

**EXECUTION OF MAJOR
INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS
CONTINUES IN DUQM**

The Special Economic Zone Duqm continues with the execution of seven main infrastructure projects associated with the road sector. **>A4**



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HIS MAJESTY SENDS CONDOLENCES

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences and sympathy to Droupadi Murmu, President of the Republic of India on the victims of the crash (collision) of two trains in India's Odisha state. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his condolences and sympathy to the president, families of the victims and the Indian people, wishing the injured persons speedy recovery. **>A8**



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CEREMONY

Sayyid Theyazin attends wedding of Crown Prince of Jordan



AMMAN: Stemming from the distinguished fraternal relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said attended the wedding of Jordan's Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah.

The ceremony took place at Zahrani Palace in Amman on Thursday.

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin also attended the wedding reception and dinner at Al Hussein Palace in Amman.

During the reception, His Highness Sayyid Theyazin conveyed greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein and the Jordanian people.

In his turn, the Jordan King asked His Highness Sayyid Theya-

zin to convey his utmost thanks and appreciation for His Majesty's sincere sentiments.

He wished His Majesty good health, well-being and long life, and the people of Oman further progress.

Meanwhile, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said felicitated Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah, Crown Prince of Jordan and Princess Rajwa Al Hussein, wishing them a happy married life. He prayed to the Almighty Allah to bestow His blessings on Jordan.

Prominent royals and political dignitaries from around the world took part in the wedding, including Britain's Prince William and Princess Kate, as well as US First Lady Jill Biden and US climate envoy John Kerry. **>A8**

HM'S DIRECTIVES TO MAKE OMAN PROSPEROUS AND SELF-RELIANT

His Majesty reviewed ongoing government initiatives aimed at achieving rapid economic growth during the cabinet meeting

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Key directives made by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in the meeting with the Council of Ministers on Wednesday have been welcomed by the ministers and top officials in Oman.

The directives include discount on the electricity bill by 15 percent during the months of May, June, July and August, increasing financial allocations for housing assistance programme by OMR26.4 million, extending the Job Security System benefits to citizens whose services were terminated at private sector establishments until December 2023, launching an investment fund, the 'Oman Future Fund', with a capital of OMR2 billion.

In addition, the directives include introducing a scheme for grooming graduates who are

capable of playing leading roles in various economic sectors, excluding small and medium enterprises from some fees specified by the Tender Board, support to local wheat production by allocating OMR5 million until the year 2027 and allocating usufruct lands for its cultivation, providing direct subsidies in fuel prices at Salalah Airport on a par with fuel prices at Muscat International Airport and competitive prices for trips to Khareef Dhofar, and the establishment of a National Centre for Women and Children's Health at Sultan Haitham City.

Appreciating His Majesty's efforts on the health front, Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al-Sabti, the Minister of Health, said, "We appreciate the decision of the Council of Ministers for the establishment of a national centre for women



OMR26.4mn
Financial allocations
for housing
assistance

OMR2bn
'Oman Future
Fund' capital

and children at Sultan Haitham City. This reflects the concern of His Majesty the Sultan for the health sector for its pivotal role in achieving the goals of sustainable development and the special interest in providing care for women and children."

The Minister also confirmed that the Ministry of Health will move forward in implementing what has been approved by the

Council of Ministers and its readiness to put this decision into practice and to develop necessary plans to achieve this.

On the plan to support local wheat production, Dr. Saud bin Hamoud Al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said: "We appreciate the Council of Ministers' decision to support local wheat production by allocating about

OMR5 million until 2027, and the grant of usufruct lands in some governorates for its cultivation."

The minister confirmed that the Ministry seeks to expand the cultivation of wheat in Oman by finding arable lands, and supporting farmers with seeds to grow wheat crops and improve its quality and quantity in the Sultanate of Oman.

>A3

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN Cut in airfares to boost Salalah tourism

1 The decision to operate more direct flights to and from Salalah Airport at competitive prices during Khareef season has been welcomed by people. **>A3**

OMAN Evaluation of tourism projects for financing

2 The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has begun preparing a comprehensive matrix to evaluate projects that are eligible for financing. **>A5**

SPORTS Duckett breaks Bradman's record

3 English batter Ben Duckett surpassed Sir Don Bradman's record of scoring the fastest 150 runs at Lords against Ireland. **>A8**



**288 dead, 747
injured in India's
train crash**

A6

TOP RANKS

Sportspersons to be honoured for bringing laurels for Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: All the athletes who have excelled in the sports field in 2022 and brought laurels for the country will be honoured under the patronage of Dr. Hilal bin Ali Al-Sabti, Minister of Health today.

The Ministry will honour the athletes who have got top ranks in the sports field and made the country proud by winning gold, silver and bronze medals at international meets.

In addition, a number of sports federations, sports committees, and the technical and administra-



tive staff will also be honoured.

Basil Ahmed Al Rawas, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, said: "This honour is aimed at supporting Omani sportspersons for



their achievements in the sports field and achieving ranks, which has led to award of 196 gold, silver and bronze medals for the Sultanate of Oman. We are proud of their achievements." **>A5**



PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:10pm
Asr.....	3:29pm
Maghrib.....	6:56pm
Isha.....	8:17pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:53am

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Cairo to host Omani–Egyptian Press Forum from June 5

The forum is being organised by the Oman Journalist Association and Oman’s embassy in Egypt

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Egyptian capital Cairo would host the Omani–Egyptian Press Forum from June 5 to June 7.

The forum is being organised by the Oman Journalist Association and the Sultanate’s embassy in Egypt in cooperation with the Egyptian Journalist Syndicate.

The Omani Society for Writer and Literati , Oman Film Society and the National Records and Archives Authority will take part in the forum to be held at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.



Amr Moussa



Dr. Nevin Yousef Al Kilani



Abdullah bin Nasser Al Rahbi



Dr. Abdul Mon'em bin Mansour al-Hassani

Nasser Al Rahbi, the Sultanate’s ambassador accredited to Egypt and its permanent representative to the League of the Arab States (Arab League) , Dr. Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Araiimi, Chairman of Oman Journalist Association, Khalid Al Bulshi, Chairman of Egyptian Journalist Syndicate, Amr Moussa, former Secretary General of the Arab League and Foreign Minister of Egypt.

The opening would also see screening of a movie on the Sultanate for Oman Film Society, which sheds light on the Sultanate development in the fields of culture, construction, health, education and tourism.

The activities of the forum will also include three discussions under the title “The Omani–Egyptian Relations; Deep- rooted history and promising relations” which would shed light on the historic relations between the two countries .

The first session is on the Omani –Egyptian Relations in ancient Egyptian literature, the second is on the future of the economic and investment relations between the Sultanate and Egypt while the third session would be on the media and cultural impact on boosting Omani –Egyptian relations.

will be Amr Moussa, former Secretary General of the Arab League and Foreign Minister of Egypt.

The opening of the forum would see a number of activities, including a photography exhibition that will have some 200 photos from historic, tourism and economic fields. The exhibition would also display records and archives on the deep- rooted relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Egypt.

On the sidelines of the forum, a

cultural and artistic evening would be organised at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilizations on the second day of the event. It will be a joint session between Oman Journalist Association and Egyptian Journalist Syndicate where a number of writers, literati, artists and poets will deliver their messages in the presence of a number of media persons, artists and officials.

The Omani Egyptian Press Forum brings together media per-

sons from the Sultanate of Oman and Egypt to acquaint themselves with the cultures of the people of the two countries.

With the convening of the forum, OJA aims to encourage holding open press and media discussions to open channels of communication with their Egyptians counterparts.

The opening of the forum would also see the speech of Abdullah bin

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SULTANATE OF OMAN

Launch of PRE-DIABETES CLINIC @ APOLLO SUGAR IMC

Apollo Hospitals Oman offers Centers of Excellence for several key specialties and super specialties. We are one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art facility spread across several locations, and each Centre of Excellence stands out as a citadel of world class healthcare.

Type 2 diabetes in Oman, is currently the fastest growing health crisis and is a significant cause of premature mortality and disability.

PREDIABETES

Prediabetes as such do not have any symptoms and it gets diagnosed by chance in most people. You can have prediabetes for years without symptoms. This means you likely won't know you have prediabetes until serious health problems show up. Some of the common symptoms include increased hunger, unexplained weight gain, frequent urination, and fatigue.

Talk to our doctor about getting your blood sugar tested if you have any of the risk factors for prediabetes, like:

EXCESS WEIGHT

If you're medically overweight, you're at a higher risk for developing prediabetes. This is especially true if you carry too much weight in your abdomen.

LESS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & UNHEALTHY DIET

Being physically active less than 3 times a week and having Diets of high in sugar and processed foods raising your blood pressure and increasing your level of bad cholesterol.

ADVANCED AGE

The older you are, the more you're at risk. At age 45, your likelihood of developing prediabetes starts to rise; so make sure to have your blood sugar checked during your medical appointments.

FAMILY HISTORY

Prediabetes has a hereditary factor. If someone in your family has or had type 2 diabetes, you are more likely to develop prediabetes, though this is often more a result of shared circumstances and learned behaviors than genes.

GESTATIONAL DIABETES

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or visit directly Apollo Sugar Diabetes Center (IMC) from 9 am to 1 pm and 5 pm to 9 pm.

TO REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS

Opaz installs chargers for electric vehicles on its premises

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz) installed charging devices for electric vehicles, as a new service for investors who visit the premises and to encourage employees to own electric vehicles.

This endeavour comes in line with the government's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to compliment the incentives announced recently in this regard.

Abdumajeed bin Abdullah Al Ansari, General Manager of the Support Services Sector at the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, said, “As a first phase, Opaz installed a charging device for electric vehicles in the designated parking lots in Opaz premises in Muscat. This comes as part of a gradual initiative that includes increasing the number of devices in the buildings in Muscat and of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. Further, Opaz will make the electric vehicles charging service available in all the existing and under development free and economic zones and industrial cities that are affiliated with Opaz.”

“As the demand for the service is expected to increase in light of the incentive package recently announced by the government for those who purchase electric vehicles, Opaz will respond to the commendable demand for this service, whether by visitors or employees. Opaz is always seeking to keep abreast of the various technical developments by providing an advanced infrastructure to support the use of modern technologies. In this regard, it has already started using artificial intelligence techniques in its premises post using these technologies in Duqm. It adopted a central monitoring from its office in Muscat to reduce over consumption of energy and water the

ELECTRIC VEHICLE ONLY

in buildings,” Al Ansari added.

He further explained, “Bringing the electric vehicles chargers marks a new addition, reflecting Opaz plan to own some electric vehicles for official use in Muscat and Duqm on an experimental basis. Moreover, this serves spreading the culture of environmental sustainability in particular among employees and visitors as there is a high interest from the economic zones and free zones to produce solar and wind energy. Thus, the move towards using electric vehicles requires a change in the culture”.

It is noteworthy that these new charging devices will provide many advantages for the Opaz employees and visitors. These devices will provide fast and effective charging for various types of electric vehicles, and enhance the charging experience safely and smoothly while users complete their work.

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Reduction in airfares to boost Salalah tourism

Stressing the importance of His Majesty's directives to develop various sectors in Oman, citizens thanked HM the Sultan for these decisions, which are in the interest of the country

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The decision to operate more direct flights to and from Salalah Airport at competitive prices during the Khareef season has been welcomed by the citizens and expats.

They thanked His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for giving directives to the authorities concerned to provide direct subsidies in fuel prices at Salalah Airport on a par with fuel prices at Muscat International Airport.

Expats living in Oman hoped that these decisions would lead to reduction in airfares on the Muscat- Salalah route. "I always feel that the route was overpriced and sometimes the fares used to touch OMR80 which I feel was exorbitant," said Saji, an Indian living in Oman for 10 years.



The journey by bus is cheap but it is very tiring and takes a long time, he said, adding that cut in airfares would lead to a rush of tourists to the Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef Season.

Stressing the importance of His Majesty's directives to develop various sectors in the Sultanate of Oman, citizens thanked HM the Sultan for these decisions, which are in the interest of the country.

Moath Al-Saeedi, from the Wilayat of Al-Khaboura in North Al-Batinah Governorate, a student at Sultan Qaboos University, expressed his sincere thanks and deep gratitude for the directives of His Majesty the Sultan regarding the creation of a scholarship programme targeting graduates who are able to play leading roles in the economic sectors, describing this as being in line with the requirements of the current labour market and its outputs.

He also stressed that the directives of His Majesty to launch the investment fund, discount on the electricity bill during the summer, and extension of the disbursement of the job security benefit until the end of 2023, among others, will enhance the growth of the national economy, consolidate its strength, and seek a balance be-

tween the requirements of economic and social development."

"Congratulations to our country, Oman, its loyal sons and its guests. From the residents and visitors on what is being achieved during the glorious reign of Sultan Haitham bin Tarik," he added.

Nawal Al-Badi from the Wilayat of Sohar, North Al Batinah Governorate, also said that whenever the state's financial conditions improve, it brings with it sound decisions that make everyone happy. It will have a direct impact on the national economy and revitalise it, thus attracting more investments, he said, adding it will be reflected on the citizens in particular, and society in general."

She also expressed her thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his lofty directives that are in the interest of the country and citizens.

Nader Al-Amiri from the Wilayat of Seeb in the Governorate of Muscat also stressed that the directives of His Majesty are in sync with the requirements of the current stage as well as the future, and all of this will help various sectors of the state and life of the people, so thanks to His Majesty for his great interest in for the country and its citizens.

Two Austrians, Danish national shifted to Oman from Tehran

MUSCAT: In compliance with the Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to pursue endeavours with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Kingdom of Belgium, the competent Omani authorities have facilitated the process of receiving two Austrian citizens and a Danish citizen, who were all transferred from Tehran to Muscat onboard a Royal Air Force of Oman plane, in preparation for their repatriation to their respective countries.

Oman values the cooperation of authorities in the Islamic Republic of Iran and their positive response to Omani endeavours. -OMA

Oman Future Fund to help attract foreign investment

< FROM A1 Welcoming His Majesty's directive on the investment fund, Qais Al Youssef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), said: "His Majesty the Sultan's launch of the Oman Future Fund is an outstanding step to attract local and foreign investments. It will showcase to the world that Oman is a safe, sustainable and attractive investment destination."

He explained that the fund is an important and advanced step within the measures taken by the government to improve the business environment, spur the growth of businesses, and create an attractive climate for investors.

On the other hand, Faisal Al-Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), said that the Oman Future Fund will increase foreign investments, enhance international trade, and attract more investors which would increase the productivity and profitability of companies in the private sector.

He also stressed that the exclusion of small and medium enterprises from some fees will help enhance competitiveness in the market, improve the commercial environment, provide an envi-

ronment conducive to the growth of emerging and innovative companies, and increase the chances of success for small and medium enterprises in the market.

Abdulsalam Al Murshidi, the Chairman of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), said that the establishment of the Oman Future Fund comes in partnership with the Ministry of Finance, and embodies the goals and specialisations of the agency seeking to contribute to the implementation of government policies and strategies, and to stimulate the bold investment system in the Sultanate.

Financing requests

He also indicated that the approval of financing requests for projects will be done through a joint team between the Agency, the Ministry of Finance and any other party that is agreed upon, and the evaluation of investment opportunities on a commercial basis through the financial and economic feasibility of the project and its sustainability.

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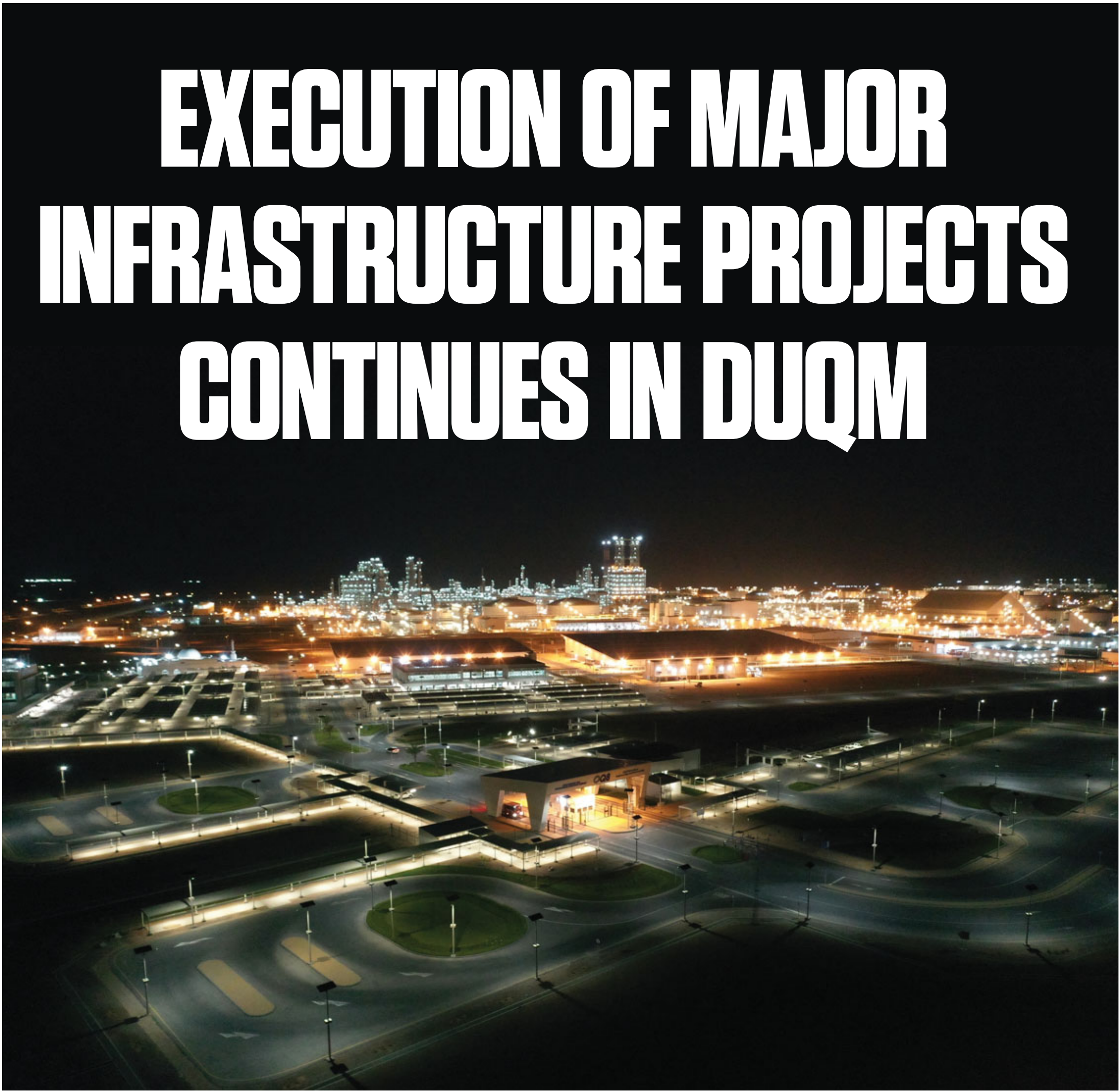
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The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has awarded five projects for construction of dual roads for a total length of 100 kilometres and two other projects are in the tender stage

DUQM: The Special Economic Zone Duqm continues with the execution of seven main infrastructure projects associated with the road sector. The projects include Phase 1 and 2 of the national dualisation road 32, dualisation of Sultan Said bin Taimur, construction of internal roads network in the CBD of Sa' ai, and the dual road linking Duqm Airport with Ras Markaz for the length of 51 kilometres.

Director of Projects Department at Duqm Development Company, said that the execution of these projects comes within rehabilitation and development of the road networks in the Special Economic Zone, Duqm to cope with the current and future investments. The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has awarded five projects for construction of dual roads for a total length of 100 kilometres and two other projects are in the tender stage, he said. Completion of the road projects would provide a strong infrastructure to keep pace with the scheduled investments in the area, he said, adding the road projects in the special economic zone Duqm would develop land transport services and link the area with tourism services and projects.

-ONA



The projects include Phase 1 and 2 of the national dualisation road 32, dualisation of Sultan Said bin Taimur, construction of internal roads network in the CBD of Sa' ai, and the dual road linking Duqm Airport with Ras Markaz for the length of 51 kilometres



JORDAN

Sayyid Theyazin attends wedding



Ministry begins evaluation of tourism projects for financing

The focus will be on the strategic importance of the project, its location, elements of sustainability and operation, total cost of investment, added value, local content



Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has begun preparing a comprehensive matrix to evaluate projects that are eligible for financing.

Innovation The focus will be on the strategic importance of the project, its location, elements of sustainability and operation, the total cost of investment, added value, local content, implementation plan and innovation, and linking



the project vertically and horizontally with supply chains and intertwining with the rest of the sectors. Coinciding with the launch of the ‘Oman Future Fund’, Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, said: “Creating a national fund of this level represents an effective tool in financing tourism investment, overcoming the challenges facing investors in this sector, and accelerating the implementation of projects in a way that supports building a diversified and integrated tourism sector, and represents an important step to empower the ministry.” “In order to achieve its objectives in the sector and create new opportunities for ambitious youth and entrepreneurs to achieve their aspirations and turn them into successful projects, it is hoped that they will enhance and create job opportunities and increase the volume of investment in the tourism sector,” added Salim Mohammed Al Mahrouqi. With ONA inputs

OIA

Restructuring of distribution, supply firms in electricity sector complete

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Investment Authority (OIA), has announced the completion of a project to restructure the distribution and supply companies in the electricity sector of the Sultanate of Oman.

The completion of the project resulted in the merger of the electricity distribution and supply companies of the Nama Group into two companies which are: - Nama for Electricity Distribution and Nama for Supply

This comes as an implementation of government directives to restructure the electricity sector companies, and in line with directions to improve spending, reduce operational costs, and



raise efficiency. “Nama Electricity Distribution” is specialised in meters and low-voltage networks, including the construction of lines and transformers. “Nama for Supply” is concerned with billing and collection operations. It is hoped that the merger project will contribute to improv-

ing the performance of electricity companies, improving their services, reducing their operational costs, facilitating subscribers, and saving time and effort through the “Unified Services Center for Nama Group”, which is an integrated service window for electricity and water under one umbrella for all subscribers.

ASEAN

His Majesty issues Royal decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has issued Royal decree No. 35/2023 appointing a Permanent Representative for the Sultanate of Oman to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), reading as follows:

Indonesia Article (1) appoints Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed bin Salim Al Shanfari, Oman’s Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia, as the Sultanate of Oman’s Permanent Representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Article (2) says that this Royal

decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Military promotions His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued a Royal Decree No. 34/2023 on conducting military promotions, reading as follows: Article (1) promotes Brigadier Abdulaziz Abdullah Badr Al Manthri and Brigadier Sultan Mohammed Nassir Al Ma’amari to the rank of Major General. Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue. -ONA

SHEIKH ABDULMALIK PARTICIPATES IN THE CEREMONY IN TURKIYE

Sheikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah Al-Khalli, Chairman of the State Council participated in the inauguration ceremony of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as the President of Turkiye for a new term in Ankara. -ONA



HONOUR

Preparing athletes

FROM Basil Ahmed Al Rawas A1 explained that the ministry had launched in 2022 a project to develop a system for preparing athletes for international competitions, and the current vision aims to support the efforts of sports federations and committees to expand the base under the supervision of federations and sports clubs through the programme ‘Athlete Preparation Centres’ and ‘Support and Care for Promising Athletes’ for the athletes who have been enrolled after fulfilling the admission requirements and have the requisite strength to make their mark at the

international level. He added: “In the framework of the keenness to find a database for the athletes of the Sultanate of Oman that can be relied upon to develop their physical capabilities and to define the map of the targeted sports according to accurate scientific data, the design and implementation of an “electronic programme to follow up their performance” has been started. It is expected to be launched during June, and it is hoped that this will provide a comprehensive record of all athletes in the Sultanate of Oman and data for technical cadres in various sports sciences.”

THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY



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Royal Oman Police

ANNOUNCEMENT

In order to facilitate inspection and customs clearance procedures, the Directorate General of Customs at the Royal Oman Police announces to the commercial community that importers must submit the customs declaration (tax paid) through the Bayan E-clearance system before the arrival of the shipment at the land ports, as of 20 June 2023.

US PRESIDENT

Debt default would have been ‘catastrophic’

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden addressed the country from the Oval Office for the first time Friday, telling Americans he would sign a bill to raise the debt ceiling into law on June 3. “I’m going to sign tomorrow,” Biden said. “It was critical to reach an agreement, and it’s very good news for the American people,” he said.

“No one got everything they wanted. But the American people got what they needed,” Biden added. “We averted an economic crisis and an economic collapse,” he said.

The Senate earlier this week passed the bill to raise the debt ceiling and cap government spending for the next two years.

The signing of the bill will end

the monthslong fight over raising the limit, which is the amount of money the US can borrow to fund the government.

The nation’s debt currently stands at around \$31 trillion (€29 trillion), which Republicans say is unsustainable.

Republicans, who currently enjoy a majority in the House of

Representatives, refused to raise the debt ceiling unless Biden and the Democrats agree to federal spending cuts. But Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy managed to reach an agreement, giving Republicans some of their demanded federal spending cuts but holding the line on major Democratic priorities. — **DW**



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Death toll from India train crash climbs to 288, 747 people injured

The three-way accident involved Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Coromandel Express and goods train on three separate tracks at Bahanaga Bazar Station in Odisha’s Balasore district



BALASORE: The death toll from a three-train crash in Odisha’s Balasore has climbed to 288, Indian Railways said on Saturday.

“As of 2 pm today, the death toll in the Odisha train crash has risen to 288 while 747 people have been injured along with 56 grievously injured,” Indian Railways said in a statement. Earlier in the day,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached the train crash site in Odisha’s Balasore. He was accompanied by Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

The three-way accident involved Bengaluru-Howrah Superfast Express, the Coromandel Express and goods train on three separate tracks at Bahanaga Bazar Station in Odisha’s Balasore district. According to Odisha Government’s Special Relief Commissioner’s office 17 coaches of the two trains had derailed and

severely damaged.

At the site PM Modi spoke to Cabinet Secretary and Health Minister and asked them to ensure all needed help is provided to the injured and their families, government sources said.

After taking stock of crash incident, PM Modi visited Fakir Mohan Hospital, Balasore, where some of the passengers injured in Friday’s accident involving three trains were admitted.

After meeting the crash survivors, he said that directions have been given to probe the train accident and that whoever is found

guilty will not be spared.

A painful incident

“It’s a painful incident. The government will not be able to bring them back, who lost their lives [in the accident], but the government is with their kin in this grief. This incident is very serious for the government. The government will leave no stone unturned for the treatment of those injured. Instructions have been given for every type of investigation and whoever is found guilty will not be spared,” PM Modi said.

“I also thank the Government

of Odisha and all the officers of the administration here who tried to help the people with limited resources,” he said, adding that Railway is working towards track restoration.

He also thanked the people of Odisha, who came forward to help crash survivors, whether by donating blood or providing assistance in the rescue operation.

Earlier on Saturday, PM Modi convened a meeting to review the situation in connection with the rail accident.

Seven National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Teams, five

Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) Units and 24 Fire Services and Emergency Units engaged in rescue operations.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) deployed Mi-17 helicopters for the evacuation of the deceased and injured. According to the Eastern Command, IAF is coordinating the rescue efforts with the civil administration and Indian Railways.

The Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw earlier visited the site and directed a “high level” probe and said measures will be taken to ensure such incidents do not take place in future. — **ANI**





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NEW FIVE-YEAR MANDATE



Türkiye’s Erdogan sworn in for 3rd term as president

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was sworn in for his third consecutive term on Saturday after winning a run-off election last weekend.

The inauguration in the capital, Ankara, will be followed by a lavish ceremony attended by world leaders as well as NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg.

Erdogan’s new five-year mandate will allow him to continue pursuing an increasingly authoritarian programme domestically while charting an independent path as a regional military power amid global crises like Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the conflict in Syria. His new government will also oversee efforts to rebuild after a devastating series of earthquakes in February killed 50,000 people and leveled entire cities in the southeast of the country — a disaster he was widely criticized over.

What’s on the agenda?

Erdogan swore an oath in parliament at 3pm local time (1200 UTC) and received his mandate from temporary speaker Devlet Bahçeli.

“I, as president, swear upon my honour and integrity before the great Turkish nation and history to safeguard the existence and independence of the state ... to abide by the constitution, the rule

of law, democracy, the principles and reforms of Atatürk, and the principles of the secular republic,” said Erdogan, who is Türkiye’s longest-serving leader.

Some politicians from opposition parties did not stand up as Erdogan took the oath, as per parliamentary rules, in an act of protest.

Afterwards, he will attend a ceremony at the Presidential Palace followed by a dinner attended by 21 heads of state and 13 prime ministers, as well as high-level officials from other countries like the United States and China.

Leaders set to attend include Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mahmud.

Armenia’s Prime Minister

Nikol Pashinyan also confirmed he would attend, in what is the latest sign of a thaw between the two arch foes, which have never established diplomatic relations.

The Turkish leader is expected to announce his new Cabinet after the dinner. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is due to attend the ceremony, and he will also hold bilateral talks with Erdogan on Sunday.

Türkiye has been in the spotlight after Finland and Sweden moved to join NATO in the wake of Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Ankara was among the last NATO members to ratify Finland’s membership in March. But it has held out on allowing Sweden to join over Stockholm’s reluctance to extradite exiled members of Kurdish groups that Türkiye claims to be “terrorists” with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK).

The NATO secretary general previously said his visit to Türkiye aimed to “ensure the fastest possible accession of Sweden” to the military alliance, ideally during the next leaders’ summit in July. “My message is that Sweden has delivered, and the time has come to ratify Sweden,” Stoltenberg told reporters on Thursday.

— **DW**



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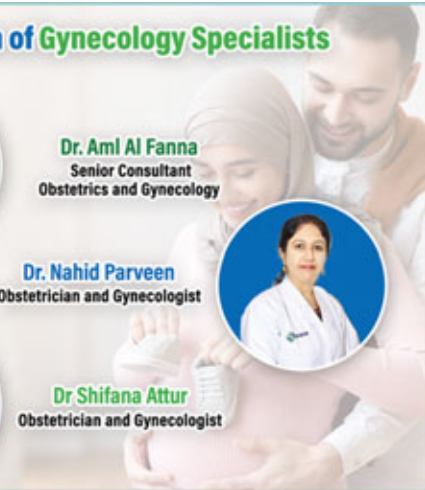
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Duckett breaks Bradman’s 93-year-old record at Lords

Even though Duckett (182) fell 18 runs short of scoring a double hundred at the end of the day, still his knock was enough to surpass Bradman’s long-standing record

LONDON: English batter Ben Duckett surpassed Sir Don Bradman’s record of scoring the fastest 150 runs at Lords on Friday against Ireland.

Even though Duckett (182) fell 18 runs short of scoring a double hundred at the end of the day, still his knock was enough to surpass Bradman’s long-standing record. While shattering the 93-year-old record, the left-handed batter also registered another milestone in his name as he became the first batter since 1924 to score 100 runs before lunch in a Lord’s Test.

It was a special day for the 28-year-old batter as he brought up a second Test ton, and first at home.

After the end of Day-2, Duckett said as quoted by Sky Sports, “A hundred at Lord’s is special. I



know everyone says it, but it hasn’t really sunk in yet.”

“Batting with Ollie Pope was a breeze, really enjoyable to be at the other end watching him play.”

He further went on to reveal how hard the journey has been for him as continues to challenge for a place in England’s playing XI.

“It has been a pretty crazy jour-

ney for me. I have only played (Tests) abroad, so even fielding here, soaking up the atmosphere, and then scoring a hundred is what I have dreamt of. I am so happy I managed to get there.

“[This summer] is only going to get harder, it’s going to be a tougher summer than this week. For me personally, runs is form and that’s what

I’ve been trying to do at the start of the summer for Notts and taking it to here.” Duckett concluded.

His knock is a glimpse of the dominant display that the English batters showcased on Friday.

Zack Crawley and Ben Duckett provided the ideal start to the hosts with a 109-run partnership. Fionn Hand brought an end to their partnership to give Ireland a glimmer of hope.

However, Pope went on with his business and brought up a 252-run partnership. Pope was at his peak as he sent the ball across the boundary line at every single opportunity.

Ben Duckett matched Pope’s intensity and applied pressure on the Irish bowlers with his flawless technique. Pope went on to complete his maiden double century but, Duckett fell short by 18 runs.

With the new ball, Graham Hume claimed Duckett’s wicket. From that point, Joe Root and Pope laid the foundation of another massive partnership which took England’s score to 507/2. England looked in the pole position before the third session of Day-2.

However, Andy McBrine kicked off the third session on the right note for the visitors as he picked up Root’s wicket. Root departed for a score of 56(59).

Pope was next to follow. He tried to play a shot, missed the ball completely and Lorcan Tucker made no mistake behind the stumps to end an exquisite Test knock by the English batter. England decided to declare their innings at a score of 524/4. -ANI

FRENCH OPEN

Djokovic survives test to move on

PARIS: Novak Djokovic held his nerve in two tiebreaks on Friday as the 22-time Grand Slam winner dispatched a tough Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-2 to reach the fourth round at Roland Garros for 14 consecutive years.

The third seed twice fell a break of serve behind in an entertaining first set as Davidovich Fokina’s clean hitting pulled the Serbian all around Court Philippe-Chatrier. Djokovic reclaimed the break in the next game on both occasions though, before raising his level in the tie-break to clinch the set with a stunning forehand return winner.

“I knew it was going to be a very difficult match, a very physical match,” Djokovic said.

The two-time champion in Paris had the chance to serve for the second set at 5-4, only to face a strong fight-back from the 29th seed, who leveled the score with a break and held his serve to lead by 6-5. The 36-year-old even had to save a set point at 40-30 behind in the 12th game, before finding another gear in the tie-break, winning a series of breathtaking rallies to move further clear.

“We played three hours for only two sets. He contested very well. He is an amazing fighter and an amazing player. He has very few weaknesses in his game. Congratulations to him for fighting. Bad luck, but he played a great match, Added Djokovic, who let out a roar after winning the second set and raised his fist to the crowd in celebration.



The Serbian was more commanding in the third set, racing to victory after clinching the set 6-2.

Next for Djokovic in the round of 16 is Peru’s Juan Pablo Varillas.

Spanish top seed Carlos Alcaraz, who was drawn into the same half with Djokovic, also moved one step closer to his second Grand Slam title after beating Canadian 26th seed Denis Shapovalov 6-1, 6-4, 6-2.

The reigning US Open winner will play Lorenzo Musetti of Italy for a place in the quarterfinals.

“My dream right now is to win every tournament I play in, fight for Grand Slams, to compete with the guys like Djokovic,” the 20-year-old world No.1 said after the straight-set victory.

-Xinhua

WORLD TEST CHAMPIONSHIP

Australian players sweat it out in nets ahead of WTC final

LONDON : Australian cricketers are set to start their summer with a crucial encounter with India in the final of the World Test Championship (WTC) which will be held on June 7 at Oval in London. Australia’s key batters Steve Smith and David Warner are burning their sweat in the nets before the ‘big test’.

The ICC shared some visuals from Australia’s players, practicing in the nets “#WTC23 final preparations on point,” ICC captioned the videos of David Warner and Steve Smith.

In this year Smith has played five test matches and has scored 249 runs with an average of 41.50. He has smashed one hundred in the year so far.

Warner was in action in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 where he scored 516 runs in 14 matches. he had an average of 36.86 and a strike rate of 131.63 in the season. He was not at his best but these runs will give him confidence ahead of a big final.



The ICC also shared a video of Australian bowlers with the caption, “Ready to step up in the #WTC23 final.”

Australia squad: Pat Cummins (capt), Scott Boland, Alex Carey (wk), Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis (wk), Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Todd Murphy, Steven Smith (vice-capt), Mitchell Starc, David Warner. -ANI

OVAL, LONDON

Virat Kohli will get runs for India, says former cricketer Greg Chappell ahead of WTC final

NEW DELHI: Former Australian cricketer Greg Chappell believes that the Oval conditions will suit the star Indian batter Virat Kohli as the Indian team prepares to face Australia in the World Test Championship final 2023.

In less than three days’ time, India will feature in their second consecutive WTC final. Last time after a hard-fought battle, they missed out on the opportunity to lift the title against New Zealand. Last time the former Indian skipper Virat Kohli came close yet failed to live up to his standards as he succumbed to Kyle Jamieson’s aggressive bowling style. He scored 57 runs in both innings at the Rose Bowl Stadium, in Southampton, England.

However, this time he will look to turn things around at a different time, a different venue and with a reigned form.

This time the match will be held at the Oval, London and according to Chappell the conditions he could play in Kohli’s favor because of the inability of Australian bowlers to exploit conditions like English bowlers and he will score runs



for his team.

While speaking in the Backstage with Boria show on Revsportz Chappell said, “Virat Kohli was asked a lot of questions in England in 2014 and 2021 by Anderson, Broad and the rest of the English bowlers. They bowled some excellent lines and lengths to him in conditions that suited them. They knew he is the best and

lifted themselves up when bowling to him. To think or say that the Australians will be able to do the same from ball one is not correct. The English know their own conditions better than anyone else in the world. And Virat loves to bat against the Australians. We have seen that in Australia. His record is evidence how good he is. He loves a contest and is never one to

back off from one,” Chappell said in the Backstage with Boria show on Revsportz.

“The Oval from all of my experience is going to have bounce and it will suit Virat. You have said to me that the weather has stayed dry so far. If the weather continues to stay dry the Oval is as close to an Australian wicket in England as you will ever get. And that will suit Virat. I think if he is mentally switched on like I have said to you earlier in the conversation, he will get runs for India. He is a very good player and someone who can make a telling difference.”

The former Australian cricketer also went on to speak about Rohit’s form and whether his IPL form could impact his WTC performance.

Even though in the IPL 2023 Rohit performed a bit better than he did in IPL 2023. He scored 332 runs in comparison to his tally of 268 runs in the IPL 2022.

However, the main concern with Rohit’s batting form that came into the limelight was his inability to develop his innings into a bigger score. -ANI

CRICKET

Warner likely to retire from Test after series against Pakistan

LONDON: Australian opener David Warner is likely to retire from Test cricket after the series against Pakistan and the announcement could be made in Sydney, his home ground, after the last match of the series is played at the venue.

Warner indicated about his test retirement plans in Beckenham on Saturday ahead of his training session for the World Test Championship final. “If I can get through

this (WTC final and ensuing Ashes campaign) and make the Pakistan series I will definitely finish up then,” Warner said, according to cricnet.com.au.

Apart from the WTC final against India, Warner is also preparing for five-match Ashes series with England.

He also indicated his plans of retirement from T20 cricket.

“You’ve got to score runs. I’ve

always said the (2024) T20 World Cup would probably be my final game. I probably owe it to myself and my family - if I can score runs here and continue to play back in Australia - I can definitely say I won’t be playing that West Indies series,” he said.

“So for me, then I’ll have to play IPL, some of the other franchise leagues and then get into that rhythm to play in June. There will

be a bit of cricket around to play. Who knows I might go back and play a Shield game for New South Wales,” he added. Australian left-handed batter Usman Khawaja believes that his opening partner David Warner is showcasing some best cricket for quite some time.

Two months ago in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Warner managed to score 26 runs from three innings against India. -ANI



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INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Indian economy is expected to grow in a range of 6.5-6.7 per cent in the financial year 2023-24, said industry body Confederation of Indian Industry President R Dinesh. > **B2**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



AIN AL KASFA PROJECT

Falha Investment Company signed four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to develop the Ain Al Kasfa project in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq, South Al Batinah Governorate. > **B2**

Ominvest to redeem its perpetual subordinated bonds on first call date

The bonds are valued at OMR60.638 million and are listed on Muscat Stock Exchange with a fixed annual interest rate of 7.75 percent



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest), the leading investment company in the Sultanate, announced its decision to redeem its perpetual bonds on

its first call date. The bonds are valued at OMR60.638 million and are listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) with a fixed annual interest rate of 7.75 percent. The bonds will be redeemed on June 6, 2023, followed by the payment of the principal amount and

accrued interest, and the delisting of the bonds from the Muscat Stock Exchange. Ominvest's decision to take this step is a direct result of the company's strong financial performance and robust liquidity position.

Abdulaziz Mohammed Al Balushi, the GCEO of Ominvest, commented on the call option decision, stating: "The strong financial position of the group and the availability of good liquidity enabled us to take this strategic step, particularly after announcing the issuance of new perpetual bonds in April 2023, with a value of OMR60.158 million and a fixed annual interest rate of 5.25 percent. After completing the redemption process, Mus-

cat Clearing and Depository Company will disburse the value of the bonds, along with the due interest, to the bondholders based on their records as of June 4, 2023."

In addition, Ominvest reported strong unaudited results for the first quarter of the year, which included a 104.9 percent increase in group revenues to reach OMR116.0 million, compared to OMR56.6 million in the same period of the previous year.

Net profit attributable to Ominvest shareholders also increased by 37.2 percent to reach OMR12.1 million, compared to OMR8.8 million in the corresponding period of 2022, placing the company in an excellent position to achieve outstanding results in the re-

maining months of 2023.

The GCEO of the group further added, "We are pleased with these outstanding results in the first quarter of 2023, which happen to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the group's establishment. Today, we stand on the threshold of a completely different phase in the company's journey, as Ominvest aims to solidify its presence as a regional and global player. We plan to expand our business portfolio geographically and sector-wise in the coming period, and achieving such promising results is a testament to that commitment. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our bondholders for their participation and continuous support."

MSX WEEKLY TRADING

MSX sees mitigated performance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Omani stock market recorded a mitigated performance last week and saw some volatility as uncertainty weighed on expectations early in the week, according to an analyst.

"However, the main index rebounded to a certain extent after two weeks of losses. The market was able to recover after temporarily falling below this year's low," said Farah Mourad Senior Market Analyst of XTB MENA.

These developments could leave the main index exposed to additional declines although the improvements in sentiment locally and globally could play a role in improving its performance and could provide some support for the market.

Similarly to other stock markets, the Omani stock market reacted positively to the resolution of the debt ceiling issue in the US. A matter that has pushed investors towards caution as they contemplated the potential aftermath of a payment default from the govern-



ment of the largest economy in the world. "In this regard, local and international investors returned to the market as soon as an agreement was reached between the US president and the Speaker of the House of Representatives," she added.

Other global markets participated in the limited performance of the Omani stock market such as energy prices. Oil prices have



been particularly volatile and have affected traders' expectations. However, crude was able to recover strongly toward the end of the week. "A more consistent recovery could help the Omani stock market reverse its course. In this regard, traders could react to Opec's meeting in case any clues or indications that could affect the direction of the market arise," the analyst said.

On a local level, the banking sec-

tor continued to move the market with the wave of consolidations slowly advancing. The confirmed merger of Sohar Bank and HSBC Oman constitutes a new step in this direction.

"The operation could result in increased pressure on other banks in the country and could give the consolidated entity a competitive advantage and the capacity to grow further. The stock price of HSBC Oman has increased as a result while that of Sohar Bank declined," she added.

Other sectors could continue to see some volatility while global economic conditions continue to change and as the global economy continues to slow down. The weaker-than-expected recovery in China could have an impact on exports and in particular oil exports. "Energy demand could come under pressure with manufacturing activity declining in major economies which could reverberate on local stocks to a certain extent. However, this could be alleviated by the strong local economic initiatives," she added.

NCSI DATA

Oman sees 31% jump in production of refineries, petroleum industries

MUSCAT: Production of Oman's refineries and petroleum industries increased by 30.8 percent at the end of April 2023, while liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and paraxylene products led to an increase in exports, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Production of standard grade petrol (M-91) by Omani refineries increased by 230.7 percent, recording 1.20 million barrels. Production of M-95 grade fuel amounted to about 201,600 barrels, a decrease of 87.2 percent until the end of April 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.

Production of gas oil (diesel) rose by 84.2 percent to 6,743,100 barrels. Production of jet fuel rose by 89.8 percent to 2,101,300 barrels, while production of liquefied petroleum gas amounted



to 292,700 barrels. Paraxylene production amounted to 158,600 metric tonnes, while gasoline production increased by 363.2 percent to 51,400 metric tonnes, and polypropylene production increased by 41.5 percent to 79,300 metric tonnes. - **OMA**

PUBLIC AUCTION PROCESS

Oman signs 3 green hydrogen projects worth over \$20bn

MUSCAT: Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom), a subsidiary of Energy Development Oman (EDO), has signed three agreements granting the first green hydrogen blocks in the Sultanate of Oman with a total investment value exceeding \$20 billion.

The first one was awarded through Phase A Round 1 public auction process, and the other two are awarded following the earlier signing of commercial term sheets. The signing of these agreements signifies another key milestone of the Sultanate of Oman's journey to becoming a global hub for green hydrogen production.

Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hydrom signed the agreements with the winning bidders from Denmark, the United States of America (USA), the United Kingdom (UK), Kuwait, Singapore and the Sultanate of Oman during an event held here on Thursday.

The three projects were signed with the consortia of Amnah, Green Energy Oman (GEO) and BP Oman.

These contracts are expected to yield a total production capacity of half a million tonnes of green hydrogen per annum from more than 12 GW of installed renewable energy capacity at the three sites, each covering an area of 320 square kilometres in the Al Wusta Governorate.

The first of two blocks (Z1-01) in the public auction process launched last year was awarded to a consortium comprised of Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners (CIP), Blue Power Partners



(BPP) and Al Khadra, part of Oman's Hind Bahwan Group.

The consortium will develop around 200 KTPA of green hydrogen from 4.5 GW of installed renewable energy capacity for planned green steel plants located in the Port of Duqm, within the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Sezad). This ground-breaking project demonstrates the potential of harnessing renewable energy in supporting the diversification of the national economy and contributing to a low-carbon future.

The second project was signed with BP Oman for the development of green hydrogen for ammonia production and export. The anticipated annual production for this project is 150 KTPA of green hydrogen from 3.5 GW of installed renewables capacity in Block Z1-03.

The third project was signed with the consortium of Green Energy Oman (GEO) for the development of green hydrogen and its derivatives. The consortium includes Oman's integrated Energy Company OQ, Oman Shell, Kuwait's energy investor EnerTech

(ETC), InterContinental Energy (ICE) and Golden Wellspring Wealth for Trading (GWWT). This project is expected to produce up to 150 KTPA of green hydrogen from 4 GW of installed renewables capacity in Block Z1-04.

The signing of these project agreements with both BP Oman and GEO follows the earlier signing of commercial term sheets, which regularised the legacy initiative projects under a regulatory framework.

During the event, a head-usufruct agreement was signed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Hydrom.

This agreement provides for the granting of land rights to Hydrom for the purposes of renewable energy and clean hydrogen projects. The agreement was signed by Dr. Khalfan Said Al Shuaili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Dr. Firas Al Abduwani, Acting Managing Director of Hydrom. - **OMA**

Full story @ timesofoman.com/business

Electric Workover Rigs: A technology in transition



AL BARAKA Oilfield Services SAOC has supported Oman's leading oil and gas exploration and production company in the Sultanate, in servicing wells in the Oman concession area using Conventional Workover Rigs since 2013. Workover includes primarily changing completions and casings, fishing, cementing, abandonment, milling, perforations, changing pumps/motors, upsizing wellhead, and various other integrity operations. The challenge given by the client to the contractor was to safely and successfully commission the first two new electric-powered 550 HP Hoists.

A Super Local Community Contractor (SLCC) has become the first oil and gas company in Oman to introduce groundbreaking electric-powered Workover Rigs. It is proud to declare itself as the first company in Oman to work intensively and proactively to design these modularised electric-powered workover units, able to optimise the move time between the wells, thereby creating faster turnarounds and reducing costs. This allowed the client to bring early oil to the tanks, minimising deferment, achieving ample savings in operations, and accelerating cash flow.

Conventional Workover Rigs are primarily hydraulic, not electric. Compared with the conventional units, the new electrical hoists are equipped



with the latest technology and ergonomics that ensure safe operations and faster movement between locations which reflects in the increased number of wells attended so far in 2022. Other advantages are viz. modular, less space occupation; improved control features, ability to control both torque and speed accurately; fully automated pipe-handling systems; less maintenance expenditure, consequently leading to lower operating costs. The electrical units are designed to enhance safety and overall performance efficiency defined by the specific application, the location of the well, and the type of work to be performed. These rigs have a more efficient power source, as electric motors convert more of the energy input into mechanical power compared to diesel engines. This is also reflected in the reduction in non-productive time.

Two critical features were the basis of the design of the Workover Unit, i.e. potential to take the lead in energy efficiency/ decarbonisation and minimising "lifting and drops" hazards

by introducing automated handling mechanisms and reducing manual/human intervention.

In phase II, these units will be hooked up to the Overhead Electricity Transmission Grid instead of running from diesel generators. Oman's power grid is fed by electricity produced from clean natural gas-fired turbines which emit less pollution; therefore there will be an overall saving in energy consumption and reducing pollution from burning fossil fuels, with the aspiration to reduce global carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2050, as part of the decarbonisation roadmap laid down by the Ministry of Energy & Minerals in Oman, in line with the Paris Agreement's objectives of limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

The electric-powered hoist concept has been extremely successful such that the client has incorporated these types of rigs in future new contracts as against conventional hydraulic rigs. Other service providers are also planning to switch to Electric Workover Rigs as the latest trend in Oman.

MARKET

Pacts inked to develop Ain Al Kasfa project

The four companies that signed the MoUs were: Le Furo Tokyo Company (which specialises in transferring the technology of extracting minerals from hot water), Iran's New Golden Solutions Company (which specialises in construction projects in Oman and Iran), Kalout Company and Al Bahja Group (Oman)

MUSCAT: Falha Investment Company signed four memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to develop the Ain Al Kasfa project in



the Wilayat of Al Rustaq, South Al Batinah Governorate.

The four companies that signed the MoUs were: Le Furo Tokyo Company (which specialises in transferring the technology of extracting minerals from hot wa-

ter), Iran's New Golden Solutions Company (which specialises in construction projects in Oman and Iran), Kalout Company and Al Bahja Group (Oman).

Falha Investment Company attracts to Oman the best inter-

national practices on hot spring technologies.

Le Furo Tokyo Company will establish the first centre in Oman for extracting minerals from Ain Al Kasfa, besides developing aromatics.

Through its MoU, New Golden Solutions Company is entrusted to prepare designs for the development of the Ain Al Kasfa project and place it on the global map of sustainable projects, in a manner that fits with the surrounding nature in the wilayat.

As far as marketing the project is concerned, an MoU was signed with Kalout Company, which markets hot springs worldwide and attracts tourists interested in the healing properties of such springs.

Meanwhile, the MoU signed with Al Bahjah Company focuses on maximising the local added value of the governorate by optimising the use of heritage and antiquities there. -ONA

Indian economy expected to grow 6.5-6.7% in 2023-24

NEW DELHI: The Indian economy is expected to grow in a range of 6.5-6.7 per cent in the financial year 2023-24, said industry body Confederation of Indian Industry President R Dinesh.

He said the growth will be supported by strong domestic drivers and robust momentum in capital expenditure.

The government expects India's 2023-24 GDP at 6.5 per cent.

"The Indian economy remains resilient in the face of a challenging global environment, and we do not anticipate major domestic roadblocks in the year ahead," Dinesh said in his first media interaction after taking over as President CII.

Apart from the capex push by the government, he added that the resilience in the domestic economy comes from the healthy balance sheets of the corporates and a well-capitalised financial system. He added that a range of pragmatic and transformational policies of the government, which continued through the pandemic, helped catalyse a sharp economic recovery and the resilience in growth that India is currently witnessing.

Livelihood business, tourism, wellness, skill development, and future technologies were outlined as some of CII's key action priorities for the coming year.

Coming to the GDP numbers released, as per the provisional estimates released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), real

Despite strong global headwinds and tighter domestic monetary policy tightening, various international agencies have forecasted India to be one of the fastest-growing economies in 2023-24, supported by robust growth in private consumption

GDP growth for 2022-23 stood at 7.2 per cent, higher than the 7 per cent projected.

Despite strong global headwinds and tighter domestic monetary policy tightening, various international agencies have forecasted India to be one of the fastest-growing economies in 2023-24, supported by robust growth in private consumption and sustained pick-up in private investment. -ANI

FEDERATION OF INDIAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

Lulu Financial MD appointed as chair of FICCI Middle East Council

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of Lulu Financial Holdings, has been appointed as the Chair of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) Middle East Council.

Adeeb is a multifaceted entrepreneur with business interests in financial services and hospitality. His company Lulu Financial Holdings has a presence in 10 countries across the Middle East, Indian sub-continent and Asia-Pacific regions, with investments in India including the NBFC Lulu Finserv and cross-border payments company Lulu Forex spread across 40 cities, apart from luxury hospital-ity assets.

Adeeb has been engaged with industry bodies in India for several years and is a known face for



his steadfast support in furthering the relationship between GCC countries and India. His expertise in various domains and vehement support for the startup ecosystem

Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director of Lulu Financial Holdings has been engaged with industry bodies in India for several years and is a known face for his steadfast support in furthering the relationship between GCC countries and India. In his new role as chair, Adeeb participated in the 6th meeting of the FICCI Middle East Council held in New Delhi

is well documented among the business community.

In his new role as chair, Adeeb participated in the 6th meeting of the FICCI Middle East Council held in New Delhi on Wednesday. During the meeting, council members, including Shailesh Pathak,

Secretary General of FICCI, Goutam Ghosh, Senior Director & Regional Head, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, and Deepti Pant, Joint Director and Head, Africa, Middle East, and South Asia, discussed the growing investment opportunities for businesses in both re-

gions. They also touched upon key initiatives planned for the upcoming year and identified country-wise ambassadors from the business community.

The summit welcomed a special delegation from the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, headed by its Chairman, Abdallah Sultan Al Owais. Additionally, there was an interactive session featuring Satish Sivan, Joint Secretary of Development Partnership at the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Indian Consul General Designate to Dubai.

Oman's oil and gas sector

Furthermore, a presentation was conducted to highlight the opportunities in Oman's oil and gas sector.

As per data from the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, bilateral trade between India and the GCC countries has achieved

new heights in recent times, surpassing the \$150 billion mark. The GCC countries have emerged as a key destination for Indian exports, absorbing more than 10 per cent of India's total exports. Additionally, India's imports from the GCC account for over 18 per cent of the total import volume.

Established to promote trade and investment between India and the various GCC countries, the FICCI Middle East Council has emerged as a meaningful platform for discussions aimed at enhancing trade, fostering investment, and promoting cultural exchange.

In the last 12 months, the council has held several events and discussions in association with government representatives and business chambers from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain to explore mutual synergies in diverse sectors.

NEOM GREEN HYDROGEN COMPANY

L&T to build energy infrastructure for world's largest green hydrogen plant

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The power transmission & distribution business of Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has achieved important milestones for the power elements and grid packages of the world's largest green hydrogen plant being built by NEOM, Saudi Arabia. Located at Oxagon in Saudi Arabia's region of NEOM, NEOM Green Hydrogen Company (NGHC) is an equal joint-venture by ACWA Power, Air Products and NEOM.

NGHC is setting up a mega plant to produce green hydrogen at-scale for global export in the form of green ammonia with a total investment of \$8.4 billion. Supported by 23 local, regional, and international banking and financial institutions, the project has now achieved full financial close, and construction is moving forward.

A few quarters back, L&T received the nod to establish the renewable energy generation, storage and grid infrastructure, from air products, the system-integrating EPC contractor and exclusive off-taker of green ammonia to be produced from the project. The value of the packages awarded to L&T aggregate to \$2.779 billion. Since then, significant progress has been achieved in various activities including surveys, design and engineering, establishment of



temporary facilities and procurement of long lead items.

Under these contracts, L&T will engineer, procure, and construct a 2.2 GWac PV solar plant, 1.65GW wind generation balance of plant and a 400 MWh battery energy storage system under the power elements package. It will also construct three 380kV switching stations, 306km of 380kV overhead lines and UG cables required to the Kingdom's grid network. The scope also in-

cludes the energy power monitoring system (EPMS) for the complete network.

Appreciating the bold vision of the Kingdom and the project proponents, the Chairman designate and Managing Director of Larsen & Toubro, S. N. Subrahmanyam said, "Such initiatives at scale have the potential to speed up global energy transition. Also, these technology-led projects are aligned with L&T's aspirations towards propelling our next wave of

growth and reflect the customer's trust in our commitment to professionalism, timely delivery, and quality."

Commenting on the development, T Madhava Das, Whole-Time Director & Sr. Executive Vice President (Utilities), Larsen & Toubro said, "We are proud to be associated with the project that will integrate 4GW of renewable energy to enable production of up to 600 tonnes of carbon-free hydrogen per day."

In a recent statement, Wolfgang Brand, Vice President of NEOM Green Hydrogen from Air Products, the prime EPC contractor and system integrator for the entire facility, expressed enthusiasm for the progress made towards the world's largest green hydrogen production facility in NEOM. "We are pleased to commence the full execution of this lighthouse project and are proud to work with our partner L&T in their ambition to produce carbon-free hydrogen using renewable energy," said Brand.

"NGHC is excited to be leading the global energy transition and having the right partners is essential in making this happen, so we are thrilled to be working with Larsen and Toubro on our green hydrogen generation, grid infrastructure and storage," added David R. Edmondson, CEO of NEOM Green Hydrogen Company.

Advertisement for SIFR Sodium Free Drinking Water featuring a Grand Eid Offer. The offer includes a Hot & Cold Dispenser for \$50 only and a White Tap Dispenser or Tap Dispenser or Manual Water Pump or Cradle with Tap for \$20 only. Additional offers include 2 full bottles, 30 refill coupons, and 15 refill coupons. The offer is valid from 1st April to 30th June 2023. Contact: 800 71 222 or GSM: 9275 5522.



A great morning routine makes getting out of bed more pleasant and sets the tone for a successful, happy day. Whether your Dad is a morning lark or a night owl, he will appreciate gifts that help him start his days on the right foot. With that in mind, here are three fun Father's Day gift ideas to consider, all of which would also make great gifts for the newly-graduated:

THE PERFECT CUP OF COFFEE

Most people think they are satisfied with their morning cup of coffee, that is, until they try Nextmug, a smart, self-heating mug that keeps beverages warm (130 degrees F), hot (140 degrees F) or piping hot, (150 degrees F) depending on the setting selected. Lab testing has shown that liquid in a standard ceramic mug loses 52% of its heat over a two-hour period. Nextmug loses no heat over that same time frame, making it possible to savour coffee or tea for as long as it takes to drink it. If Dad has ever resorted to microwaving a forgotten morning brew, which can turn even the best drink bitter, or has simply slugged it down tepid, he will appreciate this sleek, ergonomic, easy-to-use mug. Plus, its optional spill-resistant lid means that Dad can take his cup of joe throughout his home or office, on the back deck, or wherever he would most enjoy it. Perfect for a dorm or first apartment, this makes a useful high school or college graduation gift as well.

A CLOSER SHAVE

Help Dad say goodbye to nicks and patchy facial hair. Offering a close shave, even on a dense beard, Braun's Series 9 Pro Electric Shaver features sensors that adjust power to beard density, and a precision switch to capture tricky hair. Because its built-in sonic technology yields a more efficient shave, and its docking station automatically charges and cleans the razor, you'll be giving Dad the gift of more time for himself in the morning.

MUSIC AND PODCASTS ON-THE-GO

Add entertainment and motivation to Dad's morning workouts with comfortable, durable headphones. Just be sure to consider his needs when selecting the right pair. Whereas bone conduction headphones offer the safety of being able to hear surrounding sounds, which is great for morning jogs and commutes, air conduction offers the best shock-free comfort. Finally in-ear style headphones can isolate outside noise when it's desired, such as at the gym. The X9-pro, allows users to switch between these three modes. It's also completely waterproof and Bluetooth-connected, so Dad can listen to his favorite jams and podcasts, even when swimming laps at the pool. And thanks to its 32G storage, he won't get bored with his listening options.

This Father's Day (and graduation season) put a smile on the face of your honoree by looking for gifts that help elevate morning routines.

— StatePoint

GIFTS TO ELEVATE DAD'S MORNING ROUTINE THIS FATHER'S DAY



SPORTS

Al Harthy set for first outing in world’s biggest endurance race

Omani racing star to debut in 24H Le Mans in race’s centenary year

Times News Service

MUSCAT: World motorsport’s greatest and most prestigious race, the annual Le Mans 24 Hours, welcomes Ahmad Al Harthy and the Oman Racing team for the first time this year – the huge event marking the fourth round of the FIA World Endurance Championship season.

Taking place on 10/11 June at the Circuit de la Sarthe in France, the build-up to the 24H Le Mans is already underway ahead of the first official test sessions on Sunday, 4 June, with the squad having unveiled a special new livery for its Aston Martin GTE. Notably too, Al Harthy’s debut in the endurance classic will form part of the race’s landmark centenary year.

The crown jewel event of the FIA WEC calendar couldn’t come at a better time for the Oman Racing with TF Sport team, the squad heading to France off the back of a season-best third place last time out at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium.

Following two challenging races to begin Oman Racing’s maiden season in World Endurance, at Sebring in America and Portimao in Portugal, a welcome change to the Balance of Performance rulings meant the No.25 Aston Martin Vantage was able to compete on an even footing at Spa.

After chalking-up his first GTE Am pole position in style with a superb performance at the Ardennes track, Al Harthy then starred in the race along with team-mates Charlie Eastwood and Michael Dinan to



secure a first WEC podium finish, mere tenths of a second shy of the runner-up position.

Climbing into eighth place in both the GTE Am driver and team standings as a result, the trio now head to Le Mans with confidence high and a determination to challenge strongly in the greatest and most spectacular race global motor racing has to offer.

While the 100th anniversary installment of the 24H Le Mans will mark a career milestone for Oman’s most successful racing driver, Al

Harthy has, of course, raced as part of the Le Mans 24 Hours event previously in the ‘Road to Le Mans’ support races on two occasions. Back in 2017 he claimed a double victory, returning in 2021 and again finishing on the podium – that time alongside Dinan.

Competition in the GTE Am class will be fierce, with 14 entries from WEC joined by six other standalone entries. All told, including prototype cars from the Hypercar and LMP2 classes, the combined grid for this year’s 24H Le Mans is



expected to be north of 60 cars.

As ever, Al Harthy will be supported by his prestigious portfolio of partners Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS, with huge numbers of fans also set to make the journey from Oman to France to cheer-on their home hero.

Ahmad Al Harthy: “I truly cannot wait for Le Mans week to begin, this is such a huge event for everyone at Oman Racing with TF Sport and the biggest race of my entire career so far. Le Mans

is such a famous event around the world, there is so much history associated with it and I am unbelievably proud to be representing Oman on the biggest stage of them all in endurance racing.

“Everyone has been preparing so hard behind the scenes and we head to Le Mans in very good spirits after the podium finish at Spa last time out in WEC. We’re obviously very experienced in 24 hour races from GT World Challenge Europe, where we have won of course, but Le Mans is another

level again. It really is going to be an amazing experience, and we intend to do Oman proud.”

Opening practice for this year’s 24H Le Mans will get underway at 10.00 local time on Sunday, 4 June, with session two following at 15.30. On Wednesday, 7 June, a further practice session will begin at 14.00 ahead of qualifying at 19.00 – in the latter the top eight from each class will progress to ‘Hyperpole’ on Thursday, 8 June. Wednesday concludes with another practice at 22.00.

FOOTBALL

Man United are a different team now, says Guardiola ahead of FA Cup final

LONDON: The FA Cup final between Manchester City and Manchester United will be played tomorrow at Wembley Stadium. Manchester City’s manager Pep Guardiola said that Manchester United are a different team now compared to the start of the season.

Manchester United will be looking to win their second title this season, as they won the Carabao Cup in March. In the pre-match conference, Manchester City’s manager said, “The final is special. Manchester United are a different team to what we faced at the start of the season. They have improved and so has their quality”, as per Sky Sports.

He added, “Finals are about how you play in the moment, not what you’ve done in the past, but how you do individually as a team. It’s not important to think about the



past or many years ago, it’s one game. We have to do our best.”

Guardiola also spoke about playing in the FA Cup final, he said, “It’s the final of the FA Cup and it’s a

pleasure to be here. It’s a final so nothing else. It would be good for us if we have to think about what we have to do to win one game - nothing changes to analysing the

strength of our opponents and the weaknesses they have. It’s a football game, we can’t control what happens outside”, as per Sky Sports.

On the team updates he said, “Squad is more or less fine ahead of the FA Cup final. Jack Grealish and Kevin De Bruyne have trained well since returning this week.”

Manchester City received good news on the injury front this week as Kevin De Bruyne, Jack Grealish, Ruben Dias and Manuel Akanji returned to training.

Pep Guardiola says deputy goalkeeper Stefan Ortega will start for Man City in the FA Cup final, as per Sky Sports.

The quartet had been left in Manchester for City’s final game of the season at Brentford, but could now be in line to return at Wembley for the FA Cup final as City closed in on the treble. **-ANI**

PARIS SAINT-GERMAN



Spanish defender Ramos to follow Messi’s footsteps

PARIS: Spanish defender Sergio Ramos on Saturday announced that he will play his final game for Paris Saint-Germain on Sunday against Clermont Foot. The veteran centre-back will follow Lionel Messi out of the French club after his contract expires.

The 37-year-old defender took to Twitter to post a farewell message to the PSG fans for making him feel at home and announce that on Sunday he will feature in the shades of Purple for one last time. “Tomorrow will be a special day, tomorrow I will say goodbye to another stage of my life, goodbye to @PSG_espanol. I don’t know how many places you can feel at home, but without a doubt, PSG, its fans and Paris have been one of them for me,” Ramos wrote in his tweet.

After spending the majority of his career in Madrid Ramos embarked on a new journey and joined the French side in 2021. His initial career was plagued by injury and at a point in time it felt like he would rarely have an opportunity to feature for his new club.

In two seasons, Ramso featured for PSG on 44 occasions in

Ligue 1, scoring three goals and registering a single assist.

He made his debut for the club in the UEFA Champions League in the 2022-23 season and made 8 appearances.

The French Giants made their way to the Round of 16 but their dream of clinching their first UCL title came to an end on a bitter note. They were knocked out by the hands of Bayern Munich with an aggregate score of 3-0.

The Spanish defender is not the only one who is leaving the PSG camp this summer. Along with him the Argentinian talisman and his former rival in La Liga Lionel Messi is also going to play his last game on Sunday.

On June 1, PSG boss Christophe Galtier confirmed that star striker Lionel Messi will be leaving the club in early June, adding that he had the privilege of “coaching the best player in the history of football”.

Galtier was quoted as saying by Goal.com: “I had the privilege of coaching the best player in the history of football. It will be Leo’s last match at the Parc des Princes against Clermont.”

-ANI

PREMIER LEAGUE

Nottingham Forest release Jesse Lingard

LONDON: Nottingham Forest football club which plays in the Premier League has released Jesse Lingard from their squad for the new season of the Premier League.

The reason behind releasing the 30-year-old Jesse Lingard from the club is his poor run of form. The right-footed attacker did not manage to register a single goal or assist in 17 Premier League appearances for Nottingham Forest. Nottingham Forest signed Jesse Lingard last year as Miltiadis Marinakis, son of the Nottingham Forest club owner Evangelos wanted to bring him to Nottingham.

Last year, Jesse was close to signing a deal with West Ham United but Miltiadis Marinakis convinced him to play for Nottingham Forest. Lingard moved to Forest last summer on a 12-month deal, earning a base salary of



£115,000 per week plus incentives. He was the club’s highest-earning football player.

In Carabao Cup, Jesse Lingard scored two goals and contributed two assists for Nottingham Forest, as they reached the semi-finals of

the competition.

Later, Jesse Lingard faced injury issues which kept him out of the squad for the remaining Premier League matches.

Nottingham Forest has announced the release of five other

players as well. Andre Ayew, Cafu, Jack Colback, Jordan Smith and Lyle Taylor have also been released along with Jesse Lingard.

While Keylor Navas, Dean Henderson and Renan Lodi have returned to their clubs after completing a loan spell with Nottingham Forest.

Defender Serge Aurier has extended his contract for one year and will remain at Nottingham Forest for the next Premier League season. Since joining the club in September, he has made 28 appearances and 22 Premier League starts.

Nottingham Forest finished in the 16th position in the Premier League table. They played 38 matches, winning nine, losing 18 and drawing 11. Nottingham Forest survived relegation as they finished the season two places above the relegation zone. **-ANI**

IN PICTURES



People enjoy leisure time in Tehran
People having fun beside a lake at a park in Tehran, Iran. *xinhua*



One dead, 2 missing after heavy rain pounds wide areas of Japan
Passengers wait for Shinkansen trains to start again at Nagoya Station in Nagoya, Japan. Torrential rains pounded a wide swath of Japan's Pacific coast and disrupted transportation services, including cancellations of shinkansen bullet train services in some areas. *xinhua*



UN Security Council extends mandate of assistance mission in Sudan
This picture shows members of the United Nations Security Council voting on the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) at the UN headquarters in New York. The UN Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the UNITAMS until December 3 of this year. *Xinhua*



Bollywood actors Vicky Kaushal and Sara Ali Khan at Janpath
Bollywood actor Vicky Kaushal and actress Sara Ali Khan pose for a picture with an earring at Janpath market during the promotion of their upcoming movie 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke', in New Delhi. *ANI Photo*



10th International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts concludes in Cairo
Artists perform at the closing ceremony of the International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts in Cairo, Egypt. Themed "Drums Dialogue for Peace", the 10th International Festival for Drums and Traditional Arts concluded on Friday night. *Xinhua*



People participate in running activity to advocate low-carbon lifestyles in Seoul
People participate in a running activity advocating low-carbon lifestyles at the Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul, South Korea. A running event was held to raise people's awareness of low carbon lifestyles in Seoul ahead of the World Environment Day, which falls on June 5. *xinhua*



Folk dancers perform to celebrate Day of National Unity in Budapest
Folk dancers perform to celebrate the Day of National Unity in Budapest, Hungary. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Pay your bills through Bank Muscat Internet and mobile banking

The platform, which is being continuously upgraded, has been recording a massive rise in popularity with well over 1.6mn customers using Mobile and Internet Banking to conduct a wide variety of banking transactions including fee payments



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has called upon customers to take full advantage of its powerful omnichannel Internet and mobile banking platform for their daily transactions and bill payments.

The platform, which is being continuously upgraded, has been recording a massive rise in popularity with well over 1.6 million customers using Mobile and Internet Banking to conduct a wide

variety of banking transactions including utility and educational fee payments. Being available 24/7, 365 days a year, Mobile and Internet Banking provide customers with the convenience of banking from the convenience of their homes or offices without having to visit a branch.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager, Digital Banking, said, "In line with our customer-centric vision, Bank

Muscat is continuously launching new features to enhance banking convenience for customers, and the consistent rise in active customers reflects the popularity of Mobile and Internet Banking. We thank our customers for their strong confidence and trust in the bank and request them to use the constantly upgraded platform for their banking transactions conveniently any time and from anywhere. In particular, the platform will be very useful in making util-

ity bill and fee payments to a number of institutions in the country."

Bank Muscat's continuously upgraded Internet and mobile banking services offer customers a fast, comfortable and secure banking experience. Today, retail banking customers use various features like real-time bill payments for utilities in Oman, such as electricity, water, telecom, mobile top-ups, instant credit card bill payments, educational institutions fees payments etc. It is important to note

that Mobile and Internet banking allows customers to securely manage and pay all their bills from one place.

Also, both mBanking and Internet banking can show the outstanding bill amounts and also payment history with the functionality of date-based searches. Instant payment confirmation is provided at the end of a successful transaction. Some of the newly added billers include Al Sharqiyah University (fees), FRIENDi (top-

ups), OpenSooq Services, Awasr (Internet bills), ONEIC (electricity bills) and MEDC (electricity bills).

Mobile and Internet banking also enable a variety of fund transfers within the bank and in Oman, fund transfers across the world via the SWIFT network; speed transfers to a number of countries including Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Pakistan Sri Lanka and Egypt; Zakat calculator and charity payments

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MUSCAT



Taism honours 36 Grade 12 students at annual graduation ceremony

MUSCAT: On June 1, 36 Grade 12 students from The American International School of Muscat (Taism) made a proud walk across the Bosch Center for the Performing Arts stage and received their diplomas at the school's annual graduation ceremony.

More than 500 parents, faculty, and students attended the ceremony, which was followed by a celebratory reception.

As per Taism tradition, the ceremony was led by the student Master of Ceremonies, and featured speakers from the graduating class. "I am incredibly proud of our students who led the ceremony tonight. Their confidence and wisdom are an inspiration to us all," says Dr Kevin Schuttinger, High School Principal. "The students' desire to step up and take on the responsibility of leadership is a moving example of the confidence and character instilled in them throughout their time at Taism."

Taism's Class of 2023 will be attending universities around the world. Students were accepted to over 300 universities in 10 different countries, with the US, Canada and the UK being the most popular. Students are pursuing a broad range of studies including Economics, Film and Television Production, Business Management, Engineering, Health and Sciences, Finance, Business Administration and Entrepreneurship, Life Sciences and Psychology, Computer Science, and Artificial Intelligence.

Fawzi Mushantaf, Chairperson of Taism's Board of Directors, and Kevin Schafer, Taism Director, awarded the diplomas to the graduates. The students were lauded for their outstanding achievements and personal attributes, which they embody as lifelong learners.

"It is important to honour these students for their growth, and the

diligence shown in their studies," says Schafer. "These graduates rose to the challenge while at Taism, and have bright futures ahead of them."

Dr Schuttinger presented special awards to the graduates. The award for Academic Excellence (Highest Honors) was given to seniors Eva Bonde, Liliana Castiblanco Guzman, Rami Idris, Shyam Lakshmanan, Nilanjana Sha Sudha, Jayani Singh & Nandika Singh.

The Master of Ceremony for this year's graduation ceremony was Ekaterina Nadezhkina and the Graduation Speaker was Nandika Singh. Both of these important roles were determined through an audition process of interested students who earned "Academic Honours" and "Highest Academic Honours" respectively.

Nandika focused on the importance of stewarding and appreciating the time we're given, saying,

"But, my hope not only for myself but also for the rest of my class is, even though there is a certainty in endings and an uncertainty about the future, that we let our awareness of the timer and our appreciation for the time guide the way we spend each second."

The recipient of the Outstanding Senior Award distinguished herself through academic achievement, participation in a variety of extracurricular activities, and significant contributions to the Taism community through acts of service, leadership and character. The award was received by Liliana Castiblanco Guzman.

Lili also gave a speech during the event. Lili stated, "Whether I made some massive positive change to the world through my career and life did not define my success. What truly defined my success was rather the impacts I had on the people around me and my community."

HEALTHCARE

Pre-diabetes clinic launched at Apollo Sugar IMC



MUSCAT: Apollo Hospitals Oman offers Centers of Excellence for several key specialties and super specialties.

We are one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art facility spread across several locations, and each Centre of Excellence stands out as a citadel of excellence.

Type 2 diabetes in Oman, is currently the fastest growing health crisis and is a significant cause of premature mortality and disability.

You can have prediabetes for years without symptoms. This means you likely won't know you have prediabetes until serious health problems show up.

Talk to our doctor about getting your blood sugar tested if you have any of the risk factors for prediabetes, including:

- Being overweight
- Being 45 years or older
- Having a parent, brother, or sister with type 2 diabetes
- Being physically active less than 3 times a week
- Ever having gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or giving birth to a baby who weighed more than 9 pounds

At Apollo Sugar IMC, our multidisciplinary team of diabetologists, endocrinologists, and clinical dietitians will ensure you get an accurate diagnosis at the right time with the right treatment and help you lead a healthy life.

For appointments or more details, call 24794502/95186854 or visit directly Apollo

Sugar Diabetes Center (IMC) from 9 am to 1 pm and 5 pm to 9 pm.







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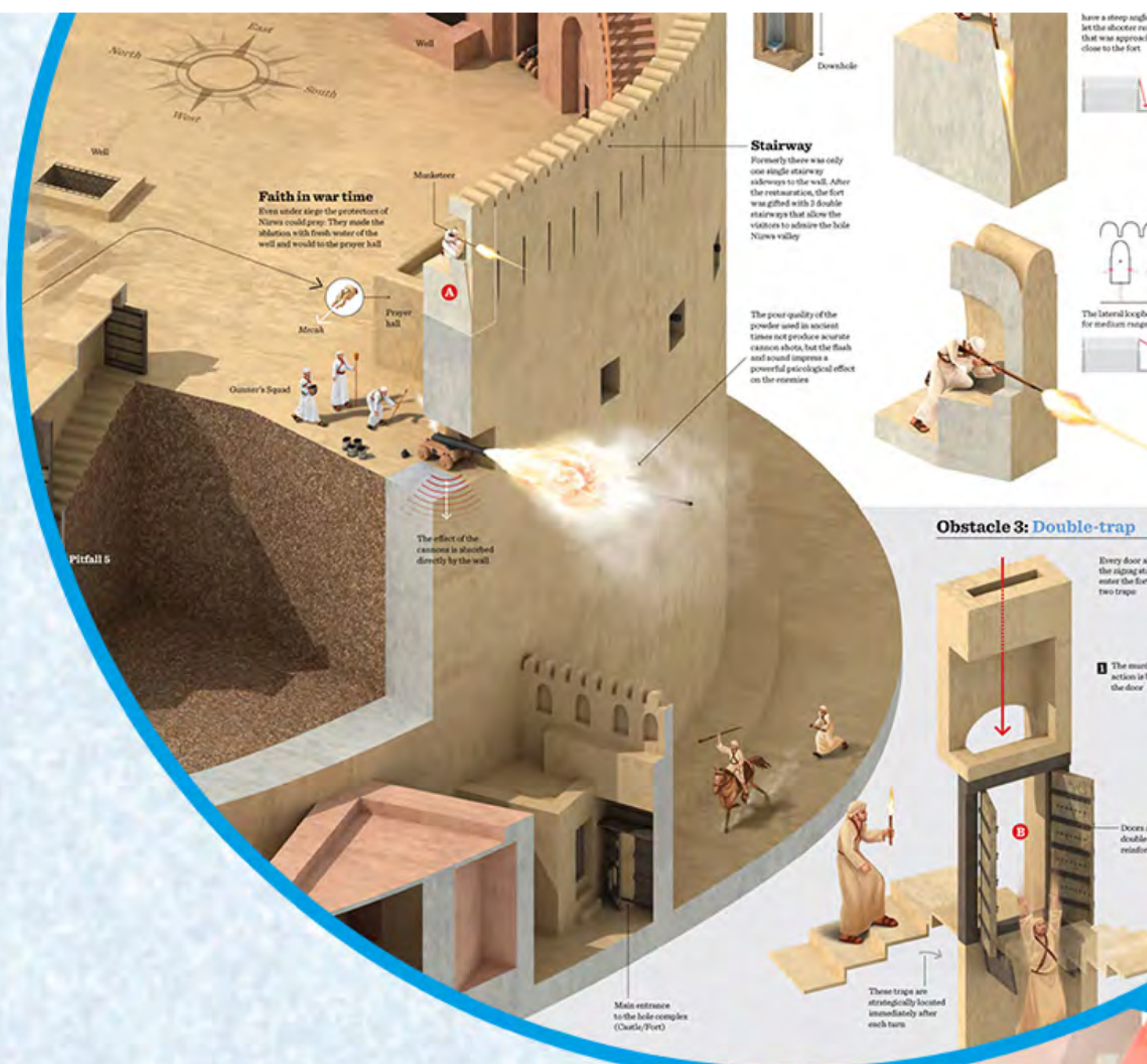
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