAR 250, KWD 20, BHD 25, OMR 25, and QAR 250 or more will entitle shoppers to a high-quality gift from Redtag. The offers are applicable across Redtag's collections, including the newly launched specialised Ramadan range, ShineBright.

Taking a family-centred approach this Ramadan, Redtag has designed matching/complementing apparel for all the members: Men and boys have shirts in solid colours and cotton trousers that exude elegance; women and girls have dresses in powdery-pink and off-white, as well as glittery gold, in line with the grandeur of the occasion. The festive collection also boasts zebra-print pleated long dresses, paisley print dresses, and luxurious embroidered silk shrug jackets for modest-fashion aficionados. Shirts in creams, monogram-printed T-shirts and classic denim will resonate with boys and men who ascribe value to comfort.

"We are revolutionising the idea of 'value' in fashion, in the Middle East. Our 'New Lower Prices' campaign will drastically reduce the prices of apparel and homeware, enhancing brand access for customers across socioeconomic strata. Likewise, there is a unique balance of functionality and aesthetics in our clothing, aimed at catering to shoppers en masse. Additionally, through the adoption of relevant technologies, we are unlocking the power of personalization and optimising the customer experience," Shehbaz added.

CAPTIVATING CULINARY EXPERIENCE



Dubai Food Festival to celebrate its 10th edition with sizzling line-up of culinary events

DUBAI: Dubai Food Festival (DFF), the largest annual culinary celebration in the Middle East, is scheduled to return next month to celebrate its 10th edition with a thrilling line-up of gastronomic events and experiences.

From 21 April to May 7, the city will be transformed into a haven for foodies as hundreds of restaurants, cafés, and eateries offer distinctive and captivating culinary experiences and home-grown concepts during the 17-day festival.

Dubai's food scene has undergone an incredible transformation over the last decade, establishing the city as a leading global gastronomy hub and reinforcing its position as the food capital of the world. The number of restaurants in the city has more than doubled during this period, from approximately 5,500 in 2013 to over 13,000 in 2023, indicating the significant expansion of the food sector.

Food trucks and beach-side eateries may not have been a part of Dubai's gastronomy scene ten years ago, but the destination has since witnessed the emergence of exciting food concepts, pop-up dining events, hidden gem locations, farm-to-table dining experiences, and quirky food halls. These diverse and unique gastro experiences are celebrated at DFF. In addition, the city's exceptional culinary talent has been recognised by global awards such as the Michelin Guide Dubai, Gault&Millau UAE guide, and Mena's 50 Best Restaurants.

Dubai Restaurant Week made its debut during DFF 2016, providing exclusive dining experiences at some of the city's top restaurants and offering a chance to savour Dubai's diverse culinary offerings at value prices. The gastronomy sector in Dubai has experienced significant growth, particularly in the thriving homegrown culinary industry that is putting the city on the global culinary map.

AHLIBANK

Daily returns on account balance with 'Wafra Plus' account

MUSCAT: As part of ahlibank's commitment to offering innovative products and services to its customers which sustainably support their saving goals, the 'Wafra Plus' account was introduced as a daily return account which offers many benefits such as competitive rates, debit cards, and more, as it enables new and existing customers to develop their financial resources and grow their account balance daily.

The 'Wafra Plus' Daily Growth Account is a savings account that pays up to 1.75% interest per year on the daily balance in the account. At the end of each day, the benefit is compounded and credited to the client's accounts. Key benefits for Wafra Plus accountholders include up to 1.75% interest p.a. in competitive benefits, compounded advantages daily, unlimited transactions on the account, and benefits being credited to the account every day. As per the scheme, ahlibank will offer interest rates ranging from 1.00% (for deposits up to OMR9,999) to 1.75% (for deposits of OMR100,000 and more), depending on the deposit amounts.

"The 'Wafra Plus' account comes in line with the comprehensive growth strategy of ahlibank. We at ahlibank are always keen to encourage smart and sustainable money management in all our operations, and the "Wafra Plus" account comes as a good example of that, as it supports our customers' efforts to save simply and effectively that meets their goals and aspirations. By enhancing our existing suite of products and services, we are always looking to develop solutions that suit the lifestyles of our customers" said Muneer Al Balushi, AGM - Head of Retail Distribution.

ALIZZ ISLAMIC BANK



Graduation of first batch of Ruwad Alizz programme celebrated

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank, represented by the Learning and Development Department, celebrated the graduation of the first batch of the Ruwad Alizz programme.

The course conceptualised in collaboration with Harvard ManageMentor, an e-learning platform from the prestigious Harvard University, aims to enhance the skill and knowledge of middle management, enabling them to become future leaders.

The ceremony was attended by Sulaiman bin Hamad Al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, Ali bin Saif Al Mani, General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank, and other members of executive management.

A group of 28 participants completed the Ruwad Alizz programme that focuses on developing leaders from both government institutions and private sector establishments. The programme looks to equip participants with the necessary skills required to meet future job market demands by providing a comprehensive and rapid development journey for future leaders. The programme which

spanned six months included a group of local and regional exceptional leadership guest speakers, including members of the bank's executive management team.

This provided a unique opportunity for participants to learn from diverse leadership styles and experiences, which is essential for future success. The programme's philosophy is based on the belief that personal growth is driven by the accumulation of experiences, whether from individuals, societies, or different organisations.

Ali Al Mani, General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank said, "We emphasise the importance of collectively serving our beloved country and continuously striving to develop middle leaders in alignment with Oman's Vision 2040. We appreciate the significant praise that the Ruwad Alizz programme has received in the past, highlighting its exceptional nature due to the quality of its teaching programs, instructors, and affiliation with Harvard ManageMentor, a distinguished e-learning platform associated with Harvard University."

HILTON GARDEN INN MUSCAT AL KHUWAIR

Indulge in ultimate Iftar experience at Together & Co

MUSCAT: Together & Co Restaurant, Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair, welcomes the holy month and invites guests to a delectable feast offering a lavish spread of dishes curated by our talented chefs, to make your Iftar an unforgettable experience.

The Ramadan Iftar buffet will feature a range of mouth-watering dishes made with the freshest and finest locally sourced produce, including Arabic delicacies, international cuisine, and a variety of desserts. Guests can indulge in an array of heartwarming soups, savoury appetizers, salads, hot entrees, and flavorful desserts that will tantalize their taste buds. Our menu includes lamb ouzi, hot and cold mezze, succulent grilled meat and fish, aromatic stews, a salad bar, assorted seasonal fruits, and our ultimate favourite desserts like luqaimat, kunafa, and umm ali, among many others.

The buffet will be open from sunset until 10:30pm. Guests can enjoy the exquisite cuisine in a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere, with excellent service from our friendly team members. In addition, our restaurant will also feature live entertainment. Guests will



be able to enjoy their meal while being serenaded by the soothing and soulful sound of live oud music.

For those who prefer to dine under the stars, our restaurant also offers an outdoor seating option overlooking the park. This is the perfect way to enjoy the warm spring weather while savouring the delicious Iftar buffet.

Parents dining with kids need not worry about keeping their children entertained during the event. Our Kids Club on the 7th floor will be open providing a safe and enjoyable environment for children to play.

"Ramadan is a time of togetherness, reflection, and generosity. At Hilton Garden Inn Muscat Al Khuwair, we want to create a memorable dining experience. We take pride in using only the freshest and locally sourced ingredients to create our dishes. We understand the importance of supporting our local community and believe that using fresh ingredients is essential to creating delicious and healthy meals. In addition to our commitment to fresh ingredients, we are also passionate about giving back to our community. We have also partnered with Oman Food Bank to reinforce charitable giving during this Holy Month of Ramadan," said Ozge Yilmaz, General Manager.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Bank Muscat participates in SQU Career Fair 2023



MUSCAT: In line with its continuous success in investing in human resources and commitment to creating rewarding job opportunities and internships for Omani youth, Bank Muscat participated in the 23rd Career and Training Opportunities Fair organised by the Sultan Qaboos University from March 20-22.

Bank Muscat has been keenly participating in the annual career fair organised by the Centre for Career Guidance at the Sultan Qaboos University for a long time as it offers an excellent opportunity to meet with students, introduce them to the types of jobs at the bank, its employment and training policies, and also explain to them how to apply for available vacancies.





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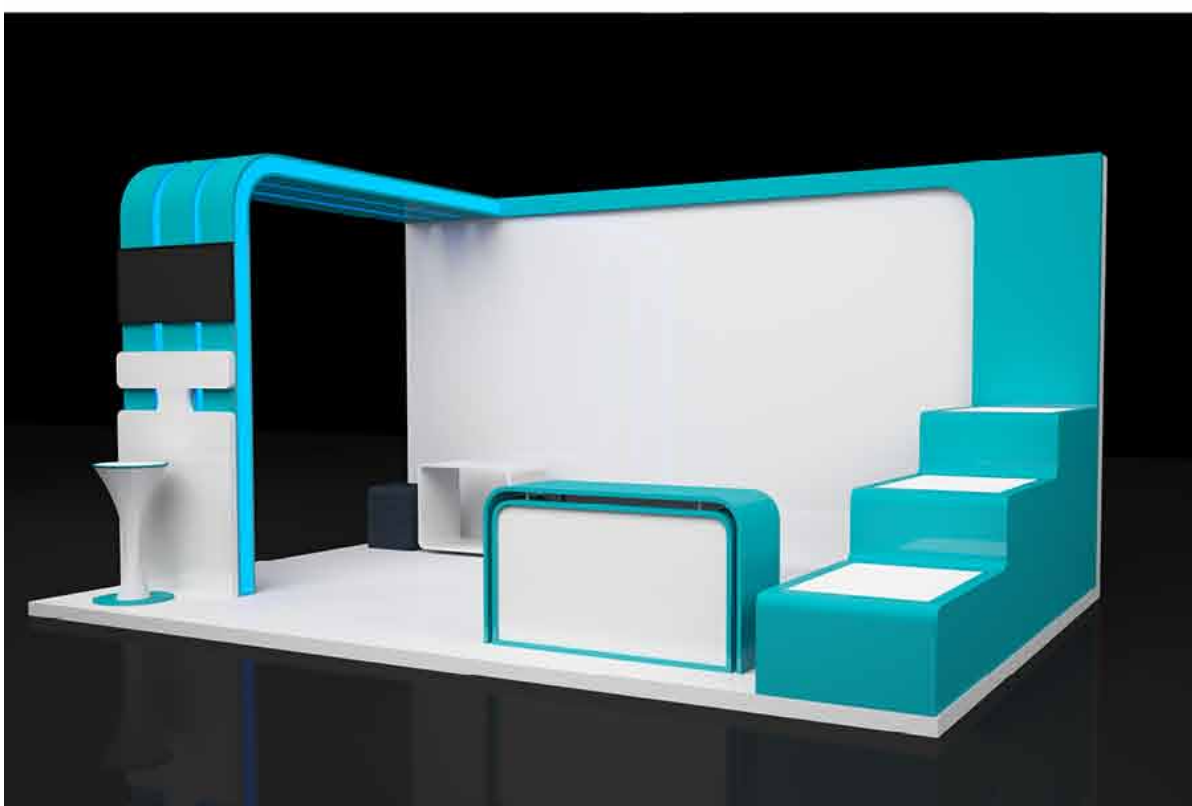
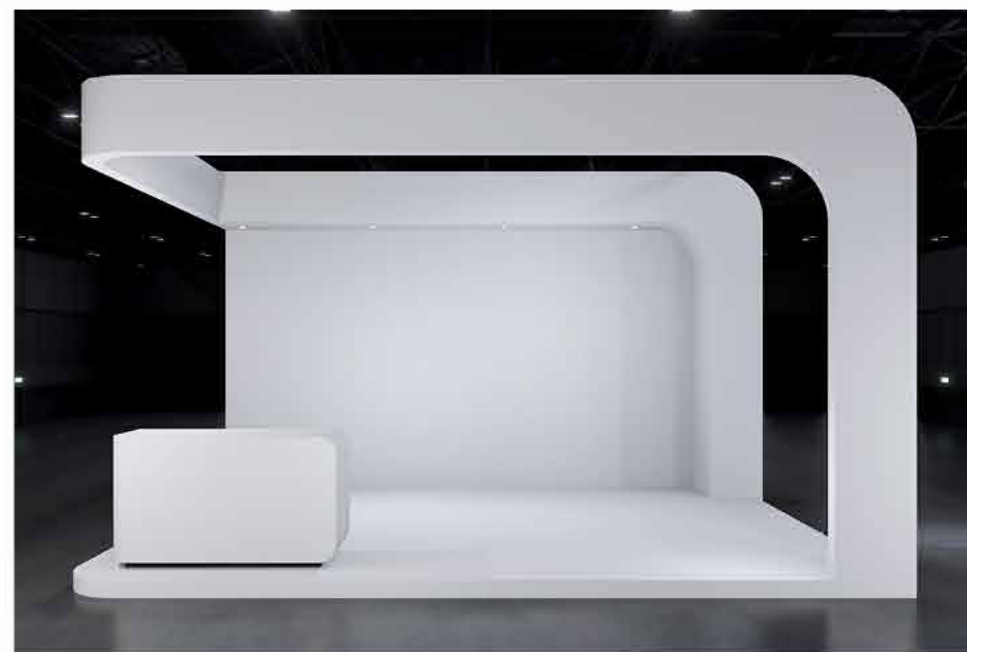
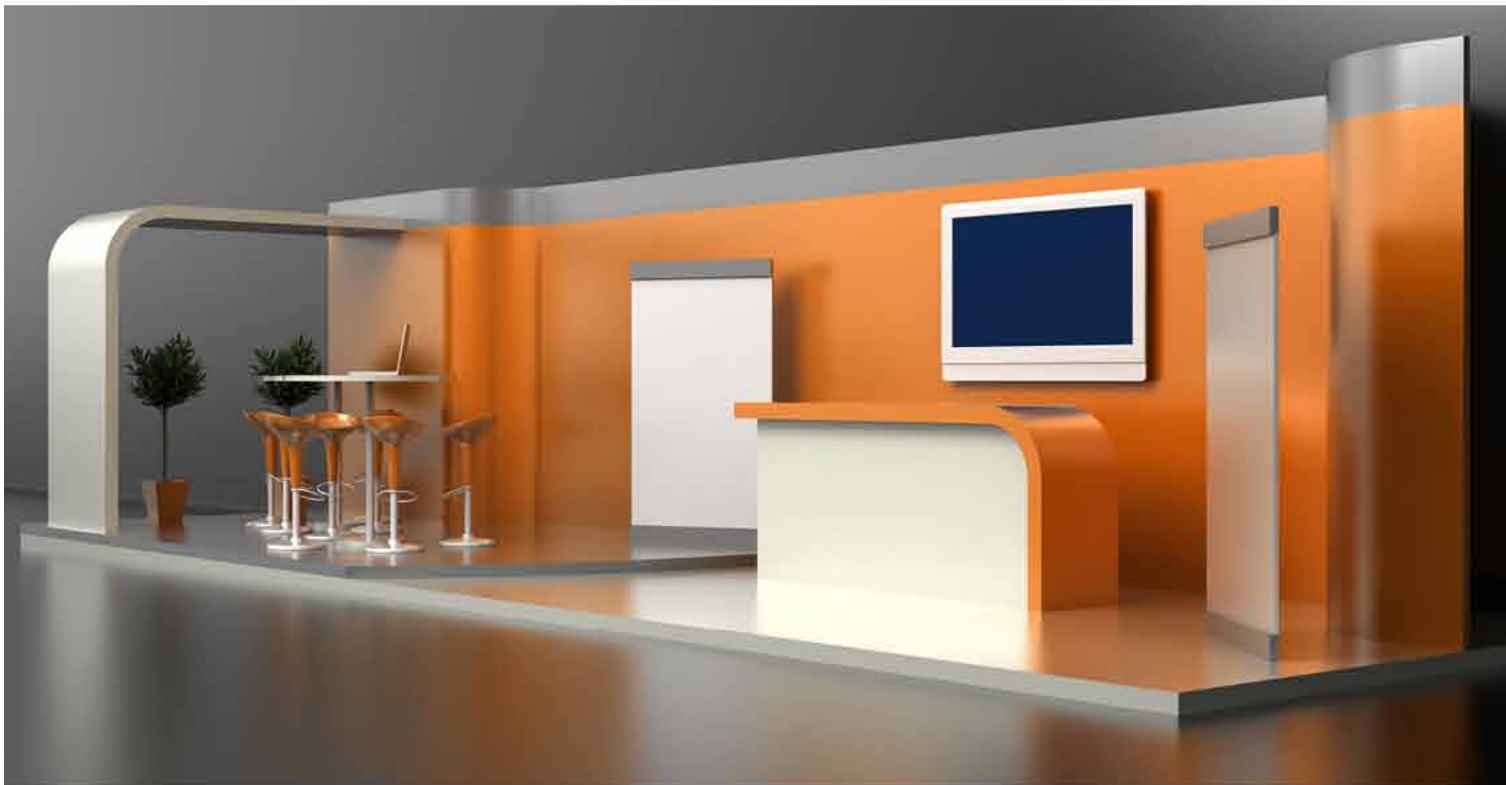
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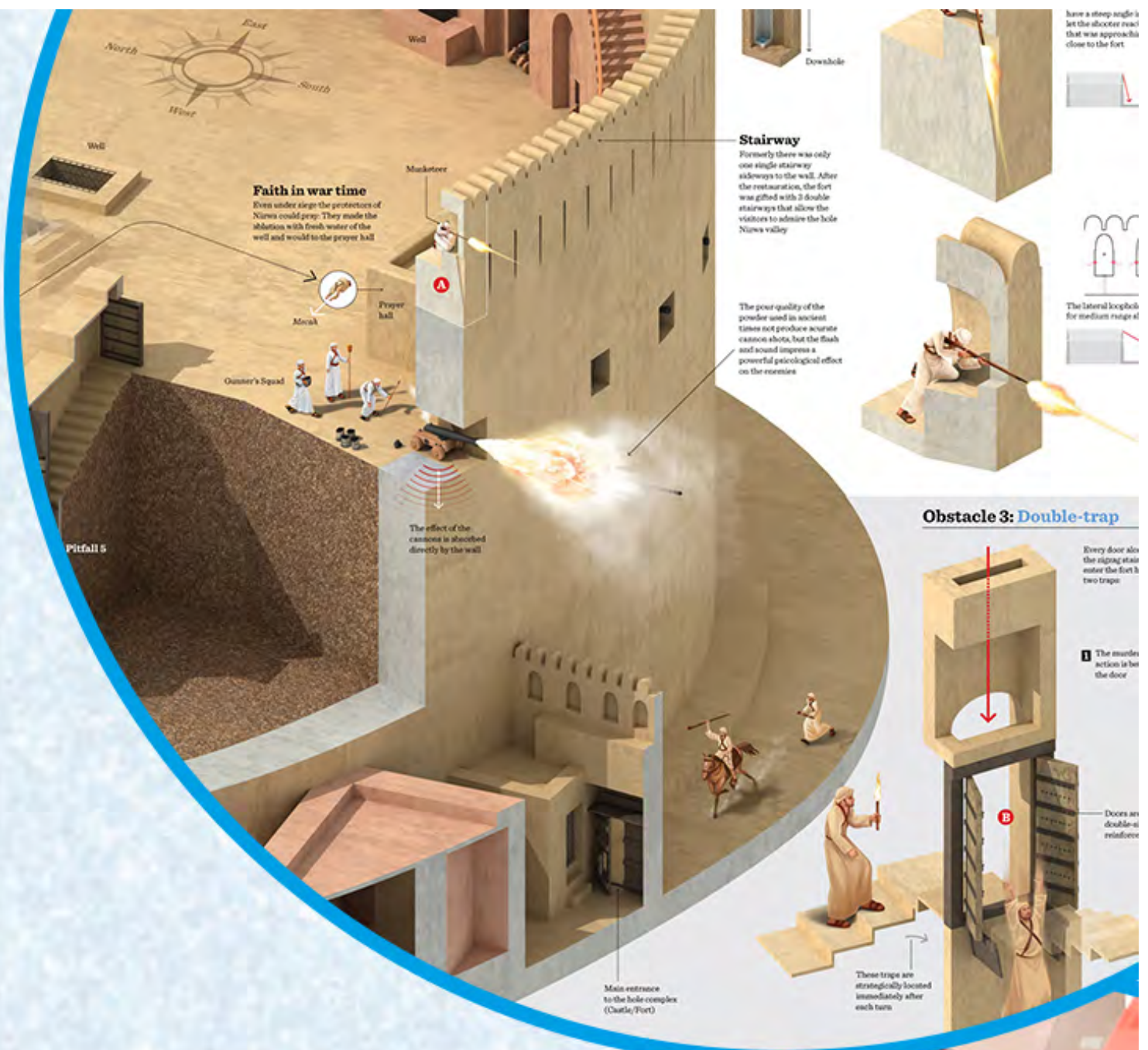
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