

**HM THE SULTAN GREETES
PRESIDENT OF ERITREA**
MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Isaias Afwerki of the State of Eritrea on his country's Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and welfare. His Majesty also wished the people of Eritrea further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



**HM THE SULTAN RECEIVES THANKS
CABLE FROM PRESIDENT OF SENEGAL**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Macky Sall of Senegal in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable to him on his country's National Day. In the cable, President Macky Sall expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments. He wished His Majesty good health, wellbeing and continuous success. He also wished the relations between the two countries further development and growth. — **ONA**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Oman promotes tourism in Frankfurt

1 Represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman is taking part in IMEX exhibition, which kicked off on Tuesday in the city of Frankfurt, Germany, and will run until 25 May 2023. **>A2**

WORLD India seeks closer ties with Australia

2 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Sydney for his second Australian visit as Indian prime minister. Modi shared the stage with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. **>A6**

MARKET Port of Salalah 2nd most efficient port

3 Port of Salalah has retained its top spot as the 2nd most efficient container port in the world two years in a row based on the CPPI report of the World Bank and S&P Global. **>B1**

ON BEHALF OF HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN

Sayyid Fahd meets ISESCO Director General

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty the Sultan, HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmoud Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers received on Tuesday, Dr. Salim Mohammed Al Malik, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO).

After welcoming the guest and his accompanying delegation, HH Sayyid Fahd expressed Oman's appreciation for the efforts of ISESCO to upgrade the level of international cooperation in the fields of education, culture, information, human and social sciences, as well as its role in realising coordination and harmony among countries of the Islamic world.

HH Sayyid Fahd also highlighted Oman's continuous support for the organisation in carrying out its duties. **>A2**



AN IDEAL INVESTMENT DESTINATION



Foreign inflows in Oman hit OMR19.6 billion in 2022

With OMR10.15 billion of investments, the United Kingdom topped the list of investors

MUSCAT: The direct foreign investment in Oman reached OMR19.620 billion with financial inflow of OMR1.860 billion compared to a total investments value of OMR17760 billion during the fourth quarter of 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The sectors of extracting oil and gas and real estate activities came

on top of foreign direct investments in Oman by the end of the fourth quarter in 2022, constituting a rise by 10.5 percent.

Foreign direct investment in the activity of extracting oil and gas had the biggest share of direct foreign investments during the fourth quarter of 2022 with a total value of OMR14.166 billion, going up from OMR12.177 billion by the end of the fourth quarter of 2021.

It was followed by the converting industries activity which stood at OMR1.55 billion, comprising a drop by OMR1.705 billion. The financial intermediation activity came next with OMR1.48 billion, comprising a drop from OMR1.648 billion.

Direct foreign direct investment in real estate activities increased from OMR990.6 million by the end of the fourth quarter in 2021 to reach OMR1.037 billion by the end of the fourth quarter in 2022. Foreign direct investments in other activities increased from OMR1.240 billion to OMR1.389 billion.

Direct foreign direct investments from the UK were the highest with a total value of OMR10.156 billion, followed by the US with OMR2.735 billion. **>A5**



INVESTMENT IN
EXTRACTING OIL AND
GAS HAD THE BIGGEST
SHARE OF FOREIGN DIRECT
INVESTMENTS DURING THE
FOURTH QUARTER OF 2022,
WITH A TOTAL VALUE OF
OMR14.166 BILLION

Investments in food industry exceed OMR13 million

MUSCAT: The available investment opportunities in the food industry in cooperation with the government and private sectors exceed OMR13 million, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), said on Tuesday.

The investment opportunities include in the field of value-added fish industries products, the centre for training, testing and developing food technology,

dairy industries and date processing and packaging, according to the ministry.

The ministry said that the value-added fish industries products opportunity is a new manufacturing facility that will be established in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm on a land area of 1,000 square metres, with an investment of OMR4.2 million and an investment revenue of 13.9 percent. **>A5**

ZIMBABWE TO BE THE HOST NATION

Oman face Ireland in their Cricket World Cup Qualifier opener

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman have been clubbed with former World Cup winners Sri Lanka, Ireland, Scotland and neighbours UAE in Group B as the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 fixtures were released on Tuesday afternoon.

Hosts Zimbabwe, West Indies, the Netherlands, Nepal and United States make up Group A with ten teams competing for the final two spots at ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India.

The ten-nation World Cup qualifier will be held in Zimbabwe from June 18 - July 9 across four venues in Harare and Bulawayo.

Oman, who are aiming to qualify for the Cricket World Cup for the first time, will begin their campaign on June 19 in Bulawayo against Ireland followed by a game against UAE on June 21.



On June 23, Oman will take on 1996 World Cup winners Sri Lanka before concluding the league stage with a match against Scotland on June 25. Each side will play the other teams in their group once with the top three from the groups

progressing to the Super Six stage.

Each team will play three Super Six matches against the sides they have not meet in the group stage. All points won in the groups will be carried over to the Super Six stage apart from those gained against the bottom

two from each group. Both the finalists will progress to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023. The Super Six stage will commence on June 29, while the bottom two teams from each group will compete in the playoff.

For the first time at this event, DRS will be used for all matches from the Super Six stage.

The qualifier will begin with hosts Zimbabwe taking on Nepal and two-time World Cup winners West Indies meeting USA on June 18. Each match will be of high stakes, with the top two teams qualifying for the global one-day showpiece and assured of nine guaranteed matches in India.

Queen's Sports Club and Bulawayo Athletic Club in Bulawayo, Harare Sports Club and Takashinga Cricket Club in Harare will share 34 matches between them, with Harare Sports Club staging the final on July 9. **>A4**

OMAN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP QUALIFIER FIXTURES (All matches begin at 11am, Oman time)

June 19 (Monday):	Ireland vs Oman, Bulawayo Athletic Club
June 21 (Wednesday):	Oman vs UAE, Bulawayo Athletic Club
June 23 (Friday):	Sri Lanka vs Oman, Queen's Sports Club
June 25 (Sunday):	Scotland vs Oman, Bulawayo Athletic Club
June 29 (Thursday):	Super 6: A2 vs B2, Queen's Sports Club
June 30 (Friday):	Super 6: A3 vs B1, Queen's Sports Club
Playoff: A5 vs B4,	Takashinga Cricket Club
July 1 (Saturday):	Super 6: A1 vs B3, Harare Sports Club
July 2 (Sunday):	Super 6: A4 vs B3, Queen's Sports Club
Playoff: A4 vs B5,	Takashinga Cricket Club
July 3 (Monday):	Super 6: A3 vs B2, Harare Sports Club
July 4 (Tuesday):	Super 6: A2 vs B3, Queen's Sports Club
Playoff:	7th vs 8th Takashinga Cricket Club
July 5 (Wednesday):	Super 6: A1 vs B3, Harare Sports Club
July 6 (Thursday):	Super 6: A3 vs B3, Queen's Sports Club
Playoff: 9th vs 10th	Takashinga Cricket Club
July 7 (Friday):	Super 6: A1 vs B1, Harare Sports Club
July 9 (Sunday):	Final, Harare Sports Club
Warm-up fixtures:	
June 19 (Tuesday):	Zimbabwe vs Oman, Takashinga Cricket Club
June 15 (Thursday):	Oman vs Nepal, Harare Sports Club





PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....12:09pm

Asr.....3:30pm

Maghrib.....6:51pm

Isha.....8:10pm

Fajr (Tomorrow).....3:56am

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MINISTRY OF HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Oman promotes tourism at IMEX Frankfurt 2023

FRANKFURT: Represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Sultanate of Oman is taking part in IMEX exhibition, which kicked off on Tuesday in the city of Frankfurt, Germany, and will run until 25 May 2023. Oman's delegation is headed by Tourism Undersecretary Azzan Qassim Al Busaidi.

Ten tourism companies and hotel establishments will showcase their products at Oman's pavilion to attract tourist groups. They affirm their commitment to meet tourist groups' needs for organising regional and international meetings and conferences, among other activities.

Through the exhibition, the ministry seeks to promote Oman as a tourist destination that is suitable for tourism market requirements. It highlights the



fact that Oman possesses the facilities to attract "conference and convention tourism".

IMEX Frankfurt exposition figures among the world's leading international exhibitions specialised in conference tourism. It brings together more than 2,500 establishments representing 150 countries. It constitutes a platform for experts and those interested in the sector of conferences, exhibitions and events. -ONA

SQU

Agreement inked for ISESCO chair in machine learning for remote sensing

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ICESCO) today signed a cooperation agreement to establish an ISESCO chair in the field of machine learning for remote sensing and geographic information systems.

The agreement was signed by HH Sayyid Dr. Fahd bin Al Julanda Al Said, SQU Vice-Chancellor, and Dr. Salim Mohammed Al Malik,

ISESCO Director-General.

The agreement aims at exchanging knowledge and expertise between the two sides, besides promoting development in ISESCO fields of competence.

All parties can benefit from cooperation between professors, researchers and university administrative heads. The establishment of the chair is in line with the academic role of Sultan Qaboos University. -ONA



KEY PILLARS

< FROM A1 Sayyid Fahd reviews sustainable growth march

Then, HH Sayyid Fahd reviewed the march of the sustainable development in the country. He affirmed that the government attaches great attention to education, science and technology, considering them as key pillars for development.

In his turn, ISESCO Director General expressed his appreciation for the achievements made by Oman. He lauded Oman's constructive role in supporting ISESCO. He also commended the role of Oman, represented by Oman National Commission for

Education, Culture and Science (ONCECS), in promoting dialogue among civilizations and encouraging cultural rapprochement.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Madiha Ahmed Al Shaibani, Minister of Education, Chairperson of ONCECS and Amna Salim

Al Balushi, ONCECS Secretary General. It was also attended by Ambassador Khaled Fateh Al Rahman, Director of the Center for Civilizational Dialogue at ISESCO and Dr. Salim bin Hilal Al Habsi, Director of Programs of the National Committees at ISESCO. -ONA



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Microsoft brings innovations in AI, cloud to Comex

Microsoft's booth at Comex reflects the company's commitment to supporting the accelerated adoption of technology amongst individuals

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Microsoft is participating in Comex as the official Innovation Partner, where it will demonstrate industry-leading technological innovations and highlight the key role artificial intelligence (AI) plays in the successful digital transformation journeys of governments and businesses.

Held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat, Microsoft's booth at Comex reflects the company's commitment to supporting the accelerated adoption of technology amongst individuals, organisations, and across key sectors in line with Oman Vision 2040's goal to transition the nation into a knowledge-based community.

"The Sultanate of Oman is setting up necessary infrastructure to accelerate economic diversification and introduce a series of digital innovations across vital sectors", said Sheikh Saif Hilal Al Hosni, Country Manager, Micro-



IT SECTOR: Comex serves as an opportunity for regional IT stakeholders to network with other innovators and share case stories.

soft Oman and Bahrain.

"AI is a defining technology of our time, and we are optimistic about what AI can do for industries and the society in the Sultanate. Microsoft has long been a trusted partner in digital change across The Sultanate of Oman; and at this year's Comex, we shall devote ourselves to helping delegates get ready for AI and make it work."

IT stakeholders

Comex serves as an opportunity for regional IT stakeholders to network with other innovators and share case stories, allowing each to strengthen their own digital transformation programmes.

AI readiness

Microsoft's focus on AI readiness will further strengthen best practices and ensure that all delegates can return to their organisations with value-adding knowledge.

Microsoft's stand will feature 5 partners including Netways, PWC, Cypher Learning, Noventiq, and IITC (International Information Technology Co.); the Company's experts will be participating in the Comex International Conference discussing various topics such as E-services, Cybersecurity and Healthcare and Data and AI.

Through the Azure platform, the intelligent Microsoft Cloud offers public and private enterprises the ability to deliver new business models and boost the speed of innovation and time to market.

Microsoft's AI technologies are protected by industry-leading security measures and include advanced analytics, natural-language-processing, cognitive services, and IoT field-connection services. These technologies can connect the entire business, from the physical to the virtual.

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SHATI AL QURUM

Indian embassy, G20 team of Oman organise beach cleaning drive

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Embassy of India, Muscat in association with Oman's G20 team, organised a beach cleaning drive at Shati Al Qurum Beach on 21 May 2023.

The initiative was organised as part of India's ongoing G20 Presidency, with the objective of promoting environmental sustainability and community engagement.

The beach cleaning drive witnessed a participation of more than 100 volunteers, including students and members of Oman's G20 team. The volunteers actively contributed their time and efforts towards the cleaning and rejuvenation of Shati Al Qurum Beach, making it a more pleasant environment for all.

The presence of Pankaj Khimji, Oman's Sherpa of the G20 Secre-

tariat, and Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, elevated the significance of this event.

During the event, Pankaj Khimji and Ambassador Amit Narang addressed the media, highlighting the importance of collective action in addressing environmental challenges and the need for continued cooperation between nations.

The Embassy of India expressed its sincere gratitude to all the volunteers, students, and members of Oman's G20 team who selflessly contributed their time and energy to make the beach cleaning drive a resounding success. Their commitment and enthusiasm exemplify the spirit of collaboration and community engagement that is essential in achieving our common goals.

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OMAN MARKS TURTLE DAY WITH MISSION TO BOOST GLOBAL CONSERVATION EFFORTS

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority, celebrated World Turtle Day, which falls on May 23 of each year.

In addition to drawing attention to the vulnerability of some species of turtles facing extinction, it encourages global humanitarian action for the conservation of turtles.

On this occasion, the Environment Authority organised various activities for children and adults, which included educational and recreational activities aimed at introducing the importance of sea turtles and contributing to their protection.

The Sultanate of Oman is an important nesting site for sea turtles worldwide, especially on Masirah Island, with an estimated number of about 30,000 turtles visiting every year.

Green turtles are among the most common species found on a number of beaches in the Sultanate of Oman, the most important of which are the beaches of the Turtle Reserve in the Niyabat of Ras Al Hadd in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, in addition

to the olive turtle and the vervain turtle, in small numbers that do not exceed between 150 and 100, respectively.

The Environment Authority (EA) continues to work on programmes to protect sea turtles in the Sultanate of Oman through the implementation of a number of environmental projects, including the sea turtle registration and numbering programme, which deals with collecting data on the spread and distribution of sea turtles, knowing their migration lines, feeding and nesting places.

In addition to the remote monitoring project of green marine turtles, which is being implemented in various regions of the Sultanate of Oman, the EA provides data on the life and behaviour of sea turtles and tracks their migration path through special global sites for tracking sea turtles.

The five-year project between the EA and the Fish and Wildlife Service Agency of the Federal Government of the United States of America aims to study the success rate of Al Rimani turtle nests on the beaches

The Sultanate of Oman is an important nesting site for sea turtles worldwide, especially on Masirah Island, with an estimated number of about

30,000

turtles visiting every year

of the state of Masirah Island, identify sites of relative importance for nesting on different beaches, and determine the factors that affect the success of nesting, hatching, spatial planning, and measures to control the use of beaches to ensure optimal use and the development of national capacities to manage environmental resources.

The project to prepare an action plan for the conservation of sea turtles in the Sultanate of Oman, in cooperation with the Environment Society of Oman and the use of international experts in the field of sea turtle protection, seeks to protect sea turtles according to a strategic approach, which includes assessing the current situation, opportunities and challenges to protect sea turtles, as well as identifying priorities for action and proposing implementation mechanisms.

The voluntary environmental awareness project in the field of turtle protection, which is the "Turtle Commando" programme

launched by the authority in 2021, is concerned with the protection, control and monitoring of sea turtles. It enjoys wide participation from Omani youth and is held annually for six months in the Turtle Reserve in the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, and for three months on Masirah Island.

The Authority responds to the cases of death and stranding of sea turtles through communications received through the Authority's hotline 80061999 and they are treated and rehabilitated in cooperation with Oman Aquarium, and then returned to the sea.

The Environment Authority is committed to implementing many awareness seminars and informative boards on various beaches, and is working on numbering and counting turtles in addition to carrying out continuous monitoring and control on all beaches. It also carries out campaigns to clean nesting beaches as well as coral reefs and guide visitors to the reserve to participate with the local community. — OMA



CRICKET



< FROM A1

Oman confident of making it to Super Six stage

The qualifier is the culmination of four years of hard-fought competition and brings together the bottom five teams from the ICC Men's CWC Super League, three automatic qualifiers from ICC Men's CWC League 2 and two teams who gained entry from the ICC Men's CWC Qualifier playoff.

Ahead of the Qualifier, all the teams will also feature in two warm-up matches to be played on June 13 and 15. Oman will play against hosts Zimbabwe in the first of the two warm-up matches at Takashinga Cricket Club on June 13 and then meet Nepal in the second warm-up game at Harare Sports Club two days later.

Oman's coach Mendis said: "Now with the groupings and venue re-

leased, we know where to play and whom to play. We have to perform and there wouldn't be any room for any excuses wherever we play. I along with my boys are confident of making it to the Super Six stage.

"We have a pre-World Cup Qualifier tour to Durban in South Africa that will last for 12 days. Our preparations have been good despite the scorching summer giving the boys a hard time. We hope the five practice games in Durban will help us and by the time we conclude the trip, our boys will be ready. The two official warm-up games against Nepal and Zimbabwe will be crucial in Harare. We hope to have a successful outing in Zimbabwe."

ICC Chief Executive Geoff Al-

lardice said: "The countdown to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 is entering the final stages and this event presents an incredible opportunity for teams to earn a place in the pinnacle event of one day cricket. The stakes don't get any bigger in what will be a very competitive event enjoyed by fans looking to see who will join the eight teams that have already booked their tickets to India.

"With two former Cricket World Cup champions among the contenders as well as emerging cricket nations who are aiming to qualify for the first time, this unique event, featuring teams from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe will be a showcase of the global game."



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Oman wins first prize at Arab music, song event

In the song contest, Oman won second prize for its song titled “Aynak” (your eyes), which revolves around the theme of beauty



TUNIS: Radio of the Sultanate of Oman won first prize in the Arab Music and Song Contest's 14th round dedicated to music tracks. Oman bagged first prize for its leading music track codenamed “Wahaj” (glow). In the song contest, Oman won second prize for its song titled “Aynak” (your eyes), which revolves around the theme of beauty. This was announced at the



30th meeting of the Arab Broadcasting Union's standing committee, held via video conferencing and attended by Yousuf Humaid Al Yousufi, Director General of Radio Broadcasting. The contest was held at the headquarters of the Arab Broadcasting Union in Tunis during the period from 9 May to 11 May 2023. -ONA

TWO-DAY SEMINAR

Call to plug gaps in supreme audit institutions' independence

DOHA: The State Audit Institution (SAI) took part on Tuesday in a seminar on promoting the independence of supreme audit institutions in the Arab Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI) zone. The two-day seminar, held in Doha, is jointly organised by the ARABOSAI and the INTOSAI Development Initiative (IDI). SAI was represented during the event by Ahmed Salim Al Rujaibi, Deputy Chairman of SAI. The event reflects the efforts of the ARABOSAI and the IDI in identifying gaps related to the independence of supreme audit institutions. Several related topics are discussed during the seminar, including regional approaches regarding independence, the World Bank's indicator and the strategic plan of the ARABOSAI, among other topics.



STRATEGIC PLAN: SAI was represented during the event by Ahmed Salim Al Rujaibi, Deputy Chairman of SAI.

On the sidelines of the seminar, the SAI Deputy Chairman held several meetings with heads of counterpart audit institutions and representative of international organizations. During those meetings, several areas of cooperation were reviewed, in addition to discussing matters of mutual interest. -ONA

INVESTMENT

< FROM A1 Food technology centre to be set up in Muscat

The centre for training, testing and developing food technology is an investment opportunity to address the gaps in the system of food safety and monitoring. The centre will be set up in the Governorate of Muscat on an area of more than 20,000 square metres at an investment of OMR3.9mn. The dairy industries investment opportunity deals with the establishment of a new unit for evaporating and condensing milk. The investment will have an Omani trademark. The proposed unit will be set up on an area of 8,000 square metres at the free zone in Sohar, with an investment of OMR3 million and an investment revenue of 14.1 percent. The date processing and packaging deals with the setting up of a new production facility for

processing and packing dates for the commercial and retail food sectors. The unit will have an investment of OMR2.1 million and an investment revenue of 17.4 percent. The ministry further said that these opportunities are aimed at attracting qualitative investments into the sectors for economic diversification and to contribute to the development of the Sultanate's governorates. While these opportunities are in a number of governorates it is aimed at creating an ideal environment for the success of these investments and to contribute in increasing the share of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the gross domestic product (GDP). These initiatives will also help to promote the Sultanate of Oman as an

ideal investment destination in the various food industries. With regards to digital adaptability, the ministry said that the provision of a basic digital infrastructure was made through the Invest Oman lounge. The Invest Oman platform aims at serving investors, and enabling them to access the platform's website and take advantage of the services provided through it. The website of the lounge was designed to comply with the requirements of investment marketing in the country. It includes the main investment sectors, like logistics, manufacturing, education, information technology, health, circular economy, mining, fisheries, energy, renewable power resources, agricultural wealth sector and the tourism sector. -ONA

ATLANTA NAVAL FORCE

SAF Chief of Staff discusses security issues

MUSCAT: Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) received Rear Admiral Juan María Martin, Commander of the Operation ATLANTA Naval Force.

Maritime security
During the meeting, the two sides discussed several matters related to maritime security in the region. The meeting was attended by a number of senior SAF officers. -ONA

FIGURES

Investments in Oman

< FROM A1 The United Arab Emirates was next with OMR1.083.4 billion. To break down the figures, investments from some other countries stood as the following: OMR927.5 million from Kuwait, OMR896.8 million from China, OMR370.3 million from Bahrain, OMR327.7 million from Qatar, OMR255.2 million from India, OMR241.1 from the Netherlands and OMR171.1 million from Switzerland, as well as OMR2.458 billion from other countries. -ONA

US EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

Workshop on benefits from US bank's services



MUSCAT: A workshop was organised on Tuesday on activating the memorandum of cooperation (MoC) signed by the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, and the Export-Import Bank of the United States. The workshop discussed financing tools, guarantees and assurances provided by the Bank, as well as benefits and advantages made available via the memorandum of cooperation. The workshop also touched on the experience of some countries and companies that benefited from the US Bank's services. The workshop was held under

the auspices of Tahir Salim Al Amri, Executive President of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO). Aseel Mohammed Ridha Al Lawati, Director General of the Public Debt Unit at the Ministry of Finance, said that the MoC, signed on 23 February 2023, grants companies operating in government projects the right to benefit from the services provided by the Export-Import Bank of the United States to the tune of \$500 million. The event was participated by officials representing several public and private establishments. -ONA



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India seeks closer defence, security ties with Australia



The Indian PM pushed for strengthening ties, promising that trade between the countries would double in the next five years



SYDNEY: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Sydney for his second Australian visit as Indian prime minister. Modi shared the stage with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney Olympic Park. “The last time I saw someone on the stage here was Bruce Springsteen and he didn’t get the welcome that Prime Minister Modi has got,” Albanese told a crowd of 20,000 people. Prime Minister Modi reciprocated the warm welcome, telling the Indian diaspora at the stadium that the “most important foundation of our ties is mutual trust and mutual respect.” He pushed for strengthening ties, promising that trade between the countries would double in the next five years.

Positive cooperation

“Our positive cooperation is growing in areas like climate action, disaster management, strategic technologies, reliable supply chain, education and health security,” Modi said. “It hasn’t grown through diplomacy. The real strength is the Indians living in Australia,” he added. Modi hailed the cricket ties between India and Australia as well, telling the packed stadium that millions of Indians were saddened by the passing of Australian cricketer Shane Warne in March. The Indian diaspora accounts for only 3% of Australia’s population of 26 million, but is the nation’s fastest growing ethnic minority.

Trade ties in focus

The leader of the South Asian nation kickstarted his three-day tour on Tuesday by telling Australian media that he wanted to take New Delhi’s ties with Canberra to the “next level,” which includes deepening defence and security relations to help ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region. “As two democracies, India and Australia have shared interests in a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. There is alignment of our strategic viewpoint,” Modi told The Australian newspaper. “The high degree of mutual trust between us has naturally translated into greater cooperation on defense and security matters. Our navies are participating in joint naval exercises. I am confident that there is merit in working together to realize the true potential in closer defence and security co-operation,” he added. The visit comes after Modi attended a weekend Quad summit in Japan with the leaders of the United States, Japan and Australia to counter China’s rising influence in the Indo-Pacific. Australia and India have a great “strategic alignment,” Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles said. “It really does afford the opportunity to take the relationship to the next level,” he told public broadcaster ABC, ahead of Modi’s arrival. When asked if Australia would raise India’s treatment of Muslims and other minorities with the Hindu nationalist leader, Marles

India will soon open consulate in Brisbane: Indian PM Modi

SYDNEY: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that a new Indian Consulate will be opened soon in the Australian city of Brisbane. Addressing a community event in Sydney on the second day of his visit to Australia, PM Modi said that IMF considers India a bright spot in the global economy and the World Bank believes that if anyone is challenging global headwinds, it is India. “As per the demands of Indian-origin people in Brisbane, a new Indian Consulate will be opened soon in Brisbane,” he said. India has High Commission in Canberra and Consulates in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was also present at the event. PM Narendra Modi said that India has no dearth of capability or resources. “India has no dearth of capability or resources. Today, India has the world’s biggest and youngest talent factory,” PM Modi said. People cheered as PM Modi asked some questions related to India’s achievements across various sectors. “The country which had the fastest vaccination programme during the COVID-19 pandemic is,” he asked. **-ONA**

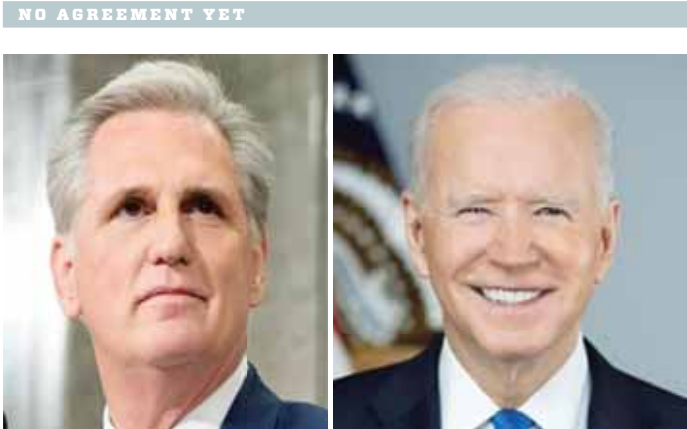
declined to go into detail and said he expected Albanese and Modi would have a “full conversation.” “Ultimately, we are both democracies and that very much underpins the way in which we see the world,” the deputy prime minister said, stressing instead the trade and defense ties between the two countries. India is a “growing massive economy, there are great opportu-

nities for us,” he said. Australia is the final stop on Modi’s Asia-Pacific tour. The trip has been seen as part of an effort to assert India’s role in the region in the face of growing influence from China. Before travelling to Sydney, Modi was in Papua New Guinea to meet with the 14 Pacific Island leaders in a bid to boost cooperation. **— DW**

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Biden, McCarthy have ‘productive’ debt ceiling meeting

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy held a sit-down meeting earlier on Monday to discuss raising the country’s debt ceiling, which limits how much the US federal government can borrow to pay its accounts. The two called their latest talks productive but no deal has yet been reached. “I believe we can get a deal done,” House Speaker McCarthy told reporters after the meeting. “We don’t have an agreement yet,” McCarthy added. “But I did feel the discussion was productive in areas that we have differences of opinion.” “Biden and I will talk every day until we get this done,” he said. The debt ceiling is a spending limit set by Congress that determines how much money the government can borrow. Failure to raise it beyond the current cap of roughly USD 31.4 trillion in June could result in the US defaulting on its debt. That would mean the government could not borrow any more money or pay all of its bills. It would

also threaten to wreak havoc on the global economy. “I just concluded a productive meeting with Speaker McCarthy about the need to prevent default and avoid a catastrophe for our economy. We reiterated once again that default is off the table and the only way to move forward is in good faith toward a bipartisan agreement,” Biden said in a statement. “While there are areas of disagreement, the Speaker and I, and his lead negotiators Chairman McHenry and Congressman Graves, and our staffs will continue to discuss the path forward,” he added. The president cut short his trip to Asia, returning from Japan late Sunday night so he could work toward a deal in the final days before the June 1 deadline. Biden and McCarthy spoke on the phone while the president was aboard Air Force One en route back to Washington, and negotiators designated by the president and speaker have been trying to reach an agreement on a framework. **— ANI**

SEAWORLD YAS ISLAND

Region’s first marine life theme park opens in Abu Dhabi

Times News Service

ABU DHABI: SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, the region’s first Marine Life Theme Park, officially opened its doors to the public, offering unforgettable experiences and immersive adventures for guests of all ages. The star-studded opening celebrations, which took place on May 22, featured unforgettable performances by Emirati superstar Hussain Al Jassmi, Scottish recording artist Red as well as a sensational orchestra of 120 musicians. Marking the opening of the next-generation Marine Life Theme Park, the event’s captivating opening ceremony featured stunning immersive sound and light shows, which dazzled the crowd. The coveted event was attended by hundreds of special guests and celebrities. The newest theme park on Yas Island, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi was developed by Miral, the leading creator of immersive destinations and experiences, in partnership with SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, a leading educational theme park and entertainment company as well as one of the world’s foremost zoological organizations. Kicking off the event, which was held in the One Ocean realm, guests were treated to a special inaugural viewing of SeaWorld Abu Dhabi’s One Epic Ocean spectacular. The immersive show features multimedia and state-of-the-art spatial audio, bringing wonders of the ocean to life on an extraordinary 360-degree screen, standing at 15 metres tall and 218 metres wide. A group of young marine enthusiasts then took to the stage, activating a mesmerizing sound and light display which featured a swirling vortex that lit up the One Ocean globe. Symbolizing the connection between the ocean and



all of us and marking the official opening of SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, this moment was a highlight of the majestic event. Guests in attendance went on to enjoy performances from the orchestra and Red, culminating in a bespoke track dedicated to SeaWorld Abu Dhabi sung by Hussain Al Jassmi. In a stunning finale, a series of silver three-dimensional figures representing marine animals flew across the stage, inviting guests to explore the newly opened park for the first time. During the event Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of Miral, alongside Scott Ross, Chairman of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment and Mohamed Abdalla Al Zaabi, Group CEO of Miral welcomed Dr. Mugheer Khamis Al Khaili, Chairman of the Department of Community Development in addition to other government officials, as well as ambassadors and charg  d’affaires to the UAE from the USA, Japan, Singapore and Belgium among other countries. Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak,

Chairman of Miral, said: “Today marks a great milestone for Abu Dhabi as we open SeaWorld Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, a landmark attraction that is unparalleled in the region and the world on every level. SeaWorld Abu Dhabi represents the next generation of theme parks, joining the world-class experiences on Yas Island, further positioning it as a top global destination, contributing to the growth of Abu Dhabi’s tourism vision. The Park will also play a key role in promoting environmental awareness and protecting marine life in Abu Dhabi, the UAE and the wider region, undoubtedly inspiring guests to care for and protect our precious marine life for years to come. Together, with our partner, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, we are proud to be pushing the limits of science and conservation to create a truly unparalleled knowledge hub, demonstrating our joint commitment to upholding the highest standards of animal care and welfare. We look forward to welcoming guests from around the world to showcase the beauty and wonder of the ocean at

this one-of-a-kind park.” Spanning five indoor levels over 183,000 sqm, the park tells a captivating One Ocean story, taking guests on a journey of discovery seamlessly blending learning and fun across eight immersive realms. At SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, guests of all ages can enjoy unique family-friendly experiences including up-close animal encounters and animal presentations. The park is also home to inspiring entertainment, exciting rides and attractions as well as unmatched dining and shopping experiences. Scott Ross, Chairman of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, said: “As the first SeaWorld park to open outside of the United States, SeaWorld Abu Dhabi marks a significant chapter for SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. It is with great privilege we celebrate this highly anticipated opening alongside our valued partners at Miral. The extraordinary SeaWorld Abu Dhabi Marine Life Theme Park was born through years of collaboration and innovation, combining SeaWorld’s nearly 60 years of experience in animal welfare and



commitment to marine conservation with Miral’s unprecedented track record as a leading developer of world-class destinations. Together, we have created a state-of-the-art Marine Life Theme Park unlike anything the world has seen to date, truly representing a next generation SeaWorld experience. We have no doubt that guests will be amazed with all that SeaWorld Abu Dhabi has to offer and we are sincerely proud to play our part in inspiring their commitment to marine conservation for years to come.” Each realm at SeaWorld Abu Dhabi is uniquely themed and intricately designed, transporting guests to different marine environments found across the globe. The One Ocean realm acts as the core of the park sharing the One Ocean story through highly immersive media. The realm is also home to the Animal Care Center and houses the portals to the rest of the park, while the Abu Dhabi Ocean realm invites guests to discover the unique marine life of the Arabian Gulf. At Rocky Point, guests will see sea lions and harbour seals

in a hidden cove inspired by the USA’s Pacific Northwest. The Tropical Ocean realm features a vibrant and sunny rainforest and a stunning blue lagoon with dolphins, flamingos, fish and birds. In Micro Ocean realm children and families are in for big fun as they explore the microscopic world as plankton and learn that being small can have a big impact. In Endless Ocean realm guests will marvel at the world’s largest multi-species marine life aquarium, featuring over 68,000 marine animals and an astounding 25 million litres of water. In the Arctic and Antarctica realms of Polar Ocean, guests will enjoy icy seascapes and learn about the unique habits of polar species. SeaWorld Abu Dhabi offers 10 up-close animal encounters amongst 100 animal experiences and presentations, where guests can learn about the unique characteristics and behaviors of fascinating marine animals including dolphins, sharks, and sea turtles. The park is also home to over 15 interactive rides and experiences, each taking guests on a unique journey of discovery beneath the waves. Thrill-seekers can enjoy rides like the Manta Coaster at Tropical Ocean, or hop into the Hypersphere 360 in Polar Ocean’s Arctic Realm. Additionally, several family friendly rides await in Micro Ocean – there’s something for guests of all ages to enjoy at the Marine Life Theme Park. As guests venture through SeaWorld Abu Dhabi, entertainment is all around with over 20 live characters and performances taking place over the course of each day. Guests can refuel between activities throughout their journey, with 18 different dining experiences to choose from, ranging from quick snacks on-the-go to fine dining options.

Pakistan, Malaysia, Japan start their campaign with big victories

Top three teams will qualify for the FIH Junior Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, to be played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

SALALAH: Fancied Pakistan toyed with Chinese Taipei to record a 15-1 win, Japan trounced Thailand 7-1 and Malaysia drubbed Uzbekistan 8-1 in the AHF Men's Junior Asia Cup Salalah 2023, which got underway in Salalah on Tuesday.

Three-time champions Pakistan turned out to be too strong for their rivals and the huge margin sent out warning signals to the rest that they are one of the title contenders. Pakistan along with defending champions India have won the Junior Asia Cup a record three times each.

Both have been drawn in the same Group A and the blockbuster clash in the group stage will take place on May 27.

Pakistan led 5-0 while Japan were ahead 6-0 at half-time in Group A games.

Mohammed Sufyaan and Abdul Hanan Shahid scored a hat-trick each in Pakistan's huge win.

In the first of Group B matches, Malaysia were emphatic in their demolition of Uzbekistan, leading 6-0 at the break.

Organised by the Oman Hockey Association (OHA) under the auspices of Asian Hockey Federation (AHF), the best young Asian teams are in action at the tournament, which began on Tuesday and will conclude on June 1.

The top three teams from Salalah will qualify as Asian representatives for the upcoming FIH Junior



Hockey Men's World Cup 2023, to be played in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur.

The ten participating teams have been split into two pools.

Pool A comprises Chinese Taipei, India, Japan, Pakistan and

Thailand. In Pool B hosts Oman are joined by Bangladesh, Korea, Malaysia and Uzbekistan.

Each team in the pool stage will play the other four teams in their group once. The top two teams in both pools will qualify for the

semi-finals, while the teams in third and fourth positions will compete for the 5-8 place classification.

The teams finishing in the fifth place in both pools will go head-to-head to avoid finishing in the

tenth place. The losing semi-finalists will play in the bronze medal match, with the two finalists and the bronze medalists qualifying for the FIH Junior Hockey World Cup 2023.

Malaysia, as hosts, have already qualified for the World Cup, so if Malaysia enter the semifinals of the Junior Asia Cup, all the other three teams making it to the semi-finals will gain entry into the World Cup as well.

The FIH Junior Hockey Men's World Cup 2023 will be played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 5-16 December 2023.

Teams that have already qualified for the World Cup are Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands and Spain from Europe. Australia and New Zealand have also qualified through the Oceania qualifiers. South Africa and Egypt are the qualifiers from Africa while Argentina, Canada and Chile are the three qualifiers from Pan America.



Trophy unveiled

SALALAH: The Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) and OHA unveiled the tournament trophy in the presence of all the ten team captains in Salalah on Monday.

Fumio Ogura, the AHF President, expressed his gratitude to the Oman Hockey Association (OHA) for hosting the Junior Asia Cup.

He said: "Our past experiences have shown us the exceptional capabilities of OHA as an excellent host for AHF events. We take great pride in our strong working relationship with the OHA, who have consistently proven themselves as one of the finest hosts in Asia."

"We would also like to express our appreciation to Dhofar Municipality, the local government of Salalah and all the sponsors and facilitators of the Men's Junior Asia Cup 2023."

NEW STADIUM IN AL AMERAT

FIH president in Oman, reviews Hockey5s World Cup preparations

MUSCAT: With nearly eight months to go for the hosting of the inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey5s World Cup in Oman, preparations are in full swing with Oman Hockey Association (OHA) working in close coordination with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.

The FIH Hockey 5s World Cup will be held in January 2024 with 16 men's and 16 women's teams to vie for the coveted titles.

Keeping a close watch on the progress of the showpiece event is Tayyab Ikram the president of FIH, the world hockey governing body. Ikram is currently visiting Oman to attend the HF Men's Junior Asia Cup Salalah 2023 and on Monday visited the construction site of the new stadium for the Hockey 5s World Cup in Al Amerat.

He was accompanied by OHA chairman Dr Marwan Al Juma, OHA treasurer Zuhair al Ajmi and other officials.

It may be mentioned that *Times of Oman* had first reported in April this year that the Hockey 5s World Cup venue has been shifted to Al Amerat from Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

The visit of the FIH president is the first to Oman since he last visited in January this year.

Following his visit to Al Amerat to review the preparations, Ikram said: "I am thankful to the Oman authorities and the Hockey 5s World Cup Local Organising Committee, as well as the construction companies, for a fruitful discussion about the planning of the inaugural FIH Hockey5s World Cup in January 2024."

The new stadium will be built next to the existing Oman Cricket Academy Grounds and close to Al Amerat Club.



Al Juma, who last month became the first Omani to be elected as vice-president of the Asian Hockey Federation (AHF), had earlier told *Times of Oman*: "The decision to build a new venue for the Hockey 5s World Cup came at the behest of the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY), His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said."

The world-class stadium in Al Amerat will feature one full-fledged hockey pitch (11-a-side) and a five-a-side pitch for the World Cup with a capacity of 5,500 seats.

The state-of-the-art hockey arena will also get the second full-fledged floodlit astro-turf pitch after the conclusion of the Hockey 5s World Cup.

AUSTRALIAN PACER

Hazlewood 'fit and available' for WTC final against India

MELBOURNE: Australian fast-bowler Josh Hazlewood appears to have recovered from his injury, which is a positive sign for the Australian cricket team as they will be facing India in the final of the World Test Championship (WTC) starting on June 7.

In a major relief for the pacer, scans have revealed no damage and he has now returned to bowling as the Australian squad prepares to depart for the UK.

A Cricket Australia (CA) spokesperson, giving an update on Hazlewood, said, "Josh Hazlewood returned home from the IPL last weekend after experiencing minor

side soreness after the completion of his most recent IPL match.

"After a brief and precautionary rest period, Hazlewood returned to high-intensity bowling last week and will continue to increase his bowling workloads in preparation for the WTC and Ashes series. Hazlewood is considered fit and available for the WTC and Ashes Series" added the spokesperson.

Hazlewood who plays for Royal Challengers Bangalore in IPL, only managed to play in three IPL matches. He only bowled nine overs in those three matches. On May 9 he flew back to his country, Australia to get his injury treated

and be prepared for the coming matches.

Hazlewood has been named in the squad for the upcoming WTC final. He is also part of the squad that will be facing England in the Ashes Series commencing on June 16.

Australia's squad: Pat Cummins (captain), Steve Smith, David Warner, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Matthew Renshaw, Marcus Harris, Alex Carey, Josh Inglis, Cameron Green, Mitchell Marsh, Scott Boland, Josh Hazlewood, Nathan Lyon, Mitchell Starc, and Todd Murphy. - **ANI**



Sultanate of Oman
MINISTRY CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

TENDR. No.	Project Category	Grade In Tender Board Registration	Location	Last day to purchase tender documents	Last date of tender submission
4/2023	Consulting Offices	First	CONSULTANCY SERVICES (DESIGN AND SUPERVISION) TO CONSTRUCTION OF RESIDENTS FOR SECURITY AT THE MINISTRY'S AT AL KHUWAIR	06/06/2023	03/07/2023
5/2023	Services	First	Luqt Al Athar Book Printing	30/05/2023	12/06/2023

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om

INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

KR کیمجی رامداس
KHIMJI RAMDAS
— IN YOUR TRIUMPH IS OURS —

TODAY'S MATCH

ELIMINATOR



Lucknow Super Giants

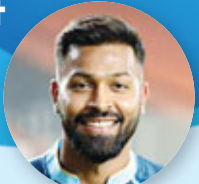
VS



Mumbai Indians

6pm, Chennai

QUOTE OF THE DAY



"We were quite spot on but we made some basic errors in bowling. I think we did a lot of things right. But we bowled a couple of soft balls in between. We gave some runs in between, we must've conceded 16 runs or so due to our soft balls."

Hardik Pandya
Gujarat Titans captain

A group of tennis players in yellow and purple uniforms are running on a court. The image is partially obscured by large, bold text at the bottom.

CHENNAI MARCH INTO TENTH FINAL

CSK spinners stifle Gujarat Titans as they successfully defend 172 at home

CHENNAI: Chennai Super Kings (CSK), led by MS Dhoni, defeated defending champions Gujarat Titans (GT) by 15 runs at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai to march into a record tenth IPL final on Tuesday.

Batting first, Chennai managed to put up a competitive total of 172 and then on a pitch that

was slow and assisted turn, the spinners – Ravindra Jadeja and Mahesh Theekshana – picked up four wickets for 36 runs. They were ably supported by Deepak Chahar and Matheesha Pathirana as Titans were bowled out for 157.

For Titans, who like batting second it was only the fourth loss in 18 chases. Titans who were the dominant team in the league stage, earned a second shot at a place in the final. They will meet the winner of Mumbai Indians or Lucknow Super Giants in Ahmedabad in Qualifier 2 on Friday.

Chasing a total of 173, Titans openers started slow but Deepak Chahar cleared up Wriddhiman Saha in the third over. Theekshana got the second wicket when he dismissed skipper Hardik Pandya in the sixth over as GT could reach the

50-run mark only in the eighth over.

Jadeja then dismissed Dasun Shanaka to give Chennai the upper hand. Wickets fell at regular intervals and Jadeja dismissed David Miller to leave Titans 88/4 in 13th over.

In the next over, Deepak Chahar got the massive breakthrough of in-form batter Shubman Gill, who was caught by Devon Conway for a fighting 42 off 38 balls. Theekshana then dismissed Rahul Tewatia as Titans failed to cope up with the increasing required run-rate.

All-rounder Rashid Khan did hit a few boundaries to keep the hopes alive but with wickets falling at the other end, Chennai were in the driver's seat going into the death overs. Rashid's fighting knock came to an end after Tushar Deshpande got him caught at deep

point in the 19th over. He scored 30 off 16 balls.

Earlier, Ruturaj Gaikwad and Devon Conway put on 49 without any loss in the powerplay. Gaikwad looked in great touch and went on to notch-up his half-century in 36 balls.

The Gaikwad-Conway's opening partnership was broken when Mohit Sharma dismissed Gaikwad for 60 from 44 balls. In the next over, left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad dismissed Shivan Dube and CSK were 90/2.

Conway along with Ajinkya Rahane took CSK past 100 in 13.1 overs. Rahane was dismissed for 17 by Darshan Nalkande and Conway followed soon after making 40. Mohammed Shami picked up the wicket of Conway (125/4).

Ambati Rayudu and Ravindra

Jadeja batted sensibly to take Chennai close to 150. Rashid Khan dismissed Rayudu for 17. After Rayudu's wicket there was a huge roar from the Chennai crowd as Dhoni walked out to bat. The celebrations were short-lived as Dhoni was dismissed for one by Mohit and Chennai were 155/6.

Moeen Ali joined Jadeja and the duo took the Super Kings to 172/7 with Shami castling Jadeja for 22 from 16 balls off the last ball of the innings.

Brief scores: Chennai Super Kings 172/7 in 20 overs (Ruturaj Gaikwad 60, Devon Conway 40; Mohammed Shami 2/28, Mohit Sharma 2/31) beat Gujarat Titans 157 all out in 20 overs (Shubman Gill 42, Rashid Khan 30; Ravindra Jadeja 2-18, Maheesh Theekshana 2-28).



OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by July 2023 reaching \$74.87, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 69 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$74.18. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,686.26 points, down by 0.36 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.14 per cent at 468.31 points. Muscat Finance, up 1.75 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.72 per cent, was the top loser.

Port of Salalah retains its top spot as 2nd most efficient port globally

Port of Salalah also claimed the No.1 spot in the West Central and South Asia region

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Port of Salalah has retained its top spot as the second most efficient container port in the world two years in a row based on the Container Ports Performance Index (CPPI) report for 2022 published by the World Bank and S&P Global. Port of Salalah also claimed the No.1 spot in the West Central and South Asia Region.

In its analysis to determine the best-performing container ports in the world, the World Bank-S&P Global Market Intelligence collects time stamps from 10 of the world's largest liner shipping companies, which collectively operate close to 80 per cent of the global container ship fleet capacity. In 2022, performance time stamp data and other information were



analysed for the 348 ports capturing 156,813 port calls involving 243.9 million container moves. While the No. 1 port scored 215 Index points, the Port of Salalah scored 212 Index points.

The Port of Salalah's location-

al advantage coupled with its growing connectivity as well as its world-class operations gives its customers an unparalleled competitive edge in a very competitive region.

Salalah's status as a tranship-

ment hub is also important for the growth of the local economy in Dhofar as the importers and exporters benefit from the best-in-class connectivity the port offers to trade their products globally. Having a highly efficient port also

improves local business confidence and will therefore attract further investment including FDI.

Port of Salalah attributed this success and recognition to the commitment and continuous improvement mindset of the team,

support from its customers and prompt services of the various authorities including but not limited to the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology, ROP Customs and Asyad.

"Port of Salalah has again, for the second consecutive year, been recognised as the 2nd most efficient container port in the world. This is due to our outstanding performance, and it underlines the stability and commitment to serve our customers in the best possible way. I salute our hardworking employees for this great achievement, and I thank all the stakeholders around our business who supported us in achieving this milestone," commented Keld Christensen, CEO of Port of Salalah.

"It's great to work with this talented and motivated team as The Port of Salalah continues our transformation to deliver for our customers. We have come a long way over the last 5 years, improving productivity by over 20 per cent and driving a customer-centric focus throughout the entire organisation. Our transformation only intensifies from here as we engage every team member to raise the bar," commented Scott Selman, COO of Port of Salalah.

Bank Dhofar SAOG announces intention to make acquisition offer to Ahli Bank

FURTHER to Bank Dhofar SAOG disclosure on 18 May 2023 announcing the terms of a revised non-binding offer made to the board of directors of ABO on 26 April 2023 (the "Revised Offer"), having considered its options, the board of directors of Bank Dhofar SAOG ("Bank Dhofar") at its meeting held on 23 May 2023 resolved to make an offer to acquire 100% of the issued share capital of ABO in a takeover pursuant to the Oman Acquisition and Takeover Regulations (Ministerial Decision No. 2 of 2019) ("Offer") and to therefore withdraw our merger proposal.

The terms of the Offer will be identical to the terms previously outlined in our Revised Offer, and are summarised below:

1. Offer structure

The Offer provides all ABO shareholders with an option to elect to receive up to 25% of their consideration in cash (the "Cash Component"); the rest of the consideration will be paid in the form of newly issued Bank Dhofar shares (the "Share Component"). For ABO shareholders who are: (i) Sharia compliant juristic shareholders; or (ii) subsidiaries of Sharia compliant juristic shareholders, the Cash Component will be increased to 100% of total consideration received, to reflect their (or their parent shareholder's) de jure inability to receive shares in a conventional bank.

Bank Dhofar envisages to fund the Cash Component of the Offer from its existing liquidity and capital resources as well as a contribution from Bank Dhofar's existing shareholders, if and as required.

2. Financial terms

The financial terms of the Offer are set forth as follows:

- 1.2910 Bank Dhofar ordinary shares per ABO share (the "Swap Ratio"), valuing each ABO share at OMR 0.200 based on the Bank Dhofar closing share price of OMR 0.155 as at 9 April 2023 (the "Bank Dhofar Unaffected Share Price")
- OMR 0.200 per each ABO share as the Cash Component

The above represents:

- A premium of 15.0% to ABO's closing share price of OMR 0.174 as at 9 April 2023 (the "ABO Unaffected Share Price");
- An implied Price to Q1 2023 Book Value multiple of 1.30x.

Since the submission of our initial non-binding offer to the board of directors of ABO on 10 April 2023 (the "Initial Offer"), Bank Dhofar's share price has appreciated. As a result, for the Share Component, this appreciation translates into a significant increase in the value of each ABO share under the agreed Swap Ratio of 1.2910. As at closing share prices on 17 May 2023, the Swap Ratio of our Revised Offer now represents:

- A premium of 30.6% to the ABO Unaffected Share Price, valuing each ABO share at OMR 0.227 based on the Bank Dhofar closing share price of OMR 0.176;
- An implied Price to Q1 2023 Book Value multiple of 1.48x, by far exceeding the average Price to Book Value multiple of the Omani banking sector.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Cash Component values each ABO share at OMR 0.200.

3. Strategic Rationale

After completion of the Takeo-

veroffer, Bank Dhofar will look to effect a combination with ABO. We believe that a combination of Bank Dhofar and ABO is a compelling opportunity for ABO shareholders to:

- Create a leading domestically-focused wholly owned Omani bank with a robust competitive position, well placed to serve the entirety of the market with leading market positions across a number of customer segments;
- Combine the banks' highly complementary activities and expertise across retail, corporate and Islamic banking for the benefit of the combined group and its customers;
- Provide career development opportunities for both banks' employees;
- Provide opportunities to create value for both sets of shareholders, notably through an improvement in the combined group's cost of funds; and
- Provide enhanced liquidity for both sets of shareholders.

All in all, the proposed transaction offers an immensely attractive opportunity for shareholders of both entities to benefit from value creation with significant synergy possibilities and to participate in the long-term growth story, whilst ensuring a strong and well capitalized bank on day one.

We remain highly confident in our ability to successfully execute the contemplated transaction.

Any transaction, should it proceed, is subject to obtaining approvals from regulators and other applicable requirements. A further announcement will be made if and when appropriate.

Abdul Hakeem
Omar Al Ojaili
Chief Executive Officer

AUTOMATING FOLLOW-UP PROCEDURES

Opaz launches Centralised Compliance System at Comex

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) inaugurated on the sidelines of Oman's Official Technology show (Comex 2023), the Centralised Compliance System "Eltizam", under the patronage of Dr Ali bin Amer Al Shidhani, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, and with the presence of several other dignitaries.

Launching the "Eltizam" system is aimed at automating follow-up procedures and practices in the field of control and compliance, most notably environmental and

labour control and inspection of buildings and projects, monitoring, compliance, and issuance of violations and reports, in addition to providing the system with another feature of e-payment through the system.

Follow-up procedures

The Centralised Compliance System will be implemented in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad) as a first phase to automate the various follow-up procedures, which include procedures for following up on environmental compliance, pollution control, waste and hazardous materials management, projects control, labour control, and building control.

This system also targets other

categories of end users as it is not only used by inspectors, but representatives of companies, consultants and contractors can also use the system via tablets or mobile phones.

Through the system, users can schedule field visits, distribute compliance follow-up tasks electronically, specify exact inspection sites, prepare field visit reports and add attachments and images directly on-site without having to go back to the office. It is also possible via Eltizam to communicate directly between the inspection team and follow-up team and companies to follow up on inspections, in addition to the ability for companies to send inspection requests according to the projects' stages.

Daleel Petroleum

A Journey of Excellence

Daleel's journey began in 2002 with a mission to study and explore the hydrocarbon potential of Block 5, underpinned by a goal to harness these resources for the advancement of the Omani economy. It paved the way for 20 years of excellence – a milestone that was recently celebrated. In addition to securing a 15-year extension for Block 5, Daleel has also recently added to its portfolio by signing of an agreement with PDO to develop the Lekhwair Small Field.

From the outset, Daleel has been committed to safety, operational excellence, empowerment and business growth throughout our challenging journey. Guided by a sustainable advancement strategy, our goal is to optimize value creation from our assets by unlocking new opportunities and maintaining our successful track record while maximizing stakeholder value as well.

Leveraging the latest technologies, Daleel has succeeded in tapping the hydrocarbon resources of the Daleel, Bushra, Shadi, Mazoon, Furat and more recently the Thahab fields. These efforts were complemented by the deployment of EOR technology, which helped boost oil production to around 50,000 bpd presently, up from 5,000 bpd in 2002.

In recognition of these accomplishments, Daleel was conferred with the Gas and LNG Middle East Summit Award for the 'Most Efficient Oil and Gas Industry Developer in Oman'. Adding to the haul of awards received by the company were the MB Chairman Award for Excellence in 2018, 2019 and 2022, and the OPAL Best Practice Awards for Operational Excellence in 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Also noteworthy are Daleel Petroleum's robust HSE safeguards. In 2022, for example, Daleel achieved its goal of eliminating Routine Zero Flaring – eight years ahead of target. This was made possible by investments to extract associated natural gas and condensates with a capacity of 40 million cubic feet per annum.

Omanisation has been one of our proudest achievements that presently stands at 97%, up from 69% in 2011. This success was applauded at the 17th GCC Ceremony to Recognize Companies & Establishments in the area of Nationalization Practices and Implementations.

As we begin a new chapter in our growth, we are committed as ever before to contribute to a brighter, more ambitious, future for the Sultanate of Oman in partnership with our shareholders.



MARKET

MSX index ends lower



Muscat Finance, up 1.75 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.72 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,686.26 points, down by 0.36 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.14 per cent at 468.31 points. Muscat Finance, up 1.75 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 9.72 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 445 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR2.17 million, with more than 7.31 million shares changing hands. Out of 44 traded securities, 6 advanced, 24 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR361,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR324,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR38,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,628.00 points, down 0.35 per cent. Prices of Muscat Finance, Al Madina Takaful, Al Batinah Development Company and So-

har International Bank were up by 1.75 per cent, 1.21 per cent, 1.03 per cent and 0.98 per cent respectively.

Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Bank Muscat, United Finance and Global Financial Investments were up by 2.50 per cent, 2.24 per cent, 1.87 per cent, 1.72 per cent and 1.64 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,023.58 points, down 0.72 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Oman Cement, Raysut Cement and Galfar Engineering were up by 6.25 per cent, 2.44 per cent, 2.22 per cent and 1.05 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.52 per cent before closing at 1,693.07 points. Prices of Renaissance Services and Shell Oman Marketing were up by 1.07 per cent and 0.47 per cent respectively. Prices of Sohar Power, Al Suwadi Power, Al Jazeera Services, Muscat Desalination and Phoenix Power were up by 5.56 per cent, 3.33 per cent, 3.10 per cent, 2.04 per cent and 1.49 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,701.36	4,678.48	4,686.26	4,703.13	-16.86	-0.36
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,651.84	7,599.97	7,628.00	7,654.67	-26.67	-0.35
Industry Index	6,076.16	6,023.58	6,023.58	6,067.05	-43.47	-0.72
Services Index	1,701.96	1,674.70	1,693.07	1,701.96	-8.89	-0.52
MSX Shariah Index	469.07	467.53	468.31	468.97	-0.66	-0.14
MSX TR INDEX	6,180.89	6,150.80	6,161.04	6,183.21	-22.17	-0.36
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,335.44	8,278.94	8,309.47	8,338.52	-29.05	-0.35
SERVICES TR IDX	1,871.00	1,841.04	1,861.23	1,871.00	-9.78	-0.52
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,490.85	6,434.68	6,434.68	6,481.12	-46.44	-0.72

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
7,314,726	2,173,431	445	23,713,579,648	6	24	14	44

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, MAY 23

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRV VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM00000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	72,948	6,060	5	0.083	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.083	0.001	1.205	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.100	14,700,000
OM00000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	1,258	471	2	0.360	0.378	0.360	0.378	0.374	0.004	1.070	0.378	0.362	0.378	0.100	89,362,980
OM00000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	269,223	27,353	12	0.102	0.103	0.101	0.103	0.102	0.001	0.980	0.103	0.102	0.104	0.100	472,776,416
OM00000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	172,200	12,743	15	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.067	0.074	0.100	9,018,750
OM00000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	948	265	2	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.280	0.300	0.100	34,971,429
OM00000003968	OQREDOO	53,029	19,090	3	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.000	0.000	0.380	0.358	0.380	0.100	234,339,623
OM00000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	1,000	86	1	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.086	0.000	0.000	0.086	0.084	0.086	0.100	17,168,662
OM00000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	16,000	4,211	8	0.264	0.264	0.263	0.263	0.265	-0.002	-0.755	0.263	0.262	0.263	0.100	26,300,000
OM00000003026	OMAN TELECOM	517,269	503,748	26	0.980	0.980	0.968	0.972	0.980	-0.008	-0.816	0.972	0.960	0.972	0.100	729,000,000
OM00000001533	OMINVEST	20,000	7,560	6	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.382	-0.004	-1.047	0.378	0.378	0.382	0.100	252,642,131
OM00000002440	AL SHARQIA INVESTMENT HO	29,500	2,183	4	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.074	0.082	0.100	6,660,000
OM00000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO	122,000	7,324	10	0.062	0.062	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.060	0.061	0.100	12,000,000
OM00000002374	UNITED FINANCE	418,715	23,867	24	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.057	0.060	0.100	20,299,256
OM00000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,997,619	793,059	105	0.267	0.268	0.263	0.263	0.268	-0.005	-1.866	0.263	0.263	0.264	0.100	1974,182,427
OM00000001749	OMAN CEMENT	12,000	3,840	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.328	-0.008	-2.439	0.320	0.320	0.328	0.100	105,879,267
OM00000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	18,642	4,661	6	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.258	-0.008	-3.101	0.250	0.250	0.265	0.100	15,301,068
Total	16	4,722,351	1,416,520	230												
Parallel Market																
OM00000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	94,090	5,365	6	0.057	0.058	0.052	0.058	0.057	0.001	1.754	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.100	17,814,487
OM00000002396	ALBATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO	35,000	3,430	1	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.097	0.001	1.031	0.098	0.095	0.100	0.100	2,940,000
OM00000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,560	1,712	3	0.880	0.880	0.864	0.864	0.880	0.004	0.465	0.864	0.864	0.880	0.100	82,080,000
OM00000001160	NATIONAL GAS	70,505	7,051	6	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	8,500,000
OM00000003281	TAGEER FINANCE	100	9	1	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.100	24,008,988
OM00000004420	BANK NIZWA	234,267	21,791	9	0.093	0.094	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.093	0.093	0.094	0.100	208,036,632
OM0000004689	SHARQIYAH DESALINATION	500	63	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.100	12,714,281
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	76,275	2,212	6	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.100	19,571,735
OM00000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	38,065	11,343	2	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.000	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.100	20,976,220
OM00000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	3,146	299	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.093	0.100	0.100	19,000,000
OM00000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	23,000	3,128	2	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.000	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.100	10,270,962
OM00000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	160,834	46,533	33	0.288	0.290	0.288	0.290	0.290	0.000	0.000	0.290	0.290	0.289	0.100	223,358,000
OM00000002648	NATIONAL FINANCE	5,900	894	1	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.116	0.117	-0.001	-0.855	0.116	0.115	0.120	0.100	66,549,697
OM0000004735	SEMBICORP SALALAH	20,009	2,058	5	0.102	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.104	0.101	0.104	0.100	99,275,483
OM00000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	105,909	20,236	7	0.193	0.193	0.188	0.188	0.190	-0.002	-1.053	0.188	0.188	0.190	0.100	38,161,452
OM00000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	401,553	34,255	38	0.066	0.066	0.065	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.149	0.066	0.066	0.066	0.100	17,200,000
OM00000005963	PHOENIX POWER	513,054	32,337	12	0.064	0.066	0.063	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.063	0.066	0.100	96,531,696
OM00000008868	THE PEARL REEF	1,500	179	1	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.121	-0.002	-1.653	0.119	0.119	0.121	0.100	50,547,655
OM00000007884	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	29,000	2,794	6	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.098	-0.002	-2.041	0.096	0.095	0.098	0.100	14,932,838
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	86,811	15,360	11	0.180	0.180	0.176	0.176	0.180	-0.004	-2.222	0.176	0.176	0.176	0.100	35,200,000
OM00000002077	AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES	200,000	26,200	4	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.131	0.134	-0.003	-2.239	0.131	0.127	0.136	0.100	40,305,347
OM00000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	110,200	4,213	14	0.044	0.044	0.038	0.039	0.040	-0.001	-2.500	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.100	3,315,000
OM00000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	239,900	6,957	16	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.030	-0.001	-3.333	0.029	0.027	0.032	0.100	20,717,784
OM00000003961	VOLTAMP ENERGY	247	27	2	0.110	0.110	0.105	0.105	0.112	-0.007	-6.250	0.105	0.105	0.110	0.100	8,547,289
OM00000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	11,000	723	5	0.070	0.070	0.065	0.065	0.072	-0.007	-9.722	0.065	0.065	0.070	0.100	10,400,000
Total	25	2,462,825	248,948	193												

UPSKILLING NATIONAL COMPETENCIES

bp Oman continues ‘Ruwad’ training programme with three new agreements

Times News Service

MUSCAT: bp Oman recently signed three agreements as part of its national training programme, ‘Ruwad’. A combined effort between bp, Oman energy association (Opal) and various other oil and gas contractors, the ‘Ruwad’ programme aims to establish a framework that enables the upskilling of national competencies in line with Oman Vision 2040’s goals and objectives.

Following its successful launch last year, bp signed an agreement with SLB (formerly known as Schlumberger), Worley and Nafath. In total, the three contractors will provide 46 training and internship opportunities to participants.

Designed for graduates with technical and non-technical backgrounds, including Bachelor, Diploma and General Diploma holders, Ruwad’s primary goal is to empower participants with the



necessary skills needed to forge a successful career in the local job market. Additionally, successful participants will have the opportunity to secure employment with the partnered contractors and will receive a certificate of experience as well. The graduates selected to train with SLB, Worley and Nafath, will focus on the fields of engineering, renewable energy, sup-

ply chain, finance and technical and non-technical fields.

Ali Al Lawati, Managing Director of SLB Oman, said, “We believe that a comprehensive training programme like ‘Ruwad’ will not only positively impact the future of our participants, but will also contribute to the sustainable development of Oman’s national workforce. By onboarding 30 interns, our investment and

participation as training partners in this programme reflect our commitment to creating a generation of skilled young Omani professionals.”

“Ruwad programme is designed to ensure participants are equipped with the right skills and knowledge needed to succeed in today’s fast-paced job market. Our partnership with bp Oman via this programme aims to create a capable workforce and an attractive labour market, both of which align with Oman Vision 2040,” added Patrick Tranter, Vice President of Oman Operations, Worley.

Speaking about their role in the programme, Abdullah Al Saïdi, Co-founder and CEO of Nafath Renewable Energy, said, “Our aim at Nafath is to empower Oman’s youth and present new opportunities for them in the renewable energy sector. Working with bp Oman, we affirm our commitment to support the development of Oman’s sustainable energy future.”

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India's domestic IT and business services market grew by 7.2%

NEW DELHI: Indian IT and business services market was valued at \$13.87 billion and recorded a 7.4 per cent year-on-year growth in 2022 as compared to 7.2 per cent in 2021, according to International Data Corporation (IDC).

International Data Corporation (IDC), a global market intelligence and advisory services provider, attributed the rise in growth rate to digital transformation initiatives among enterprises in India.

“The Indian IT services market remained resilient, with enterprises investing in digital transformation amidst macro-economic uncertainties like the war in Ukraine, high-interest rates, inflation, etc. Cloud, analytics, Artificial Intelligence/ Machine Learning and security continued to be key technology investment areas as enterprises focused on enhancing customer experience, improving operational efficiency and agility, etc., and will continue to do so in the upcoming years,” said Harish Krishnakumar, Senior Market Analyst, IT Services, IDC India.

The IT and business services market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.0 per cent between 2022-2027 and reach \$20.42 billion by 2027. — ANI

DIGITAL SOLUTIONS

Elm participates in Comex 2023

Times News Service

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TURN UP THE FLAVOUR THIS SUMMER WITH BOLD, BRIGHT MEALS

“ Fresh flavours and aromas are strong triggers that ensure that experiences today are remembered tomorrow, says Giovanna DiLegge

From the hearty and warm flavours of winter to the bold, rich and bright flavours of summer, herbs and spices are not only a delicious and better-for-you addition to any dish, they can transform it into unforgettable memories.

June 10 is National Herbs and Spices Day and the perfect time to celebrate food, flavour and time with family or friends. As you prepare for the occasion, and all your summer gatherings, remember to shop carefully, as freshness is essential when it comes to herbs and spices.

“Fresh flavours and aromas are strong triggers that ensure that experiences today are remembered tomorrow,” says Giovanna DiLegge, vice president marketing, North America Consumer at McCormick, a global leader in flavour.

That’s why for the first time in nearly 40 years, McCormick is debuting a brand new design for its red cap branded products that audibly seals in aromas and flavours, for long-lasting freshness of herbs and spices. And to help you make the most of summer, McCormick is sharing this recipe for Fresh Peach Pie, which incorporates rich and bright summer fruits, and a sweet note of cinnamon spice.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds fresh peaches, peeled, pitted and sliced (about 7 cups)
- 1/2 cup plus 3 tablespoons sugar, divided
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon plus 1/8 teaspoon salt, divided
- 1 1/2 teaspoons McCormick Ground Cinnamon, divided
- 1 package (14.1 ounces) refrigerated pie crusts, (2 crusts)
- 3 tablespoons corn starch
- 1 tablespoon McCormick All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 tablespoon water



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix peaches, 1/2 cup of sugar, lemon zest and juice, and 1/4 teaspoon of salt in large heat-safe bowl until well blended. Let stand 30 minutes. Drain peaches, reserving 8 tablespoons of juice. Return peaches to bowl; sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon. Set aside.
2. Meanwhile, prepare pie crust as directed on package. Roll each crust into 12-inch circles on lightly floured surface. Press 1 crust into bottom of 9-inch pie plate. Cut remaining crust into 10 strips, about 1-inch wide. Refrigerate pie plate with bottom crust and prepared strips until ready to assemble pie.
3. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F. Mix 2 tablespoons of remaining sugar, remaining 1/8 teaspoon salt, remaining 1 teaspoon cinnamon and corn starch in small bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of reserved peach juice to cornstarch mixture, whisking to mix well; set aside.
4. Place remaining 6 tablespoons peach juice in small saucepan. Bring to simmer on medium-low heat. Stir in vanilla. Whisk cornstarch slurry into saucepan. Cook and stir just until thickened and smooth, about 30 seconds. Remove from heat. Pour syrup mixture over peaches; toss to coat. Allow to cool slightly.
5. Spoon peach mixture into chilled pastry-lined pie plate. Arrange pie dough strips over top to create a lattice (see below for instructions). Trim dough strips about 1/2-inch longer than bottom pie crust. Fold strips underneath crust and pinch to adhere. Crimp or flute crust edges, as desired. Brush lattice with water and sprinkle evenly with remaining 1 tablespoon sugar. Place pie plate on large shallow baking pan.
6. Bake 25 minutes or until crust is lightly browned. Reduce heat to 375 degrees F. Rotate pan. Bake 30 to 35 minutes longer, until crust is golden brown and filling is bubbly. Cool on wire rack. Serve with vanilla ice cream, if desired.

How to weave a lattice top crust: Using longer strips for the center of pie and shorter strips for edges, arrange 5 pie dough strips vertically over top of filling, leaving about 1 inch of space between each strip. Fold back every other strip (2 and 4) to just above midline of pie. Place one of the longer strips across pie horizontally, just below the fold. Fold vertical strips back down over top of the horizontal strip. Fold back the opposite vertical strips (1, 3 and 5) and place another strip below the first horizontal strip, again leaving about 1 inch of space between them. Fold vertical strips back down over top. Repeat this process with one more strip below, and then 2 strips above first crosswise strip. Work quickly, as the warm filling may make the dough difficult to work with.

After 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover edge of crust with foil strips to prevent excessive browning.

SPORTS

JAVELIN THROW

India's Chopra attains career-high rank, becomes World No. 1

NEW DELHI: Tokyo Olympic gold medallist Neeraj Chopra is the World No. 1 in the latest men's javelin throw rankings issued by the World Athletics on Monday. Neeraj topped the charts with 1455 points, 22 ahead of Grenada's Anderson Peters.

The Indian javelin throw ace rose to World No. 2 on August 30, 2022, but was stuck behind Pe-

ters, the reigning world champion, since then.

Neeraj won the Diamond League 2022 finals in Zurich in September of last year, making him the first Indian athlete to do so.

However, he was sidelined with an injury following his victory in Zurich.

Neeraj, the Indian national record holder in men's javelin throw,

competed in the season-opening Doha Diamond League on May 5 and finished first with a throw of 88.67m. Anderson Peters finished third in Doha with a distance of 85.88m.

The No. 1 ranking will come as a boost for Neeraj Chopra, who will next compete at the FBK Games 2023 on June 4 in the Netherlands. He also confirmed his participation

at the Paavo Nurmi Games 2023 in Turku, Finland, on June 13.

With the Paris 2024 Olympics approaching, the 2023 season promises to be a crucial one for Neeraj.

Neeraj will compete in the World Athletics Championships in Budapest in addition to defending his Diamond League title and Asian Games javelin gold medal in Hangzhou. - ANI



Newcastle United secure spot in Champions League

A goalless draw against Leicester helped Eddie Howe's side to book a place in Europe's elite league for the first time in 20 years

NEWCASTLE: Newcastle United secured Champions League football for the first time in 20 years with a goalless draw against relegation-threatened Leicester in their English Premier League match at a jubilant St. James' Park on Monday.

Fifth placed Liverpool's draw with Aston Villa on Saturday meant Newcastle needed just one point from their last two games to be assured of a Champions League place. Eddie Howe's third placed side achieved their target at the first attempt Howe and his players embarked on a lengthy lap of honor after the final whistle as they soaked up the acclaim from the Toon Army.

Newcastle failed to break the deadlock in a match they dominated, striking the post three times, but the result was sufficient for the Magpies to make a long-awaited return to Europe's elite competition next season. Newcastle are four points clear of fifth-placed Liverpool heading into Sunday's final day of the season, while Leicester remain in the relegation zone, two points adrift of safety.

Newcastle manager Howe said he didn't expect his Newcastle side to make it into the Champions League at the start of the season.

He told Sky Sports: "It certainly wasn't top four (our target at the start of the season). I think you always hope, you always believe and



you have to dream.

"But we didn't feel that we were ready for that. After last season's battle with relegation it was whether we could consolidate and become a better team.

"To not have that flirtation with relegation and try to give it a go... The lads have been unbelievable for me this year. I can't praise them enough. Their attitude, their mentality. It's just been incredible."

It was the 2002-03 season, under the guidance of legendary manager Sir Bobby Robson, when Newcastle last played in Europe's elite club competition.

It has been a remarkable turnaround since Howe took charge 18 months ago, one month after the

Saudi Arabian-backed takeover of Newcastle and with the club five points from safety at the foot of the Premier League.

Newcastle will aim to complete a successful season on a high on Sunday, travelling to face Chelsea hoping to secure third position.

Leicester host West Ham on the last day hoping the Hammers have taken their eye off the ball with their top-flight place secure and a Europa Conference League final to look forward to.

But they go into that game knowing even a win might not be enough as 17th placed Everton can guarantee their Premier League status with victory over Bournemouth at Goodison Park. - Agencies



RACIST ATTACK ON VINICIUS JR



Four arrests made for hate crime in Spain

MADRID: The Spanish National Police Force announced on Tuesday the arrest of four individuals accused of directing a hate crime at Real Madrid's Brazilian winger Vinicius Jr.

The four suspects, aged between 19 and 24 and identified as members of Atletico Madrid's 'Frente Atletico' group of 'ultras', are alleged to have displayed a banner reading 'Madrid hates Real'.

Accompanying the banner was an effigy wearing Vinicius' No. 20 shirt, adorned with a noose around its neck, seemingly simulating a hanging. The offensive display was found hanging from a motorway bridge near Real Madrid's Valdebebas training ground.

These incidents occurred in January, on the eve of a Copa del Rey match between the two Ma-

driged teams at Real Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

The Spanish Football League, La Liga, denounced the incident in a Madrid court, demanding criminal action against the perpetrators.

News of these arrests emerged just two days after Vinicius was subjected to further racist abuse during Real Madrid's 1-0 defeat at Mestalla Stadium.

These incidents have drawn widespread condemnation from all sectors of Spanish society, leading to Vinicius criticising La Liga for its lack of action against racism in Spanish football. Valencia, meanwhile, has condemned the incidents which are still under investigation. Real Madrid has called for criminal charges and two supporters have already received lifetime bans. - Xinhua

SERIE A

Setback for Juve after 10 points docked

ROME: Juventus encountered a disastrous setback on Monday, dropping to seventh place following a 10-point penalty and a 4-1 defeat against Empoli. Juve had been previously docked 15 points for inflating transfer fees to augment profits in January.

This penalty was temporarily revoked when they lodged an appeal.

However, on Monday, the Federal Court of Appeal delivered its verdict, imposing a 10-point penalty on Juve.

This judgment seemingly unsettled Juve's squad on the pitch as they conceded three goals after the first half. Despite Federico Chiesa scoring a late goal in the 85th minute, Roberto Piccoli clinched a comfortable victory for Empoli in stoppage time.

With the point deduction and the loss, Juve slid from second to seventh place, an outcome that also assured Lazio of a Champions League spot.

In other matches, Roma extended their winless streak, battling back twice to secure a 2-2 draw against Salernitana.

Napoli have already secured the Serie A title and, before Monday's ruling, were 17 points ahead of second-placed Juve.

"It was a strange situation, 10 minutes before the match the sentence came out," said Juve



coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"Summing up a season in an evening like this is an understatement. Juventus are used to winning, we have to close ranks."

In April, a tribunal at Italy's Olympic Committee (CONI) revoked Juve's 15-point penalty from the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) appeals court.

It asked the appeals court to revise punishments to the club and some key figures, including for-

mer vice-chairman Pavel Nedved, who was originally given an eight-month suspension.

Nedved has now been acquitted alongside club officials Paolo Garimberti, Assia Grazioli Venier, Caitlin Mary Hughes, Daniela Marilungo, Francesco Roncaglio and Enrico Vellano.

Long bans given to former chairman Andrea Agnelli, ex-chief executive Maurizio Arivabene and sporting directors

Federico Cherubini and Fabio Paratici have now been upheld.

A Juventus statement said that the club "takes note" of the decision and "reserves the right to read the reasons to evaluate a possible appeal" to CONI.

Juve's loss at Empoli on Monday leaves them five points behind AC Milan, who occupy the final Champions League spot, with two games to play - and Juve host Milan on Sunday. - Agencies

IN PICTURES



Siberian tiger cubs at Siberian Tiger Park in Harbin, NE China
This picture shows Siberian tiger cubs at the Siberian Tiger Park in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. The park is a key breeding base of the China Hengdaohezi Feline Breeding Centre. More than 10 newborn cubs have been born here this year. *Xinhua*



UNESCO Executive Board adopts decision concerning establishment of Category 1 Institute in China
The UNESCO is set to establish a Category 1 Institute on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in Shanghai, China, according to a resolution adopted on Monday. *Xinhua*



Iran, Indonesia sign preferential trade agreement
Indonesian President Joko Widodo (left) holds a welcoming ceremony for visiting Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi prior to their talks at the Presidential Palace in Bogor, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



Mrs World International 2022 Yasmin Jal Mistry during a fashion show
Mrs World International 2022 Yasmin Jal Mistry poses for a photo during a fashion show organised by Nekzad Entertainment, in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



Children pictured at internally displaced persons camp in Kabul
Afghan children are pictured at an internally displaced persons camp in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan. *Xinhua*



2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship: Kazakhstan vs. Slovenia
Kazakhstan's goalkeeper Andrey Shutov (centre) tries to make a save during the Group B match between Kazakhstan and Slovenia at the 2023 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Riga, Latvia. *Xinhua*



Street fair in Beirut, Lebanon
A band parades at a street fair in Beirut, Lebanon. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

NBO showcases next generation of banking and finance technology

Comex 2023 is the ideal platform for the bank to showcase the next step in the digital transformation of Oman's financial sector

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) participates in this year's Comex 2023, the Sultanate of Oman's official technology, communications, innovation and digital transformation exhibition, where it demonstrates the advances in financial technology and the bank's capabilities to drive Oman towards a digitally-enabled future. Held at Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre from May 22-25, Comex 2023 – the 32nd annual



staging of the event – includes a public exhibition, workshops and seminars, as well as deep dive specialist events throughout the year.

Tariq Atiq, General Manager and Chief Retail & Digital Banking Officer at NBO, said, "Comex 2023 is the ideal platform for the bank

to showcase the next step in the digital transformation of Oman's financial sector. Banking & Finance Technology Week is the ide-

al opportunity to gain insight into global trends, understand customer needs and continue to build on our reputation to adopt the latest

technology to develop innovative products and services to empower customers and make their financial lives more convenient." NBO was the first local bank in Oman and since its inception has introduced many market firsts to the country. The bank has fully embraced the digital transformation of banking and was first in the country to introduce self-service kiosks, a Merchant App specifically designed to serve micro and home businesses, and adopted QR codes as a form of payment. Most recently, NBO opened Oman's first Digital Corner in its head office in Al Udhaiba to serve NBO and non-NBO customers alike at any time of day or night. Adding accessibility and convenience, the new NBO Digital Corner allows customers to make banking suit their life at anytime. Each year, Comex is attended by over 30,000 visitors and features over 100 exhibitors from more than 15 countries. Comex 2023 focuses on major industries and sectors listed in the national strategy for development, including Banking and Finance.

ADVANCED SOLUTIONS

Revolutionise your corporate banking experience with Sohar International's unified transaction banking platform featuring DigiCash and DigiTrade

MUSCAT: In alignment with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and to promote financial inclusion in Oman, Sohar International is committed to its digital transformation strategy. The bank continues to leverage its digital capabilities to provide proven digital solutions to both corporate and government clients. Sohar International's Unified Transaction Banking Platform, consisting of DigiCash and DigiTrade, offers advanced solutions that streamline banking operations, improve efficiency and security, and provide a seamless banking experience for customers. This has been widely acknowledged by clients, particularly government entities and large corporations. The enhanced Unified Transaction Banking platform has witnessed a notable increase in adoption, as evidenced by the successful onboarding of numerous new corporate clients who have experienced enhanced, seamless, and secure digital banking services. Ahmed Al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said, "The contemporary world demands accessible, 24/7 banking solutions that cater to the fast-paced needs of our clients. At Sohar International, we recognise the importance of staying ahead of the curve and leading industry



transformation. Our commitment to innovation, adoption of disruptive technologies, and agile response to market demands has set us apart. By embracing digitalisation, we have provided exceptional customer service to our wholesale banking clients while contributing to the wider societal objective of a paperless world." The bank's robust digital capa-

bilities enable the provision of reliable banking solutions for cash and liquidity management, as well as trade finance-related services, through an exceptionally efficient, seamless, and secure channel. Through this platform, government and corporate clients can enjoy the convenience of making various types of payments, benefit from automated reconciliation of

collections, engage in digitised trade finance transactions, and utilise a digital ecosystem that connects vendors and customers through a supply chain framework. Additionally, the platform enables easy management of balances across group companies, optimisation of interest costs, and transparent booking of foreign exchange rates. Furthermore, the unified digital transaction banking platform offers flexibility in conducting transactions through web access or by integrating with an ERP system using our out-of-the-box Host-to-Host integration solution. The tech-savvy Sohar International has adopted a calibrated client-centric approach to business that fundamentally alters the traditional transaction landscape. The organisation has developed two new transformational solutions, enabling a more responsive operating model that caters to mid to large corporate and government clients. These initiatives bolster Sohar International's standing in the market as an organisation equipped and ready to compete globally. The bank offers a suite of products comparable to the best available in international markets, further strengthening its position in the industry.

EXHIBITION



Bank Muscat showcases its digital solutions for individuals and corporates at Comex

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate is participating in the Comex 2023 exhibition and showcasing some of its cutting-edge, digital services and products at this premier technology, communications, innovation and digital exhibition, which offers exhibitors and visitors a comprehensive and highly specialised platform for industry-leading discussions, knowledge-sharing and B2B meetings. The bank continues to participate in the exhibition over the years because of its great importance in introducing modern digital services and its keen support for the digital transformation efforts in the country. Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager, Digital Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "By participating in Comex annually, the bank is able to introduce modern financial products and services to the exhibition visitors and the general public in line with the rapid digital transformation happening in the Sultanate. Bank Muscat's services and products enjoy great popularity, and today more than 1.6 million customers are using Bank Muscat's Internet and Mobile Banking services. Digital banking is also helping enhance financial inclusion for various segments of society and increasing the advantages and number of benefits available to

our customers." Wafa Ibrahim Al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager, Transaction & Government Banking, Bank Muscat, affirmed that the bank would continue to develop and innovate to keep pace with the latest developments in digital banking. She pointed out that the bank has been steadily adding to the number of digital services and solutions, which are available to corporates and institutions. With state-of-the-art solutions and services like the Trade Portal, Liquidity Management solution, Business-to-Business (B2B) Connect platform, Corporate Online Banking platform, Direct Debit solutions and Remote Deposit Capture, Bank Muscat's Corporate Banking offer secure 'best-in-class' digital solutions and services, which are based on customer feedback and needs as well as global trends. Corporate and institutional customers are benefiting immensely from the latest devices, solutions and technological advances made available to them through the implementation of cutting-edge technology. This is reflected in the transactions processed through the Corporate Online Banking platform, which soared to an unprecedented OMR8 billion in 2022 and continues to show a rising trend at present. Wafa Al Ajmi thanked customers for their strong confidence and trust in the bank.

GREAT WALL MOTOR

GWM launches regional parts centre in Dubai

MUSCAT: OTE Group has enthusiastically welcomed the recent launch by Chinese automaker Great Wall Motor (GWM) of a major parts distribution centre in the UAE – a move that will dramatically improve parts availability and after-sales service delivery for GWM's growing customer base in the Sultanate of Oman. Set up in Dubai, the facility is GWM's first Regional Parts Distribution Center in the Middle East, encompassing 22 markets across the region. State-of-the-art in its design and operation, the new fa-



cility will significantly reduce the logistics cycle, while also enriching parts variety and range. For OTE Group, the launch of

the Regional Parts Distribution Centre just across the border in the UAE will help OTE to facilitate the immediate availability of parts

for their customers. Additionally, it will further strengthen GWM's positioning in the Oman market following the Chinese automaker's launch in Oman last year under OTE Group's auspices. With the easy availability of critical auto parts, GWM sees its prospects for growth in the Middle East on a strong upward trajectory. The privately-owned Chinese automaker has been making impressive inroads into Omani roads, mirroring its breathtaking growth across the globe.





pH 9.1 to 9.5

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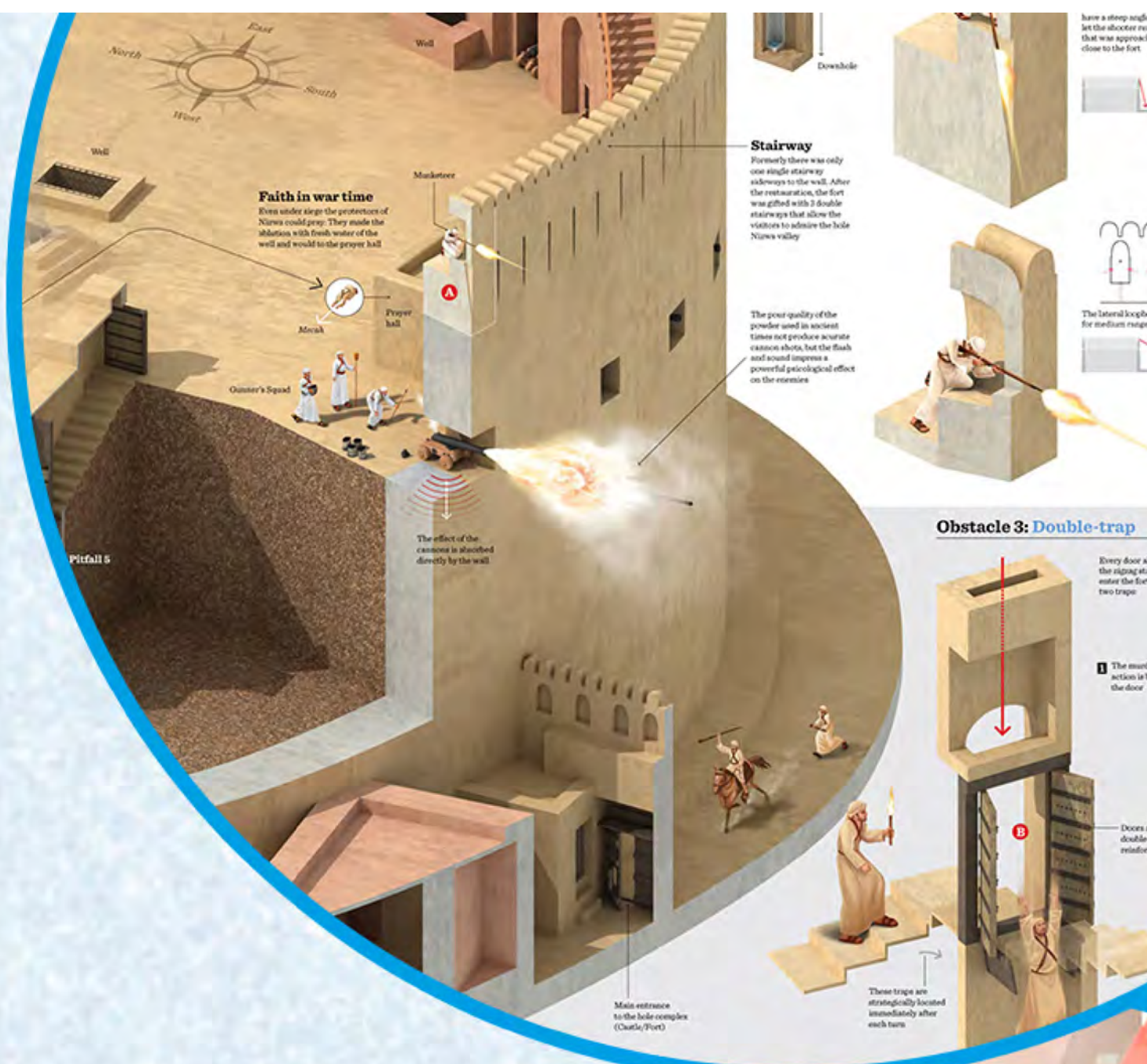
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