

ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION IN OMAN RISES

The total production of electricity in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 4.1 per cent till the end of February 2023 to reach 4,611.3 GW per hour compared to 4,431.2 GW during the corresponding period in 2022. **>B1**



HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN SENDS CONDOLENCES TO RWANDA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda on victims of the floods that swept through his country. In the cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sympathies to President Paul Kagame, families of the victims and the people of Rwanda, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. — **ONA**



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PAKISTAN ARMY'S CHIEF OF STAFF ARRIVES IN OMAN

Gen. Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan arrived on Sunday on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. Upon his arrival, he was received at A'Seeb Airbase by Maj. Gen. Mattar Salim Al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), several senior RAO officers, the ambassador of Pakistan to Oman and the Military Attaché of Pakistan's embassy at Muscat. **-ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Royal Hospital cuts waiting lists for surgeries

1 The Royal Hospital is exerting extensive efforts to cut down waiting lists for patients who need surgeries and X-rays. The hospital is undertaking many initiatives and adding health staff to keep pace with the growth of professional operations. **>A2**

OMAN

Iran Expo 2023

2 The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, took part in the opening ceremony of "Iran Expo 2023". **>A5**

WORLD

Syria in Arab League

3 Arab League foreign ministers voted to readmit Syria into the organisation, after a suspension that lasted over a decade due to the region-wide condemnation of President Bashar Assad's crackdown. **>A6**

The Authority supervises 13 existing zones comprising the SEZAD, 3 free zones in Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah, and nine industrial cities operated by Madayn

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With a growth of six percent, the total volume of investments in all of Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) amounted to OMR15.20 billion at the end of 2022. The total area of the zones exceeded 2,200 square kilometres.

In addition, over 130 usufruct agreements were signed last year and the number of workers in the special economic zones and free zones stood at 74,663, while the



“The Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate, which is under development, will be among the promising upcoming zones, and it is expected to be jointly managed by Oman and Saudi Arabia. Further, there is a study to complete the planning aspects of Al Rawdah Zone in Al Buraimi Governorate and other areas.

Dr. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidy,
Chairman of Opaz

investment requests exceeded 600 and the number of projects reached 3,246 in all zones.

These details were revealed by Opaz at its annual media briefing on Sunday in the presence of Dr. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidy, Chairman of Opaz, Eng. Ahmed bin Hassan Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman, CEOs of the special economic zones and free zones and other officials.

During the event, Opaz presented its key achievements of 2022 and also disclosed its objectives for the current year, the main pro-

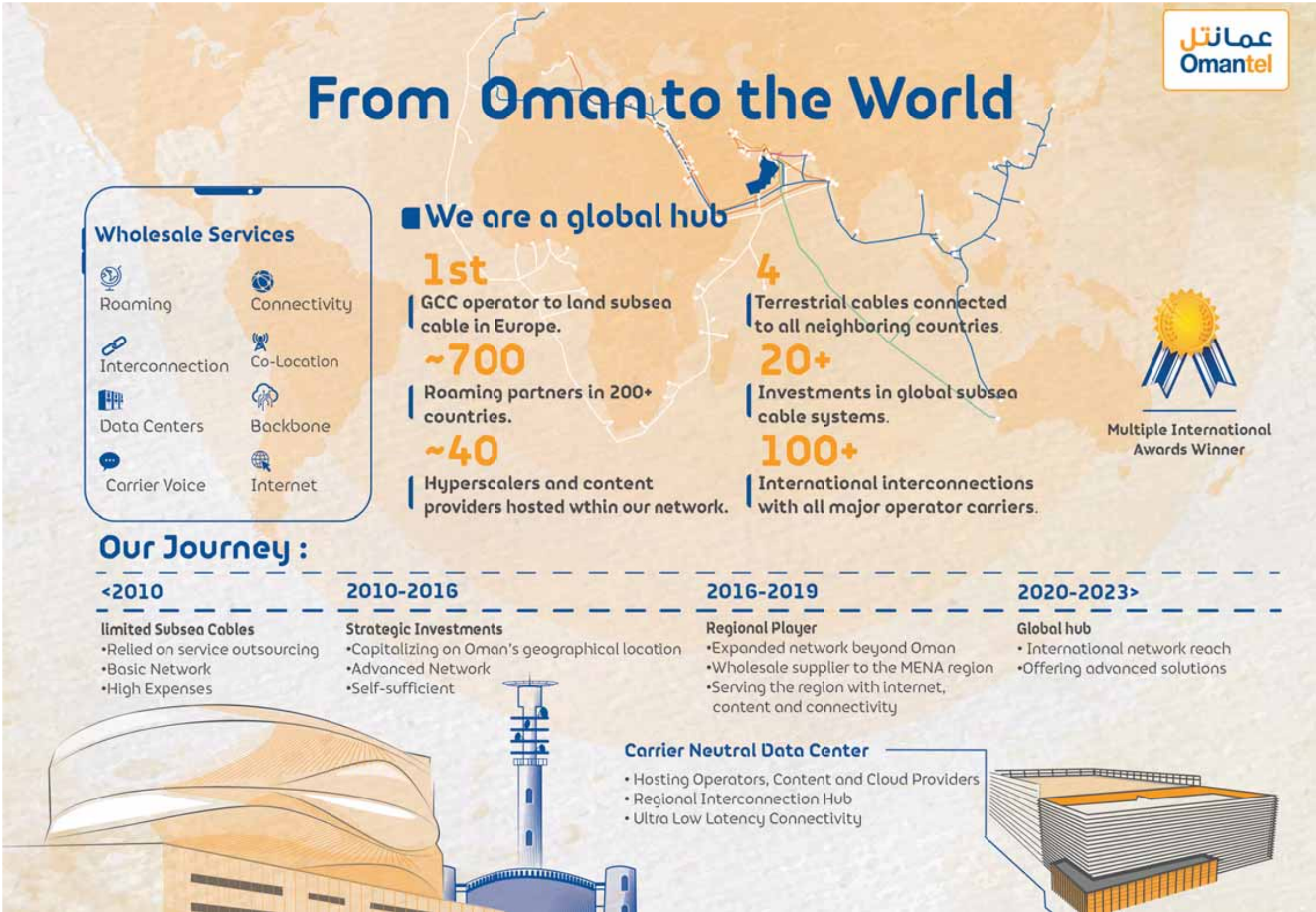
jects and accomplishments in the different special economic zones and the free zones.

In his speech, Dr. Ali Masoud Al Sunaidy said that there are 21 zones affiliated to Opaz, including 13 existing zones that are the Special Economic Zone in Duqm, three free zones (Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah, and other nine economic zones under the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), while eight other zones are still under development (two of which are economic

and one is a free zone), in addition to five industrial zones in the Sultanate of Oman.

“The Integrated Economic Zone in Al Dhahirah Governorate, which is under development, will be among the promising upcoming zones, as it is expected to be jointly managed by Oman and Saudi Arabia.

“Further, there is a study to complete the planning aspects of Al Rawdah Zone in Al Buraimi Governorate and other zones too,” he added. **See also >B1**



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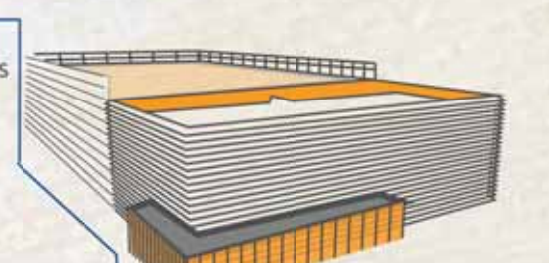
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Royal Hospital initiatives reduce waiting time for surgeries, tests

In 2022, the hospital conducted about 850 surgeries, some which took place during the evening and weekends

MUSCAT: The Royal Hospital is exerting extensive efforts to cut down waiting lists for patients who need surgeries and X-rays.

The hospital is undertaking many initiatives and adding health staff to keep pace with the growth of professional operations at a time that health establishments in Oman, like other parts of the world, were impacted by circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr. Amid Khamis Al Araiimi, Assistant Director General for Medical Affairs at the Royal Hospital, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the hospital prepared a room for surgical operations during the evening period and 4 rooms during the weekend.

In 2022, those efforts enabled the hospital to conduct about 850 surgeries, some which took place during the evening and weekends, said Dr. Amid. He added that the efforts contributed significantly



to reducing the number of patients on waiting lists.

Improve the services

In addition, the Royal Hospital introduced a lot of organisational procedures to organise and improve the services rendered to patients, Dr. Amid affirmed.

In addition, continuous coordination was made with private institutions to provide the Royal Hospital with various types of devices that serve patients in need. As part of such cooperation, 20 new apparatuses were installed at the obstetrics and gynaecology department in the hospital, Dr.

Amid explained.

He stated that the hospital provided two modern ultrasound machines to improve the quality of detection of fetal abnormalities, in addition to signing agreements to conduct magnetic resonance imaging, which reflects the integration between all sectors in the Sultanate of Oman to provide a fertile practical environment under the umbrella of the Royal Hospital.

Dr. Salim Khalfan Al-Rahbi, Director of the Surgery Department at the Royal Hospital, said that during the coronavirus pandemic, the total number of surgeries

in 2021 amounted to 14,294, and it rose to 17,625 in 2022, which varied between simple to more complex operations.

He pointed out that the total number of patients benefiting from virtual clinics in the past year reached 11,838, while the number of visits to outpatient clinics reached 52,764 in 2022. The hospital has made efforts to reduce the time period for obtaining first appointments and it ranges between 2 and 4 weeks only.

Dr. Jokha Al Kalbani, Director of the Radiology Department at the Royal Hospital, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the

hospital has finally worked on a campaign to reduce radiology department appointments.

She added that approximately 150 additional patients were accommodated every day in addition to the pre-existing patients, and the necessary logistical equipment and administrative and health staff were provided to keep pace with the campaign's work, and the campaign targeted 1,387 adult patients, and approximately 569 children.

For her part, Dr. Alia bint Youssef Al Madhani, Consultant in Obstetrics and Pregnancy and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and

“The efforts of Royal Hospital have significantly contributed to reducing the number of patients on waiting lists

Dr. Amid Khamis Al Araiimi
Assistant DG for Medical Affairs

Gynecology at the Royal Hospital, said that many initiatives have been taken to keep pace with the continuous increase in the number of patients benefiting from the services of the department.

She added that the long waiting list for women's referral clinics has been reduced by increasing the lists from 15 to 25, and providing ultrasound machines in each room to facilitate the examination process.

Additional clinics have been created to significantly reduce the waiting lists for appointments from 72 weeks to 19 weeks, then to 2 weeks. -ONA

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Cruise ship with 439 tourists anchors at Salalah Port



VISIT: The cruise ship has a programme to visit many ports around the world. - ONA

SALALAH: Salalah Port on Sunday received a cruise ship with 746 passengers on its board, including 439 tourists.

The cruise ship has a programme to visit many ports around the world.

The programme of the ship, which came from Port Sultan Qaboos in the Governorate of Muscat and heads to the Port of Jeddah, included tours to tourist attractions and archaeological sites renowned in the Governorate of Dhofar, besides visiting beaches and traditional bazaars in the Wilayat of Salalah.

Oman annually witnesses visits of many cruise ships, thanks to its sea location overlooking the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. -ONA



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COMMENTARY

The mist of our heritage

SALEH AL-SHAIBANY

While I was browsing at one of the 'traditional' markets, I overheard two Europeans saying that they were looking for something authentic and Omani. They were obviously tourists and the cameras that were hanging by their sides testified to that.

I looked around the marketplace and found very little that would remind me of Omani heritage.

Apart from the Khanjars (daggers) and deles (coffee pots), nothing else remotely resembled the local culture in the line of shops that formed the long arcade. The two foreigners looked at carpets but they were either Turkish or Afghani. The old ornaments were Indian, clothes were from Japan and even the turbans were imported from faraway lands. The beautifully decorated souq was a work of art and that is probably where the planners need to think. Perhaps the original place crumbled to dust and was beyond repair. In a bad attempt to revive it, the bulldozers razed down the last evidence of the great tradition to be replaced by a shining replica.

The result was that the whole thing was new. The majority of the shopkeepers were not Omanis. No wonder the tourists looked bewildered as they walked down the

arcade. Their brochures had listed the souq as "authentic Omani market" but all they could see was a little foreign place mimicking the past. My visit there was brief. I doubt if the visitors found what they wanted. As I was leaving the place, I turned to take a last look. I saw the ghosts of the old souq with old sellers squatting on the matted floor talking to customers. They had long, white beards and white turbans covered their heads. The air smelled of spices, dry fish and fresh coffee. There was also a commotion of noises made by livestock, auctioneers and clanging of the hammers from the silversmiths.

The floor was dusty, the walls of stone and the doors and windows solid teak.

The air was also filled with generosity since everybody was as poor as the next person but content with what they had. There was also laughter and nobody really cared whether it was the weekend or middle of the week. All that has now been replaced

by plastic decorations, greed and a terrible hurry to make a quick sale. There was a twinge of sadness in me as I walked away from the place. We invite tourists to show them a piece of foreign culture in a country rich in tradition. The irony is that, as the years pass by, the void left behind as the bulldozers march forward, will leave the country much poorer in a way of originality. Yes, there are still forts dotted around the country to remind us of the heritage but the original way of life is now a retreating phenomenon.

If you say that the price of progress is high, then you are definitely wrong. Heritage is a birthright that can live side by side in harmony with development. There is no conflict between the two. The past has always a place in the hearts of those who value history. The past belongs to no particular generation but to all generations to come. We don't travel to another country to see what we already have at home if we preserve our heritage.

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WHO

'Covid-19 taught us many lessons'

Times News Service

local level. The country's ability to develop drugs and medical devices and manufacture them locally has become an important necessity so that we are not hostage to external factors in times of crisis, and there has been much talk today about food security, and in this context we must also talk about technical security and scientific security, as we have enough science, knowledge and industries to develop our technical needs by ourselves.

MUSCAT: With the World Health Organization finally declaring an end to the state of emergency for the Covid-19, a number of doctors in Oman said that there are many lessons to be learnt from the pandemic which has caused the death of more than 20 million people in the world.

Dr. Zaid bin Al-Khattab Al-Hinai, Assistant Professor and Consultant of Paediatric Infectious Diseases at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University, said: "There are many lessons from the pandemic at the local level. First, we must praise the strength of the health system in the Sultanate of Oman. We were transparent in transferring information to the community."

He added that the Ministry of Health succeeded in providing the latest medicines and treatment whenever available on a large scale, and this confirms the feasibility of large investments in the health system, and also shows the importance of expanding and increasing investment in the health system by the government. Let's enjoy better health and more prosperity."

He stressed the need to develop the pharmaceutical industries and medical technology at the

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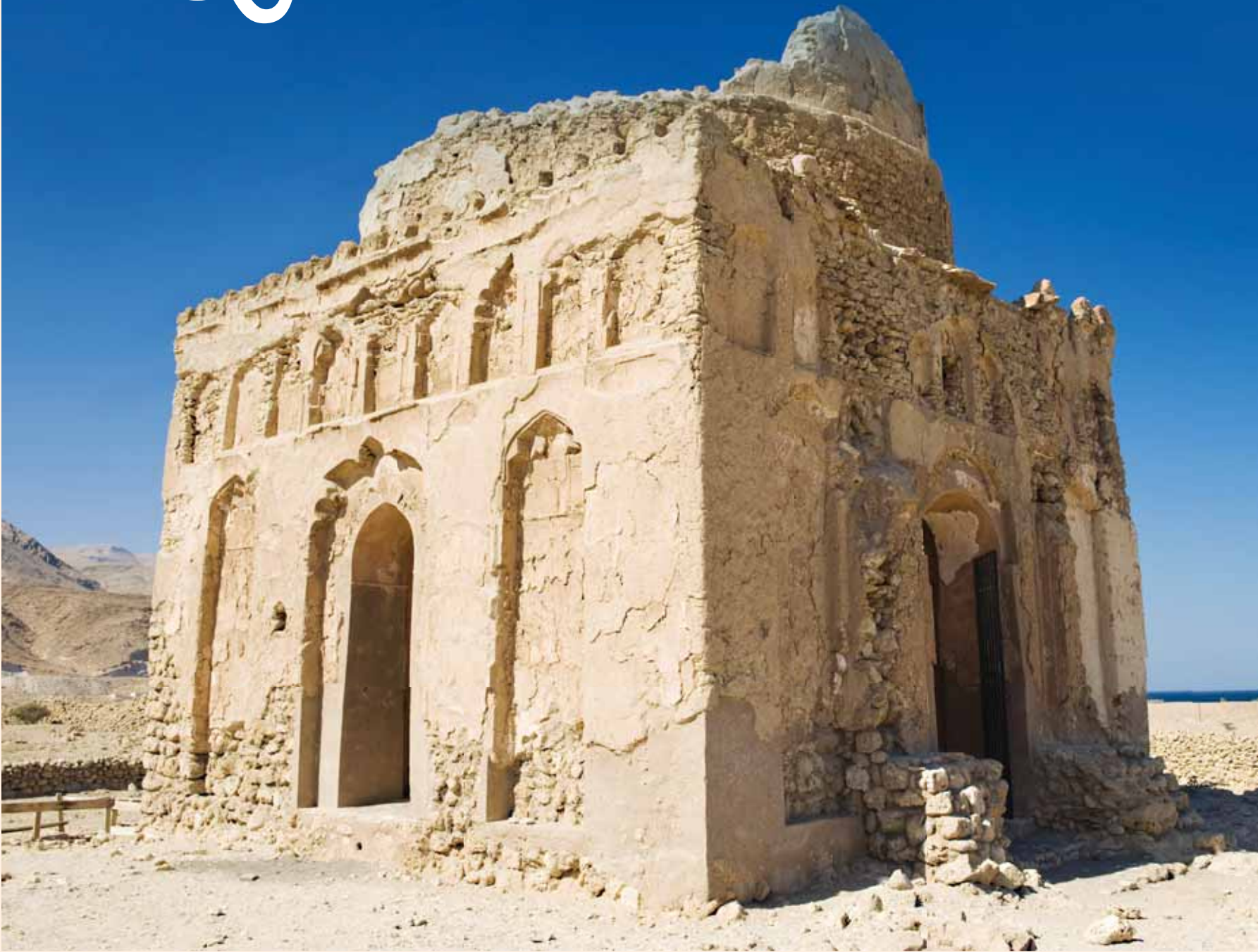
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ANCIENT CITY OF QALHAT



Located on the east coast of the Sultanate of Oman lies the ancient city of Qalhat. Surrounded by inner and outer walls, the city was first developed as a major port of Arabia between the 11th and 15th centuries. Its relevance and significance are not only from its long preservation, but also for its unique archaeological testimony that marks the cultural and commercial relationships between Arabia, East Africa, India, China and South-East Asia. Currently, it is also known as the Bibi Maryam mausoleum, as it is a desolate, singular tomb that is all that remains of the once-bustling city of Qalhat. The ancient architecture on the pebbled beach juxta-

posed against the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Oman. Once the capital of ancient Oman, the city of Qalhat was recently placed on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites for its historical significance and its role in Oman's evolution between the 11th and 15th centuries. The Ministry of Tourism said, "Once the first capital of Oman, Qalhat's history traces back to the Bronze Age. The Portuguese occupied the city until being expelled in the late 16th century. Since then, the settlement has slowly fallen to ruin, with only the tomb of Bibi Maryam remaining as testament to Qalhat's former importance." Oman's Ministry of Tourism said that Qalhat was once a shining

jewel along the Omani coastline. "The Indian Ocean trade route brought many people through the ancient city, which Italian explorer Marco Polo described as having 'fine bazaars and one of the most beautiful mosques,'" added the Ministry. "In the late-Middle Ages, when it was Oman's first capital, the city was notably encircled by a fortified wall and was bustling with shops, bazaars, and houses." "Today, a single mausoleum is all that bears witness to the city's former glory. Some say the lonely tomb was built by Baha al-Din Ayaz, king of the Hormuz Empire, for his wife, Bibi Maryam. But others maintain that it was indeed her who built it for him," said the Ministry.







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Oman attends opening of Iran Expo 2023

The Omani delegation was headed by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion



TEHRAN: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, took part on Sunday in the opening ceremony of “Iran Expo 2023”. The expo sees a turnout of more than 750 Iranian companies and other companies that showcase products from various sectors, including industry, medicine, household appliances, foodstuffs and petrochemicals. The Omani delegation was headed by Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Also present at the event were Ibrahim Ahmed Al Mu’aini, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Islamic Republic of Iran, Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), and a number of Omani businessmen. Iran Expo 2023 is an opportunity

to learn about Iranian industries, develop exports and open up new markets for Omani companies and investors. It offers further options to augment the volume of investment, diversify sources of import and export, forge strategic economic partnerships, and facilitate the smooth flow of goods and products between the two countries. During its participation in the expo, the Omani delegation visited a number of Iranian factories, learned about investment opportunities in various fields and organized meetings among Omani and Iranian businessmen. A meeting was held with several Iranian companies that expressed keenness to enter into partnerships with Omani companies. During 2022, total Omani imports from Iran during 2022 stood at OMR113 million, while the value of total exports to Iran amounted to OMR207 million. — ONA



MINISTRY OF LABOUR



Ejada-based system of incentives and gratuities approved

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour announced the approval of a system of incentives and gratuities for all departments linked to Ejada System, as well as rewards for outstanding performers (workers) who excelled during 2022. This was unveiled during a gathering organised on Sunday by the Ministry of Labour with undersecretaries of other ministries. During the meeting, emphasis was laid on procedures undertaken by the ministry to upgrade performance in a manner that improves the labour market, addresses its challenges and provides opportunities for job seekers. The meeting also outlined electronic services endorsed by the ministry to facilitate direct communication among individuals and institutions. Sayyid Salim Musallam Al



Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, gave a visual presentation on training programmes and the initiatives of the ministry. The presentation explains the challenges facing the ministry in its drive to achieve the goals and objectives set for national future action. During the gathering, “Ejada Platform for Human Resources Development” was launched. The platform will serve as meeting place for national workforce operators. — ONA

AN ENVIRONMENT FOR ENTERPRISE

Tejarah Talks discusses Oman’s journey to Net-Zero target

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As Oman progresses towards its 2050 Net-Zero target, Tejarah Talks takes a deep dive into what exactly the green transition means for Omani companies and investigates the new commercial opportunities it is opening up for local businesses. Generously sponsored by Jindal Shaded; Sustainable City - Yiti; Nortal; Omantel; and OmanFM, Tejarah Talks is an Oman Business Forum initiative organised in association with the Ministry of Commerce Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP). The next edition of this popular discussion forum “Oman’s Journey

to Net-Zero: An Environment for Enterprise?” is scheduled for Wednesday 17 May at 7:30pm and will be held at Omantel’s Head Office in Airports Heights. Noting that the session will provide a platform for Omani businesses of all sizes to learn more about the latest developments in sustainable practices and climate-related regulations, Maymuna Al Adawi, MoCIIP Director, Public Private Partnerships and organizer of Tejarah Talks said: “Given that SMEs make up 90% of all businesses, employ 70% of the world’s workforce and contribute over 50% of global GDP, their role in achieving climate goals is key. Our SMEs here in Oman are no



exception. They have a huge role to play in the collective corporate effort to address climate change and achieve Net-Zero emissions by 2050. With this Tejarah Talks, we aim not only to inform but also to

inspire and empower local SMEs to take meaningful climate action and seize the opportunities this presents.” Al Adawi went on to explain: “The green transition will fundamentally transform every part of Oman’s economy. Some of these changes will be visible, such as renewable energy and electric vehicles, but most will happen behind the scenes in the way organisations operate and manage their relationships. In fact, Oman’s journey towards Net-Zero presents a raft of opportunities for local SMEs to reduce running costs, develop new products, create jobs, attract investment and new customers – ultimately helping them

maintain a competitive advantage locally and globally. Indeed, we believe sustainable development and economic growth can go hand in hand. We encourage business owners to attend this Tejarah Talks session as we make our way towards a greener future.” Internationally recognized as a country with major potential in the green economy, Oman is already home to several large renewable energy initiatives, including the US\$400 million 500MW Ibri greenfield solar power project and the 30GWh Dhofar Wind Power Plant – the GCC’s first-large-scale wind farm - which are helping reduce reliance on fossil fuels and transition towards cleaner energy

sources. Additionally, Oman’s efforts to develop green hydrogen and carbon capture and storage technologies demonstrate its firm commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while supporting economic growth. Tejarah Talks “Oman’s Journey to Net-Zero: An Environment for Enterprise?” will be moderated by His Highness Sayyid Dr. Adham Al Said, Co-founder, The Firm. Sharing expertise and insights will be panellists Fadi Al Shihabi, KPMG Partner & ESG Services Lead; Dimitra Theodoropoulos, Talabat Director, Sustainability; and Hilal Al Ghaithi, Director, Energy, Authority for Public Services Regulation.

OUTSTANDING SUPPORT

Knowledge Oman honours its longtime member

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of supporting the wider multinational community engagement in the Sultanate, Knowledge Oman, the leading local initiative for promoting knowledge sharing and community development, has awarded and recognised a long-time member of the society, Murali Kannan, for his outstanding creative support to the platform. The trophy was presented by the President of the platform, Balqees Al Hassani, in the presence of the Chairwoman Dr Yasmeen Al Bulushi. “My family and I have been living in Oman for the past 30 years now. When the opportunity to serve the community came 15 years ago from its founder Tariq Al Barwani, I grabbed it and offered my support on the creative and branding part of the platform. Today, I am happy to see Knowledge Oman’s positive impact to the society and my contribution to a platform that support youth development in the country” said Murali upon receiving the award.



Murali, a well-known award-winning Creative Director with strong conceptualisation and branding solutions strengths, has extensive exposure to the management of effective brand activation campaigns across digital, print, and out-of-home platforms.

He is also a mentor to young Omani nationals and has participated in numerous government digital transmission projects. As the business owner of Brand & Communication company called Digital Intelligence LLC (72dpi), Murali’s expertise has helped many organisations in Oman to effectively communicate their brand message. “We are pleased to recognize the exceptional contributions of Murali. His dedication and commitment to volunteer work and community service are truly inspiring and we hope their stories will encourage others to get involved in making a positive impact in their communities” said Balqees Al Hassani, President of Knowledge Oman.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

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Despite Saudi-hosted talks, clashes continue in Sudan

Representatives from both parties are attending talks in Jeddah, mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia with the aim of achieving a sustainable truce

KHARTOUM: Battles flared in Khartoum on Sunday, with fighting in Sudan between the armed forces and the powerful Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group well into its fourth week.

Representatives from both parties are meanwhile attending talks in Jeddah, mediated by the United States and Saudi Arabia with the

aim of achieving a sustainable truce. Multiple cease-fire agreements announced since the start of the fighting on April 15 have been consistently breached.

Meeting in Cairo
The Arab League is also meeting in Cairo on Sunday and scheduled to discuss the situation in the conflict-torn country.

Escaping the fighting
Fierce battles in Sudan have killed some 700 people, mostly civilians, with thousands more wounded. A mass exodus of some 100,000 have fled the country, including Sudanese as well as foreign nationals.

“Yes, I am happy to survive,” Manahil Salah, a 28-year-old laboratory doctor on an evacuation flight from the coastal city of Port Sudan to the UAE told Reuters news agency. She had hidden with her family for three days in their home, located near the army headquarters in Khartoum.

“But I feel deep sadness because I left my mother and father behind in Sudan, and sad because all this pain is happening in my homeland.”

Despite agreeing to the Saudi-hosted talks, both sides have repeatedly stressed they signed up

to cease-fires to facilitate humanitarian corridors rather than to end the fighting.

RSF leader Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo confirmed on Saturday his group’s attendance at the talks. He said he hoped they would achieve their intended goal to “establish a cease-fire, open humanitarian corridors, and provide essential services to the people of Sudan.”

Both Dagalo and Sudanese Army General Abdel-Fattah Burhan have vowed to continue the fight until the end.

Andreas Krieg of King’s College London told the French AFP news agency that “the battle for Khartoum is quickly developing into a war of attrition where both sides have similar capabilities and capacities.”

— DW

IN DALLAS

9 killed in US mall shooting

WASHINGTON: As many as nine people were killed in a shooting at an outlet mall near Dallas and seven injured persons were undergoing treatment, according to media report citing officials on Saturday night. Brian E Harvey, the chief of police in Allen, Texas, said at a news conference on Saturday night that the gunman, who hasn’t yet been identified, acted alone. A police officer, who was on another assignment at the mall at the time of the shooting, heard gunfire, rushed towards it, and killed the shooter. Around 3.30 pm (local time), a shooting was witnessed at the Allen Premium Outlets, an outdoor shopping center with more than 120 retailers located about 25 miles north of Dallas.

Social media users posted a video showing the shooter lying on the ground, dressed in all-black, holding a long rifle, and what appeared to be several rounds of ammo and a tactical vest. — ANI

FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

Arab League readmits Syria after suspension for 12 years

CAIRO: Arab League foreign ministers voted on Sunday to readmit Syria into the organisation, after a suspension that lasted over a decade due to the region-wide condemnation of President Bashar Assad’s crackdown on the 2011 protests-turned-civil-war.

Ministers held a closed meeting at the League’s headquarters in Cairo, where the unfolding situation in Sudan was also on the agenda.

“Government delegations from the Syrian Arab Republic will resume their participation in Arab League meetings,” the group’s foreign ministers said.

Some Arab League members did not attend the session on Sunday. The most notable absentee was Qatar, which has backed Syria’s opposition against Assad.

Syria’s gradual return to Arab diplomacy

For much of the past 12 years,



Syria was shunned from most diplomatic interactions in the region.

But over the past five years that has slowly been changing, with countries like the United Arab Emirates and Jordan quietly re-establishing contact.

More recently, there has been an acceleration in that process, with Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mikdad paying visits to Arab capitals including Cairo, Amman and Tunis.

It was after a last month’s visit

to Saudi Arabia that Arab countries got together in Jeddah to discuss moves to end Syria’s isolation, which has lasted for over a decade.

Saudi Arabia, which had initially supported Assad’s opposition, was among the staunchest opponents to Syria’s return.

However, the rich Sunni kingdom in March announced the restoration of diplomatic ties with Shiite Iran, after years of suspended relations. — DW

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INTERACTIVE SESSION



India has tried to mediate between Russia and Ukraine, says Jaishankar

MYSURU: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday said that India has tried to help out in the Russia-Ukraine conflict not because China did something but because the situation in Ukraine deserved that.

While speaking at an interactive session on the Foreign Policy of the Modi Government, EAM Jaishankar spoke on the Russia-Ukraine conflict and said that India has been trying to help out in the situation. “The Chinese have put forward their thoughts as is their right. They have also made a contribution to whatever has happened between Saudi Arabia and Iran,” Jaishankar said.

The UAE downgraded relations with Iran after Saudi Arabia severed ties with Iran in January 2016 after Iranian protesters stormed the Saudi embassy in Tehran following Riyadh’s execution of a prominent Shiite cleric. The animosity between Iran and Saudi Arabia had previously threatened stability and security in the Gulf, and fuelled conflicts in the Middle East from Yemen to Syria. However, in a significant breakthrough in March this year, Riyadh announced that it would re-establish ties with Tehran in a China-brokered deal, marking a change in years of hostility between the two nations.

However, Jaishankar said, “It’s not a zero-sum game between us.”

Jaishankar further said, “I’m not competing with anyone. If I do something in Ukraine, I will not do it because China did something in Ukraine. I will do it because the situation in Ukraine deserves that.”

“The fact is, in different ways, we have tried to help out since the start of the conflict. In fact, Prime Minister Modi has been among the leaders in frequent touch with Presidents Putin and Zelenskyy. I have been in touch with my counterparts,” Jaishankar spoke on efforts made by India in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Jaishankar also said that India has supported others who are trying to take the lead.

“Today is a very complicated world. A lot of problems, a lot of volatility, a lot of uncertainty. A part of diplomacy is to develop a reputation as a stabilising country, as a helpful country and as one with more friends and less adversaries,” Jaishankar said.

“(Suppose) I need 20 years of peace, but obviously I need peace on terms which are conducive to my national security. So that’s really the kind of direction,” Jaishankar said giving an example.

— ANI

UPSIDES AND DOWNSIDES?

Pros and cons of the four-day work-week model

BRUSSELS: There are two different models of the four-day workweek. One model envisions spreading the 40 hours commonly worked during a five-day week over four days. This means people will be working four ten-hour days.

Belgium is now allowing employees to decide between working a conventional five-day week or a shorter, more intense four-day week. The total worked number of hours is identical.

The other model differs from the typical workweek in that it envisions people getting 100% of the workload done in just 80% of the time, while still receiving their full salary. A few countries have begun trying out the four-day workweek.

Iceland, for example, tested the model between 2015 and 2019 to see how effective a shortened workweek and identical salary would be. Spain is starting a similar trial this spring for small and medium-sized companies, where 30% of employees will work 10% less while retaining their original salary. France, meanwhile, is planning to test a 35-hour workweek, spread over four days, for public administration employees.

Other countries like New Zealand, Japan and the United States are also looking into shorter workweeks. But what are the potential

upsides and downsides?

Advantages of a four-day workweek

Undiminished productivity and less stress
Various pilot projects have led to positive effects. For example, a British study published in 2023 found that employees were less stressed and showed a lower risk of suffering from mental illnesses like burnout when working four-day weeks. Anxiety, fatigue and sleep problems also decreased during the pilot phase. Overall, sixty-one companies with about 2,900 employees participated in the trial. The majority of companies said they intended to keep the four-day-week in place. Many cited employees’ increased well-being as a main reason for this decision.

Fewer sick days
At the same time, employees working four-day weeks called in sick less often. This is because workers have sufficient time to recover and endure less stress, said occupational psychologist Hannah Schade of the Leibniz Research Centre for Working Environment and Human Factors at the Technical University of Dortmund. This finding is helpful for think-



ing about the financial side of the four-day week, the expert said. The number of employees away on sick leave and dealing with mental illnesses need to be factored in by companies, after all.

Boosting equality, tackling labour shortages
Beyond its health and mental health benefits, the four-day workweek could also play a role in promoting greater equality. Speaking to DW, industrial psychologist Schade said the British study also found that men doing four-day weeks were more involved in care work, for example in looking after their children or relatives in need.

The four-day week could also help remedy Germany’s shortage of skilled workers, said Institute for Employment Research direc-

tor Bernd Fitzenberger. A four-day week “makes jobs more attractive, increasing the number of applicants in fields where companies are desperately seeking workers,” said Fitzenberger. This would enable families to better reconcile work and childcare, he added, and allow women living with their partners to more easily return to full-time work to build their careers.

Are fewer working hours good for the climate?
It’s difficult to measure whether a reduction in working hours will positively impact the climate. Konzeptwerk Neue Ökonomie, a Leipzig-based think tank, writes on its website that a four-day week “could also reduce the energy and resources consumed by industries

and though commutes.” Yet it also says that employees’ individual carbon footprints will depend on their respective lifestyles.

Attracting potential employees
Although it’s primarily employees who want a four-day week, companies stand to benefit, too. “Every company that offers a four-day week has a competitive advantage,” said industrial psychologist Schade. According to her, a four-day week with reduced working hours, rather than an identical number of hours spread over just four days, is what makes companies attractive to potential employees. “In return, people will then be willing to put up with other things,” said Schade.

Disadvantages of a four-day week

More stress?
One disadvantage of the four-day week could be the tendency to squeeze more work into fewer working hours, says the economist Bernd Fitzenberger. When more has to be accomplished in less time, this causes more stress. Belgium’s four-day model, for example, has employees doing 40 hours a week, spread over four days. As

an alternative, they can reduce their number of working hours, which translates into less pay.

Productivity difficult to measure
The business community is also skeptical of the four-day week. Among other things, this is due to the challenge of measuring productivity, said Holger Schäfer, a researcher at Cologne’s German Economic Institute. The IW says it is difficult to ascertain exactly how the four-day week will influence companies’ productivity. The four-day week could also translate into higher costs for companies, said Fitzenberger. This, he says, could be the case “when reduced working hours or spreading working hours over just four days is not offset by productivity gains”.

Diminished competitiveness?
Germany’s business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP) worries that shorter working weeks will harm industrial competitiveness. “In view of the glaring shortage of skilled workers, proposing a four-day week is incomprehensible,” FDP parliamentary group leader Christian Dürr told Funke Mediengruppe newspapers. — DW



Salt brings joy to Delhi

Delhi Capitals finally rise from the bottom after defeating Royal Challengers Bangalore for their fourth win in last five games

NEW DELHI: There was joy for the home crowd on Saturday as the hosts Delhi Capitals (DC) trounced Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) by seven wickets at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in Delhi.

The hero of Delhi's victory was England's batter-wicketkeeper Phil Salt, who smashed 87 off 45 balls in a dazzling display of boundary hitting, as he led his team to finish off a chase of 182 against RCB with 20 balls to spare.

After an unimpressive knock in his last five T20 innings, Salt sent five of his six sixes over the leg-side boundary and hit eight fours in an assault that turned the challenging target into a canter.

Salt smashed a 28-ball fifty, before plundering 24 runs off a Harshal Patel over to reduce the chase to 32 off 42 balls as Capitals beat RCB for the first time in three years.

It was Capitals' fourth win in their last five games, and lifted them off the bottom of the table.

Salt's blistering innings coupled with quick-fire knocks from Mitchell Marsh (26 off 17) and Rilee Rossouw (35* off 22) powered the home side to vic-

tory after Virat Kohli (55 off 46) and Mahipal Lomror's (54* off 29) fifties had lifted the away side to a competitive 181/4.

Salt claimed that DC was perfectly prepared to face RCB and was only concerned with remaining positive. "We spoke about being positive and taking them on. We saw how good they were in Bangalore when they had their tails up. Something that's a real strength of mine is that if I really get going I don't take my foot off the pedal too often," Salt said in a post-match presentation.

Salt noted that he expected the wicket to slow down in the middle overs and that DC hitters would have to bat hard to reach the "par total."

"We knew the wicket is a little slow and low and we knew that realistically we would slow down in the middle. I thought it was par. I thought we would have to bat really well to get there but the boys came out swinging and we got it done," Salt added.

'Plan was to target Siraj'

DC captain David Warner revealed that it was his team's plan

to go hard on RCB's star pacer Mohammed Siraj. In his post-match presentation, he said: "It was absolutely amazing. I thought 180 was possible. The ball started skidding on nicely."

"We said from the outset that we wanted to try and target Siraj. That was our intention. We knew he has been bowling really well and been their backbone so if we could just take him on, it would work in our favour."

Warner added: "Credit to the bowlers. They have been brilliant. They defended 130 twice. We have a strong Indian bowling unit with Ishant and Khaleel. And we are looking like a good team now."

Delhi batter Rilee Rossouw claimed that if they make it to the playoff stages, then they could prove to be a deadly opponent for other teams. The South African batter said that the entire squad is supportive of one another and admits that the game was a little difficult before Salt's blinder on Saturday.

He said: "It is a fantastic result. We bowled particularly alright. The way Salty and Warner played was phenomenal. It was a great result for us. The whole squad comes into play, the guys are supportive of the ones who are not playing. Pretty simple and easy."

He said that the team is going out with the freedom to play, knowing that they cannot afford to lose another game. "We can't lose another game, so we

are going out with the freedom to play the way we want. The way we played tonight, you would not suspect we have lost 6 games or how many ever, who knows if we get lucky and get into the knockouts, with the way we are playing, we could be dangerous," he said.

'They put pressure on our spinners'

RCB captain Faf du Plessis admitted that Delhi batters put pressure on his spinners which led to some mistakes and the defeat.

"I thought we were pretty close to par. We thought 185 is a good score. But there was a little bit of dew in the second innings. But we have to give credit to their batters, they played really well. The pressure their batters put on the spinners led to some mistakes," du Plessis said in a post-match presentation.

"We didn't maximise our innings. At about 12 overs, we felt like 185 was a par score. Obviously, you like to have one of those big overs to take you to 200, which would have been a good score. But they made our bowlers sit back a little bit after the powerplay," added the skipper. -ANI



ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE

My role is to play impactful innings for the team: Lomror

NEW DELHI: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batter Mahipal Lomror said that his role was to hit boundaries in every over and disrupt the opponent's bowling.

He also added that he loves playing on slow wickets since he gets to play on the back foot, where his game is quite strong.

Lomror's audacious 29-ball 54 in Saturday's match against Delhi Capitals may have gone in vain but has added strength to RCB's already existing batting prowess and will be important to the team's search for the playoff spot in the IPL 2023.

Lomror's innings - laced with three maximums and nine boundaries - served as a huge boost to RCB's consistent opening pair of Virat Kohli and skipper Faf du Plessis.

Lomror loves to play bold innings and looks at himself as a disruptor. He especially likes to play at the slow wickets which often trouble the other top batters of the world.



"My job was to try to score a boundary every over. To put opposition bowlers under pressure I took some risks and it paid off. I love playing on slow wickets because I get to play on the back foot where I am quite strong.

"As per my role, it is rare to score 50 or big runs. My role is to go down and disrupt the opposition's bowling. It is a high-risk game so I am not expected to play long innings. My job is to play impactful innings and cameos."

Lomror's maiden 50 on Saturday has given him confidence and is happy to have achieved a landmark which he had been waiting to play for a long time. He will look to continue his top form in the upcoming matches as well.

The team's head coach Sanjay Bangar said Lomror was certainly the highlight of the last match.

"There were a lot of positives to take from our last match in Delhi, especially in the batting department. Mahipal Lomror coming good with the bat was probably the highlight of the match. We showed great consistency in the batting department," commented Bangar.

RCB are at the fifth position with five wins and five losses. They have a total of 10 points. -ANI



مسقط غاز
MUSCAT GAS

Computer Devices & accessories for Sale

Muscat Gases Company SAOG announces the sale of Old Computer Devices & accessories for Sale in its branch located in Rusayl Industrial Area @ Street No. 16 as follows

Those wishing to buy must visit the company's branch and submit bids according to the company's document in a sealed envelope with red wax. The value of the document is 10 OMR non-refundable

- Customers can submit their bids to buy all the supplies or individually.
- Bids are deposited in a closed box located at the head office.
- The deadline for receiving bids is on May 15, 2023 at 2 pm.
- The bids will be sorted on May 18, 2023.

For serious buyers, please call 22526900/ 71590684 during official working days from 8 am in until 4 pm.



Dhofar Poultry Company (S.A.O.G)
P.O. Box 2855 –PC 211 –Salalah . Phone : 23288605- admin1@dpcoman.om

Board of Director's Report for 1st Quarter 2023		STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 March 2023																																																																																																																						
On behalf of board of directors of Dhofar Poultry Company, I have pleasure in presenting the un-audited financial statements for the 1st Quarter and the period ended 31st March 2023 Financial Performance: Total sales revenue for 1st Quarter of year 2023 is RO 2,523 Million compared to RO 2,378 Million same period last year showing a increase of 6.10%. The Net Loss for the period is RO 80.82 K compared to Net Loss of RO 257.6 K for the same period last year 2022. Reduction in Net Loss for the period by 68.63 % was mainly due to increase in Sales Price , though Cost of Hatching Eggs & Feed remained high , 25% increase in Selling & Distribution costs and General & Administration Expenses have increased by 9 % . With good loyal Customer base & Ramadhan Sales volumes , Gross Profit is higher by RO 219 K (81.34 %) compared to same period last year , though Food Grain prices volatility internationally is still continuing due to Russian – Ukraine situation . The Company is working hard to provide and maintain poultry products availability to customers around all Oman Regions as it is one of the main food securities products. Cost reduction measures & Operations efficiencies are in implementation stages , the benefits are expected to be achieved from 3rd Qtr this year 2023 . The Company policy is to reduce inputs imported from outside and reduce risk of dependence of imports and increase Company's sale of Fresh / Chilled products which have higher Realization per Kg , over Frozen Products . Despite of high market competitions from local GCC Suppliers , the Company has addressed sale and marketing sector and focused on Brand building activities as their primary and emphasize on fresh products as a better alternative from health and hygiene aspects as compared to frozen products . The Management has strategic agreements in place with local and regional partners to enhance Company brands and reach new UAE markets through its Sharjah Branch functioning to sell products directly to Secured customers and focused on product quality by ensuring strict implementation of Halal, ISO and HACCP standard and support our regional markets . Corporate Governance : The BOD reviewed incentive policies for high level executives staff and other employees, and fulfil the CMA regulation through Internal Audit Committee and internal regulation control. The related parties transaction also reviewed. Future Outlook : With poultry meat market demand increase in last few years and restricted controls on European imports , Management is targeting high value product consumers segments by improving product quality and introduction of new value added products. The Company is also working with strategic partners to increase local and regional sale volume and increase operation efficiency. On behalf of the Board, I express my sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq Bin Taimur for his wise leadership, support and generous attitude towards private sector. Finally, I would also like to thank my colleagues & fellow board members, management & staff for their consistent efforts and our customers for their continuous support. Salim Bin Abdullah Al-Awadi Chairman		<table><tr><th>Particulars</th><th>3/31/2023 RO</th><th>3/31/2022 RO</th></tr><tr><td>ASSETS</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Non-current Asset:</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Property, plant and equipment</td><td>6,436,716</td><td>6,784,539</td></tr><tr><td>Intangible asset</td><td>42,560</td><td>49,653</td></tr><tr><td>Right to use Asset</td><td>22,300</td><td>39,405</td></tr><tr><td>Deferred Tax Asset and Other Expenses</td><td>-</td><td>43,906</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>6,501,576</td><td>6,917,503</td></tr><tr><td>Current Assets:</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Inventories</td><td>1,646,275</td><td>1,377,936</td></tr><tr><td>Biological assets</td><td>1,240,445</td><td>1,049,708</td></tr><tr><td>Trade receivables, prepayments and others receivables</td><td>2,548,437</td><td>2,336,746</td></tr><tr><td>Cash and cash equivalents</td><td>305,041</td><td>280,925</td></tr><tr><td>Total Current Assets</td><td>5,740,197</td><td>5,045,315</td></tr><tr><td>TOTAL ASSETS</td><td>12,241,773</td><td>11,962,818</td></tr><tr><td>SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Shareholders' Equity:</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Share capital</td><td>2,800,000</td><td>4,000,000</td></tr><tr><td>Special reserve</td><td>-</td><td>137,033</td></tr><tr><td>Legal reserve</td><td>-</td><td>221,560</td></tr><tr><td>Accumulated losses</td><td>(1,920,170)</td><td>(3,882,894)</td></tr><tr><td>Revaluation Reserve</td><td>547,658</td><td>576,057</td></tr><tr><td>Net Shareholders' equity</td><td>1,427,488</td><td>1,051,756</td></tr><tr><td>Non-current Liabilities:</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Non-current portion of term loans</td><td>997,401</td><td>750,000</td></tr><tr><td>End of service benefits for employees</td><td>277,398</td><td>243,945</td></tr><tr><td>Non-Current portion of Lease Liabilities</td><td>20,088</td><td>25,791</td></tr><tr><td>Deferred Tax Liability</td><td>101,512</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Total Non-current Liabilities</td><td>1,396,400</td><td>1,019,736</td></tr><tr><td>Current Liabilities:</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Bank overdraft & LTR</td><td>4,496,885</td><td>5,273,677</td></tr><tr><td>Current portion of term loans</td><td>633,332</td><td>265,284</td></tr><tr><td>Trade Payables and accruals</td><td>4,171,707</td><td>4,335,822</td></tr><tr><td>Current Portion of Lease Liabilities</td><td>4,920</td><td>16,544</td></tr><tr><td>Taxation</td><td>111,042</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Total Current Liabilities</td><td>9,417,886</td><td>9,891,327</td></tr><tr><td>Total Liabilities</td><td>10,814,285</td><td>10,911,063</td></tr><tr><td>TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</td><td>12,241,773</td><td>11,962,818</td></tr><tr><td>Net Assets Per Share (RO.)</td><td>0.051</td><td>0.026</td></tr></table>		Particulars	3/31/2023 RO	3/31/2022 RO	ASSETS			Non-current Asset:			Property, plant and equipment	6,436,716	6,784,539	Intangible asset	42,560	49,653	Right to use Asset	22,300	39,405	Deferred Tax Asset and Other Expenses	-	43,906		6,501,576	6,917,503	Current Assets:			Inventories	1,646,275	1,377,936	Biological assets	1,240,445	1,049,708	Trade receivables, prepayments and others receivables	2,548,437	2,336,746	Cash and cash equivalents	305,041	280,925	Total Current Assets	5,740,197	5,045,315	TOTAL ASSETS	12,241,773	11,962,818	SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY AND LIABILITIES			Shareholders' Equity:			Share capital	2,800,000	4,000,000	Special reserve	-	137,033	Legal reserve	-	221,560	Accumulated losses	(1,920,170)	(3,882,894)	Revaluation Reserve	547,658	576,057	Net Shareholders' equity	1,427,488	1,051,756	Non-current Liabilities:			Non-current portion of term loans	997,401	750,000	End of service benefits for employees	277,398	243,945	Non-Current portion of Lease Liabilities	20,088	25,791	Deferred Tax Liability	101,512	-	Total Non-current Liabilities	1,396,400	1,019,736	Current Liabilities:			Bank overdraft & LTR	4,496,885	5,273,677	Current portion of term loans	633,332	265,284	Trade Payables and accruals	4,171,707	4,335,822	Current Portion of Lease Liabilities	4,920	16,544	Taxation	111,042	-	Total Current Liabilities	9,417,886	9,891,327	Total Liabilities	10,814,285	10,911,063	TOTAL SHAREHOLDERS' EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	12,241,773	11,962,818	Net Assets Per Share (RO.)	0.051	0.026
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<table><tr><th>Particulars</th><th>3/31/2023 Revalued RO.</th><th>3/31/2022 Revalued RO.</th></tr><tr><td>Sales (Net of Discount)</td><td>2,522,948</td><td>2,377,946</td></tr><tr><td>Cost of sales</td><td>(2,034,311)</td><td>(2,108,494)</td></tr><tr><td>Gross profit/(loss)</td><td>488,637</td><td>269,452</td></tr><tr><td>General and administrative expenses</td><td>(207,033)</td><td>(189,067)</td></tr><tr><td>Selling and distribution expenses</td><td>(270,322)</td><td>(217,024)</td></tr><tr><td>Finance costs</td><td>(111,479)</td><td>(121,542)</td></tr><tr><td>Directors' Fees</td><td>(10,600)</td><td>(9,800)</td></tr><tr><td>Other income</td><td>29,973</td><td>10,306</td></tr><tr><td>Profit/(Loss) before taxation</td><td>(80,824)</td><td>(257,675)</td></tr><tr><td>Taxation</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>Net Profit/(Loss) for the period</td><td>(80,824)</td><td>(257,675)</td></tr><tr><td>Basic profit/(loss) per share (RO.)</td><td>(0.002)</td><td>(0.006)</td></tr></table>	Particulars	3/31/2023 Revalued RO.	3/31/2022 Revalued RO.	Sales (Net of Discount)	2,522,948	2,377,946	Cost of sales	(2,034,311)	(2,108,494)	Gross profit/(loss)	488,637	269,452	General and administrative expenses	(207,033)	(189,067)	Selling and distribution expenses	(270,322)	(217,024)	Finance costs	(111,479)	(121,542)	Directors' Fees	(10,600)	(9,800)	Other income	29,973	10,306	Profit/(Loss) before taxation	(80,824)	(257,675)	Taxation	-	-	Net Profit/(Loss) for the period	(80,824)	(257,675)	Basic profit/(loss) per share (RO.)	(0.002)	(0.006)																																																																																	
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TRAINING PROGRAMME
Kaspersky announced its training and internship programme in Saudi Arabia, further fuelling its commitment to build national capabilities within the cybersecurity sector in the Kingdom.

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



WWW.TIMESOFOMAN.COM
MONDAY, MAY 8, 2023



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) lost 6.9 points, comprising a drop of 0.15 per cent to close at 4717.35 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4724.25 points.

Rakiza highlights its achievements and sheds light on future projects

Rakiza is in the advanced stages of closing its first investment in Saudi Arabia and is pursuing further attractive opportunities in Oman and KSA

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Rakiza, an infrastructure fund investing in the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, held its Annual General Meeting last week in the



presence of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed Al Murshidi, President of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and its investors.

Muneer bin Ali Al Muneeri, CEO of Rakiza thanked the fund's first close institutional investors, the Public Authority for Social Insurance, the Civil Service Employee Pension Fund, the Royal Oman

Police Pension Fund and other regional investors, for their support and trust in Rakiza.

He also praised the role of Rakiza's strategic investors including sovereign wealth funds from the region.

Al Muneeri highlighted two key milestones of the fund; the final close of Fund 1 (in excess of its \$1

billion target) and deploying 25 per cent of its capital in three infrastructure projects. As of today, Rakiza has acquired 30 per cent equity in a telecom tower portfolio in Oman; 31.25 per cent equity in a gateway container terminal in the Port of Sohar; and a majority shareholding in the new Central Fruit and Vegetable Market located

in Khazaen.

Rakiza ranks as one of the largest infrastructure funds in the Middle East region, due to the strong institutional demand and has adopted best industry practices in ESG, governance, transparency, and investment management.

Rakiza is in the advanced stages of closing its first investment in

Saudi Arabia and is pursuing further attractive opportunities in Oman and KSA.

At the close of the AGM, Al Muneeri thanked Rakiza's management and team for their hard work, and extended gratitude to OIA's leadership for their support and guidance which has been key to the Fund's success.

NCSI DATA

Oman's electricity production increases by 4.1% in February

MUSCAT: The total production of electricity in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 4.1 per cent till the end of February 2023 to reach 4,611.3 GW per hour compared to 4,431.2 GW during the corresponding period in 2022, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The Governorates of Al Dhahirah, South Al Batinah and North Al Batinah, recorded a rise of 17.2 per cent in total electricity production till the end of February 2023 to reach 2,966.7 GW per hour. Meanwhile, electricity production in the Governorate of Muscat recorded a decline of 95.5 per cent to reach 18.8 GW per hour compared to 418 GW per hour during the corresponding period in 2022.

Oman's net production of electricity till the end of February 2023 reached 4,462.7 GW per hour. The net figures are inclusive of purchases by Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) and the Rural Areas Electricity Company (RAEC).

The highest volume of net elec-



tricity production was registered in the Governorates of Al Dhahirah, South Al Batinah and North Al Batinah, which stood at 2,870.3 GW per hour compared to the corresponding period in 2022 when it stood at 2,452.3 GW per hour, constituting a rise by 17 per cent.

Further, net electricity production in the Governorates of North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah increased by 7 per cent at the end of February to reach 922 GW per hour compared to 862 GW per

hour by the end of February 2022.

On the other hand, water production in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a rise of 2 per cent to reach 79,127.3 million cubic metres by the end of February 2023 compared to 77,577.4 million cubic metres during the corresponding period in 2022.

During the same period, the Governorates of Dhofar and Muscat recorded an increase of 5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively.

-ONA

FINANCIAL RESULTS

ahlibank's first quarter net profit rises by 11% to reach OMR8.4mn

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ahlibank marked the first quarter of 2023 on a high note, powered by an extensive network of branches and a selection of innovative products and services and showcasing its strategic growth in the country as one of the most favoured banks.

ahlibank built upon its robust 2022 growth phase by reinforcing its operations with the inauguration of a new headquarters and signalling its intent to strengthen its 15-year presence in the market with equally impressive first-quarter results for 2023.

According to financial indicators, in line with ahlibank's overall performance, profit during the period reached OMR8.4 million increasing by 11.1 per cent, in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.

ahlibank's customer deposits grew by 7.3 per cent, reaching OMR2,339.7 million during the first quarter, compared to the same period in 2022. Loans, advances, and financing expanded by 5.6 per cent, amounting to OMR2,571.7



million. The bank's operating income increased by 4.6 per cent (OMR3.3 million), and its operating expenses rose by 4.5 per cent (OMR10.2 million).

Announcing the first quarter results, Said Abdullah Al Hatmi, CEO of ahlibank, stated, "2023 started on a very positive note for ahlibank, with its new head office symbolising its strategic growth over the past decade and a half. This set the stage for successive milestones that bolstered our deposits and profits. The coming months promise to enhance this sustained growth with new products and services that will reaffirm our commit-

ment to accelerating digitalisation, partnering with the government in its economic development plans, and empowering customers with exceptional banking experiences."

As the coming months reveal exciting plans and offers, it is worth highlighting some of the bank's recent accomplishments. Of particular significance is the comprehensive Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) for Private Banking and Wealth Management clients, designed to assist and support customers in achieving their long-term financial goals. Additionally, ahlibank launched Amaali, the SME Value Plus Account, catering to small and medium enterprises by offering financial solutions that enhance business potential and support new ventures.

Al Hatmi praised the bank's executive management and team members for their tireless efforts in shaping the fortunes of the bank and upholding its vision to be a dynamic and innovative centre of banking. "We will now carve our niche as the most preferred bank for customers from all walks of life," he added.

ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS

Opaz enhancing Oman's industrial infrastructure capacity

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), overseeing 21 affiliated zones, including 8 under development, in a total area exceeding 2,200 km² and providing employment to 74,000 workers continues to enhance Oman's industrial infrastructure capacity.

Keeping this in mind Opaz has made tremendous efforts to unify the legislative system and complete the law on special economic zones and free zones. It is also restructuring the procedures of the one-stop shop in Duqm, and implementing the one-stop experience in the zones supervised by Opaz to issue all approvals, licenses and certificates in 2022.

In addition to Opaz efforts have been made in the digital transformation through several applications to facilitate and accelerate investors' services and activate an access system for document control. Thus, Opaz has decided to stop receiving paper transactions by the end of next June, except for some government correspondences.

These initiatives were highlighted by senior officials of Opaz at its annual media briefing on Sunday.

Speaking about financial sustainability, Opaz was able to reprogramme the financing agreements and provide financing coverage for



many infrastructure projects with a total of OMR46 million without the need to refer to the government's treasury.

It is also working to benefit from the savings of financing agreements after completing some infrastructure projects with a maximum of up to OMR50 million by using old loans instead of getting new loans in the meantime. This will assist in covering urgent projects, which include lifestyle development, as well as projects related to enabling Sezad to provide infrastructure services for the renewable energy sector.

With regards to the institutional transformation, Opaz contracted with a specialised Irish house of expertise, and it received the first

report in March, which specified institutional transformation procedures to activate Opaz's role and hone its capabilities and its employees to attract more local and foreign investments.

Regarding renewable energy uses and the production of green hydrogen, Opaz signed with two companies that specialised in producing green hydrogen, namely the Hyport Company and Acme Company. As well, Opaz is studying other requests for renewable energy projects in coordination with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, so that these projects use Duqm to provide green ammonia products and attract mining projects that use renewable energy.

Moreover, Opaz is currently

coordinating with the Public Services Regulatory Authority and the Electricity Transmission Company to develop a mechanism for approving certificates for the use of renewable energy for factories operating in the Salalah Free Zone to enable them to export green products using part of the wind energy that is generated from Harweel field and transferred to Salalah.

Opaz also signed three memorandums of understanding to establish mineral projects in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm with each of the Jindal Shadeed Company, the Japanese Mitsui Company and Kobe Steel.

These companies use natural gas in manufacturing operations at the beginning and will use green

hydrogen in the future to produce green iron. Soon, we will announce another mining project in the Port of Duqm in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

Regarding the pharmaceutical industries, the construction works of Felix Pharmaceutical Industries factory in Salalah Free Zone were completed in 2022 and started production and it was officially opened in January 2023. This factory marks a new addition to the pharmaceutical and medical industries in the Sultanate of Oman. Likewise, Salalah Free Zone, Sohar Free Zone and Raysut Industrial Zone stand all as attractive hubs for the pharmaceutical and medical materials industries, in addition to the targeted sub-

sectors in those zones. Opaz is promoting these zones to attract more medical and veterinary industries.

"We are proud of the employees working in Opaz, the economic zones and the various free zones and industrial cities who work with each other in an integrated manner," the Opaz official said.

Highlighting the performance indicators of Opaz affiliated zones for 2022 the official said that the total volume of investment in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm until December 2022 amounted to OMR3.6 billion. The total number of manpower is 18,624 and bringing the Omanisation rate to 17.2 per cent.

The total volume of investment in the Sohar Free Zone reached OMR462 million until December 2022. The total number of manpower is 2,556 and bringing the Omanisation rate to 44 per cent.

The pace of growth continues in the Salalah Free Zone, as the total volume of investment reached OMR3.8 billion in 2022. The total number of manpower is 2,490 and bringing the Omanisation rate to 38 per cent.

Al Mazunah Free Zone is the first free zone in the Sultanate of Oman. The total volume of investment reached OMR138 million until December 2022. The total number of manpower is 726 and bringing the Omanisation rate to 14 per cent.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower



The trading value stood at OMR 2,024,270, comprising a decline of 44.4 per cent, compared to the last session

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index (30) lost 6.9 points, comprising a drop of 0.15 per cent to close at 4717.35 points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4724.25 points. The trading value stood at OMR 2,024,270, comprising a decline of 44.4 per cent, compared to the last session, which stood at OMR3,642,830. The report released by MSX

pointed out that the market value went down by 0.029 per cent to reach about OMR23.81 billion. The report added that the value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached OMR756,000, comprising 37.33 per cent. The value of shares sold by non-Omani investors reached OMR565,000, comprising 27.90 per cent. The net non-Omani investment increased by 9.43 per cent to OMR191,000. -**ONA**

RENEWABLE POWER PRODUCTION

Germany's Scholz says more renewables key to lower industry costs

BERLIN: Ramping up renewable power production rather than subsidies is the key to lower electricity prices for Germany's energy-hungry industry, Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Saturday, in an apparent dig at proposals by his government's economy minister. Industrial companies in Germany say electricity prices are too high compared with other countries, putting Germany's heavy industry at a structural disadvantage to other manufacturing centers such as the United States and China. Germany's economy ministry, led by Robert Habeck of the Greens, this week released a plan for a subsidised price of 6 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) until 2030. But the finance ministry of Scholz's coalition government swiftly pushed back against the subsidy scheme on Friday, saying

there was no budget for it. "There are regions already today where power production is as cheap as we want it to be so that industrial operations can prevail against global competition without subsidies," Scholz said, when asked to comment on how to best lower power prices. To extend this for the whole of Germany, Scholz said everything within his powers needed to be done to boost power transmission networks and renewable power production. Scholz was speaking to journalists at a geothermal power plant in Kenya during a trip to Africa. "We know today already that we will have lower power prices than today, once we reached our goal that renewable energies dominate electricity production in Germany," he added. -**BNA**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,733.61	4,712.37	4,717.35	4,724.25	-6.90	-0.15
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,642.41	7,601.44	7,615.11	7,610.90	4.21	0.06
Industry Index	6,283.26	6,224.78	6,226.89	6,227.76	-0.88	-0.01
Services Index	1,751.76	1,740.54	1,749.38	1,746.42	2.96	0.17
MSX Shariah Index	487.97	485.77	486.95	484.60	2.36	0.49
MSX TR INDEX	6,223.29	6,195.37	6,201.91	6,210.98	-9.07	-0.15
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,325.17	8,280.54	8,295.44	8,290.84	4.59	0.06
SERVICES TR IDX	1,924.12	1,911.81	1,921.51	1,918.26	3.25	0.17
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,712.09	6,649.62	6,651.86	6,652.80	-0.94	-0.01

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,574,473	2,024,270	737	23,808,526,129	12	15	17	44

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, MAY 7

REGULAR MARKET

SN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRV VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM00000002176	JAZERA STEEL PROD	1,000	284	1	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.275	0.009	3.273	0.284	0.265	0.282	0.100	35,471,021
OM00000002440	AL SHARQIA INV	6,900	459	3	0.074	0.077	0.074	0.077	0.075	0.002	2.667	0.077	0.075	0.082	0.100	6,900,000
OM00000001525	OMAN INVST& FIN	59,605	6,919	6	0.116	0.118	0.116	0.117	0.116	0.001	0.862	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.100	29,115,450
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR	15,600	4,181	3	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.000	0.000	0.268	0.266	0.268	0.100	26,800,000
OM00000001517	HSBC BANK OMAN	305,000	48,800	4	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.155	0.160	0.100	320,050,046
OM00000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	9,660	3,091	2	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.312	0.324	0.100	70,400,000
OM00000002374	UNITED FINANCE	239,338	13,715	12	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	21,367,638
OM00000002549	BANK DHOFAR	170,251	26,900	2	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.000	0.000	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.100	473,423,527
OM00000002796	BANK MUSCAT	825,953	223,150	73	0.272	0.272	0.270	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.270	0.273	0.100	2,026,727,207
OM00000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	240,100	15,477	6	0.065	0.065	0.064	0.064	0.064	0.000	0.000	0.064	0.064	0.065	0.100	12,800,000
OM00000003968	OOREDOO	194,146	73,387	14	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.000	0.000	0.378	0.376	0.380	0.100	246,056,919
OM00000001749	OMAN CEMENT	1,103	375	2	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.342	-0.002	-0.585	0.340	0.320	0.340	0.100	112,496,721
OM00000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	181,200	19,052	6	0.106	0.106	0.105	0.105	0.106	-0.001	-0.943	0.105	0.105	0.108	0.100	481,956,540
OM00000001533	OMINVEST	60,573	24,041	11	0.400	0.400	0.396	0.396	0.400	-0.004	-1.000	0.396	0.380	0.396	0.100	264,672,709
OM00000003224	RENAISSANCE SER	64,180	24,725	13	0.398	0.398	0.384	0.384	0.388	-0.004	-1.031	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.100	90,781,440
OM00000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	71,402	6,077	7	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.085	0.092	0.100	14,875,000
OM00000003026	OMAN TELECOM	321,001	316,880	16	1.000	1.000	0.994	0.998	1.000	-0.012	-1.200	0.998	0.988	0.988	0.100	741,000,000
OM00000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	10,100	889	3	0.086	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.090	-0.002	-2.222	0.088	0.088	0.093	0.100	17,567,933
Total		18	2,767,212	808,203	184											

Parallel Market

SN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (BD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRV VALUE	MARKET CAP
OM00000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	181,749	10,220	12	0.054	0.057	0.054	0.056	0.052	0.004	7.692	0.056	0.056	0.057	0.100	14,000,000
OM00000007084	MCT DESALINATE	54,176	5,201	11	0.096	0.100	0.095	0.100	0.096	0.004	4.167	0.100	0.095	0.099	0.100	15,555,040
OM00000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	3,429,896	301,473	136	0.086	0.090	0.086	0.088	0.085	0.003	3.529	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.100	17,600,000
OM0000000834	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	2,251,138	678,428	248	0.300	0.310	0.299	0.310	0.300	0.010	3.333	0.310	0.310	0.314	0.100	238,762,000
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	1,244	4,105	1	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.300	3.200	0.100	3.125	3.300	3.200	3.520	1.000	9,900,000
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	4,047	239	1	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.001	1.724	0.059	0.057	0.060	0.100	18,121,633
OM00000005983	PHOENIX POWER	26,701	1,776	4	0.065	0.067	0.065	0.067	0.066	0.001	1.515	0.067	0.064	0.067	0.100	97,994,298
OM00000004420	BANK NIZWA	711,413	66,933	13	0.094	0.096	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.001	1.064	0.095	0.095	0.096	0.100	212,510,538
OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	160,000	17,231	18	0.107	0.108	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.001	0.943	0.107	0.107	0.110	0.100	9,095,000
OM00000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	19	28	1	1.450	1.450	1.450	1.450	1.450	0.000	0.000	1.450	0.000	1.450	0.100	72,500,000
OM00000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN S	100,000	12,985	5	0.129	0.130	0.129	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.122	0.137	0.100	39,997,673
OM00000002267	GULF MUSHEROOM P	42,493	9,773	15	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.230	0.225	0.235	0.100	10,528,194
OM00000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK	2,989	2,666	6	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.000	0.000	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.100	84,740,000
OM00000002366	AL BATINAH DEV	5,000	450	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.094	0.100	2,700,000
OM00000004735	SEMBORP SALALAH	425,366	42,537	20	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.096	0.100	0.100	95,457,195
OM00000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	41,186	1,244	5	0.030	0.031	0.030	0.031	0.031	0.000	0.000	0.031	0.028	0.031	0.100	20,921,510
OM00000004930	AL SUWADI POWER	243	8	1	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.031	0.000	0.000	0.031	0.031	0.032	0.100	22,146,597
OM00000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	34,200	6,523	4	0.195	0.195	0.190	0.190	0.190	-0.001	-0.524	0.190	0.189	0.195	0.100	38,567,425
OM00000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	30,019	48,397	26	0.168	0.168	0.158	0.158	0.160	-0.002	-1.250	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.100	31,600,000
OM00000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	4,000	1,216	2	0.304	0.304	0.304	0.304	0.310	-0.006	-1.935	0.304	0.300	0.304	0.100	21,398,560
OM00000003661	VOLTAMP ENERGY	1,444	162	1	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.115	-0.003	-2.609	0.112	0.112	0.125	0.100	9,117,108
OM00000001368	CONSTRUCTION M.	15,000	840	5	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.058	-0.002	-3.448	0.056	0.054	0.056	0.100	3,500,000
OM00000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	724	101	1	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.145	-0.006	-4.138	0.139	0.136	0.144	0.100	10,497,558
OM00000003141	Baraka Water and Power	5,300	680	5	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.144	-0.014	-9.722	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.100	20,800,000
Total		24	7,779,147	1,213,223	542											

MUSCAT HILLS

Alizz Islamic Bank offers flexible financing options for residential units at La Vie project

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank, Oman Arab Bank, and Oman Real Estate Investments and Services Company (ORIS) have signed a joint agreement to offer financing facilities for customers interested in purchasing residential units at the La Vie project, which is currently being developed in Muscat Hills. This partnership enables potential homeowners to access flexible financing options and enjoy reduced profit rates when purchasing property in La Vie's luxurious complex. The agreement was signed by Ali Saif Al Mani, General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank, Sulaiman Hamad Al Harthi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Arab Bank, and Engineer Nasser Rashid Al Shibli, Chief Real Estate Officer at Ominvest group. Covering an area of approximately 640,000 square metres, the



La Vie project will feature the re-opening of one of the region's largest natural golf courses spanning 600,000 square meters, complete with 18 holes and a private club for golf enthusiasts. The course and clubhouse will be managed by the renowned golf management company - 'Troon', which operates over 750 golf clubs across 30 countries worldwide. With a built-up area of 64,000

square meters, the La Vie project will comprise of residential, commercial, and tourism buildings. The centrepiece of the development is an 80-room boutique hotel managed by global hospitality giant - Tivoli, a part of Minor Hotels Group brand, which is making its debut in the local market. The hotel boasts a rooftop swimming pool that is 70 metres long, providing stunning views of the golf course

and will also feature a private health club and spa operated by the world-leading brand 'Anantara'. Additionally, Tiv



LIFESTYLE

EXERCISE

IS MORE VITAL THAN NUTRITION IN MAINTAINING WEIGHT LOSS

Based on a recent study from the University of Colorado Anschutz Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC) at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, physical activity helps maintain significant weight loss more successfully than a diet.

The study was chosen as the Editor's Choice article in the March issue of Obesity. "This study addresses the difficult question of why so many people struggle to maintain their weight loss over time." "By providing evidence that a group of successful weight-loss maintainers engages in high levels of physical activity to prevent weight regain - rather than chronically restricting their energy intake," said Danielle Ostendorf, PhD, a post-doctoral fellow at the CU Anschutz Health and Wellness Centre.

The findings reveal that successful weight-loss maintainers rely on physical activity to remain in energy balance (rather than chronic restriction of dietary intake) to avoid weight regain. In the study, successful weight-loss maintainers are individuals who maintain a reduced body weight of 30 pounds or more for over a year.

"Our findings suggest that this group of successful weight-loss maintainers are consuming a similar number of calories per day as individuals with overweight and obesity but appear to avoid weight regain by compensating for this with high levels of physical activity," said Victoria A. Catenacci, MD, a weight management physician and researcher at CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

The study looked at successful weight-loss maintainers compared to two other groups: controls with average body weight (Body Mass Index (BMI) similar to the current BMI of the weight-loss maintainers); and

controls with overweight/obesity (whose current BMI was similar to the pre-weight-loss BMI of the maintainers). The weight-loss maintainers had a body weight of around 150 pounds, similar to the normal weight controls, while the controls with overweight and obesity had a body weight of about 213 pounds.

This study is one of the few to measure total daily energy expenditure in weight-reduced individuals using the gold standard doubly labelled water method. This method allows researchers to precisely determine an individual's energy expenditure by collecting urine samples over one to two weeks after people are given a dose of doubly labelled water. Doubly labelled water is water in which both the hydrogen and the oxygen atoms have been replaced (i.e. labelled) with an uncommon isotope of these elements for tracing purposes.

The measure of total daily energy expenditure from doubly labelled water also provides an estimate of energy intake when people are weight stable, as they were in this study. Prior studies used questionnaires or diet diaries to measure energy intake, which has significant limitations.

The researchers also measured each individual's resting metabolic rate in order to understand how much of the total daily energy expenditure is from the energy expended at rest versus energy expended during physical activity. Prior studies used self-reported measures or activity monitors to measure physical activity, which are techniques that cannot provide the same accuracy. -ANI

THE WEIGHT-LOSS MAINTAINERS HAD A BODY WEIGHT OF AROUND 150 POUNDS, SIMILAR TO THE NORMAL WEIGHT CONTROLS, WHILE THE CONTROLS WITH OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY HAD A BODY WEIGHT OF ABOUT 213 POUNDS.



SPORTS

A lot of positives to take from Premier Cup in Nepal: Mendis

Oman's Bilal Khan was named best bowler of the tournament; skipper Zeeshan Maqsood's all-round show 'deserved' player of the series award

MUSCAT: Individual brilliance stood out for Oman despite the national team narrowly missing out a place in the final of the recently-concluded inaugural ACC Men's Premier Cup in Kathmandu, Nepal. A third-place finish for Duleep Mendis coached team did secure the Men in Red a spot in the ACC Emerging Teams Asia Cup, along with Premier Cup champions Nepal and runner-up UAE. The three Associate nations will vie with the A teams from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh in the fifth edition of the event in July. The qualification for the Emerging Asia Cup is a small consolation for Oman as the team had the potential to go all the way in the Premier Cup, according to Duleep Mendis, the team's chief coach.

The former Sri Lankan Test captain said that "his boys returned with a lot of positives from the Nepal tour." Oman lost to UAE by just two runs in a rain-interrupted semi-final that was decided on DLS method. The loss of two wickets in one over just before rain stopped play gave UAE a narrow win.



Jatinder Singh in action during the inaugural ACC Premier Cup that concluded recently in Kathmandu, Nepal



Bilal Khan with the tournament's best bowler award



Oman's chief coach Duleep Mendis



Skipper Zeeshan Maqsood

Reflecting on the loss that saw Oman miss out a chance to battle with hosts Nepal in the final and a chance to make it to the Asia Cup, Mendis said: "A single-over madness cost us dear. We were ahead of UAE till that over before our two

experienced batters departed in one over and rains arrived to pour water on our hopes." Mendis added: "The boys learnt an important lesson. One can't lose focus while on the crease. Despite the defeat in the semi-final, we

came back with a lot of positives. The individual performances of some of the players were top-notch and the best in the tournament. Overall, our players demonstrated good application and noteworthy performances in all departments of the game during the tournament."

Best bowler award Oman's fiery left-arm pacer Bilal Khan was declared the best bowler of the tournament and the coveted award will give a world of confidence to the experienced speedster ahead of the ICC World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe next month. Bilal picked up a total of 17 wickets in the six matches at an average of 19.82 and an economy of 6.29. He had three four-wicket

hauls with his best figures of 4/42 against Qatar. Another bowler who impressed was right-arm off-spinner Jay Odedra, who collected ten wickets including a five-wicket haul of 5/14 against Kuwait. With a miserly economy of 3.55, the best by an Omani bowler in the series, Mendis said that he was the "find of the tournament for us." The opening pair of Jatinder Singh and Kashyap Prajapati had an excellent run with Jatinder garnering 288 runs in six games including an unbeaten century against Malaysia. An average of 72, Jatinder finished as the second-best run-getter in the tournament. UAE's Vriitya Aravind was the top scorer with 454 runs.

Prajapati scored a total of 222 runs in six matches at an average of 44.4 with the highest score of 66. He was the sixth highest run-scorer of the tournament. Oman skipper Zeeshan Maqsood led from the front and his all-round display should have "earned him the player of the series award" according to Mendis. His reasons were based on Maqsood's stellar statistics as the captain collected 187 runs at an average of 46.75 coupled with 13 wickets at an average of 16.46. However, the player of the tournament award was conferred on Nepal's spinner Sandeep Lamichhane, who picked up 13 wickets in the tournament and scored 55 runs in six matches.

KARATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Shito-Ryu Oman Karate Do Kai are champions



MUSCAT: Shito-Ryu Oman Karate Do Kai claimed the top honours at the recently-concluded Shotokan Karate Centre National Championship. Held at the Ahli-Sidab Club and organised by the Oman Karate Committee (OKC), the championship witnessed nearly 200 men and women take part in different categories. Shotokan Karate Centre finished as overall runner-up while Muscat International Karate Do Academy took third place. AIKI School of Martial Arts came fourth in the championship that witnessed a total of 16 clubs participate. The clubs and private academies that competed were: Shotokan Karate Centre, Muscat International Karate Do Academy, Buraimi Karate Academy, Shito-Ryu Oman Karate Do Kai, Eagles Samail Karate Club, Karate Champions Club, Professional Karate Club, AIKI School of Martial Arts, Beats Club, Boshi Do Kai Karate

Ghala, Freedom Karate Team, International Academy for Individual Games, International Shotokan Karate Federation Oman, JKA Oman Academy, Karate Stars Club and Emperor Academy. The competitions were divided in both kata and kumite contests to the various age groups, starting from six to 18 years. Salim bin Hamed Al Mahrooqi, the OKC Chairman, gave away the prizes at the ceremony that was attended by Hilal bin Sabeel Al Balushi, Ahli-Sidab vice-chairman, Suleiman Al Jabri headmaster of Imam Jabir bin Zaid School, Mohammed Othman Al Haj Yousuf, president of the Sudanese Community Social Club and Hassan bin Hashim bin Khalifah Al Balushi, representative of Enhance Company Group. Later, Shotokan Karate Centre chief Navas Mokeri, along with Yusuf Al Siyabi and Hilal Al Abdali, members of the centre, presented a memento to the chief guest Salim bin Hamed Al Mahrooqi.

SPANISH FOOTBALL

Rodrygo the hero as Real Madrid beat Osasuna in Copa del Rey final

MADRID: Two goals from Real Madrid striker Rodrygo gave his side a 2-1 win in the final of the Spanish Copa del Rey against a courageous Osasuna on Saturday night. The result means Real have won the Cup 20 times in history, while Osasuna's second final appearance ended with the same result as the previous one, which they lost 2-1 to Betis in 2005. Rodrigo opened the scoring for Real Madrid in the opening minute. Vinicius Jr was given too much space to turn past Jon Moncayola and Ruben Pena before pulling the ball back for his teammate to score with a shot that deflected over keeper Sergio Herrera. Osasuna reacted well with Aridane and Ante Budimir heading at Thibaut Courtois before Aimar Oroz fired just wide. Vinicius was Real Madrid's main threat and Moncayola was given a yellow card for pulling the Brazilian back, but the right-back was getting little support as the Madrid winger was given too much space. The winger set up Karim Benzema after 24 minutes, but Herrera got down to his right to make a good save before Courtois then denied Eze Abde from a narrow angle as the game was played at a breakneck pace.



David Alaba then rattled the Osasuna post with a free kick, before Vinicius' protests finally earned him a yellow card. The second half began with Benzema and Vinicius both shooting well over the bar before Osasuna leveled the game. The side from Pamplona had

threatened with crosses from the right before the ball fell to Lucas Torro at the edge of the Madrid area and the midfielder didn't think twice before slamming a 20-meter shot into the corner of the Madrid net in the 57th minute. Vinicius again found space down the Madrid left and David

Garcia could only clear his cross to Toni Kroos. The German's shot was deflected and fell kindly for Rodrygo to hit home. Osasuna never gave up, but their only chance was in injury time when Dani Carvajal just nipped the ball away from Chimy Avila on the edge of the six-yard box. - xinhua

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Big win for Man City as Reds strengthen European claim



LONDON: Manchester City piled on the pressure at the top of the English Premier League with a 2-1 win at home to Leeds United on Saturday afternoon that leaves them four points clear of Arsenal, who have a difficult visit to third place Newcastle United. Kevin de Bruyne started for City after injury, while Erling Haaland was also in the starting line-up, although Pep Guardiola rested Jack Grealish, John Stones, Bernardo Silva, Rodri and Ruben Dias ahead

of Tuesday's Champions League semi-final first leg away to Real Madrid. Leeds had new coach Sam Allardyce in the dugout, but the veteran could only watch as City dominated the first half, with Ilkay Gundogan scoring two drilled shots from the edge of the Leeds area after two assists from Riyad Mahrez. Haaland hit the woodwork twice in the second half and Gundogan missed a penalty that would have made it 3-0 in the 84th minute

and a minute later Rodrigo scored from one of his side's only chances in the game to provide a nervous end at the Etihad Stadium. Mohamed Salah's 13th-minute goal after a move involving Fabinho and Virgil van Dijk saw Liverpool to a 1-0 win at home to Brentford, which leaves them fifth in the table and favorites for a place in next season's Europa League. Salah's 30th goal in all competitions this season saw his side to their sixth consecutive league win.

Aston Villa's hopes of qualifying for Europe next year look to have disappeared after a 1-0 defeat in a Midlands derby away to Wolverhampton. Harry Kane kept Tottenham's slim hopes of playing in Europe alive with a goal on the stroke of halftime in a 1-0 win at home to Crystal Palace. Finally, two late goals gave Frank Lampard his first win in seven games in charge as Chelsea won 3-1 away to Bournemouth. - xinhua

IN PICTURES



Riders participate in launching event of bike season in Vladivostok, Russia
Riders participate in the launching event of the bike season in Vladivostok, Russia. The event attracted a large number of riders and visitors. *xinhua*



Belgian students awarded at proficiency competition
Kiana Vanderbieren, winner of the first prize in the secondary level competition, shows her skills at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, in Leuven, Belgium. Several students from Belgian primary, secondary and higher education were awarded at the Belgian final round of a Chinese language skills competition. *xinhua*



First Budapest International Contemporary Puppet Festival held in Hungary
People watch a giant robot puppet marching during the opening of the first Budapest International Contemporary Puppet Festival in Budapest, Hungary. *xinhua*



Flood hits Aceh Barat district in Indonesia
This aerial picture shows houses submerged by flood after heavy rain in Napai village in Aceh Barat district, Aceh Province, Indonesia. *xinhua*



Dreamfest water lantern festival held in St. Petersburg
People attend the Dreamfest water lantern festival in St. Petersburg, Russia. The Dreamfest water lantern festival started on Friday at the Yusupov Garden in St. Petersburg and will last for three days, during which people can launch water lanterns and enjoy performances. *xinhua*



Turtledove singing contest in Yogyakarta, Indonesia
People watch a turtledove singing contest at Alun Alun Kidul in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. *xinhua*



Kenya hosts Kungfu tournament amid growing popularity of sport
Children practice free-running tricks in Kiambu County near Nairobi, Kenya. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Enjoy unique travel experience with Asalah and Al Jawhar cards

Bank Muscat’s Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking cardholders can enjoy more privileges as well as safe and secure payment options to enjoy travel plans with family and friends in and outside the Sultanate

MUSCAT: In line with its pioneering role in providing special and exceptional offers to customers, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, is providing its customers with a chance to enjoy an exceptional banking experience



and benefits from exclusive travel offers. Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking cardholders can enjoy more privileges as well as safe and secure payment options to enjoy travel plans with family and friends in and outside the Sultanate. Customers can enjoy several exclusive and special services like travel insurance, access to airport lounges and a global concierge service, which will give customers peace of mind while travelling. On this occasion, Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager - Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, “Bank Muscat is keen to provide

the best services to its valued customers while moving ahead in developing and promoting its offers in the Sultanate. Through the travel package, holders of Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking cards can enjoy a lot of exclusive banking facilities. The bank provides several unique benefits and privileges, which reflect its customer-centricity. “I would like to extend our thanks to all our customers for their continuing trust and confidence in the bank and call upon them to benefit from the wide spectrum of travel features which have been carefully tailored to meet their aspirations and needs.”

Asalah customers can benefit from complimentary visits to the Primeclass lounge and unlimited free visits to the Majan lounge at Muscat International Airport, in addition to the Khareef lounge at Salalah Airport. Customers can also enjoy Visa Luxury Hotel Collection Program at more than 900 hotels around the world, the best prices for available rooms and free dining vouchers. The Asalah Visa Signature Credit Card on the other hand facilitates 12 complimentary visits to over 1,000 airport lounges worldwide including those at Muscat and Salalah and access to a 24/7 global concierge service

through a variety of digital channels including telephone, email, and WhatsApp. The 24-hour concierge service provides highly-personalised assistance to Visa Signature cardholders, taking care of all the details so they can simply focus on enjoying their restaurant, travel or shopping experience. The Credit Card also offers 1% cash back on purchases as well as free multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their direct family members. The complimentary Dragon Pass facilitates airport dining offers at more than 200 restaurants globally, receptions and welcome services with discounts of up to 25% in 450 international

destinations. At the same time, Al Jawhar Privilege Banking provides its customers with an exceptional banking experience and opens a world of opportunities for them. Customers are eligible for a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO 800 and exclusive offers on dining, entertainment and shopping available through the “xperience with the Entertainer” app for smartphones. Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cardholders can also enjoy the “best in class” complimentary travel insurance, which includes travel accident insurance as well as insurance for lost baggage and money, cancellation, travel delay, delayed baggage, personal liability, legal expenses and loss of passport and access to free medical and legal referral services worldwide. Al Jawhar Visa Platinum Credit Cards offer access to 25 premium lounges around the world in addition to lounges at Muscat and Salalah airports. Cardholders are eligible for a complimentary Dragon Pass and a ‘Meet and Greet’ service with a 15% discount at over 450 global destinations. They can also enjoy 1% cash back on all local and international spending and access to premium benefits at over 900 prestigious luxury hotels around the world.



Exclusive benefits on Toyota passenger car

MUSCAT: Now is the best time to own a Toyota passenger car and benefit with service from 2 years/20,000km up to 5 years / 50,000km (whichever is earlier) and insurance 1 year or cash gift in lieu of insurance OMR125 to OMR300 and 8 Toyota Raize SUV raffles. The campaign is valid until May 10. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.) Customers can choose from a wide range of passenger cars including the Yaris, Corolla and Camry. The stylish and exciting Yaris promises a dynamic driving experience due to its four-cylinder engine that is equipped with 16-valve DOCH and dual VVT-I. The Yaris is available with 1.5-liter capacity engine, producing 105 horsepower and 138 Nm of torque with fuel consumption of 20.5 km/l. This is paired with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), which simulates a seven-speed sequential shift transmission. The interior of the Yaris too is appealing. It hosts a range of practical features, including an 8-inch multimedia screen with Apple CarPlay® & Android Auto together with a USB port on the head unit and two ports at the rear console that

enable passengers to connect external media devices. Additional features include a four or six-speaker sound system and an automatic air conditioning system with two rear vents for extra passenger comfort. The popular Corolla is one of the most loved sedans and it is available in three powertrain options. It includes a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 HP and 20.39 Kg-m of torque which is paired to a new Direct Shift CVT transmission and a 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque, which is paired with a CVT transmission. Offering some of the most comfortable experiences is the Corolla’s interiors with an extensive range of features, which vary based on the trim level. Occupants also benefit from AC vents for the rear seat, a moonroof, 4.2 inch multi-information display (MID), 7-inch touch-screen multimedia infotainment display, rear view camera, cruise control, six-speaker sound system, and 60:40 split-folding rear seats. The powerful and attractive Camry is available in two engine options. The 2.5 Litre engine delivers 204 HP & 24.8 Kg.m torque & 3.5L engine delivers 298 HP & 36.3 Kg.m torque. Camry is also available in the 3.5L sports edition that adds to the thrill. The Camry’s interior is well-detailed and adds to making journeys fun.

Lulu concludes ‘Shop and Win’ promotion, picks grand prize winner



MUSCAT: Lulu Oman concluded its Ramadan Shop and Win promotion by handing over OMR100,000 worth of cash prizes to the winners of the campaign. The campaign was held from March 1 to April 29, across all Lulu stores in Oman to coincide with Ramadan and Eid celebrations. The distinctive ‘Shop & Win’ promotion gave 281 customers a chance to win cash prizes worth OMR100,000. The prize distribution ceremony was held on May 6, 2023, at Lulu Hypermarket Baushar. The prizes were distributed to the winners in the presence of well-wishers, families and shoppers, as well as the management and staff of Lulu Hypermarket Oman.

Muneer Al Balushi was announced as the lucky winner of the Grand Prize of OMR10,000. Taraq Hamad Al Thobi, Manal Zadjali, Salem Abdullah Al Muqbali, Abdullah Abdullah, Naresh M, Essam Ali, Ahmed Nasar Al Habsi and Lavkush Varmawere are the eight winners of the weekly cash prize of OMR5000. Other weekly cash prizes of OMR750, OMR500, OMR 200 and OMR 100 were won by Lulu customers from all over Oman. Shoppers purchasing for a minimum value of OMR10 at any Lulu Hypermarket in Oman during the promotional period were entitled to register themselves to be part of e-raffle draws held during the



entire period. The winners were picked in eight consecutive draws held during the promotional period. Expressing happiness over the success of the campaign, Ananth A V, Director of Lulu Hypermarkets Oman & India, said “I would like to congratulate our lucky Grand Prize winner and all other winners of this year’s Shop and Win promotion. We organize this promotion every year during Ramadan as a gratitude to our customers for their continuous loyalty and support. Our patrons continue to be at the core of everything we do, and that is why we offer them a unique customer experience like none other, along with a diverse variety of products to suit their needs at all times.

Shabeer K A, Regional Director – Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, stated, “Lulu constantly strives to bring its customers great value, excellent products, and uncompromised services. This campaign was an opportunity for shoppers to further enrich their unique shopping experience and win exciting rewards that Lulu offers during Ramadan and Eid. Lulu always aims to create promotional campaigns that are beneficial for retailers as well as a rewarding experience for shoppers at the same time. All of the promotions, special deals and offers at Lulu are specially tailored to make a tangible difference each day in the life of consumers.

New batch of residential units offered in Hayy Al Sahil project



MUSCAT: New batch of residential units was offered in Hayy Al Sahil project in Quriyat. This was announced at a press conference held yesterday. Eng. Abdulrahman bin Awad Barham Baomar, CEO of the developer of Hayy Al Sahil project, expressed the company’s gratitude to its customers who showed confidence in Hayy Al Sahil project. “Due to the successful achievement of the objectives of the first offering, we are pleased to announce the second batch of real estate units. In addition, we announce to our customers that we are extending the 10% discount offer till Thursday May 11, 2023.” On this occasion and the great turnout, the company is to announce a raffle prize draw for a residential unit studio (Terms and conditions apply) for all buyers in the first and second offerings, which will be announced after the completion of the sale of the units in the second offering.

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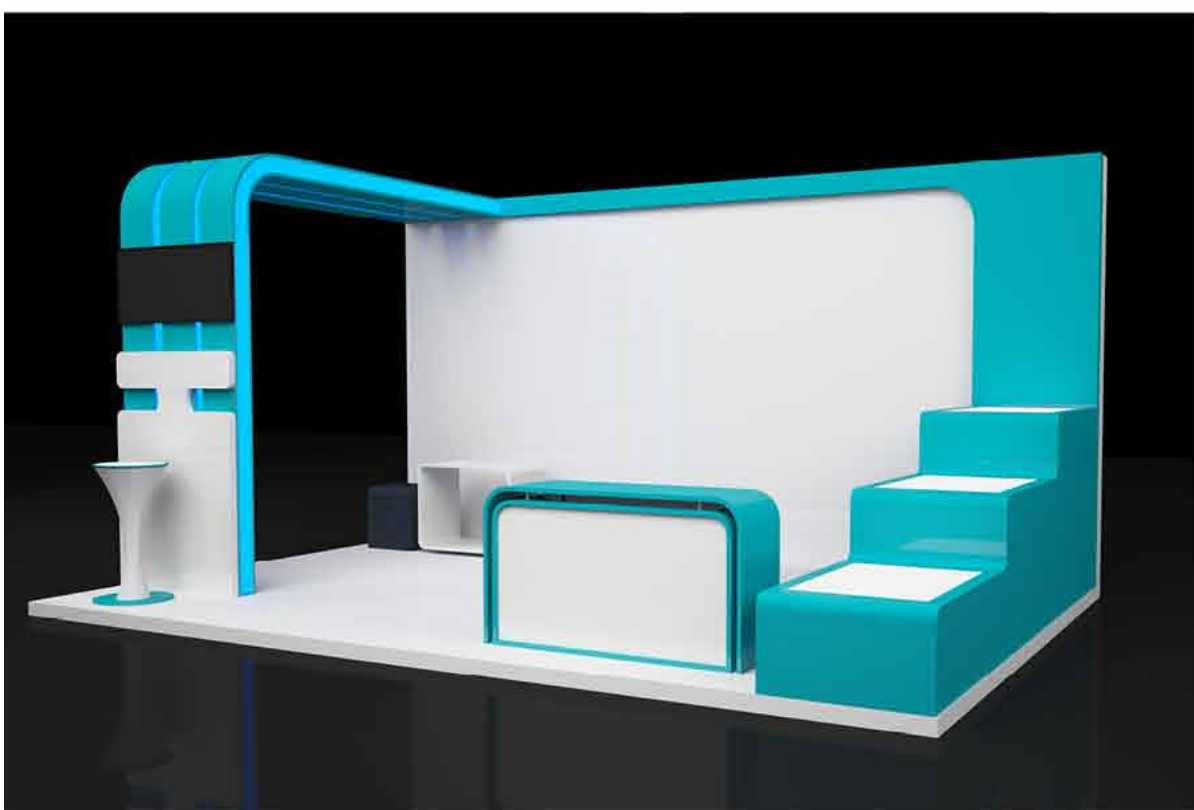
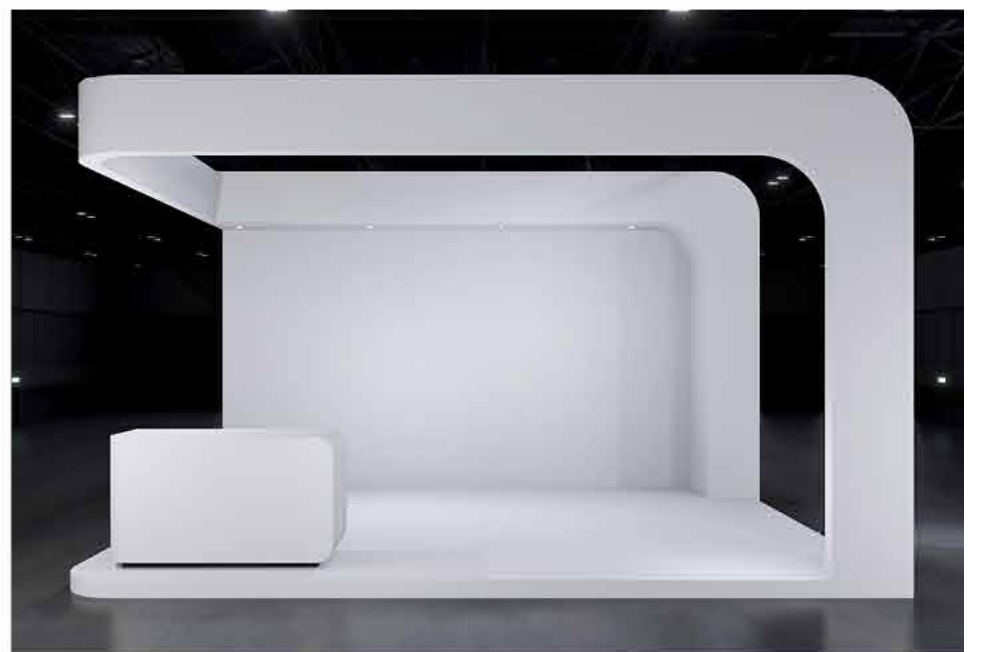
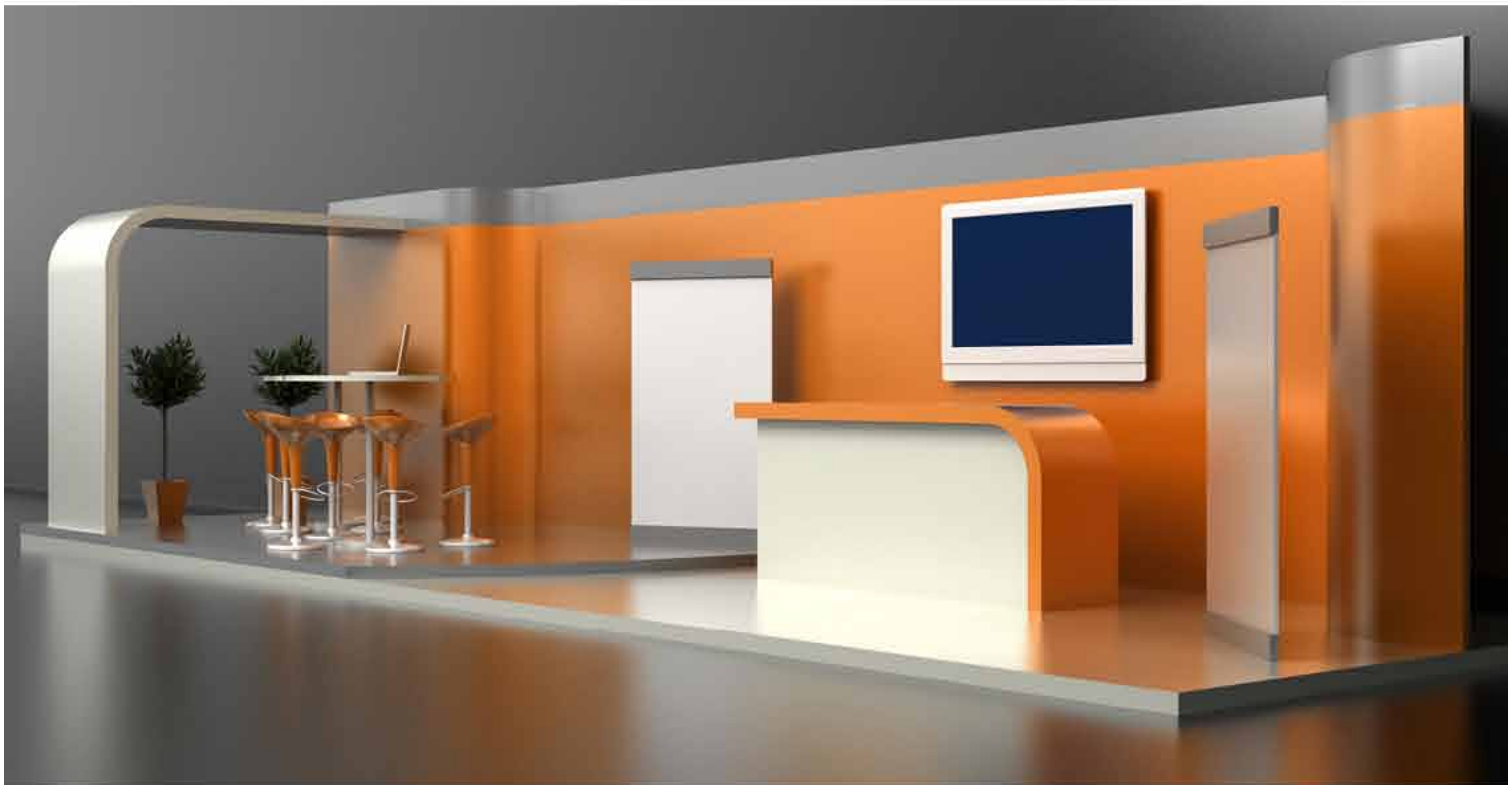
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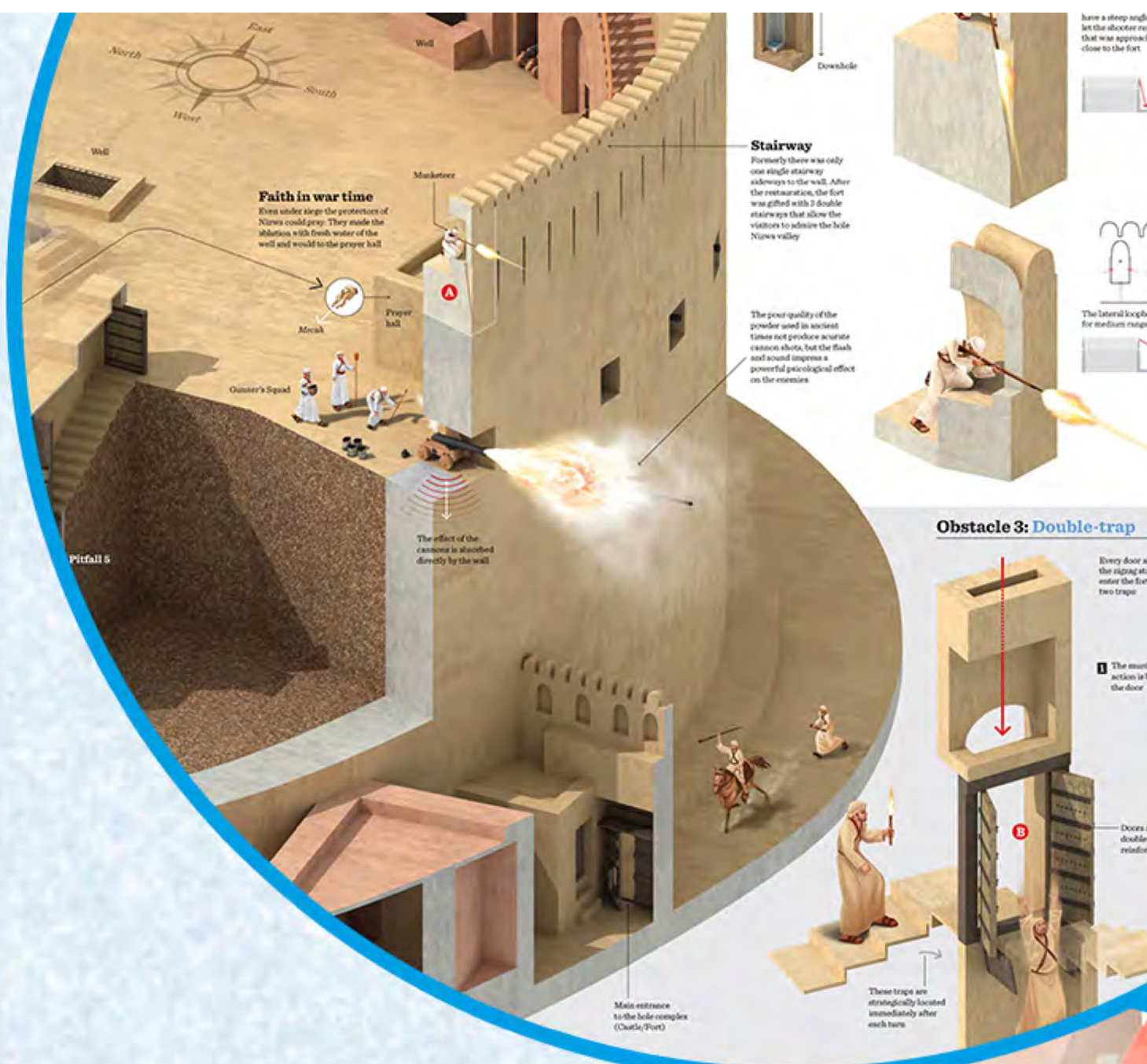
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