

STATE COUNCIL'S OFFICE STUDIES MEMO ON 2023 BUDGET

The State Council's Office yesterday held its 8th meeting of seventh term's fourth regular convening. The meeting was chaired by Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council. **>A2**



OVER 79,000 VISIT AL JABAL AL AKHDAR IN FIRST HALF OF 2023

More than 79,000 visitors have visited the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate during the first six months of 2023, reaching 79,034 visitors according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The number of Omani citizens who visited the wilayat reached 28,406. **>A5**



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HONOUR

His Majesty confers Al Nuoman Order on Saudi Ambassador

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has conferred Al Nuoman Order, First Class, on Abdullah Saud Al Anzi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Sultanate of Oman.

At the behest of His Majesty the Sultan, HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, handed over Al Nuoman Order to the Saudi ambassador when he received the latter to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty as ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Oman.

HH Sayyid Shihab expressed his thanks to the ambassador for his efforts to enhance bilateral relations, wishing him further success in his future assignments.

The ambassador commended the strong relations binding the two countries. He expressed pride and appreciation for the high level of cooperation extended to him during his tenure in Oman. **—OMA**



JINDAL SHADEED IRON AND STEEL

Pact to transport 4mn tonnes of steel products from Sohar Port to UAE

ABU DHABI: As part of Oman and Etihad Rail Company (OERC's) commitment to provide efficient and cost-effective logistics solutions for major global players across different sectors, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed to allow Jindal Shadeed Iron and Steel (Jindal) to annually transport up to 4 million tonnes of raw materials and finished products from its steel complex at Sohar Port to the UAE markets.

The MoU aims to establish a sustainable end-to-end transport logistics solution between Jindal's steel complex at Sohar Port and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), via the UAE-Oman Rail Network.

Under the terms of the agreement, OERC will leverage its state-of-the-art rail network to support Jindal in optimising operational integration through facilitated loading and unloading processes while guaranteeing rolling stock and facilities' requirements of iron ore and steel.

Commenting on the agreement, Mohammed Zahran Al Mahrouqi, Deputy CEO of OERC, said: "Our partnership with Jindal Shadeed Group reinforces Oman and Etihad Rail Com-



pany's commitment to improving logistics services to meet the future needs and expectations of our customers by providing comprehensive solutions and stimulating the growth of various industrial sectors within Oman and the UAE. Furthermore, the MoU will enable Jindal to enhance its supply chain efficiency, benefiting from the UAE-Oman Rail Network's fast, cost-effective, and sustainable services."

For his part, Harsha Shetty, CEO of Jindal, said: "This is an important milestone for our company as we look forward to further expanding the reach of our high-quality, industry-leading products in the region and beyond. **>A2**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

IMF praises fiscal steps taken by Oman

1 A team of International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials visited the Sultanate of Oman to help draft the medium-term fiscal framework and the State Budget for 2023. **>A3**

MARKET

PDO drills 1,500th well at Nimr oil field

2 PDO celebrated the drilling of its 1,500th well at the Nimr cluster, the first achievement of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman. The 1,500th well is part of the Nimr cluster, located in the South of PDO's concession area. **>B1**

SPORTS

Brazil knocked out, Jamaica script history

3 Jamaica qualified for the knockout stages of the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time after a goalless draw with Brazil sent the South American champions out of the competition. **>B6**

OMAN SOVEREIGN WEALTH FUND'S ASSETS REACH OMR18BN

Oman Investment Authority has developed strategies with an emphasis on diversifying investments and mitigating risks

MUSCAT: Assets of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) increased to OMR18 billion, after realising an 8.8 percent return on investment (RoI) at the end of 2022.

OIA has continued to extend its support of the state's general budget with cumulative dividends of OMR5.6 billion from 2016 until the end of 2022.

Job opportunities

It also showcased OIA's commitment to creating job opportunities for nationals with over 800 job opportunities created in its companies for Omanis.

Additionally, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been awarded tenders and contracts worth about OMR190 million, demonstrating OIA's ongoing efforts to support them and underscoring OIA's crucial role in driving economic growth and development of the national economy.

Sultan Salim Al Habsi, Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Directors of OIA, said that OIA approached all circumstances and challenges in 2022 prudently. "It developed strategies in line with future economic analyses and expectations, with an emphasis on diversifying investments and mitigating risks," he added.

In his opening message in the annual report, Al Habsi said that the prevailing conditions did not constitute an obstacle to OIA's

“THROUGH ITS INVESTMENTS THAT SPREAD ACROSS MORE THAN 50 COUNTRIES GLOBALLY, OIA MANAGED TO RECORD GOOD RETURNS ON INVESTMENT AND REWARDING PROFITS.

SULTAN SALIM AL HABSI, Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Directors of OIA



continuous journey toward promoting economic development and achieving financial sustainability in the Sultanate of Oman.

"Through its investments that spread across more than 50 countries globally, OIA managed to record good returns on investment and rewarding profits," he said.

This includes the Future Generations Fund; with investments in public and private markets. This fund realised a relatively better financial performance compared to a number of global sovereign funds.

Meanwhile, the National Development Portfolio, which includes more than 160 companies in Oman, achieved total profits of more than OMR1.4 billion, Al Habsi said.

Abdulsalam Mohammed Al Murshidi, President of OIA, stressed in his foreword in the report that OIA addressed the events and economic conditions of 2022 through balanced plans and prudent investment decisions in line with local and global changes.

As a result, OIA realised good performance and productivity and expanded its investments. OIA's companies launched 10 national projects across a number of governorates in some of the targeted sectors that have the potential to contribute to the desired economic stimulus, working hand in hand with the private sector and creating job opportunities for youth and business opportunities for SMEs. **>A2**

HEROIC ACT

Omani youth risks his own life to save a little girl

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A young Omani youth Abdullah Al-Amri risked his own life to save a four-year-old girl crossing the road in Salalah.

The girl was at the risk of being run over by a speeding car on a road in Salalah when Al-Amri came like an angel and saved the girl from certain death.

The heroic act of Abdullah is being widely admired in the country.

Abdullah's quick decision, risking his own life even though he did not know the antecedents of the child, reflects purely humane values and principles of the Islamic religion that every Muslim cherishes.

Speaking to the Times of Oman,

Abdullah bin Musallam Al-Amri, said: "I went out with my friends to have dinner in a restaurant in the western part of Salalah and enjoy the drizzle during the Khareef season. While I was having my food, I saw a little girl running across the street but I leaped like an angel to save her."

Writing in pain on the hospital bed, suffering from bruises and a fracture in his right leg, he added: "I saw her first steps on the street, then the second, and the third. Within seconds I saw a speeding car trying to take her away forever. I stretched my hand giving her a lifeline and held her to my chest with a mixed feeling of fear and joy. I felt something had hit me and we were both flying in the air. But



when I fell on the ground, I absorbed the entire impact, keeping the girl safe. I only became aware of the surroundings on the hospital bed."

"When I opened my eyes, I

looked around, and enquired about the child's health. They reassured me that she was fine and only suffered a fracture in her right leg. I thanked God for his kindness.

"The girl left the hospital on July 30, and is in a good condition," he added.

Abdullah Al-Amri, aged 21 years, from the Wilayat of Salalah in Dhofar Governorate, studies logistics at Dhofar University.

Recuperating

Everyone in the Sultanate of Oman is praising him for his heroic act, wishing him speedy recovery. He is still recuperating in Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah.

Wishing him speedy recovery, the Board of Trustees of Dhofar

University has appreciated the humanitarian act by its student and decided to bear the cost of his study as a reward for his heroic work.

The accident resulted in severe injuries to Al-Amri, including a fracture in his left foot and bruises on his face, hands, and several other areas. Abdullah said: "The speed of the car that hit us was around 70 km per hour, and the driver did not stop after hitting us."

"Three days after the accident, the driver came to the police station and confessed to the accident, but I forgave him."

Al-Amri called on all drivers to pay attention to the roads when driving, and not to be reckless while driving.

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MUSCAT



State Council’s Office studies memo on budget

The meeting reviewed a report on the tasks of the Council’s committees during the fourth annual convening

MUSCAT: The State Council’s Office yesterday held its 8th meeting of seventh term’s fourth regular convening. The meeting was chaired by Sheikh Abdulmalik Abdullah Al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.

Follow-up report
The meeting reviewed a report on the tasks of the Council’s com-



MEETING: During the meeting, the State Council’s Office exchanged views on an explanatory memorandum from the Council of Ministers on the government’s response to the observations and views of the State Council and the Shura Council on State Budget 2023. - **ONA**

mittees during the fourth annual convening and a follow-up report on the missions undertaken by the Council’s members the current session.

During the meeting, the State Council’s Office exchanged views on an explanatory memorandum from the Council of Ministers on the government’s response

to the observations and views of the State Council and the Shura Council on State Budget 2023. It also studied the State Audit Institution’s 2022 report. - **ONA**

TWO-DAY MEETING

GCC meeting on productivity of human resources



SALALAH: The 11th GCC Productivity Conference kicked off in Salalah on Wednesday under the banner of “Integration and harmony at work as factors for increasing productivity”.
The two-day conference is organised by the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with Al Asayid conferences company.
The conference focuses on developing the productivity of human resources
The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan Turki Al Said, Gover-

nor of Dhofar, who honoured the speakers and supporting entities.
The conference comprises three working papers. The first deals with the concept of leading change and building institutional culture after restructuring and mergers.
The second working paper elaborates on strategic parameters of institutional structuring and mergers, taking Asyad Group as a model. The third paper focuses on promoting job harmony by inculcating a culture of ‘happiness at work’, with the experience of Bank Dhofar as a model. - **ONA**

CUT CARBON FOOTPRINT

Environment-friendly transportation

<FROM A1 “Our ability to seamlessly transport nearly 4 million tonnes of raw material will greatly help us in our operations, supporting our ambition to reduce our carbon footprint.”
“We are very proud of our partnership with this national strategic project that will bring enormous economic and social returns to both the Sultanate of Oman and the UAE, whilst also emphasising the region’s competitive advantage as a logistics hub,” he added.
Through this collaboration, Jindal will not only streamline its transportation and logistics operations, but also further advance its sustainability objectives and strengthen its green value chain.
OERC will ensure an environmentally-friendly transportation and logistics solution through the Oman-UAE Rail Network, and thus, contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions in Oman and the UAE, in line with their national goals of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Through this collaboration, Jindal will not only streamline its transportation and logistics operations, but also further advance its sustainability objectives and strengthen its green value chain.



OERC has recently entered several commercial and investment partnerships with major international players in various industrial sectors to provide innovative logistics solutions and facilities, opening new corridors for economic cooperation, and unlocking promising opportunities for sustainable economic growth in Oman, the UAE, and the wider region.

REPORT

OIA to use returns from divestments

<FROM A1 Internationally, OIA invested in Group-14, a leading company that manufactures silicon anode car batteries; Crusoe Energy, which developed an innovative technology that captures flare gas emissions to generate clean energy; and Ascend Elements, a company that developed an innovative technology for recycling lithium-ion batteries.
In addition, OIA invested in 13 private equity funds across a number of continents, such as Europe, Asia, and North America.



Abdulsalam Mohammed Al Murshidi, President of OIA.

The report delved into the positive impacts of the Code of Governance for OIA Entities, which was published at the beginning of 2022. It helped the companies improve their outcomes, enhance their performance, generate profits, and enhance their efforts toward reducing debts.
OIA companies reduced their debt by 23.4 percent as a result of a structured plan that targeted the payment of OMR3 billion, including the prepayment of OMR600 million.
The report sheds light on OIA’s divestment plan, which aims to enable the private sector to lead the Omani economy and enhance its contribution to driving economic development.
As for OIA’s divestment activities in 2022, it oversaw the listing of the Pearl REIF, the first real estate fund, in the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), as well as divesting from the International Maritime College Oman and preparing six assets in different sectors for divestment during 2023.
OIA aims to utilise the returns from these divestments by directing them to investments in new sectors. The report also highlighted OIA’s positive efforts to attract foreign investments in its mandates.
OIA signed agreements with its Saudi counterpart on investment opportunities in some projects at a value of OMR4.5 billion. This includes the completion of the second phase of the Yiti Project and the Rakiza Fund.
In addition, OIA signed agreements on some investments with the Emirati side, which include the Oman-Etihad Rail Company and increasing the capital of Oman Technology Fund (OTF).
The report indicates that OIA and its companies follow the government’s directives in regard to enhancing local content by maximising the in-country value (ICV) efforts.
In this regard, 4,700 SMEs were awarded contracts and tenders worth around OMR190 mil-

lion, which represents 10.9 percent of the total spending on the supply chain in OIA and its companies, of which Riyada holders constituted 3.9 percent.
The report reflects the special attention OIA pays to recruiting and developing national competencies. It reported that the number of employees at OIA and its companies exceeded 38,000 employees, with a total Omanisation rate of 78 percent, with more than 1,700 jobs out of 4,000 identified for potential Omanisation within the next five years.
The forty-one-page annual report addressed a number of topics, most notably OIA’s governance, the geographical distribution of its assets, and key updates about its strategic partnerships, companies, and other important topics.
OIA ranked second in the world, in the index of the development of governance and sustainability performance between 2022 and 2023, with an increase of 28 percent, compared to 200 international sovereign wealth funds.
According to a new report issued by the Global SWF platform that highlighted OIA’s commitment to international norms and principles, governance and transparency standards, and the disclosure principles and practices issued by the International Forum of Sovereign Wealth Funds (IFSWF), adding that the data issued by OIA reflect on the investments and their strategies, in line with the goals of sustainable development.
The annual report was published by OIA and provides a comprehensive overview of its business activities, investments, and key developments for the year 2022.
This marks the second annual report published by OIA and reflects OIA’s unwavering commitment to transparency and good governance, as well as its ongoing efforts to engage with the public and stakeholders. - **ONA**

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IMF praises fiscal steps taken by Oman

The mission discussed financial statements and annual financial reports of the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to assessing the fiscal risks involved



DISCUSSION: The meetings also touched on standard steps to prepare the State budget, its legislative framework. - ONA

MUSCAT: A team of International Monetary Fund (IMF) visited the Sultanate of Oman to help draft the medium-term fiscal framework and the State Budget. The International Monetary Fund mission lauded the Oman government's efforts and the financial and economic measures taken to control spending and cut down public debt ceiling. Nasser Khamis Al Jashmi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of

Finance, chaired IMF mission's last meeting in the Sultanate of Oman to view a technical advice report and present IMF's observations after the mission's visit to the departments concerned. During its visit, the IMF mission met finance specialists of the ministry and other institutions. The visit also sought to evalu-

ate practices on preparing and following up the implementation of the medium-term fiscal framework. It also provided advice on how to integrate this framework into the process of drafting and implementing the State Budget. The meetings also touched on standard steps to prepare the State budget, its legislative

framework, its key parameters and the financial systems used in planning, preparing, implementing and following up the budget process. The mission also discussed financial statements and annual financial reports of the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to assessing the fiscal risks involved. -ONA

DHOFAR MUNICIPALITY

Campaign launched to combat flies

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A campaign has been launched to combat seasonal flies and the Aedes aegypti mosquito by aerial spraying with drones, according to field surveys in each region of the Dhofar Governorate during Khareef season 2023.

Aerial spraying Dhofar Municipality issued a notice saying: "Dhofar Municipality announces the launch of a campaign to combat seasonal flies, arnoot, and Aedes aegypti mosquito by aerial spraying with drones, and using specialised organic pesticides, ac-

cording to field surveys in each region, during Autumn season 2023 in the following locations; Ain Razat, Darbat Valley, Ain Jerezeez and Ain Sahlanot.

Precautionary measures Accordingly, the Municipality has called on animal breeders

and apiary owners to follow the precautionary measures during the spraying period, from 5:30 am to 6:30 am daily during the Khareef season.

Dhofar Municipality called on everyone to cooperate with this initiative for the public good.

PRESERVING THE ENVIRONMENT

Nama Week to raise awareness about Dhofar environment



Times News Service

SALALAH: Nama Dhofar Services will launch 'Nama Week in Dhofar', in cooperation with the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority and Dhofar Municipality, from 6 August to 10 August 2023.

As part of the sustainability plan of Nama Group, the Nama Dhofar Services campaign's main objective is to raise awareness of the importance of preserving the environment and achieving home safety, as well as encouraging the public's participation with the local community and the relevant entities in Dhofar Governorate.

Also, the event intends to engage all segments of society with the campaign through several entertainment activities.

The 'Nama Week in Dhofar' campaign aims to promote economic, social and environmental sustainability through a set of innovative programmes.

These programmes include upgrading conventional electricity meters to smart meters to reduce energy consumption and promote sustainability, in addition to the "Baiti Amin" programme, which aims to spread a culture of home safety among all members of society and raise awareness of the importance of safety in general. A lecture will be organised about



the efforts to rationalise electricity and water consumption to achieve a more sustainable balance in the use of natural resources.

Additionally, the Company will organise a few environmental initiatives that aim to encourage the community to actively contribute in protecting the environment and its beauty.

It is worth noting that 'Nama Week' is an initiative that targets three governorates annually. The 'Nama Week in Dhofar' campaign comes following the remarkable success of 'Nama Week in Musandam' campaign, which included various awareness programmes in the fields of health, safety and energy conservation



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AL JABAL AL AKHDAR FESTIVAL 2023 TO KICK OFF TODAY



Al Jabal Al Akhdar: Activities of Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival, organised by the Office of Al Dakhiliyah Governor in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, will begin on 3 August 2023.

The festival will be held at the main site next to Hail Yemen Park and Seih Qatna Park from August 3 to 19 August 2023.

The extravaganza seeks to attract tourists from Oman and abroad, highlighting the natural beauty and cultural heritage of Al Jabal Al Akhdar (Green Mountain) and Oman as a whole.

The festival enables entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to benefit from tourism promotion opportunities.

The festival comprises the Bait Al Rudaida Exhibition, which will be opened in the vicinity of Bait Al Rudaida Castle in Birkat Al Mouz area. The castle itself serves as a landmark for visitors and tourists

looking for services or products that can enrich their experience.

An exhibition showcasing the products of local families and SMEs will be held on the sidelines of the festival.

This is in addition to other events, programmes and recreational activities that are suitable for families and other members of the public. These include a youth corner, a children's corner, an Omani foods corner and a farmers' corner where products of Al Jabal Al Akhdar gardens will be on show.

Other activities that are common during Al Jabal Al Akhdar Festival include paragliding shows, theatre performances and adventure sports events like the Mountain Bike Race which is organized by Oman Cycling Association, Himam Trail Run Race and walkathons.

It is worth noting that visitors to the festival can get insights about the history of the state of Al Jabal Al Akhdar by visiting the historical village of Al Soujra. -ONA

Donald Trump indicted in 2020 election probe

Trump was indicted on four counts, including conspiracy to defraud the US and witness tampering

WASHINGTON, DC: Federal criminal charges were filed against former President Donald Trump on Tuesday for his efforts to overturn his defeat in the 2020 US election and the insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Trump was indicted on four counts, including conspiracy to defraud the US and witness tam-



pering. The White House and President Joe Biden declined to comment following the announcement of the indictment.

“We would refer you to the Justice Department, which conducts its criminal investigations independently,” White House spokesperson Ian Sams said.

Biden did not respond to reporter’s questions on the same issue.

The comments on Tuesday follow a similar White House statement from last week.

“The Department of Justice is

independent,” White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters last Friday.

Rule of law

“You hear us say this all the time: We believe in the rule of law. The president has been very consistent on that.”

The indictment comes after Trump stated that he received a target letter alerting him that he is the focus of the investigation, a move that is frequently followed by the filing of charges.

Trump has been indicted as part of special counsel Jack Smith’s investigation into the matter.

A federal grand jury in Washington, D.C., has notably been hearing evidence in the case when it typically meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, reported The Hill.

According to the docket of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, Trump’s case has been assigned to US District Judge Tanya Chutkan.

According to the court’s website, she was appointed in 2014.

As part of special counsel Jack Smith’s investigation, Trump was charged with: Conspiracy to defraud the United States; conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding; obstruction of and attempt to obstruct an official proceeding; and conspiracy against rights, a CNN report said.

Trump will make his first court appearance in the case on Thursday in federal court in Washington, D.C, as per the Court filings.

— Agencies



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Typhoon Khanun lashes Okinawa

TOKYO: Typhoon Khanun battered Japan’s southwest islands on Wednesday, knocking out power to hundreds of thousands of people on the island of Okinawa and leaving at least one person dead.

Emergency officials said that a 90-year-old man was crushed by a collapsing garage and died of cardiac arrest, public broadcaster NHK reported.

The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) described the slow-moving typhoon as “very strong,” with maximum sustained wind speeds of 180 kilometres (111 miles) per hour.

Television footage showed high winds flipping over cars in parking lots. The JMA reported wind gusts reaching nearly 200 kilometers per hour in some locations on Okinawa. — DW

FIPIC MEMBER COUNTRIES

India committed to stronger ties with the Pacific Island countries

NEW DELHI: India established the Forum for India - Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) in collaboration with 14 Pacific Island countries in 2014 as a mechanism that will upgrade the ties between India and Pacific Islanders as well as enhance cooperation and collaboration in varied fields supporting the development of the Pacific Island countries.

The FIPIC member countries include India along with the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The Heads of Government of all these countries met in Suva, Fiji on November 19, 2014, and accepted the establishment of FIPIC.

India’s relations with the region go back to the colonial era during the early 19th century as numerous Indians were taken by the British colonists to this region as indentured plantation laborers, a large number of whom settled there even after the independence.

— Agencies



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Scope of Work for mining at Wadi Naar limestone Quarry of Raysut Cement Company SAOG (RCC).

A. Drilling and Blasting:

- Carry out Drilling and blasting to produce 150,000 Ton/Month (+10%) of limestone from Wadi Naar quarry. Contractor to ensure that minimum 10,000 Ton (+/-10%) of blasted material is available all the time for loading at two loading faces. The blasted limestone quantity can increase as per the company's requirement.
- Blasting should be well fragmented rocks with allowable maximum size should be less than 800 mm.
- Manage all ROP related fees, legal formalities. Comply with all the relevant regulatory requirements regarding storage, handling, transport and usage of explosives. Ensure the blasting procedure meets ROP regulations and other government norms.
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- Monitor noise and ground vibrations & submit the reports after every blast as per the format given by the RCC.
- Ensure blasting vibration is less than 3 mm/sec and sound less than 120 Db at 500 M distance.
- The contractor has to arrange for the cleaning for drilling block and clean the blasted face after the blast. (RCC will not deploy vehicle for drilling and blasting area preparation and cleaning of face after blasting.)
- Comply with all the health and safety regulations, ensure drilling and blasting activity is carried out safely without any undesired incidents and complains.
- Ensure the quarry faces are systematically mined and the floor is kept levelled as the areas needs to be hand over to the government with evenly levelled floor.
- Location of drilling and blasting to be decided with the advice from RCC mining officials.
- Diesel & Water for drilling equipment's are contractor scope.
- The price quote must be in per ton basis, delivered at RCC plant, inclusive of all the expenses.
- Food & accommodation for drilling & blasting personnel are in contractor's scope.
- RCC will provide NOC & Quarry Permit from the relevant Ministries and government bodies.

B: Loading and Transportation:

- Carry out loading and transportation of limestone from Wadi Naar Quarry and unloading the limestone at crushers or at the stock area at RCC plant as decided by RCC officials.
- Distance from Wadi Naar Quarry to RCC Crushers is 8 KM. (Interested party can inspect the site to understand the workings at Wadi Naar and unloading point at Crusher site with distance before offering the Quote.)
- Achieve the loading and transport quantity of 6,000 Tons/Day (+/-10%). The quantity may increase as per the plant requirement.
- Maximum size of the loading material should not be more than 800 mm.
- Excavation of the Blasted materials and clearing of Free-Faces for the next round of Drilling.
- Maintain the smooth floor level by maintaining proper excavation. Water spraying on haul road to minimize the dust generation.

7. The work timings will be from 7AM to 7PM, 6 days a week, Friday off. Work should continue in public holidays as per company requirement at the same rate.

8. Engaging suitable size of equipments for loading and transportation of limestone from Wadi Naar Quarry.

9. Weightment of each truck will be at existing quarry weighbridge at RCC plant site. The Weighbridge load bearing capacity is maximum gross weight of 110 Ton per vehicle.

10. The price quote may be in per ton basis, delivered at RCC plant, inclusive of all the expenses.

11. Contractor should maintain the vehicle in good condition with good reliability. Vehicle should be operated in safe manner following all rules and regulations of ROP. All equipments shall have all the needful permits.

12. Site office, workshop, water, electricity will be under contractor scope.

Scope of Work for Surface Miner: For Wadi Naar Limestone Quarry of Raysut Cement Company SAOG.

- Location of work in Wadi Naar Limestone Quarry belong to Raysut Cement Company (RCC), 8 KM from RCC plant at Raysut, Salalah, Dhofar Region.
- Primary extraction of limestone by Surface Miner (Generation of loose limestone), heaping, loading and transportation to RCC Plant crusher or stock piles at in the plant area per the RCC officials' instructions.
- Daily Production, generation and transportation of limestone 6,000 Tons/day (+10%), 6 days a week, Friday off / Maintenance of machine. Work will continue on public holidays as per the company requirement at the same rate. The quantity may increase as per company requirement.
- Surface Miner can work for 24 hours to generate loose limestone, but loading and transportation to RCC, Raysut plant will be from 7AM – 8 PM. Proper lighting arrangement must be made by the contractor, if the contractor want to operate Surface Miner during night. The material generated and heaped should be at-least at two locations for quality management.
- The maximum Size of the material generated and transported should be less than 200 mm. The contractor needs to ensure the limestone fed to crusher does not have any metal pieces.
- Mine working and extraction work in Wadi Naar should be in co-ordination guidance with RCC Mining Officials.
- The price quote shall be in per ton basis, delivered at RCC plant, inclusive of all the expenses.
- Engaging suitable size of equipments for loading and transportation of limestone from Wadi Naar Quarry.
- All loaded trucks received at plant will be weighed in quarry weighbridge. Maximum load bearing capacity of the weighbridge is 110 Tons. The transporter should follow the guidelines of the ROP for maximum allowable load limit in the trucks.
- Vehicle should be operated in safe manner following all rules and regulations of ROP. All equipments shall have all the needful permits as per ROP rules.
- Site office, workshop, water, electricity will be under contractor scope.
- RCC will not be responsible for the performance of the Surface Miner.
- The contractor can take the sample from site to check the suitability for the working of Surface Miner.

Email: PURCHASING@RAYSUTCEMENT.COM.OM
Tel: (968) 23220600 -Extn 509

Contact Details

Raysut Cement Company. Salalah, Raysut Industrial Area,
Post Box: 1020., Postal Code: 211, Salalah – Sultanate of Oman
Procurement Department: Office hours 7:00-15:00 hours.

SPORTS

2023 ODI CRICKET WORLD CUP

Pakistan agree to schedule change, to play India on Oct 14

MUMBAI: The blockbuster India-Pakistan game at the 2023 ODI World Cup will now be played on October 14 rather than the scheduled date of October 15 as released in the original ICC schedule, *ESPNews* reported on Wednesday.

Though the International Cricket Council (ICC) is yet to release a revised schedule, which is expected by the end of this week,

it is understood that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has agreed to the change. The match will still be played in Ahmedabad.

The date change for the World Cup's biggest clash has an impact on Pakistan's preceding fixture, against Sri Lanka in Hyderabad. The venue remains the same but the game will now be played on October 10 instead of October 12, allowing Pakistan a sufficient gap

between the two matches.

The need for a change in the schedule reportedly arose because the original date for the India-Pakistan fixture was also the first day of the Hindu festival of *Navaratri* and local police were concerned that it would be difficult to provide adequate security on the day. The ICC wrote to the PCB a few days ago about the changes and the PCB agreed.

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah, however, had said the clash with Navaratri wasn't the reason for the change.

He said last week that several Full Member countries had requested changes to the World Cup schedule and that several tweaks would be made.

The change of the India-Pakistan date will almost certainly

have an impact on other games and teams. October 14 is already a double-header, featuring games between Bangladesh and New Zealand in Chennai and Afghanistan and England in Delhi. The latter game is likely to be affected, potentially played a day earlier (October 13).

The changes to the schedule, two months away from the ODI World Cup, come after the original

schedule was already extremely delayed. It was finally released by the BCCI and the ICC at the end of June just 100 days before the start of the tournament.

The tournament is scheduled to begin on October 5, with reigning champions England taking on New Zealand in Ahmedabad, but the ICC and the BCCI have also not yet announced when match tickets will go on sale.

FINAL ASHES TEST

'Ball change had significant bearing on The Oval result'

LONDON: The ball change which took place during Australia's second innings at The Oval continues to be a significant talking point, with Australia head coach Andrew McDonald saying he had never seen a replacement ball have such an impact on a game, according to an *ESPNews* report on Wednesday.

When Usman Khawaja was struck on the helmet by a short delivery from Mark Wood in the 37th over of Australia's chase, umpires Kumar Dharmasena and Joel Wilson ruled that the ball had been damaged enough to warrant being replaced. The ball that was chosen looked considerably newer (England had been trying to get the previous one to reverse swing) and, after play had been curtailed on Sunday by rain, provided the quicks with considerable assistance on the final day.

Khawaja and David Warner were both removed by Chris Woakes after an opening stand of 140 while Wood claimed Marnus Labuschagne. However, Steven Smith and Travis Head got Australia down to needing 120 with seven wickets in hand when the defining collapse occurred after a two-hour rain delay.

"I've never seen tactics shift so dramatically on the back of a decision," McDonald said. "Went from catchers in front of the wicket to behind the wicket, and there's no doubt in some ways changed the shape of the game and the tactics within the game."

"So I will say that the ball change did have a significant bearing on the tactics, the way that England went about it. But in saying that, I think we still should have been able to navigate that."

"There were two clumps where we lost 3 for 30 and 5 for 50, and that's part of us owning it. The umpires are out there to make a deci-



sion and they had a box of balls to choose from, and they made the best decision at that time from what they saw was there."

It ultimately meant that Australia had to settle for a 2-2 Ashes scoreline for the second time in four years, which allowed them to retain the urn but left them short of the ultimate ambition of a first series win in England since 2001.

"We didn't quite achieve what we set out to achieve," McDonald admitted. "We clearly wanted to come here and win the Ashes but the cricket we played, the cricket both teams played was fascinating. I think the whole series was fascinating. People should be proud of what they've been able to achieve, even if we didn't quite get to where we wanted to in winning the Ashes."

"The Manchester [Test], we owned that result but Leeds and [The Oval] I think everyone was in the game and both teams had their chances, and we had a really good look at winning this series."

"And that's probably the part when we sit back and reflect, once we let it all settle down and go back through it, there were definitely some opportunities for us to win. And I think England can equally say the same. As it settles, two-all seems about right, and I think everyone's said that." - *Agencies*

ASHES SERIES

England, Australia lose WTC points for slow over-rates

DUBAI: England and Australia have been docked 19 and ten World Test Championship (WTC) points respectively for their slow over-rates over the course of the five-Test Ashes series, which ended 2-2.

At the end of the series, England were found to have been behind the ask in four of the five Tests: by two overs in the first Test at Edgbaston, nine in the second at Lord's, three in the fourth at Old Trafford, and five in the last Test at The Oval. As for Australia, they did fine in four of

the Tests, but were ten overs short at Old Trafford.

As a result, England ended the series with just nine WTC points (24 for two wins and four for one draw, minus 19 for the over-rate penalties), and Australia 18 points (24 for two wins and four for the draw, minus ten). That left Australia at No.3 on the WTC table, with 30 percentage points, behind Pakistan (100) and India (66.67), while England were at No.5, below West Indies (16.67) with 15 points. - *Agencies*

ENGLAND COACH SPEAKS

McCullum reiterates wish to continue with 'Bazball' style

LONDON: England cricket team coach Brendon McCullum reiterated his wish for England to stick to their attacking 'Bazball' style after the drawn Ashes but said they have "refined" their approach through the series, according to a *BBC Sport* report on Wednesday.

England beat Australia by 49 runs in the fifth Test to tie the series 2-2.

The hosts stuck to the 'Bazball' style used since McCullum and captain Ben Stokes took charge last year, even after they fell 2-0 behind after two Tests.

"From our point of view the most pleasing aspect is when we were under the most pressure at 2-0 down we stayed true to that and were able to manufacture some results that allowed us

to walk away at 2-2."

"What we are trying to do is allow ourselves to get in a space in our own minds where it allows your talent to come out," said McCullum.

"If you're weighed down by fear of failure or by external noise all you're doing is suffocating that talent. So it's as simple as that."

"Sometimes we'll get the balance wrong with the style we play but you've got teams good enough to stand up to you and make you pay when the time comes and Australia did that in the first couple of Test matches."

"But we refined it slightly as the series wore on."

Legacies to carry on
Monday's finale at The Oval



Brendon McCullum (right) and England captain Ben Stokes

marked the end of Stuart Broad's career, while Moeen Ali, who took a crucial 3-76 while battling a groin injury, confirmed his Test retirement,

having returned to replace injured spinner Jack Leach in the series.

"We'll miss them, but they have left a huge imprint on the side," said New Zealander McCullum,

Hardik lashes out at West Indies Cricket

TAROUBA: India's stand-in skipper Hardik Pandya slammed West Indies Cricket for the conduct of the ongoing tour after India clinched the ODI series 2-1 on Wednesday.

After lauding his team for their exceptional performance in the series decider, Pandya said he hoped West Indies Cricket could take note of the lapses and ensure that basic necessities are provided to visiting teams in future.

"This was one of the nicest grounds we have played on. Things can be better when we come to the West Indies next time. Things like travel... hopefully, the West Indies cricket board can take note and ensure that there are no hiccups. We don't ask for luxury but we need some basic necessities taken care of," Pandya said in the post-match presentation. Pandya's comments came



amid reports that the Indian team was stranded at the airport for approximately four hours due to delayed flights.

During his post-match comments, Pandya disclosed that he interacted with Virat Kohli

before the match and the latter advised him to spend some time at the crease to end his lean phase with the willow.

"I took it deep intentionally, wanted to have some time out in the middle. Had a great chat with Virat before the game, he wanted me to spend some time out in the middle and get used to the 50-over format. Really thankful for him to share that experience with me. Once you hit one ball and get into rhythm things are very different. The ball was doing just a bit. Scoring 350 was always crucial. When you have a total like that, batters chase the ball and if luck is one your side, batters will nick it. Couple of really good catches by Gill," he added.

After securing the Test and the ODI series, India will now be keen to claim the five-match T20I series, which begins on Thursday. - *ANI*

from the start, and hit three sixes in his first 13 balls. He was severe on Cariah, in particular, taking him for 28 runs off just ten balls as he raced away to fifty in 39 balls.

Samson and Gill added 69 in just 8.5 overs. The stand was broken when Samson, soon after his fifty, failed to clear mid-off against Shepherd. His wicket also put a brake on the scoring rate: Samson fell in the 32nd over; in the next eight, India managed only 23.

India lost Gill, too, during this phase. He was looking good for a hundred but fell for 85 off 92 balls.

Batting at No. 6, Suryakumar Yadav gave a glimpse of his T20 fluency. He scored 35 off 30, which included a six on each side of the

wicket behind the square. Towards the end of the innings, Hardik also hit a few lusty blows to finish unbeaten. It was a late acceleration by him. At one stage, he was on 11 off 22. Off the next 30, he scored almost two runs per ball to finish on 70 not out off 52.

West Indies' chase never got going, with Mukesh getting Brandon King to edge one behind in the very first over. The seamer kept peppering the good length outside off and had Kyle Mayers chopping one onto his stumps and Windies skipper Shai Hope nicking one to first slip. Those blows reduced the West Indies to 17 for 3.

Jaydev Unadkat, playing his first ODI in almost ten years, took just

five balls to an incision of his own. He got Keacy Carty to edge one to the right of first slip. Shimron Hetmyer and Romario Shepherd offered little resistance and fell to Thakur.

West Indies' lower order could do little against Kuldeep Yadav's variations. Joseph and Motie kept the Indian bowlers at bay for close to ten overs before Thakur bounced out Joseph. In his next over, Thakur rattled Jayden Seales' stumps to complete the formalities.

Brief scores: India 351/5 (Shubman Gill 85, Ishan Kishan 77, Hardik Pandya 70*, Sanju Samson 51; Romario Shepherd 2-73) beat West Indies 151 (Gudakesh Motie 39*; Shardul Thakur 4-37, Mukesh Kumar 3-30). - *Agencies*

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by October 2023 reaching \$86.37, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 58 cents from the price of Tuesday, which was \$85.79. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,799.15 points, up by 0.19 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03 per cent at 472.75 points. Al Batinah Power, up 7.69 per cent, was the top gainer while Sembcorp Salalah, down 2.91 per cent, was the top loser.

PDO achieves milestone of drilling its 1,500th well at Nimr oil field

Covering a total area of 1,875km, Nimr is the company's largest cluster and boasts the most extensive well stock spread across 23 fields

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) celebrated the drilling of its 1,500th well at the Nimr cluster, the first achievement of its kind in Oman.

The 1,500th well, referred to as NM-1500, is part of the Nimr cluster, located in the South of PDO's concession area. Covering a total area of 1,875km, Nimr is the com-



pany's largest cluster and boasts the most extensive well stock spread across 23 fields. It contributes more than 12 per cent of PDO's production (around 90,000 barrels per day) and possesses one of the most substantial hydrocar-

bon growth portfolios.

PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister said: "This historic accomplishment of drilling the 1,500th well in the Nimr cluster underpins our long-term commitment to sustainable growth

and maximising value to Oman's economy. We are setting new benchmarks in the energy sector, safely and competitively growing our core business, in terms of both cost and carbon performance. This achievement is the result of a great

cross-functional effort within the organisation and we are immensely proud of everyone involved."

The journey to NM-1500 began 43 years ago when the discovery well, NM-1 was drilled in the Nimr-C area, with output starting a few

years later following the commissioning of production facilities. The well is still yielding oil today.

Oil South Petroleum Manager Junaid Ghulam said: "NM-1500 symbolises the persistence, resolve, sustainability and superb reputation of our Company and its people to produce oil from the most challenging of sub-surface environments, consisting of heavy oil from complex classics with strong aquifers, for decades past and decades to come."

In recent years, "Nimr" has evolved into an efficient well "factory" delivering over 130 new wells a year. NM-1500 was operational just 15 hours after the rig move, a testament to the well-oiled machine that Nimr has become. This achievement was made possible through efficient management of operational issues and effective collaboration between various teams across the company.

Notably, the well NM-1000 was drilled in 2013 over 23 days in the complex and challenging Middle Gharif sandstone reservoir to a total depth of 2,100 metres and is now in production.

PARTNERSHIP

Samail Industrial City, Flexible Rubber Factory sign OMR1mn expansion deal

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Samail Industrial City, which falls under the umbrella of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), has signed a contract with Flexible Rubber Factory to expand the project, involving an investment of up to OMR1 million and covering a total area of 20,000 sqm. This expansion aligns with the efforts of supporting circular economy practices, promoting recycling initiatives and boosting local value-added services.

Sami Al Kharusi, Owner and Executive Director of Flexible Rubber Factory (Marn), pointed out that the factory is the first of its kind in the Sultanate, specialising in recycling used tyres and transforming them into rubber-derived products following the process of extracting steel from the rubber powder. Notably, Marn stands as the exclusive factory in the Gulf region that extracts and exports 'rubber dough' to global markets for tyre manufacturing.

Al Kharusi added that the fac-



tory stands out for its 100% Omani management, and notably, 30% of the production lines have been locally manufactured within the factory itself. A remarkable feat

of the factory is its 100% waste recycling rate, leaving no room for additional waste. Moreover, the factory plays a significant role in generating opportunities at the lo-

cal level, as rubber dough is used in the manufacturing of a wide array of products, including shoes, waterproof materials, asphalt, and various rubber-based products.

AGENTS' MEET

Air India Oman hosts successful agent and corporate customers meet in Oman

Times News Service

MUSCAT: India's premier carrier - Air India, recently held an exclusive agents' meet along with its General Sales Agent (GSA) in Oman - National Travel & Tourism (NTT).

The event focused on strengthening the available agent network and offering better services for Air India customers across Oman.

The event was hosted by Parminder Pal Singh, Regional Manager - Gulf, Middle East & Africa. In attendance were prominent travel agents and corporate customers from across Oman.

According to a spokesperson from National Travel & Tourism, "Air India has undergone a major transformation now being under the TATA Group. We wished to communicate this transformation and its benefits to our agents which in turn would benefit customers choosing to fly with Air India. Currently Air India and Air India Express cater to a vast base of customers from various cities in India."

Speaking about NTT's association with Air India in Oman he said, "National Travel & Tourism has established a strong relationship as GSA for Air India / Air India Express (erstwhile Indian Airlines),



as a flagship carrier, since 1995. We expect this relationship to grow even stronger with time as we look forward to welcoming customers to a whole new experience with Air India and Air India Express."

Established more than three decades ago, National Travel & Tourism (NTT) is Oman's preferred tours, leisure, travel and freight management consortium offering a unique one-stop total

solution providing capability. As a leader in comprehensive travel management services, NTT offers a diverse world of global, regional and local travel expertise covering both business and leisure travel.

GLOBAL SHARES



Stocks drop, Treasury yields dip after Fitch downgrades US rating

TOKYO: Global shares tumbled and Treasury yields dipped on Wednesday after rating agency Fitch unexpectedly downgraded the United States top-tier sovereign credit rating.

Fitch cut the United States by one notch to AA+ from AAA, citing fiscal deterioration, a decision announced after the Wall Street close on Tuesday.

The news hit global stock markets, taking Europe's STOXX 600 index to a two-week low. It was last down 1.4 per cent by 0914 GMT.

US stocks were also set to open lower with Nasdaq futures down more than 1 per cent.

US 10-year Treasury yields were down 2 basis points while the US dollar was up just 0.2 per cent against a basket of peers, Reuters reported.

"The lack of movement in US Treasury Bonds and the dollar index suggests the market has already largely quantified and assessed the damage done from recent fallouts," said Sophie Lund-Yates, lead equity analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Fitch's move, which came after it had placed the ratings on negative watch in May, drew an angry response from the White House, which called it "arbitrary and based on outdated data" as it came two months after a debt ceiling agreement that averted a US default.

"It's true that this move by Fitch is somewhat based on outdated data, especially with the trajectory of inflation now at a more favourable gradient," Lund-Yates said.

Investors drew comparisons with what happened when Standard & Poor's cut the US's AAA rating in 2011 in the aftermath of the global financial crisis. Investors then had also fled to the relative safety of Treasuries from riskier equities.

"S&P being the first to downgrade 12 years ago was far bigger news and has allowed investors to adjust for the most important bond market in the world not being a pure AAA anymore, but it's still a big decision," said Deutsche Bank strategist Jim Reid.

While investors say the downgrade is unlikely to have a big impact on US Treasuries, which underpin the financial system as a global safe asset, it has injected some uncertainty into financial markets, casting renewed attention on the debt metrics of the world's largest economy.

The news also came just after the US Treasury said on Monday it expected to borrow \$1,007 trillion in the third quarter, the largest amount ever for that period, compared with May's \$274 billion estimate. Attention was on a refunding announcement coming up on Wednesday.

The downgrade "basically tells you the US government's spending is a problem. It's an unsustainable budget situation because the economy can't even grow its way out of this problem going forward," said Steven Ricchiuto, US chief economist at Mizuho Securities.

"Therefore, they're going to have to either tackle it or accept the consequences of potential further additional downgrades."

Tony Sycamore, an analyst with IG, said apart from the Fitch move, there had been some disappointing data in the US and China and some weaker-than-expected earnings, so people were taking money off the table.

Elsewhere, Japan's 10-year bond yield hit a fresh nine-year peak on Wednesday as investors continued to test the Bank of Japan's tolerance for higher yields following Friday's surprise policy tweak. The yen was up 0.5 per cent against the dollar, looking to reverse three sessions of losses. -BNA

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Al Batinah Power, up 7.69 per cent, was the top gainer while Sembcorp Salalah, down 2.91 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,799.15 points, up by 0.19 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.03 per cent at 472.75 points. Al Batinah Power, up 7.69 per cent, was the top gainer while Sembcorp Salalah, down 2.91 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 335 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.57 million, with more than 5.87 million shares changing hands. Out of 36 traded securities, 13 advanced, 10 declined, and 13 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR90,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR59,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR31,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,881.04 points, up 0.83 per cent. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, So-

har International Bank, HSBC Bank Oman, and Ominvest were up by 7.14 per cent, 1.89 per cent, 1.21 per cent, and 0.54 per cent respectively. Prices of United Finance, and Al Anwar Investment were up by 1.64 per cent, and 1.16 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,171.32 points, up 0.34 per cent. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, and Oman Flour Mills were up by 6.06 per cent, 1.72 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Chromite, Galfar Engineering, and Raysut Cement were up by 2.17 per cent, 1.24 per cent, and 0.59 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.08 per cent before closing at 1,681.67 points. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Phoenix Power, Al Jazeera Services, Ooredoo, and Oman Telecom were up by 7.69 per cent, 3.18 per cent, 0.83 per cent, 0.27 per cent, and 0.10 per cent respectively. Prices of Barka Water & Power Company, Renaissance Services, and Abraj Energy were up by 2.33 per cent, 2.06 per cent, and 0.65 per cent respectively. — United Securities

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES							
Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%	
MSX 30 INDEX	4,805.70	4,784.83	4,799.15	4,790.28	8.87	0.19	
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,893.44	7,819.20	7,881.04	7,816.39	64.65	0.83	
Industry Index	6,174.65	6,088.77	6,171.32	6,150.53	20.79	0.34	
Services Index	1,687.92	1,679.06	1,681.67	1,683.05	-1.38	-0.08	
MSX Shariah Index	473.92	468.54	472.75	472.59	0.16	0.03	
MSX TR INDEX	6,324.20	6,296.74	6,315.58	6,303.91	11.67	0.19	
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,613.20	8,532.18	8,599.66	8,529.11	70.55	0.83	
SERVICES TR IDX	1,863.25	1,853.48	1,856.35	1,857.88	-1.53	-0.08	
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,596.07	6,504.32	6,592.51	6,570.29	22.21	0.34	
Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.....	Up.....	Down.....	Equal	Sec. Traded
5,873,992	1,565,009	335	23,932,801,070	13	10	13	36

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2

RN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV CLOSE	DIFF	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST DB	LAST OFF	PRE VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	474,393	50,760	19	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.108	0.106	0.002	1.887	0.108	0.107	0.108	0.100	495,726,727
OM0000002226	ALJAZEERA SERVICES	100,000	24,200	8	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.240	0.002	0.833	0.242	0.242	0.242	0.100	14,811,434
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	19,390	7,272	2	0.374	0.376	0.374	0.376	0.374	0.002	0.535	0.376	0.376	0.376	0.100	251,305,404
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	493,000	182,517	11	0.373	0.373	0.370	0.370	0.369	0.001	0.271	0.370	0.370	0.373	0.100	240,849,365
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	506,590	504,698	19	0.994	1.000	0.994	0.999	0.998	0.001	0.100	0.999	0.999	1.000	0.100	749,250,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO	90,920	6,364	4	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.066	0.070	0.100	8,531,250
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO	79,850	5,689	6	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.072	0.072	0.000	0.000	0.072	0.072	0.071	0.100	6,480,000
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	1,344,593	376,551	43	0.280	0.281	0.280	0.280	0.280	0.000	0.000	0.280	0.277	0.280	0.100	2,101,791,177
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	95,000	8,075	7	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	16,969,026
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	9,098	546	2	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.061	-0.001	-1.639	0.060	0.057	0.065	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	1,183	450	1	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.388	-0.008	-2.062	0.380	0.380	0.426	0.100	89,835,800
Total	11	3,214,017	1,167,122	122												

Parallel Market																
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	11,000	308	3	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.028	0.026	0.002	7.692	0.028	0.026	0.028	0.100	18,896,848
OM0000005280	OMAN ARAB BANK	100	15	1	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.140	0.010	7.143	0.150	0.135	0.140	0.100	250,411,500
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	2,211	689	2	0.310	0.350	0.310	0.350	0.330	0.020	6.061	0.350	0.310	0.350	0.100	42,000,000
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	5,000	625	1	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.120	0.005	4.167	0.125	0.120	0.130	0.100	53,096,277
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	27,150	1,733	8	0.065	0.065	0.063	0.065	0.063	0.002	3.175	0.065	0.063	0.066	0.100	95,069,095
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	2,500	1,406	5	0.550	0.590	0.550	0.590	0.580	0.010	1.724	0.590	0.522	0.590	0.100	92,925,000
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	9,203	893	2	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.096	0.001	1.042	0.097	0.090	0.099	0.100	19,400,000
OM0000001111	GULF HOTELS (OM)	93	396	1	4.260	4.260	4.260	4.260	4.260	0.000	0.000	4.260	0.000	4.260	1.000	14,604,652
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDUSTRY	1,750	3,536	6	2.050	2.100	1.902	2.100	2.100	0.000	0.000	2.100	1.902	2.200	0.100	188,370,000
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	1,500	1,425	1	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.950	0.000	0.000	0.950	0.855	0.960	0.100	90,250,000
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO	3,000	285	1	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.086	0.100	0.100	2,850,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	1,225,885	117,494	45	0.095	0.097	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.000	0.000	0.095	0.095	0.099	0.100	212,510,538
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	10,500	1,786	6	0.171	0.171	0.170	0.170	0.171	-0.001	-0.585	0.170	0.170	0.176	0.100	34,000,000
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	78,643	24,064	42	0.307	0.307	0.305	0.306	0.308	-0.002	-0.649	0.305	0.305	0.306	0.100	235,681,200
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	210,500	17,903	14	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.085	0.090	0.100	17,510,000
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	76,892	12,365	8	0.160	0.162	0.160	0.160	0.162	-0.002	-1.235	0.160	0.161	0.161	0.100	32,477,831
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	13,046	59,250	20	4.700	4.700	4.500	4.500	4.600	-0.100	-2.174	4.500	4.500	4.600	1.000	13,500,000
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	45,000	3,930	4	0.088	0.088	0.086	0.088	0.090	-0.002	-2.222	0.086	0.088	0.090	0.100	41,464,402
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	215,395	9,047	16	0.043	0.043	0.042	0.042	0.043	-0.001	-2.326	0.042	0.041	0.042	0.100	6,720,000
OM0000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	420	42	2	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.103	-0.003	-2.913	0.100	0.097	0.105	0.100	95,457,195
Total	20	1,938,788	257,192	188												

HIGHEST LEVELS SINCE APRIL

Oil prices rise as US inventory data reflect robust demand

LONDON: Oil prices surged on Wednesday, trading near their highest levels since April, buoyed by crude and fuel product inventory data showing robust US demand.

Brent crude futures for October were up 44 cents, or 0.5%, to \$85.35 a barrel by 0949 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude for September climbed 48 cents, or 0.6%, to \$81.85 a barrel.

US crude inventories fell by 15.4 million barrels in the week ended July 28, according to market sources citing American Petroleum Institute figures, compared with analysts' estimates for a drop of 1.37 million barrels, Reuters reported.

If the US government figures, due later on Wednesday, match the API drawdown number, it would mark the largest drop in US crude inventories according to records dating back to 1982.

Gasoline inventories fell by 1.7 million barrels, the API data showed, compared with estimates



for a 1.3-million-barrel drop.

Distillate stocks fell by 510,000 barrels, compared with analysts' estimates for a build of 112,000 barrels. Both are indicators of robust prompt fuel demand in the US.

"For most of the last two weeks, it has been to products that oil has looked for its forward leanings, but the overnight remarkable draws in the API data sees crude take over the bull baton and give the market another spurring on," PVM Oil analysts said.

Crude oil inventories have also begun to drop in other regions as demand outpaces supply, which has been constrained by deep production cuts from Saudi Arabia, the de facto leader of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), that has provided price support. —BNA

BRIEFS

Xbox appoints ProGlobal as its official communications agency in Mena

MUSCAT: ProGlobal, one of the region's rapidly growing communications agencies announced its appointment as the official cocommunications partner for Xbox in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena).

As the regional agency for Xbox, ProGlobal will harness its expertise and robust network of trusted partners, to drive impactful communications campaigns that foster deeper connections between Xbox and its fanbase across Mena. Key markets will include UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.

As Xbox continues to expand its footprint and engage with gamers across the region, ProGlobal takes on a pivotal role in crafting compelling storytelling, managing relations with media and content creators, and executing strategic campaigns to amplify its messaging and offerings.

"We're absolutely thrilled to have been trusted and chosen as Xbox's communications agency for the region, as it expands our decade-long partnership with Microsoft," said Ali Sharif, Managing Director at ProGlobal. "The region's gaming landscape continues to thrive, and Xbox maintains a strong market presence with an incredible array of offerings for its fans. Building upon this success, we are eager to enhance the brand's presence, forge connections with the vibrant gaming community, and deliver unforgettable moments that leave a lasting impact."

India's inland cargo movement records 16% increase

NEW DELHI: Cargo movement on national waterways in the country has recorded a 16 per cent yearly increase in 2022-23, Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal informed Parliament in a written reply to a question on Tuesday. The government was asked by a member whether there was any increase in traffic on national waterways in the past two years. —ANI

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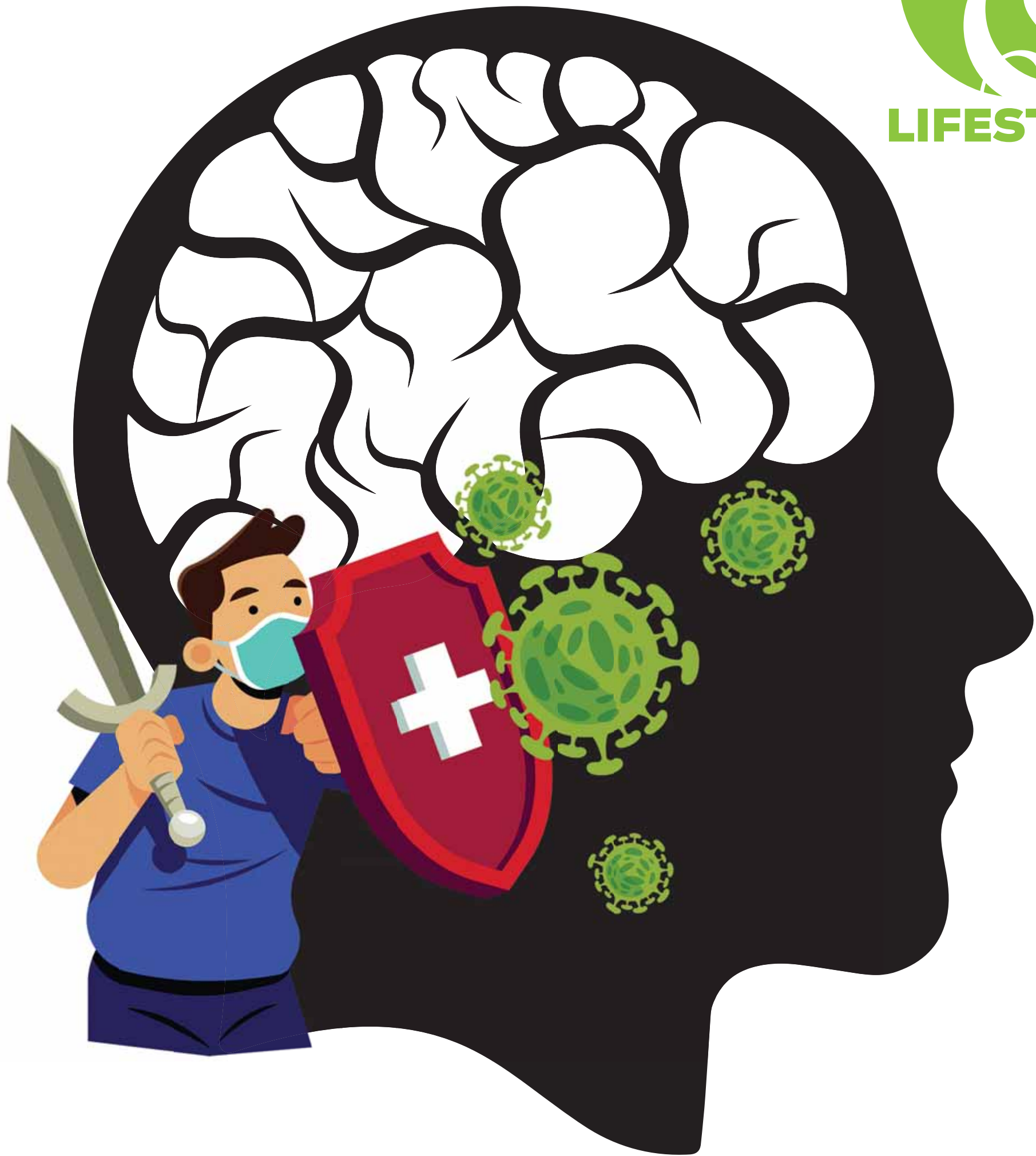
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NEW TREATMENT BRINGS HOPE FOR BRAIN FOG, OTHER LONG COVID SYMPTOMS

The National Institutes of Health of the United States (US) is beginning a handful of studies to test possible treatments for long COVID. It is an anxiously awaited step in US efforts against the mysterious condition that afflicts millions.

The announcement from the NIH's \$1.15 billion RECOVER project comes amid frustration from patients who've struggled for months or even years with sometimes-disabling health problems — with no proven treatments and only smattering of rigorous studies to test potential ones.

"This is a year or two late and smaller in scope than one would hope but nevertheless it's a step in the right direction," said Dr. Ziyad Al Aly of Washington University in St. Louis, who isn't involved with NIH's project but whose own research highlighted long COVID's toll. Getting answers is critical, he

added, because "there's a lot of people out there exploiting patients' vulnerability" with unproven therapies.

Scientists don't yet know what causes long COVID, the catchall term for about 200 widely varying symptoms. Between 10% and 30% of people are estimated to have experienced some form of long COVID after recovering from a coronavirus infection, a risk that has dropped somewhat since early in the pandemic.

"If I get 10 people, I get 10 answers of what long COVID really is," US Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said.

That's why so far the RECOVER initiative has tracked 24,000 patients in observational studies to help define the most common and burdensome symptoms — findings that now are shaping multipronged treatment trials. The first two will look at:

“We can rapidly pivot,” Dr. Amy Patterson with the NIH explained. A failing treatment can be dropped without ending the entire trial and “if something promising comes on the horizon, we can plug it in.”

— Whether taking up to 25 days of Pfizer's antiviral drug Paxlovid could ease long COVID, because of a theory that some live coronavirus, or its remnants, may hide in the body and trigger the disorder. Normally Paxlovid is used when people first get COVID-19 and for just five days.

— Treatments for “brain

fog” and other cognitive problems. They include Posit Science Corp.'s BrainHQ cognitive training programme, another called PASC-Cognitive Recovery by New York City's Mount Sinai Health System, and a Soterix Medical device that electrically stimulates brain circuits.

Two additional studies will open in the coming months. One will test treatments for sleep problems. The other will target problems with the autonomic nervous system — which controls unconscious functions like breathing and heart-beat including the disorder called POTS.

A more controversial study of exercise intolerance and fatigue also is planned, with NIH seeking input from some patient groups worried that exercise may do more harm than good for certain long COVID sufferers. The trials are enrolling 300 to 900 adult partici-

pants for now but have the potential to grow. Unlike typical experiments that test one treatment at a time, these more flexible “platform studies” will let NIH add additional potential therapies on a rolling basis.

“We can rapidly pivot,” Dr. Amy Patterson with the NIH explained. A failing treatment can be dropped without ending the entire trial and “if something promising comes on the horizon, we can plug it in.”

The flexibility could be key, according to Dr. Anthony Komaroff, a Harvard researcher who isn't involved with the NIH program but has long studied a similarly mysterious disorder known as chronic fatigue syndrome or ME/CFS. For example, he said, the Paxlovid study “makes all sorts of sense,” but if a 25-day dose shows only hints of working, researchers could extend the test to a longer course instead of starting from scratch. —DINA

SPORTS

Jamaica script history as Brazil knocked out

Reggae Girlz seal spot in last 16 after draw with Brazil; France beat Panama in a nine-goal thriller

MELBOURNE: Jamaica qualified for the knockout stages of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time after a goalless draw with Brazil sent the South American champions out of the competition in disappointing fashion on Wednesday.

It was a cagey Group F encounter in Melbourne and Jamaica put in a stubborn defensive display to ensure their impressive tournament still has another chapter.

But Brazil, who recalled striker Marta to the starting XI, could not find the goal they needed and failed to progress for the first time in 28 years. Marta, 37, is the all-time leading scorer in men's or women's World Cups but will not feature again, with her sixth tournament in Australia coming to an end having made three group-stage appearances, *BBC Sport reported*.

After this goalless stalemate, Jamaica could face Colombia or Germany in the last 16, while France go through as Group F winners following their thrilling 6-3 victory over Panama in the other match on Wednesday. Jamaica had two draws and a win in the group stages as they remained unbeaten

Jamaica put themselves in a



strong position when they held group favourites France to a goalless draw and followed it with a crucial 1-0 win over Panama without star striker Khadija Shaw, who was suspended after being sent off in their opening match.

Manchester City's Shaw returned to the side in Melbourne,

adding much-needed threat for Jamaica on the counter-attack.

Former Arsenal centre-back Rafaelle Souza largely kept Shaw at bay, though the Jamaican's presence alone caused problems and she almost scored with 10 minutes remaining, firing over the bar on the break. That was Jamaica's only



real chance as Brazil built pressure and searched endlessly for the goal they needed to take them through to the knockout stage. Marta, who went off to huge cheers after 80 minutes, had a few glimpses at goal, while Debinha, Luana and Tamires all drew saves from Jamaica goalkeeper Becky Spencer.

They almost found a golden touch in the third minute of second-half stoppage time when substitute Andressa pounced on a

scramble in the box, but Spencer was again equal to it and Brazil's substitutes fell to their knees in despair in the dugout.

Jamaica, meanwhile, have kept three clean sheets in the group stage and have proven they are more than a match for some of the world's higher-ranked nations. There was an outpouring of emotion at full-time as the magnitude of their achievements became clear. Their journey to Australia

and New Zealand was marred by a battle with their own federation - the Reggae Girlz players wrote an open letter calling for "immediate and systematic change" - and their success will give them a greater voice.

France down Panama

In Sydney, France defeated Panama 6-3 in a nine-goal thriller and finish top of Group F on Wednesday.

Already eliminated debutants Panama led through their inspirational skipper, Marta Cox, whose superb free-kick was struck perfectly into the top corner from 30 yards. But France took control in Sydney, with Kadi Diani scoring a hat-trick, including two penalties.

France also scored through Lea le Garrec, Vicki Becho and an own goal, while Yomira Pinzon and Lineth Cedenio netted Panama's consolation goals.

Panama were well beaten by a superior side, and there were re-cremations after falling 4-1 down before half-time with the players holding a fractious and impromptu meeting on the pitch before going down the tunnel. - Agencies

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

South Africa stun Italy; Sweden set up date with USA

WELLINGTON: South Africa are through to 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup last 16 for the first time after claiming their first World Cup win with a thrilling 3-2 victory over Italy in a Group G match in Wellington on Wednesday.

Thembi Kgatlana's 92nd-minute winner proved the difference after Italy fought back to level with an Arianna Caruso header, reported *BBC Sport*. A draw would have been enough to take Italy into the knockout rounds.

South Africa will play Group E winners the Netherlands on Sunday. After earning a first World Cup point in their 2-2 draw with Argentina, South Africa have shown significant progress from their debut appearance at the tournament in 2019, when they lost all three group matches.

There were scenes of jubilation for the South Africa players when the final whistle confirmed they had made history for their nation.

With a win certain to guarantee



their place in the knockout rounds, Italy got off to the perfect start when they were awarded a penalty as Karabo Dhlamini caught the heels of teenager Chiara Beccari.

Referee Maria Carvajal awarded a free-kick, but a swift video assistant referee intervention concluded the foul had been committed inside the penalty area and Caruso



calmly converted from the spot to put Italy in command of their World Cup future.

However, South Africa were gifted a leveller as Benedetta Orsi, playing her first World Cup match, was left red-faced when she hit a no-look back pass to an unexpected Francesca Durante and it rolled into her own net.

Desiree Ellis' side burst into the lead when Kgatana slipped a clever ball through the Italy defence to put Hildah Magaia through on goal and she lifted it over Durante.

VAR seemed like it may have come to South Africa's rescue when Caruso equalised from a corner, but after a lengthy delay the goal was given.

Italy hearts were broken when Magaia stepped through the defence and squared it to Kgatana, who made no mistake in finding the back of the net.

Sweden clinch top spot

Sweden beat Argentina 2-0 on Wednesday to make it three wins from three, clinching top spot in Group G and a mouth-watering last-16 clash with the USA.

After a fiercely contested hour, Sweden's extra quality shone through, with Rebecka Blomqvist finding space in the box to power home Sofia Jakobsson's cross from close range. Elin Rubensson put the result beyond doubt with a coolly taken late penalty after Blomqvist had been fouled in the box as Argentina sought to defend a free-kick.

Argentina depart the tournament having finished bottom of the group with one point.

Sweden are used to going deep in major tournaments, having

reached the last four in five of the last six, and have some chastening recent near misses to further fuel them - none more so than their shootout agony in the final of the Tokyo Olympics.

Sweden will need such qualities and more in Melbourne on Sunday when they take on four-time winners and reigning champions the USA in the first knockout round.

The Americans have been far from their scintillating best so far in this tournament, but they remain packed with talent and, as they have shown in the previous two World Cups, know how to get the job done.

The USA and Sweden will be meeting for a sixth World Cup in succession and a seventh time overall at the finals, going back to each team's first game at FIFA's inaugural edition in China in 1991.

The spoils have gone the USA way in four of the previous World Cup meetings and 23 of the 42 games between them overall. - Agencies

ANOTHER STAR MOVES TO SAUDI ARABIA

Mane leaves Bayern Munich to join Ronaldo at Al Nassr

MUNICH: Former Liverpool forward Sadio Mane has left Bayern Munich to join Cristiano Ronaldo at Saudi Arabian club Al Nassr, *BBC Sport* reported on Wednesday

The 31-year-old scored 12 goals in 38 games for Bayern in an underwhelming season despite initially impressing.

The Senegal player was also involved in a physical altercation with Leroy Sane in the Manchester City dressing room after losing a Champions League game.

Reports suggest the German champions have recouped most of the US\$ 44.6mn they paid Liverpool for Mane a year ago.

Bayern CEO Jan-Christian Dreesen said the former Southampton player - who has signed a four-year deal with Al Nassr - had not had an "easy year" since moving from Anfield.



"He was not able to contribute as much as we all and he himself had hoped," said Dreesen.

Earlier on Tuesday Bayern manager Thomas Tuchel said he and Mane agreed "it was the best solution to untie the knot".

"We had a long, big hug and we both agreed we don't like what's

happening now, but we think it's for the best in this situation," said the Bayern coach.

"Sometimes things don't work out as everybody wants. I have always had a very good relationship with him and this will stay.

"I can totally understand he feels hurt and I also wouldn't feel happy if things like this happened.

Untie the knot

"Obviously it's something that we didn't bring to the full potential, which is my responsibility, but in this particular situation it was the best solution to untie the knot."

Al Nassr signed five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo in December and have followed that up this summer by adding Croatia midfielder Marcelo Brozovic, Brazil full-back Alex Telles and Ivory Coast midfielder Seko Fofana. - Agencies

FRENCH INTERNATIONAL



Barca's Dembele to join PSG

BARCELONA: Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele will join Paris Saint-Germain, Barca coach Xavi confirmed on Wednesday, *BBC Sport* reported. The 26-year-old France international was an unused substitute in Barcelona's 1-0 pre-season friendly win over AC Milan in Las Vegas on Tuesday.

"He says that he has this proposal and that he has decided to leave. It is his personal decision," said Xavi. Dembele has scored 40 goals in 185 games since joining Barcelona from Borussia Dortmund in 2017.

NEW SIGNING COULD BE LOANED

Chelsea sign Rennes midfielder Ugochukwu on seven-year deal

CHICAGO: Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino has said the new signing of midfielder Lesley Ugochukwu may go on loan after the midfielder joined Chelsea for US\$ 29.6 mn from Rennes, according to a *BBC Sport* report on Wednesday.

Ugochukwu has signed a seven-year deal but Pochettino has not yet decided the Frenchman's immediate future.

The 19-year-old has made 47 Ligue 1 appearances for Rennes and has also featured in the Europa League. "We need to assess him when he starts training today and then in London after the tour," said Pochettino.

"He's a young, talented player. Now is the time to assess him until the end of the transfer window and see if he is going to be with us or maybe it can be a possibility to loan him."

Ugochukwu, whose deal has the option of another year, is



yet to make his senior debut for France but has played for Les Bleus at under-17, under-18 and under-19 levels. He could return to Ligue 1 for next season because the Blues' ownership group purchased a majority stake in Alsace club Strasbourg in June.

Ugochukwu will be the only new player to join up with the 29-man squad that is travelling in the USA, but Pochettino is happy with the Blues' summer recruitment so far. - Agencies

IN PICTURES



Zhughe Village makes efforts to preserve ancient heritages
This aerial picture shows the Zhughe Village of Lanxi City, east China's Zhejiang Province. The Zhughe Village, a historic gem with over 300 ancient buildings dating back to Ming and Qing dynasties (1368-1911). The village has made concerted efforts to preserve the ancient heritages and develop tourism, receiving over 500,000 visitors annually. *Xinhua*



Indian and Mongolian troops in action
Troops of India and Mongolia in action during the Joint Exercise 'Nomadic Elephant 2023'. *(ANI Photo)*



Dance drama presented during International Dance Festival
Dancers of a song and dance troupe from Hotan Prefecture perform a dance drama at a theatre in Urumqi, northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. *xinhua*



National Day celebrated in Switzerland
People line up at a food stand on the occasion of the Swiss National Day at La Grange Park in Geneva, Switzerland. *Xinhua*

Rose sales benefit locals in Lanzhou
A staff member arranges newly-picked roses at a modern agricultural demonstration garden in Lanzhou New Area, Lanzhou, northwest China's Gansu Province. By the end of July this year, the garden had produced more than 60 million fresh cut roses, with sales revenue of about \$8.4 million. *Xinhua*



People watch supermoon in Vancouver, Canada
People watch a supermoon in Vancouver, Canada. *xinhua*



Highlight of shooting matches at Chengdu
Pavel Schejbal/Veronika Schejbalova (left) of the Czech Republic compete during the Shooting 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Final at the 31st FISU Summer World University Games in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province. *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Toyota Crown: Feature packed luxury sedan

The new Toyota Crown is built around the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA-K) platform



MUSCAT: The all-new Toyota Crown with its exceptional design, stunning technology and a host of features is becoming popular with enthusiasts here in Oman. Making a strong comeback after years, the Toyota Crown is building on its legacy and now in its new generation is even more appealing than ever. The new Toyota Crown is built around the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA-K) platform. The new Crown comes exclusively with a choice of two environmentally friendly powertrains. The first hybrid electric powertrain consists of a front electric motor and Toyota's first-ever 2.4-litre inline four-cylinder turbo engine, paired with direct shift six-speed automatic transmission with a combined power of 340 HP and 40.7 Kg.m. torque.

The second hybrid electric powertrain consists of two electric motors and a 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine, generating a total power of 222 HP. The hybrid-electric system, paired with an Electric Continuously Variable Transmission (e-CVT), achieves the lowest fuel efficiency, with a consumption rate of 21.6 km/l. Instantly drawing attention are the Crown's stunning Quad LED headlights, featuring three low-beam lights and an Auto high beam light. Which efficiently illuminate the roads. The Toyota Crown has been engineered for both supreme visual appeal and peerless performance. Drivers can choose from several driving modes, including NORMAL, ECO, SPORT, SPORT+ which allows drivers to adjust sys-

tem settings individually to their exact driving habits. Striking a seamless connection between stylish design, exquisite luxury, and enhanced convenience and comfort, the new Crown's cabin is accentuated by a range of advanced features. These include a 12.3-inch touchscreen multimedia system with Apple CarPlay® and Android Auto™ compatibility, a 12.3-inch TFT colour meter that allows users to choose from 12 patterns to suit their tastes, a colour head-up display (HUD), a dual-zone automatic air conditioning system with rear AC vents, a 11-speaker JBL surround sound system, panoramic moon roof, multi-adjustable power and ventilated front seats, and 60/40 split and reclining rear seats. For added convenience, the new Crown is

equipped with a hands-free, electrically powered trunk that can be activated using a foot-operated system when the user's hands or arms are full. The Crown is equipped with Toyota's first vertical-type wireless charging feature with enhanced space for charging the smartphone on the go. Offering all occupants exceptional views and providing an abundance of natural light from above, the panoramic roof creates a spacious atmosphere. As with any Toyota model, the new Crown comes complete with a comprehensive array of safety features. The Crown is equipped with Advanced Panoramic View Monitor System for all-round coverage of the vehicle's surroundings for efficient parking. The next generation Toyota Safety System delivers cutting edge safety technology like pre-collision system, Dynamic Radar Cruise Control, Lane trace assist, and adaptive high beam system. The new Crown also features Toyota's first-ever Safe Exit Assist (SEA), which uses the Blind Spot Monitor (BSM) to help prevent accidents. A choice of seven exciting exterior hues complement the Crown's striking visual appeal. The vehicle's interior features an equally stylish colour scheme, with two options. The new Crown also offers a choice of two aluminium wheel designs.

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Daily returns with 'WafraPlus' account from ahlibank

MUSCAT: As part of ahlibank's commitment to offering innovative products and services to its customers which sustainably support their saving goals, the "Wafra Plus" account was introduced as a daily return account which offers many benefits such as competitive rates, debit cards, and more, as it enables new and existing customers to develop their financial resources and grow their account balance daily. The 'WafraPlus' Daily Growth Account is a savings account that pays up to 2% interest per year on the daily balance maintained in the account. At the end of each day, the benefit is compounded and credited to the client's accounts. Key benefits for Wafra Plus accountholders include up to 2% interest p.a. in competitive benefits, compounded advantages daily, unlimited transactions on the account, and benefits being credited to the account every day. "The "Wafra Plus" account comes in line with the comprehensive growth strategy of ahlibank. We at ahlibank are always keen to encourage smart and sustainable money management in all our operations, and the "Wafra Plus" account comes as a good example of that, as it supports our customers' efforts to save simply and effectively that meets their goals and aspirations. By enhancing our existing suite of products and services, we are always looking to develop solutions that suit the lifestyles of our customers" said Muneer Al Balushi, AGM – Head of Retail Distribution. With Wafra Plus, customers

can use 24x7 cash management tools via digital channels or the branch network; they are not only able to make unlimited transactions but are also able to augment their savings with competitive perks that are compounded and paid daily. As a result, advantages are available to customers as withdrawals or compounded benefits in their accounts. "Customers' financial strength will be enhanced not only by the availability of limitless withdrawals but also by the intrinsic savings culture it fosters, as it is designed as a straightforward and easy-to-maintain service. The 'Daily' prefix on the product indicates the bank's desire to instil financial competency in its customers, who will now be able to earn more daily. We strongly encourage our current and prospective customers to take advantage of this unique opportunity to grow their finances while enjoying the peace and security that comes with it," added Muneer Al Balushi. ahlibank's experienced team of professionals constantly keep their eyes and ears on the market to understand and assess customer choices and feedback. This helps the bank deep dive into key trends, and needs of customers, enabling thought through product innovation. The latest 'Daily Multiplier Account' reiterates ahlibank's belief that innovation is the key to progress. ahlibank offers a wide portfolio of innovative banking products and services to the traditional and Islamic sectors.

Splash's School of Cool is back in session

MUSCAT: With the school term right around the corner, Splash is revving up to debut a collection that has everything you need to make this your most stylish school year yet. From elegant, tailored pieces that are a reminiscence of the hey-days of Y2K fashion to cute character nightwear sets that make for perfect sleeper attire, the collection checks off your back-to-school shopping list. The easy-to-wear styles are predominantly crafted from sustainably sourced BCI cotton, recycled polyester, sustainable viscose, and other eco-friendly materials, making it not just stylish but a responsible collection too. With pieces adhering to the needs of your school calendar, the collection opens with classic academia-inspired looks to ensure that you are primed and prepped for your first day of school. Think menswear tailoring, vintage details, neutrals intercepted with preppy checks and stripes, femi-



nine collars, and crop-length blouses — key transitional pieces that take you all the way to winter. The casual looks shine with inventive graphics and characters from the realm of the virtual Splash celestial collection and Dis-

ney favourites. The modish silhouettes embrace a relaxed style with cargo joggers, knotted-front tees, and oversized tailoring to create effortless and comfy looks. Added to the mix is activewear with hyper-bright and monochrome pal-

ettes from Kappa. Denim is at the forefront of the collection, featuring utility styles refreshed with soft silhouettes, up-cycled techniques, and durable designs that evoke 90's nostalgia. The voluminous silhouettes and sustainable fabrics make them wardrobe favourites that are mixed and matched to create iconic styles that transcend fickle trends. From oh-so-comfy nightwear to best friend night sets for sleepovers to lingerie—the thoughtfully designed style supplies will add to the excitement of the new school year. Not one to forget about accessories, the drop also includes stylish backpacks, belts, hair accessories, socks, and caps to round off your back-to-school essentials. Attractively priced and with inclusive sizes extending from XS to plus, the Splash back-to-school collection is now available to shop across the Middle East in Splash stores, Splash at Centrepoint and online.

BUSINESS TRAINING PROGRAMME

Bank Muscat employees undergo LEADSkill business training

MUSCAT: In line with its pioneering role in the development of Omani human resources, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has partnered with the Faculty of Business of Sohar University represented by Al Masar Training Institute to provide 19 high-potential bank employees from Al Dhahirah, Buraimi, North and South Al Batinah with specialised training to improve critical thinking, management and leadership skills. The bank's employees underwent training through the LEADSkill programme, which upskilled and empowered them to lead, manage accounting and financial matters, and drive change interventions. The LEADSkill programme ended with a Capstone Business

Challenge and the awarding of certificates to the trainees recently. In addition to enhancing the ability of employees to their new responsibilities and adhere to the highest standards of integrity at work, the programme also included several assorted activities to enhance their participation and interaction during the training. Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager – Regional Branches, Bank Muscat said: "The bank's employees are the core strength and the primary reason for its success and accomplishments. Hence, Bank Muscat continuously invests resources and time to further develop their capabilities. The bank is also closely supporting efforts for the further development of Omani youth



through specialised programmes and courses to realise national development goals. We thank Sohar University and Al Masar Training Institute for their excellent training programme, which will help our employees to reach their full potential and contribute in the

best possible manner to the bank and the nation." Professor Nur Naha Binti Abu Mansor, Dean, Faculty of Business at Sohar University, said: "We are delighted to collaborate with Bank Muscat to offer the LEADSkill programme to talented bank em-

ployees from the different branches in different Wilayats. The programme is a Faculty of Business project based on global standards of essential leadership skills and will go a long way in enabling the participants to overcome business challenges and apply best practices in leading and managing teams in their respective sectors." The bank's Jadara Academy, which is accredited by the Global Association of Corporate Universities and Academics, provides a comprehensive framework for all staff learning and development programmes. It works with reputed local and international higher educational organisations to train and develop the bank's human resources. Bank Muscat employees who took part in the LEADSkill

programme expressed their happiness and appreciation for the programme and for the various efforts made by the bank to develop Omani human resources. It may be noted that Bank Muscat has over 4,000 employees and enjoys over 95 per cent Omanisation and excellent gender equality. Over 48 per cent of the bank's employees are women, who work across different departments and at all levels including the bank's management. As a result of its strong HR processes and abundant learning and development opportunities, most of its senior and middle management today have been promoted from within the bank's ranks. It must also be noted in this regard that as part of its strategic plan, the bank continually creates a pipeline of leaders.

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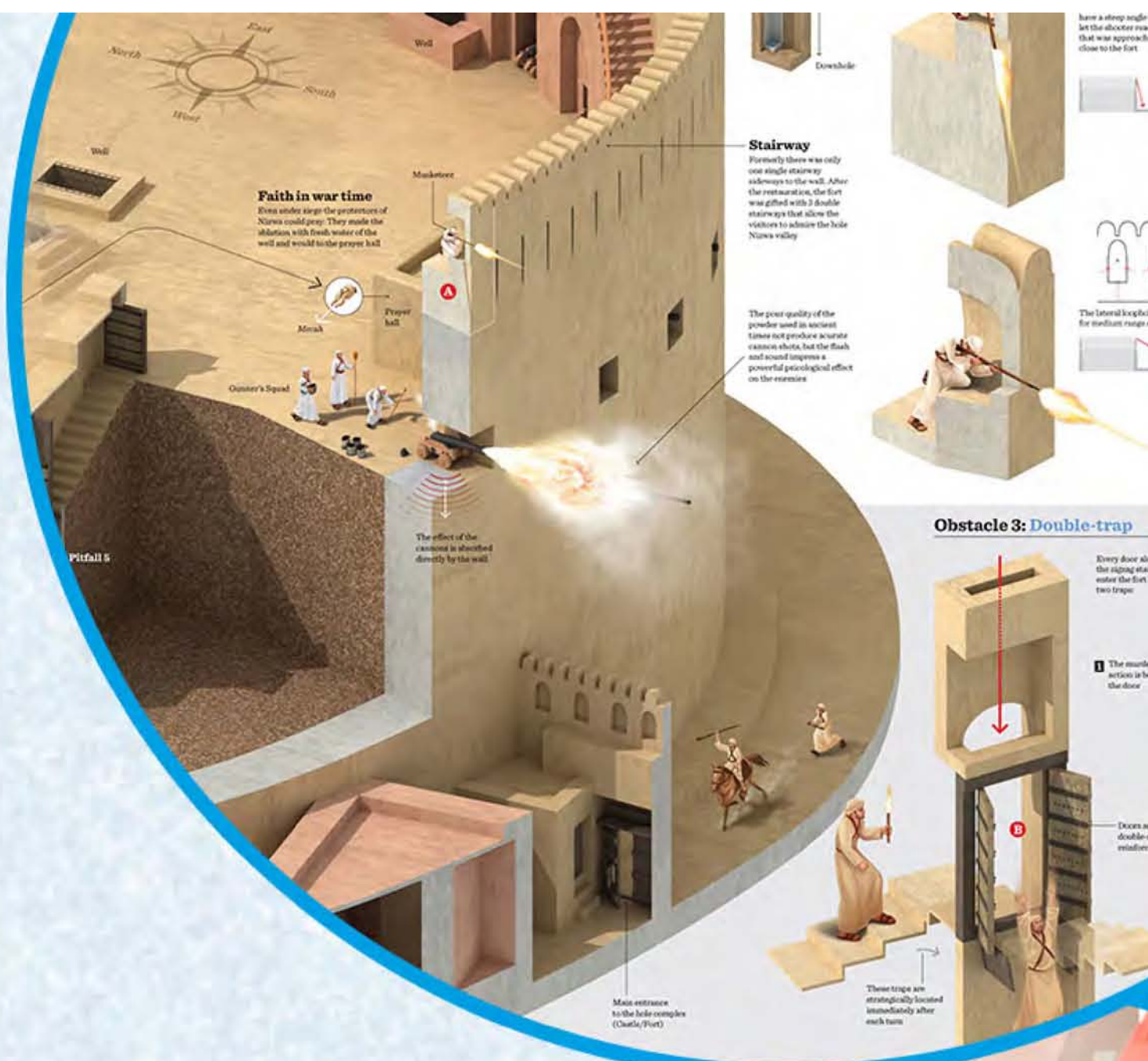


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