

BANK MUSCAT POSTS PROFITS EXCEEDING OMR51 MILLION

Bank Muscat posted a net profit of OMR51.30 million during the first quarter of 2023 compared to OMR48.26 million reported during the same period in 2022, constituting an increase of 6.3%, according to the preliminary unaudited results announced by the bank. **>B1**



RAMADAN PRAYER TIMINGS	
DHUHR	12:12pm
ASR	3:39pm
MAGHRIB	6:34pm
ISHA	7:47pm
FAJR (APRIL 18)	4:26am

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OMANIS' MARRIAGE



His Majesty issues Royal Decree

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik yesterday issued Royal Decree No. 23/2023 on Omanis' marriage to foreigners.

Article (1) cancels Royal Decree No. 58/93 and annuls all decisions issued in implementation of its provisions.

Article (2) states that the provisions of this decree shall not prejudice the provisions of the Islamic Sharia or public order or any provision cited in the laws, Royal decrees or applicable systems stipulating non-marriage to a foreigner as a condition for occupying or continuing to occupy certain public jobs of significance or special nature.

Article (3) stipulates that documents proving the cases of marriage of Omanis to foreigners within the Sultanate of Oman shall be documented in accordance with the provisions of the relevant laws and Royal decrees. Foreign documents proving these cases of marriage are treated as official Omani documents after being authenticated by the competent authorities in the respective

foreign country/countries, as well as the Omani Foreign Ministry.

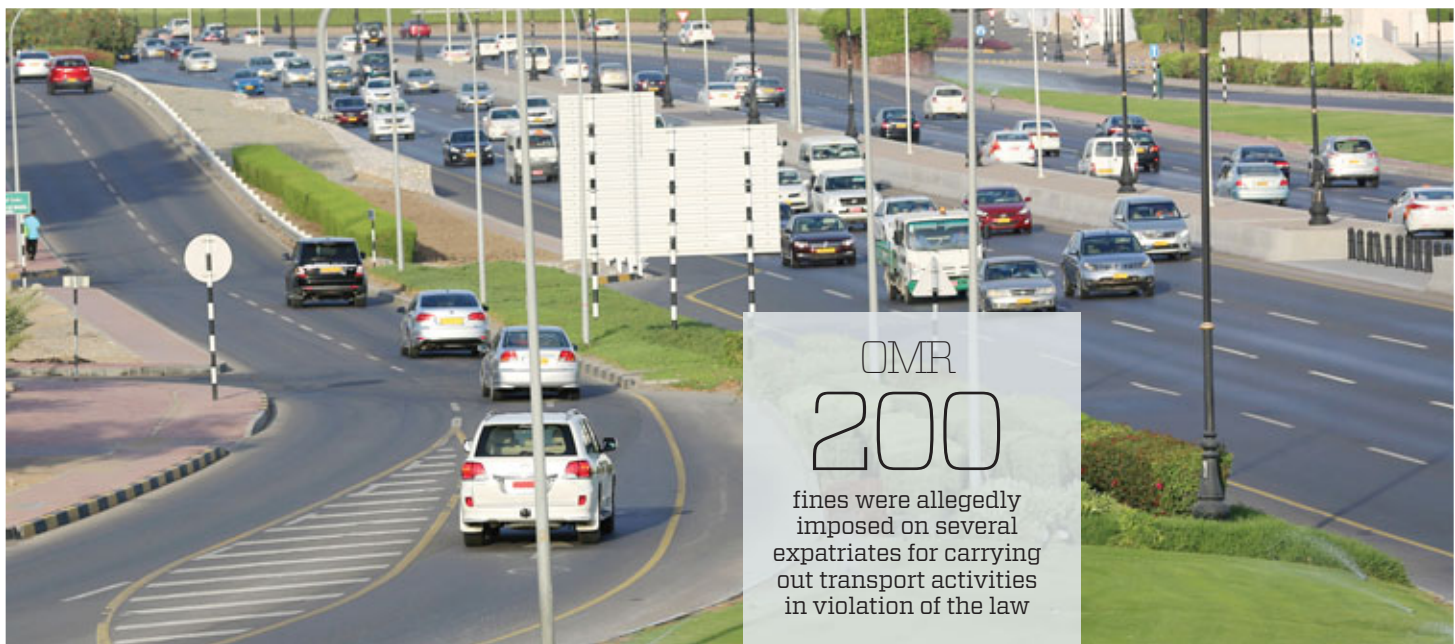
Article (4) validates the documents evidencing the marriage of Omanis to foreigners that are issued by foreign official authorities prior to the date of entry into force of this decree—even though they might be in violation of the provisions regulating the marriage of Omanis to foreigners in force at that time—on condition that those documents be authenticated by the Omani Foreign Ministry, and in a manner that does not contradict the provision of Article (2) of this decree.

Article (5) states that Units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and other public legal persons shall implement the provisions of this decree, each in their own areas of jurisdiction.

Article (6) repeals all that contravenes this decree or contradicts its provisions.

Article (7) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing. **-ONA**

MINISTRY'S DRIVE AGAINST ILLEGAL TRANSPORTERS TO CONTINUE IN OMAN



Ministry clarifies its stance on fines being imposed on expats for ferrying passengers

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, (MoTCIT), said on Sunday that the drive to clamp down on illegal transportation will continue in the Sultanate of Oman.

The ministry urged workers in the transport sector to adhere to the requirements of the Land Transport Law and its regulations as they ensure effective implementation of the law.

In a series of tweets on Sunday, the ministry assured that no expatriate would be harassed nor would he be fined if he is not breaking the Land Transport Law.

The clarification from the ministry comes after a series of alleged reports of fines being slapped on expatriates who were ferrying friends to the airport or delivering goods in their private vehicles.

Expatriates had widely expressed their concerns on social media and on various Whatsapp groups and other social platforms on the exorbitant fines being im-

posed by officials for even "dropping their friends to the airport".

Times of Oman received several complaints with people sending across receipts of OMR200 fine they had received.

Allaying the fears of the expatriate community, the statement said: "The inspection teams came across a number of violations, including violations of the requirements for carrying out transport activities with regard to the transportation of goods and ferrying individuals. It added: "The inspection teams have been instructed to ensure that only drivers who violate the provisions of the executive regulations of the Land Transport Law should be fined.

"Fines would not be imposed on people who ferry their acquaintances and friends to pick or drop

at the airport if they do not charge them or the driver doesn't receive any financial reward."

The ministry statement said: "If people have been penalised while ferrying their friends or relatives, their grievances can be submitted about the violations for review at the Land Transport Department at the Ministry's General Office or the Roads Departments in the governorates within 15 days from the date of its issuance."

The statement said: "Through these campaigns, the ministry aims to organise the land transport sector and open the way for companies and individuals to invest in this vital sector after obtaining the necessary approvals and permits from the ministry and the concerned authorities."

'SAS' PROJECT

MoU signed to build 300 houses for orphans



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Al Rahma Association for Motherhood and Child Welfare and 'Sobha' Group signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the 'SAS' project initiative; to build 300 houses for orphans and needy families, at a total value of OMR9.6 million over the next ten years.

The MoU was signed by Sana Abdul Rahman Al Khanjari, Chairwoman of the Board of Directors of Al Rahma Association and PNC Menon, Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sobha Group.

Speaking to the reporters, PNC Menon said, "The most important things in one's life are food, housing and education. So, I thought let us do housing only as this is the most important thing for any family. Therefore, we decided to construct 300 houses for 10 years. But today, I felt it should be not 10 years but five years."

Regarding choosing Oman, he said, "Oman created me. My whole young days were spent here. I came here with 7 dollars. Rest of the things, Oman created. That is why Oman. And I am also an Omani citizen. I got my citizenship here." **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Health minister praises blood donation drive

1 The Indian embassy in Muscat started a blood donation campaign which was inaugurated by the Minister of Health, Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti. Dr Al Sabti said: "We really value this initiative. This initiative will reflect positively on the Indian community." **>A6**

WORLD 56 killed in Sudan

2 56 people have been killed as Sudan's armed forces battled the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for control of the country. **>A6**

SPORTS Real Madrid warm up

3 Real Madrid warmed up for their Champions League quarters second leg against Chelsea with 2-0 victory at Cadiz in La Liga. **>B6**

THEATRES

Good news for movie buffs; Ruwi, Shatti cinema halls to reopen

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Get ready to grab your box of popcorn or a packet of chips with your favourite drink. Relive the joy of watching a movie at the iconic Ruwi Cinema or Shatti Qurum theatre.

Yes, you heard it right! Months after the two theatres among the five halls where screening was stopped, movie buffs in the Sultanate of Oman will soon get an opportunity to watch films at these two theatres.

Though a final date of re-opening has not been finalised, *Times of Oman* expects that Ruwi and Shatti Qurum cinema halls are likely to reopen after Eid Al Adha holidays.

In an exclusive interview, P Chandrasekr, Group General Manager, Jawad Sultan Group,

said: "We are delighted to say that Jawad Sultan Group is returning to cinema business. To start with, we will reopen the iconic Ruwi Cinema and Shatti Qurum Cinema in the next two-three months. We had exited the cinema business in 2016 and concurrently leased our 4 properties to VOX management for running their cinema operations.

"Following the termination of the lease arrangement between both the parties by mutual agreement, our owners gave a lot of thought and decided to return to the business, which they are credited to be pioneers in Oman."

It may be mentioned that following the end of the agreement between VOX and Jawad Sultan Group, 4 cinema locations - Ruwi, Shatti Qurum, Sur and Sohar - had closed down. In addition, VOX



also closed their cinemas in the Panorama Mall location.

Chandrasekr said: "To start with, we will focus our energy on the opening of Ruwi and Shatti Qurum. We have moved out of Sohar as the property has been sold while we will give a pause to Sur operations. We have now three locations and will begin with two places.

"The cinema market has transformed in recent times with a tremendous competition given by movies on OTT platforms. Besides, the industry was hit badly by the pandemic for a couple of years and is now recovering in the post-pandemic era."

Chandrasekr was, however, upbeat and said that "things are looking good ahead."



He credited the euphoric response to the recent achievements of Indian movies at the Oscars along with the production of high-quality Hollywood movies and Indian movies in different languages and Bollywood films.

The senior official at the Jawad Sultan Group said: "We know that we will face good competition from four other operators, but we

will bank on our strong skill sets and offer the best experience to customers.

"We will also no longer be called City Cinema and will return with a new name. Customer-oriented service will be our top priority at both the venues, be it sound and projection systems or attractive and varied offers."

Market situations

Chandrasekr, who has been closely following the industry for the past decade, said: "We are mindful of and have assessed the market. We are re-entering a business that we were pioneers in and we are moving with cautious optimism.

"We are going ahead with Ruwi and Shatti Qurum as both the halls were doing reasonably well even before we had entered a deal with VOX in 2016." **>A6**

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COMMENTARY

In the spirit of the last week of Ramadan



Saleh Al-Shaibany



WE ARE in the last week of Ramadan and all of us are looking forward for the Eid holidays that are ahead of us but we may have missed a point or two in this holy month.

While we are planning a lavish Eid celebrations with festival meals and events, the question is whether we observed well the rituals in the past three weeks. The earthly bounties were the meals we ate in the Iftaar but the question is if we really raised our hands to be grateful.

But that is not all, have we really showed our appreciation to God by giving a "little something" to the poor during the month. Not all the families are blessed with a good income. Some are struggling to

make ends meet but we should not elaborate in the details of it. Gratitude to God can be expressed in many ways and prayers are only a part of it.

We know, for some, to open their wallets to share the cash with the less fortunate is never easy. They are always worried that there may be some hard times ahead and they may need it in the future. But it does not have to be a lot of money because every little helps. As the Eid gets closer, this is the right time to reconsider it.

The spirit of Ramadan always culminate in the first day of Eid and we can spare a thought in this last week of fasting to the less fortunate. I am not sure where I came across the words that the 'spirit of Eid is empathy'. Whoever said it then deserves a medal. If we do not give to the poor then we do not show compassion to the world around us. And if we don't have compassion, we cannot connect to the next fellow human being.

In simple words, giving is the best way to show gratitude to God. And why should we give? Because we want to see a better world around us. The world of togetherness and well-being. It is not an exaggeration that sparing a little cash save people from not only starvation but illness. If you think I am exaggeration, then think of what has been happening in Yemen, Somalia and Ethiopia, to give just a few examples.

Of course, charity begins at home but a few more rials further from home always help.

It is a humbling experience and it can bring together people from very different lives and circumstances, both home and far from home.

To go with the current technology, online donation is very effective if you don't know where to reach the needy. People don't have to be physically present to still make a difference and be attentive to the true meaning and intention in donating.

It is the act of giving that we find joy in ourselves. So let us reach out in this last week of Ramadan to make the Eid celebrations of the poor more meaningful.

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Auction of Five-Year Development Bonds worth RO 75 million at 5.25% p.a.

Oman Development Bonds

On behalf of the Government of Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman announces an issue of Government Development Bonds to be sold by auction. The 68th Issue of Government Development Bonds will be issued on Thursday, 04/05/2023, carrying a coupon rate of 5.25% per annum for a maturity period of 5 years (maturing on 04/05/2028). These Bonds will be auctioned on Tuesday, 02/05/2023. Investors may apply for these Bonds through competitive bidding only.

Security of Capital

Total security is offered as the Bonds are registered and transferable only by means of a document evidencing the transaction between a buyer and a seller through Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). The Bonds are direct and unconditional obligations of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman.

Fixed and Attractive Returns

Interest of 5.25% per annum is payable half-yearly throughout the tenure of the Bonds. The interest will be paid semi-annually on 4th November and 4th May, every year till maturity of the Bond on Thursday 04/05/2028.

Liquidity

The Bonds can be listed and traded before maturity in MSX at the prevailing market price.

Collateral Advantage

The Bonds can be used as a collateral security to obtain loans from any licensed commercial bank.

Who Can Invest?

Resident and Non-resident Investors, such as Banks, Financial Institutions, Companies, Individuals and any other entity of any nationality

How to buy the bonds?

Investor may obtain bonds through any licensed commercial bank operating in the Sultanate of Oman, upon the submission of eligible application form.

MSX Investor Code

The investor must provide the MSX Investor Code in his/her application.

Anyone who does not have MSX Investor Code, can obtain it from Muscat Clearing and Depository Co. (MCD) through their website at least one day prior to submitting the application to the commercial bank. (www.mcd.gov.om)

For any enquires:

Tel: +968 24822222 | 24822223 | 24822280 | 24822281

Fax: +968 24810555

E-mail: mcd.support@mcd.gov.om

Bank Account Details

An investor must provide the same Bank Account details registered with MCD.

68th Issue

Opens on Sunday, April 16th, 2023 & closes on Monday, May 1st, 2023.

The minimum subscription amount is RO 500 and in multiples of RO 100

To view the 68th Issue of Government Development Bonds, please visit the following websites:

Ministry of Finance | www.mof.gov.om

Central Bank of Oman | www.cbo.gov.om

Contact the Central Bank of Oman (Monetary Operations Department) or any licensed commercial bank for details.

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» IFTAR TIMING

6:34 pm



» PRAYER TIMINGS

Dhuhr	12:12 pm
Asr	3:39 pm
Maghrib	6:34 pm
Isha	7:47 pm
Fajr (April 18)	4:26 am

» IFTAR RECIPE

LEMONGRASS PINA COLADA

Recipe by Oneza Tabish

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pineapple (peeled and cut into chunks)
- 3 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 cup coconut cream
- 1/3 cup lemongrass leaves
- 1/2 cup water
- 8 ice cubes

PREPARATION

- In a blender add all of the above ingredients and blend till smooth.
- Serve cold or chilled.



» WORDS OF WISDOM

Believers always win [Qur'an 21:94]

So whoever does righteous deeds while he is a believer – no denial will there be for his effort, and indeed We, of it, are recorders.

» FASTING TIPS



MAINTAIN ORAL HYGIENE

During Ramadan, decreased intake of fluids causes decreased saliva production. This causes exaggeration of existing dental conditions like inflammation of gums, and caries of teeth. Maintain good oral hygiene and drink lots of water or fluids during evenings and Suhoor to help minimise this issue.

» CUISINE



HOT AND COLD MEZZE

Mezze is the term used for little hot and cold appetisers usually served in Middle Eastern cuisine. They can be served for any meal, and the tradition is meant to unite people around the table in a spirit of sharing. Soups and mezze are a must during Iftar because they are filling, simple to eat, and-- the first course served at Iftar. The most popular mezze dishes are hummus, falafel, baba ganoush, labneh, tabbouleh, fattoush, stuffed olives, dolmas, hard cheeses, meatballs and more. Make sure to include both hot and cold mezze on your menu.

» GOOD DEED



BLESS YOUR DEBTORS

“And if the debtor is on straitened circumstances, then grant him time until it is easy for him to repay” (Surah al-Baqarah:280)

Ramadan is an opportunity to bless your debtors with the forgiveness of that which they owe you if it is financially viable. Your reward is with Allah, and he is ever just and generous. It is our responsibility to honour our commitments and pay our debts, but there is a great reward for those who, as an act of worship to Allah, forgive those who are in their debt.

We can relieve another's debt in two ways. If we have given money as a loan to someone and we know that he is genuinely not able to repay we should give them time. Another way is to

forgive it completely.

According to Surah al-Baqarah:281, “But if you remit it [the debt] by way of charity, that is better for you if you did but know. And be afraid of the Day when you shall be brought back to Allah. Then every person shall be paid what he earned, and they shall not be dealt with unjustly”

You can also help the one in debt by helping them pay off their debts. It is important to care for people and try to alleviate their stresses and strains, whether financial or otherwise.





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FINAL OPERA

ROHM to present Così Fan Tutte opera

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat is delighted to present Mozart's stunning opera Così Fan Tutte as the final opera of the 2022/2023 Season at the opera house.

Audiences are invited to celebrate opera with a production which promises to do justice to the work of arguably the best-loved composer of the opera genre.

Acclaimed young composer Leonardo Sini, a rising star in the world of music, will conduct the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra in Ettore Scuola's direction of Così Fan Tutte.



The 1685 Choir of the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatory of Ravenna will perform alongside star soloists including Martina Russomanno, Serena Malfi, German Olvera, Alasdair Kent, Lavinia Bini and Ferruccio Furlanetto.

The plot takes place in the Bay of Naples in the 18th century. Deeply convinced of women's infidelity, the cynical Don Alfonso provokes his young friends Ferrando and Guglielmo by impugning the constancy of their fiancées, sisters

Dorabella and Fiordiligi.

To prove his assertion, Alfonso proposes the following plan to them: that they tell their fiancées they are leaving for war, and then return dressed as Albanian soldiers, ready to do anything to seduce the lonely fiancées. With their "real" lovers gone, Fiordiligi and Dorabella appear outraged when their servant Despina (Don Alfonso's accomplice) introduces into their home the two Albanians, who quickly prove very enterprising.

The two sisters at first reject them virtuously but soon allow themselves to be charmed by these new suitors who, under a false identity, gradually become disillusioned as they see their mistresses betraying them. "They all do that!" ("Così fan tutte") Don Alfonso concludes, delighted to have proved his theory. When the deception is revealed, the two couples reunite despite it all, with no great illusion about their happiness.

The opera is rich with fabulous costumes and elegant staging, making it the perfect evening out and a feast for opera lovers and culture enthusiasts.

Don't miss your chance to catch this wonderful performance in Muscat. Così Fan Tutte will take place over two nights on May 4 & 6, at 7.30pm at the Royal Opera House Muscat.

MOU SIGNED

Integrated housing complexes

<FROM A1 The agreement provides for the establishment of integrated housing complexes for the target group if they have lands, or the construction of separate houses for those who will be given land or for those who own unconstructed land or an uninhabitable house.

The building area for each home will be 200 square metres at a construction cost not exceeding OM35,000 for each house.

The MoU signing ceremony was held under the patronage of Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development.

-With ONA inputs

APPOINTMENT

Sayyid Firas discusses investment opportunities with Indian delegation

Times News Service

MUSCAT: World Telugu Information Technology Council (WTITC) has appointed His Highness Al Sayyid Firas Fatik Al Said as a patron of the council for Oman.

This appointment was made during a visit by a WTITC delegation led by Sundee Kumar Makthala to Oman on Tuesday.

During the visit, the delegation met with Firas to discuss collaborations between Oman and the Telugu States from India. The discussion covered investment opportunities, business policies in Oman, and technology



exchange initiatives in the IT and ITeS sectors.

Sundee Kumar Makthala, the leader of the delegation, handed over the appointment letter to HH Firas, formally

appointing him as a patron of WTITC Oman. The delegation also visited Telugu people in Muscat and Sohar labour camps, providing them with hope and support.

Sundee Kumar Makthala, Chairman of WTITC, said, "We are delighted to meet HH Al Sayyid Firas Fatik Al Said and discussed the immense potential for cooperation between Oman and the Telugu States. Our discussions focused on investment opportunities and technology exchange initiatives in the IT and ITeS sectors, which can create a win-win situation for both sides."

JOB VACANCIES



Oman Electricity Transmission Company SAOG (OETC) has a vital role in the Oman Electricity Sector, as it owns and operates the main transmission network as well as transmission network in Dhofar and Musandam Governorates through which electricity is transmitted from the generating stations to the distribution load centers in all governorates of the Sultanate. The main electricity transmission network operates at high voltage of 132kV and above. Also, OETC has the responsibility of balancing generation and demand at all times of the day as part of its responsibilities for the economic dispatch of power in the Sultanate, and are currently looking for motivated Omani candidates for the following positions:

Job Title	Job Code
General Ledger & Fixed Assets Senior Accountant	IRC17011
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Note: only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.



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JAALAN BANI BU ALI

Search on for missing citizen at sea

Muscat: A citizen has gone missing at sea in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has called on everyone to join the search operation. The ROP announced the news of a missing citizen at sea in the Khuwaima area in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. The police confirmed that search efforts are ongoing, with the participation of the authorities and citizens.





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Ramadan Iftar Program

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "He who provides a fasting person something with which to break his fast, will earn the same reward as the one who was observing the fast, without diminishing in any way the reward of the latter."

The Oman Charitable Organization is pleased to announce that it will receive donations for Ramadan Iftar Program in Sultanate of Oman for the year 1444 AH AD 2023

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OMAN/WORLD

OMAN DATA PARK

TRA grants new licence to provide VoIP services

MUSCAT: The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) granted a new licence to Oman Data Park (ODP) to provide voice or video telecommunication services over Internet protocol (VoIP), which contributes to expanding the base of services provided via Internet Protocol in the Sultanate of Oman.

The issuance of the licence is based on Oman's Telecommu-

nications Regulatory Law and its executive regulations, issued by the Ministerial decision No. 144/2008.

In accordance with this approval, ODP will work to contribute to enhancing the benefit of users of the telecommunications sector in Oman from the technology of voice transmission, as well as sending and receiving phone calls over the

Internet Protocol (VoIP) instead of transmitting it via the landline telephone network.

Eng. Maqbool Al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park said that obtaining this licence confirms ODP's readiness to provide this type of advanced services at a time when the Sultanate of Oman is keen to keep pace with the latest developments in this field. — **ONA**



More than 50 people dead in Sudan clashes

The sound of heavy firing could be heard as the military urged people to remain inside their homes



KHARTOUM: At least 56 people have been killed as Sudan's armed forces (SAF) battled the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for control of the country, according to the Sudanese Doctors' Union.

The doctor's syndicate also said some 600 people were wounded in the fighting that broke out on Saturday.

Fighting continued well into the night in the capital Khartoum and other parts of the country after months of tensions erupted between two rival military leaders.

The sound of heavy firing could be heard as the military urged people to remain inside their homes. Schools, banks and government offices would be closed on Sunday.

Both sides claim they control key airports and other installations.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke to the military leader Abdel-Fattah Burhan and RSF leader General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, calling for an immediate end to violence and a return to dialogue.

Burhan overthrew long-term ruler Omar al-Bashir in April 2019. Eighteen months later, the military and the RSF staged a second coup,

upending a transition to democracy.

Disagreements between Burhan and Dagalo over the planned integration of the RSF into the regular army have now turned into open conflict.

In an interview with Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera, Dagalo accused Burhan of starting the battle by surrounding RSF troops. "This criminal, he forced this battle upon us," he said.

Regional and international players need to step in and attempt to mediate between Sudan's generals and de-escalate the fighting, Kholood Khair, the director of the Sudan-based Confluence Advisory think tank, told DW on Sunday.

Khair said she does not expect any stepping back from the conflict "until we see... a concerted international effort at a very high level." She warned that the situation was getting "more difficult by the hour."

"Unfortunately, we haven't seen the type of political heavyweights being engaged on the mediation side," she said.

RSF leader Daglo is believed to enjoy strong ties with Gulf coun-

tries, as his forces fought in Yemen alongside the Saudi-led coalition against Houthi rebels.

Burhan is meanwhile rumored to be close to Egypt, with unconfirmed reports saying he stopped in the country hours before his 2021 coup.

Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia have called on the Arab League to convene over Sudan later on Sunday.

Khair also said the appetite for a return to a democratic path in the country was still high but stressed the violence must stop first.

"There's still a lot of support throughout the country for democratic transition," she said. "We have to remember that this power struggle between the generals is by no means indicative of the broader politics that are taking place in Sudan."

Internet reportedly blocked

Internet access was blocked in Sudan on Sunday amid the ongoing clashes between the military and the powerful RSF paramilitary.

The MTN telecommunications company blocked internet services in Sudan, following orders from the government telecommunica-

tions regulator, two MTN officials told the Reuters news agency.

Sudanese Twitter users also reported the internet outage.

Fighting 'even more aggressive'

Mohamed Amin, a journalist currently in Khartoum, told DW clashes continued on Sunday and that the situation was "even more aggressive" than Saturday with heavy shelling in the vicinity of the armed forces headquarters.

He added that there were air strikes and artillery attacks against army headquarters, with both the military and the RSF claiming control over the vital facility.

Electricity has been cut from most of the capital city, Amin said.

"The clashes can be witnessed all over Khartoum and the sounds of the bombs and gunfire are everywhere," he said. He added that Khartoum's international airport remained shuttered for the second day in a row.

RSF accused foreign planes of striking bases in Port Sudan, Amin said, describing this as a "very new element" of the conflict. — **AW**

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TELEPHONIC CONVERSATION

India and US discuss regional, global issues

NEW DELHI: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday held a telephonic conversation with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and discussed regional as well as global issues.

Taking to his official Twitter handle, Jaishankar stated that they noted the steady progress in India-US ties. He tweeted, "A warm conversation, as always with US Secretary of State @SecBlinken this morning. Discussed current regional and global issues. Noted the steady progress in our bilateral ties."

Earlier in March, S Jaishankar held a meeting with Antony Blinken. The two leaders discussed measures to mitigate the global impacts of Russia's war in Ukraine. Blinken and Jaishankar held talks on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi.

During the meeting, Blinken spoke to Jaishankar and shared his views on tackling global and regional challenges. In a statement, US Department of State

spokesperson Ned Price said that Blinken met with Jaishankar to discuss how India and the US can expand technology and defence cooperation and increase food energy, and health security.

Ned Price also informed that Blinken and Jaishankar spoke about efforts to elevate and expand strategic technology and defence industrial cooperation and promote food, energy, and global health security. The two leaders also held discussions to promote clean energy transition, counter-narcotics cooperation and women's economic empowerment.

During his visit to India, Blinken attended the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Quad Foreign Ministers meet on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue in Delhi.

During his visit to India, Blinken said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is right that there are real challenges to multilateralism and added that they are directly coming from Russia.

— **ANI**



JAWAD SULTAN GROUP

Number of cinema operators in Oman increases to five

< FROM A1 Following the decision by Jawad Sultan Group, the number of operators in the Sultanate have risen to five with VOX, Cinopolis, Novo and WOW, being the other operators.



Around 80 screens in Oman

Despite halls in Sohar, Sur and Panorama Mall closed, the Sultanate of Oman has around 80 screens, a number that Chandrasekr believes is "excess to the requirement".

"We will have a total of six screens with three each in Ruwi and Shatti Qurum. We are thankful to movie buffs in Oman for showering love, encouragement and support to us for the past many years," he said.

Recalling the journey of cinema in Oman, Chandrasekr said that Jawad Sultan Group began its operations in Ruwi in 1978 when they launched Al Nasr Cinema, which was later named City Cinema.

He said: "Prior to Al Nasr, there had been a small set-up near the main Ruwi Grand Mosque to show movies since 1973. But, Al Nasr was the first full-fledged cinema hall and the first movie screened in 1978 was the Raj Khosla-directed 1969 movie *Do Raaste* with Rajesh Khanna and Mumtaz."

Entertainment industry

The Jawad Sultan Group top official said that "entertainment industry has a lot of scope in Oman, but one has to tread with a lot of caution in present times."

He said: "Technology has taken over and there is an overlap between education and entertainment. There is convergence happening in this industry but not in other forms of media. We will try to bring the latest technology once we start our operations, and we are committed to finding ways to improve our offerings for customers."

Chandrasekr admitted that Netflix and other OTT platforms have cut into the market of cinema movie goers.

"However, there is still a lot that cinema halls could offer and the experience of watching a movie in a hall is something different, and we will strive to make it more enjoyable."

Soon after closing down five theatres last year, a spokesperson for Majid Al Futtaim Leisure, Entertainment & Cinemas that manages VOX Cinemas in Oman, said: "As a responsible business focused on long-term sustainable growth, we have identified opportunities to accelerate our progress and deploy our capital more efficiently. As such, we will be closing a number of our older and low-performing VOX Cinemas sites."

BLOOD DONATION

Health minister praises Indian embassy's blood donation drive



DONATION DRIVE: The blood donation campaign was inaugurated by the Minister of Health, Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Indian embassy in Muscat started a blood donation campaign on Friday which was inaugurated by the Minister of

Health, Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti.

Praising the blood donation drive, Dr Al Sabti said: "We really value this initiative. This initiative will reflect positively on the Indian community. As everyone knows,

blood is very valuable, wherever it comes from."

'O' positive group

Dr. Zainab bint Salim Al-Araimi, Director of the Blood Banks Services Department, said: "Actually we need all the blood groups but more of 'O' positive because it can be given to other blood groups. Everyone can donate this time during Ramadan as all the blood banks are suffering from shortages. This campaign is very supportive of blood banks and we are going to launch this drive in other centres and in Salalah."

300 units

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, Amit Narang, said that last year we had started Ramadan blood donation drive in which we had collected more than 1,400 units of blood. Even the figures this time is very encouraging as we have collected over 300 units of blood on Friday.

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Slaughterhouses prepare for Eid

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The slaughterhouses under Muscat Municipality are making preparations to welcome people during Eid Al-Fitr.

Muscat Municipality announced readiness of its slaughterhouses in Al-Seeb and Al-Amrat. There are sufficient number of veterinary staff, butchers, and cleaners, to meet all the require-

ments of customers. The aim is to meet the demand and guarantee safety of community members, while ensuring both quality and speed. As for the working hours of slaughterhouses, they will be designated for individuals and companies, starting on Monday (26 Ramadan 1444 AH - April 17, 2023) from 6 am to 1 pm for individuals, while for companies it will be from 7 pm to midnight.

In order to speed up the slaughtering and handing it over to the public, work will be allocated only from Friday 30 Ramadan 1444 AH to the second day of Eid, where the morning session will be from (7 am to 2 pm) for the slaughter of livestock (sheep and goats only).

As for the evening period from (4 pm to 8 pm), it is specified for the slaughter of livestock, including cows and camels only.

Accademia Stauffer ensemble at ROHM

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) will present the Accademia Stauffer All Stars Ensemble on 5 May 2023. It is a talented and extraordinary ensemble of musicians from the Stauffer Academy of Cremona in Italy.

The academy is an institution which nurtures education in stringed instruments.

Concert

The evening concert offers a programme of two special composers, Vivaldi and Piazzolla, each exploring the seasons of the year through compositions arranged for stringed instruments.

Well-known and well-loved throughout the world, Vivaldi's The Four Seasons and Piazzolla's The Four Seasons of Buenos Aires, tell the story of the seasons through intricate, dramatic, and unique music.

Italian-Swiss patron

The ensemble, featuring violin, viola, cello, double bass, and harpsichord, consists of musicians selected from the academy which is supported by the Fondazione Stauffer. Established in Cremona, in 1970, by Italian-Swiss patron and entrepreneur Walter Stauffer, the foundation aims to promote and support advanced musical training for string players, traditional Cremonese violin making, and musicological research.

— **ONA**



INDIAN PREMIER LEAGUE



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حياة أحلى
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Raza, Shahrukh power Kings to win against Super Giants

Lucknow Super Giants' skipper KL Rahul hits a half-century, crosses 4,000 runs in IPL

LUCKNOW: A fighting half-century from Sikandar Raza and an entertaining cameo by Shahrukh Khan powered Punjab Kings (PBKS) to a hard-fought last-over two-wicket win over Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) in their IPL match at Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ekana Cricket Stadium, on Saturday.

In the chase of 160 runs, Punjab Kings struggled at the start as IPL debutant Yuvraj Singh picked up wickets of Atharva Taide (0) and Prabhsimran Singh (4) to reduce them to 17/2 in 2.2 overs.

Matthew Short looked in good touch, smashing Avesh Khan for three straight fours in the third over. Short looked to build a stand with Harpreet Bhatia, but was dismissed on the final ball of the sixth over for 34 off 22 balls, consisting of five fours and a six.

Krishnappa Gowtham dislodged his stumps to send PBKS sinking at 45/3 in 6 overs. Bhatia and Raza carried the chase forward. At the end of 10 overs, PBKS were at 68/3.

Krunal Pandya disrupted PBKS's chase as he dismissed Bhatia for 22 off 22 balls. Raza relieved some pressure in the 13th over, smashing Krunal for two sixes and a four. The over gave away 17 runs, taking PBKS to 99/4 in 13 overs.

Ravi Bishnoi helped LSG come back into the game, dismissing Sam Curran for just six runs and half of the PBKS line-up was inside the hut at 112 runs in 14.3 overs.

Raza brought up his maiden half-century in just 34 balls, consisting of three fours and three sixes. But on the very next ball, he was dismissed by Mark Wood after a diving catch from KL Rahul. Shahrukh Khan was the next batter on the crease, and he smashed six on the very first ball



he faced. PBKS were 128/6 in 16 overs, needing 32 in the final four overs.

The equation came down to 23 runs in the final three overs. Bishnoi took the crucial wicket of Raza, who was caught by Marcus Stoinis for 57 off 41 balls, consisting of four boundaries and three sixes. The equation came down to 20 runs in the final two overs.

Brar and Shahrukh lightened the pressure with a four and six, but Wood got the last laugh by dismissing Brar for six. PBKS still needed seven runs in seven balls.

Kings reached home, finishing at 161/8 in 19.3 overs. Shahrukh's cameo of 23 off 10 balls included a

four and two sixes.

Yuvraj was the pick of the bowlers, taking 2/19 in three overs. Wood took 2/35 in his four overs and Bishnoi also got two scalps.

Earlier, half-century from skipper KL Rahul helped Lucknow Super Giants reach a modest total of 159/8 despite fiery spells from stand-in Punjab skipper Curran and pacer Kagiso Rabada.

Openers Rahul and Kyle Mayers played contrasting roles from each end, with Mayers being an aggressor. At the end of the powerplay, LSG were at 49/0, with Mayers (28) and Rahul (20) unbeaten.

Brar gave Punjab Kings the needed breakthrough, dismissing

Mayers for 29 off 23 balls, consisting of four and three sixes.

Deepak Hooda, playing his 100th IPL match, was leg-before-wicket for 2 by Raza. Rahul reached 4,000 runs in IPL, becoming the fastest player to do so, when he reached 30. At the end of 10 overs, Super Giants were at 74/2.

Rahul reached his first half-century of the season in 40 balls, consisting of seven fours. In the 15th over, Rabada broke the 48-run partnership as Krunal was caught by Shahrukh Khan for 18 off 17 balls.

On the very next ball, he also got the prize wicket of Nicholas Pooran, who was dismissed for a golden duck. With five overs left to make an impact, both Rahul and Stoinis let their arms loose with some sixes.

Curran took the wicket of Stoinis, sending him back for 15 off 11 balls, with two sixes while Arshdeep Singh got his first wicket, sending back Rahul for 74 off 56 balls, consisting of eight fours and a six. A flurry of wickets left Lucknow reach only 159/8.

Curran was the pick of the bowlers, taking 3/31 in his four overs. Rabada took 2/34 in his four overs. **Brief scores:** LSG: 159/8 (Rahul 74, Mayers 29; Curran 3/31) lost to PBKS: 161/8 in 19.3 overs (Raza 57, Short 34; Yuvraj Singh 2/19). -ANI

Milestones don't exist for me, says Raza



LUCKNOW: Punjab Kings' Sikandar Raza from Zimbabwe said that "milestone don't exist for him" as he wants to contribute to the team's win following Punjab's victory against Lucknow Super Giants on Saturday.

Asked on how he was feeling after scoring his first IPL half-century, Raza replied: "People make a huge thing about the fifties. For me these milestones don't really exist, for me every run counts, I ask myself what is the difference between 49 and 50 or 50 and 51. So what I look at is; did I win the game, did I contribute to the winning of the game or most importantly did I take the game forward."

When he went out to bat on Saturday against Lucknow Super Giants, Raza said that his first priority was to negotiate Mark Wood's over as he was a real threat. He said: "When I went out there, I realised that for me to take the game forward, I have to try and bat out Mark Wood's over because he was the threat."

During a chat with his team-mate Shahrukh Khan, who has hit the first ball he faced for a six in two matches, Raza asked what is up with him hitting the first ball for a six.

Shahrukh said: "I knew it was Wood's last ball. I was just ready

to drive him off the front foot. It was just instinct. I have been practising and coming into good positions. As long as it comes correctly, I would take it any day."

Raza and Shahrukh revealed the reason behind their names. And the story is quite interesting and emotional.

Sikandar said that his name was named after his uncle who passed away while Shahrukh's family was fan of Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan and hence he was named after him. He said, "I was the first boy born in the family. I was born in 1995 and the movie *Baazigar* was released in 1993-94. My parents were fans of Shahrukh Khan. My mom wanted me to name Shahrukh, and that is the reason for my name."

Raza had a stellar year with the bat and also contributed significantly with the ball in T20Is. Not only was he the leading scorer for Zimbabwe with 735 runs, with five half-centuries but he also led the wickets chart for them, scalping 25 wickets at an excellent economy rate of 6.13.

In ODIs, Raza aggregated 645 runs at an average of 49.61 and strike rate of 87.16, making two fifties to complement three centuries. With the ball in hand, Raza was ever-reliable, scalping eight wickets while giving away just more than five an over. -ANI

FIA WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Oman Racing's Al Harthy qualifies fifth fastest in Portimao

MUSCAT: Oman Racing's Ahmad Al Harthy mounted a strong challenge for the GTE Am pole position during qualifying for round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship at Portimao in Portugal on Saturday, but had to settle for fifth place due to yellow flags while on his quickest lap.

Ultimately ending up just half a second shy of pole, and only 0.3 seconds away from the front row of the grid, the Oman Racing with TF Sport driver was very happy with his performance and confident the team has a strong car for this afternoon's race at the Autodromo Internacional do Algarve.

Producing a best lap time of 1m49.904 seconds, the Aston Martin Vantage racer had posted best sectors in the first and second portions of the lap and was on course for more. Due to the yellow flags though, the result of a stricken car, the Omani missed out on a front row starting slot.

Prior to the qualifying run, Al Harthy and his team-mates, Michael



Dinan and Charlie Eastwood, had made good progress with the No.25 car across the three free practice sessions.

Improving by almost 1.5 seconds between FP1 and FP3, the Oman Racing with TF Sport squad clearly delivered a competitive car for

qualifying and Al Harthy - who is supported by prestigious partners Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS - is sure the same will be true for the 6 Hours of Portimao.

Going into his second race in the FIA World Endurance Champion-

ship, Al Harthy and the Oman Racing squad hold ninth place in the driver and team standings following a ninth place finish during the season-opening event last month at Sebring in the USA.

Al Harthy said: "We gave it all we had in qualifying. I had a very quick

lap, I did my best in sector one and sector two, but then there was a yellow flag so I had to back off. It's when the tyres were at their best as well, so it was unfortunate, but we still start a respectable P5 for the race. I'm looking forward to a good, clean six hours of racing.

"We worked hard during practice for a good qualifying and race set-up, and the Oman Racing with TF Sport guys have done a fantastic job as they always do. We can definitely fight strongly from P5 so we're aiming for a strong race and to come away with a good result."



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QUOTE OF THE DAY



“Would have been happier if we would have finished on the winning note but nonetheless, pleased with my effort. That’s the role given to me by the management and it’s my job to repay them. Obviously it was a very beautiful wicket to bat on. Really happy to get a hundred.”

Venkatesh Iyer
Kolkata Knight Riders batter after his knock on Sunday

TODAY’S MATCH



VS

Royal Challengers Bangalore

Chennai Super Kings

6pm, Bengaluru

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	T	NR	NRR	PTS
RR	4	3	1	0	0	+1.588	6
LSG	5	3	2	0	0	+0.761	6
GT	4	3	1	0	0	+0.341	6
PBKS	5	3	2	0	0	-0.109	6
KKR	5	2	3	0	0	+0.320	4
CSK	4	2	2	0	0	+0.225	4
RCB	4	2	2	0	0	-0.316	4
MI	4	2	2	0	0	-0.389	4
SRH	4	2	2	0	0	-0.822	4
DC	5	0	5	0	0	-1.488	0

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

KISHAN, SURYAKUMAR GUIDE MUMBAI TO FACILE VICTORY



MUMBAI: Venkatesh Iyer's maiden century went in vain as Ishan Kishan's fifty (58) and Suryakumar Yadav's quick-fire knock of 43 runs guided Mumbai Indians (MI) to a 5-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in their IPL 2023 game at Wankhede Stadium on Sunday.

Chasing a target of 186, Mumbai got off to a fiery start as their openers, Ishan Kishan and Rohit Sharma, hammered Shardul Thakur for 16 runs in the second over of the game. The duo continued their blistering form as they slammed Umesh Yadav for 17 runs with the help of two sixes and one four in his over.

Kishan was in red-hot form and he slammed Sunil Narine for 22 runs in the 4th over with the help of two sixes and brought his team's score beyond the 50-run mark. The pair piled up beyond 60 runs in 5 overs. The 65-run stand was broken when Suyash Sharma dismissed Rohit for 20.

Suryakumar joined Kishan as the latter brought up a 21-ball half-century in the 8th over of the game. After slamming a maximum in the 9th over, Kishan fell prey to Varun Chakravathy's for 58 off just 25 deliveries.

Tilak Varma and Suryakumar did not allow the Kolkata bowlers to settle down before Suyash Sharma bowled Varma for 30 off 25 to break the growing partnership.

Tim David then came out to bat and slammed Chakravathy for 15 runs with the help of two maximums.

Suryakumar fell prey in the 17th over to Shardul Thakur after scoring 43 off 25 balls. His knock was laced with four boundaries and three sixes. After Suryakumar's exit, Mumbai still needed 10 runs with 22 balls.

David made a dash for the finish. His 24 in 13 balls sealed the deal with 14 balls to spare and gave Mumbai a net-run rate boost.

Earlier, Venkatesh became the first player to score a century for Kolkata Knight Riders in 15 years as his blistering knock of 104 (51) took the team to 185/6.

Venkatesh broke Knight Riders' jinx of no IPL centuries since Brendon McCullum's unbeaten 158, but the other batters were not fluent.

Young Mumbai debutant Arjun Tendulkar, son of legendary Sachin Tendulkar, bowled an impactful over to kick off the game. He bowled two new-ball overs that showed promise for the future.

Mumbai got an early breakthrough as Cameron Green picked up his first wicket of the match when he dismissed N Jagadeesan for a four-ball duck in the second over with the total just 11.

Rahmanullah Gurbaz departed in the final over of the powerplay as Kolkata were down to 57/2. Skipper Nitish Rana and Iyer tried to revive the innings but Rana's exit stalled the progress. Venkatesh continued to score runs as wickets fell at the other end. At the end of 10 overs, Kolkata had scored 104/3.

After Shardul Thakur was dismissed by Hrithik Shokeen in the 13th over for a score of 13, Rinku Singh stepped in and held on to the other end as Venkatesh went on a rampage.

Venkatesh lost his wicket in the 18th over to Riley Meredith after hitting 104 off 51 balls, which included six fours and nine sixes. Andre Russell's unbeaten cameo of 21 off 11 took the team's total to 185/6.

Brief scores: Kolkata Knight Riders 185/6 (Venkatesh 104, Russell 21; Shokeen 2-34) lost to Mumbai Indians 186/5 in 17.4 overs (Kishan 58, Suryakumar Yadav 43, Suyash 2-27). - ANI



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OER BUSINESS SUMMIT

The 13th edition of OER Business Summit, a flagship event by the Sultanate's premium business magazine, with a special HR focus, will take place at Sheraton Oman Hotel on October 19. Ahmed Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman, Opaz will be the chief guest.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,759.69 points, down by 1.07 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.46 per cent at 478.47 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Voltamp Energy, down 9.79 per cent, was the top loser.

Bank Muscat posts net profit of OMR51.30mn

Net Interest income from conventional banking and net income from Islamic Financing stood at OMR91.71 million for the three months ended 31 March, 2023



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the flagship financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced its preliminary unaudited results for the three months ended 31 March 2023.

The bank posted a net profit of OMR51.30 million for the period compared to OMR48.26 million reported during the same period in 2022, an increase of 6.3 per cent. The key highlights of the results

for the period are as follows:

Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at OMR91.71 million for the three months ended 31 March 2023 compared to OMR82.08 million for the same period in 2022, an increase of 11.7 per cent.

Non-interest income was OMR31.50 million for the three months ended 31 March 2023 as compared to OMR31.83 million for the same period in 2022. Operating expenses for the three

months ended 31 March 2023 was OMR48.70 million as compared to OMR45.76 million for the same period in 2022, an increase of 6.4 per cent.

Net Impairment for credit and other losses for the three months ended 31 March 2023 was OMR13.69 million as against OMR12.0 million for the same period in 2022.

Net loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables increased by 8.4 per cent to OMR9,765 million as against

OMR9,009 million as of 31 March 2022.

Customer deposits including Islamic Customer deposits increased by 1.6 per cent to OMR8,992 million as against OMR8,853 million as of 31 March 2022.

The full results for the three months ended 31 March 2023 along with the complete set of unaudited financial statements will be released following the approval of the Board of Directors of the bank at its meeting scheduled later during April 2023.

SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT



Regulation for registering SMEs to begin in May

MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) will start implementing the regulations for registering micro, small and medium enterprises and issuing the entrepreneurship Riyada card from May 1.

ASMED issued, on February 2023, the regulation for registering micro, small and medium enterprises and issuing the entrepreneurship Riyada card. According to the regulation, an enterprise is considered micro if it has 1-10 employees with annual revenues below OMR150,000. A small enterprise has 11-50 employees with annual revenues

between OMR150,000 and OMR1.250 million, while a medium enterprise has 51-150 employees with revenues reaching less than OMR5 million.

The authority also issued a decision on February 2023 on specifying the segments illegible for the Riyada card. Those include five segments in a bid to boost the sector's contribution to the national economy and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Moreover, the Riyada card is considered a legal document which enables its holder from receiving a package of facilities in various sectors from the authorities concerned. -ONA

NEW ENERGY VEHICLE

Global luxury carmakers bet on China's NEV market

HAIKOU: Global luxury carmakers attending the third China International Consumer Products Expo have set their sights on the world's largest new energy vehicle (NEV) market.

Volkswagen brought its luxury brands, including Porsche, Bentley, and Lamborghini, to the expo held in Haikou, the capital of south China's Hainan Province, from Monday to Saturday.

Porsche showed its purely electric car model Taycan 4s, and Bentley exhibited a plug-in hybrid. Meanwhile, Britain's Lotus showcased a fully electric SUV.

China's NEV market has seen booming development over the past few years, luring more carmakers to vie for a piece of the market. China's NEV sales nearly doubled to 6.89 million units last

year, accounting for over a quarter of the total automobile sales in the world's largest auto market, said Xu Xingfeng, an official with China's Ministry of Commerce, at the expo.

Young customers particularly love the all-electric models, said Sheng Tantzsch, vice president and chief financial officer of Porsche China. Over 50 per cent of Porsche's new vehicle sales worldwide are expected to be all-electric or plug-in hybrids by 2025, and that figure would reach more than 80 per cent by 2030, she said.

More and more Bentley customers are choosing to buy hybrid cars due to the green and low-carbon consumption trend, even as most are not worried about gasoline costs, said an exhibition staff worker with Bentley. -Xinhua

ENERGY DEVELOPMENT OMAN

EDO achieves \$100 million in cost savings from loan term renegotiations

MUSCAT: Energy Development Oman (EDO) has successfully renegotiated the terms of its \$2.5 billion loan, resulting in cost savings of \$100 million in interest.

The move sets a new benchmark for EDO and represents a significant saving for the company and is part of a broader initiative aimed at reducing interest costs across government-related entities in Oman in line with the government's objectives to achieve financial sustainability.

The borrowing cost of EDO is largely based on the credit rating of the Sultanate of Oman. In 2022, the rise in oil and gas prices along with the government's continued efforts to ensure financial sustainability led to two rating agencies, Fitch Ratings and Standard and



Poor's (S&P), raising their rating assessments. This improvement in the credit outlook contributed to increasing the investment attractiveness of Oman.

Eng. Mazin Rashid Al Lamki, the CEO of EDO said, "The latest

credit rating upgrade by S&P Global Ratings is a strong testament to the government's prudent fiscal policies and ongoing economic reform efforts. As a result of this upgrade, we expect to see increased investor confidence and interest in

Oman, which will, in turn, support economic growth."

He added, "For EDO, this means that we will have access to more favourable borrowing terms and is a positive step towards achieving our goal of supporting Oman's long-term development."

Al Lamki pointed out that taking advantage of the country's improved credit profile; EDO proactively sought to renegotiate its seven-year \$2.5 billion loan, issued in August 2021 and signed initially at a fixed credit margin of 2.95 per cent. EDO asked the bank group to voluntarily amend the existing loan to a lower margin. The company worked closely with the Debt Management Office (DMO) of the Ministry of Finance to set the margin at 2.05 per cent. -ONA

INITIATIVE



ahlibank Souq aims to support SMEs

Times News Service

MUSCAT: ahlibank has launched its first Souq initiative aimed at supporting the growth and development of local SMEs.

The initiative, which is the first of its kind in the bank's history, is part of the bank's commitment to aiding the overall socio-economic development in the region and is in line with Oman's Vision 2040.

The ahlibank Souq, part of the bank's Ramadan CSR programmes, provides a platform for 40 SMEs from different sectors to showcase their products and services, supporting the local community's development, youth projects, and female entrepreneurs. This comes as part of the bank's commitment to support SMEs and facilitate their growth and expansion by pro-

viding them with the necessary exposure to a wider audience; contributing towards a brighter future for Oman's economy.

Commenting on this initiative, Jumana Aflah Al Hashmi, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications of ahlibank, said, "The ahlibank Souq marks a significant milestone in our commitment to supporting the growth and development of the Sultanate's economy and community. By empowering local SMEs, we are not only contributing to achieving the Vision 2040 plan, but we are also investing in the future of our nation. We remain dedicated to driving positive change and building a brighter future for the Sultanate and are proud to take this step forward in our impactful community engagement roadmap."

Ramadan Mubarak

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MARKET

MSX index ends lower



A'Saffa Foods, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Voltamp Energy, down 9.79 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,759.69 points, down by 1.07 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 1.46 per cent at 478.47 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Voltamp Energy, down 9.79 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Oman Arab Bank were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Oman Flour Mills were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 749 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR4.36 million, with more than 19.25 million shares changing hands. Out of 57 traded securities, 17 advanced, 26 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR99,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR95,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR4,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,695.82 points, down 0.63 per cent. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Global Financial Investments, Takaful Oman and Ominvest were up by 9.45 per cent, 8.93 per cent, 4.35 per cent and 1.92 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat

Finance, Bank Nizwa, Al Sharqia Investment, National Bank Oman and Oman United Insurance were up by 6.45 per cent, 3.09 per cent, 2.60 per cent, 2.11 per cent and 1.72 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,090.64 points, down 1.51 per cent. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, National Biscuits, Al Hassan Engineering, Oman Cement and National Mineral Water were up by 10.00 per cent, 9.97 per cent, 5.88 per cent, 4.22 per cent and 1.75 per cent respectively. Prices of Voltamp Energy, Salalah Mills, Oman Fisheries, Al Maha Ceramics and Galfar Engineering were up by 9.79 per cent, 9.60 per cent, 6.98 per cent, 6.98 per cent and 3.57 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.55 per cent before closing at 1,676.30 points. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Al Maha Market- ing, Oman National Engineering, Al Suwadi Power and Sembcorp Salalah were up by 9.30 per cent, 3.83 per cent, 3.77 per cent, 3.23 per cent and 2.50 per cent respectively. Prices of Ooredoo, Al Batinah Power, Abraj Energy, Renaissance Services and OIFC were up by 4.33 per cent, 3.23 per cent, 3.15 per cent, 2.50 per cent and 2.46 per cent respectively.

— United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 16

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PD	LAST HD	LAST OFF	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET															
GLOBAL INV. H.	15,683	955	2	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.061	0.056	0.005	8.929	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.100	12,200,000
OMAN CEMENT	389,083	127,298	35	0.338	0.350	0.338	0.346	0.332	0.014	4.217	0.346	0.342	0.348	0.100	114,481,558
AI MAHA PETROLEUM	10,338	10,648	5	1.030	1.030	1.030	1.030	0.992	0.038	3.831	1.030	1.050	1.050	0.100	71,070,000
OMAN NAT. ENG.	35,000	3,850	6	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.106	0.004	3.774	0.110	0.107	0.110	0.100	16,500,000
OMINVEST	4,946	1,716	1	0.454	0.454	0.454	0.454	0.416	0.038	1.923	0.454	0.410	0.450	0.100	283,386,941
OMAN FLOUR MILLS	2,444,184	1,417,180	9	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.580	0.000	0.000	0.580	0.560	0.580	0.100	91,350,000
JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	10,170	26,922	6	0.265	0.265	0.264	0.265	0.265	0.000	0.000	0.265	0.258	0.265	0.100	3,037,959
ALJAZEERA SERVICES	190	49	1	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.256	0.260	0.100	15,913,111
TAGEER FINANCE	800	77	2	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.096	0.090	0.096	0.100	25,328,163
OMAN CABLES INDSTR.	330	541	1	1.640	1.640	1.640	1.640	1.645	-0.005	-0.304	1.640	1.485	1.640	0.100	147,108,000
BANK MUSCAT	870,267	239,194	45	0.275	0.275	0.273	0.274	0.275	-0.001	-0.384	0.274	0.274	0.275	0.100	0,566,752,795
SOHAR INT. BANK	387,490	40,693	21	0.105	0.106	0.104	0.104	0.105	-0.001	-0.952	0.104	0.104	0.115	0.100	477,366,478
OMAN TELECOM	392,560	396,120	12	1.010	1.010	1.000	1.000	1.015	-0.015	-1.478	1.000	1.000	1.010	0.100	750,000,000
OMAN UNITED INSUR.	48,080	13,707	8	0.286	0.286	0.285	0.285	0.290	-0.005	-1.724	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	28,500,000
NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,000,000	278,000	1	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.278	0.284	-0.006	-2.115	0.278	0.271	0.292	0.100	452,013,087
AL ANWAR CERAMIC	19,188	6,723	7	0.354	0.354	0.346	0.346	0.354	-0.008	-2.260	0.346	0.340	0.350	0.100	78,120,000
OMAN INVST & FIN.	20,782	2,471	3	0.121	0.121	0.119	0.119	0.122	-0.003	-2.459	0.119	0.118	0.122	0.100	29,613,150
RENAISSANCE SER.	1,000	390	1	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.400	-0.010	-2.500	0.390	0.380	0.396	0.100	92,199,900
AL SHARQIA INV.	93,000	6,975	5	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.077	-0.002	-2.697	0.075	0.075	0.077	0.100	6,754,000
OOREDOO	46,575	18,748	22	0.410	0.410	0.398	0.398	0.416	-0.018	-4.327	0.398	0.394	0.398	0.100	259,075,804
ALMAHA CERAMICS	5,780	2,312	4	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.400	0.430	-0.030	-6.977	0.400	0.390	0.400	0.100	22,000,000
Total	5,866,036	2,584,268	197												
Parallel Market															
ASAFA FOODS	61,700	14,931	2	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.220	0.022	10.000	0.242	0.242	0.000	0.100	29,040,000
NATIONAL BISCUIT	100	386	1	3.860	3.860	3.860	3.860	3.510	0.350	9.972	3.860	0.900	3.860	1.000	3,860,000
OMAN ARAB BANK	5,898,588	803,350	35	0.133	0.139	0.133	0.139	0.127	0.012	9.449	0.139	0.134	0.139	0.100	232,047,960
SMN POWER HOLDING	689,554	64,715	50	0.094	0.094	0.093	0.094	0.086	0.008	9.302	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.100	18,765,746
TAKAFUL OMAN	36,598	1,762	8	0.046	0.050	0.046	0.048	0.046	0.002	4.348	0.048	0.046	0.050	0.100	12,000,000
AL SUWADI POWER	143,178	4,296	7	0.030	0.032	0.030	0.032	0.031	0.001	3.228	0.032	0.030	0.031	0.100	22,861,003
SEBPCORP SALALAH	215,033	17,462	19	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.002	2.500	0.082	0.082	0.085	0.100	78,274,900
MCT DESALINATE	14,656	1,436	8	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.096	0.002	2.083	0.088	0.088	0.088	0.100	15,243,039
MINERAL WATER	22,678	1,310	2	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.058	0.057	0.001	1.754	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.100	1,566,176
OMAN CHROMITE	170	510	1	3.000	3.000	3.000	3.000	2.850	0.150	1.895	3.000	3.000	3.245	1.000	9,000,000
OMAN PACKAGING	118,828	21,730	1	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.186	0.185	0.001	0.541	0.186	0.185	0.186	0.100	6,033,070
CONSTRUCTION M.	5,451	343	1	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.069	0.069	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.073	0.100	4,312,500
ALANWAR INVESTMENT	53,000	4,452	4	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.000	0.000	0.084	0.083	0.084	0.100	16,800,000
SHELL OMAN MRC	554	972	6	0.850	0.880	0.850	0.876	0.876	0.000	0.000	0.876	0.824	0.876	0.100	83,220,000
UNITED FINANCE	23,700	1,422	3	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	21,367,538
BANK DHOFAR	1,865	288	2	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.155	0.160	0.100	479,416,230
AMAN REAL ESTATE	2,000	200	1	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.096	0.100	0.100	20,000,000
BARKA DESALINATION	345	49	1	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.140	0.142	0.100	10,724,124
THE PEARL REEF	155,140	18,307	15	0.120	0.120	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.000	0.000	0.118	0.118	0.120	0.100	50,122,885
HISBC BANK OMAN	91,620	14,280	12	0.159	0.159	0.154	0.155	0.157	-0.002	-1.274	0.155	0.156	0.156	0.100	31,100,000
MADINA TAKAFUL	113,562	9,775	11	0.087	0.087	0.086	0.086	0.087	-0.001	-1.149	0.086	0.086	0.087	0.100	324,060,672
RESC BANK OMAN	91,620	14,280	12	0.159	0.159	0.154	0.155	0.157	-0.002	-1.274	0.155	0.156	0.156	0.100	31,100,000
PHOENIX POWER	198,426	10,775	16	0.054	0.056	0.054	0.055	0.056	-0.001	-1.786	0.055	0.055	0.056	0.100	80,443,080
BANK NIZWA	2,950,335	280,139	77	0.096	0.097	0.094	0.094	0.097	-0.003	-3.093	0.094	0.094	0.097	0.100	210,273,585
GALFAR ENERGY SERVICES	1,114,850	314,232	162	0.286	0.286	0.277	0.277	0.286	-0.009	-3.147	0.277	0.277	0.278	0.100	213,345,400
ALBATINAH POWER	288,147	8,644	8	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.031	-0.001	-3.226	0.030	0.030	0.031	0.100	20,246,623
BANK NIZWA	628,500	118,905	15	0.190	0.190	0.189	0.189	0.196	-0.007	-3.571	0.189	0.182	0.189	0.100	38,364,438
NATIONAL BANK	308,535	32,841	47	0.109	0.110	0.105	0.106	0.111	-0.005	-4.505	0.106	0.106	0.107	0.100	80,010,000
ALBATINAH POWER	288,147	8,644	8	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.031	-0.001	-3.226	0.030	0.030	0.031	0.100	20,246,623
BANK NIZWA	628,500	118,905	15	0.190	0.190	0.189	0.189	0.196	-0.007	-3.571	0.189	0.182	0.189	0.100	38,364,438
GALFAR ENGINEER	1,114,850	314,232	162	0.286	0.286	0.277	0.277	0.286	-0.009	-3.147	0.277	0.277	0.278	0.100	213,345,400
OMAN FISHERIES	50,000	2,928	7	0.059	0.059	0.058	0.058	0.062	-0.004	-6.452	0.058	0.057	0.059	0.100	17,814,487
OMAN FISHERIES	120,179	9,648	13	0.080	0.081	0.080	0.080	0.086	-0.006	-6.977	0.080	0.078	0.080	0.100	14,566,272
SALAH MILLS	834	697	3	0.716	0.716	0.716	0.716	0.702	0.014	9.586	0.716	0.716	0.716	0.100	39,774,554
VOLTAMP ENERGY	4,909	633	2	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.129	0.143	-0.014	-9.790	0.129	0.000	0.129	0.100	10,500,955
Total	32														

PREVENTION OF UNAUTHORISED TRAVELLERS

Oman Air hosts regional immigration authority stakeholders for documents verification workshop

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, recently hosted the Emirates Regional Immigration Liaison (ERIL) team for a Documents Verification Workshop at the Novotel Muscat Airport.

Organised by the airline's security department, the event was part of ongoing cooperation between ERIL member states, airlines and key border officials, to prevent travel on fraudulent documents, deter illegal immigration and human trafficking cases, increase early intervention, and identify and respond appropriately.

During the workshop, Oman Air's Document Verification Unit (DVU) was recognised for its achievement in intercepting more than 350 cases of immigration forgery across its network during 2022, which were then transferred to the relevant local authorities.



Alauddin Al Ali, Senior Manager - Airline Security at Oman Air, said, "Security is paramount to our operations as an airline and it is key for us to develop strong networks with Liaison Officers, airlines, officials and organisations like ERIL, from a range of countries. Through the frequent

exchange of information and tools, we are able to stay updated on trends and issues in security and fraud, prevent and disrupt such cases, and above all, protect the safety of our guests."

ERIL is a multi-agency group composed of representatives from all over the world, who collabo-

rate to combat illegal migration through joint disruption efforts, information sharing, and training. ERIL member states include Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

BUSINESS SUMMIT

OER summit to focus on enhancing competitiveness of Oman's economy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 13th edition of OER Business Summit, a flagship event by the Sultanate's premium business magazine, with a special HR focus, will take place at Sheraton Oman Hotel on October 19. Ahmed Al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman, Opaz will be the chief guest.

His Highness Dr Adham Al Said, Assistant Professor for Economics, Sultan Qaboos University, CEO and Co-Founder, The Firm for Business and Economic Consulting will be the keynote speaker at the summit, which is being organised by UMS Group.

The summit includes a presentation by Sanjay Kawatra, CEO, Strategic Businesses, Ominvest, Venkatesh Palakkad, Director and Principal Consultant, Reem Al Bawadi Business Solutions and Technologies (RAB), Dalel Maghrebi, Digital Business Solutions Manager, GBM Oman among others.

Bank Dhofar and Raysut Cement are the Strategic Partners, Taageer Finance and GBM Oman are the Associate Partners, while Dhofar International Development and Investment Holding Co. SAOG (DIDIC) and Muscat Eye Laser Center are the Support Partners. Dhofar Insurance Company is the Insurance Partner, Takaful Oman Insurance is the Islamic Insurance Partner and BIMA, the Online Insurance

The OER Business Summit will bring together business leaders, senior government officials and international experts to deliberate on the roadmap to a better future and fulfilling His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's Vision 2040 plan

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The OER Business Summit will bring together business leaders, senior government officials and international experts to deliberate on the roadmap to a better future and fulfilling His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's Vision 2



Turn off your notifications and ignore your email at the end of the workday

According to a recent study, turning off your notifications and ignoring your email at the end of the workday might help you become a better leader.

Managers who disconnected from their jobs at home felt more refreshed the next day, identified as effective leaders and helped their employees stay on target better than bosses who spent their off hours worrying about work. Less-experienced leaders were especially prone to becoming ineffective if they spent their time focusing on their jobs at home.

The upshot is that the key to effective leadership in the office might be a better work-life balance. Led by scientists from the University of Florida, the University of Arizona and Florida State University, the new study was published in the 'Journal of Applied Psychology'.

"The simple message of this study is that if you want to be an effective leader at work, leave work at work," said Klodiana Lanaj, a professor in UF's Warrington College of Business who led the research. "This is particularly important for

inexperienced leaders, as they seem to benefit the most from recovery experiences when at home. Leaders have challenging jobs as they juggle their own role responsibilities with the needs of their followers, and they need to recover from the demands of the leadership role."

The study surveyed managers and their employees at U.S. businesses in 2019 and 2022. The researchers assessed leaders' ability to disconnect from work when at

home the night before and their level of energy and how strongly they identified as a leader in the morn-

ing at work. Employees rated their bosses on their ability to lead their teams.

"What we found is that on nights when leaders were able to completely turn off and not think about work, they were more energized the next day, and they felt better connected to their leadership role at work. On those same days, their followers reported that these leaders were more effective in motivating them and in guiding their work," Lanaj said.

"But on nights when leaders reported that they were thinking about the negative aspects of work, they couldn't really recuperate their energy by the morning," she said. "They saw themselves as less leader-like and they weren't as effective, as rated by their followers."

How to improve work-life balance

So how can leaders — and businesses — promote this kind of work-life balance to build effective leaders?

"My hope is that this study will give managers data to support their decision to be present at home and to disconnect from work," Lanaj said.

While Lanaj's study didn't ask managers how they relaxed at home, other research points to well-known ways to unwind and reset: Exercise, socialise with friends, spend quality time with family, or engage with TV shows, books or hobbies. What helps one person leave work at the office might not help another. The key, Lanaj says, is to find the methods that let you decompress from work as much as possible.

And businesses that want the best out of their leaders on the job should help them recharge at home. Reducing after-hours emailing and expectations for on-call work is one way to do that.

Tech fuels a lot of this after-hours work, but also might offer a solution. You can set your phone to disable notifications after a certain hour or leave work devices in a dedicated office.

"You can start small," Lanaj said. "Say, 'After this time in the evening, I won't check my work email.' See where that takes you." -ANI



SPORTS

Haaland on a goal-scoring spree

Manchester City cut deficit with leaders Arsenal after 3-1 win over Leicester City

MANCHESTER: Manchester City's early first-half onslaught, led by a brace from star striker Erling Haaland, helped them clinch a 3-1 win over Leicester City at the home arena of Etihad Stadium on Saturday.

John Stones opened City's account early in the fifth minute itself, scoring with help of a magnificent left-footed volley from the edge of the penalty box. In the 13th minute, Haaland converted a penalty to double his side's lead, sending home fans into loud cheers.

Wilfried Ndidi's weak challenge let Kevin de Bruyne set up Haaland's second goal and the Norway star converted the opportunity into a brace with no hesitation. 25 minutes into the game, the scoreline read 3-0 in favour of Manchester City.

Haaland is now having 32 goals in a 38-game PL season. He is just two goals away from the record for most goals in a Premier League season, which is held by Andrew Cole (34 goals in 1993/94) and Alan Shearer (34 goals in 1994/95), when the season used to be a 42-games-per-side affair.

With his penalty against the Foxes in the 13th minute, Haaland established a new record for goals in a first-ever 38-game Premier League season. With his 31st goal, the Manchester City striker has one more than Kevin Phillips, who scored 30 goals for Sunderland in 1999-2000.



Twelve minutes later, Haaland capitalised on a through-ball from Kevin De Bruyne to score his 32nd goal, tying Mohamed Salah of Liverpool's record-setting 38-game season. In the 75th minute, a goal by substitute Kelechi Iheanacho offered Leicester fans a little to cheer about.

With this win, City is in second place in the points table with 70 points, three shy of table-toppers Arsenal.

They have 22 wins, four draws and four losses in 30 matches. Leicester City is in the 19th spot, with only seven wins in 31 matches, four draws and 20 losses. They have only a total of 25 points.

Following the match, City manager Pep Guardiola told Sky Sports, "It is always tricky after the Champions League against a team who is fighting but the qual-

ity is there. We started really well with focus but when you make lots of substitutions you drop a little bit. It is three points and we move to the next one."

"It was completely different because the guys that start the second half it was the same approach as the beginning.

"I have a little bit of experience to play in three days in the important stages and you make a lot of substitutions and some dynamics we have and some players do not. And when the game was under control we made the changes."

"Of course it was worrying - we made a mistake and then they had the chance with Maddison and Kelechi. The game was tricky in the last 15 minutes. But the first 60 to 65 minutes was good," concluded the manager.



Man City will resume action on Wednesday when they lock horns with Bayern Munich at the Allianz Arena in the second leg of their UEFA Champions League quarter-final.

Later, Guardiola's side will face off against Sheffield United in an FA Cup semi-final at Wembley on Saturday, April 22.

Man City's next Premier League game is an all-important clash against toppers Arsenal at home on April 26.

Chelsea upset

Teenager Julio Enciso scored a stunning winner as Brighton came from behind to beat Chelsea 2-1 in the Premier League in Frank Lampard's first home match since being reappointed Blues manager.

Paraguayan forward Enciso, 19, blasted into the top corner from 35 yards to help Brighton continue their European qualification push.

Substitute Danny Welbeck had levelled at Stamford Bridge after Conor Gallagher's deflected strike gave Chelsea a fortunate lead.

Brighton remain seventh in the table and Chelsea 11th.

Tottenham lose

Manager Gary O'Neil said relegation-threatened Bournemouth "took a huge step" towards Premier League survival as substitute Dango Ouattara scored a stoppage-time winner in a stunning finish at Tottenham, winning 3-2 on Saturday.

Son Heung-min opened the scoring for the hosts in the first half before Uruguay left-back Matias Vina marked his first Premier League start with a deserved equaliser for Bournemouth.

The Cherries looked set to clinch all three points after Dominic Solanke put them in front early in the second half, only for Arnaut Danjuma to come off the bench and equalise against his former club on 88 minutes.

Fellow Spurs substitute Richarlison then sent a free header wide deep into stoppage time and, moments later, the visitors went up the other end and Ouattara netted a dramatic winner.

After winning at relegation rivals Leicester last week to climb out of the bottom three, the Cherries are now six points clear of the drop zone in 14th.

Spurs remain fifth as chairman Daniel Levy continues to search for Antonio Conte's successor, with Burnley boss Vincent Kompany the latest to be linked with the job this week. -ANI

LIGUE 1 ALL-TIME LEADING SCORER

Mbappe achieves another milestone



PARIS: Kylian Mbappe became Paris St-Germain's all-time leading goalscorer in Ligue 1 on Saturday as they beat 10-man Lens 3-1 to move five points clear at the top of the table.

Mbappe, who netted his 139th goal in his 169th league match, surpassed Edinson Cavani's tally.

In a crucial match between the league's top two, Lens midfielder

Salis Abdul Samed was sent off after 19 minutes.

Lionel Messi and Vitorino Pereira also scored for PSG before Lens' Przemyslaw Frankowski scored a penalty.

Second-placed Lens created numerous chances despite trailing 3-0 at half-time but were unable to add to Frankowski's spot-kick as PSG edged closer to an 11th league title. -Agencies

LA LIGA

Real Madrid down lowly Cadiz

MADRID: Real Madrid warmed up for their Champions League quarter-final second leg against Chelsea with 2-0 victory at lowly Cadiz in La Liga on Saturday.

Defender Nacho scored the opening goal with a brilliant strike into the bottom corner from 25 yards. Marco Asensio slotted in a second for the visitors from inside the area.

Madrid named a strong team despite being almost out of the title race, and with a trip to Stamford Bridge on Tuesday looking to defend a 2-0 lead. Frank Lampard's Chelsea lost 2-1 at home to Brighton on Saturday.

Cadiz and Real both hit the woodwork, with Alfonso Espino striking a post and Karim Benzema hammering a shot off the crossbar.

Two goals from Inaki Williams gave Athletic Bilbao a 2-0 win at home to fourth place Real Sociedad in the Basque derby in the San Mames Stadium.

Williams put his side ahead with a scrambled goal following a 33rd minute corner in a first half Athletic dominated. He added the second with a powerful shot to finish off a perfect counter-attack with 20 minutes left to play.

Betis moved to within three points of Real Sociedad with a

3-1 win at home to Espanyol, who remain second from bottom of the table. Luiz Henrique set up Ayoze Perez for his first goal since joining Betis in the 26th minute and Ayoze then passed for Juan Miranda to score Betis' second of the game, just seven minutes later.

Cesar Montes got Espanyol back into the game two minutes into the second half, but just as Espanyol were pressing for an equalizer, William Carvalho made the game safe in the 68th minute with a powerful shot.

Villarreal's hopes of a top-four finish suffered a setback when they were beaten 2-1 at home to Valladolid, who gain three vital points in their battle to avoid relegation. Selim Amallah put Valladolid ahead in the second minute and Jawad El Yamiq doubled their lead in the 34th minute, with Etienne Capoue pulling a goal back for the home side with 16 minutes left to play.

On Friday night, Rayo Vallecano ended an eight-game run without a win when they defeated Osasuna 2-1 thanks to an own goal from Aridane Hernandez after 40 minutes and a second from Isi Palazon three minutes later.

Barcelona are 10 points clear of Real Madrid at the top of the table and visit Getafe on Sunday in their game in hand. -Agencies



BOXING

Zhang KOs Joyce to clinch WBO heavyweight interim title

LONDON - China's Zhang Zhilei smashed British Joe Joyce with a sixth-round technical knockout at the Copper Box Arena in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park on Saturday to win the WBO heavyweight interim title.

"This fight was easier than I had expected," said Zhang who travelled from his US basecamp to challenge the 37-year-old Joyce with a stunning pro record of 15-win clean sweep.

"I have been working so hard and now I get the reward."

Joyce was cheered by an overwhelming crowd, but suffered a lot since the first round from 'Big Bang' Zhang's heavy punches.

The 2016 Rio Olympic silver medalist was staggered from time to time and his face was often covered by blood.



The referee decided to end the match in the sixth round and Zhang replaced Joyce to become the mandatory challenger for unified champion Oleksandr Usyk's WBO title.

"I want to thank my coach, my team and the fans in China as they

had to stay up so late to watch my fight," said Zhang.

"This victory is my best birthday present from my team and myself," said Zhang who turns 40 next month.

But Zhang, whose dream is clinching the world title, didn't think that he would rest too long



after the huge victory. "I don't want to waste any time," he said.

"I'm just disappointed with my performance," Joyce told BT Sport. "The right hand he kept hitting me with... I couldn't get out of the way, so respect to Zhang."

"I expected to win like I normal-

ly do. Thanks for all the support and congratulations."

He added: "I'm disappointed. I'd like to apologise to all my fans and supporters - I'll be back. My journey isn't over, this is just a hurdle I've tripped over. I'll be back."

Zhang - a 39-year-old, 6ft 6in

southpaw with an accomplished amateur career - was far from a walkover opponent, but was the underdog.

'Juggernaut' Joyce has been commended in the past for having the best, and toughest, chin in the division, but he struggled to shrug off Zhang's heavy shots.

Zhang - who won silver at the 2008 Olympics - now boasts 25 wins, with 19 stoppages, one defeat and one draw.

"Today is mine," he said. "Today belongs to me, belongs to everyone who showed up, belongs to every Chinese fan who showed up."

"I'm 39 years old, but I'm disciplined, I train hard and next step I go for the title."

Joyce insisted he "will be back" and promoter George Warren said they may seek a rematch with Zhang. -Agencies

ROUND-UP

EID AL FITR 2023: YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST STAYCATION DEALS IN OMAN

Spend memorable Eid at Sifawy Boutique Hotel



MUSCAT: Spend a memorable staycation at Sifawy Boutique Hotel in Jebel Sifah with your family and friends starting from OMR75 NET. Book more than 2 nights and get a 15% room discount or a complimentary dinner for every additional night. Eid activities: 2nd day of Eid: musical fest, live saxophone from 4pm to 9pm. 3rd day of Eid: Live DJ music at Dunes from 5pm to 10pm. Exciting activities at the Marina on April 24 and 25, 5pm to 8pm.



Exclusive Eid offer at Juweira Boutique Hotel



MUSCAT: Experience the true essence of Omani hospitality and enjoy a memorable Eid staycation . Starting from OMR 65 for 2, per room, per night inclusive of breakfast. 15% discount on food and beverages. Claim the offer by booking between April 21 and 25. Terms and conditions: Adults only, 16 years and above. The offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.



Eid staycation at Salalah Rotana Resort and Fanar



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Book your stay for 3 nights and get a complimentary 4th night. Enjoy 20% off on all food and beverages.

wana Aqua Park, complimentary breakfast for 2 adults and 2 children (below 12 years old), extend your stay to get a complimentary dinner for every additional night.

SCIENTIFIC MISSION

Jupiter and the Juice launch: What you need to know

A scientific mission of great importance began at the spaceport in Kourou, French Guiana on Friday. The European Space Agency (ESA) is sending up its Jupiter Icy Moons Explorer, Juice, to – well, explore three of Jupiter’s icy moons.

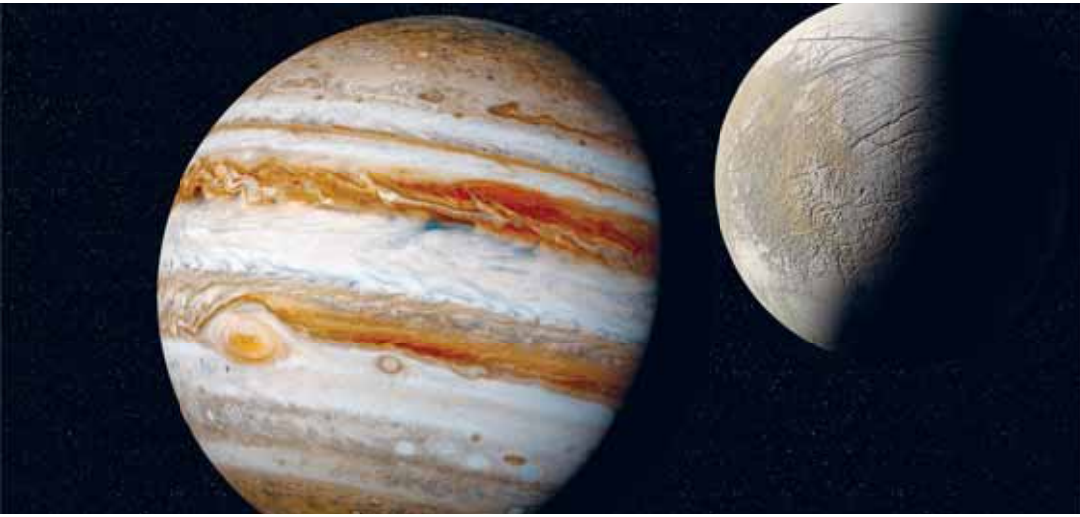
Doesn’t sound too exciting yet? Then consider that one of the mission’s goals is to characterize “these moons as both planetary objects and possible habitats,” according to ESA. In other words, the mission aims to find out if life could be possible on Ganymede, Europa or Callisto, or whether life has existed on the moons in the past.

The launch was originally scheduled for one day earlier, but had to be pushed because of lightning risk in Kourou on Thursday.

The Juice project is a mission of many firsts. The spacecraft, which is being sent up on an Ariane 5 rocket, will be the first to change orbits from another planet (Jupiter) to one of its moons. And it will be the first to orbit a moon other than the Earth’s.

The total costs of the mission stand at around €1.6 billion (\$1.7 billion). Juice will carry several high-tech systems on board, “including the most powerful remote sensing, geophysical and in situ payloads ever flown to the outer solar system,” ESA says.

While the mission is European-led, there has been wider interna-



tional collaboration.NASA contributed one of the instruments, a UV imaging spectrograph. The Japanese space agency JAXA contributed hardware for several of the instruments on board the spacecraft, while the Israeli space agency ISA contributed hardware for a radio science experiment.

If things go according to plan, Juice will arrive at Jupiter in July 2031 – a marathon journey time of eight years. It will do 35 flybys of the three moons between July 2031 and November 2034 and will then enter Ganymede’s orbit, where it’s scheduled to stay and collect information until December 2035.

Here are a couple of facts to get

you excited.

Jupiter, our solar system’s largest planet

While the Juice mission is concerned with three moons, Jupiter has a total of 95 moons with confirmed orbits.

It is the largest planet in our solar system, and twice the mass of all the other planets combined. As NASA puts it: “If Earth were the size of a nickel [a US five-cent coin], Jupiter would be about as big as a basketball.”

Jupiter’s size gives it a powerful magnetic field. Part of the Juice mission is to find out how this affects the icy moons surrounding the planet.

Scientists already know the magnetic field moves gases between Jupiter’s moons. Sulphur and oxygen released by volcanos on Jupiter’s volcanic moon Io reach three other moons Juice will be exploring. What researchers are looking to learn is how this process works.

The moons at the centre of the Juice mission

Ganymede, Callisto, Europa and Io were discovered by Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei in 1610 and are known as the four “Galilean moons.” They were the first objects found in our solar system to orbit a body other than the sun or Earth.

Ganymede, the Juice mission’s primary target, is the only moon in our solar system that generates its own magnetic field. It’s also the biggest moon in our solar system, with a diameter of 5,268 kilometres (3,273 miles) and a metallic core made up of an iron-heavy liquid. Its subterranean ocean is thought to hold more water than all of Earth’s oceans combined.

Callisto is Jupiter’s second-largest moon and ESA scientists hope that by orbiting it, Juice will gather information about the environment around Jupiter in the planet’s early days. Callisto is made up of equal parts rock and ice and may have a subsurface, liquid ocean located at depths greater than 100 kilometres.

Europa is slightly smaller than Earth’s moon and possibly holds vast underground oceans. It is primarily made of silicate rock and has a water-ice crust. Juice scientists suspect that Europa may release water vapor into space via plumes and geysers. One the mission’s main goals is finding out whether there are biosignatures and pockets of water on Europa signs of life.

The three moons are all named after figures from Greek mythology, according to which Ganymede was supposedly the most beautiful mortal on Earth and abducted by the gods to serve as the cup bearer of the king of the gods, Zeus. Callisto was a nymph

who was turned into a bear and later became the constellation Ursa Major. Europa was the mother of King Minos of Crete and lover of Zeus, whose Roman equivalent is Jupiter.

Jupiter’s challenging environment

The Juice spacecraft will operate in extreme conditions. The area around Jupiter and its moons is one of the most intense radiation environments in our solar system. The temperature around the gas planet stands at a chilly -230 degrees Celsius (-382 degrees Fahrenheit). This contrasts starkly with the scorching 250 degrees Celsius that it will have to withstand during its Venus flyby on the way to Jupiter.

The gravity-assisted flyby, a casual 300 million kilometre detour, will set the spacecraft on course for its 2031 arrival at Jupiter.

The researchers behind Juice hope that the mission will answer several questions on Jupiter’s atmosphere, its magnetic field and how these factors interact with each other and influence the planet’s moons.

The hope is that the answers to these questions will help scientists better understand the fundamental physics of planetary environments and eventually figure out whether life on one of Jupiter’s moons would be possible. -nwf

ROUND-UP

HOLY MONTH



Khimji Ramdas hosts annual Iftar gathering

MUSCAT: In the spirit of the Holy month of Ramadan, the Khimji Ramdas Group (KR) organised its annual Iftar dinner for over 1,000 invitees at the Oman Convention and Exhibitions Centre; where the company's Board of Directors, senior management, employees and their families, media and business associates broke fast together.

The annual tradition of the KR Group aims to continue the legacy of the company's renowned family spirit, where every attendee embodies a common sense of purpose and mutual respect.

Expressing his gratitude to those who attended, Anil Khimji, Director of Khimji Ramdas Group stated, "At the core of our iftar dinner is the spirit of the

holy month of Ramadan which unites us in breaking fast and bread as one big family. It is the perfect time to reconnect and re-inforce our people-centric values and showcase our appreciation to our employees and business associates year on year."

KR Group is a leading business conglomerate known for delivering quality and innovation for over a century. Since its founding in 1870, KR is known for doing everything it can to make a positive impact. By embracing innovation and change continuously, the company's purpose has been to unlock the potential of people, businesses, and the country. As the group continues to evolve and expand, it remains committed to this 150-year-old purpose.

BankDhofar opens new branch in Al Dhahira

Al Araqi Branch would enrich the presence of BankDhofar in Al Dhahira Governorate

MUSCAT: BankDhofar continues to expand its branches network across the Sultanate. The bank has recently announced the official opening of Al Araqi branch.

The opening ceremony was held under the patronage of Sheikh Hilal Hamoud Al Maamari, in the presence of a number of prominent members of the society, and BankDhofar executive management team.

Amjad Iqbal Al Lawati, Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar, stressed that the opening of Al Araqi Branch would enrich the presence of BankDhofar in Al Dhahira Governorate by being closer to the customers of that region, and providing valuable banking experience to them.



"The new branch provides unparalleled banking experience to our customers. At BankDhofar, we will continue our efforts to expand our branch network across the Sultanate to make our services easily accessible to

customers."

In addition to Al Araqi Branch, the bank has a nationwide branch network of 77 branches and 1 Corporate Center (66 branches of BankDhofar and 11 branches of Maisarah).

With its prime location, which is easily accessible, the branch offers a wide range of services to its customers except for cash services. The new branch is designed to provide a convenient banking experience to its customers.

ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Apollo partners with Zakat Committee in Muttrah

MUSCAT: Apollo Hospitals, Sultanate of Oman partnered in healthcare with Zakat Committee in Muttrah as they held activities for children at Lulu in Ruwi.

Zakat committee of Muttrah is from the Ministry of Endowment and Religious Affairs.

"We look after the needy people in Muttrah starting from Riyam Park until all the way till Qurum. This is a government committee," explained Abdulzahraa bin Hassan al Lawati, Head of the Collection Committee, Zakat Committee in Muttrah.

The Zakat committees for all the wilayats were created under the order of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

School children paraded through the mall dressed in traditional clothes chanting verses from the holy Quran and Hadheed.

Apollo Hospitals, Sultanate of Oman was the Health partner and all the children gathered received a free dental check up and physical examination. This year Apollo has steered the regular corporate activities towards corporate social responsibility with a series of initiatives taking health care into society.

"Apollo Hospitals have been spear heading series of wellness programmed in different social



clubs, corporate, schools and colleges contributing towards developing a healthy country. We strongly believe that healthy children develop a healthy country and we are more than happy to co-operate with the initiative of Zakat Committee of Muttrah and especially this event for children," said Shobha PK, COO Apollo Hospitals, Sultanate of Oman.

Dental surgeon from Apollo, Dr Praveen Gopalan Purushothaman said common dental problems seen in children are tooth decay, Malocclusions, fluorosis and gum diseases with reasons varying from poor oral hygiene and high sugar and low fiber diet. These are the main causative factors of tooth decay.

The committee had also arranged goodies and food for the participating children and henna for visitors.

"This is a special day for children traditionally observed in the middle of Ramadan - Qaranqasho. They are also getting free physical and dental screening from Apollo Hospitals, Sultanate of Oman. This event has become possible and made so colorful only because of so many hands that have come together," said Abdulzahraa. He said there are children who have lost their mothers or fathers and the message that is being conveyed is, "You are not alone, we are here."

"We're telling them not to worry as we are here as mothers and fa-

thers to fulfill their needs. We are also there to help them in education," he pointed out.

This was also an opportunity for the public to learn on ways to contribute and the impact their contribution can have.

"The public can contribute with how much ever they want to the committee to fulfill the needs of the children. I think we need them more than they need us because of the benefits of the prayers in return. Because you can feel the happiness that comes from within you. We request everyone to use this once in a year opportunity," he explained.

The bank account numbers are available, and the members are also visiting the company heads and chairpersons and the request is not to close the doors.

The Zakat committee is providing assistance to children in education, youth who lost jobs because companies have closed down, individuals who are serving time due to unpaid loans, as well as food aid for students in school.

"We send the money to school to provide the needy students with snacks in schools," he said.

People who need assistance can approach Muttrah Zakat committee office opposite AbdulRazak Mosque in Ruwi.

WISH LIST BENEFITS



Experience benchmark luxury in Lincoln Aviator

MUSCAT: Lincoln's stylish and powerful Aviator is now available with exclusive Wish List benefits. Service 5 Years / 100,000km and 1 Year Registration. The campaign will end on 10 May, 2023. (Conditions apply. For details visit a Lincoln showroom Wattayah.)

With an eye-catching exterior design, thoughtfully detailed interior, advanced features, technology and more, the Aviator is engineered to make every experience exceptional. The Aviator is equipped with a standard twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine that is paired with a 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmis-

sion. This helps the Aviator dish out an impressive 400 horsepower and 562 Nm of torque for effortless acceleration. The three-row luxury SUV is equipped with all-wheel drive capability.

The Aviator takes drives to even greater levels with the Lincoln Drive Modes' five signature settings - Normal, Conserve, Excite, Slippery and Deep Conditions. This feature allows owners to further customise their driving experience, while a 10.1-inch standard configurable LCD instrument cluster confirms their choices with beautiful, easy-to-read dynamic graphics and prompts.

MILESTONE

Aster Royal Hospital performs complex cochlear implant surgery on young boy



MUSCAT: Aster Royal Hospital's ENT team has been performing micro-ear surgeries for over 10 years, and to strengthen its role in this direction, the team performed a complex cochlear implant surgery on a young boy, marking the next step in its efforts towards restoring hearing for the citizens and expatriates of the Sultanate of Oman in line with the National Ear Care Program. Aster Royal Hospital marks a new milestone with this cochlear implant surgery.

Hearing impairment is a leading cause of the disease burden in the world. The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that currently, over 1.5 billion people (nearly

20% of the global population) live with different levels of hearing loss, with 430 million of them having disabling hearing impairment. Disabling or profound hearing loss refers to a situation where someone has great difficulty hearing and communicating. Childhood hearing impairment can result in an inability to hear sounds and hence poor language and speech, severely affecting their education and quality of life. Hearing loss is the fourth highest cause of disability globally, affecting productivity and the country's economy.

The first cochlear implantation procedure at Aster Royal Hospital was performed by a team of

highly qualified medical professionals, including Senior Consultants Dr.Subirendra Kumar and Dr. Vidya Bhargavan, who were supported by a team of audiologists, anesthetists, nursing staff, and an excellent administrative setup. The high quality of state-of-the-art equipment available for ear surgeries at Aster Royal Hospital made this feat possible. The main surgeon has more than 30 years of experience in ear surgeries and has been involved in cochlear implant surgeries for over 15 years.

A Cochlear Implant is a highly complex electronic device that helps to stimulate the nerves of hearing directly in a patient who

has severe to profound hearing loss. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically implanted in the inner ear to provide stimulus directly to the nerves of hearing. Cochlear implantation is indicated in selected patients who cannot benefit from hearing aids.

Cochlear implantation surgery is only the first part of the management, which has to be followed by intensive speech training with the support of audiologists and speech therapists. Aster Royal has a robust team of well-experienced audiologists and speech therapists with all the latest skills and techniques.



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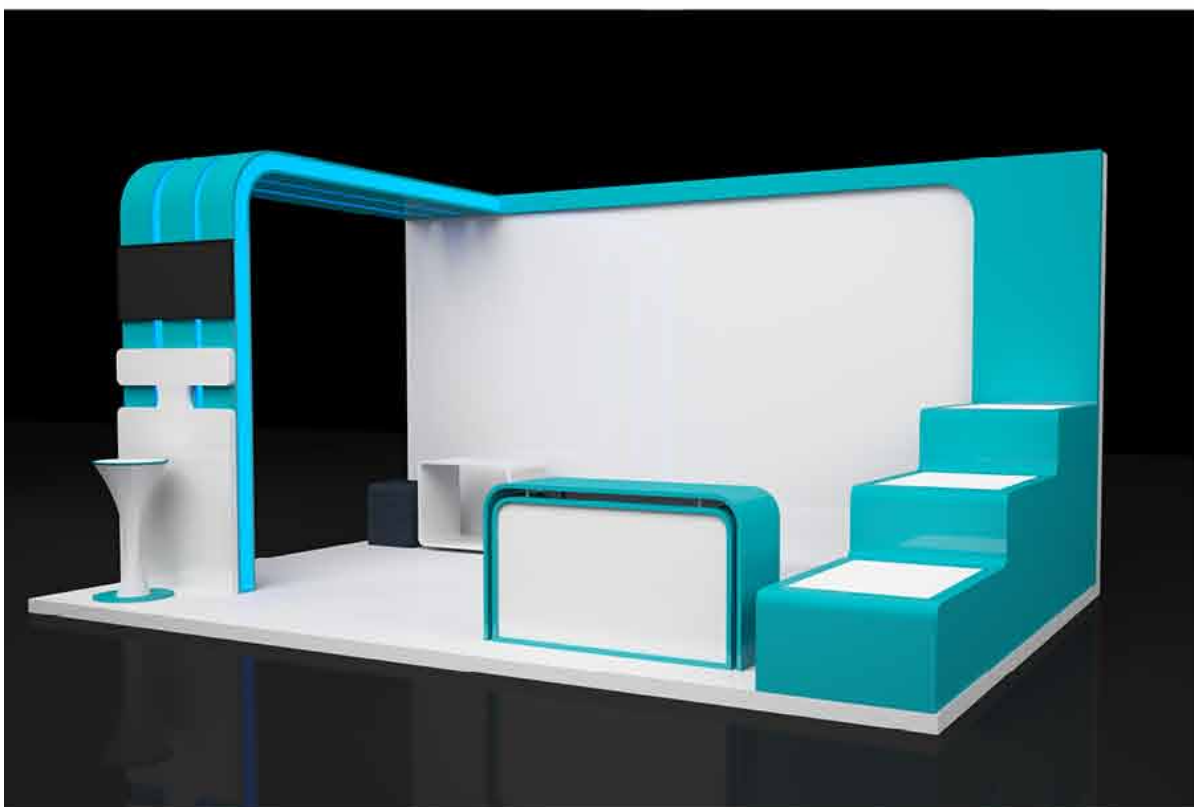
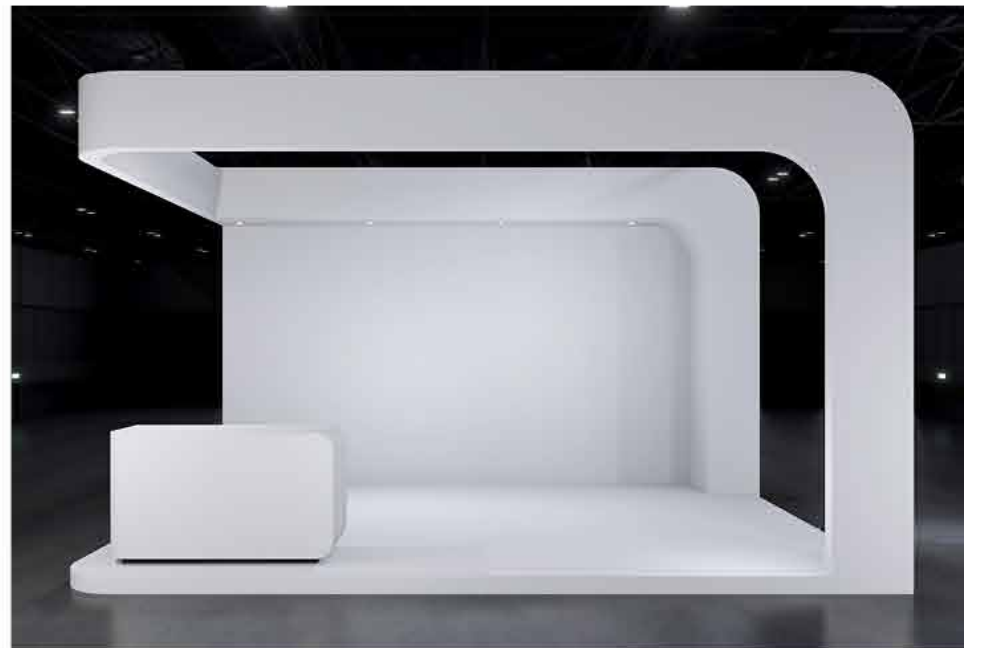
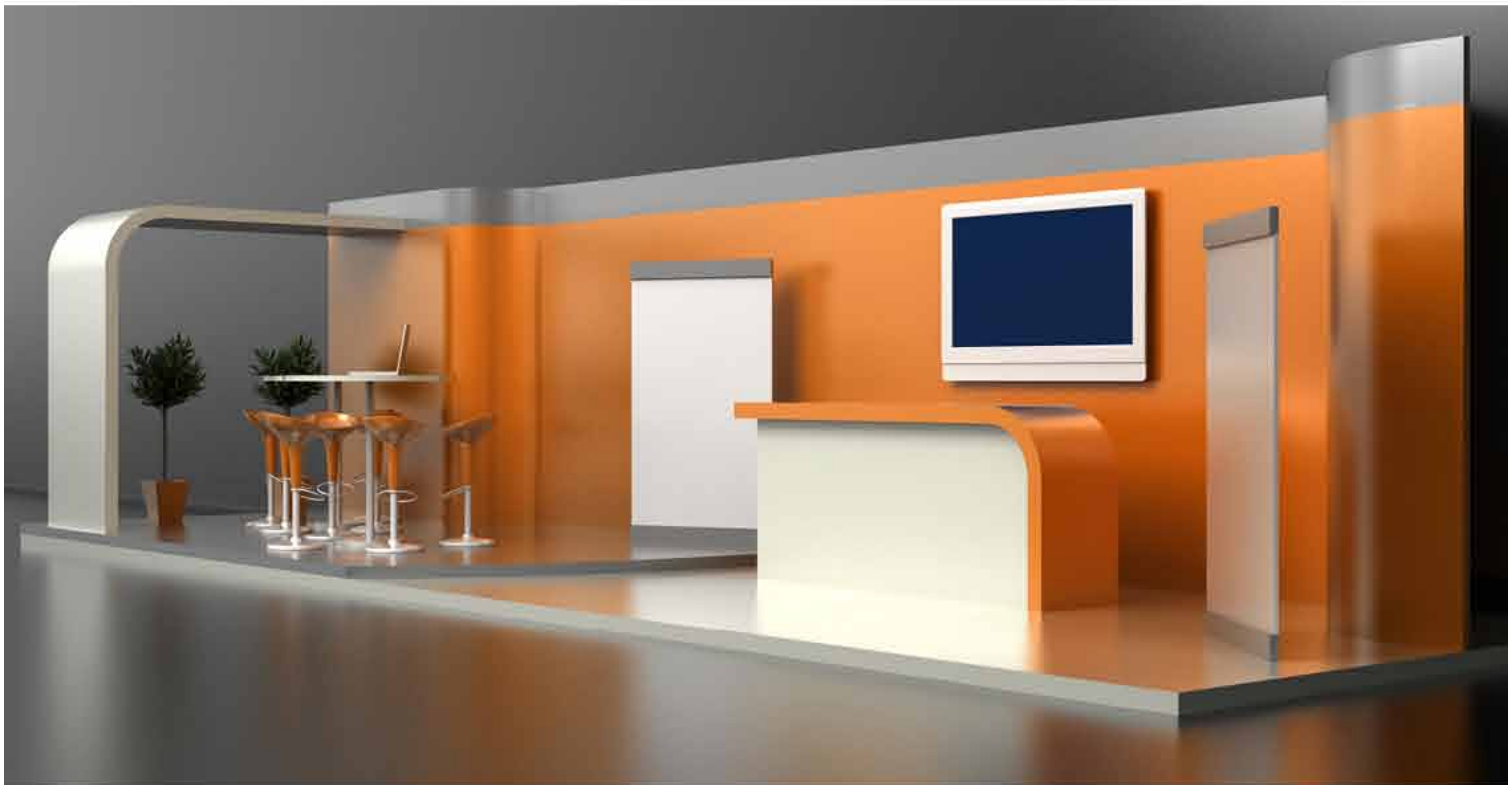
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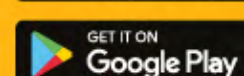
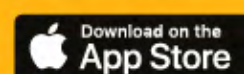
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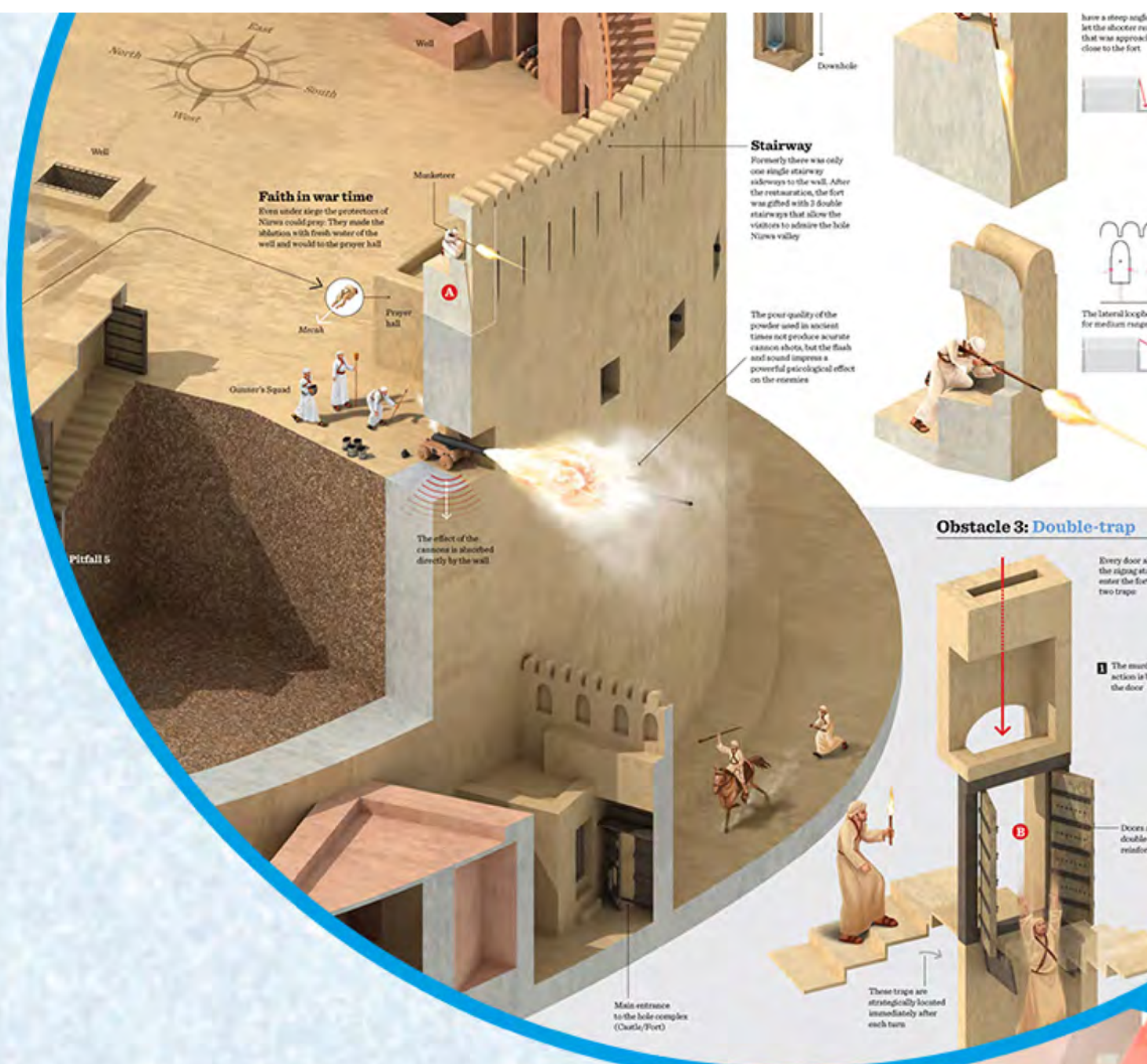
OUR 14-SECOND STORY

On the anniversary of Apollo 13, we remember our role in a life or death drama that lasted 14 seconds. For the crew, that brief time span would determine whether they landed safely on Earth or bounced back into space, never to return. To realign their spacecraft would require a fuel burn of precisely 14 seconds. Precision they had on hand, thanks to the NASA-qualified Speedmaster Moonwatch, worn by all three astronauts. To say thank you, NASA gave us a Silver Snoopy Award. A proud moment. Today, our Co-Axial Master Chronometer certified Moonwatch measures the seconds with even greater precision – and you don't have to be an astronaut to wear one.





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