

**OMAN STRENGTHENS
TIES WITH SINGAPORE**

The Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef led a recent high-level trade and investment delegation to Singapore. **>B1**



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**HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN
ISSUES ROYAL DECREE**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Thursday issued Royal Decree No. 27/2023 on the promulgation of the Higher Education Law, after presenting the same before the Council of Oman. The Royal decree reads as follows: Article (1) states that the provisions of the Higher Education Law attached to this decree shall be applied. **>A5**



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DELEGATED BY HM

Sayyid Theyazin attends coronation of King Charles III



LONDON: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said took part in Coronation of King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth.

The ceremony took place at Westminster Abbey Church in London on Saturday. During the event, Sayyid Theyazin was accompanied by Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr Hamad Al Busaidi.

As King Charles III was crowned, gun salutes were fired from 13 locations across the UK including Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

The largest, a 62-round salute, happened from the Tower of London. A six-gun salute took place at Horse Guards Parade and 21 rounds were fired at the remaining locations. The bells of Westmin-

ster Abbey rang out to celebrate the historic moment.

After the King was crowned, Queen Camilla received her own coronation, albeit in a slightly different form.

Like her husband, she was anointed with holy oil by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but without a screen, which demonstrates the different nature of anointing a consort compared to a reigning sovereign.

The Keeper of the Jewel House then presented the Consort's Ring, which symbolises promise and commitment, "marrying" her to the King and both to God and their people. Then, she was crowned with Queen Mary's Crown, marking the first time in recent history that a new crown wasn't made specifically for this occasion, and presented with the Sceptre and Rod.

-ONA/ANI See also >A4, A6

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Oman ranks 2nd in use of desalinated water

1 The Sultanate of Oman is ranked second in the use of desalinated water in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, according to a study by the French Institute of International Relations.

>A2

WORLD

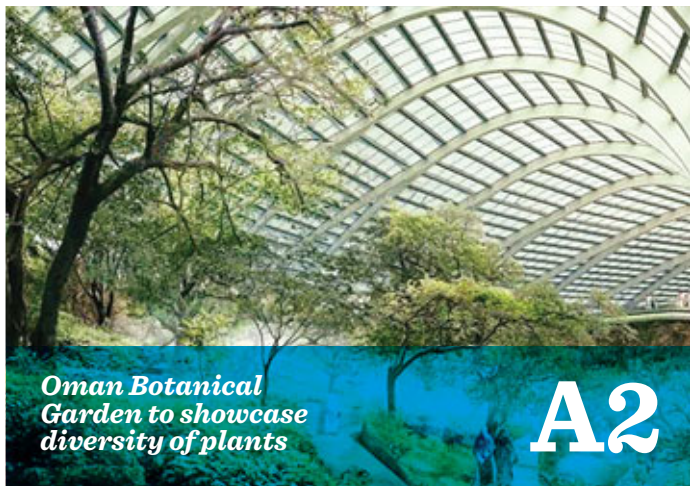
Scorpion stings flyer on Air India flight

2 A scorpion stung a passenger on board an Air India flight from Nagpur to Mumbai. Air India confirmed the incident took place on April 23, adding that the passenger was given treatment. **>A6**

SPORTS

Babar Azam breaks ODI record

3 Pakistan went to the top of the ICC Men's ODI Team Rankings with a win in Karachi in the ODI against New Zealand. Pakistan are the new No.1 team in men's ODIs after a massive win over Kiwis. **>B6**



Oman Botanical Garden to showcase diversity of plants

A2

Steps being taken to ensure, safeguard the interests of foreign investors, says OCCI chief

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman is committed to delivering world-class facilities and is making efforts to promote foreign investments in the country, according to Faisal Abdullah Al Rawas, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

In his exclusive remarks to *Times of Oman* recently, Al Rawas said: "The business climate is promising in Oman with various measures being taken to ensure and safeguard the interests of foreign investors. Though, in recent times, the whole world has been



facing serious economic challenges due to different reasons."

The OCCI chief added: "There has been a big disruption in supply chains and air connectivity in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is time for each country to try and build a system that could mitigate the impact of

such unforeseen developments. A flexible economic system is the need to deal with such variables, and I am certain that it would help each country."

Al Rawas said: "We have to be competitive in order to attract foreign investments. It is a challenge but the efforts made by the

Sultanate of Oman have borne fruits and there are positive indicators in the growth of the Omani economy. We have already witnessed improvements in many global indicators, be it the financial ratings, attracting foreign investments, or the ease of doing business." **>A2**

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Oman Air reports strong performance in first quarter of 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate, has revealed a strong performance in its first quarter of 2023.

In a statement, the airline said that the total revenue for 2023 is set to increase by 236 percent compared to 128 percent in 2022.

The airline further said that there was a 182 percent growth in passenger traffic and revenues increased by 88 percent.

Meanwhile, its net loss for 2023 will see a decline by 56 percent.

The cargo capacity of the airline is forecast to increase by 160 percent in 2023 bringing in a 360 percent rise in revenues.

The national airline of Oman

also said that the overall Omanisation currently is 75 percent with 81 percent Omanisation of pilots, followed by 100 percent of Omani male crew members, and 90 percent of engineers and 93 percent of support employees. A total of 155 new Omani employees joined the company in 2023, including 7 pilots, 63 cabin crew, 40 engineers and 45 support staff.

The airline said that all flights reported an on-time performance of 96 percent as the airline operated to 44 destinations.

The fleet strength of the airline as per the agreements signed between 2011 and 2015 will be limited to 45 (10-A330s, 13-737s (Max), 13-737NG, and 9 Dreamliners), compared to 54 in 2022.



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Maghrib.....	6:42pm
Isha.....	7:59pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:07am

IMF

GDP to grow at 4.1% in 2023

<FROM A1 The Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry said: "The recent legislation related to foreign investment, long-term residence for investors, financial facilities, and regulation of the labour market system makes the business climate promising in Oman."

The Sultanate of Oman witnessed a positive growth in real GDP estimated at 4.4 percent in the last quarter of 2022, and the expected growth for the current year is estimated at 4.1 percent, although the global economic growth rate is estimated at 2.8 percent for the year 2023, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) data.

On the other hand, the global inflation rate is expected to decrease from 8.8 percent for the year 2022, to 6.6 percent. For the year 2023, however, the inflation rate in the Sultanate in March of this year, amounted to 1.6 percent.

Oman ranks 2nd in desalinated water use in GCC

Desalinated water constitutes 86 percent of water use in the Sultanate of Oman, compared to 42 percent in the UAE, 90 percent in Kuwait



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman is ranked second in the use of desalinated water in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, according to the French Institute of International Relations.

A recent study by the French Institute of International Relations confirmed that desalinated water constitutes 86 percent of water use in the Sultanate of Oman, compared to 42 percent in the UAE, 90 percent in Kuwait, and 70 percent in Saudi Arabia.

It explains the fact that only 0.5 percent of the water on earth can be used for human consumption,

adding that climate change poses a threat to this scarce supply, even as some two billion people around the world still lack access to safe drinking water.

This precious natural resource is a challenge for Gulf Arab countries, where desalination is the only available option. It noted that last year, there were more than 21,000 desalination plants operating worldwide, nearly double the number a decade ago.

With the United Nations projecting that within two years, two-thirds of the world's population will be affected by water stress, the desalination business will also thrive at an estimated growth rate of between 6 percent and 12

percent annually.

It stated that by 2030, desalination capacity in Middle East countries is expected to almost double, making it very difficult to control carbon dioxide emissions due to the energy-intensive nature of desalination plants, which are currently powered by electricity produced primarily from natural gas or liquid fuels.

It pointed out that the release of salt-laden waste into the sea during the desalination process leads to an increase in salinity in coastal areas and affects marine life. There is also the problem of transmission losses, which are estimated to be higher than 50 percent in some Gulf countries.

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NCSI

Survey continues to get opinion of government services' beneficiaries

Times News Services

MUSCAT: Starting from May 2, the National Centre for Statistics and Information is continuing with its implementation of the second round of the opinion poll of government services beneficiaries for the year 2023.

The survey comes with the aim of identifying the opinions of customers with the services provided the by government agencies, and assessing the level of satisfaction with aspects related to submitting or completing a service request, in addition to identifying the opinion of beneficiaries of electronic services and assessing the level of satisfaction with them, in order to improve the quality of services provided.



RANDOM SAMPLE: The survey targets a random sample of customers with government agencies in the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

The survey targets a random sample of customers with government agencies in the Sultanate of Oman, during the last quarter of 2022 and the first quarter of 2023,

according to a set of basic criteria for evaluating government services Survey to get opinion on services provided by government agencies continues. With ONA inputs

OVER 1,400 PLANT SPECIES

Oman Botanical Garden to showcase diversity of plants



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Botanical Garden will be the largest garden in the world, showcasing Oman's plant diversity in an area stretching over 4.2 square kilometres.

Upon completion, it is expected to include more than 1,407 species of local plants that will be cultivated in environments simulating their native conditions.

The unique project will display traditional Omani plants and showcase Oman's plant diversity as well as agricultural heritage and hospitality.

Located between the mountains and valleys of the (Al-Khoud) area of Lolik Al-Seeb, which is famous for its plant diversity, the garden will feature traditionally grown Omani plants and document their usage in the various fields of daily life.

A world-class project, the Oman Botanical Garden will have various sections like a visitor centre, a green mountain environment department, the Dhofar mountain environment department, the Omani valleys environment department, the sandy deserts department, the Salt Flats Environment Department (Sabkha), the Children's Games Department, the Agricultural Nursery Department, the Laboratory Department and the Researchers and Students Department.

It is worth noting that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism launched in 2021 an international tender for the development, implementation and production of interactive content, visual communication, and the development of the smart device application for the Oman Botanical Garden project.



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IN PICTURES

KING CHARLES III CORONATION



**BRITISH EMBASSY
IN OMAN CELEBRATES
KING CHARLES III
CORONATION**

The British Embassy in Oman celebrated the coronation of King Charles III on Saturday. The embassy organised a 'Coronation' screening at the Al Bustan Palace to celebrate this occasion. The event was attended by senior government officials, dignitaries, businessmen and embassy officials.



PHOTOS BY SHABIN E.

Port of Salalah | ميناء صلالة

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR THE FIRST QUARTER ENDED 31ST MARCH 2023

Dear Shareholders,

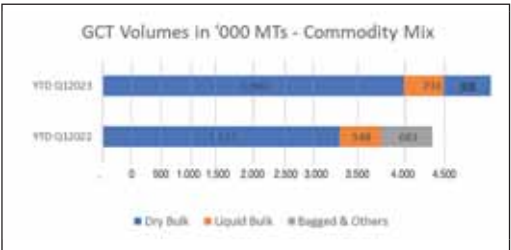
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I have the pleasure in presenting the unaudited consolidated financial results of your company for the first quarter ended March 31, 2023 (Q1 2023).

Company Performance

During Q1, 2023 the Container Terminal (CT) handled 1056 K TEUs compared to 1093 K TEUs in corresponding period last year. The company has retained all major customers and Maersk Lines our major business partner has maintained consistent volumes.



The GCT has handled 5039 K tons of general cargo during Q1 2023, as compared to 4,363 K tons in Q1 2022. The positive volume development of general cargo is seen in the last quarter of 2022 continued in the first quarter of 2023 with volume increase of 15% as compared to corresponding period last year. The major commodities handled are limestone, gypsum, methanol, and cement, which are exported from Salalah to nearby markets, and continue to drive the general cargo business.



Financial Overview

Consolidated net profit for Q1, 2023 was recorded at RO 1,170 K, as compared to the corresponding period last year profit of RO 908K. Consolidated EBITDA was recorded at RO 4,118 million during Q1, 2023, as compared to RO3,155 million during same period last year. The EBITDA margin has been impacted due to lower maintenance & repair cost, marine and staff cost.

Revenues of GCT have increased by 6.1% compared to the same period last year mainly due to higher dry bulk volumes supported by productivity of new MHC's in general cargo. The general cargo revenue for volumes handled at Berth 31 has been included in the container terminal financials, as in the previous year, due to the conversion of the berth into a container terminal facility.

The complete accounts of the company will be delivered or sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English as requested, within seven days of receipt of the request.

Year 2022	Particulars	1 Jan 2023 to 31st Mar 2023	1 Jan 2022 to 31st Mar 2022
4,344	Volume Container Terminal (TEUs'000)	1,056	1,093
15,296	General Cargo Terminal (Tons'000)	5,039	4,363
70.909	Revenue (RO'000)	17,939	17,258
3,924	Profitability (RO'000)	1,379	1,161
3,222	Net Profit before tax	1,170	908
	Net Profit/ (Loss) after tax		
4.54	Ratios Net profit/ (Loss) (%)	6.52	5.26
0.03	Earnings per share (RO)	0.01	0.01
0.40	Book value per share (RO)	0.41	0.40

Employee Development

Port of Salalah is steadfast in developing and enhancing employees' productivity as people are the primary asset of the company. Various safety, technical, management and administration trainings are imparted to the staff.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Port of Salalah strongly believes in a CSR program that is aligned with the pillars of sustainability and volunteerism and it is fundamental to our business. Impacting the local Dhofar region and benefitting the larger segments of communities requiring support are the guiding post of the company CSR program.

Future Outlook

While global container volume declined in Q1 2023 due to weakening of the underlying supply/demand balance, Container freight rates have stabilized to 2019 (Pre-pandemic) levels and with more capacity and equipment available which is expected to ease the burden on the trade caused by the high freight rates.

In the containerized segment, while the transshipment volume, which holds the lions share, continues to be performing in line with same period last year and Import gate volumes were at 14% YoY growth despite the negative development at a global level. The positive trend with the gate volume growth is expected to continue in 2023 lead by various initiatives including re-distribution, container conversion of bulk as well as Yemen gateway.

With an ambitious target of 20MMT by end 2023 (a growth of 10% YoY), The General Cargo business is off to a good start in Q1 '23 with volume performing on target and delivering a 10% YoY growth. The key commodity segments i.e dry bulk (Limestone and Gypsum) as well as Liquid bulk are showing growth and forecast also remains strong for the rest of the year despite the increase in vessel charter for dry bulk. The major dry bulk importing markets India and Vietnam are also forecasting positive growth.

Conclusion

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Shareholders of the company, we record the sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, for his strategic vision, leadership, and his continued support, without which it would not have been possible to establish and maintain this world-class port.

We also thank our customers, investors, and partners at the Salalah Hub and Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and members of the Government bodies we work together with.

We place on record our appreciation for the contributions of all our employees, who continue to perform with high distinction.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

Braik Musallam Al Amri
Chairman
Salalah Port Services Co. SAOG
May 3rd, 2023

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS OF 31ST MARCH 2023

Parent Company		Consolidated		Parent Company		Consolidated	
Mar-2022	Mar-2023	Mar-2022	Mar-2023	Mar-2022	Mar-2023	Mar-2022	Mar-2023
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
ASSETS							
Non Current Assets							
152,221	142,682	152,432	142,866	54,878	58,546	54,949	58,629
23,963	20,011	24,033	20,072	7,697	9,217	7,720	9,244
249	211	249	211	81	95	81	95
546	546	-	-	210	210	-	-
-	26,000	-	26,000	10,000	-	10,000	-
176,979	189,450	176,714	189,149	72,866	68,068	72,750	67,968
Current Assets							
7,257	8,427	7,257	8,427	3,241	2,791	3,241	2,791
2,981	3,973	2,981	3,973	1,529	1,146	1,529	1,146
30,074	6,980	30,074	6,980	2,685	11,567	2,685	11,567
8,986	5,776	8,986	5,776	2,220	3,456	2,220	3,456
32,500	20,601	32,500	20,601	7,923	12,500	7,923	12,500
69,150	71,824	69,150	71,824	27,625	26,596	27,625	26,596
150,948	117,581	150,948	117,581	45,223	58,056	45,223	58,056
327,927	307,031	327,662	306,730	118,089	126,124	117,973	126,024
TOTAL ASSETS							
46,758	46,758	46,758	46,758	17,984	17,984	17,984	17,984
7,666	7,666	7,666	7,666	2,949	2,949	2,949	2,949
15,584	15,584	15,665	15,665	5,994	6,025	5,994	6,025
116,780	121,217	117,214	121,578	46,621	44,911	46,756	45,077
186,788	191,225	187,303	191,667	73,548	71,838	73,714	72,035
LIABILITIES							
Non Current Liabilities							
22,783	19,174	22,863	19,241	7,374	8,762	7,400	8,793
10,001	11,007	10,001	11,007	4,233	3,847	4,233	3,847
9,998	9,848	9,989	9,836	3,788	3,846	3,783	3,842
42,782	40,029	42,853	40,084	15,395	16,455	15,416	16,482
Current Liabilities							
4,950	5,096	4,950	5,100	1,960	1,904	1,962	1,904
56,844	54,666	55,990	53,864	21,027	21,864	20,722	21,539
35,968	13,580	35,968	13,580	5,223	13,834	5,223	13,834
595	2,435	598	2,435	936	229	936	230
98,357	75,777	97,506	74,979	29,146	37,831	28,843	37,507
141,139	115,806	140,359	115,063	44,541	54,286	44,259	53,989
327,927	307,031	327,662	306,730	118,089	126,124	117,973	126,024
1.04	1.06	1.04	1.07	0.41	0.40	0.41	0.40

UNAUDITED CONSOLIDATED AND PARENT STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR 31ST MARCH 2023

Parent Company		Consolidated		Parent Company		Consolidated	
Mar-2022	Mar-2023	Mar-2022	Mar-2023	Mar-2022	Mar-2023	Mar-2022	Mar-2023
US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	US \$ '000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
44,861	46,641	44,870	46,641	17,939	17,254	17,939	17,258
(30,988)	(29,524)	(30,988)	(29,522)	(11,356)	(11,919)	(11,356)	(11,919)
(5,342)	(6,748)	(5,350)	(6,755)	(2,595)	(2,055)	(2,598)	(2,058)
(7,319)	(7,006)	(7,323)	(7,009)	(2,697)	(2,816)	(2,698)	(2,817)
(113)	(142)	(113)	(142)	(54)	(44)	(54)	(44)
1,674	137	1,674	137	53	644	53	644
2,773	3,358	2,770	3,350	1,290	1,064	1,286	1,064
674	617	674	617	237	259	237	259
(419)	(373)	(420)	(374)	(143)	(161)	(144)	(162)
3,028	3,602	3,024	3,593	1,384	1,162	1,379	1,161
(654)	(542)	(657)	(542)	(209)	(252)	(209)	(253)
2,374	3,060	2,367	3,051	1,175	910	1,170	908
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2,374	3,060	2,367	3,051	1,175	910	1,170	908
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2,374	3,060	2,367	3,051	1,175	910	1,170	908
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2,374	3,060	2,367	3,051	1,175	910	1,170	908
0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01

10 DAYS

Eight killed in separate incidents over a week

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Eight people have died in the Sultanate of Oman in separate incidents in the last ten days. The cause of deaths is drowning, sand collapse and gas leak. The incidents occurred between April 26 and May 6.

In the first case, a man and his wife were found dead after their vehicle drifted in a valley in the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

Speaking exclusively to Times of Oman, an official from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) confirmed that a woman aged 21 years and her husband (33-year-old) were found dead in Wadi Al-Bathaa, in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali.

In another incident, the body of a missing boy aged 21 years was found in Wadi Dayqah in the Wilayat of Dima Wal'Tayyin after three days of search by the CDAA.

The citizen was drowned in Wadi Dayqah in the Wilayat of



Dima Wal'Tayyin during the tropical depression which was accompanied by thunderstorms, strong winds, and heavy precipitation.

Times of Oman contacted Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Rahbi, a relative of the boy, who said that the man was walking along with a group of youth on the edge of one of the mountains in the Toul area of the Wilayat of Dima Wal'Tayyin around 11 am on April 29 when he slipped and fell into the wadi leading to his death.

In another case, the Oil and Gas Workers Union have condoled the death of their colleague Yahya

Al-Anbouri who died as a result of hydrogen sulfide gas leak in the Mukhaizna field in Al-Wusta Governorate. The union also stated that the gas leak resulted in four other injuries.

The CDAA said that the rescue teams from South Al Batinah Governorate responded to a sand collapse incident in which three workers died while carrying out road maintenance work leading to the village of Wakan in the Wilayat of Nakhal.

Speaking to Times of Oman, a senior official of the CDAA said that the dead persons have been identified as Bangladeshi nationals. "They are all aged between 25 and 42 years," the official added.

In the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, the CDDA responded to another sand collapse incident involving two workers of Asian nationality while they were digging a well in a farm in Al Muntreb in the Wilayat of Bidiyah. One person was rescued alive but the other died.

MEETINGS

Oman, Pakistan agree to boost air travel

ISLAMABAD: Several meetings were held between officials from the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, resulting in an agreement to boost air travel between the two countries' airports.

During the visit, Eng. Naif Ali Al Abri, Chairman of CAA and head of the Omani delegation, discussed means of developing various aspects related to air navigation with Khawaja Saad Rafique, Pakistan's Minister of Aviation and Khaqan Murtaza, Director General of Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority.

The delegation also went on tour of Islamabad International Airport to view various aviation-related facilities. -ONA

HIGHER EDUCATION LAW

<FROM A1> His Majesty issues Decree

Article (2) states that the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation shall issue the executive bylaw/regulation of the attached law, as well as the decisions necessary for the implementation of its provisions, within one year from the date of its enforcement. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions shall continue to be enforced without prejudice to the provisions of the attached law or its provisions.

Article (3) stipulates that those addressed by the provisions of the attached law shall adjust their conditions in line with the law's provisions within one year

from the date of its enforcement.

Article (4) cancels Royal decree No. 41/99 on promulgating the System of Private Universities, Royal decree No. 42/99 on the establishment of private higher colleges and institutes and Royal decree No. 83/2002 on promulgating the law on educational scholarships, grants and study aids.

It also annuls all that contravenes this Decree or the attached law or their provisions.

Article (5) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing. -ONA



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جامعة الشرقية
A'SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

A'Sharqiyah University (ASU) is a private higher education institution located in Ibra, North of A'Sharqiyah Governorate of the Sultanate of Oman, about 150 km from Muscat. It was established in 2009 by Ministerial Decision (78/2009) issued by the Ministry of Higher Education.

Tender details:
ASU's Tender Committee has the pleasure to invite the companies who are experienced in providing IP Telephone System:

Tender No.	Description	Document Collection Deadline	Bids Submission Deadline	Document fees
ASU/10/2023	IP Telephone System for A'Sharqiyah University (ASU/10/2023)	11/05/2023	25/05/2023	100 OMR

- The specialized companies of the above assignment can obtain the tender document from Procurement and Contracts Department at A'Sharqiyah University, Ibra, during the working days from 9:00 am to 03:00 pm.
- All bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Tender Committee at A'Sharqiyah University in Ibra, and must bear the Tender Number and Tender Title. The envelope must be sealed with red wax and contain no indication of the name of the Tenderer.
- The submitting of the main envelope should contain the following:
 - Separate sealed envelope contains technical proposal (1 original copy + 2 copies). Apart from hard copy, a SOFT COPY of the technical proposal should be included in the envelope on a virus-free USB flash drive.
 - Separate sealed envelope contains commercial proposal (1 original copy + 2 copies). Apart from hard copy, a SOFT COPY of the commercial proposal should be included in the envelope on a virus-free USB flash drive.
 - Separate sealed envelope contains tender bond.
- ASU general terms and conditions of tenders shall apply on all submitted bids. http://www.asu.edu.om/downloads/purchase_terms_conditions.pdf
- ASU is not bound to accept the lowest bid.
- For more details, please don't hesitate to contact us on: (+968) 25401115/25401116.



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MOH No- 580/22

Rahul ruled out of IPL, WTC final

LSG name Karun Nair as his replacement for remainder of IPL 2023 season



MUMBAI: Lucknow Super Giants' skipper KL Rahul, who injured himself during a recent IPL match against Royal Challengers Bangalore match, has been ruled out of the remaining IPL 2023 season and the forthcoming World Test Championship (WTC) 2023 final against Australia in June.

A statement from IPL said: "KL Rahul ruled out of IPL 2023 due to injury. Lucknow Super Giants names Karun Nair as his replacement for the remainder of the IPL2023."

Nair, who replaces Rahul at LSG,

has so far played 76 IPL games and has 1,496 runs in his name.

KL Rahul announced his unavailability for the rest of the season with an Instagram post. The batter also confirmed that he is set to undergo surgery on his thigh, which will rule him out for the WTC final against Australia, starting on June 7 at The Oval.

His post read: "After careful consideration and consultation with the medical team, it's been concluded that I'll be undergoing a surgery on my thigh shortly. My focus will be on my rehabilitation and recovery in the coming weeks.

"It's a tough call to make, but I know it's the right one to ensure a full recovery. As the team captain, it pains me deeply not to be able to be there during this crucial period. But, I'm confident that the boys will rise to the occasion and give their best performance as always. I'll be cheering for them from the sidelines with all of you, watching every game. @lucknowsuper-giants," Rahul said.

"Absolutely gutted that I won't be at the Oval next month with Team India. I'll do everything I

can to get back in blue and help my country. That has always been my focus and priority. @indiancricketteam. I want to express gratitude to each one of you - my fans, which gave me the strength to get back up, the LSG management and the BCCI for their promptness, and my teammates for their unwavering support during this difficult time. Your encouragement and messages mean a lot to me and motivate me to come back stronger and fitter than ever before," he added.

"Meanwhile, I promise to keep you all updated on my progress and hope to be back on the field sooner than soon. The last few days have been really hard, but I'm determined to come out on top. Injuries are never easy, but I'll give it my all as always. Thank you for all the support and good wishes."

Possible replacements

With Rahul out of the WTC final, India still have a variety of options to choose from as his replacement.

Rahul would have been a crucial member of the squad due to his experience playing in England, as

well as due to his versatility.

Rahul would have potentially covered three roles in the Indian setup - opening batter, middle-order batter and as wicketkeeper-batter.

Options at India's disposal

Ishan Kishan: He was a part of the Indian squad for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia but served as the backup keeper, with KS Bharat getting the nod.

He could well be the frontrunner for a call-up in the India squad due to his past experience and flexibility.

Sarfraz Khan: He has been banging at the doors of selectors, arguably being the most impressive performer in the Indian domestic circuit. Sarfraz bats in the middle-order for Mumbai and has impressed everyone with his attacking brand of cricket. In 37 first-class games, he has scored 3505 runs at an impressive 79.65.

Despite the favourable numbers, Sarfraz is yet to receive an international call-up and it remains to be seen whether the Indian team management will decide to blood him in during such a high-stakes game.

Yashasvi Jaiswal: The rising youngster has been making waves on India's domestic circuit and has been one of the most consistent performers in the IPL this season.

Jaiswal has long been touted as India's future opener after making his name at the 2020 ICC Men's U19 World Cup in South Africa and his game has only continued to improve.

The 21-year-old has featured in 15 first-Class games and has 1845 runs at a staggering average of 80.21, with 9 centuries to his name. In IPL 2023, Jaiswal has scored 442 runs in 10 games so far, including a brilliant ton against Mumbai Indians.

Ajinkya Rahane: The veteran is already in the squad for the clash against Australia and will almost certainly be a lock-in selection with Rahul's untimely injury.

The general consensus was that it would well come down to a clash between Rahul and Rahane for a place in the India XI, come June 7 and the former vice-captain is now likely to get the nod at his preferred No.5 position in the batting order. - ANI/icc-cricket.com

Extremely poor: Sangakkara on Royals' defeat

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Royals (RR) coach Kumar Sangakkara termed the team's performance against the defending champions Gujarat Titans (GT) as "extremely poor" and "embarrassing".

Rajasthan succumbed to 118 in 17.5 overs against GT on the home turf on Friday. The GT registered a 9-wicket victory.

"It is embarrassing for anyone when you don't play well," Sangakkara said. "But we've got to accept the fact that we were extremely poor today. And that's the first step. You realise it, accept it, and then try to come up with the solutions to what the problems are," he added.

The coach said that RR did show intent. However, they were "reckless". "We were very, very poor in terms of capitalising on the starts we got. We were showing intent for a while, but we were a little bit reckless, and then we had very, very little intent against the two spinners," he added. -ANI

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Tender Announcement

Request for Pre-Qualification For Consultancy Services for (Updating the Feasibility Study for National Veterinary Vaccine Company)

National Veterinary Vaccines Company seeking for a consultant to update the feasibility study. The consultant for the project may be part of a single organization or consortium.

Scope of the study: Updating Feasibility Study

Qualification No.	PQ-FS-2023/1
Tender Fee	100 OMR
Last Date for Collection Pre-Qualification	14 May 2023
Last Date for Clarifications	17 May 2023
Last Date for Submissions	21 May 2023

Companies with relevant experience in executing similar projects within the same domain are invited to purchase this tender.

For inquiries or to request pre-qualification documents, Please contact us by email:

Aziza.alrawahi@nvvco.om +968 92431881

Tender

Local Online Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender Committee at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences announces the tender shown in the following table:

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Establishments eligible to bid	Document's Price	Last date for bid purchase online	Last date for bid submission
28/2023	Preparation of the infrastructure for the network of the building of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Musandam Branch	Companies specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board at the (Excellent, First, Second, Third and Fourth) Grades	RO 25/- (Twenty Five Omani Riyals)	16/05/2023 at 02:30 pm	26/05/2023 at 10:00 am

- Tender documents may be purchased online starting from Sunday 07/05/2023 at 07:30 am through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>
- All bidding companies must attach with their bids the document acknowledging commitment to the bid, which is attached to the tender documents. The bid shall be sealed and signed by the authorized person, and shall be uploaded in the electronic tender system of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences with the tender name and number only.
- Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omanisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.
- The University shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid.

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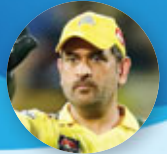




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QUOTE OF THE DAY



“Crucial game for a simple reason: the middle of the table has a logjam. This win gives a cushion, but we can't get comfortable with it because one or two teams are close and are facing each other.”

MS Dhoni

TODAY'S MATCHES



VS

Gujarat Titans vs Lucknow Super Giants

2pm, Ahmedabad



VS

Rajasthan Royals vs Sunrisers Hyderabad

6pm, Jaipur

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	NR	NRR	PTS
GT	10	7	3	0	+0.752	14
CSK	11	6	4	1	+0.409	13
LSG	10	5	4	1	+0.639	11
RR	10	5	5	0	+0.448	10
RCB	9	5	4	0	-0.030	10
MI	10	5	5	0	-0.454	10
PBKS	10	5	5	0	-0.472	10
KKR	10	4	6	0	-0.103	8
SRH	9	3	6	0	-0.540	6
DC	9	3	6	0	-0.768	6

CSK: Chennai Super Kings, DC: Delhi Capitals, GT: Gujarat Titans, KKR: Kolkata Knight Riders, LSG: Lucknow Super Giants, MI: Mumbai Indians, PBKS: Punjab Kings, RCB: Royal Challengers Bangalore, RR: Rajasthan Royals, SRH: Sunrisers Hyderabad



CHENNAI CRUISE TO VICTORY

Super Kings' pace trio of Pathirana, Chahar, Deshpande wreck Mumbai Indians batting

CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings' pace trio of Matheesha Pathirana, Deepak Chahar and Tushar Deshpande combined well to share seven wickets as the hosts cruised to six-wicket victory over Mumbai Indians at MA Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday.

Put to bat first, Mumbai Indians were restricted to a below-par score of 139, a total which Super Kings never looked in trouble during the chase at Chepauk.

Ruturaj Gaikwad's rapid cameo of 30 off 16 balls (4x5, 2x6) in the first four overs and his opening wicket 46-run partnership with Devon Conway (44) set them up for an easy victory.

Chahar's twin strikes had reduced Mumbai to 14/3 in the third over; and although Nehal Wadhwa (64) and Suryakumar Yadav added 55 to stage a recovery, Pathirana applied the brakes in the death overs. Mumbai managed only 17 - while losing four wickets - in the last three overs, as Wadhwa's maiden T20 fifty turned out to be a solitary effort.

The win takes Super Kings to the second spot on the points table, even as third-placed Lucknow Super Giants have an extra game in hand. Mumbai on the other hand, remain sixth.

On Saturday, Pathirana was introduced in the 13th over, just after Wadhwa and Suryakumar had given Mumbai Indians hope of a respectable total.

Pathirana's first two overs went for only eight off the bat, and skipper MS Dhoni kept his remaining overs for the death. He returned to start the 18th after the two overs before that were taken for 29 and gave only two runs aside from casting Wadhwa with a 145kph yorker. He ended with 3/15 - all wickets coming in the death overs.

With Tilak Varma out injured for this game, Mumbai were missing a solid middle-order batter. And forced to rebuild after the top-order failure, Wadhwa opened up after the powerplay when he gently cut Ravindra Jadeja for four to deep backward point, and then drilled Moeen Ali to deep extra cover.

Once Wadhwa picked up some momentum, he looked confident enough to keep attacking spin: Jadeja was slog-swept over short fine to start the 11th over, before he beat short fine leg with another sweep off Maheesh Theekshana in the 14th. And with five overs to go, he cracked the innings' first six by launching Theekshana over long-on.

Wadhwa's fifty took 46 deliveries when it was raised in the 17th over, after which he swept, pulled and scooped Jadeja for fours.

After Suryakumar's exit, Tristan Stubbs (20) and Wadhwa carried the innings further and brought up their fifty-run stand in 39 balls.

Gaikwad in a hurry

Chennai Super Kings slammed 46 in the first four overs, out of which Gaikwad had hammered 30. That included four fours and two sixes, as he got Super Kings' chase rolling alongside Conway. Gaekwad turned the screw in the third over when Mumbai introduced left-arm seamer Arshad Khan.

Gaikwad went 6, 4, 4, 6, but was dismissed off the first ball of the fifth over from Piyush Chawla, but by then, he had already set the foundation for a comfortable win for Super Kings, who had lost two and had one rained out in their previous three games.

Ajinkya Rahane and Conway built a steady partnership of 35 before Rahane was trapped for 21 by Chawla.

Ambati Rayadu was out for 12 and Conway also departed for 44, handing Akash Madhwal's maiden IPL wicket as Super Kings were 130/4 in 16.3 overs. Shivam Dube (26 n.o.) and skipper Dhoni then powered the team to an easy win in 17.4 overs.

Brief scores: Mumbai Indians 139/8 (Nehal Wadhwa 64, Suryakumar Yadav 26, Tristan Stubbs 20; Matheesha Pathirana 3/15, Deepak Chahar 2/18, Tushar Deshpande 2/26) lost to Chennai Super Kings 140/4 in 17.4 overs (Devon Conway 44, Ruturaj Gaikwad 30, Shivam Dube 26 n.o.; Piyush Chawla 2/25).

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CBO INCREASES REPO RATE
After the US Fed's recent announcement to raise its key policy rate, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) increased its repo rate for local banks at a similar rate of 25 basis points to stand at 5.75 per cent.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



REFINERY PRODUCTS RISE
The total refinery products in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 40.4 percent until the end of March 2023 compared to the same period last year, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Potential uptick ahead for Omani stock market

Contrary to other markets in the region which saw some positive performances overall, the benchmark Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) remained within its larger downtrend that started when the market hit a peak in March



Farah Mourad

port stock markets in the US and the Middle East as traders take on more risks. The improving sentiment could see global investors return to stock markets like that of Muscat, Dubai, and others in the region," she further added.

At the same time, some concerns could remain as the US economy is expected to see a recession later this year which could impact the global economy and as the banking sector's woes re-emerge periodically as US regional banks continue to be under stress. "Such fears could impact the local banking sector to a certain extent as investors could remain cautious. Global investors could continue to show concerns toward banks despite the strength of Omani banks," Farah Mourad said.

The banking sector in Oman has been recording strong results and continues to see an increase in deposits, a factor increasingly monitored by investors since the failures of a number of US banks. The sector is also seeing growing loan volumes despite higher interest rates which could help banks record more profits. A strong performance in the banking sector could create an impetus for the rest of the stock market and push the main index to the upside.

"In addition, banks could also benefit from their solid credit rating,

Executed deals on MSX



MUSCAT: The deals executed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose last week to the levels they were in last March, above the level of 4,000 deals; Benefiting from the high demand for the share of Abraj Energy Services, the company witnessed the execution of 1,192 deals.

Bank Muscat witnessed the execution of 359 deals, while the stock maintained the level of 270 baisas, which is almost the same level to which the stock fell after the annual general assembly of the bank approved on March 22 the distribution of cash dividends of 15 baisas, while 214 deals were executed on Al Anwar stock.

Renaissance Services witnessed the implementation of 203 deals, 195 deals were executed on Ooredoo shares, 150 deals on National Bank of Oman (NBO) shares, 141 deals on International Financial Investments shares, and 126

deals on Omantel shares.

The total number of deals executed last week was 4,109 deals, compared to 1,932 deals, 2,447 deals, and 3,454 deals in the previous three weeks.

The trading value rose last week to OMR14.3 million compared to OMR5.6 million in the previous week when trading was limited to just three days due to the Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

At the level of stock market indices, the main index recorded a decline of 145 points last week and closed at 4,718 points, the financial sector index decreased by 176 points, while the services sector index increased by 40 points, the Sharia index rose by about 7 points, and the industrial sector index recorded the best rise, up by 225 points, benefiting from The rise in the shares of a number of industrial companies. - **OMA**

which should help dissipate investors' concerns. Most Omani banks have seen their ratings upgraded to a positive outlook," she added.

However, the market could still be exposed to the volatility and uncertainty in energy markets. Oil in particular fell sharply this week before rebounding and could cause

some volatility in the market. "Despite its strong rebound, it remains at relatively low levels compared to last year's peaks. The commodity is expected to see a volatile year with Chinese economic recovery being weaker than expected and the US potentially heading toward a recession," Farah Mourad said.

INVESTMENT DELEGATION

Oman strengthens ties with Singapore

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef led a recent high-level trade and investment delegation to Singapore.

As well as participated in extremely productive discussions with several government and commercial organisations including the Ministry of Trade & Industry, Singapore Economic Development Board and Enterprise Singapore, the delegation that included representatives from the Ministry of Energy & Minerals; Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries; Oman Investment Authority; the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones & Free Zones; Asyad; OQ; and Fisheries Development Oman engaged with Singaporean investors looking to enter as well as expand their presence in the Middle East.

According to Faisal Al Nabhani, MoCIIP's Director of International Cooperation & Trade Relations, the significant level of attention generated by the visit came as no surprise given the international accolades Oman's economy has recently received: "At the start of the year FDI Intelligence ranked Oman fourth globally in its FDI Standouts Watchlist 2023 while just last month Oman was projected to be the fastest growing economy in the GCC in 2023 by the World Bank and the IMF predicted Oman will have the highest economic growth rate in the Arab World in 2024."

"This visit, when the world's attention is very much focused on us and our economy, presented an outstanding opportunity to build on the strong trade and investment relations we enjoy with Singapore. We were able to showcase the impacts and ambitions of Oman Vision 2040, the enlightened economic strategy that is driving our development and progress. I should say that it is these impacts - the differences Oman Vision 2040 has already made - that have earned us this international recognition," remarked Al Nabhani.

Amongst the most notable differences made possible by Oman Vision 2040, in the Mo-



CIIP Director's opinion, are the pro-enterprise enhancements to Oman's commercial regulatory and legislative framework and the range of business-friendly initiatives introduced. "The new Invest Oman Lounge, designed to support investors as they set up operations, is a good example of this and, of course, there is the hugely successful Invest Easy, the Government's portal for registering new businesses which since the launch of the new licensing service in April 2021 has issued more than 351,000 licenses - over 69,000 of them to international investors."

Oman and Singapore already enjoy strong trade relations with Oman's non-oil exports to Singapore increasing from \$152 million in 2021 to \$214 million in 2022. A significant rise of 40 per cent.

"As the figures show, Singapore is a key market for Omani goods, particularly chemicals, iron, steel, machinery, plastics and cosmetics. Singaporean consumers are known for their high standards of quality, and Omani companies are well-positioned to meet these standards. There is considerable growth potential While Singapore is a relatively small island nation of almost 6 million, it is an ideal launching pad for Omani companies to enter the lucrative trading bloc of Southeast Asia - Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia - home to over 685 million people," Al Nabhani added.

The delegation's visit to Singapore is part of a broader effort to enhance economic ties between Oman and countries around the world.

8TH ANNUAL CYBER SECURITY WEEKEND

Kaspersky experts share what's new on cyberthreat agenda in META

Times News Service

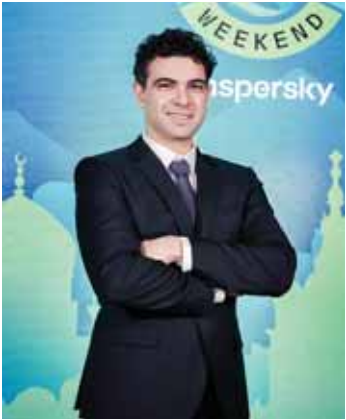
ALMATY, KAZAKHSTAN: The biggest cyberthreats specifically targeting governments, enterprises, businesses and industrial organisations were discussed during Kaspersky's 8th annual Cyber Security Weekend-META 2023, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on Thursday.

The event also saw the experts from the company forecasting the trends that will influence the cybersecurity landscape in the future.

The impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI), compromised corporate data on the Darknet, risks carried by deepfakes as well as critical industry-specific threats - all these topics were discussed during the conference. Special attention was put on Kaspersky's Cyber Immunity approach as a way to create solutions that are virtually impossible to compromise and that minimise the number of potential vulnerabilities.

"Considering how quickly the threat landscape is expanding its boundaries and the number of new devices appearing in users' daily lives, it's not surprising that we were detecting over 400,000 malicious files per day and this number is growing year by year," said Dr Amin Hasbini, Head of Global Research & Analysis Team (GReAT) for META, at Kaspersky.

"It is crucial for individuals, businesses, and governments to take proactive steps to protect their systems and data from these evolving threats. This includes implementing strong cybersecurity measures, staying vigilant against emerging threats, and keeping up to date with the latest security



Amin Hasbini

trends and best practices," he further added.

Gradual rise in phishing attacks

Diving deeper into social engineering cyberattacks, Kaspersky shared insights on phishing attacks which are most common in the Middle East, Türkiye and Africa (META) region. Comparing the first quarter (Q1) 2022 to Q1 of 2023, Egypt (49 percent), UAE (33 percent), Qatar (88 percent), Oman (28 percent), Kuwait (27 percent) and Bahrain (20 percent) saw an increase in phishing attacks on users. On the other hand, phishing attacks in Saudi Arabia saw a slight decrease of 1 percent in Q1 of 2023 as compared to the same time in 2022.

In the African region, phishing attacks grew in South Africa (7 percent), Nigeria (53 percent) and Kenya (87 percent) in Q1 of 2023 as compared to Q1 of 2022. Türkiye (53 percent) witnessed a 53 percent increase in Q1 of 2023 as



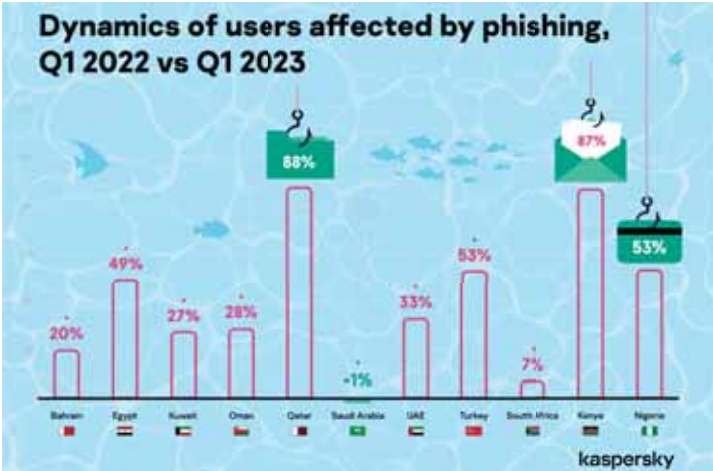
Dmitry Galov

opposed to Q1 2022.

Ransomware

According to Kaspersky's data, the number of organisations that faced ransomware mainly dropped in Q1 2023 in the META region in comparison with the same period in 2022. The decline was observed in the Middle East region, where the number of B2B ransomware detections dropped by 61 percent. Over the same period ransomware attacks also dropped in Türkiye, with a 59 percent decrease, as well as in Africa (a 65 percent drop).

"While we see a decrease in ransomware in the META region, that doesn't mean that it becomes less dangerous. We can clearly see a distinctive trend in ransomware getting more sophisticated and targeted, exposing victims to more threats. In recent years, ransomware groups have come a long way from being scattered gangs to businesses with distinctive traits of full-fledged industry," Dmitry Galov, Senior Security Researcher



at Kaspersky, said.

"They continue to evolve by adopting techniques, such as developing cross-platform ransomware, embedding self-propagation capabilities and even using zero-day vulnerabilities that were previously affordable only for APT actors. It explains why it remains one of the most crucial threats for business despite the detection numbers decreasing," he further added.

"This is a global trend, while in those regions that put more efforts into proper protection measures on governmental and organisational levels, the decrease is more dramatic. For countries with a lower level of cyber readiness ransomware remains a critical threat and the decrease is less prominent," he pointed out.

Fast-paced growth of Trojan banking

New malware families and cyber-attack campaigns have contributed to a rampant rise of Trojan

banking attacks in Q1 of 2023 as compared to Q1 of 2022. The highest increase was in Türkiye (238 percent).

Overall, the Middle East too saw an increase in Trojan banking attacks in the first quarter of 2023 - Kuwait (218 percent), Egypt (186 percent), Saudi Arabia (168 percent), Oman (115 percent), Qatar (99 percent), UAE (67 percent) and Bahrain (33 percent). Nigeria (268 percent) and Kenya (129 percent) also posted an increase.

Anticipated trends

Major drivers of growth in cyber-crime are expected to be Crime-ware and Advanced Persistent Threats (APTs).

• Middle East to witness a rise in Crimeware: Crimeware is malicious software that is covertly installed on computers. Crimeware programs can be Trojans, keyloggers or spyware, and represent a new type of threat to security, posing new challenges and vulnerabilities. For example, some Tro-

jans are used to log every key you type (keyloggers), some capture screenshots when you are using banking websites, some download other malicious code, and others let a remote hacker access your system. What they each have in common is the ability to 'steal' your confidential information - such as passwords and PINs - and send it directly to the criminal. Armed with this information, the cybercriminal is then able to steal your money. Notably, North and South Africa too will evolve into a hotbed for Crimeware.

- APT attacks in Central and East Africa: As countries in Central and East Africa accelerate on their digitization agenda, government and diplomatic institutions as well as key industrial organisations can become rich targets for stealthy APT attacks this year, according to Kaspersky experts. Strong cyber defence and intelligence sharing are important in this environment to identify and expose APT patterns, disarming cybercriminals and disrupting the kill chain.
- Geographical expansion of APTs: Kaspersky experts have also witnessed advanced actors performing attacks with a focus on Europe, the US, the Middle East, and various parts of Asia. While most actors previously targeted victims in specific countries, more and more APTs are now targeting victims globally. For instance, MuddyWater, an actor that previously showed a preference for targeting Middle Eastern and North African entities, has expanded its malicious activity to organisations in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Malaysia, and Canada.

MARKET

Refinery products in Oman rise by 40%

Oman's standard grade petrol (M-91) increased by 61.5 percent, reaching 4.62 million barrels until the end of March compared to the same period in 2022

MUSCAT: The total refinery products in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 40.4 percent until the end of March 2023 compared to the same period last year, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).
Oman's standard grade petrol (M-91) increased by 61.5 percent, reaching 4.62 million barrels until the end of March compared to the same period in 2022, which witnessed the production of 2.86 million barrels. The sales of this grade amounted to 3.45 barrels while its exports increased by 191.2 percent to reach 1.58 barrels.
The production of petrol (M-95) amounted to 2.63 million barrels, with a decrease of 7.8 percent until the end of March, compared to the same period in 2022, which



amounted to 2.85 million barrels, and its sales decreased by 3.1 percent to reach 2.85 million barrels, while exports amounted to 35,000 barrels, down by 95.8 percent.
The production of gas oil (diesel) until the end of last March increased by 40.1 percent to reach 8.31 million barrels, and its sales increased by 5.9 percent, to reach 3.47 million barrels, and its exports also increased by 70.7 percent, compared to the same period in 2022 to reach 4.63 million barrels.
The production of jet fuel amounted to 2.69 million, an increase of 98.7 percent until the end of last March.
Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) production increased by 40.5 percent, to reach 1.84 million barrels, and its sales increased by 11.3 percent, to 1.91 million barrels.
As for petrochemicals, gasoline production increased by 302.6 percent at the end of last March, compared to the same period in 2022, to reach 34,700 metric tonnes, and

its exports amounted to 39,900 metric tonnes, an increase of 365.1 percent.
The production of paraxylene reached 115,500 metric tonnes, while its exports were recorded at 114,050 metric tonnes, while polypropylene production increased by 53.2 percent, recording 67,600 metric tonnes while its sales increased by 37.4 percent, to reach 6,900 metric tonnes, while its exports increased by 56.3 percent, to reach 63,300 metric tonnes. -ONA

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO increases repo rate for local banks by 25 basis points

MUSCAT: After the US Fed's recent announcement to raise its key policy rate, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) increased its repo rate for local banks at a similar rate of 25 basis points to stand at 5.75 per cent.
The Central Bank of Oman's monetary policy target is to sustain and maintain its fixed exchange rate. This policy is aligned with the structure and nature of the Omani economy. Several advantages for the Sultanate of Oman are derived from this policy among which are the stability of the Omani Rial, mitigation of capital outflow and promoting certainty among investors by removing exchange rate risk.
The global economy is witnessing rising and sustained inflationary pressure and as such, central



banks in a number of countries are attempting to address this pressure by hiking their respective key policy rates with the objective of reducing lending and by default reducing aggregate demand that in turn would translate into reduced consumption. While higher interest rates are expected to lead to lower inflation, in some cases, as related to consumers in high-

income brackets, they could result in higher savings.
Therefore, and in light of such conditions dominating the global market, key policy interest rates were also hiked by central banks in countries that anchor their monetary policy on fixed exchange rate regimes and in a number of other countries that are experiencing similar inflationary pressure. -ONA

APPOINTMENT

Renaissance appoints Chief Facilities Management Officer

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's IFM leader Renaissance Services has appointed Rami Oud as its Chief Facilities Management Officer (CFMO), a key position that will further strengthen the company's hard FM services and contribute to business expansion goals.
Rami, who joined in May 2023, has over two decades of experience in construction and facilities management, his last role being General Manager, Mosanada FMS Como FMS JV and Aktor Como FMS JV - Qatar.
He has been part of key projects ranging from public infrastructure to military facilities in the Middle East and beyond. Among the many projects he has worked on are Doha Metro and Lusail Tram Network in Qatar, Saudi Arabian Railways, Dubai Metro, Paris Sorbonne University-Abu Dhabi, and Dubai International Financial Centre in the UAE.
A Mechanical Engineer from the Lebanese University and a member of the Order of Engineers and Architects - Beirut, Rami has also lent his expertise to the design and procurement of military facilities in Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Djibouti.
In addition to strengthening Renaissance's Hard FM services solution capabilities, Rami will also oversee the delivery of construction projects.
Commenting on the role, Rami said, "Renaissance has an appe-



to for growth and innovation. From senior management to people on the ground, everyone is driven by the same values and aligned with the Renaissance 2.0 vision, which makes driving change easier. I am happy to be part of such a team."
Welcoming Rami, Stephen R Thomas, CEO, Renaissance said, "Clients are embracing the integrated facilities management (IFM) model to drive standards up and cost down, while streamlining efficiency, quality and international standardisation. Rami brings current and future-thinking expertise to our team capabilities, as a trusted IFM partner for government and other clients, at a time when IFM has significant growth potential for our industry and our own future-focused ambitions for Renaissance 2.0."

PLATINUM SPONSOR

Sohar International to sponsor Arab Federation of Capital Markets Conference

MUSCAT: With a strong aspiration to serve as a significant catalyst in propelling the economy of the Sultanate, Sohar International is delighted to be a part of the upcoming Arab Federation of Capital Markets (AFCM) conference as a Platinum sponsor.
This event is the largest gathering of stock exchanges and capital markets in the Arab world and is being hosted by the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). Held under the patronage of Nasser bin Khamis bin Ali Al Jashmi, the Secretary General of Ministry of Finance, the conference will take place on May 9-10, 2023, at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel, Muscat.
Commenting on Sohar International's participation, Ahmed Al Musalmi stated, "We are honoured

to join this esteemed platform, which convenes distinguished leaders from across the Arab capital markets industry at an opportune moment for exchanging insights and perspectives. The Sultanate's steadfast commitment to economic diversification and the recent drive to expedite public offerings have resulted in a growing inflow of foreign investments into the country. This conference aims to promote greater integration and liquidity among exchanges throughout the region, while also catalysing collaboration and aligning efforts to fortify the Arab capital markets on all fronts. By doing so, we aim to inspire and empower businesses, ultimately elevating the region's capital markets to new heights."

Representing Sohar International at the conference will be Ahmed Al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, who will deliver an insightful presentation on the key global and regional economic drivers, and Oman's position in this context. Al Musalmi will also touch upon local trends, the business and economic landscape, highlight the banking scene in Oman, and how Sohar International is positioned to play a positive catalyst role and its commitment to positioning Oman as an attractive investment destination. Manish Dhameja, Chief Wholesale Banking Officer and Hanife Ymer, SVP and Head of Environment, Social and Governance will participate in the panel discussions.

ARAB DIGITAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS 2023

Opaz receives Government Achievements Award for providing land allocation service electronically

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) received the Government Achievements Award at Arab Digital Government Awards 2023, which was announced at a ceremony held in Dubai. The Arab Digital Government Award is granted to Arab government entities that stand out for delivering innovative and effective digital applications and solutions to improve the quality of government services, increase customer satisfaction, and enhance transparency.
This award seeks to increase the quality standard of digital government products and services, contribute to enhancing competitiveness to improve the performance of government bodies and facilitate practising business, as well as adopt international standards in the digital transformation journey. This contributes to uplifting the efficiency of the government sector, in addition to stimulating development and ensuring the constantly introducing of innovative initiatives. This contributes to improving the quality of services in government institutions.
Winning this award comes as a testament to Opaz's continuous commitment towards promoting innovation, development and the use of modern technologies to im-



prove the experience of investors and beneficiaries of the services provided by Opaz and its affiliated zones, and adhere to best practices. It also marks an acknowledgment of Opaz's persistent efforts towards digital transformation through its development of electronic applications aimed at simplifying government procedures and providing fast, safe and inclusive services to investors.
OPAZ won this award in return for providing the land allocation service electronically to the investors interested to invest in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad). The service can be ac-

cessed through the online portal (eoss.duqm.gov.om) from anywhere around the world to register in Opaz digital portal and submit a land usufruct request.
This service aims to facilitate and speed up the procedures for investors, save time and effort, and achieve transparency for all investors in Sezad with a smooth selection of the plot of land directly as soon as the investor specifies the type of project and the required plot of land. The system displays the master plan for the investor, demonstrating the lands available based on the application's data. Through Geographic Information

Systems (GIS), which has become one of the modern technologies used in achieving the governance of procedures, the new service will enable the investor to make the investment decision easier by choosing the appropriate location while providing the investor with a spatial description that enhances his investment decision.
The service is distinguished by allowing investors to select the plot of land in interactive maps for more than 800 different economic activities. It also brings other features, including the possibility of measuring the distance between the selected land and the key landmarks in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, providing accurate information about the level of land's altitude above sea level, merging joint lands, getting full measurements of lengths and spaces, determining the geographical location coordinates, and sharing the approximate distance of the land from the nearby utilities such as electricity, water, telecommunications, and roads.
Investors can also access the service by searching and inquiring about information on interactive maps, printing maps, obtaining modern satellite images of the area, data of the masterplan, public services and nearby landmarks. Likewise, investors can request land with different specifications, as concerned employees will act upon the investor's request.

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Understanding the chemical pathway between muscle contraction and the growth and regulation of hippocampal neurons is just the first step in understanding how exercise helps improve brain health



LIFESTYLE

EXERCISE IMPROVES BRAIN HEALTH WITH CHEMICAL SIGNALS



Physical activity is frequently mentioned as a way to improve both physical and mental health. Researchers at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology discovered that it may also directly improve brain health. They investigated how the chemical signals released by muscles during exercise promote neuronal development in the brain.

Their work appears in the journal *Neuroscience*. When muscles contract during exercise, like a bicep working to lift a heavy weight, they release a variety of compounds into the bloodstream. These compounds can travel to different parts of the body, including the brain. The researchers were particularly interested in how exercise could benefit a particular part of the brain called the hippocampus.

"The hippocampus is a crucial area for learning and memory, and therefore cognitive health," said Ki Yun Lee, a Ph.D. student in mechanical

science and engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and the study's lead author. Understanding how exercise benefits the hippocampus could therefore lead to exercise-based treatments for a variety of conditions including Alzheimer's disease.

To isolate the chemicals released by contracting muscles and test them on hippocampal neurons, the researchers collected small muscle cell samples from mice and grew them in cell culture dishes in the lab. When the muscle cells matured, they began to contract on their own, releasing their chemical signals into the cell culture.

The research team added the culture, which now contained the chemical signals from the mature muscle cells, to another culture containing hippocampal neurons and other support cells known as astrocytes. Using several measures, including immunofluorescent and calcium imaging to track cell growth and multi-electrode arrays to record neuronal electrical activity,

they examined how exposure to these chemical signals affected the hippocampal cells.

The results were striking. Exposure to the chemical signals from contracting muscle cells caused hippocampal neurons to generate larger and more frequent electrical signals -- a sign of robust growth and health. Within a few days, the neurons started firing these electrical signals more synchronously, suggesting that the neurons were forming a more mature network together and mimicking the organization of neurons in the brain.

However, the researchers still had questions about how these chemical signals led to growth and development of hippocampal neurons. To uncover more of the pathway linking exercise to better brain health, they next focused on the role of astrocytes in mediating this relationship.

"Astrocytes are the first responders in the brain before the compounds from muscles reach the neurons," Lee said. Perhaps, then, they played a role in help-

ing neurons respond to these signals.

The researchers found that removing astrocytes from the cell cultures caused the neurons to fire even more electrical signals, suggesting that without the astrocytes, the neurons continued to grow -- perhaps to a point where they might become unmanageable.

"Astrocytes play a critical role in mediating the effects of exercise," Lee said. "By regulating neuronal activity and preventing hyperexcitability of neurons, astrocytes contribute to the balance necessary for optimal brain function."

Understanding the chemical pathway between muscle contraction and the growth and regulation of hippocampal neurons is just the first step in understanding how exercise helps improve brain health.

"Ultimately, our research may contribute to the development of more effective exercise regimens for cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's disease," Lee said. -ANI

SPORTS

Babar Azam breaks ODI record as Pakistan reach the summit

The hosts defeated New Zealand in the fourth ODI in Karachi to become world No.1 in ICC ODI Rankings

KARACHI: Pakistan are the new world No.1 team in ICC Men's ODIs after a massive win over New Zealand in the fourth ODI of the bilateral series in Karachi.

The hosts, who now lead 4-0 in the series that has one game to go, have 113 rating points, and edge Australia and India by decimal points. Pakistan were fifth with 106 rating points in the ODI rankings before the start of the series.

They chased down tall targets in the opening two ODIs and went on to win the third ODI in Karachi by 26 runs to move to third in the points table behind Australia and India, going ahead of England and New Zealand in the process.

In the fourth ODI on Friday, a century from Babar Azam, his 18th in the format, and contributions from others helped Pakistan post a tall total of 334. Babar became the fastest to 5,000 ODI runs in the process, reaching the milestone in his 96th ODI innings. The record was previously held by Hashim Amla, who achieved the feat in 101 innings.

However, to remain at the top of the rankings at the conclusion of the series, Pakistan will have to make a clean sweep by winning the fifth and final ODI on Sunday.

A loss in the final ODI will see them slipping back to No.3 and Australia reclaiming their No.1 ranking. New Zealand will remain at the fifth spot irrespective of the result. Pakistan will also remain on top if the fifth match is abandoned or yields a no-result.



'Next career goal'

Babar, who will play his 100th ODI on Sunday reflected on his journey and career thus far. Speaking to PCB Digital, Babar recalled several career highlights including the first time he was called upon to the team.

"It was a different feeling altogether," Babar said. "There was some talk about me being selected, but when I got the call, there was a lot of excitement. I was sitting with my family and it made them happy.

"When I entered the Gaddafi Stadium as a Pakistan player, I reminisced my journey of how I used to come here as a ball picker and how I had come here before Inzamam-ul-Haq's final Test match, which was against South Africa, as a net bowler.

The Pakistan skipper also recalled how he wasn't picked to the national academy for top performers after his first season as an U15 regional player and the many sacrifices he made on the road to becoming an international cricketer.

Once in the national team, Babar had a good start to his career but struggled to convert starts to big knocks.

He recalled the role of former head coach, and now team director, Mickey Arthur in him turning around this trend with three centuries on the trot against West Indies in UAE.

"I want to mention Mickey as he played an integral role in my transformation," Babar said.

"As a cricketer, there's a feeling that if you are not up to the mark, you might get dropped from the side, but he gave me the confidence.

"He asked me to give my best to the side and not worry about getting axed from the side and that helped me a great deal. He did not only do it with me but with every player in the side and that is why we have eight to nine players in the side currently from that lot."

In 2019, Babar was elevated to captaincy, and his numbers took an instant spike as he enjoyed the additional responsibility.

In ODIs, he averages over 75 as captain (after the 4th ODI against New Zealand) and has seven tons in 25 matches.

All three of his T20I tons also came as skipper of the side. In Tests, the difference was profound with his average going over 50 as captain.

"The first year was a little overwhelming as there were a lot of things to deal with simultaneously as a Pakistan captain," Babar spoke of taking on captaincy. "But, I learned how to manage that. I also learned a lot from how Saifi bhai [Sarfraz Ahmed] managed the team. I used to see his demeanour on and off the field and used to ask him questions that helped me.

Speaking of his next career goal, Babar was ambitious and wished to lead Pakistan to World Cup glory.

"Being the captain of a World Cup-winning side would be sweet," Babar concluded. - [ANI/icc-cricket.com](#)

UNAUTHORISED TRIP TO SAUDI ARABIA

Messi apologises to PSG teammates

PARIS: Lionel Messi has apologised to his Paris St-Germain (PSG) teammates and says he will wait for the club to decide what they want to do with him after making an unauthorised trip to Saudi Arabia. The Argentina captain was suspended by the club for two weeks for the trip.

It followed PSG's home defeat by Lorient on Sunday - their third in six games - when Messi played 90 minutes. "I am sorry for what I did and I wait to see what the club decides," Messi said in a video posted on Instagram.

"I honestly thought we were going to have the day off after the match as had happened in the previous weeks. I had organised this trip to Saudi Arabia having cancelled it previously. This time I couldn't cancel it."

Messi is set to leave PSG when his contract expires in the summer. The 35-year-old, who has also been fined by the club, has a role as a tourism ambassador for Saudi Arabia.

PSG manager Christophe Galtier says he had "nothing to do with" Messi's suspension, while also condemning fan protests outside players' homes.



"Leo's suspension has added to poor performances, we can't hide behind that," Galtier, 56, said on Friday.

"The decision had nothing to do with me. I was informed of the decision. I can't say it has been a pleasant period."

PSG top Ligue 1 by five points

with five games to play but are out of the Champions League and lost in the last 16 of the French Cup. There were fan protests following their defeat to Lorient.

Fans also gathered outside the home of the club's Brazilian forward Neymar on Wednesday, chanting for him to leave the club.

The 31-year-old is out for the rest of the season because of an ankle injury. The actions of the supporters prompted the club to increase security at the homes of Messi, Neymar, Italy midfielder Marco Verratti and Galtier, as well as at the club's training ground.

"Regarding the protests in front of a player's home, we have to be careful with that. Private life must remain private," said Galtier.

"I can understand the anger, the disappointment of our fans. You may protest at the training ground or at the PSG office or after a match at the Parc des Princes but I cannot accept it at anyone's house.

"There are a lot of these things happening at the moment, and they can be uncontrollable and dangerous."

The Argentine has scored 15 goals and has 15 assists in the French League-1 this season. In all competitions, Messi has scored 20 goals and provided 19 assists for the 2022-23 season.

Lionel Messi joined PSG in 2021, since then he has scored 31 goals and has 33 assists to his name in 71 matches over the past two seasons combined. - [Agencies](#)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Spurs goalkeeper Lloris out for rest of season

LONDON: Tottenham goalkeeper and captain Hugo Lloris will miss their final four games of the season because of a thigh issue.

The former France international, 36, has not featured since being withdrawn at half-time in Tottenham's 6-1 defeat at Newcastle on 23 April.

"Hugo is out for the season. We have now had the results back. We did fear that," said interim boss

Ryan Mason on Friday. Tottenham are seventh in the English Premier League going into their next home match against Crystal Palace.

Fraser Forster is likely to deputise after replacing Lloris against Newcastle and starting the club's last two matches, against Manchester United and Liverpool.

Lloris, who joined Spurs from Lyon in 2012, is about to enter the final year of his contract at the

Tottenham Hotspur Stadium but Mason would not comment on his future.

"I can't speak about next season but Hugo has got a very important role for us until the end of the season," added Mason, who succeeded Cristian Stellini as interim boss after that heavy defeat at St James' Park.

Lloris has made 447 appearances for Tottenham Hotspur in all competitions. - [Agencies](#)



SEASON-OPENER IN DOHA



Chopra claims victory at Diamond League

DOHA: Olympic gold medal winner Neeraj Chopra didn't waste time to leave his mark after his recovery from injury at the opening Diamond League of the season in Doha on Friday.

Neeraj missed the action due to an injury but, from his very first attempt it seemed as if he picked up his form right where he left off. Chopra's first throw was 88.67m which was a great way to start the new season. His first throw was

enough to seal the victory for him but he still tried to push ahead.

Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Jakub Vadlejch, who was able to reach 88.63m, came second.

Britain's Dina Asher-Smith finished third as Sha'Carri Richardson set a new 100m meeting record.

American Richardson, 23, clocked 10.76 seconds, beating the previous meeting record of 10.80 set by her compatriot Tori Bowie, whose death at the age of 32 was

announced on Wednesday. Asher-Smith ran 10.98secs, with Jamaica's Shericka Jackson second.

Fred Kerley came from behind to win the men's 200m.

American Kerley, the Olympic silver medallist over 100m, trailed as the field exited the bend but accelerated in the closing stages to cross the line in 19.92secs, with compatriot Kenny Bednarek placing second and Canada's Aaron Brown third.

Two-time Olympic champion Faith Kipyegon, of Kenya, won the women's 1500m in three minutes 58.57secs.

Earlier, Britain's Lawrence Okoye and Nick Percy finished fifth and ninth respectively in the men's discus.

Olympic bronze medallist Holly Bradshaw was forced to withdraw from the women's pole vault after "Achilles and calf stiffness" during the warm-up. - [Agencies](#)

IN RACE TO BE FIT FOR FRENCH OPEN

Injured Nadal withdraws from Rome Masters



ROME: Rafael Nadal faces a race to be fit in time to launch his bid for a record-extending 15th French Open title.

Nadal has withdrawn from next week's Italian Open but says his condition has improved as he bids to be fit in time for the French Open.

The 36-year-old Spaniard has not played since January because of a hip injury and says he needs more time to train.

Unless he plays one of the events in Geneva or Lyon starting May 21, the 14-time champion will go to Roland Garros without a match on clay this year.

"I'm very sorry to announce that I will not be able to be in Rome," he said.

"You all know how much it hurts to miss another one

of the tournaments that have marked my professional and personal career for all the love and support of the Italian fans," the 22-time Grand Slam champion continued in a statement on social media.

"Despite having noticed an improvement in recent days, there have been many months without having been able to train at a high level and the re-adaptation process has its times and I have no choice but to accept them and continue working."

His statement is considerably more optimistic than his post of two weeks ago when he said he had paused training to consider alternative treatments.

The French Open begins in Paris on May 28. - [Agencies](#)

IN PICTURES

Blooming jacaranda trees in Pakistan
A child is pictured under blooming jacaranda trees in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Xinhua



Art exhibition held at China Institute Gallery in New York
Visitors view a painting at the exhibition held at China Institute Gallery in New York, the United States. The exhibition 'Flowers on a River: The Art of Chinese Flower-and-Bird Painting', was held presenting over 100 works by 59 artists.

Xinhua



Art Vancouver held in Canada
Visitors look at some paintings during the Art Vancouver event at the Vancouver Convention Centre in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, on May 4, 2023.

Xinhua



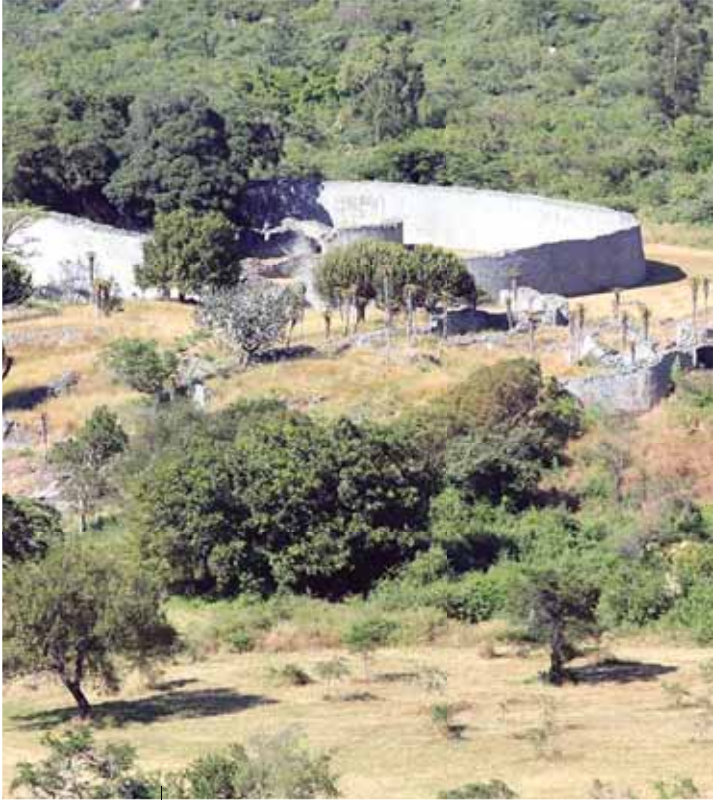
Palace of Batoufam chiefdom in Cameroon
Photos show carved wooden statuettes exhibited in the palace of Batoufam chiefdom, West region, Cameroon. Chiefdom is a common form of political organisation in Cameroon in the past, which is generally composed of one or several villages or communities controlled by the chief.

Xinhua



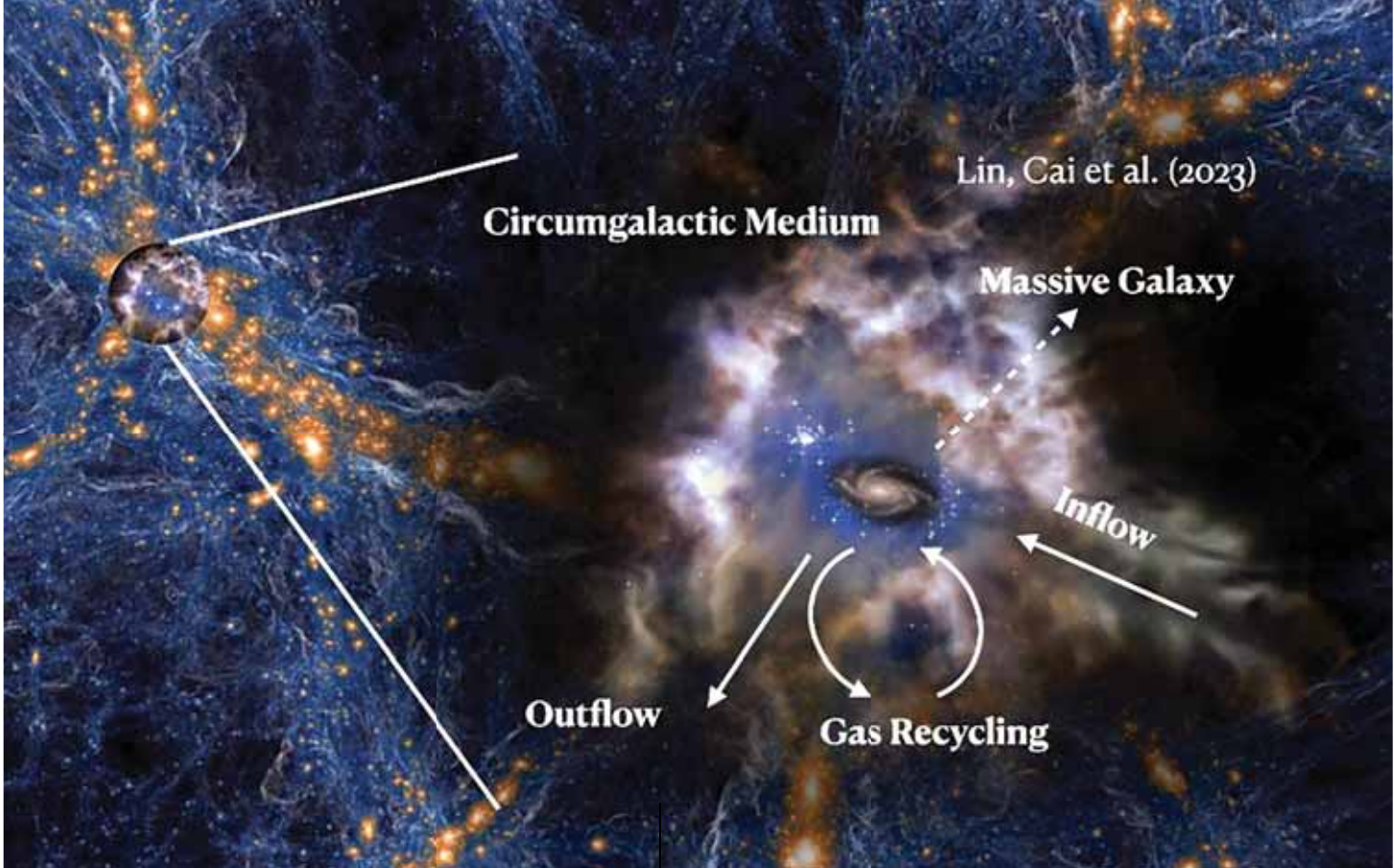
View of Great Zimbabwe National Monument in Masvingo
This photo shows a view of the Great Zimbabwe National Monument in Masvingo Province, Zimbabwe. The monument was inscribed on the list of world cultural heritages by the UNESCO in 1986 and is one of Zimbabwe's greatest tourist attractions.

Xinhua



Scientists reveal how massive galaxies form in early universe
This diagram provided by Tsinghua University shows the process of gas recycling, which has been proved to be the key factor in the formation of massive galaxies in the early universe.

Xinhua



ROUND-UP

Kidsity and bp Oman organise National Robotic Olympics for kids

The National Robotics Olympics is a competition for teams based on designing and programming EV3 (evolution 3 Lego) robotics to apply certain tasks and win matches against teams from all 11 governorates

MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman and collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Kidsity held the fourth National Robotics Olympics closing ceremony, held under the patronage of Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad Al Busaidi, Chairman of Sabco Group.

The National Robotics Olympics is a competition for teams based on designing and programming EV3 (evolution 3 Lego) robotics to apply certain tasks and win matches against teams from all 11 governorates. A total of 1,118 beneficiaries participated in the programme throughout the four cycles of the National Robotics Olympics.

The competition started with a qualification stage which was held for two weeks, qualifying two teams from each governorate to compete in the final stage of the competition. The matches required the designed and programmed robots to race across a 1.2m track and drop a barrier using a robotic arm designed by the team. 24 teams comprising a total

of 48 students qualified for the final stage to compete for the first three winning placements, with cash prizes up to OMR750.

Shamsa Al-Rawahi, bp Oman Social Investment Manager, commented: "Encouraging children to innovate is a key educational skill needed for future developments in our country."

"The competition was a valuable experience for all students as it allowed them to explore their potential in robotics and enhance their building and analytical thinking skills and enhances their knowledge in STEM education."

Saif Al Manji, Co-Founder of Kidsity, further added about the importance of the National Robotics Olympics: "These programmes empower students with applicable skills such as inventiveness, teamwork, and persistence; it also empowers them to face a variety of challenges and opportunities more confidently. It is Kidsity's main goal to be part of a bright future for Oman's talented youth."



PARTICIPATION



KR Eshraqa's participation in MoSD's first forum for people with disabilities invokes positive response

MUSCAT: Dedicated to advancing its pioneering role in social responsibility, community development and service, KR (Khimji Ramdas) Eshraqa recently participated in the first forum for people with disabilities that took place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

The three-day forum was organised by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and sought to promote and empower people with disabilities, by exploring ways to utilize their capabilities and skills with the aim of integrating them into society.

KR Eshraqa's stall at the forum received a remarkable response from visitors across age-groups, who were oriented with its various social initiatives, and current projects in education, health, community well-being and training.

Highlighting the importance

of integrating people of determination into society, within the framework of Oman's Vision 2040, Nailesh Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas Group mentioned, "At Eshraqa we have a long-standing commitment to promoting inclusivity for people of determination."

"We firmly believe in supporting initiatives that enhance their wellbeing and promote their integration into society. Our participation in the Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) inaugural forum for people with disabilities aligns perfectly with this vision."

"Through our involvement in such events, we aim to empower people of determination and create an equitable society for all, so that they can realise their full potential and participate actively in shaping their own future and that of the nation."

WIDE RANGE OF GLOBAL CUISINES

Mall of Oman set to expand its culinary offering with over 16 new dining experiences

MUSCAT: Mall of Oman, Majid Al Futtaim's fifth and largest shopping destination in the Sultanate, is set to expand its diverse F&B offering throughout the year with the addition of 16 new dining experiences.

Currently home to over 42 F&B outlets, Mall of Oman offers a multitude of dine-in options through a wide range of global cuisines — including renowned casual dining restaurants, home-grown concepts, and fast food favourites.

Some of the latest additions to the mall's delectable F&B repertoire include Ladurée Oman, SOMI, Italian Barrista Café, YaBeelh Burger, Dunkin' Donuts and ASL Al Arab.

Later in 2023, the Mall of Oman will welcome: Hello Karachi Oman — which will feature popular Pakistani dishes, and Omani House — for local and authentic Omani cuisine. Furthermore, those looking for a caffeine fix or a relaxed space to work will be able to enjoy Ushk Café and Joy Café. Come summer,

foodies can also look forward to enjoying The Crepe Café, Golocius Pizaza & Cucina, as well as Oman's first including Meat Moot Smoking.

Husam Al Mandhari, Director of Shopping malls in Oman at Majid Al Futtaim Properties said: "Dining has always been an integral part of a visitor's mall experience — which is why we are committed to evolving and diversifying Mall of Oman's F&B offering. More broadly, this ensures that we're creating a leading retail, leisure,

entertainment, and dining destination in the country.

Boasting a variety of cuisines, residents and tourists will find some of the leading fast food chains, restaurants, and cafés all in one place which we look forward to growing throughout the year."

In recent months, the mega shopping mall has welcomed a selection of new F&B outlets including Burger King, Nayeab, MADO, McDonald's, Hani, Papa Johns, and Roosters Peri Peri.

DEMONSTRATES 'GREEN' PROGRAMME PROMOTION

Majan University College triumphs at Ghedex

MUSCAT: Ghedex 2023, one of the most anticipated higher education expos in Oman, was successfully held from April 30 - to May 2 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), Muscat, and from May 3-4 at Majan Hall in Sohar.

The event was an outstanding showcase of the latest educational trends and innovations, providing students, parents, and professionals with a unique opportunity to explore a vast range of academic programmes and institutions. Majan University College (MUC), the main sponsor of the event, demonstrated its unwavering commitment to academic excellence and sustainability by setting up an impressive booth that featured digital screen signage and e-brochure kiosks. Going green was one of MUC's sustainable goals for this Ghedex, and they managed to demonstrate it successfully.

MUC won three prestigious awards at the Excellence in Education event, which was held on the second day of Ghedex. The awards were in recognition of MUC's outstanding performance in both Student Support & Counselling, and Entrepreneur Development. Nabila Al Macki, the Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs, and other key members of MUC staff, received the awards from Sayyed Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, the Undersecretary for the Ministry of Labour.

Dr. Ammar Al Balushi, the Head



of Faculty of Business Management, shared valuable insights on fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems at the Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Omani Schools, Colleges, and Universities. He shared his thoughts and ideas in line with Oman Vision 2040's goals for a brighter, more innovative future.

Ms. Nabila Al Macki participated in a CEO panel that discussed Innovation and Incubation Ecosystem in Oman on

Day 2 of Ghedex.

She highlighted the importance of nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit among the youth and creating a supportive ecosystem that enables them to thrive.

The students of MUC also made use of the Oman Innovation Oasis Expo at Ghedex to promote their sustainable business called Pecor, a technology that can remove ink from papers so that it can be reused again instead of discarding. The award-winning business idea received a lot of appreciation from students, parents, and professionals at the event.

The Majan Training Institute (MTI) also showcased its courses for professionals at the Workshop segment at Ghedex on all three days of the OCEC event. MTI is the refreshed brand of the previously known Majan Training Unit, which offers short courses and training programs for students and professionals in the region.



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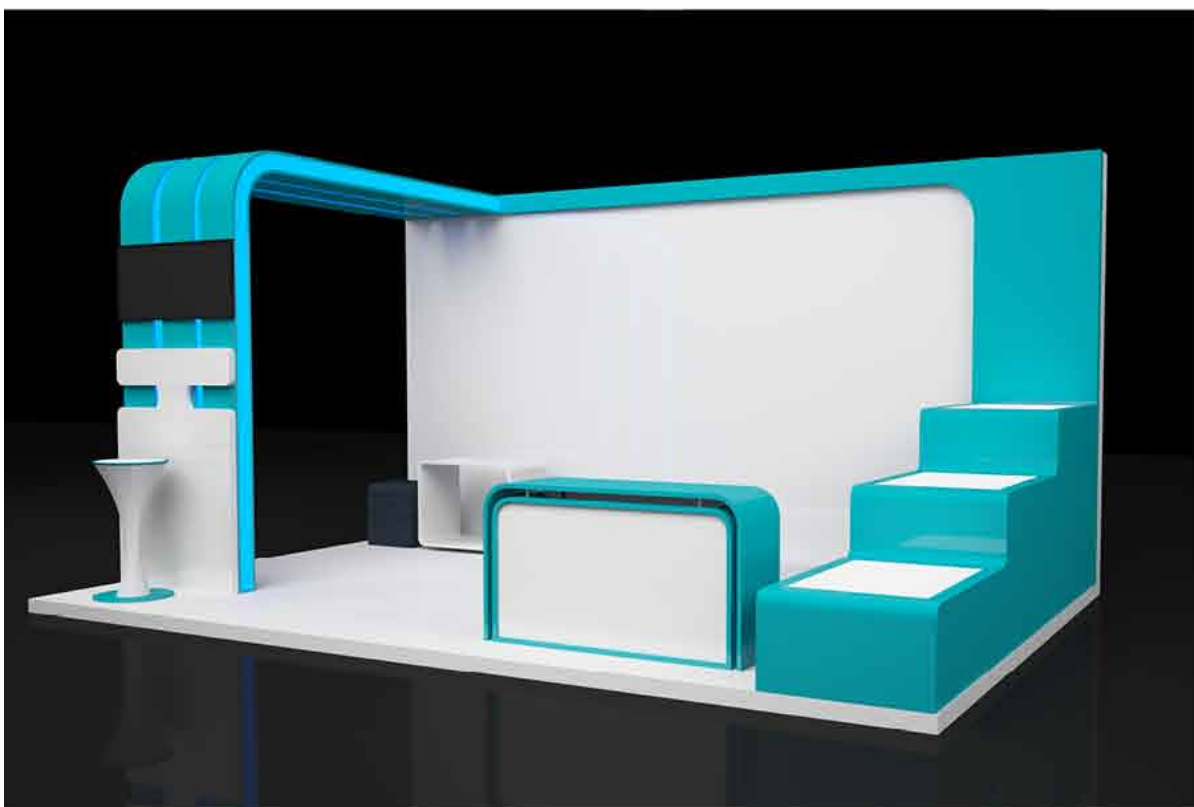
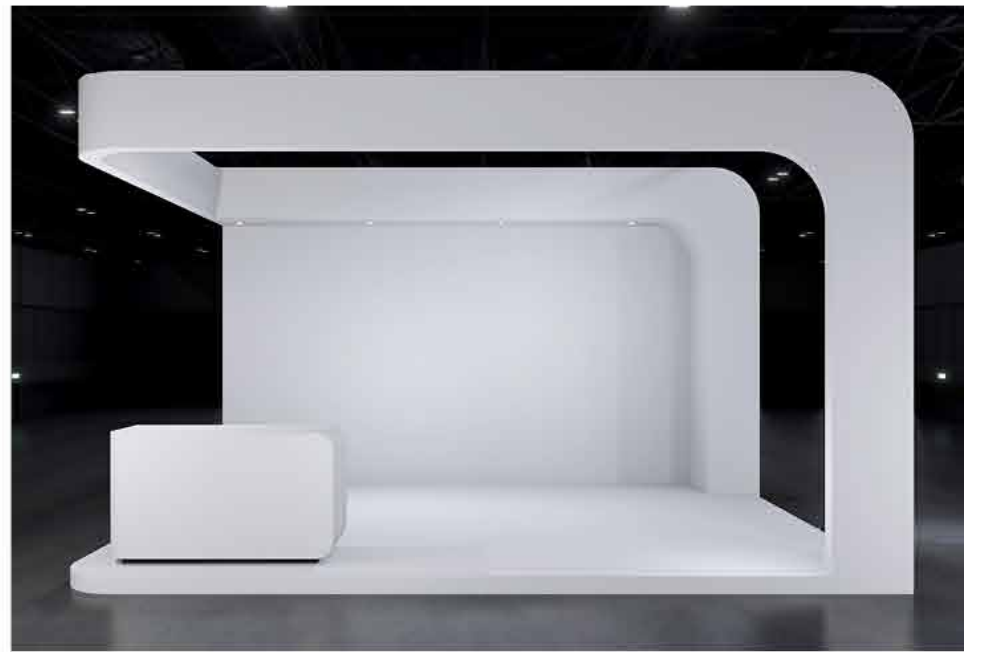
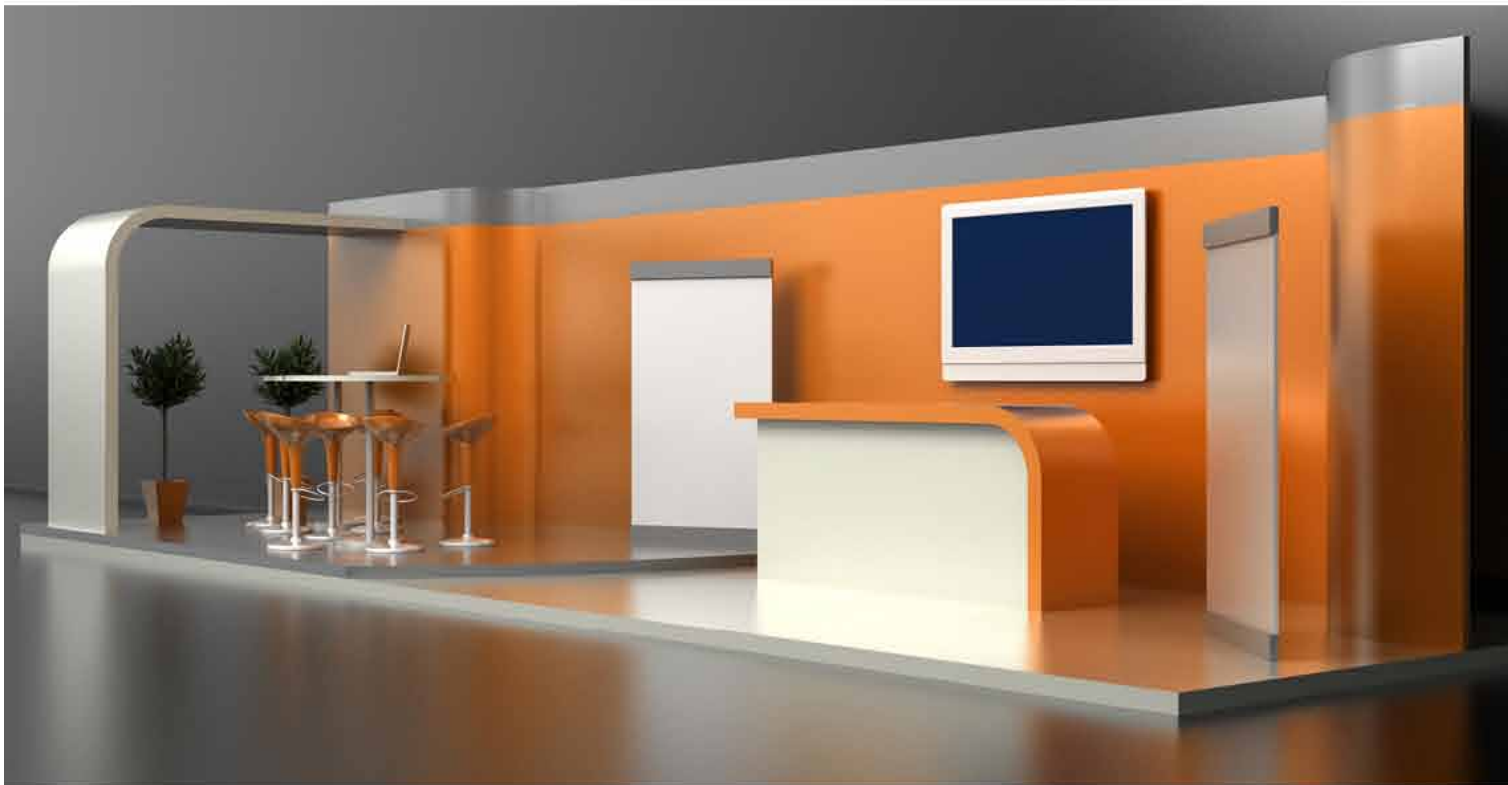


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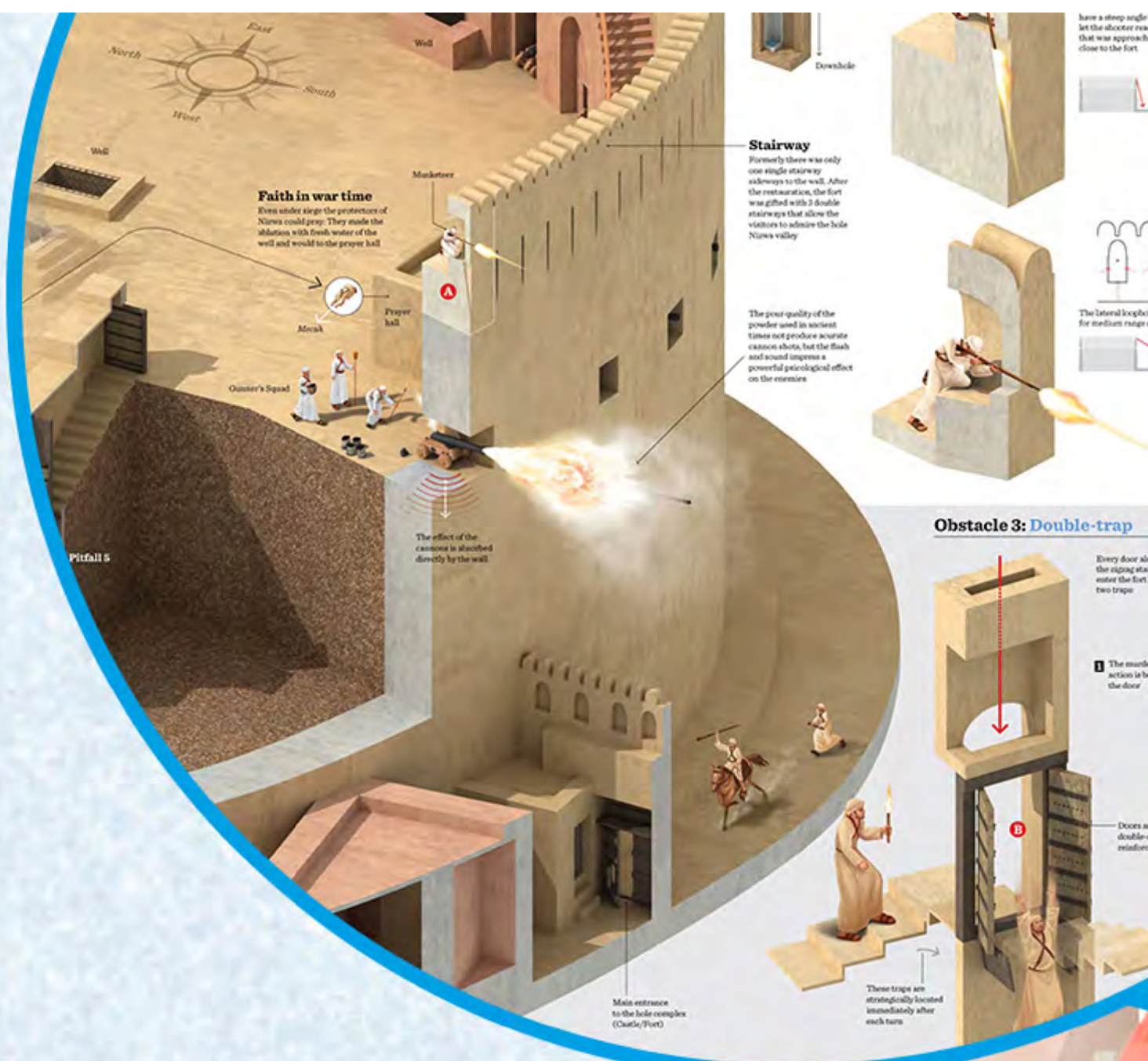
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