

**WORKSHOP ON PLAN TO ADAPT
WITH CLIMATE CHANGE**

A workshop kicked off on Wednesday for a project to prepare a national plan to adapt with climate change and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in the Sultanate of Oman. **>A5**



6 085010 120010

**HIS MAJESTY RECEIVES THANKS
CABLE FROM ITPF PARTICIPANTS**

MUSCAT: The participants at the General Assembly of the International Tent Pegging Federation have sent a cable of thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The general assembly was held in Muscat during the period from 6 to 8 March 2023. In the cable, the participants expressed their appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for Oman's hosting of the general assembly. **>A2**



Founded 1975 · Volume 48 No. 11 | 16 Pages · Baisas 200 · Subscription OMR63 | ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company | Chairman/Editor-in-Chief Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali | Printed & Published by Muscat Media Group

TIMESOFOMAN.COM

FACEBOOK.COM/TIMESOFOMAN

TWITTER.COM/TIMESOFOMAN

YOUTUBE.COM/USER/TIMESOFOMANONLINE

TIMESOFOMAN.COM/WHATSAPP

TIMESOFOMAN.COM/RSS

LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/TIMES-OF-OMAN

INSTAGRAM.COM/TIMESOFOMAN

Leading in Oman's Digital Banking

[Know more](#)

Bank Muscat. Better Everyday.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Meeting focuses on streamlining budget's fiscal performance



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance on Wednesday organised an introductory meeting on streamlining the fiscal performance of the State's 2023 general budget.

The meeting was chaired by Abdullah Salim Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance, and attended by representatives of government units.

The meeting elucidates the procedures of the Financial Performance Control Initiative designed to ensure that all government units and departments adhere to their approved budgets in a manner that achieves efficient implementation of the 2023 State Budget and its economic and social objectives, notably by means of electronic tracking.

The meeting also reviewed the procedures of controlling finan-

cial performance and addressing challenges posed to government units during the implementation of the State Budget. It explored ways to improve and develop mechanisms of regularising the fiscal performance of State Budget 2023.

The Ministry of Finance furthermore urged all government institutions to stick to submitting budget distribution statements on a monthly basis.

Thus, government units are required to review and analyse their respective fiscal performance, while at the same time submitting feedback/comments to ensure the realisation of key targets of the Budget in accordance with the determinants and principles upon which this year's Budget was initiated.

— ONA

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Maintaining road tunnels is costly

1 With high cost of operating tunnels in the Sultanate of Oman that amounts to nearly between OMR30,000 and OMR40,000 per month, other options are being looked into while building roads, said Khamis bin Mohammed Al Shamakhi, Undersecretary for Transport at the ministry. **>A3**

WORLD

Gender equality '300 years away,' UN Chief

2 United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Monday that the progress toward gender equality is "vanishing before our eyes," and it will take 300 years to bridge that gap, according to the official release issued by the United Nations. **>A6**

MARKET

'Oman's banking sector resilient'

3 Oman's banking system has weathered recent shocks relatively well and its financial indicators appear healthy, benefiting from prudent oversight by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), said Hussain Al Yafai, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Standard Chartered Oman. **>B1**



Muscat's most famous place for hikers

A4

OMAN REPORTS 50% DROP IN ROAD ACCIDENT CASUALTIES

525

THE NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS IN OMAN LAST YEAR

FILE PHOTO

Traffic violations are expected to be soon linked among the GCC countries

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has reported more than 50 percent drop in the number of casualties in traffic accidents across the country in the last 10 years.

Speaking to Shabiba FM, the radio station of Al Shabiba, Lieutenant Colonel Abdullah bin Yahya Al Sarmi, Director of the Traffic Safety Institute at the Royal Oman Police (ROP), said that the number of deaths reported due to traffic accidents was 1,139 in 2012. "But in 2022, that number came down to 525," he said.

He also said that casualty of traffic accidents decreased due to joint efforts of Royal Oman Police and increasing awareness among drivers.

The Lieutenant Colonel also said that since 2012, ROP started working on a national strategy to

reduce traffic accidents.

"The strategy was based on an action plan in May 2011, which the Sultanate of Oman signed along with 82 countries," he further added.

He also said that the vision of the ROP is to reach zero deaths due to traffic accidents, and this is not achieved by wishful thinking, but rather by the hard work of everyone and the concerted efforts of all.

Lieutenant Colonel Al Sarmi also revealed a decrease in people speeding on Oman roads.

Meanwhile traffic violations will soon be linked among the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to reduce the number of accidents.

The system is undergoing finishing touches and will be implemented shortly.

Elaborating about this, an official at the ROP said, "Each Gulf country has its own server for the traffic system, and we plan to exchange traffic information by linking these servers among the GCC countries."

This came during the nineteenth meeting of the working group, which was held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, via video conference in implementation of the decision of the thirty-ninth meeting of their Highnesses and Excellencies, Ministers of Interior of the GCC states, regarding the linking of traffic violations between the GCC countries.

The working group for linking traffic violations in the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf discussed the beginning stages of the linking process and activating the exchange of traffic violations among the Directorates General for Traffic in the GCC countries, the launch can be expected very soon.

This link would enhance standardisation and exchange of procedures among traffic agencies, according to mechanisms that operate and contribute in reducing accidents and violating traffic rules in the GCC states.

HIS MAJESTY'S CUP FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Seeb take on Al Nahda as HM's Cup finalists chase history

Times News Service

MUSCAT: On Thursday evening when the champion of 2022-23 His Majesty's Cup Football Championship will be crowned, a piece of history will be scripted by either of the finalists – Seeb and Al Nahda.

Defending champions Seeb will become only the second domestic club in the 21st century to have successfully defended the title while for Al Nahda, it will be their maiden title if they manage to get past the AFC Cup winners.

Seeb will be hoping to emulate record-winning Dhofar's feat of defending the crown (2019-20 and 2020-2021) on Thursday at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex against a title-hungry Al Nahda side. The match kicks off at 7.30pm. Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi will be the chief guest and give away the trophy.



Only once, since 2000, has a club managed to retain the coveted HM's Cup football title in its long history of the tournament, which began in 1972.

Four-time winners Seeb, coached by former national team coach Rasheed Jaber, will be eyeing their fifth trophy to join the exclusive club of Ahli-Sidab and Al Nasr, who have won five titles each.

Dhofar with ten trophies hold the record of most titles and are closely followed by Fanja with nine crowns. Standing between Seeb's dreams of a five-peat are Al Nahda, who have been in a roaring form this season and chasing their first title. The club have been three times unlucky in the summit clash as they lost to Al Suwaiq in 2008-09 and in 2012-13 and then



to Fanja in 2013-14 for two back-to-back defeats in the final.

Coached by Hamed Al Azani, the Buraimi Governorate club, have displayed impressive form and are currently on top of the Omantel top-flight league.

Seeb will be banking on experience as they have a host of national team players - Salah Al Yahyaie, Eid Al Farsi, Mohammed Al Musal-

lami, Abdulaziz Al Maqbali, Ali Al Busaidi and Mohsin Al Ghassani.

Coach Jaber admitted that his side have the "experience of playing more finals and may hold a slight edge." "The final is going to be a tough affair. It will come down to small details. I have confidence in my boys and they have the experience of playing big games," he said. **>A2**

A unique experience

theguideoman.com @guideoman

31st
MUSCAT



Dhuhr.....	12:23pm
Asr.....	3:46pm
Maghrib.....	6:18pm
Isha.....	7:28pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:06am

Panasonic

Register Between 12th Mar to 16th Mar Campaign Period 13th Mar to 15th Apr

OMASCO
Oman Marketing and Services Company LLC
P.O.Box: 2734, Ruwi, Postal Code: 112, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Email: Omasco.ACService@alfuttaim.com
Tel: 24582401 / 24582180 / 24582575 / 24582940
www.omasco.com

FREE

Air Conditioner Service*

- ◆ Applicable for Split Air conditioners only
- ◆ Applicable for the purchase made on or before 31st Dec 2021
- ◆ Applicable for individual customers only
- ◆ Commercial AC's are excluded
- ◆ Applicable only in Muscat Capital area

+968 24582940 +968 24582180

Download and Register Now!

SMART CARE APP

Scan Now

T&C apply

RED BULL DANCE YOUR STYLE COMPETITION



Oman welcomes its first dance event in over seven years

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman welcomed its first dance event in seven years and has been witnessing a unique tournament that allows local dance talents to showcase their skills and compete against each other in a fun and friendly setting. The Red Bull Dance Your Style competition, which returns for its 2023 edition, kicked off with auditions on February 25 at Muscat's Voma Studio, and now the qualifying competitors will battle it out in the national final on Friday, the 10th of March at Al Mouj Marsa Plaza in Muscat at 5:30 pm.

Dancers go head-to-head in a 1v1 dance battle set to unpredictable mainstream hits. There are two rounds per battle and three final rounds, and the crowd gets to play judge as dancers showcase their best improvisation skills in their own unique style of dancing.

The event, which is in partnership with Red Bull MOBILE and Virgin Radio, has amplified dance scenes around Oman to determine who will go on to represent the country and take to the international stage at the Red Bull Dance Your Style World Final in Germany on November 4 later this year.

The world's best dancers from over 30 countries will compete against each other in electrifying 1v1 battles that are all about creativity, energy, passion, and the ability to wow the crowd.

In 2022, 60 champions from two event seasons and more than 30 countries competed for 8 spots to face the invited wildcards in the Red Bull Dance Your Style World Final in Johannesburg, South Africa, which went down on December 10, 2022, with Japan's THE D SoraKisnagging the championship title.

About Red Bull Dance Your Style

Red Bull Dance Your Style is a global all-styles street dance event series with a unique battle format. From hip hop to house, to locking to popping – dancers participating in Red Bull Dance Your Style will need to 'wow' the crowd and ultimately win their vote. Testing freestyle and musicality skills through unpredictable mainstream tracks ranging from recent global hits to classic beats, Red Bull Dance Your Style will have the crowd deciding who will rule the dance floor at this exciting free event.

ITPF PARTICIPANTS

His Majesty receives thanks cable

MUSCAT: The participants at the General Assembly of the International Tent Pegging Federation (ITPF) have sent a cable of thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The general assembly was held in Muscat during the period from 6 to 8 March 2023.

In the cable, the participants expressed their appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for Oman's hosting of the general assembly.

They also lauded the great role of the Sultanate of Oman in supporting the International Tent Pegging Federation, which contributed to propagating this sport locally, regionally and internationally.

The participants prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect His Majesty the Sultan and to grant him good health, wellbeing and a long life. They also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity. – ONA



HIS MAJESTY'S CUP

'Going to be a tough affair'

< FROM Seeb beat Al Suwaiq in the double-leg semi-finals with a 3-0 scoreline while Al Nahda defeated Al Rustaq 1-0 on aggregate in the other semi-final.

Nahda coach Azani sounded confident of his side lifting the cup. "We have missed it on three occasions. Our boys are hungry to win it and I am hopeful that we will come on top against a strong Seeb team," said Azani.

Nahda will be relying on their goalie, Ibrahim Al Mukhaini, who was adjudged the best shot-stopper at the 25th Gulf Cup in Basra, Iraq. The club also have national team players in Ahmed Al Kaabi, talented striker Al Mundher Al Alawi and Mansoor Al Nuaimi.

Prior to 2000, there have been six occasions when four clubs have managed to retain the title. The earliest accomplishment was recorded by Fanja when they won back-to-back titles in 1975 and 1976.

Dhofar achieved it for the first time in 1980 and 1981 while Ahli-Sidab registered the first hat-trick of titles from 1982-84, an achievement that was emulated by Fanja (1985-88) and Seeb (1996-98).

ITB BERLIN 2023

Oman's Heritage Minister meets ministers from UAE and Bahrain

BERLIN: Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism conferred with Abdullah Touq Al Marri, Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the International Tourism Exchange, ITB Berlin 2023 on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed means of boosting the bilateral economic relations, especially in tourism fields.

Moreover, Al Mahrouqi met with Fatima Al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism of the Kingdom



of Bahrain.

In this meeting, the two sides reviewed areas of cooperation in the field of tourism and heritage.

They also highlighted developments in the tourism sector regionally and internationally.

– ONA

TWO-DAY EVENT

Oman attends forum in Riyadh

RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education, took part in the Future of Education, Science and Culture International Organisations Forum, held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The two-day event was organized by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) in cooperation with the Saudi National

Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

Oman was represented during the forum by Amna Salim Al Balushi, Secretary General of Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science (ONCECS).

The forum, which includes 20 discussion panels, comes under the theme "Together for Impact in the 21st Century." As many as

100 international and regional organisations are taking part in the event, in addition to representatives of "ALECSO", "ISESCO" and "UNESCO".

The event aims to come up with a new and mutual vision and a roadmap for international organisations to cooperate more effectively by setting up a sustainable mechanism for partnerships.

– ONA

OTE PRESENTS

HAVAL

FROM GWM, CHINA'S LARGEST SUV & PICKUP MANUFACTURER

5 Million SUVs Worldwide Sold in 60 Countries

Call 80050004

OTE GROUP
THE FUTURE OF CARS

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES HELD

Sri Lanka's Embassy in Muscat marks International Women's Day



MUSCAT: Sri Lanka celebrated the International Women's Day on 8 March 2023 themed "She is the Pride of the Nation", under the patronage of President Ranil Wickremesinghe.

It is dedicated to honour the remarkable achievements of Sri Lankan women. State Minister of Women and Child Affairs Geetha Kumarasinghe told the media that among the event's highlights will be the awarding of four exceptional women who have epitomised the grace and elegance of Sri Lankan women globally and locally, adding that "we acknowledge and appreciate the immense contribution of women in Sri Lanka's development and believe that recognising them will serve as an inspiration to all women in the country. The event will also recognise 25 district-wise outstanding female entrepreneurs, and they will be presented gifts

and certificates."

All citizens of Sri Lanka who have completed 21 years of age, including women, were granted universal franchise in the year 1931.

Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike was the world's first female prime minister when she became the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka (Dominion of Ceylon) in 1960. Sri Lanka continued to produce several outstanding women leaders. Sri Lankan women gradually occupy a higher representation in a number of areas of economic, social and cultural life in Sri Lanka today.

Despite the current social and economic challenges, Sri Lankan women continue to exhibit strength and resilience, earning respect and admiration.

The Sri Lanka Embassy in Muscat also celebrated this important day with special activities.

Maintaining road tunnel projects is a costly affair

Al Sharqiyah

Expressway features two tunnels for vehicles crossing the mountain range

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With high cost of operating tunnels in the Sultanate of Oman that amounts to nearly between OMR30,000 and OMR40,000 per month, other options are being looked into while building roads.

Khamis bin Mohammed Al Shamakhi, Undersecretary for Transport at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology confirmed that the cost of operation of tunnels in the Sultanate of Oman is very high so we are looking for other options and this won't be our first choice.

He said that the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is now



considering all available options as tunnels are not always the best option when we consider the high cost of operation.

Regarding the integrated project between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning Al Jabal Al Akhdar, he said that the project includes construction of a road to link Al Jabal Al Akhdar and Al Batinah Governorate. "We are considering all available options for construction of the road

before the decision is taken by the government. The project has not yet been decided on whether it is going to be a development project or an investment one," he said.

On the launch of Aber taxi-meter Application, he said that this system aims to regulate the operation of taxis and came in response to requests from taxi users.

"It is part of our commitment to regulate the issue of pricing," he said, adding that we had two options which are the traditional method of fixing meters to calcu-

late the cost and the other option of setting up electronic metres. We have opted for the latter option through the Aber application. We hope this application meets our targeted goals in terms of regulating pricing. The application would help in regulating the pricing," he added.

Al Sharqiyah Expressway, features two tunnels for vehicles, crossing the mountain range between Samail industrial area and Al Jardaa intersection.

The strategic road includes three lanes for traffic in each direction and a permitted design speed of 120 km per hour, as it includes modern bridges that extend over wadi crossings of up to 90 metres in height, and two vehicle tunnels with a total length of 2.1 km.

The first tunnel is located at the beginning of the village of Nadab in the wilayat of Samail and is of a length of 650 metres, while the second tunnel is in the middle of a mountain range in wadi Al Aqq, with a length of 1450 metres.

Each tunnel consists of two separate tracks of three lanes in each direction, with a permitted design speed of 90 km per hour. The tunnels are designed according to the highest specifications of international standards, including all safety and security specifications.

DEAD WHALE FOUND WASHED ASHORE IN OMAN

The Environment Authority's department in Al Wusta Governorate said that it has dealt with the death of an Arabian Sea Bryde's whale. "A dead Bryde's whale had washed up on Kanasa beach in the Wilayat of Mahout in Al Wusta Governorate. The cause of death is attributed to fishing nets," the Environment Authority said.



THE DIASPORA DIVA

Embassy of India celebrates International Women's Day

MUSCAT: The Embassy of India in Muscat celebrated International Women's Day with an exclusive event titled 'The Diaspora Diva.' More than 100 Indian diaspora women attended the function on the evening of 7th March 2023.

Ms. Divya Narang, the spouse of Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, gave the welcome address. Speaking on the occasion, Ms. Divya Narang said, "International Women's Day is an occasion to celebrate the achievements of women and recognise their contributions to society. The Diaspora Diva is a tribute to the Indian women in Oman, who have significantly contributed to the country's progress and development."

The event's highlight was a panel discussion moderated by Ms. Divya Narang, in which three panelists participated. The panelists included Ms. Vaishali Jesrani, the Oman Women's Cricket Team captain, Ms. Lakshmi Kothaneth, a senior journalist at the



Oman Observer, and Ms. Papri Ghosh, principal of Indian School Al Ghubra. The panel discussion focused on various aspects of women's role in society, including in sports, education, and journalism. The panelists shared their experiences and discussed the challenges and opportunities for women in Oman.

A specially curated exhibition of artwork by diaspora women added colour to the event. The

artwork showcased the creativity and talent of Indian women in Oman. Ms. Tarini Agrawal, Ms. Poornima Subramanian, Ms. Naina Purecha, and Dr. Kavitha Ramakrishna exhibited exquisite artwork. Meanwhile, the incredible 'Yarn Knot Alone Muscat' team exhibited products like beanies, blankets, and knitted breasts used by lactation consultants, which they make and distribute to four major government hospitals in Muscat.

A mesmerizing Kathak performance by the 'Leelangika' group, representing womanhood in all its forms, provided a visual treat to the audience.

The event was a celebration of women's empowerment and their contributions to society. The Embassy of India in Muscat is committed to supporting women's rights and promoting gender equality. The Diaspora Diva was a step towards achieving this goal and inspiring women to reach greater heights in their respective fields.

SULTAN QABOOS UNIVERSITY



Oman International ELT conference kicks off at SQU

MUSCAT: Oman 22nd International English Language Teaching (ELT) Hybrid Conference kicked off yesterday at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) under the theme "The 21st Century Language Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities."

The opening ceremony of the two-day event was held under the auspices of Sheikh Ahmed Mohammed Al Nadabi, Secretary General of the Shura Council.

Many academics and teachers specialized in the field of ELT from Oman and other countries took part in the conference.

This year's conference focuses on the topic of community service, in line with the goals of SQU and Oman Vision 2040.

The event also aims to create a platform that enables English language teachers to meet with



each other virtually to discuss ways to improve their teaching at different stages in their careers by learning new and creative teaching methods.

Several lectures and workshops are held on the sidelines of the conference. -ONA

MEGA
TECH SALE

Lenovo

15.6" 11th Gen Intel Core i5-1135G7 8GB RAM 256GB SSD

SAVE 29%

OLD PRICE 119,000

NEW PRICE 84,900

SAMSUNG

A137 4GB RAM 64 GB ROM

SAVE 21%

OLD PRICE 70,000

NEW PRICE 54,990

Lenovo

15.6" 11th Gen Intel Core i5-1135G7 8GB RAM 256GB SSD

SAVE 42%

OLD PRICE 51,770

NEW PRICE 29,900

AV 4K LED TV

65" 4K LED TV

SAVE 29%

OLD PRICE 209,900

NEW PRICE 149,000

PAY ONLY RO. 12.42

6 TAKE IT HOME

EASY PAYMENT PLANS 0% INTEREST

bank muscat

خط دفع سهلة

TRAVELLING
THIS SUMMER?
GET INSURED
WITH US FOR A
COMPREHENSIVE
COVERAGE

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

OMAN UNITED INSURANCE COMPANY SAOG
Post Box 1522, Ruwi, PC 112 Sultanate of Oman
24477300 | info@omanutd.com | www.omanutd.com

OMAN UNITED INSURANCE CO. SAOG



MUSCAT’S MOST FAMOUS HIKE: PLAY IT ON HARD MODE



THE RIYAM - MUTTRAH hike is a favourite with all novice hikers in the city. The path is well defined, with arrows and flag markings. If you start at daybreak, you can reach Muttrah souk just in time for a karak before 8am. But for those who like a challenge, there are some ways to take it up a couple of notches.

Start at Muttrah souq
Instead of starting at Riyam, park your car at Muttrah, in a lane just after the entry to Muttrah fort. Locate C38 trail start on Google Maps, and that's the place to begin. The first part of the hike is exciting. You encounter little pools of water inhabited by tiny frogs and tadpoles. You will need to find innovative ways to traverse these pools, so that you don't get your shoes wet. After a 45 minute walk at a reasonable pace, you reach the wadi where you have to take the uphill route towards Riyam. Spend sometime in the wadi, admiring the terrain and the vegetation before you make your way up. At the highest point, you will

be rewarded with a picture-postcard view of the incense-burner monument.

Decision Time
As you descend towards Riyam (you would have trekked for just over an hour already), you will see an arrow directing you towards the Riyam car park. Ignore that one, and look at the other arrow pointing towards Old Muscat. Take a big swig from your water bottle, and tighten your shoelaces, because this is the path you will be taking.

Hike towards Old Muscat
This will be the challenging part of the trek, with uphill, downhill and a few narrow crevices to squeeze through. There isn't much shade, so be sure to slather on the sunscreen and wear sunglasses. Just when you think you've challenged yourself enough, and wonder if you can summon a helicopter to pick you up, you are greeted with a glimpse of the white walls of homes in Old Muscat. From this point, it will

take at least 20 minutes to reach the end of the trail, but the sight of the city will egg you on.

The best part is yet to come
If you are tempted to hop into a taxi to take you back to the parking lot, don't succumb. The walk from Old Muscat to Muttrah on a spring morning is something out of a storybook. Climb up the stairs of the Muscat Gate Museum and take in the views. Try to spot unique migratory birds nesting on the mighty trees that line the street. Admire the hard work put in by the gardeners who maintain the lawns and flowerbeds. The last 3 kilometers will feel like a walk in the clouds.

Pro Tip: Always hike with a companion, carry enough water and keep your phone charged. Also: Don't leave any trash behind, and don't push yourself beyond your physical fitness level

Location: Muttrah C38 trail to Old Muscat C39b, and back via Al Bahri Road, Muttrah Corniche



INTERVIEW

Indian actress Shraddha Kapoor talks about her latest movie

BOLLYWOOD actress Shraddha Kapoor talks exclusively to Evita Louis of T FM about her movie, *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*, which is currently running in cinemas across Oman.

Here are edited excerpts from the interview.

Evita Louis: Shraddha, so nice to finally be able to meet you. Congratulations on this brand new movie *Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar*. Tell us, what was it like to work with Ranbir Kapoor for the first time?

Shraddha: It was amazing. He's someone I've admired since the longest time. He is loved so much by everybody, especially for his acting skills - known as one of the finest of his generation. So on this film to see how he works, to see how he approaches what he does, and the effortlessness with which he approaches everything is just, it's so beautiful. It was great



to have that with him on the big screen as his co-star and the different kinds of scenes to see how he's doing an emotional scene differently, more lighthearted scene in a different manner. I really enjoyed the entire process because I felt that to be able to feed off him was something that made me feel more motivated as well. Yeah. So it was really (great) to work with him.

Evita Louis: So obviously these

are all the good things. Now, every actor I'm sure has, you know, his or her quirks. What was the one thing you did not like?

Shraddha: (laughs) Well, I'm definitely, I would tease him and you know, say that you are a big makkaar (rogue) in real life also because all of this is to show that you know, you're being so effortless on the big screen. And I would just, you are saying all of these

big, big dialogues with such ease. There has to be some method to this madness. So I tell him that, you're a very big makkaar (rogue) because Luv sir's definitely given you the script before he's given it to me. You've definitely spent preparing for it. That's why you know everything so well (laughs).

Evita Louis: Okay. Awesome. Now you, you know, across the span of your career, you've played so many different kinds of roles. Is there a favourite that you really like? You know, do you like the romantic lead? Is there something else that you really enjoy portraying?

Shraddha: It's so, so difficult for me to pick one. And you know it's just so invigorating (as) an actor you know you get to be a part of different kinds of films. I think that (the) journey as an actor you can dabble from one film to another, one genre to another,

different kinds of characters you get to play in one lifetime is so fascinating. So I'd really like to dabble in as many different kinds of characters and films as I can.

Evita Louis: What is the best piece of relationship advice either you have given someone or someone's given you?

Shraddha: I would say that how about you be that person who you would like to have in your life. so that's something that I think, that I read this somewhere and it really resonated with me that often times people are like you know this is the kind of person that I want and he or she needs to be like this and all of these qualities but its so nice to think about that you know, "hey do you have those qualities within yourself for someone else or for yourself to begin with" which is the most important thing so (it) is nice I came across this somewhere and it resonated with.....

Evita Louis: You are a powerhouse of talents. You can dance, you can act, you can sing. Now, is there a go to karaoke song? Somebody puts a mic in front of you and say, "Shraddha, sing", what's your go to karaoke song?

Shraddha: So I am a big Lata Mangeshkar fan and she's family as well. So I would say her songs absolutely, lag ja gale and all those. (I am) a huge fan of Avril Lavigne, so maybe some of her songs.

Evita Louis: Alright okay alright. Final question for you before we let you go. If you could switch lives with one person who would it be for one day only.

Shraddha: No one...I am very grateful and very thankful to be myself and super super blessed. So, no one. Shraddha Kapoor's film 'Tu Jhoothi Main Makkaar' released on March 8, 2023.

ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS

Workshop on plan to adapt with climate change



MUSCAT: A workshop kicked off on Wednesday on the project of preparing a national plan to adapt with climate change and achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 in the Sultanate of Oman.

The event is organised by the Environment Authority in co-operation with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Green Climate Fund.

The workshop aims to highlight the importance of consolidating a balance between the necessities of development and protecting climatic and ecosystems. This balance comes within the framework of comprehensive national strategic and action plans that take into consideration the improvement of economic and social aspects for the population.

Further, the event showcased Oman's efforts in adapting with climate change and boosting sustainable development. -ONA

ARAB MINISTERS

Meeting on mineral resources held

RABAT: The Sultanate of Oman headed the 29th meeting of the Arab countries' Mineral Resources Sector Advisory Committee, held at the headquarters of the Arab Industrial Development, Standardisation and Mining Organisation in Morocco.

The meeting, held under the chairmanship of Dr. Said Mohammed Al Bar'ami, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Morocco, was participated by delegations representing 19 Arab countries.

Technical topics proposed

Many topics were discussed during the meeting, including technical topics proposed for the meeting of Arab ministers concerned with the minerals sector and the AIDSMO programme for 2023-2024, among other topics.

-ONA

CIVIL DEFENCE AND FIRST AID CONFERENCE

Conference highlights efforts taken to maintain security and safety

MUSCAT: Oman's Civil Defence and First Aid Conference and Exhibition kicked off on Wednesday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

More than 300 participants from Oman and abroad are taking part in the event, which is organised by the Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (ACDA).

The two-day event highlights the relentless efforts undertaken by Oman in achieving the highest levels of security and safety.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr. Khamis Saif Al Jabri, Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

Col. Abdullah Saleh Al Najashi, Director General of the ACDA, said that the event coincides with the International Civil Defence Day, which reflects the appreciation of civil defence authorities' efforts to protect lives and property. It values the authorities' contribution to development plans as they address accidents and crises that threaten human life, wealth and the environment.

Col. Al Najashi pointed out that the slogan of International Civil Defence Day 2023 ("Role of Technical Systems in Risk Assessment") highlights the importance of information technology and its



applications in risk management, preparedness and minimization of pertinent loss, as well as evaluation of monitoring systems' capacity to tackle risks.

The conference's sessions deal with risk legislations and regulations, risk reduction, the lessons learned from major accidents and best practices and technical applications in the field.

Risk assessment

The first day of the event covered seven working papers on various aspects of safety—notably the role of legislation and technical regulations in reducing risks, the integration of risk assessment and emergency operations through technology, harnessing and using artificial intelligence techniques in risk management, and the role of modern technologies in risk management and minimization of impacts of earthquakes.

Meanwhile, the chief guest toured the accompanying exhibition, which showcases security and safety apparatus, civil defence and ambulance equipment, as well as a children's corner comprising fire extinguishers, fire blankets and first aid and other training equipment.

-ONA



U.S. EMBASSY - MUSCAT

ONLINE AUCTION SALE OF USED ITEMS

The U.S. Embassy Muscat is auctioning used household and office furniture, furnishings, appliances, computers, and IT equipment by online auction.

Interested bidders may view the auction items online starting on Thursday, March 09 at 10:00, 2023 by going to <https://online-auction.state.gov/en-US>. Online bidding for all items will open on Thursday, March 09 at 15:00hrs. Bidders must first register on the website before placing a bid.

All items offered for sale will be sold "as is, where is," which means that there are no warranties, either expressed or implied. Bidding closes on Sunday, March 12, 2023 at 14:00 hrs.

Successful bidders will be notified after the auction closes on Sunday, March 12, 2023. At that point, they must make full payment of all lots won to the Bank Muscat U.S. Embassy account. Payment instructions are listed in the "How to pay for your items" section in the "How it works" link on the auction page. **PLEASE NOTE PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS MAY BE DIFFERENT FROM PREVIOUS AUCTIONS AND FAILURE TO FOLLOW PAYMENT INSTRUCTIONS WILL RESULT IN FORFEITURE OF YOUR LOTS AND BANK FEES TO RETURN YOUR MONEY. PLEASE READ INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.** All payments must be received in full before 14:00hrs on March 14, 2023 in the U.S. Embassy account in Bank Muscat. **NO LATE PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Successful bidders with fully paid lots may collect their items on Saturday, March 18, 2023 at the Ghala Warehouse during their scheduled time. If you (or a designated person) are not available to collect your items on Saturday, March 18, 2023, please do not participate in the auction, as there are no alternate pickup dates.



شركة إسمنت عمان (س.م.ع.ع.)
Oman Cement Company (S.A.O.C.)

P.O. BOX 560, RUWI, POSTAL CODE 112, SULTANATE OF OMAN
[Factory Al Misfah West, Bausher, Tel. # 00968 24437070 ext. 102, Fax # 00968 24437777]

TENDER

The company invites offers for the following tender:

Sl. #	Tender ID	Description	Tender Fee	Deadline for Purchasing of Tenders	Deadline for Submission of Offers
1.	1563000031/23	EXECUTION OF KILN SHELL REPLACEMENT AT DISCHARGE END	RO. 52.500	16th March 2023 1700 Hours	21st March 2023 2359 Hours

Tender documents can be obtained by paying the below amount online to Company's account detailed below:

Account name: Oman Cement Company SAOG
Bank Name: Bank Muscat SAOG
Account number: 0423 01086 3070 017
Account Type: OMR
SWIFT Code: BMUSOMRX

Copy of deposit transaction of a non-refundable amount of writing on the above as tender fees to be emailed to CFOSecretary@omancement.com & Treasury@omancement.com with the Subject showing "Tender No." and "Tender Description" enabling the Company to provide tender document through email to your company. The above payment is a non-refundable amount.

Contact details: Office number: +968 244 37803, Mobile number: +968 97932277

The last date for submission of offers is on Tuesday, 2359 hours detailed date on the above table, accompanied by a bid bond issued by any local bank in Oman (equivalent to 1%) of the total tender value. The bid bond must be valid for 120 days from the last date of submission of offers and ORIGINAL bid bond must be submitted on the tender box at the reception on our Administration Building, Al Misfah West factory Site, Bausher, Muscat, Oman.

Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by a tender bond will NOT be considered. This publication is part of the tender documents



THIS SHOW IS POWERED BY

SAMSUNG

SUNIDHI CHAUHAN

LIVE IN CONCERT

FRIDAY 10 March



LIVE AT MUSCAT ARENA
OMAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

GATES OPEN AT 6:00 PM

TICKET CATEGORY: VVIP RO 100 | VIP RO 50 | GOLD RO 25 | SILVER RO 10 | GALLERY RO 5

PRESENTED BY



PLATINUM SPONSORS



GOLD SPONSORS



ASSOCIATE SPONSORS



MEDIA PARTNERS



TECHNICAL PARTNER



MARKETING PARTNER



TALENT MANAGEMENT



TICKETING PARTNERS

TRAVEL PARTNERS

HOSPITALITY PARTNERS

PRINTING PARTNER

For direct ticket purchase, contact **9351 6714 | 9239 7205**

To book tickets online, visit **muscatbeats.com**

WORLD



مستشفى الحياة الدولي

AL HAYAT INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL

Quality Care Without Compromise



DEPARTMENT OF ORTHOPEDICS

- All Trauma Cases
- Anterior cruciate ligament (ACL), The posterior cruciate ligament (PCL)
- Medial patellofemoral ligament (MPFL), osteochondral autograft transfer system (CATS)
- Hip and Knee replacement surgeries
- Revision ACL reconstruction
- Revision TKR, THR

- Arthroscopies
- Shoulder Injuries
- HTO (High Tibial Osteotomy)
- Spine surgeries
- Microdiscectomy
- Spine fusion surgeries
- Anterior lumbar interbody fusion (ALIF)
- A transforaminal lumbar interbody fusion (TLIF)

2200 4000 9797 1672 9509 4944

Our Team of Orthopedic Specialists



Dr. Mohamed Al Mathani
Consultant - Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Khalifa Al Ghafrri
Senior Consultant Spine Surgery



Dr. Ali Al Lawati
Consultant Trauma & Orthopedics



Dr. Shibu
Orthopedic Specialist



Dr. Omar Al Mahrouqi
Orthopedic Surgeon



Dr. Dayanand
Orthopedic Specialist

STATUS OF WOMEN

Gender equality ‘300 years away’, warns UN chief

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said that the progress toward gender equality is “vanishing before our eyes,” and it will take 300 years to bridge that gap, according to the official release from the UN.

While addressing the UN session of the Commission on the Status of Women on Monday, Guterres said, “It takes on even greater significance at a time when women’s rights are being abused, threatened, and violated around the world. Progress won over decades is vanishing before our eyes.” He also recalled the incidents where women’s rights were taken away and said that in Afghanistan, women have been erased from public life. He further stated that in many other places, women’s sexual and reproductive rights were rolled back.

“In some countries, girls going to school risk kidnapping and assault. In others, police prey on vulnerable women they have sworn to protect. Gender equality is growing more distant. On the current track, UN Women puts it 300 years away,” the UN Chief said.

“Maternal mortality is increasing. One woman dies every two minutes during pregnancy or



childbirth; most of those deaths are preventable,” Guterres added.

He further stated that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic had forced millions of girls to drop out of school. Meanwhile, mothers and caregivers were forced out of paid employment, and children were forced into early marriage, according to the release.

From Ukraine to the Sahel, crisis and conflict affect women and girls first and worst. And at the international level, some countries now even oppose the inclusion of a gender perspective in multilateral negotiations, Guterres told the Commission on

the Status of Women.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946, according to the statement.

Guterres said the international community must also create a safe digital environment for women and girls, outlining his third point. In this regard, the UN is working to advance a code of conduct for information integrity on digital platforms, aimed at reducing harm and increasing accountability.

The Secretary-General stressed that promoting women’s full contributions to science, technology and innovation is not an act of charity or favour to women, but a “must” that benefits everyone.

“The Commission on the Status of Women is a dynamo and catalyst for the transformation we need. Together, let’s push back against the push back on misogyny, and forward for women, girls, and our world,” he said.

-ANI

LABOUR UNIONS

Greece faces fresh strikes, protests over train crash

ATHENS: Thousands of Greek workers went on strike on Wednesday over the deadly train crash that left 57 people dead.

Striking labour unions brought transport to a near-standstill, halting ferries to the islands and disrupting public transport.

Tens of thousands of people also gathered outside parliament around midday to participate in protests. Police said the number of participants across Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras was more than 50,000, according to AFP.

Subway services had run for a few hours to enable people to get to center of Athens for the demonstration. The collision between a passenger train carrying more than 350 people and a freight train last week was one of Greece’s deadliest rail accidents. The crash killed several university students and injured dozens of others.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis’s centre-right government has come under fire for initially blaming the collision on human error, but the prime minister later issued an apology saying, “We cannot, will not, and must not hide behind human error.” Rail workers have been striking almost every day since the crash, saying their demands for improvement in safety protocols have gone unaddressed for years.

The Greek government has requested assistance from European governments to modernize safety procedures on the relatively limited rail network.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said experts from the European Union Agency for Railways would visit Greece. — DW



Printed and published by:
Muscat Media Group
Post Box: 770,
Postal Code: 112

Founder: Essa bin Mohammed Al Zedjali
Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zadjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

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

INDIAN AIR FORCE

IAF appoints first female commander of a combat unit

NEW DELHI : The Indian Air Force has selected Group Captain Shaliza Dhama to take over command of a frontline combat unit in the Western sector.

Group Captain Dhama was commissioned in the year 2003 as a Helicopter pilot and has over 2800 hours of flying experience. A Qualified Flying Instructor, she has served as Flight Commander of a Helicopter Unit in the Western sector.

Having been commended by the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief on two occasions, the officer is presently posted in the Operations branch of a frontline Command Headquarters.

Capt Shradha Shivdavar who was posted as an Army Air Defence officer in Jalandhar, she was living her dream but something still felt missing in her life.

In 2021, she saw Army Aviation recruiting women officers as pilot in the helicopter fleet and those words from the Colonel rung her ears again. After a healthy amount of convincing to her Commanding Officer, she applied for the Pilot Course and is currently undergoing the course in Combat Army Aviation Training School, Nashik.

She is expected to complete her course in November 2023 and become one of the few Women Officers in the Indian Army to wear those wings.

Lt Hansja Sharma currently posted to 661 Army Aviation Sqn (R&O), Jalandhar undergoing training to don the coveted wings at Army Pilots’ Course-33, the third batch that includes Women Officers at CATS, Nasik.

She is getting trained to become an Army Pilot at Combat Army Aviation Training School, Nasik. “The veins fill with enthusiasm and I can feel the zeal gushing through my veins when I think how far I have come and how far is this journey going to take me,” she says remarking about the Women in Forces.

Lt Kritee Saxena a first-generation Army officer completed her training from Officers Training Academy, Chennai, on November 21, 2020 and got commissioned into Army Aviation.

She has been an active participant in co-curricular activities and has displayed a flair for literature by being an editorial member of journals at college, the Officers Training Academy.

-ANI

MIDDLE EAST ENERGY 2023

Innovative solutions on display at major exhibition in the UAE

DUBAI: Prysmian Group, world leader in the energy and telecom cable systems industry, will showcase its state-of-the-art technologies at Middle East Energy 2023, the electrical industry’s largest show in the Middle East, taking place in Dubai from March 7 to 9, 2023 (booth S1.G10).

Within the product portfolio on display at MEE 2023, including HV/EHV underground and submarine cable systems and innovative specialties such as the PRY-CAM technology, the Group will present an array of product ranges that reinforce the Group’s commitment to Sustainability, like innovative leadless cable designs for challenging environmental conditions and cable solutions for renewable energy applications.

“Middle East Energy is a premier platform in the Region and Prysmian Group is proud to present our full range of products”, stated Cinzia Farisè, CEO MEAT Region Prysmian Group. “We rely not only on a vast product range, but also on a strong presence with offices and factories throughout the Middle East to support the energy transition in the Region”, she added.

Prysmian Group’s presence at MEE 2023 will be the stage to present its new Prysmian PRYSOLAR cables in the Middle East Region, following the launch at Genera 2023 in February.

Prysmian PRYSOLAR is the result of the extensive Group R&D efforts to face the most unpredictable challenges coming from the massively increasing solar applications market and anticipate the future. Thanks to an innovative and first-in-the-industry test protocol that certifies long term resistance in water for DC cables, Prysmian PRYSOLAR offers extreme climate strength and +30-years lifetime, which – for customers - translate into reliable return on investment, increased operation efficiency of assets, reduced OPEX and lower leveled cost of energy.

“Solar photovoltaic generation is set to cover more than 50% of the global electricity demand by 2050. Return on investment, asset efficiency, OPEX and Levelized Cost of Energy are the main and most critical priorities for our customers in the solar industry. Prysmian PRYSOLAR is the new generation of cables designed to provide our solar customers with peace of mind in these areas”, says Vanessa Alvarez, SVP Industrial Specialties, Prysmian Group.

As part of MEE 2023 Technical Seminars programme on March 8 Prysmian Group will also present its innovative PRY-CAM Asset Monitoring Solutions.

Prysmian Group has offices in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah (UAE), Istanbul (Turkey), Muscat (Oman), Doha (Qatar) Manama (Bahrain), Riyadh (KSA) and Cairo (Egypt), and factories in Mudanya (Turkey), Muscat & Sohar (Oman), and Chiplun (India) and relies on a remarkable track record of major power industry development projects in the Region since 1980.





AREEJ VEGETABLE OILS & DERIVATIVES SAOC
P.O. Box 22, P.C. 124, Rusayl, Sultanate of Oman email: mail@avod.com.om

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (“AGM”) AGENDA

The Board of Directors of Areej Vegetable oils & Derivatives SAOC (Company) is pleased to invite the shareholders to attend the company’s annual ordinary general meeting (AGM), which is scheduled to be held at 2:00 PM on Sunday, 26th March 2023, via the electronic platform to hold general meetings which can be accessed through the website of the Muscat Clearing and Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) if the quorum of the meeting is not completed, a second annual ordinary general meeting will be held at 2:00 PM on Thursday, 30th March 2023 to discuss the following agenda:

1. To consider and approve the report of the Board of Directors on the activity of the company and its financial position during the financial year ended 31/12/2022.
2. To consider the auditors’ report and to approve the balance sheet and profit & loss account for the financial year ended 31 /12/ 2022.
3. To consider and approve the distribution of cash dividend to the shareholders as per the AGM date an amount of (300 Baiza for each share), for the financial year ended on 31/12/ 2022.
4. To approve sitting fees of the Board meetings paid to the Board Members for the previous financial year and to determine the sitting fees for the upcoming financial year ending on 31/12/2023.
5. To consider and approve the transactions entered into by the Company with related parties during the fiscal year ended 31/12/2022.
6. To consider and approve the transactions which the Company will enter into with related parties during the fiscal year ending 31/12/2023.
7. To appoint the Company auditors for the financial year ending on 31/12/2023 and to determine their fees.

According to the Company’s Articles of Association and the controls of holding General Meetings using electronic platform issued by the Ministry Of Commerce and Industry, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- a. Juristic persons only, have the right to appoint a natural person as a proxy to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.
- b. Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder’s shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information, please contact Mr. Mohammed Yaqoob As-Sariri on Telephone Number 24448013.

Important Notice: Joint stock companies shall deposit amounts due to investors which have not been claimed by the investors after the expiry of six months of the due date with the Investors Trust Fund. Therefore, each shareholder is kindly requested to check with Muscat Depository and Securities Registration Company situated within the Muscat Securities building in order to enquire about any amounts which may be due to him.

Chairperson **Auditor** **Legal Advisor**

Tupperware[®]

is now in Oman.



You can find it on [Tupperware.com](https://www.tupperware.com),
Cassabella Oasis Mall & Buildex Mall of Oman

cassabella
BUILDex

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by May 2023 reaching \$82.04, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$2.62 from the price of Tuesday, which was at \$84.66. - OMA

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,854.67 points, up by 0.23 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.12 per cent at 489.70 points. Raysut Cement, up 9.85 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 9.84 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman's banking sector resilient with healthy financial indicators

Banks have the potential to harness digitalisation to upgrade customer experience and improve cost efficiencies, said Hussain Al Yafai, CEO of Standard Chartered Oman



Hussain Al Yafai, CEO of Standard Chartered Oman



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's banking system has weathered recent shocks relatively well and its financial indicators appear healthy, benefiting from prudent oversight by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO), according to an industry expert.

"The country is going in the right direction and the banking sector is key to supporting the country's growth," said Hussain Al Yafai, CEO of Standard Chartered Oman, in an exclusive interview with the *Times of Oman*.

"Banks have the potential to harness digitalisation to upgrade customer experience and improve cost efficiencies and digitalisation in Oman's banking sector is moving forward carefully. The CBO continues to develop the Fintech ecosystem by launching the Fintech Regulatory Sandbox Framework and testing the use of

blockchain technology for trade finance," he further added.

Given the opportunities across the Oman economy, aligned with Vision 2040, it is positive to have a diverse range of banks operating in the country - who each provide their unique advantages and competition that contribute to a vibrant banking system, Hussain Al Yafai said.

Oman's 2040 Vision aims to create a competitive business hub underpinned by strong regulation and environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals. Progress has been impressive, said Hussain Al Yafai.

Oman's total non-oil exports jumped by 50 per cent from January-September last year driven by increased demand from key markets in the region and around the world. The economy is on a strong post-Covid recovery path and higher oil prices, alongside the government's economic stimulus measures, are translating into resilient gross domestic growth (GDP) growth. The Ministry of Finance expects the national economy to grow by 5.5 per cent, he said.

"This presents many opportunities for growth in corporate bank-

ing, given the increased demand for financing from businesses in various industries. The same is true for institutional banking, as the government continues to develop its infrastructure and invest in key sectors such as tourism, healthcare, and education," he added. "Taken together, these are exciting times for a bank like Standard Chartered that serves the broader Omani economy," said Hussain Al Yafai.

Regarding the GCC banking sector's performance last year, he said that according to an S&P report published in November 2022, the GCC's banks were forecasted to 'almost reach' pre-pandemic profitability levels by the end of the year, driven by higher oil prices, rising interest rates and new public projects.

"This has proven correct, as most GCC banks posted strong earnings growth in the full year, with net profit lines growing double digits in most cases. Good cost performance also contributed to growing net earnings, with several peers reducing their cost-to-income ratios during the year," he added.

Hussain Al Yafai said that 2022 was a year of volatility and uncertainty for markets globally, with

risks ranging from geopolitical to economic. The GCC banking industry showed resilience amid this crisis, in large part due to government support and favourable macroeconomic factors.

In the years to come, the global economic slowdown is expected to potentially have a spill-over effect on the region. Oil prices may continue to fluctuate, and taking recent forecasts into account, this could result in lower growth for Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies.

"Despite these challenges, GCC economies have taken numerous positive steps and are accelerating structural reforms and enhancing policies to increase diversification and grow the economy. Additionally, the banking industry in the GCC must remain cognisant of rising operating costs, increased competition, and changing customer expectations," he added.

"Digital transformation, increased competition from new entrants in the market, including fintech and digital-only banks will continue to be a challenge, and banks must continue to innovate and adopt new technologies to improve operational efficiency, customer experience, and risk management practices," he said.

Oman's financial markets are poised for growth

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's financial markets are poised for growth as the government continues to invest in developing robust capital markets, Hussain Al Yafai, CEO of Standard Chartered Oman, said.

This investment will pave the way for Initial Public Offerings (IPOs), offering a boon for local and international investors. In 2023, the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) is expected to experience a surge in IPO activity, with three offerings linked to subsidiaries and affiliates of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), a marked contrast to the two IPOs launched in 2022.

"The performance of the MSX is expected to sustain performance in 2023, driven by a suite of initiatives instituted by the regulator, the Capital Market Authority (CMA), and the stock exchange aimed at bolstering the capital market. Many of these measures stem from the updated Securities Law ratified in June 2022," he added.

The Muscat Stock Exchange also aims to promote public offerings, diversify capital markets solutions,

and encourage investment. It's also looking to upgrade its market status and bring capital markets to the centre stage of economic development, he said.

Al Yafai said that to further promote growth, the MSX has also committed to finalising guidelines for regulating the actions of market makers and liquidity providers. Efforts are also underway to establish a specialised securities market for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). "This is a positive development and a reflection of the government's commitment to strengthening the financial system and promoting the growth of the capital markets. We expect the trend to continue and overall, the outlook is promising," he added.

Al Yafai said, "Our role is to drive commerce and through our corporate, commercial and institutional banking we support clients with their transaction banking, financial markets, corporate finance and borrowing needs. We also support their international banking needs across 59 markets, which include some of the world's fastest-growing economies and most active trade corridors."

BUSINESS MEET

Sezad event to bring sustainable business opportunities for SMEs

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) will host a 3-day programme which aims to bring sustainable business opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs.

The 'Rowad Duqm' programme jointly organised by Sezad in co-operation with Tawasul Foundation will kick off on March 12.

Many government and private bodies operating in the zone,

SMEs and entrepreneurs are taking part in the event. The event will serve to establish partnerships between SMEs and other companies operating in Sezad.

Challenges

Further, this business event intends to identify the major challenges facing these enterprises to establish their projects and provide their services and businesses to companies in the zone, as well as discuss their needs and aspirations.

IATA REPORT

Middle Eastern airlines' January traffic up 97.7%

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Middle Eastern airlines' January 2023 traffic rose 97.7 per cent compared to the same period in 2022, according to a new report.

"Capacity increased 45.9 per cent and load factor climbed 20.8 percentage points to 79.2 per cent in January 2023, the Geneva-based International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced in its latest report.

Total traffic in January 2023 (measured in revenue passenger kilometres or RPKs) rose 67 per cent compared to January 2022. Globally, traffic is now at 84.2 per cent of January 2019 levels.

Domestic traffic for January 2023 rose 32.7 per cent compared



to the year-ago period, helped by the lifting of the zero-COVID policy in China. Total January 2023 domestic traffic was at 97.4 per cent of the January 2019 level.

International traffic climbed 104.0 per cent versus January 2022 with all markets recording strong growth, led by carriers in the Asia-Pacific region. International RPKs reached 77.0 per cent of January 2019 levels.

"Air travel demand is off to a very healthy start in 2023. The rapid removal of COVID-19 restrictions for Chinese domestic and international travel bodes well for the continued strong industry recovery from the pandemic throughout the year. And, importantly, we have not seen the many economic and geopolitical uncertainties of the day dampening travel demand," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

Cargo volumes drop

Middle Eastern carriers experienced an 11.8 per cent year-on-year decrease in cargo volumes in January 2023. This was, however, an improvement to the previous month while capacity increased 9.6 per cent in January 2023 compared to January 2022.

The report said that Asia-Pacific airlines saw their air cargo volumes decrease by 19 per cent in January 2023 compared to the same month in 2022. This was a performance improvement compared to December (-21.2 per cent). Airlines in the region continue to be impacted by lower levels of trade and manufacturing activity and disruptions in supply chains due to the residual effects of COVID restrictions.

CAPITAL MARKET AUTHORITY

CMA cancels licence of insurance company

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has issued a decision cancelling the licence of an insurance services company related to carrying out insurance brokerage business and deregisters the company from the insurance brokers' register for failing to adjust its situation in line with the statutory requirements during the suspension period.

The CMA had earlier issued a decision to suspend the company from carrying out licensed business for four months in line with the statutory requirements for violating Article 4 of the Insurance Brokers Regulation. The article says that the broker must file two audited annual budgets and the accompanying accounts within no more than 90 days of the end of the financial year.

YOUR ALL-TIME FAVOURITE

ALL-NEW
GRAND VITARA

COMING SOON

LEAVE A GRAND TRAIL

Scan the QR Code to book the Grand Vitara

MOOSA ABDUL RAHMAN HASSAN & Co. LLC

800 76 200

suzuki.moosagroup.com

suzuki.omn

suzukioman

Suzuki Global

MARKET

MSX index ends higher



Raysut Cement, up 9.85 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 9.84 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,854.67 points, up by 0.23 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.12 per cent at 489.70 points. Raysut Cement, up 9.85 per cent, was the top gainer while Muscat Thread Mill, down 9.84 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 464 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR8.82 million, with more than 17.14 million shares changing hands. Out of 46 traded securities, 18 advanced, 14 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR762,000, followed by GCC & Arab investors for OMR603,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,817.54 points, up 0.17 per cent. Prices of Muscat Finance, Oman & Emirates Investment, Bank Dhofar, Bank Muscat and Ominvest were up by 3.33 per cent, 2.56 per cent, 1.96 per cent, 0.69 per cent and 0.42 per cent respectively.

Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Al Madina Takaful, Bank Nizwa, Al Omaniya Financial Services and Oman United Insurance were up by 1.70 per cent, 1.09 per cent, 1.01 per cent, 0.67 per cent and 0.63 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,140.86 points, up 1.1 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement, National Aluminium, Oman Fisheries, Jazeera Steel Products and A'Saffa Foods were up by 9.85 per cent, 8.33 per cent, 7.06 per cent, 3.20 per cent and 2.63 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Thread Mill and Galfar Engineering were up by 9.84 per cent and 1.91 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.12 per cent before closing at 1,743.95 points. Prices of Al Maha Marketing, Oman Oil Marketing, Muscat Desalination, National Gas and Ooredoo were up by 3.64 per cent, 2.10 per cent, 1.01 per cent, 0.94 per cent and 0.91 per cent respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Phoenix Power and OIFC were up by 3.77 per cent, 3.03 per cent, 3.03 per cent, 1.70 per cent and 0.80 per cent respectively. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

OMAN STOCKS

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,856.71	4,836.03	4,854.67	4,843.38	11.28	0.23
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,823.75	7,775.69	7,817.54	7,804.46	13.08	0.17
Industry Index	6,142.71	6,062.77	6,140.86	6,073.85	67.01	1.10
Services Index	1,761.97	1,741.93	1,743.95	1,741.93	2.02	0.12
MSX Shariah Index	490.76	489.57	489.70	490.30	-0.61	-0.12
MSX TR INDEX	6,132.42	6,106.31	6,129.84	6,115.59	14.25	0.23
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,186.68	8,136.39	8,180.19	8,166.50	13.69	0.17
SERVICES TR IDX	1,869.22	1,847.95	1,850.10	1,847.95	2.15	0.12
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,395.32	6,312.09	6,393.40	6,323.63	69.77	1.10

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
17,144,726	8,819,945	464	23,795,423,720	18	14	14	46

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. IND.	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRE-VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																	
OM0000003000	AI MAHA PETROLEUM	27,330	31,267	11	1.200	1.200	1.140	1.140	1.100	0.040	3.636	1.140	1.140	1.200	0.100	78,660,000	
OM0000002176	JAEZERA STEEL PROD	207,002	59,567	15	0.282	0.290	0.282	0.290	0.281	0.009	3.203	0.290	0.280	0.290	0.100	36,320,408	
OM0000003968	OOREEDA	1,755,111	775,247	26	0.436	0.442	0.436	0.442	0.438	0.004	0.913	0.442	0.442	0.432	0.442	0.100	287,717,350
OM0000002796	BANJULUSCAT	1,245,525	362,815	33	0.291	0.292	0.290	0.292	0.290	0.002	0.690	0.292	0.292	0.291	0.298	0.100	21,191,867,942
OM0000001533	QMINVEST	457,188	218,895	12	0.478	0.480	0.476	0.480	0.478	0.002	0.418	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.480	0.100	320,815,404
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,542,180	431,459	9	0.275	0.281	0.275	0.276	0.275	0.001	0.364	0.276	0.277	0.281	0.100	448,761,194	
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT ENG.	70,090	8,400	4	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.120	0.000	0.000	0.120	0.118	0.123	0.100	16,800,000	
OM0000002440	AL SHARGIA INC.	148,450	12,173	12	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.082	0.080	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.100	7,280,000	
OM0000003026	OMAN TEL COM.	4,328,697	4,328,693	24	0.992	1.000	0.992	1.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000	1.100	0.100	750,000,000	
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	756	318	2	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.000	0.420	0.420	0.450	0.100	23,100,000	
OM0000003234	RENAISSANCE SER	213,631	95,073	18	0.440	0.450	0.438	0.438	0.440	-0.002	-0.455	0.438	0.436	0.442	0.100	103,547,580	
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	333,730	56,734	1	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170	0.171	-0.001	-0.585	0.170	0.171	0.188	0.100	331,441,769	
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	273,900	87,163	18	0.328	0.328	0.318	0.318	0.320	-0.002	-0.625	0.318	0.318	0.320	0.100	31,800,000	
OM0000002077	AL OMANYA FINS	53,136	7,889	5	0.140	0.149	0.140	0.149	0.150	-0.001	-0.667	0.149	0.140	0.147	0.100	45,178,832	
OM0000001525	OMAN INVSYS FIN.	23,180	2,878	5	0.125	0.125	0.124	0.124	0.125	-0.001	-0.800	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.100	29,388,000	
Total	15	10,679,766	6,478,571	195													
Parallel Market																	
OM0000001418	AL OMANIA PETROL	151,591	22,199	10	0.134	0.145	0.134	0.145	0.132	0.013	9.848	0.145	0.135	0.142	0.100	29,000,000	
OM0000001319	AL OMANIA PETROL	34,200	2,223	7	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.060	0.005	8.333	0.065	0.054	0.065	0.100	2,182,144	
OM0000001566	AL OMANIA PETROL	35,755	3,175	24	0.085	0.092	0.085	0.091	0.085	0.006	7.059	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.100	16,568,134	
OM0000001590	AL OMANIA PETROL	53,939	3,314	9	0.060	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.060	0.002	3.333	0.062	0.061	0.062	0.100	19,043,072	
OM0000002804	AL OMANIA PETROL	5,000	975	1	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.190	0.005	2.632	0.195	0.171	0.195	0.100	23,400,000	
OM0000001681	AL OMANIA PETROL	12,000	955	2	0.079	0.080	0.079	0.080	0.078	0.002	2.564	0.080	0.077	0.080	0.100	9,750,000	
OM0000002372	AL OMANIA PETROL	300	292	1	0.972	0.972	0.972	0.972	0.952	0.020	2.101	0.972	0.960	0.972	0.100	59,559,300	
OM0000002549	AL OMANIA PETROL	25,000	3,900	1	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.153	0.003	1.961	0.156	0.156	0.160	0.100	467,430,824	
OM0000007084	AL OMANIA PETROL	12,380	1,236	2	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.001	1.010	0.100	0.100	0.106	0.100	15,555,400	
OM0000001160	AL OMANIA PETROL	100,333	10,841	12	0.108	0.109	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	3,180,000	
OM0000000570	AL OMANIA PETROL	40,000	5,593	6	0.139	0.140	0.139	0.140	0.139	0.001	0.719	0.140	0.134	0.140	0.100	10,573,060	
OM0000007811	AL OMANIA PETROL	65,000	20,410	3	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.314	0.312	0.002	0.641	0.314	0.300	0.314	0.100	22,102,460	
OM0000001517	AL OMANIA PETROL	3,313	514	1	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.155	0.155	0.000	0.100	310,048,482	
OM0000001772	AL OMANIA PETROL	12,310	960	1	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078	0.085	0.100	15,600,000	
OM0000002275	AL OMANIA PETROL	2,054,166	1,822,297	28	0.892	0.900	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.000	0.000	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.100	94,740,000	
OM0000002366	AL OMANIA PETROL	100,000	5,300	3	0.053	0.055	0.053	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.000	0.055	0.053	0.055	0.100	1,650,000	
OM0000002374	AL OMANIA PETROL	186,000	11,718	7	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.064	0.100	21,996,098	
OM0000002848	AL OMANIA PETROL	200	29	1	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.144	0.000	0.000	0.144	0.142	0.155	0.100	77,937,185	
OM0000006979	AL OMANIA PETROL	139,440	20,440	2	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.148	0.000	0.000	0.148	0.148	0.152	0.100	23,963,348	
OM0000004420	AL OMANIA PETROL	277,400	27,186	13	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.099	-0.001	-1.010	0.098	0.098	0.099	0.100	219,221,397	
OM0000004768	AL OMANIA PETROL	588,367	53,863	25	0.092	0.092	0.091	0.091	0.092	-0.001	-1.087	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.100	15,925,000	
OM0000005260	AL OMANIA PETROL	646	75	1	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.118	-0.002	-1.695	0.116	0.116	0.119	0.100	193,651,560	
OM0000005983	AL OMANIA PETROL	967,259	55,417	19	0.087	0.088	0.087	0.088	0.089	-0.001	-1.695	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.100	84,830,885	
OM0000005211	AL OMANIA PETROL	955,396	197,361	34	0.206	0.209	0.205	0.205	0.209	-0.004	-1.914	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.100	24,612,221	
OM0000004925	AL OMANIA PETROL	24,055	770	4	0.032	0.033	0.032	0.032	0.033	-0.001	-3.030	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.100	21,596,398	
OM0000004933	AL OMANIA PETROL	61,157	1,958	9	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.032	0.033	-0.001	-3.030	0.032	0.032	0.033	0.100	22,861,003	
OM0000004248	AL OMANIA PETROL	527,650	54,232	35	0.107	0.107	0.102	0.102	0.106	-0.004	-3.774	0.102	0.102	0.107	0.100	20,362,831	
OM0000002036	AL OMANIA PETROL	10,000	350	1	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.061	-0.006	-9.836	0.055	0.055	0.000	0.100	883,996	
Total	26	26	6,452,888	2,338,194	262												

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Visit Oman to promote Oman as travel destination for Mastercard cardholders

Times News Service

MUSCAT: 'VisitOman.om', the Sultanate of Oman's travel booking gateway has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Mastercard, a global technology leader in the payments industry at the ITB Berlin taking place from March 7 – 9.

Visit Oman's signing of the MoU represents another milestone for tourism in the Sultanate, as it will serve to promote Oman as a travel destination to billions of Mastercard cardholders across the globe. The collaboration will enable Visit Oman to engage with Mastercard's world-class programs to further its vision to be an extensive digital travel booking gateway that connects global and regional travellers to unlimited discovery in Oman.

Powered by Mastercard's proprietary Priceless platform, the collaboration will promote Oman as a preferred tourism destination



across key source markets to drive inbound tourism by creating differentiated experiences for cardholders across the globe.

The collaboration will further enable Visit Oman to plan, execute and improve its campaign reports through increasing transparency on tourism trends, anonymised traveller profiles, and economic impact through Mastercard's Data

Insights capabilities.

Shabib Al Maamari, Visit Oman's Managing Director, explained, "Our signing of this new agreement with Mastercard is an exciting development for both Visit Oman and the Omani tourism industry – as it further enhances our mission to build strong, strategic, and commercial partnerships in target markets, and with Omani

suppliers, to deliver one connected booking platform that is designed to enable the unlimited Omani traveller experience."

This latest initiative by Visit Oman also creates new tourism development opportunities and additional opportunities for local Omani tourism suppliers.

Selim Ergoz, Senior Vice President, Government Engagement, EEMEA, Mastercard, said, "We are delighted to deepen our relationship with the Sultanate of Oman as we help fuel the next chapter in their booming travel industry. Mastercard recognises the vital role tourism plays in the well-being of communities, which is why we bring our technology, platforms, and data-driven insights to our partners to help shape and execute their tourism strategies. In line with our philosophy of powering economies and empowering people, we look forward to sharing the vibrance and excitement of Oman with the world."

GARTNER REPORT

39% of global knowledge workers will work hybrid by end of 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: By the end of 2023, 39 per cent of global knowledge workers will work hybrid, up from 37 per cent in 2022, according to Gartner, Inc.

"Hybrid is no longer just an employee perk but an employee expectation," said Ranjit Atwal, Senior Director Analyst at Gartner. "Many employees started to partially return to the office in 2022, but the hybrid work style will remain prominent in 2023 and beyond. To adapt, employers have been implementing a human-centric work design – including flexibility, intentional collaboration and empathy-based management – which suits hybrid employees."

For example, IT workers are more inclined to quit their jobs than employees in other functions as they look for greater flexibility, improved work-life balance and better career opportunities. CIOs can maximise retention and attraction of talent by resetting their employee value proposition with a more human deal.

Gartner defines hybrid workers as workers who work in the office at least one day a week. Fully remote workers are those working from home all the time. On-site workers are those who work on-site full time, not working at home at any time.

The number of remote workers is expected to continue to fall year



over year. Gartner estimates that remote workers will represent only 9 per cent of all employees worldwide by the end of 2023.

In the US, the hybrid work trend will be more pronounced than in the rest of the world with 51 per cent of knowledge workers projected to work hybrid and 20 per cent to work fully remote in 2023.

Human-centric design meets virtual workspace

Human-centric design requires a new set of principles, norms and thinking. Successful virtual workspaces will increase the ability to hire and bring together employees regardless of geographic location. Virtual workspaces provide potentially disruptive new alternatives to in-person meetings (and the associated travel) and existing virtual meeting solutions. Gartner predicts that by 2025, 10 per cent of workers will use virtual spaces for activities such as sales, onboarding and working remotely.

"For remote-first or hybrid organisations, fully mature virtual workspaces may replace the office as the embodiment of company culture and become the centre of the digital employee experience," said Christopher Trueman, Senior Principal Analyst at Gartner. "However, employees should not be expected to engage in the virtual workspace for their entire workday. Virtual workspaces should only be used for meetings and interactions that will be enhanced by them, such as brainstorming, product reviews, or social gatherings."

Hybrid and fully remote work varies by country

While all countries have increased their proportion of hybrid and fully remote work since 2019, the allure of fully remote and hybrid work varies significantly by country.

Japan employers are focused more on employees returning to the office full-time compared with other employers around the globe. In Japan, the number of fully remote and hybrid knowledge workers will total 29 per cent of its workforce in 2023.

In Europe, where face-to-face interaction remains a preference, the hybrid style of work is projected to increase in 2023. In Germany, fully remote and hybrid knowledge workers will account for 49 per cent of the German workforce in 2023.

OIL PRICES

Oil steady as surprise US crude draw counters rate hike jitters

SINGAPORE: Oil prices steadied on Wednesday as industry data showed an unexpected draw in US crude oil inventories, after the market tumbled in the previous session on fears that more aggressive US interest rate hikes would hit demand.

Brent crude futures rose 18 cents, or 0.2 per cent, to \$83.47 per barrel by 0452 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude futures gained 4 cents to \$77.62 a barrel, Reuters reports.

Data from the American Petroleum Institute showed US crude inventories fell by about 3.8 million barrels in the week ended March 3, according to market sources. The drawdown defied forecasts for a 400,000 barrel rise in crude stocks from nine analysts polled by Reuters.

However, near-term drivers pointed towards a more bearish outlook as investors braced for steeper US rate hikes.

"Fed Chair Powell's comments on 'higher for longer' rates spooked markets and sent risk assets, including commodities, sharply down overnight. The short rebound in oil

BEING A HOMEMAKER IN A CAREER-OBSSESSED WORLD



Akshara Bachkhetti

Swati Bhide

Priti Chauhan

Samina Namoji

Gayathri C

Is the job of a homemaker a challenging career? Are the round-the-clock jobs at home as tiresome as it is brooding over the office files? Homemaking to date is more gender-specific, i.e. a woman's duty and it is more demanding than any average 9-5 jobs. And when it comes to expatriate homemakers living in Oman, they deserve an extra pat on their backs for relinquishing their working status either to bring up their children or owing to lack of job opportunities. Instead of wallowing in self pity they grabbed every opportunity that came their way. From making new friends and investing in family time to going hiking and soaking up in the scenic beauty of Oman, they left no stones unturned to rediscover themselves in their 'new' home called Oman.

When **Akshara Bachkhetti** moved to Oman in September 2019 little did she know that in a few months' time pandemic would hit the world and she would not be able to see her family and friends soon. "But lockdowns were also a blessing in disguise - we grew closer as a unit bonding in ways that may not have happened in 'normal' times - studying, playing, cooking and cleaning together," remembers Akshara. After working for almost two decades with breaks only

for further education and pregnancies, for Akshara, Muscat chapter was to reset and rediscover herself. "The plan was always to go back to work somehow but the sheer lack of job opportunities hit the most vulnerable part of my self-esteem," she adds. But that did not deter Akshara by any means. "I'm lucky in that I have a full life and causes that are dear to me like improving access to books via CareShare Books, a free library movement," she says.

For Priti Chauhan the opportunity of exploring a new culture, and country came with the uncertainty of quitting a 9-5 corporate job. Up-rooting from a "settled" life around friends and family is never an easy choice, more so, when you are used to a comfortable routine of daily life. Priti moved to Muscat, Oman in January 2020, just a month before the pandemic brought the world to a standstill.

"I spent a good part of my time baking banana bread which became the recipe of the pandemic," reminisces Priti.

As the world slowly moved past the pandemic and the COVID restrictions started lifting, Priti grasped at every opportunity to explore Oman and get acquainted with its

people and culture. "I have been in Oman for three years now, and I feel completely at home. The closest friends I have in Muscat are Omani - they opened their homes to us and gave us a sense of belonging in a new country."

Swati Bhide came to Muscat in 1998. She landed in Muscat with some assumptions of not getting many things like Mumbai but on the first day her husband took her to an Indian restaurant where she could savour her favourite snack, Pani Puri. Since then Muscat became her home.

"Initially, I loved the silence but after a few days, I realized that there is only silence if you don't have any activities. I started missing my family, friends, and freedom to move around as I had to depend on my husband to go anywhere," remembers Swati. Soon they started having their group of friends. "We used to go to the health club with our friends and we learnt so many things from each other. Muscat is my home now. We have

lived here in Oman for so many years just because of the respect, safety, and warmth we got from the local Omani community," Swati said

Like Swati Bhide, Oman has been a second home for **Gayathri C** from the word go! Having relocated from Saudi Arabia she did not know what to expect here in Oman. "I experienced freedom of a different kind. The friendly people, pristine beaches, and the natural beauty of Oman took my breath away. 16 years have flown past and it has still captured my soul. Settling down in Oman in a community was probably the easiest thing for me. I went ahead to make friendships for a lifetime, says

dropping into my house now and then was what made me miss it the most. Coming from a joint family I did have my moments of outbursts and felt homesick whenever I heard the familiar voices of friends and family. To make matters worse I was alone at home with a little child and had nothing to do. There were times when I would cry myself to sleep and would pine to go back. But over time, I saw the beauty this country had to offer, remembers Samina.

Samina made friends who encouraged her to follow her passions and this helped her to ultimately find her goal in life.

"Within no time there was a really strong network of friends on whom I could rely, and together we explored scenic places and made memories on the sunny beaches and parks.

"But the thing that truly stands out for me is the hospitality and warmth of the local Omani people, be it my first neighbour who welcomed me with open arms and divine food into her home or those young men who helped us when we were stuck in a wadi. Oman is now my home away from home and I shall carry a little bit of it no matter where I go," says Samina.

Gayathri. On a n opened up many opportunities for her which she hadn't imagined before. Gayathri started hiking in Oman. "I never thought I would, but the mountains were calling," she adds.

The day **Samina Namoji** landed in Oman 17 years ago it was hot and humid. As she walked out of Muscat International Airport with three suitcases, her older one in tow she wasn't sure what to expect, but slowly and steadily the charm of this country grew onto her and managed to capture her heart.

"The hustle and bustle of India, the crowded streets, festive occasions, and friends



SPORTS



Captain Rohit calls for a stronger mindset

India take on Australia in the fourth and final Test in Ahmedabad, starting today

AHMEDABAD: India will face Australia in the fourth and final Test match of the Border Gavaskar Trophy on Thursday. On the eve of the match, Indian captain Rohit Sharma emphasised that the result will depend on the mindset of players rather than skills. India will be keen to win in the last Test match to book their place in the World Test Championship (WTC) final with India leading the series 2-1. A win in the final Test

will ensure they secure a spot in the final. Speaking at a pre-match conference, the Indian opening batter said: "Irrespective of the challenging conditions a batter always has to find his own way of scoring runs. The approach of the player cannot change in a span of three weeks. So in the end it is about the strong mindset that a batter appears with." "We are just trying to figure out

more and more methods of coming out on top when the pitches are challenging. Every individual is different, so they will find their own way of scoring runs. "All these guys have played a lot of cricket. You can't change in a span of three weeks. You need to change your mindset. You need to adapt to the conditions as soon as possible. It's more than the skills. It is mentally how you prepare yourself and how you want to tackle opposition bowlers, I feel it is more mental than skills." He added: "It's important in any Test match you play. Leave the conditions, outside of India you have to just go and score runs, find ways to score runs and that is the talk among the group how challenging the pitches are, how much

is it turning, how much is it seaming and all that. We are trying to keep all of that away. Conditions are there for us to play. You have to find your way to score runs on whatever pitches you play on." Rohit Sharma believes that his team does not focus on what their opponents are trying to pull off. "No, not really it is a part of their plans. I guess you cannot really look too much into what they want to do to us. "In my opinion, what we want to do to them is more critical. Our focus has always been on that whenever we play the opposition, not just Australia, any opposition, we pay more focus, more emphasis on what we want to do out there and not what they are trying to do to us." -ANI

WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATION



Women's volleyball event on March 10

MUSCAT: To mark the International Women's Day, which is celebrated annually on March 8, the second edition of women's volleyball tournament will be held at Bausher Club on March 10. According to organisers, more than 250 women volleyball players, which include Omani and expatriate players from 20 clubs, are expected to participate in the tournament. The prize distribution ceremony

will be graced by Sariya Al Hadiyah, Member of the State Council and Mumtaz Al Balushi, director of administration, Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones. The winners will be handed attractive prizes, including cash awards. There will also be awards to fans during the competition. In the first edition, Slashers Oman emerged winners while Muscat Blazers finished as runners-up.

INJURY UPDATE

Bumrah undergoes back surgery in NZ

WELLINGTON: Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah underwent back surgery on Monday in New Zealand, as he races against time to get fit for the ICC Cricket World Cup, which will be held at home from October-November this year. According to *ESPNCricinfo*, the pacer is expected to stay in New Zealand till March-end. As per his roadmap for return, designed by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) medical staff, he will resume bowling and training by August. His workload will be increased gradually to get him fit for the marquee cricketing event. Bumrah has not played any competitive cricket since September last year when he pulled out of the white-ball series against South Africa at home. His withdrawal from the series was due to a stress reaction in his lower back. He attempted a comeback in January during the white-ball home series against Sri Lanka, but niggles in the back did not let it happen either. Bumrah has been ruled out of the 2023 edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) and the final of the ICC World Test Championship starting from June 7, for



which India will qualify if they win the final Test against Australia starting from Thursday in Ahmedabad. BCCI medical staff at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru had been treating his

case urgently and had suggested the pacer undergo surgery. The decision to get the surgery done was taken by BCCI in coordination with the pacer and NCA. It has been a frustrating wait for Bumrah, who has attempted to

make a comeback more than once since suffering a back injury in August which ruled him out of the Asia Cup. Initially, the injury did not seem serious as he was named in India's T20 World Cup squad in September and even played the last two T20Is against Australia on September 23 and 25. Three days later, Bumrah did not play the first T20I against South Africa and it was learnt that he was taken for scans, which revealed a stress-related injury in his back. He was rushed to NCA and the scans there confirmed that the injury was serious. It ruled him out of the T20 World Cup, in which India achieved a semifinal finish. Bumrah resumed his rehab in November and started to bowl in mid-December. His progress seemed to be positive as he was added to the white-ball series played in January more than a week after the original squad was picked up. He had performed the match simulation exercises in the NCA, but discomfort resurfaced while taking up higher workloads during fitness drills in January. Scans revealed the development of a fresh niggle, which ruled him out of the Sri Lanka series and Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia. -ANI

ICC TEST RANKINGS

Ashwin and Anderson tie for No.1 Test bowler spot

DUBAI: The enthralling battle to be rated the top Test bowler in the world is as tight as ever following the latest update to the ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings. It has been a close race between England seamer James Anderson, India veteran Ravichandran Ashwin and Australia captain Pat Cummins in recent weeks and there is now a tie at the top after the ICC updated their weekly rankings list on Wednesday. Ashwin drops six rating points after picking up four wickets during the third Test of India's ongoing series against Australia, with Anderson now tied with the experienced spinner on a total of 859 rating points. Cummins' absence for the final two Tests in India has seen



his rating drop to 849 points, with the right-arm still maintaining his place in third spot on the rankings and within striking distance of the leading two players.



There may be another challenger on the horizon soon too, with South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada improving three spots to fourth and up to 807 rating points on the

latest list for Test bowlers after the 27-year-old collected eight wickets in the Proteas' 87-run victory over the West Indies during the first Test at Centurion.

Australia spinner Nathan Lyon is also an eye-catching mover inside the top-10, with the veteran improving five places to ninth overall following his match-winning 11-wicket haul in the third Test against India in Indore. The only change inside the top-10 for Test batters sees Australia opener Usman Khawaja move up two places to ninth overall, while South Africa right-hander Aiden Markram (up 21 places to 33rd) and West Indies middle-order performer Jermaine Blackwood (up 12 spots to 35) also make giant strides following impressive performances in the first Test. There is also plenty of movement on the latest ODI Player Rankings, following the completion of England's series in Bangladesh.

England opener Jason Roy improves five places to 12 overall on the list for batters, while skipper Jos Buttler (up four spots to 16th) and the experienced Dawid Malan (up 22 spots to 35th) also catch the eye. From a Bangladesh perspective, it is all about veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, after his Player of the Match performance in the third and final game of the series. Shakib smashed 75 with the bat, backed that up with a four-wicket haul during England's reply, and was duly rewarded in all ODI ranking categories. Shakib already holds the No.1 ranking for ODI all-rounders, but his latest efforts saw the 35-year-old improve five places to 27th on the list for batters and two spots to fifth for bowlers. -ANI

CRICKET

Plenty of positives for Aussies from India tour: Ponting

DUBAI: Australian cricket legend Ricky Ponting believes his former side will take plenty of positives from their current tour of India, but expects to see some different faces in the squad when they travel to England for the upcoming ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final and the eagerly-awaited battle for the Ashes.



While Australia currently trail India 2-1 and have failed to regain the Border-Gavaskar trophy they so dearly crave, they showed plenty of spirit winning their first Test match on Indian soil since 2017 when they registered a comprehensive nine-wicket triumph over their rivals in Indore. The victory was led by a superb 11-wicket match haul from veteran spinner Nathan Lyon, while fellow spinners Matthew Kuhnemann and Todd Murphy also chipped in well and both have performed admirably at various stages of the tour.

The two-time World Cup-winning captain said there are plenty of positives that the tourists can take from the series. "I think all the spinners (have performed well) ... and I think at different times, most of the batters have actually shown that they can cope and survive in those conditions.

"The quicks haven't had a chance to bowl and Australia have had the guys coming in and out as well. But I think Usman (Khawaja), Travis (Head), (Marcus) Labuschagne, (Steve) Smith and then all of the spinners that have played, I think there are some real positives there. It's just a bit of a shame that it's taken Australia to the start of the third Test match to find the right style of play," Ponting said.

While Australia will be doing their utmost to square the series against India with a victory in the

final Test in Ahmedabad, their attention following that clash will quickly turn to their tour of England in the middle of the year which will include the WTC final at The Oval and a five-match Test series against their Ashes rivals. Ponting expects Australia to take a large contingent of players for the lengthy two-month tour but thinks it may include some faces that haven't featured in India. "Matt Renshaw was picked on this (India) tour because everyone felt he was a good player of spin. Peter Handscomb was picked on this tour to India because he's a good player of spin bowling. I think you've seen that through this series at different times. "But when you think about the different set of conditions in the UK, then I wouldn't be surprised if maybe neither of those guys are on that tour," Ponting noted. "I think there's a good chance that Renshaw will be on that tour, but I'm not so sure about Handscomb and if he'll make it to England or not. Someone like Marcus Harris might even get another opportunity back into that Ashes squad. "Uncapped speedster Lance Morris and promising all-rounder Aaron Hardie may also be in contention to make the trip," said the Aussie legend. -ANI

UPGRADE Your Lifestyle **SUBSCRIBE, SAVE & ENJOY**



Your new style of living!
Unlimited 2 for 1 Offers and valuable Discounts
at leading merchants covering all your needs.



FREE
2TRY



ROUND-UP

Lulu’s new promotion offers cash prizes worth OMR100,000

There will be discounts and exclusive offers on all essential commodities, including beverages, frozen foods, fresh produce and other grocery items

MUSCAT: With Ramadan fast approaching, Lulu Hypermarket has unveiled its much-awaited Ramadan promotion with an exciting range of special deals, promotions and offers for shoppers. The promotion started on March 1 and will run till April 29, at all Lulu stores in Oman. There will be discounts and exclusive offers on all essential commodities, including beverages, frozen foods, fresh produce and other grocery items. In addition to this, customers get a chance to win OMR100,000 worth of cash prizes during the promotional period. The special Ramadan offers will be available both in-store and on



Lulu online platforms. There will also be numerous daily deals on the online shopping app, which will make shopping more convenient and full of savings for shoppers. Special Ramadan kits will also be available to make shopping for Ramadan essentials an easy experience for customers. The kits will include essential grocery items, such as milk powder, rice, sugar, instant foods, jellies, ketchup, oil, pulses, pasta,

grains, coffee and tea, at the lowest consolidated prices. Since Ramadan is a time of sharing, Lulu has introduced an array of gift items, such as watches, perfumes, sweet boxes, and assorted gift baskets, for customers who wish to gift something to their loved ones. As part of the Ramadan promotion, customers get a chance to shop and win cash prizes worth OMR100,000 during the entire promotional period. Shoppers

are entitled to an e-affle coupon on a purchase of products worth OMR10. The cash prize includes a grand prize of OMR10,000 and weekly cash prizes of OMR100, 200, 500, 750 and 5,000 for 8 weeks totalling 281 lucky winners. Speaking about the Ramadan promotion, Shabeer K A, Regional Director - Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, said, "Ramadan is the most blessed time of the year, and Lulu is glad to be the ultimate shopping

destination for customers to fulfil all their Ramadan needs under one roof!. There will be huge discounts across categories including groceries, household, non-food etc., which are always in high demand. Our special Ramadan kit is a boon for customers who find shopping for essentials a tedious task." "Our staff are working round the clock to improve customers' experience and to make shopping easy and enjoyable during Ramadan. We are

also taking necessary steps to boost the availability of stocks at all times and maintain price stability to meet the increased demand throughout the fasting month," he added. Lulu's commitment to building life-long loyalty with its customers by understanding their needs and behaviours, especially during seasonal events like Ramadan, has undoubtedly made it the most affordable one-stop destination for customers wherever they are.

REMITTANCE AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE



Unimoni Exchange relocates its Sohar city branch to convenient location

MUSCAT: Unimoni Exchange, a leading remittance and foreign exchange brand in the Sultanate of Oman, has relocated its Sohar city branch to a more conveniently accessible location near Bank Muscat main branch in Sohar. The relocated branch was inaugurated by Boban M P, CEO Unimoni Exchange Oman, along with other senior officials of Unimoni. "In our constant endeavour to provide the best customer experience we are glad to relocate our Sohar city branch to a convenient location near Bank Muscat Main

branch Sohar. "Our new branch is well equipped to provide greater experiences and enhanced convenience with a new look and feel. We look forward to welcoming our existing and new customers," said Boban. Operating the largest retail network, Unimoni Oman offers a suite of services for consumers and corporates, delivered through multiple touch-points such as retail stores, digital and mobile solutions, and self-service kiosks, across the Sultanate.

INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Asyad co-hosts 164th ITOSF meeting focused on crew safety and wellbeing

MUSCAT: Asyad Group, represented by its shipping arm Asyad Shipping, co-hosted the Informal Tanker Operators' Safety Forum's (ITOSF) 164th meeting, alongside NYK Group, recently at the Kempinski Hotel, Muscat. The forum, established in early 1970s, brings together more than 70 tanker management companies from around the world to discuss the latest trends and share experiences in tanker safety. Asyad Shipping cohosted the first ITOSF meeting held in Oman, reaffirming its status as a leading maritime player committed to crew safety and well-being and the use of cutting-edge tanker safety technologies. The international forum was also an opportunity to connect with stakeholders and industry experts and an ideal global platform for Asyad Shipping to share its knowledge and expertise in tanker safety.

Covering a host of topics, the 164th ITOSF meeting welcomed non-member safety experts from different companies to present emerging trends and share insights on best practices in tanker safety. Attendees had the unique opportunity to take part in several sessions on safety-related issues, including a session on safety measures during maintenance and drydock presented by Asyad Drydock's Head of HSE. Other speakers presented sessions on the latest developments and topics, such as cybersecurity, TMSA, SIRE 2.0 and risk management. "Having ITOSF meeting in Muscat reflects our unwavering commitment to crew safety and well-being as a top priority which is aligned with the people-first culture adopted across Asyad Group," said Khalil Al Balushi, Vice President Marine at Asyad Shipping. "As a key player responsible for setting HSSE benchmarks and



identifying industry-changing practices, we seize this opportunity to share valuable experiences and lessons on safety with fellow industry experts and shape a safer more sustainable future for the maritime industry." Ko Ko Naing, Chairman of ITOSF said: "It was a pleasure to hold the ITOSF meeting in Oman

for the first time. The country's growing reputation as a logistics hub made it an ideal destination for us to discuss tanker safety, an issue we feel is imperative to the efficient flow of global trade. We are grateful to Asyad Shipping and NYK Group for hosting the meeting and look forward to further collaboration."

Asyad Shipping is forging ahead in its quest to optimise the safety of its operations by employing the latest standards and technologies and gaining insights from industry experts. These efforts are reasserting Asyad Group's standing as an integrated logistics provider and cementing Oman's position as a global logistics hub.

mai alkaline
pH 9.1 to 9.5
Alkaline Ionized Drinking Water

HYDRATE SMARTLY

- ✓ Ultra-hydrating
- ✓ Revitalizing
- ✓ Energizing
- ✓ Electrolytes

800 71 222
9275 5522

OmanOasis OmanOasisOfficial OmanOasisWater

✓
100 %
Business
Ownership

✓
Tax Free
Environment

✓
Affordable
Payment
Plans

✓
Residency
Visa
(for non Omanis)

✓
First
Business District
in Duqm

Prices starts at

OMR 39,700

Reserve your office now

99898268 / 92810622 / 72227786

OMAN
DESIGN
& BUILD
WEEK

Visit Our Stall

🕒 10 : 00 AM - 10 : 00 PM
📅 13th - 15th March 2023
📍 oman convention & exhibition centre
└ Booth No.4200

ميسان سكوير
MAYSAN SQUARE
الدقم Duqm

BUSINESS REIMAGINED

f in @ www.maysanproperties.com

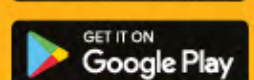
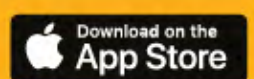
UPGRADE Your Lifestyle **SUBSCRIBE, SAVE & ENJOY**



Your new style of living!
Unlimited 2 for 1 Offers and valuable Discounts
at leading merchants covering all your needs.

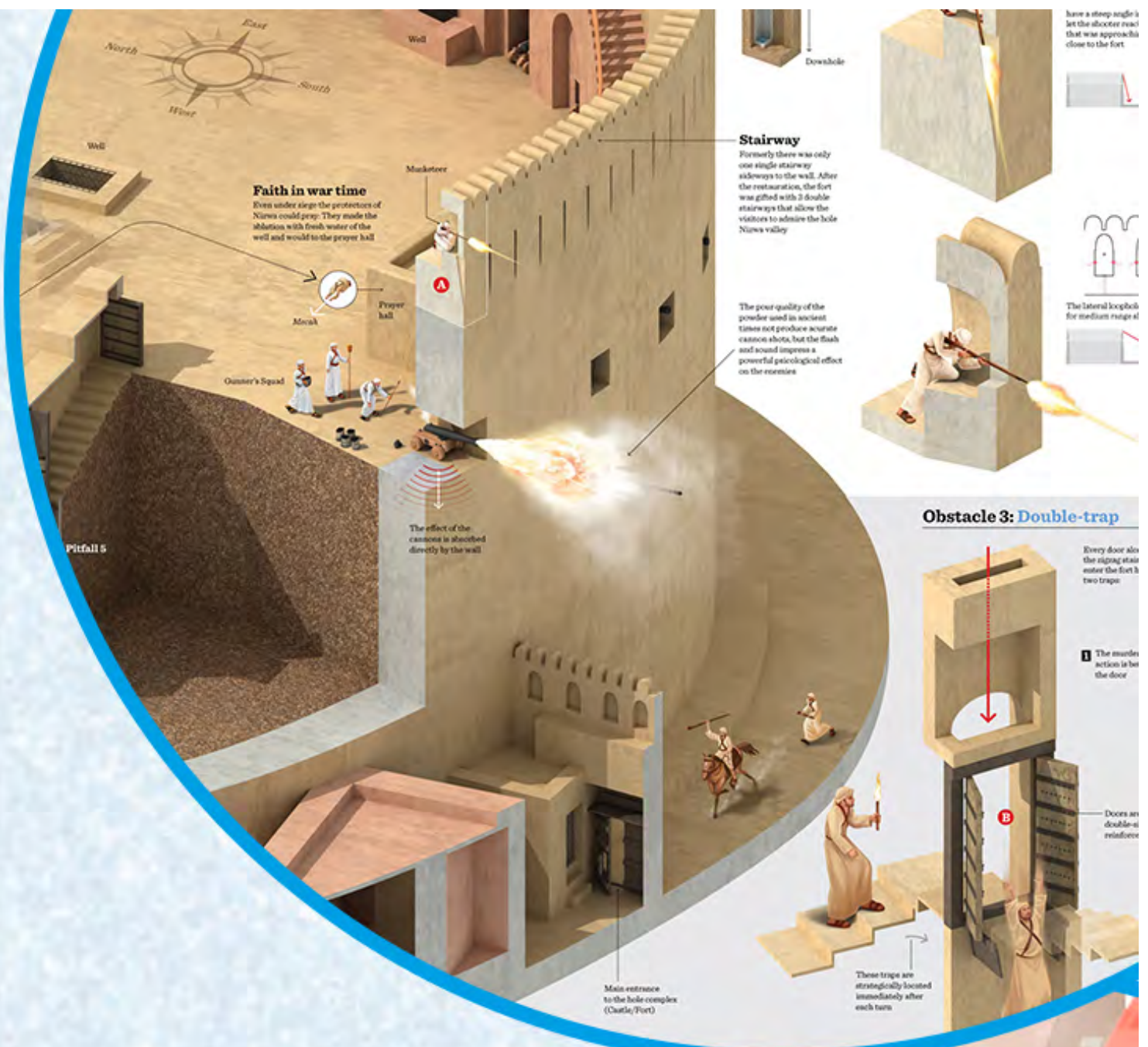


FREE
2TRY





novagram



Let Novagram tell your story

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

CALL US:
97211869

sales@novagram.om



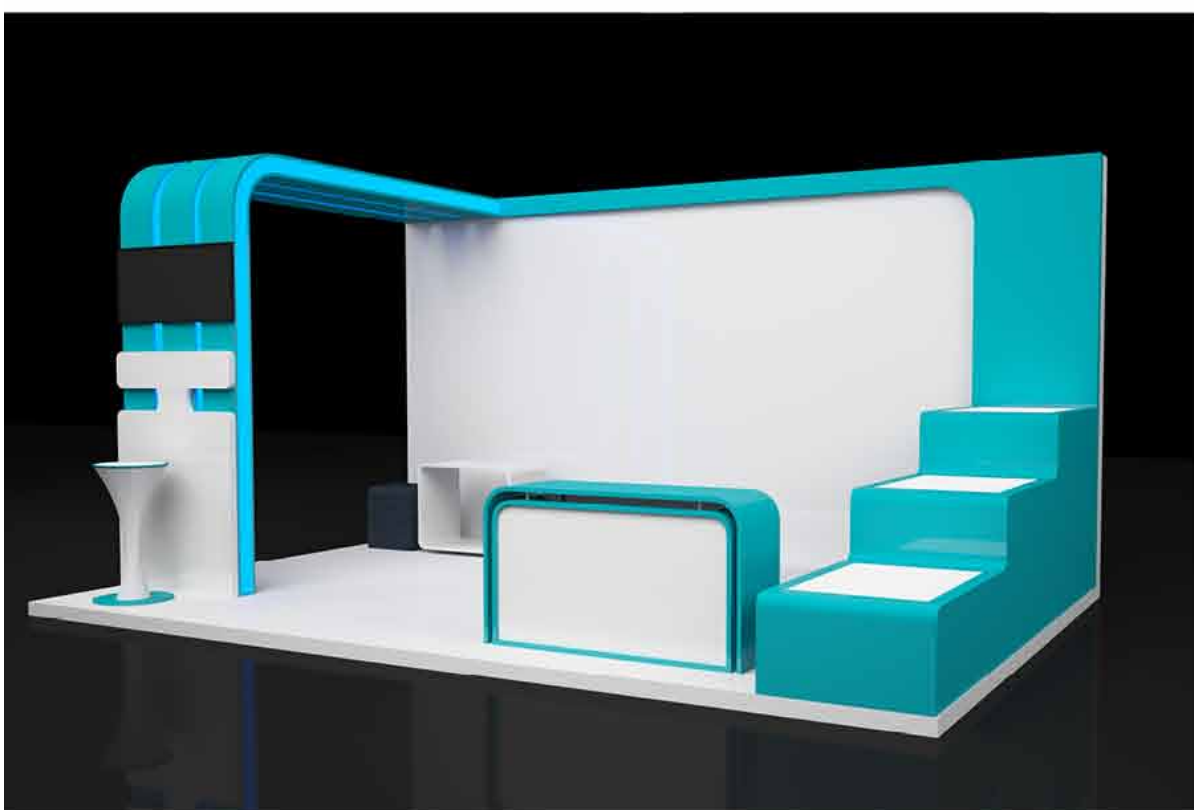
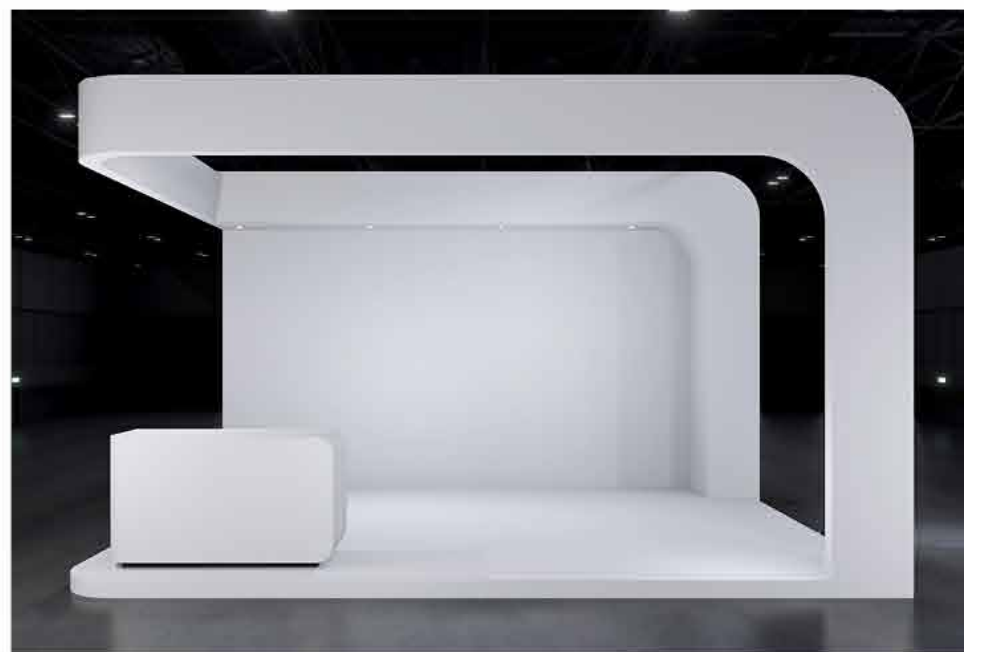
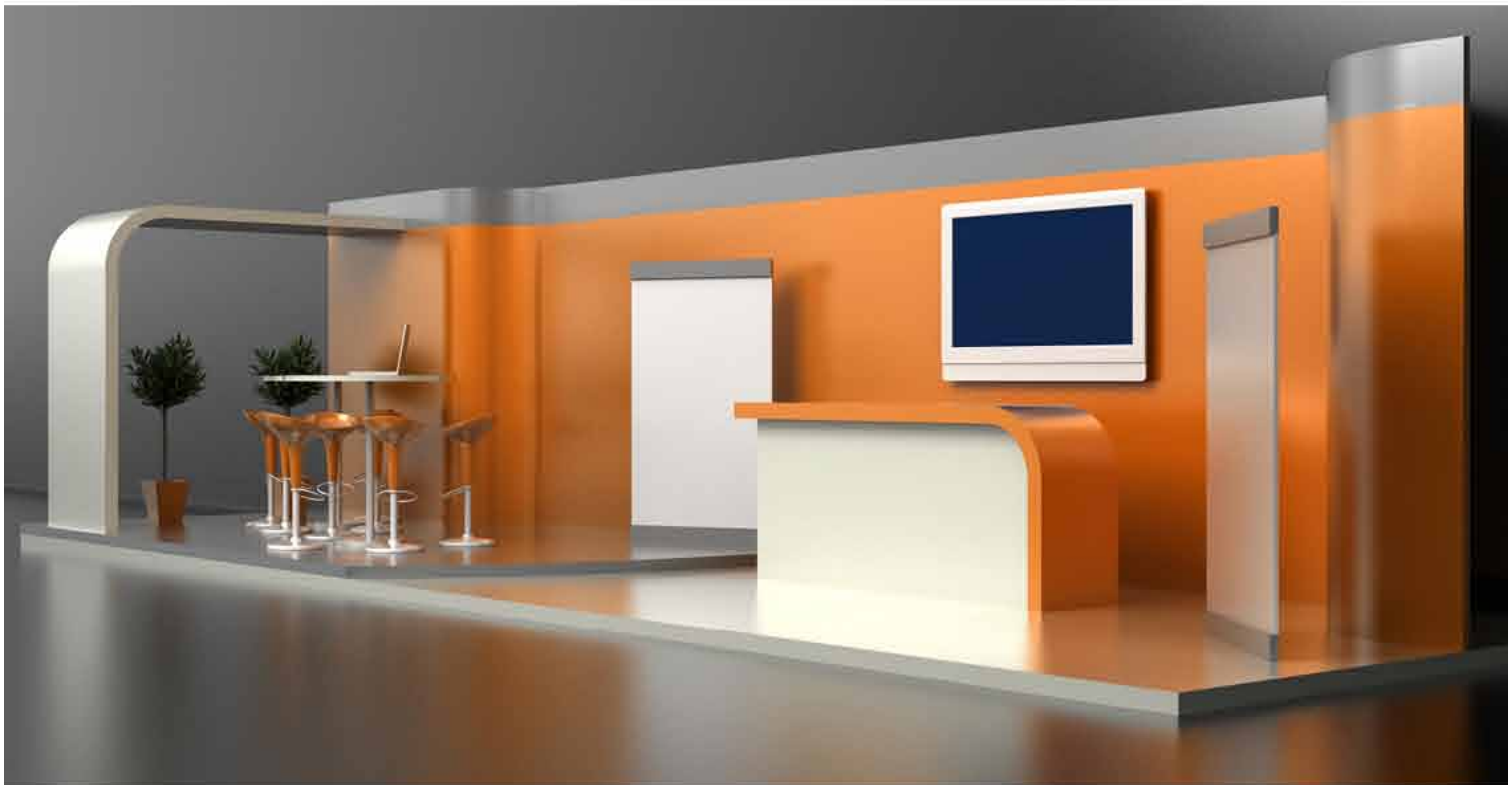
مجموعة مسقط للإعلام
Muscat Media Group





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

**Call us on
99614066**



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