

**ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER
RECEIVES TOP IRANIAN
MILITARY OFFICIAL**

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Tuesday Maj. Gen Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. **>A5**



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**ARRIVALS AT OMAN'S
AIRPORTS INCREASE**

MUSCAT: The number of international inbound and outbound flights via Oman's airports increased by the end of February 2023, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). **>A5**



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ON TUESDAY



His Majesty issues two Royal Decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq issued two Royal Decrees reading as follows: Royal Decree No. (28/2023) on endorsing the organisational structure of the Foreign Ministry.

Article (1) endorses the organisational structure of the Foreign Ministry as per the annex attached to this decree.

Article (2) cancels Royal Decree No. 69/2009 on the endorsement of the Foreign Ministry's organisational structure, as well as all that contradicts this decree

or contravenes its provisions.

Article (3) states that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

Royal Decree No. (29/2023) on establishing an embassy for the Sultanate of Oman in Hungary.

Article (1) establishes an embassy for the Sultanate of Oman in Hungary.

Article (2) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — **OMA**

MINISTRY OF FINANCE PAYS MORE THAN OMR325MN DUES TO PRIVATE SECTOR

Public revenue at the end of first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR3,217 million

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance announced that it has paid more than OMR325 million due for private sector in accordance with payment vouchers received through the e-financial system with a completed documentary cycle.

The Ministry's Fiscal Performance Bulletin pointed out that public revenue at the end of the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR3,217 million, up by 6 percent compared to OMR3,025 million registered over the corresponding period in 2022. This is mainly attributed to an increase in oil revenue and current revenue, representing 53 percent and 25 percent, respectively, of the total public revenue.



Net oil revenue at the end of the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR1,707 million, increasing by 9 percent when compared to OMR1,565 million achieved over the same period in 2022. This is driven by higher oil prices of \$85 per barrel, as well as an increase



Net oil revenue at the end of first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR1,707mn, increasing by 9% compared to OMR1,565mn achieved over the same period in 2022

in oil production to 1,063,000 barrels per day.

Net gas revenue at the end of the first quarter of 2023 decreased by 12 percent to stand at OMR720 million compared to OMR819 million registered over the same period in 2022.

The decline is a result of a deduction of gas purchase and transport expenses from the total revenue collected from the Integrated Gas Company. **>A5**

ACHIEVEMENT

Omani cricketer rises to No. 5 in ICC ODI all-rounder rankings

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The recent rise to World No. 5 in the ICC Men's ODI All-Rounder Rankings of Oman captain Zeeshan Maqsood is a reason of joy for the whole cricket fraternity of the Sultanate.

Maqsood joins an exclusive club of top-five ranked all-rounders and is in the company of Bangladesh's all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, Rashid Khan of Afghanistan and Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza. This is the first time that an Omani cricketer has scaled such heights. Adding further shine to his success is the fact that Maqsood is the only cricketer from Associate nations among the top-five.

In his remarks to *Times of Oman*, the 35-year-old Maqsood said: "It is a great honour to be up there among the top-five all-rounders of the world."

"I am proud of my achievement



that has taken me to No.5 in ODI cricket's all-rounders list. Hard work and dedication has been the key to my success story."

The left-handed batter and bowler added: "This [my climb] has been possible due to the support of Oman Cricket board, coaches, team-mates, and fans. I will try to push further as there is still plenty to achieve ahead."

"My individual rankings apart,

I am happy to have played my role in many Oman victories, which gives me more satisfaction and I am looking ahead to contribute more in the team's success," he said. As per the latest ICC rankings, Maqsood attained his career-best rankings with total rating points of 252 on April 29.

Maqsood also made the biggest jump among the 20 cricketers featured in the latest rankings, climbing three places to reach world No. 5 from the previous rating update of the world governing body.

Among the 20 are star players of the likes of Mitchell Santner (New Zealand, 6th), Wanindu Hasaranga (Sri Lanka, 9th), Chris Woakes (England, 10th), Alzarri Joseph (West Indies, 11th) Hardik Pandya (India, 13th), Glenn Maxwell (Australia, 14th), Shadab Khan (Pakistan, 15th), Josh Hazlewood (Australia, 15th), and Moeen Ali (England, 20th). **>A5**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



OMAN

S. Korea keen to expand trade ties with Sultanate

2 A top South Korean official has expressed hope in strengthening the trade ties between Oman and South Korea in the future. "We share a strong bond and have excellent trade relations," he said. **>A3**

OMAN

Over 40 injured in gas leak accident

1 At least 42 people were injured following a chlorine gas leak at Al Muwailih Industrial Area in Sohar, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDA) reported on Tuesday. **>A2**

WORLD

Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan arrested

3 Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was taken into custody by paramilitary forces. The former leader was arrested during a court appearance in Islamabad over anti-graft charges. **>A6**

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National campaign for organ donation in Oman launched

MUSCAT: The Omani Association for Organ Donation on Tuesday outlined its national media campaign aimed to raise public awareness about organ donation. Through the “Shifa” application of the Ministry of Health, the campaign targets the registration of 100,000 donors in its first year. This was unveiled during a press conference held by the Omani Association for Organ Transplantation.

Dr. Noreen Yousef Al Balushi, Liver and Pancreas Surgery Consultant, specialist in Organ Transplants, President of the Omani Association for Organ Transplantation, said that the campaign targets all age groups. The campaign is being conducted through various media channels, including print press, audio and visual media and electronic platforms, she added. It seeks to use community events as a starting point to spread the culture of organ donation, she explained. “During the first year of the campaign, we seek to cover a large number of cases of organ failure and to build a special centre for organ transplants,” Said Dr. Noreen. She pointed out that the campaign will focus on the values of humanity, social solidarity, transparency and commitment to institutional and individual responsibility.



Dr. Noreen hopes that the campaign will develop into a national drive and restore hope to many patients. Meanwhile, Dr. Neven Ibrahim Al Kalbani, Head of the Organ Transplant Department at the Royal Hospital, member of the National Committee for Organ and Tissue Transplantation, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that, so far 24 liver transplants and 325 kidney transplants have been conducted. “Shifa” application However, a large number of patients awaiting kidney transplants and surviving on dialysis stands at 2,300 patients. The

positive side is that the number of people registered for organ donation after death through the Ministry of Health’s “Shifa” application amounts to 8,000. Recently, the Royal Hospital, represented by the Department of Organ Transplantation, launched an educational electronic application for organ transplantation codenamed (Your Donation is Life—No.8). The application, which is the first one of its kind in the Arab world, is designed to provide all information related to organ transplantation. It takes the number “8” to indicate that an organ donor can save 8 lives. The educational electronic application is launched as a measure to correct some misconceptions about organ donation. It will be a reliable source in this aspect. — ONA

Over 40 injured in gas leak accident

Times News Service

MUSCAT: At least 42 people were injured following a chlorine gas leak at Al Muwailih Industrial Area in Sohar, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) reported on Tuesday. In his remarks to *Times of Oman*, an official from CDAA said: “Among the injured were four Omani citizens while the remaining were expats from Asian nationalities. All the injured were

treated and are out of danger.” Earlier on Tuesday morning, the CDAA said that its team, specialised in dealing with hazardous materials accidents in North Al Batinah Governorate, responded to a report of chlorine gas leakage from a cylinder in Al Muwailih Industrial Area. The team responded swiftly and managed to contain the gas leak. The CDAA said: “A total of 42 people suffered medium to critical injuries as a result of gas inha-

lation.” Reacting to the gas leak, the Environment Department in North Al Batinah Governorate, said: “In cooperation with the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, the directorate dealt with an accident of chlorine gas leakage from a cylinder in Al Muwailih Industrial Area. The cylinder was removed from the accident site and other procedures were concluded while dealing with such accidents.”



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Minister meets UNICEF official

MUSCAT: Dr. Laila Ahmed Al Najjar, Minister of Social Development, held a meeting in her office on Tuesday with Adele Khader, Regional Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the Middle East and North Africa, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman. The meeting discussed a joint programme between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the period 2022-2025. It also touched on the vision of the Ministry of Social Development for developing programmes related to child protection. The meeting dealt with ways to benefit from the technical expertise of the UNICEF in training Omani nationals in the field of childhood affairs. The minister underscored the significance of the UNICEF delegation's visit which, she said, “reflects the depth of relations and offers an opportunity to exchange views and expertise on various sectors of social action, most notably childhood care”. — ONA

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South Korea keen to expand trade ties with Oman, says top Korean official



Oman and South Korea share a strong bond and have excellent trade relations

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A top South Korean official has expressed hope in strengthening the trade ties between the Sultanate of Oman and South Korea in the future.

In an exclusive chat with *Times of Oman* in South Korea during the visit of delegates of the World Journalists Congress, Kim Dong-yeon, Governor of Gyeonggi Province, said: "Oman and South Korea share a strong bond and have excellent trade relations."

"We are happy with the existing economic ties but there is ample scope for expanding the trade ties between the two countries as more and more opportunities grow in both the nations."

The former Deputy Prime Minister of South Korea was speaking to *Times of Oman* at an official reception hosted for journalists from across 50 nations at the Governor's house.

The 36th governor of Gyeonggi Province, South Korea's most populous province, has been at the forefront of efforts to attract investments to the province and actively promote international trade relations.

Dong-yeon, who is also a former



South Korean finance minister, said that "cooperation in green energy" could be one of the areas for collaboration between Oman and South Korea.

Gyeonggi Province is the nation's largest local autonomous region. Several types of industrial environments for high-tech and traditional industries, large corporations and SMEs feature in the province. It is the "Opportunity Capital" and is a microcosm of South Korea.

The governor said: "The province has attracted investments from the world's top four semiconductor equipment companies and is a hub of new growth industries such as IT, biotech, mobility, AI and big data."

Dong-yeon said that Oman and South Korea share common concerns on the climate crisis and are determined to overcome it.

"We are happy to share our expertise in green energy with Oman as we realise that the future is about carbon neutrality and the focus grows on renewable energy. We will work together for a sustainable future," said the top South Korean official.

Responding to the climate crisis, the province has created a carbon-neutral fund to support low-carbon technologies so as to foster the growth of a carbon-neutral industrial ecosystem in the province.

The province has implemented 'basic ordinance on carbon neutrality and Green growth' among other initiatives.

Gyeonggi Province has also introduced renewable energy into public buildings and public environmental facilities and is building infrastructure for the hydrogen economy, including hydrogen supply, hydrogen transportation and the hydrogen city. Among the other measures that the province has adopted are expansion of multi-use container utilisation programmes to reduce plastic waste and curb fine dust emissions at workplaces by supporting improvement of air pollution control facilities at small businesses.

LARGE-SCALE ATTENDANCE



Students forum at Oman Across Ages Museum hosts multiple workshops

EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC SECTOR



Audit Authority conducts training programme in conjunction with 33 government departments

MANAH: The second day of the 20th Students Forum, held at Oman Across Ages Museum, saw a flurry of activities on Tuesday.

Located in the Wilayat of Manah in the heart of the Governorate of A'Dakhiliyah, Oman Across Ages Museum is just one hour and 40 minutes (160 km) by car from Muscat and 20 minutes (20km) from Nizwa.

On Tuesday, there was an encouraging response as large-scale attendance of academics, students, administrative staff from branches of UTAS along with employees of a number of private and public sectors in the halls of the museum was witnessed.

A workshop entitled "Your way to build a brand" was delivered by Professor Rayyan Abdullah, Dean of Fine Arts College in Leipzig in Germany. Professor Abdullah is a renowned name in the world of branding and has worked on branding of well-known companies as Bugatti, Volkswagen, German transportation and many others.

Abdullah said that in order to become a No.1 designer, one should always start with mental designing and have a paper and pen ready to start with.

Abdullah said: "Designing is the biggest philosophy of the company on the smallest space given."

He explained in depth the factors that help in designing a logo or redesigning a brand of a company in an outstanding manner.

Designing fonts is one of the great skills performed by Professor Abdullah. He designed unique fonts for brands of big companies as Burberry, Metro Dubai and Nokia and has published a book on fonts of big companies. Wa-seem Qaddora was the presenter of the second workshop, titled "Branding Visual Identity".

A specialist in visual communication and identity, he spoke about the difference between brand and brand identity.

He also talked about brand naming and said: "Brand naming is always a part of branding".

Qaddora added: "We are living in a branding world, the most important thing in the company or business is the brand logo, sometimes the logo branding is more expensive than whatever the company owns. Sometimes re-branding a logo costs a company more than designing a logo."

UTAS Nizwa student Jawaher Al Kharusi spoke about how to make reels. She explained how to make creative reels, possible obstacles for the reel makers to encounter and how to overcome.

One of the attendees, Rawan Al Hasani, mass communication student at UTAS Nizwa, expressed her happiness at participating in this workshop. "I am very glad to be given a chance to attend this fruitful workshop that witnessed a huge attendance from students of different branches of UTAS. I can make reels with better quality from now onwards".

There were also workshops on "Virtual Reality Technology" by Congenial Production Company and "Creative Design Binoculars" by Abdul Majeed Al Shehhi.

Participations of the hackathon were received at the end of the day for evaluation. A theatrical play entitled "Lost Souls Station" was conducted in Nizwa Hall at UTAS Nizwa. The participants of the Forum from UTAS branches will also be taken for a tour of the traditional Nizwa Souq.

MUSCAT: The State's Audit Institution (SAI) on Tuesday conducted a training programme on auditing tenders, contracts and procurements.

As many as 33 government departments took part in the programme, aimed at empowering the public sector's professional and functional workforce.

The programme reflects the existing institutional partnership focusing on protecting public funds and raising the efficiency of their use.

The programme, which brings together employees of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus, runs until 11 May. Eight groups of trainees will benefit from the programme this year.

The training programme presents anomalies that were revealed to the audit institution during monitoring operations.

The aim is to develop the capabilities of the participants and enable them overcome such anomalies in their respective institutions. — OMA



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UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE:

LAND OF

There has been an increase in the number of visitors to the UNESCO World Heritage Site in Dhofar called the Land of Frankincense, according to the Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar. Frankincense is an integral part of Oman's culture and heritage. This aromatic resin is mostly used in incense and perfume and obtained from the tree bark of genus Boswellia. Frankincense is also known for its healing and restorative properties. Locally known as luban, Oman is known to produce the world's finest frankincense.

The best quality of frankincense is found in the Dhofar region and is abundantly available in the souqs. Hafa Souq in Salalah is an exclusive place that sells them. Oman's frankincense trail in Dhofar region was visited by explorers Marco Polo and Lawrence of Arabia. The frankincense tree (boswellia sacra) can still be found in Wadi Dawkah. The trees grow in the alluvial bed of the wadi under the extreme heat of this region.

According to UNESCO, "the frankincense trees of Wadi Dawkah and the remains of the caravan oasis of Shisr/Wubar and the affiliated ports of Khor Rori and Al Baleed vividly illustrate the trade in frankincense that flourished in this region as one of the most important trading activities of the ancient



FRANKINCENSE

and medieval world."

The four components of the Land of Frankincense dramatically illustrate the trade in frankincense that flourished in this region for many centuries. They constitute outstanding testimony to the civilisations in south Arabia since the Neolithic age.

According to Oman's Ministry of Tourism, "Frankincense is a symbol of life, or rather it is life itself, for the Dhofari people. It is not a mere tree, but an embodiment of culture, history, sociology and geography."

The Museum of the Land of Frankincense is located in the region of Al Baleed in Salalah and borders the ruins of Al Baleed Archaeological Park. Visitors can discover how trade with Frankincense and maritime strength ensured that the region flourished in the 12th century.





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BILATERAL RELATIONS

Royal Office Minister receives senior Iranian military official

MUSCAT: Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received here on Tuesday Maj.Gen Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The meeting touched on areas of joint cooperation and means of promoting them.

The two sides also reviewed march of the historical relations binding Oman and Iran

The two sides also reviewed march of the historical relations binding Oman and Iran. — **ONA**



IN BRUSSELS

Oman's Minister of Energy and Minerals meets Belgian officials

BRUSSELS: Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals met separately in Brussels on Tuesday with Van der Straeten, Minister for Energy of Belgium and Maros Sefcovic, Vice-President of the European Commission.

During the meetings, they discussed means of enhancing co-operation and coordination with the European Commission in the regulatory frameworks for clean hydrogen production and transportation projects. The meetings also explored opportunities to enhance existing cooperation with the Kingdom of Belgium in the areas of investment in green hydrogen production, transportation and storage projects.



Meanwhile, a series of specialised workshops were held between the European Commission, the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium during the visit. — **ONA**

ON TUESDAY

Cruise ship with 1,377 passengers anchors in Salalah Port

SALALAH: Salalah Port on Tuesday received a cruise ship with 1,377 passengers on its board, including 918 tourists. The cruise ship has a tourist programme to visit many ports around the world.

Tourist programme

The tourist programme of the ship, which came from Port Sultan Qaboos in the Governorate of Muscat and heads to the Port of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, included tours to tourist attractions and archaeological sites renowned in the Governorate of Dhofar, besides visiting beaches and traditional bazaars in the Wilayat of Salalah.

The Sultanate of Oman annually witnesses visits of many cruise ships, thanks to its sea location overlooking the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. — **ONA**



COMMUNITY REUNION

Bangladesh Social Club urges expats to work more responsibly

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Leaders of Bangladesh Social Club Oman urged Bangladeshi expatriates to work more responsibly in order to demonstrate trustworthiness and obedience towards the rules and regulations of Sultanate of Oman.

They also requested the community not to get involved any activity in any circumstance that goes against the law to enhance the brotherly relation between Oman and Bangladesh.

Leaders of Bangladesh community and prominent expatriates emphasised on these issues in a gathering of the community on the occasion of Eid reunion recently.

The newly formed "Greater Noakhali Wing", a wing of Bangladesh Social Club, organized a social event at Al Nahda Resort and Spa, Barka, to celebrate the formation of the wing.

Tuing Aye, Second Secretary and Head of Chancery of Bangladesh Embassy Muscat was the chief guest of the occasion on behalf of the ambassador HE Md.



Nazrul Islam. Sirazul Hoque, the chairman of Bangladesh Social Club Oman, vice-president Azimul Haque Babul (CIP), secretary M N Amin attended in the event as special guest.

Cholim Uddin Selim, the convener of Greater Noakhali Wing, presided the celebration. Chief adviser Iftakher ul Hasan Chowdhury was special guest of the occasion. Joint convener Gazi Polash and member secretary of the wing Abu Yusuf were present at the stage among others.

In his speech, the chief guest Tuing Aye emphasized on the loyalty of expatriates towards rules and regulations of Oman. He requested all Bangladeshi expats not to violate any rule or regulation of the country at any situation to strengthen the relationship between two brotherly countries.

While addressing the gathering, president of Bangladesh Social Club, Sirazul Islam said, "Oman is one of the most peaceful and safe country in the world. We are lucky that we have a very good brotherly relation with Omani people. I request all Bangladeshi expatriates to show case highest level of loyalty towards this country at all means in all circumstances."

The CEO of Gulf overseas Exchange Co. LLC Iftakher ul Hasan Chowdhury, who is also the chief adviser of Greater Noakhali Wing urged the community to follow the law of the land, avoid illegal gathering and send money through legal channels.

"We are now highest amongst all expatriates in Oman, so, our responsibilities are more and we must have more commitment. Our lawful and responsible activities will help us to build a strong bridge of friendship between Oman and Bangladesh. At the same time, sending money to Bangladesh through proper channels will help to boost our economy."

The Greater Naokhali region predominately includes the districts of Noakhali, Feni and Lakshmipur in Bangladesh. In 1984, the district of Noakhali was divided into three districts for administrative convenience.

NCSI DATA

Arrivals at Oman's airports rise by 94%

MUSCAT: The number of international inbound and outbound flights via Oman's airports increased by the end of February 2023, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of inbound and outbound international flights through Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport and Sohar Airport surged by 112.4% by the end of February 2023 to stand at 14,250 compared to 6,708 during the corresponding period in 2022.

Moreover, the number of domestic inbound and outbound flights via Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport and Sohar Airport increased slightly by 1.1% to reach 1,994 compared to

1,973 during the same period in 2022.

The number of arrivals through Oman's airports increased by 94% as the number of inbound, outbound and transit passengers through Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport, Muscat Airport and Duqm Airport reached 2,231,451 by the end of February 2023. The number of outbound passengers through the airports till the end of the same month also increased by 113% compared to the corresponding period in 2022.

Nationality-wise, Indians topped the list of passengers with 123,130 passengers by the end of February 2023, followed by Bangladeshi passengers who stood at 44,233 and 37,130 Pakistani passengers. — **ONA**

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Public spending up

< FROM Moreover, current revenue amounted to OMR787 million at the end of the first quarter of 2023, going up by OMR151 million when compared to OMR636 million registered over the same period in 2022.

Public spending by the end of the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR2,767 million, comprising a rise by OMR99 million (4 percent) when compared to the same period in 2022. This is mainly due to an increase in current expenditure and contributions and other expenses.

Further, current expenditures of civil and government units

at the end of the first quarter of 2023 amounted to OMR1,033 million, comprising a rise by OMR79 million compared to OMR954 registered during the same period in 2022.

Development expenditure of civil and government units during the same period amounted to OMR117 million, representing 13 percent of total development spending, i.e. OMR900 million allocated for 2023.

Meanwhile, the State Budget registered a surplus of OMR450 million at the end of the first quarter of 2023 compared to a surplus of OMR357 million achieved over the same period in 2022. — **ONA**

OMAN CRICKET

A long journey to the top-five for Maqsood

< FROM A1 It has been a long journey to the top-five for Maqsood, Oman's long-serving skipper. The 35-year-old left-handed batter and left-arm orthodox bowler was ranked 216 in 2019 before breaking into top-100 in 2020 with the best rank of 77. He then catapulted

into 24th spot in 2021, then a year later, Maqsood made the world notice by reaching No. 8.

His achievements were hailed by the ICC when he was conferred with the 2021 ICC Men's Associate Cricketer of the Year award in January 2022. From 2019-2023, Maqsood has played 37 ODIs and

scored a total of 1,021 runs with the highest of 109 [against USA] and an average of 31.90. He made his ODI debut on April 27, 2019 vs Namibia.

Maqsood picked up 53 wickets in 37 games with the best figures of 4/15 against UAE. He had an economy rate of 4.06 and an average

of 22.94 that included four four-wicket hauls. Maqsood scored 969 runs in a series (ICC World Cricket League 2, 2019-23) to be fourth best in the world for most runs in a series by a captain. He is also among the top-10 bowlers for most wickets in the same series, having picked 47 in 34 games.

NEW ZEALAND

Storms pause search for missing student

AUCKLAND: New Zealand police temporarily on Tuesday suspended the search and rescue operation for a high school student who went missing during a school trip to the caves in Auckland as heavy rains led to flash floods in the country's North Island.

One of the 15 students went missing in the Abbey Caves complex near Whangarei, where they

went for an outdoor education class with two teachers. The remaining 14 students and both teachers are accounted for.

Operation suspended
The rescue teams suspended operation at 5 p.m. after searching the area all day while it was lashed by heavy rains throughout the day. They will resume the search at

first light. "Our thoughts are with the friends and family of the unaccounted for student," New Zealand Police Superintendent Tony Hill said in a statement. "The school is also being supported by the Ministry of Education's Traumatic Incident Team."

School Principal Karen Gilbert-Smith said the incident was "hugely upsetting for all concerned."

Some, however, contended that the group should not have been on an excursion in such treacherous conditions. Gilbert-Smith urged parents to be patient in a school Facebook post.

"In time we will seek to understand how this situation occurred, but for now I ask that we stay united," she said.

— DW



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Pakistan’s former prime minister Imran Khan arrested in Islamabad



Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah told reporters that Khan was arrested by Pakistan's anti-corruption body, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), after he did not appear before a tribunal "despite notices"



him of "corruption and corrupt practices."

In a pre-recorded video released by party officials, Khan said "by the time these words reach you I would have been detained under an illegitimate case."

How did Khan's party react?
Officials from Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf political party have urged supporters to take to the streets and "shut down Pakistan" in protest.

"Pakistan's people, this is the time to save your country. You won't get any other opportunity," the party said on Twitter.

However, police have vowed to strictly enforce an order prohibiting gatherings of more than four people.

Khan's close aide, former information minister Fawad Chaudhry, denounced the arrest

as an "abduction."

Footage broadcast on national television showed Khan being manhandled by dozens of paramilitary rangers and taken into an armored car.

"As we reached court's biometric room to mark the attendance, dozens of rangers attacked us," Ali Bukhari, a lawyer for the party, told the news agency.

Pakistan's political crisis
Khan was ousted by a no-confidence vote in April 2022. He claims his ouster was illegal and part of a Western conspiracy.

Khan has campaigned against the government of his successor Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, and demanded early elections.

The conflict between the two politicians has escalated amid the country's worst economic crisis in decades. Khan's support-

ers have clashed with police on several occasions.

In recent days, Khan has accused a senior intelligence officer, Major-General Faisal Naseer, of being involved in an assassination attempt last year during which he was shot in the leg. The military said these comments were "fabricated" and "unacceptable."

Anonymous officials from the NAB told the Associated Press that Khan will be brought before an anti-graft tribunal later on Tuesday.

Khan has almost 100 cases registered against him since he was ousted — a tactic analysts say successive governments have used to silence their opponents in a country where the military holds undue influence.

In most cases, he faces being barred from public office if convicted. — DW

High Court summons officials over Imran Khan’s arrest

ISLAMABAD: Following ex-Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan's arrest outside the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday by Rangers, the IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq took notice of the matter and summoned the Islamabad IGP and the interior secretary within "15 minutes," reported Geo News.

He also directed the additional attorney general to appear before the court in 15 minutes and instructed him to immediately find out who was behind the arrest. "If an inquiry has to be conducted, action will also be taken against the prime minister and ministers," the chief justice said.

Justice Farooq further asked: "Tell us in which case the arrest was made?"

The Islamabad advocate general then requested that the court extend the time of 15 minutes to half an hour; however, the request was rejected and he was ordered to appear in 15 minutes, reported Geo News.

The PTI chief was taken into custody by Rangers personnel, who were acting on the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) warrant, from the premises of

Islamabad High Court where the former premier had gone to seek bail in multiple cases registered against him, reported ARY News. According to the NAB notice, Khan's warrants were issued on May 1 by NAB chairman Lt Gen (retd) Nazir Ahmad Butt.

In a statement, Inspector General of Police, (IGP) Islamabad Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that Imran Khan was arrested in the Al-Qadir Trust case, adding that the situation is under control.

Meanwhile, Islamabad police further said that Section 144 had been imposed in the federal capital and rejected the PTI's allegations that people were tortured.

Taking to Twitter, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that Imran had failed to appear before the court despite being issued several notices to him in the inquiry.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had launched an investigation against Imran Khan, Bushra Bibi and others for the alleged gain of hundreds of canals of land in the name of Al Qadir University Trust, which reportedly caused a loss of 190 million pounds to the national exchequer. — ANI

SUDAN UPDATES



Saudi-hosted talks yield ‘no progress’ yet

JEDDAH: No resolution is in sight for the fighting which has gripped Sudan since mid April, reports suggested on Monday, amid ongoing talks coordinated by the US and Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea city of Jeddah.

The conflict between the armed forces, under the leadership of army general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo have left hundreds killed and thousand more injured.

Each of the warring generals sent a representative to the talks, which kicked off on Saturday.

However, a Saudi diplomat who spoke to AFP news agency on Monday said "no major progress" has thus far been made.

"A permanent ceasefire isn't on the table... Every side believes it is capable of winning the battle," the diplomat added.

Both parties have hinted they were engaging with the talks to tackle humanitarian issues like safe passage, rather than end the fighting. Several cease-fire agreements have been announced since April 15, but all were violated shortly afterward.

The talks are set to continue "in

the following days," the Saudi Foreign Ministry said, without providing a specific timetable. They aim to achieve "an effective short-term halt" to the fighting, as well as facilitating aid delivery and restoring basic services.

The Saudi ministry is also pushing for "a timetable for expanded negotiations to reach a permanent cessation of hostilities", it said.

Sudanese citizens stuck in the country amid the fighting or forced to seek refuge abroad are eagerly waiting for the talks to yield any results.

"If the Jeddah negotiations fail to stop the war this would mean that we won't be able to return to our homes and our lives," Tamer Ibrahim, a 35-year-old government employee in Bahri, across the Blue Nile from Khartoum, told the Reuters news agency.

"We're waiting on these negotiations because they're our only hope."

The United Nations top humanitarian official Martin Griffiths arrived in Jeddah on Sunday with plans to meet both parties' representatives. He reportedly had asked to join the negotiations, but his request remains pending. — DW

SURVEY FINDINGS

84% of Indian consumers show increased intent to travel against 45% in pre-Covid times

MUMBAI: Travel is back on the Indian consumer radar with over 84 per cent of people surveyed indicating an increased intent to travel in the next six months as against 45 per cent of respondents in pre-pandemic times, a survey by Thomas Cook (India) said.

According to India Holiday Report - May 2023 compiled by Thomas Cook (India), 82 per cent of respondents indicated a preference for 3-4 shorter trips or minications which can be either domestic or international short haul, in addition to at least one or two long annual trips of 10-12 days. Despite supply constraints leading to higher pricing, over 80 per cent of respondents displayed an appetite for higher spends of about 20 per cent in comparison with pre-pandemic times.

The survey said 75 per cent of multigenerational families and 62 per cent of couples or double-income no kids (DINKS) continue to display a strong travel desire.

In terms of high-growth segments which are emerging, Young India — which the company termed as millennials and Gen Z — forms the new powerhouse for the sector with the highest intent to travel of 95 per cent of the respondents.

Of India's seniors surveyed, 58 per cent of these are displaying high travel appetite, especially for premium holidays like cherry blossom tours in Japan and cruises. They have a significant disposable post-retirement income, along with topped-up funds from their children, the survey said.

According to the survey, the pandemic has induced restrictions has increased appreciation for life.

About 78 per cent of these re-



spondents opted for experience-led travel to create memories of a lifetime with deeper exploration and distinctive local elements as against regular sightseeing.

It said bucket list destinations comprised 65 per cent; gastronomy of 45 per cent; outdoor-adventure-fun consisted 50 per cent,

and culture and history were 30 per cent.

Domestic destinations favoured were Kashmir (60 per cent); Himachal and Uttarakhand (50 per cent), Ladakh (35 per cent), Northeast (40 per cent) Kerala (25 per cent), Andamans (30 per cent), Goa (30 per cent)

and Bhutan (30 per cent).

According to the survey, international tourism is witnessing a strong resurgence. Despite visa challenges, Europe is a clear favourite preferred by over 46 per cent of respondents, led by Switzerland, France, Spain and Italy. Short hauls (50 per cent) are witnessing rapid growth with increased interest for Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Oman; island destinations like Maldives, Mauritius (28 per cent).

According to Thomas Cook (India), it surveyed over 3,500 consumers and covers a comprehensive market, including India's metros, mini-metros like Pune, Chandigarh, Coimbatore and key Tier II-III markets of Jaipur, Indore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Nagpur, Surat, Baroda, Bhubaneswar, Lucknow, Mysore, Visakhapatnam, Guwahati, and Patna, among others.

— ANI

I get goosebumps watching Rinku bat, says KKR’s Russell

At most times, Andre Russell would have backed himself to face the final ball of a close chase, but on Monday he trusted Rinku Singh

KOLKATA: Player of the Match in the IPL match against Punjab Kings (PBKS) on Monday Andre Russell heaped praise on Rinku Singh who has emerged as a finisher for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in this season.

The West Indian batter said that he gets “goosebumps” watching Rinku bat the way he is doing for KKR.

Rinku Singh secured KKR’s win in the last ball by hitting a boundary as the batter scored 21 off just 10 balls in the match.

“In any other game, with any other batter, I’m not sure if I would run [a bye in the penultimate ball],” Russell told reporters after the match.

“I’ve never really done those things before. I would back myself to bat the last delivery and get the job done. But when you have a guy like Rinku, who has been so successful in the last couple of overs for us, and when you have such a fearless player who has a shot to counter any delivery, I was definitely confident.

“I gave him a hug and said, ‘listen, bring home the bacon for us; at the end of the day, we need you



at this point’, and he said, ‘okay, big man, no worries’. Happy days.”

Russell added: “I get goosebumps seeing him doing what he’s been doing. I have company at the back end, he soaks the pressure off and he’s been here for years now, a really hard-working guy. He’s very funny outside the field, I try to stay as close to him while we are training. Feeling good, now.”

“The key to Rinku’s performance is being very calm,” Russell said. “As a batter, you have to have an open mind and be relaxed. You can’t expect just a full-pitched delivery. You have to expect the slower ball, the yorker, the short ball at the head, and Rinku has a

shot for every delivery. That’s the key to his success. His technique is very simple... and I’ve been encouraging him whenever I get a chance to talk to him to stay humble.

“Because no matter how many people keep shouting ‘Russell, Russell, Russell’, I always just stay humble. Because when you get swell-headed, that’s when you lose it. He’s a great guy, I love him like a brother, and I hope he keeps doing what he’s doing.”

KKR are in the fifth spot in the points table with five wins, six losses and a total of 10 points. PBKS have slipped to the seventh position in the table with 10 points due to a low net-run rate. -ANI

I didn’t think about last ball: Rinku

KOLKATA: Rinku Singh again proved himself as a finisher in this year’s IPL winning the match for Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) on the last ball by smashing a boundary at the Eden Gardens.

“I didn’t think about the last ball. Even when I hit those five sixes, I hadn’t thought much. I

was playing on the merit of the ball. I had the belief in me that I could finish the game. I have got used to it, sometimes I bat at 5, sometimes at 6, 7. I practice that way. There is no particular way I like to celebrate,” said the KKR batter during the post-match presentation on Monday night. -ANI



PUNJAB KINGS

‘We don’t have a good off-spinner’

KOLKATA: Punjab Kings (PBKS) captain Shikhar Dhawan believed that his team lacks an effective off-spinner and that could be a major reason for the loss against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in the IPL match at the Eden Gardens on Monday.

After losing to KKR by 5 wickets, Shikhar Dhawan said, “Feels bad, of course not feeling great, we lost the match. Not an easy track to bat on, I felt that we had a good total. In the end, they played well.

“It was a great effort from Arshdeep [Singh], the way he has bounced back from the last game. All credit to him that he took the game to the last ball. I feel we don’t have a good off-spinner. That is where we are leaking a bit of runs when left-handers come in. This wicket was offering a turn as well, that is where we took the hit.” -Agencies



Shikhar Dhawan

ENGLAND BOWLER RETURNS HOME

Jordan replaces injured Archer for Mumbai

MUMBAI: England and Mumbai Indians’ fast bowler Jofra Archer returned home early from the IPL, just five weeks before the first Ashes Test begins.

Archer was replaced at Mumbai Indians by England teammate Chris Jordan, who played in Tuesday’s match against Royal Challengers Bangalore. Jordan made his IPL debut in 2016 and ahead of Tuesday’s match, had played 28 IPL matches and taken 27 wickets. The speedster has represented England in 87 T20Is and has scalped 96 T20I wickets.

The 28-year-old Archer has been struggling with a long-term elbow injury and has made just five appearances for Mumbai Indians this year, taking two wickets.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said Archer would undergo a “period of rest and rehabilitation”.

The first Test against Australia takes place from 16-20 June at Edgbaston. Archer had minor surgery on his right elbow earlier in April



Jofra Archer (left) and Chris Jordan



after missing four IPL matches.

It was Archer’s fifth surgery on the area in the past two years, having first struggled with the problem during England’s tour of India in 2021. He did not play for England for 22 months before a return to

white-ball action in February 2023, taking six wickets in England’s ODI win against South Africa.

“Archer has been recovering from right elbow surgery. However, pushing through the discomfort whilst recently playing, hoping it

will settle, has proven challenging,” an ECB statement read.

“Therefore, it has been agreed for him to return to the UK for a period of rest and rehabilitation to give him the best opportunity for a full recovery.” -Agencies

NZ SQUAD FOR ODI WORLD CUP

Latham, Southee as possible replacements for skipper Williamson

AUCKLAND: Tim Southee and Tom Latham could be in consideration for the replacement of Kane Williamson in New Zealand’s ODI World Cup captaincy, *ESPN-cricinfo* reported on Tuesday.

Southee could come into consideration for New Zealand’s ODI World Cup captaincy as well as Latham who has recently had the role in the absence of the injured Williamson.

Although Williamson has begun rehab following surgery on the ACL injury he sustained in the IPL he is still considered unlikely to make the World Cup in October.

Latham has been the regular stand-in when Williamson has been absent in recent years and was in charge for both legs in Pakistan where the T20Is were shared 2-2 and the home side claimed the ODIs 4-1.

Southee, who is New Zealand’s Test captain, was one of the players unavailable for that tour due to involvement in the IPL.

“That’s something that still needs to be worked out,” New Zealand coach Gary Stead said of the World Cup job. “Tim [Latham] is captaining the Test team as well.



Tim Southee (left) and Tom Latham

Tom [Southee] has had plenty of white-ball experience for us in the past. Though he captained really well [in Pakistan] with a number of guys he didn’t know much about and that’s always a challenge.”

Should Williamson not make the tournament there will also be

a key batting slot to fill at No. 3.

Devon Conway and Finn Allen were two other top-order batters at the IPL.

Meanwhile in Pakistan, Daryl Mitchell had an excellent ODI series with two centuries while Will Young also averaged 48, although



Gary Stead (left) and Kane Williamson

Stead said no decisions had been made about who would fill the position moving forward.

“Every opportunity Daryl gets in a number of different positions he keeps putting his hand up. He’s shown his value to the team overall,” Stead told reporters in Auckland.

“[Will’s] had a really good start to his international career, especially the white-ball game, and he’s had some of the Associate teams where he’s scored big runs but it was really pleasing to see how he went against what is a real quality attack when you think of Shaheen

Afridi, Haris Rauf, Shadab Khan.”

Stead indicated that it remained the case that “11 or 12” of the World Cup squad were likely locked in with those remaining positions still requiring some discussion.

The schedule for the tournament is yet to be confirmed - and will likely only come out after the IPL - with Stead adding that where they play certain teams may have a bearing on the final selections. He was hopeful that Kyle Jamieson, who is recovering from back surgery, will be in the frame.

“We’ve got three months before we need to land this so have time on our side,” he said. “We still haven’t got a World Cup draw yet, we don’t know where we are playing so it’s pretty hard to nail everything down until we get those things in place.”

Stead’s own contract is also up after the World Cup and a decision on his future is likely to be made before the tournament.

New Zealand now have a lengthy break from international cricket before next coming together for a three-match T20I series against UAE in Dubai in August. -Agencies



Suryakumar Yadav, Nehal Wadhwa slam fifties as MI cruise to win with 21 balls and six wickets to spare against RCB

MUMBAI: Suryakumar Yadav's explosive knock of 83 and Nehal Wadhwa's unbeaten half-century powered Mumbai Indians (MI) to a six-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) at Wankhede Stadium on Tuesday. A six over extra-cover off Harshal Patel by Wadhwa (52 off 34 balls) saw Mumbai mow down 200 in just 16.3 overs as they made a stunning climb from No. 8 to No. 3 on the leaderboard.

Glenn Maxwell and Faf du Plessis played terrific innings for RCB earlier as well, with both scoring half-centuries but their innings were trumped by Suryakumar Yadav (SKY), who batted at a level above all. Suryakumar and Wadhwa shared a 140-run third wicket partnership off just 64 balls to swing the game in their favour. From 101 needed off 60, Suryakumar's pyrotechnics that brought him his IPL best - a 35-ball 83 - brought the equation down to 8 off 26 when he walked off to a standing ovation. It was his fourth fifty-plus score in his last six outings, marking a sensational turnaround in fortunes after a cold first half. Ishan Kishan had provided a breezy start to the hosts with a 21-ball 42 but the batting woes of skipper Rohit Sharma continued as he departed for just 7. RCB's cause while defending was not helped by some ordinary bowling as the bowlers struggled with dew. The game, though, was decided by the finish to RCB's innings. They only made 63 in the last 45 balls of their innings, after

just the start of the mayhem that was to follow. Du Plessis was all muscle, backing away to swing cleanly and Maxwell was a mix of the inventive and the ridiculous, switch-hitting, slog-sweeping, scooping and reverse-ramping his way. The pair had put on 120 off just 60 balls when Maxwell dragged one across the line to deep midwicket for a 33-ball 68. RCB would lose Mahipal Lomror and du Plessis, for a 45-ball 61, in the next two overs to expose that brittle lower middle order. Dinesh Karthik gave the finishing kick as he slammed Kumar Kartikeya's left-arm spin in the 18th over. But his dismissal with 11 balls left had RCB short-changed. Akash Madhwal, the rookie seamer, delivered an excellent final over, only his second in the game, that went for six as RCB finished with 199. **Brief scores:** Royal Challengers Bangalore 199/6 (Glenn Maxwell 68, Faf du Plessis 65, Dinesh Karthik 30; Jason Behrendorff 3/36) lost to Mumbai Indians 200/4 in 16.3 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 83, Nehal Wadhwa 52 n.o.; Vijaykumar Vyshak 2/37). - Agencies

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GLIMPSES OF MUMBAI'S VICTORY AT WANKHEDE

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"It's an interesting time for both franchise and international cricket, I reckon. The leagues - there's a lot of movement happening in that space, but the golden question is what it's going to look like in a couple of years."

Trent Boult
Rajasthan Royals

TODAY'S MATCH

Chennai Super Kings VS Delhi Capitals

6pm, Chennai

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	NR	NRR	PTS
GT	11	8	3	0	+0.951	16
CSK	11	6	4	1	+0.409	13
MI	11	6	5	0	-0.255	12
LSG	11	5	5	1	+0.294	11
RR	11	5	6	0	+0.388	10
KKR	11	5	6	0	-0.079	10
RCB	11	5	6	0	-0.345	10
PBKS	11	5	6	0	-0.441	10
SRH	10	4	6	0	-0.472	8
DC	10	4	6	0	-0.529	8

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

OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS
The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by July 2023 reaching \$75.74, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by 36 cents from the price of Monday, which was \$76.10. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,672.59 points, down by 0.17 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04 per cent at 484.04 points. Oman Cables Industry, up 5.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non Convertible Bonds 2022, down 34.62 per cent, was the top loser.

Tethys Oil begins oil export from extended well in Oman

The three horizontal wells drilled on the Al Jumud discovery last year will now be evaluated, and the structure appraised for commercial viability

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oil export from the extended well test from Oman's Al Jumud discovery started at the end of March following the installation and commissioning of the fiscal meter, Tethys Oil said in a statement on Tuesday.
"The three horizontal wells drilled on the Al Jumud discovery last year will now be evaluated, and the structure appraised for commercial viability. An important, if not decisive, milestone has been reached in the continuing exploration of onshore Block 56 in Oman," the statement added.
The other major Block 56 event in Oman in the first quarter was the finalisation of the processing of the Central Area seismic. In-



terpretation is ongoing and by the end of the second quarter, we hope to have identified several drillable prospects to be tested by the drill bit in the second half of 2023.
Regarding Oman's Block 58 seismic interpretation is further along with work on the Fahd area completed, drillable prospects identified, and prospective resources estimated and risked. Interpretation of the Lahan area is nearing completion and these carbonate stringers imbedded in salt hold interesting potential but the year's exploration drilling in Block

58 will most likely target the large Fahd prospects, the statement further said.
The exploration drilling on Block 58 and Block 56 will be the main focus areas for the second half of the year and with prospective resources well close to 200 million barrels of oil, success could be transformative.
"We expect to revisit our old friend on Block 49, the Thameen-1 well, later this year, most likely in the third quarter. The well will undergo a re-test and preparations and tendering for the services

needed to re-enter the well and conduct hydraulic fracturing operations in the tight sandstone are ongoing," the statement said.
"With so much activity on our operated blocks, it is almost easy to forget our non-operated 30 per cent in Blocks 3&4.
"However, there were some encouraging exploration activities on these blocks as well. Three exploration wells were drilled, all of which encountered oil. The two near field ones, Elaf-1 and Rahbah-1 are undergoing production testing and evaluation,

the results of which are eagerly awaited," Tethys Oil said in the press statement.
The far-field Jari-1 well, drilled to test a large, so far unproven play, in the southern part of Block 4, encountered oil while drilling in tight sandstone of pre-Cambrian age. This Cryogenian sandstone, known locally as the Abu Mahara, is prolific in the area and, if the play works, substantial resources could be unlocked. "As expected, the reservoir was too tight to allow flows to surface and the next step is to further evaluate the well by

doing what Tethys is doing in Thameen in Block 49, test after creating fractures. We would not expect any results until the end of the second quarter, but those results will also be eagerly awaited," the statement further said.
But of course, exploration is not primarily what Block 3&4 is about. These blocks are the source of our production and cash flow. The operator CCED managed to stabilise production during the quarter at more than 31,000 barrels of oil per day, corresponding to almost 9,500 barrels of oil per day for Tethys 30 per cent stake. Infrastructure improvements continued and water handling stabilised and with four rigs in operation we would expect to see further contribution to production as the exploration focus of the first quarter changes back to production and appraisal drilling in and around the producing fields.
The press statement further said that oil prices above \$80 contributed to a strong operating cash flow which funded our continued strong investments during the quarter and also a comparatively high opex of about \$17 per barrel. First quarter opex has historically been comparatively high and we would expect opex per barrel to come down as the year evolves. Net entitlement returned to 52 per cent, reflecting the high level of capex and opex, resulting in a cash flow contribution from Blocks 3&4 which covered investments in our other blocks.

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN

CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR14 million



MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR14 million by way of allotting treasury bills on Tuesday.
The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR10 million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.645 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.645 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.62768 per cent and 4.64417 per cent, respectively.
The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR4 mil-

lion for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.755 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR89.755 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.99368 per cent and 5.05664 per cent, respectively.
Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of

ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).
It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.75 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.25 per cent.
Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. - **ONA**

CONFERENCE



Forum discusses legal aspects of financial sector

MUSCAT: Tasks of a conference titled 'Financial Sustainability and Development of the Financial Sector' kicked off in Muscat.
The conference targets finance managers, assistant managers, directors of planning and projects and personnel entrusted to implement Oman Vision 2040.
Organised by the Ministry of Labour, the two-day conference seeks to achieve a number of objectives, namely highlight the competitive position of the financial sector and introduce the programme for financial sector development and related initiatives and exchange expertise and information, discuss challenges and practices for developing the financial sector, present investment opportunities and activate competition. - **ONA**

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINERALS



Agreement inked for experimental green energy certificates for 'Hyoport Duqm'

BRUSSELS: The Ministry of Energy and Minerals and the Belgian Ministry of Energy signed an agreement on the experimental project of green energy certificates for the 'Hyoport Duqm' project. The agreement was signed in the capital city of Belgium, Brussels.
The agreement aims to evaluate the adherence of green hydrogen production projects in Oman

to related requirements of the European Union. The move will pave the way for exporting green hydrogen to European markets in the future.
Moreover, the agreement was signed by Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Tinne Van der Straeten, Belgium's Minister of Energy. - **ONA**

KASPERSKY CYBER SECURITY WEEKEND

Prices for creating deepfakes in dark web reach \$20,000 per minute



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Prices for creating deepfakes on the darkweb may range from \$300 to \$20,000 per minute, according to an industry expert.
Deepfake creation tools and services can be found on darknet marketplaces and these services offer generative artificial intelligence (AI) video creation for a variety of purposes, including fraud, blackmail, and stealing confidential data, this was announced at Kaspersky Cyber Security Weekend-META 2023, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
"The prices for creating or purchasing deepfakes may vary depending on the complexity of the project and the quality of the final product," Kaspersky experts said.
Kaspersky analysed various Darknet marketplaces and under-

ground forums offering the creation of deepfake videos and audio for different malicious purposes. In some cases, individuals may request specific targets for deepfake creation, such as celebrities or political figures.
Cybercriminals use generative AI videos in several ways for illegal activities. They can use deepfakes to create fake videos or images that can be used to defraud individuals or organisations.
"For example, they can create a fake video of a CEO requesting a wire transfer or authorising a payment, which can be used to steal corporate funds. Fake videos can be used to create compromising videos or images of individuals, which can be used to extort money or information from them," one of the company officials said. "Cyber-

criminals can also use deepfakes to spread false information or manipulate public opinion, he said. For example, they can create a fake video of a politician making controversial statements, which can be used to influence the outcome of an election," he further added.
Bypass verification
Deepfake technology can be employed to bypass verification in payment services by creating realistic fake videos or audio recordings of a legitimate account owner. These can be used to trick payment service providers into thinking that they are the actual account owner, thereby gaining access to the account and its associated funds.
"Increasingly, deepfakes are used in attempts at blackmail and

fraud. For example, the CEO of a British energy firm was tricked out of \$243,000 by a voice deepfake of the head of his parent company requesting an emergency transfer of funds. As a result, funds were wired to the fraudster's bank account. Suspicions were only raised when the criminal requested another transfer, but by then it was too late to get the funds that were already transferred back. A similar case was reported in the UAE, where \$400,000 were stolen in a scam also involving voice deepfake," said Vladislav Tushkanov, Lead Data Scientist at Kaspersky.
"It's important to remember that deepfakes are a threat not only to businesses, but also to individual users: they can spread misinformation, be used for scams, or to impersonate someone without

consent. Increasing your digital literacy level is key to countering these threats," he further added.
Continuous monitoring of Dark web resources provides valuable insights into the deepfake industry, allowing researchers to track the latest trends and activities of threat actors in this space. By monitoring the darknet, researchers can uncover new tools, services, and marketplaces used for the creation and distribution of deepfakes. This type of monitoring is a critical component of deepfake research and helps to improve our understanding of the evolving threat landscape. Kaspersky's Digital Footprint Intelligence service includes this type of monitoring to help its customers stay ahead of the curve when it comes to deepfake-related threats.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower



Oman Cables Industry, up 5.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non Convertible Bonds 2022, down 34.62 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,672.59 points, down by 0.17 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.04 per cent at 484.04 points. Oman Cables Industry, up 5.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Al Omaniya Non Convertible Bonds 2022, down 34.62 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Al Anwar Investment 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 836 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR3.38 million, with more than 15.64 million shares changing hands. Out of 52 traded securities, 9 advanced, 28 declined, and 15 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR307,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR210,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR96,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,557.72 points, down 0.11 per cent. Prices of United Finance, Bank Dhofar and Ominvest were up by 1.70 per cent, 1.25 per cent

and 0.51 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Arab Bank, Al Madina Investments, Takaful Oman, Oman & Emirates Investment and Al Sharqia Investment were up by 9.74 per cent, 7.41 per cent, 5.46 per cent, 1.33 per cent and 1.30 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,114.85 points, down 1.06 per cent. Prices of Oman Cables Industry and Oman Chromite were up by 5.00 per cent and 3.31 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Flour Mills, Jazeera Steel Products, Voltamp Energy, Oman Fisheries and Galfar Engineering were up by 8.62 per cent, 4.93 per cent, 3.57 per cent, 3.08 per cent and 1.60 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.28 per cent before closing at 1,740.61 points. Prices of Sembcorp Salalah, Al Batinah Power, Al Jazeera Services and Phoenix Power were up by 4.00 per cent, 3.33 per cent, 1.59 per cent and 1.52 per cent respectively. Prices of Abraj Energy, Renaissance Services, Musandam Power, Ooredoo and Oman National Engineering were up by 2.52 per cent, 1.59 per cent, 1.32 per cent, 1.07 per cent and 0.94 per cent respectively.

— United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,681.21	4,663.98	4,672.59	4,680.61	-8.03	-0.17
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,570.75	7,547.18	7,557.72	7,565.74	-8.02	-0.11
Industry Index	6,215.37	6,109.15	6,114.85	6,180.62	-65.78	-1.06
Services Index	1,754.94	1,733.56	1,740.61	1,735.72	-4.89	-0.28
MSX Shariah Index	486.56	482.82	484.04	484.26	-0.22	-0.04
MSX TR INDEX	6,154.39	6,131.74	6,143.06	6,153.61	-10.55	-0.17
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,247.10	8,221.43	8,232.91	8,241.65	-8.74	-0.11
SERVICES TR IDX	1,927.61	1,904.14	1,911.88	1,906.50	-5.37	-0.28
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,639.56	6,526.09	6,532.18	6,602.45	-70.27	-1.06

Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
15,640,224	3,377,237	836	23,773,099,120	9	28	15	52

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, MAY 9

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. IND.	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFR	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																	
OM0000000374	UNITED FINANCE	255,900	15,348	11	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.001	1.695	0.060	0.059	0.060	0.100	21,367,638	
OM0000000226	ALJAZERA SERVICES	12,000	3,034	7	0.259	0.259	0.252	0.256	0.252	0.004	1.587	0.256	0.245	0.256	0.100	15,668,294	
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	265,242	42,969	3	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.160	0.160	0.002	1.250	0.162	0.162	0.163	0.100	485,408,933	
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	1,000	396	2	0.396	0.396	0.396	0.396	0.394	0.002	0.508	0.396	0.390	0.394	0.100	264,672,709	
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	656,982	180,937	16	0.275	0.277	0.275	0.275	0.275	0.000	0.000	0.275	0.275	0.285	0.100	447,135,248	
OM0000003000	ALMAJRA PETROLEUM	4,600	5,290	3	1.150	1.150	1.150	1.150	1.150	0.000	0.000	1.150	0.000	1.150	0.100	73,350,000	
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	1,153,191	1,126,860	33	0.976	0.980	0.976	0.980	0.980	0.000	0.000	0.980	0.972	0.980	0.100	735,000,000	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H	383,700	24,178	8	0.064	0.064	0.063	0.063	0.063	0.000	0.000	0.063	0.063	0.064	0.100	12,600,000	
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	785,648	82,462	20	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.104	0.105	0.100	481,956,540	
OM0000001525	OMAN INVEST. FIN.	108,155	12,220	9	0.115	0.115	0.112	0.114	0.115	-0.001	-0.870	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	28,368,900	
OM0000001152	OMAN NAT. ENG.	194,352	20,810	18	0.108	0.108	0.106	0.106	0.107	-0.001	-0.935	0.106	0.106	0.110	0.100	15,900,000	
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	212,412	78,592	19	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.374	-0.004	-1.070	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.398	0.100	240,849,365
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,550,798	683,133	101	0.270	0.270	0.267	0.267	0.270	-0.003	-1.111	0.267	0.267	0.268	0.100	204,208,016	
OM0000004789	MADINA TAKAFUL	181,463	15,343	17	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.085	-0.001	-1.176	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.100	14,700,000	
OM0000002440	AL SHARQIA INV.	60,000	4,560	6	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.076	0.077	-0.001	-1.299	0.076	0.075	0.076	0.100	6,840,000	
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	10,000	740	1	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.075	-0.001	-1.333	0.074	0.071	0.076	0.100	9,018,750	
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	60,889	22,853	6	0.382	0.382	0.372	0.372	0.378	-0.006	-1.587	0.372	0.372	0.380	0.100	87,944,520	
OM0000000276	JAZEERA STEEL PROD.	62,000	16,181	10	0.266	0.274	0.256	0.270	0.284	-0.014	-4.930	0.270	0.270	0.279	0.100	33,722,449	
Total	18	6,968,332	2,335,807	290													
Parallel Market																	
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR.	1,000	1,995	1	1.995	1.995	1.995	1.995	1.900	0.095	5.000	1.995	1.710	2.000	0.100	178,951,500	
OM00000004735	SEMBCORP SALALAH	1,591,933	165,941	68	0.101	0.109	0.101	0.104	0.100	0.004	4.000	0.104	0.104	0.104	0.100	99,275,483	
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	25,559	767	4	0.030	0.031	0.030	0.031	0.030	0.001	3.333	0.031	0.030	0.032	0.100	20,921,510	
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	1,000	3,755	5	3.700	3.800	3.700	3.750	3.630	0.120	3.306	3.800	3.800	3.800	1.000	11,250,000	
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	25,704	1,722	4	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.066	0.061	0.011	1.515	0.067	0.063	0.067	0.100	97,994,298	
OM0000002287	GULF MUSHROOM F.	43,987	10,153	11	0.230	0.233	0.230	0.230	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.230	0.224	0.231	0.100	10,526,134	
OM0000002395	AL BATINAH DEV.	110,000	9,900	6	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.095	0.100	2,700,000	
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	150,000	13,700	4	0.090	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.000	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.100	24,272,823	
OM00000004420	BANK NIZWA	494,312	46,467	18	0.096	0.096	0.094	0.094	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.094	0.094	0.095	0.100	210,273,585	
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	685,198	19,957	29	0.030	0.031	0.030	0.030	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.030	0.029	0.030	0.100	21,432,190	
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	10,000	960	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.098	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	15,243,639	
OM00000008710	BARKA DESALINATION	10,000	1,390	1	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.139	0.140	0.100	10,497,558	
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	488,953	73,894	68	0.154	0.156	0.150	0.155	0.156	-0.001	-0.641	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.100	31,000,000	
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MERK.	200	178	2	0.892	0.892	0.884	0.884	0.892	-0.008	-0.884	0.892	0.888	0.892	0.100	83,960,000	
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	107,000	11,516	10	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.107	0.108	-0.001	-0.825	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.100	8,095,000	
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	3,060,096	277,067	97	0.090	0.092	0.089	0.089	0.090	-0.001	-1.111	0.089	0.089	0.090	0.100	17,800,000	
OM00000002200	AHLI BANK	874,827	149,121	6	0.170	0.172	0.170	0.170	0.172	-0.002	-1.163	0.170	0.170	0.172	0.100	331,441,769	
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	4,450	1,835	4	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.304	-0.004	-1.333	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.100	21,117,000	
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	169,652	31,582	22	0.188	0.188	0.185	0.185	0.188	-0.003	-1.596	0.185	0.185	0.172	0.185	0.100	37,555,493
OM00000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	485,290	151,321	124	0.316	0.316	0.306	0.310	0.318	-0.008	-2.516	0.308	0.308	0.330	0.100	238,762,000	
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	5,000	480	1	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.096	0.099	-0.003	-3.030	0.096	0.096	0.100	0.100	19,200,000	
OM0000003961	VOLTAMP ENERGY	931	100	3	0.107	0.108	0.107	0.108	0.112	-0.004	-3.717	0.108	0.108	0.112	0.100	11,000,000	
OM00000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	29,900	2,213	3	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.077	-0.003	-3.896	0.074	0.072	0.080	0.100	34,867,793	
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	132,600	6,945	12	0.052	0.053	0.052	0.052	0.055	-0.003	-5.455	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.100	13,000,000	
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	64,700	3,236	10	0.054	0.054	0.049	0.050	0.054	-0.004	-7.407	0.050	0.049	0.049	0.100	4,250,000	
OM0000001400	OMAN FLOUR MILLS	1,775	941	2	0.530	0.530	0.530	0.530	0.590	-0.050	-8.621	0.530	0.527	0.530	0.100	1,400,000	
OM0000003141	Barika Water and Power	5,500	583	2	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.117	-0.011	-9.402	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.100	16,960,000	
OM00000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	10,000	1,390	2	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.154	-0.015	-9.740	0.139	0.139	0.150	0.100	232,047,990	
Total	28	8,971,567	989,227	522													



STUDY DEFINES CHILDREN’S SHYNESS AND ITS MEANING

Describe shyness. According to research, shyness is characterised by dread and anxiety in the face of social novelty and/or social judgement. Although behavioural, affective, and physiological manifestations of shyness might occur, little is known about how these elements interact.

According to long-standing beliefs, temperamental shyness is a term that can be used to conceptualise shyness as a feature that is largely consistent throughout development. Shyness can also be thought of as a feeling experienced in a particular social setting; this concept is known as state shyness. Researchers at McMaster University in Canada recently published a study in Child Development that looked at a child’s behavioural, affective, and physiological reactions to a speech task in order to better understand shyness in kids.

The results revealed that while a wider percentage of children may occasionally experience shyness as an emotional

state, temperamental shyness may exist in a different group of children over time.

“Our findings provide empirical support for the long-theorised idea that there may be a subset of temperamentally shy children who manifest heightened behavioral, affective, and physiological reactivity in response to a social stressor, as well as a subset of children who may experience only the affective component which may reflect state shyness,” as explained by Kristie Poole who conducted the study at McMaster University and is now a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at Brock University. “This highlights the multiple components and developmental course of temperamental shyness and the features that distinguish temperamental and state shyness in middle to late childhood.”

Children were fitted with an ambulatory electrocardiogram and completed activities with an experimenter in a room adjacent to their parents. During this time, parents completed online questionnaires related to the child’s

Our findings provide empirical support for the long-theorised idea that there may be a subset of temperamentally shy children who manifest heightened behavioural, affective, and physiological reactivity in response to a social stressor, as well as a subset of children who may experience only the affective component which may reflect state shyness

temperament while monitoring their child on a muted closed-circuit monitor. Children prepared a two-minute speech about their last birthday and recited their speech in front of a video camera and mirror. They were told the speech would be videotaped for other children to watch later. This was designed to induce stress. The study

team coded children’s avoidance/inhibition (i.e., behavior), children self-reported their nervousness (i.e., affect), and respiratory sinus arrhythmia (i.e. physiology) was measured.

At one- and two-years post evaluations, parents completed an online follow-up survey on their child’s temperament. They responded to statements such as “child acts shy around new people.”

This examined how a children’s responses to the speech were related to their temperament across time.

“The findings showed that approximately 10 percent of children in our study showed social stress reactivity to the speech on behavioural, affective, and physiological levels, and also had a pattern of relatively higher, stable parent-reported temperamental shyness across time, providing evidence that they may be characterised as temperamentally shy,” Poole continued.

“A second subset of approximately 25 percent of children showed a pattern of social stress reactivity only on an affective level

(i.e., self-reported feeling nervous), and did not show relatively high levels of parent-reported temperamental shyness, providing evidence that they may be characterised by state shyness.

The findings have implications for the conceptualization of shyness in that different types of shyness may differ in kind rather than degree.”

The findings provide empirical evidence for long-standing ideas first articulated by the late Jerome Kagan several decades ago. He argued that temperamental shyness may exist as a distinct category for some children and the features that define this category are relatively stable across time and context.

In addition to this subset of temperamentally shy children, researchers found that a larger subset of children may experience shyness as an emotional state in some situations.

It is likely that the experience of state shyness in response to a speech task is a relatively common, normative experience for

children at this age. For a smaller group of temperamentally shy children, however, being the center of attention may be stressful across time and various contexts.

Since we know that not all children are alike and early temperamental shyness is a risk factor for internalizing-related problems, future work should examine the consequences of these findings for children’s social, psychological, and academic adjustment.

The authors acknowledge several limitations in their research. The study only measured behavioural, affective, and physiological components at one point in time, so they do not have the means to measure whether these components remain stable across development.

The authors recommend that future research include more diverse samples of children as this study was primarily of White children from middle to upper socioeconomic status families making it difficult to generalize the findings. **-ANI**



SPORTS

Messi, Argentina World Cup team win Laureus awards



Messi captained Argentina, scored seven times and won the Golden Ball as his country won the 2022 World Cup in Qatar

PARIS: Football star Lionel Messi and his World Cup-winning Argentina scored a double by being named Sportsman and Team of the Year at the Laureus World Sports Awards in Paris on Monday.

Messi captained Argentina, scored seven times and won the Golden Ball as his country won the 2022 World Cup in Qatar in December. He is the first athlete to win the

team and individual awards in the same year. This was the second time that Messi was named the Laureus Sportsman of the Year award.

Sportswoman of the year went to Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce.

She won the women's 100m world title at the World Athletics Championships in Oregon in July, becoming the first person to win five golds in an individual track event at the championships.

"This is a special honour," said Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) forward Messi, 35. "Particularly as

the Laureus World Sports Awards are in Paris this year, the city that has welcomed my family since we came here in 2021.

"I want to thank all my teammates, not only from the national team but also at PSG - I have achieved none of this alone and I am grateful to be able to share everything with them."

Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce has won 10 outdoor world sprint titles, including relays.

Fraser-Pryce's 100m gold came 13 years after her first and the 36-year-old has more world sprint titles than any other athlete.

"I was thrilled to be nominated alongside such inspiring women athletes, and to win this award, voted for by some of the greatest sportsmen and women of all time, is just amazing," she said.

"This is the sixth time I've been nominated in this category, so to finally hold the Laureus statuette in my hands is one of the greatest honours of my career."

Argentina lifted the World Cup for the third time, beating France in a penalty shootout in Doha after possibly the greatest final of all time, which ended in a 3-3 draw.

They beat England's Euro

2022-winning Lionesses, men's Champions League winners Real Madrid and France's men's Six Nations champions to win the award.

Manchester United and Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen won Comeback of the Year following his return to football after collapsing on the pitch because of cardiac arrest during Euro 2020, while men's tennis world No.2 Carlos Alcaraz was awarded World Breakthrough of the Year after a 2022 in which the then 19-year-old won the US Open and became tennis' youngest men's

No.1. - Agencies

FRENCH OPEN BUILD-UP

Murray lifts first title since 2019



PARIS: Andy Murray won his first title in nearly four years by beating Tommy Paul in the final of the ATP Challenger event in Aix-en-Provence, France on Sunday.

Briton Murray, 35, came back from a set down against American top seed Paul to win 2-6 6-16-2.

It is the three-time Grand Slam champion's first title since winning in Antwerp in 2019, and his first on clay since 2016 in Rome. It is his first title at the second-tier Challenger level since 2005.

"This last year, 18 months, has been a bit of a struggle with my game. But [my team] have been there supporting me and working with me to try and get better," said Murray.

Fifth seed Murray took a

late wildcard entry into the tournament to get more clay-court match time before the French Open, following first-round exits from Monte Carlo and Madrid in April.

Victory means Murray will rise to 42 in the world when the rankings are updated on Monday - his highest world ranking since May 2018.

His win over Paul marks his third victory over a top-20 player this year, after beating Matteo Berrettini in the first of his enthralling battles at the Australian Open in January, and Alexander Zverev in Doha in February.

The French Open, the second Grand Slam of the year, starts on May 28 with Murray aiming to play in it for only the second time since 2017.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Everton out of relegation zone with thumping victory over Brighton

LONDON: Everton produced a superb display of counter-attacking to climb out of the English Premier League relegation zone with a stunning 5-1 victory that dented Brighton's European ambitions.

An extraordinary first half saw the visitors go ahead after just 34 seconds, with Dominic Calvert-Lewin squaring for Abdoulaye Doucoure to tap in after Seagulls captain Lewis Dunk had been badly caught out.

Mali midfielder Doucoure added Everton's second just before the half-hour mark with a precise volley, into the right corner from Dwight McNeil's cross.

McNeil was then heavily involved as Sean Dyche's side extended their lead, driving towards the byline and seeing his low cross deflect off the foot of Brighton goalkeeper Jason Steele into the back of the net.

A shambolic first period saw Brighton booed off at the interval, fortunate not to have suffered the embarrassment of being four goals down, with Dunk blocking James Garner's close-range effort on the stroke of half-time.

A mightily impressive performance from Everton, who repeatedly threatened on the break during the first half and defended stoutly in the second, saw them add their fourth when McNeil raced on to Alex Iwobi's incisive pass to round Steele and slot into an empty net.

Roberto de Zerbi's side, finally managed a scrappy consolation with Kaoru Mitoma's sliding effort rebounding off the post and bouncing in off Mac Allister.

A wonderful McNeil effort in added time, that flew into the top corner, ensured Everton had the final say as they moved out of the drop zone in style, to sit 17th in the table after leapfrogging Leeds United and Leicester City.

"People will be out there thinking, 'Right, OK, there's life in that



Fulham beat Leicester

Leicester City's survival hopes suffered a blow with a 5-3 defeat at Fulham on Monday.

Victories for Everton and Nottingham Forest on Monday saw the Foxes slip into the relegation zone, two points from safety with three games remaining.

Fulham opened the scoring through a Willian free-kick before strikes from Carlos Vinicius and Tom Cairney powered them into a 3-0 half-time lead.

Cairney added another after the restart before Harvey Barnes pulled a goal back for the visitors, who then saw Jamie Vardy miss a penalty in the 66th minute.

Willian re-established Fulham's four-goal lead with another fine strike before Maddison netted Leicester's second with a spot-kick and Barnes scored a late third. - Agencies

team' but we've never lost sight of that," said Everton boss Dyche.

Everton had also briefly jumped above Nottingham Forest too but Steve Cooper's side defeated

bottom club Southampton 4-3 later on Monday. Brighton remain seventh, seven points behind fifth-placed Liverpool, with two games in hand.

IN-PICTURES



Shishou Milu Deer National Nature Reserve in C China
Picture shows milu deer at Shishou Milu Deer National Nature Reserve in central China's Hubei Province. About 150 milu deer fawns have been spotted recently at Shishou Milu Deer National Nature Reserve in Hubei, according to the reserve's management and protection authority.

Xinhua



Blooming jacaranda trees in Pakistan
People walk under blooming jacaranda trees in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Xinhua



'Chinese Bridge' competition for university students concludes in N. Egypt
Loay Adel Mohamed (first from left), a senior from Cairo University, performs during the 'Chinese Bridge' competition for Egyptian university students in Ismailia, Egypt.

Xinhua



Tea industry thriving in Hefeng County, C China

This aerial picture shows a tea garden in Zouma Township, Hefeng County, central China's Hubei Province. In recent years, Hefeng County has explored the integration of tea industry with tourism and built a number of tea gardens, which help increase local farmers' income and promote rural revitalisation.

Xinhua



Prabhas, Sunny Singh, and Kriti Sanon during the trailer launch of their upcoming film 'Adipurush'
Actors Prabhas, Sunny Singh, and Kriti Sanon, with director Om Raut, pose for photos during the trailer launch of their upcoming mythological film 'Adipurush', in Mumbai.

ANI Photo



Russia marks 78th anniversary of Soviet victory in Great Patriotic War

A military parade is held to mark the 78th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War, Russia's term for World War II, on Red Square in Moscow, Russia.

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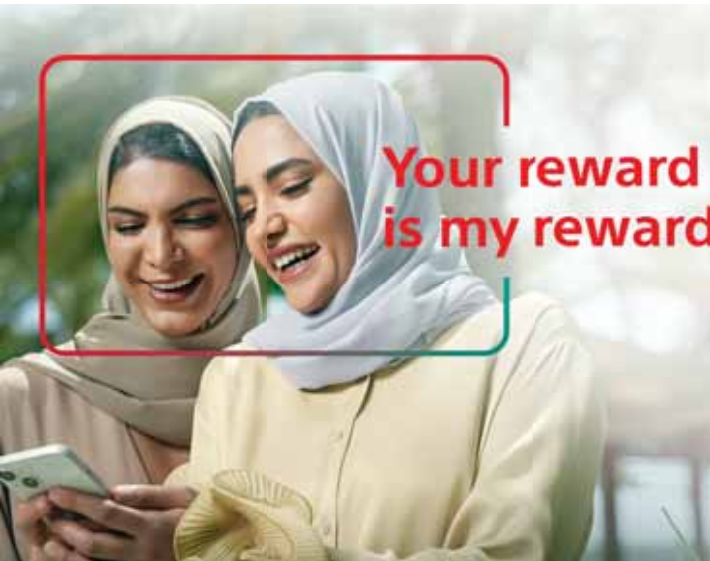


ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat relaunches Asalah and Al Jawhar referral scheme

The current referral scheme, which will run till September 30, offers cash rewards of up to thousands of rials when referring new customers to the bank to enjoy an extraordinary banking experience

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has relaunched its highly popular Asalah and Al Jawhar referral scheme for the year 2023 after the great success of last year's campaign. The current referral scheme, which will run till September 30,



offers cash rewards of up to thousands of rials when referring new customers to the bank to enjoy an extraordinary banking experience. The scheme offers existing Asalah customers and new customers a chance to win up to OMR100 for every successful referral after which the referees should meet the eligibility criteria by transferring and maintaining a deposit of OMR30,000 in their

savings accounts. The referrer can get a sum of OMR100 and the referee will get a 10 per cent cash back if the referee has a monthly salary of OMR5,000 or more and successfully meets all eligibility criteria after opening the new Asalah salary account. For Al Jawhar customers, the referrer and the referee will win OMR50 per successful referral once the referee successfully meets

all eligibility criteria by maintaining a deposit of OMR10,000 in their Bank Muscat Al Jawhar saving account. The referrer can get a reward of OMR 50 while the referee can get up to a 10 per cent cashback if a new salary account is opened by a referee with a monthly salary of OMR1,000 or more. On this occasion, Abdulnasir Al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said, “We are very happy to once again offer guaranteed rewards for successful referrals for Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking from Bank Muscat after the great success of the scheme last year. In line with its vision “To serve you better, everyday”, Bank Muscat continues to focus on enhancing the customer experience and expanding its customer base in the Sultanate that stood up to more than two million customers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our valued customers for the confidence and trust that they have placed in our cutting-edge products and services. Bank Muscat will continue offering special products and services that meet the customer aspirations.” The participation in Asalah

and Al Jawhar referral schemes is based on successful referrals to the bank which requires customers to meet the eligibility criteria for both services. Customers having a monthly salary of RO 5,000 or maintaining a savings deposit of OMR 30,000 are eligible for Bank Muscat Asalah Priority Banking. Customers having a monthly salary of OMR 1,000 or maintaining a savings deposit of OMR10,000-29,999 are eligible for Al Jawhar Privilege banking. The referred customer's account should be credited with the funds within a maximum of 30 days from the date of referral. Cash rewards will be credited directly to the respective accounts once the eligibility criteria of the referee have been successfully maintained for a period of 3 months from the date of the transferring the deposit. Customers of both banking segments can refer friends to open new accounts in Bank Muscat provided that the referees meet the eligibility criteria at the end of the three-month review period from the date of transferring the deposit to an account with the bank. It may be noted that Asalah customers enjoy a range of benefits

including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 40 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre (24779999). Exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 “Buy 1, Get 1 free” offers in Oman and at international destinations, as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and beauty and wellness segments. Asalah Visa Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges worldwide, up to 12 times a year, and a 24/7 global concierge service. Meanwhile, Al Jawhar Privilege Banking is designed to elevate Privilege Banking to unparalleled heights. It opens a world of opportunities with a number of services and facilities that makes the banking experience truly rewarding for its clientele. Al Jawhar Privilege Banking customers are eligible for exclusive 2-for-1 deals on food, entertainment and shopping that are available through the xperience with the Entertainer app on their smartphones. They also have access to a higher ATM withdrawal limit of OMR800.

BOUQUET OF SERVICES



Malabar Gold & Diamonds launches world’s biggest jewellery destination Artistry store in Kerala

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer in the world with an extensive retail network of over 310 outlets across 10 countries, has launched the world's biggest jewellery destination in the Kozhikode district of Kerala, India. The Artistry store, which is being set up as a new global destination for gold & diamonds jewellery shopping, is incidentally being set up at the same place where Malabar Group originated three decades ago. Indian Union Muslim League State President Syed Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal inaugurated the Artistry Store of Malabar Gold& Diamonds. Ministers P. A. Muhammed Riyas, V. Abdurrahiman, A. K. Sasindran, Ahmed Devarkovil, MLAs Kanathil Jameela, Najeed Kanthapuram, T. Siddique, Kozhikode Corporation Councillor Ramlath, DCC President K. Praveen Kumar, Malabar Group Chairman M.P. Ahammed, Vice Chairman K. P. Abdul Salam, Malabar Gold& Diamonds India Operations Managing Director O.Asher, Malabar Gold & Diamonds International Operations Managing Director Shamlal Ahmed, Group Executive Directors K.P. Veerankutty, A.K. Nishad, C. Mayinkutty, M.P. Abdul Majeed, V.S. Shareef, Directors P.A. Abdullah, Samad bapu, Corporate Heads R. Abdul Jaleel, A.K. Faisal, V.S. Shafeekh, Shaji Kakkodi, M.P. Ahmed Basheer, Retail Operations Head, P. K. Siraj, Malabar

Gold & Diamonds Zonal Head Javed Meyan, Chamayam Bapu and other management members, religious-social-political personalities and well-wishers were present for the event. Covering an area of 1,10,000 square feet with five floors for shopping and three for parking, the Artistry store will be the world's biggest jewellery showroom, offering a differentiated shopping experience and innovative bouquet of services to the customers. It has a dedicated wedding arena exclusively for the selection of ornaments for brides. A bespoke suite will enable the customers to design jewellery of their choice with the assistance of expert designers and craftsmen. A privilege lounge with personalised services is another feature of the showroom, to be run by a set of specially trained staff. Malabar Group Chairman termed the completion of 30 years as a momentous occasion in their journey which was made possible only because of the trust and affection of the customers. “Their continued support and trust took us where we stand now as one of the biggest jewellery groups in the world. We are especially happy to set up the Artistry store, the world's biggest jewellery showroom, at the same place where we started our humble journey. This is a significant step towards our goal to emerge as the biggest jewellery retailer in the world,” he said.

ART OF LIVING

Unlock your leadership potential by joining Art of Leadership workshop

MUSCAT: Art of Living Oman, announced the launch of its first-ever ‘Art of Leadership’ programme in Oman. The programme is scheduled to be held from May 15 to 17, from 6pm to 8:45pm, at the Hilton Garden Inn, Al Khuwair. The programme is set to be conducted by Dr Virat Chirania, a renowned corporate trainer and TEDx speaker who is known for his expertise in the field of stress management, effective team building, boosting productivity, mind management, personal excellence and emotional intelligence.

Dr Chirania is an Engineering Graduate with a Master in Management from New York and a PhD in Emotional Intelligence. He has trained various multinational corporates including Shell, Toyota, NASA, Google, Microsoft, The World Bank, Cisco, Deloitte, City Bank, Tata Communications, Bosch, Oracle, L&T etc. Dr Chirania's approach has been proven to yield results that have inspired and empowered thousands worldwide, fostering effective leaders in both their personal and professional lives. Through his unique leader-

ship programmes, many individuals have become key drivers of success within their respective teams. **Target audience** The workshop is specifically designed for corporate leaders, senior management and middle management cadre, professionals and entrepreneurs/business owners / decision makers, and all those aspiring to be modern business leaders who desire to bring about positive change in the shortest period. The workshop aims to equip participants with essential leader-

ship skills that will enhance their leadership capabilities and positively impact their organisations. Participants will be able to gain insights into effective leadership practices, understand the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership, and learn how to manage stress and boost productivity. For more information and registration, interested participants may contact Art of Living Oman at me.desk@artofliving.org, or call 93282435/ 99214706 /95056320. Don't miss this opportunity to unlock your full leadership potential.

PROMOTION

Scratch and win Kia cars and more before ‘Season of Rewards’ campaign ends

MUSCAT: Hurry! Now is the time to own a Kia and get a chance to win Kia Pegas or Kia Niro thru Scratch & Win offer before the campaign ends on May 11. You can also benefit with Scratch & Win up to 20 percent off on new Kia vehicles and periodic service up to 100,000km. Additionally, get 1 Year Insurance and Cash Gift. (Conditions apply. For details please visit any Kia showroom.) Kia has an exciting range of vehicles to choose from in Oman. They include the Sportage and Cerato. Kia Sportage is a stunning performer, sporting an attractive look and a host of impressive features and technology. The Sportage's exterior is bold and its impactful lines have an assertive presence, balanced with innovation and instinctive characteristics. The elongated grille links Kia's modern signature Tiger Nose grille – that acts as the visual focal point of the car –LED DRLs (daytime running lamps), which in turn create solid boundary lines for the striking LED headlamps. The Sportage has an attractive design at the rear too. Maintaining a strong road presence with a muscular swooping fastback design that flows into the



rear lamps, allowing the SUV to personify strength and stability. Depending on spec and model, the 2023 Sportage rides on 17-inch, 19-inch choice of different alloy designs, colours and finishes. The Sportage is equipped with powerful and efficient powertrain options. A 2.0 RVC 4WD with Nu

2.0 MPI churning 157 hp at 19.5 kg.m torque. This is paired to a 6-speed AT. The Sportage is also available as 1.6T 2WD SRF, 1.6T 2WD SPL and 1.6T 4WD SPL with Gamma 1.6T GDI with 176 HP and 27 kg.m. torque. These are paired to a 7-speed DCT. Kia Cerato is one of Kia's most

popular sedans. Designed to make an impression Eye-catching from any angle, the Cerato utilises full LED headlights which appear as slender lines with the radiator grille to underline the redesigning of the face of the model, defining the car's sporty exterior. At the rear, strong horizontal lines add a bold appearance with depth to the fluid exterior design. The Cerato will offer some of the most exciting drives due to its powerful 150 HP 2.0L Euro 4 engine that is paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission. The Cerato is also available with 1.6L, 126 HP Euro 4 engine which is paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission. The Cerato's interior is simple and practical. The features include a high-resolution 8-inch display screen and a 4.2-inch colour TFT LCD cluster for an improved, convenient driving experience. The model also features rear AC vents, Alloy Pedal, Paddle Shifter, Power Sunroof, Remote Engine Start, providing advanced solutions to everyday inconveniences. Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers.



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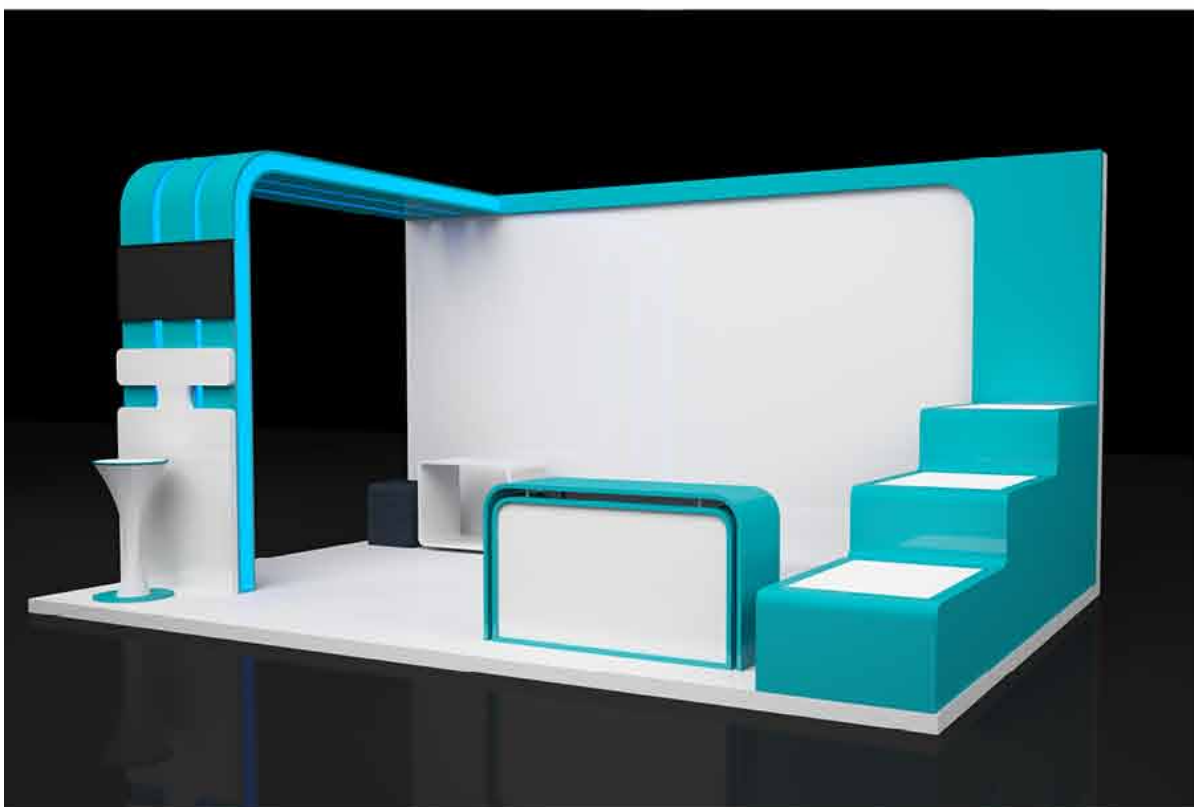
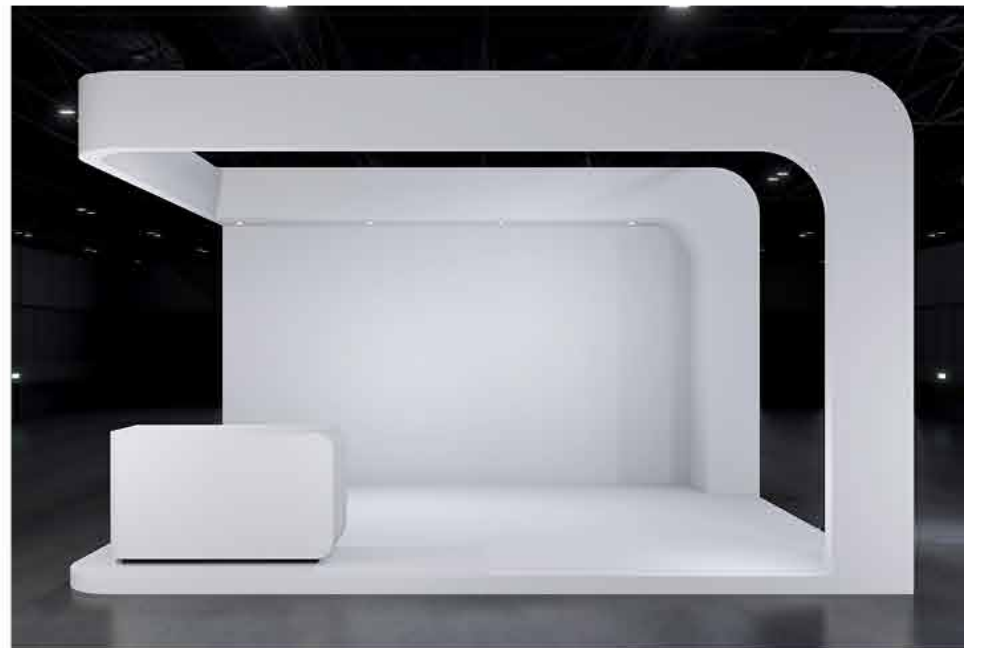
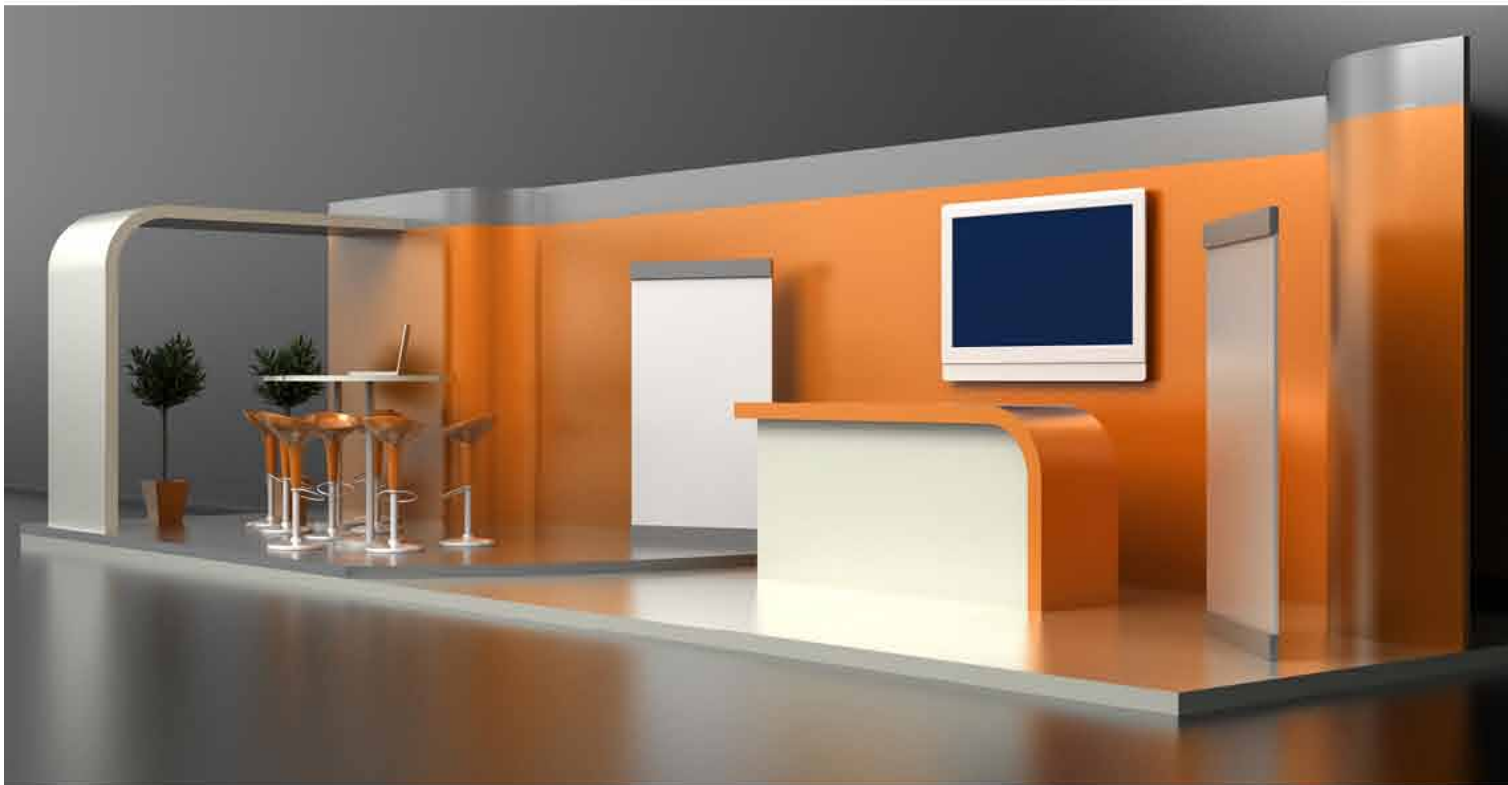
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IN MUSCAT GRAND MALL
FOR RESERVATIONS

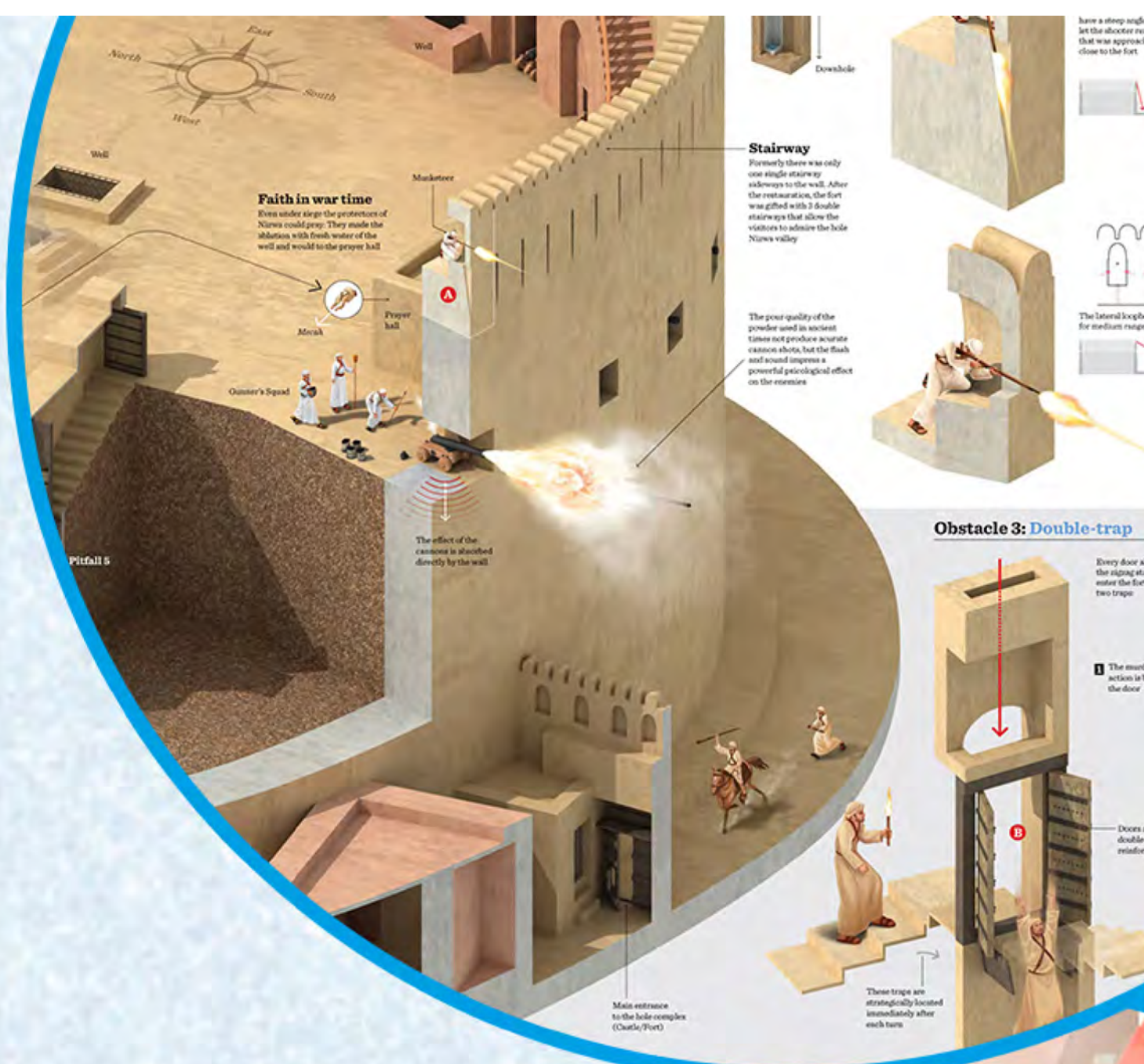
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