

SYMPOSIUM ON COMBATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING HELD

The annual symposium on combating human trafficking kicked off under the theme of "Addressing Challenges and Optimising Opportunities and Roles of Effective National Actors" on Monday. **>A3**



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PRODUCTION OF ELECTRICITY AND WATER INCREASES

The Sultanate of Oman's total production of electricity increased by 1.6 percent till the end of November 2022 to reach 39,081.9 GW per hour compared to 38,483.5 GW during the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). **>A3**



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DENPASAR



His Majesty issues Royal Decree

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq yesterday issued Royal decree No. 7/2023 ratifying the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, signed in Denpasar on 24 February 1976, and its amendment protocols, signed in Manila on 15 December 1987, in Manila on 25 July 1998 and in Vietnam on 23 July 2010.

Article (1) ratifies the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Treaty of

Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia and its aforesaid amendment protocols, in accordance with the version attached to this decree.

Article (2) instructs the departments concerned to deposit the document of Oman's joining the above-mentioned convention in accordance with its provisions.

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

SECOND CYCLE

Final stage for BHA begins in Sur

SUR: The final stage of Bilal Bin Haitham Award (BHA) for Architectural Design kicked off in the Wilayat of Sur on Monday—in its Second Cycle.

The ceremony was graced by His Highness Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham Al Said, who viewed some of the projects that qualified to the last round.

Final submission

He listened to the discussions of the jury and comments on improving the projects before final submission.

HH Sayyid Bilal bin Haitham also toured an exhibition comprising entries of top ten qualifiers, whom he praised and advised to consult the comments of the jury. He wished the participants success in the final round. **>A5**



4.9

BILLION OMANI RIYAL WAS THE TRADE SURPLUS AT THE END OF THIRD QUARTER OF 2022 COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD IN 2021 DUE TO RISE IN THE VALUE OF EXPORTS

OMAN'S REVENUES REACH OMR10.6 BILLION, SURPLUS TOPS OMR1 BILLION

The GDP value at current prices rose to reach OMR32bn at the end of 2022 third quarter

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman government's revenues rose by 43.4 percent to reach OMR10.6 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2022 compared to OMR7.4 billion at the end of the same quarter of 2021.

Total public spending increased by 12.5 percent to reach OMR9.4 billion and the general budget surplus in the third quarter of 2022 reached OMR1.1 billion. The ratio of the surplus of the general budget to gross domestic prod-

uct (GDP) at current prices has reached 3.5 percent, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) data.

The value of gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices increased by about 30.4 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2022 to reach OMR32 billion compared to OMR24.6 billion at the end of the same quarter of 2021, according to the NCSI Quarterly National Accounts Indicators: September 2022.

The increase in the GDP is attributed to the increase in the added

value of oil activities by 72.5 percent, and the added value of non-oil activities by about 14.9 percent.

The added value of oil activities increased by OMR5.2 billion, recording OMR12.5 billion, compared to OMR7.2 billion at the end of the same quarter of the previous year.

This is due to the increase in the added value of crude oil by 79.1 percent, to reach OMR10.9 billion, compared to about OMR6.1 billion at the end of the same quarter of the previous year. The added value of natural gas increased by about 36.7 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2022 compared to the same period of the year 2021.

The report indicated that the total value added of non-oil activities at the end of the third quarter of the year 2022 increased by 14.9 percent compared to the same

period of the year 2021, to record OMR20.8 billion.

This is due to the increase in the added value of industrial activities by about 28.6 percent, of agriculture, forestry and fishing by about 12.4 percent and of service activities by 9.7 percent.

As for the increase in the added value of industrial activities, it is due to the increase in the added value of manufacturing industries by 65.6 percent, of mining and quarrying by 15.5 percent and in the supply of electricity, water and sanitation activities by 3 percent.

In foreign trade indicators, the report indicates an increase in the value of the surplus in the trade balance at the end of the third quarter of 2022 by OMR4.9 billion compared to the same period in 2021 to reach OMR7.8 billion. **>A2**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Blood collection at Bausher bank rises

1 The number of blood units collected at the Central Blood Bank in Bausher during 2022 increased by 21 percent compared to 2021, according to the statistics of the Blood Banks Services Department at the Ministry of Health. **>A3**



WORLD Death toll rises to 28 in Peshawar blast

2 The death toll has risen to 28 in the suicide blast that took place in a mosque in the Police Lines area of Peshawar in Pakistan on Monday, according to Dawn. The casualties were confirmed by Peshawar Commissioner Riaz Mehsood. **>A6**

SPORTS Over 130 to take part in Assarain Golf Classic

3 More than 130 golfers have registered for the 27th Assarain Classic tournament as per the organisers. It is one of the most prestigious golf tournaments of the Sultanate and will take place at Ghala Golf Club on 3 and 4 February 2023. **>A8**

GOLD MEDAL



Omani girl brings laurel to country in table tennis

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bringing laurel to the Sultanate of Oman, Talia Mounir Al Rawahi of Oman national girls table tennis team won a gold medal in the under-11 category at the Qatar International Youth Table Tennis Championship in Doha.

The championship was hosted at the Lusail Sports Hall in Doha from January 27 to 30.

A promising player, Talia Al Rawahi, won the gold medal after making a clean sweep of the match in which she routed Qatari player Al Dana Al Kabi 3-0.

This is the first official achievement for Talia Al Rawahi at the international level since she entered the world of table tennis recently. She has proven her mettle in many contests and performed well in many international tournaments in the past.

Talia has undergone intensive training under the supervision of Iranian coach Omid Shams Shahrabaki. It is the quality training under the Iranian coach that led to her bagging the gold in Doha championship. Just a week ago the World Veteran Table Tennis Championships Muscat 2023 was

held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC). Hundreds of players from many countries took part in the events that saw the distribution of many prizes. The International Table Tennis Federation entrusted Oman to stage the event in this beautiful country that is known for its hospitality and breathtaking landscapes.

Abdullah Bamakhalif, President of the Oman Table Tennis Association had said we hope this event would attract more players – of all ages – to the sport and compete on the world stage.

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MUSCAT



Sri Lankan Embassy plans year-long celebrations to mark 75th anniversary

Sri Lanka and Oman enjoy a cordial relationship at all levels, cemented by long standing historical relations that paved the way for more formal diplomatic relations 42 years ago

Times News Service

MUSCAT: It is with immense pleasure, I extend my sincere greetings to all members of the Sri Lankan expatriate community in the Sultanate of Oman as well as all the Sri Lankan nationals, both in Sri Lanka and abroad, on the happy occasion of the 75th Independence Day of Sri Lanka.

At the outset, I pay my respects to all the leaders from the Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher and other sections of the population who made immense sacrifices to win our independence 75 years ago. Similarly, I also pay my respects to those who sacrificed their lives and limbs to protect our nation's independence and sovereignty over the past several decades.

Sri Lanka and Oman enjoy a cordial relationship at all levels, cemented by long standing historical relations that paved the way for more formal diplomatic relations 42 years ago. I thank His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, government and people of Oman for



upholding our bilateral relations at high esteem. For a long time, many Sri Lankans have made the Sultanate their home away from home, and even a few are getting naturalized.

Sri Lanka and Oman can complement each other in several areas of cooperation. Both the nations being abundantly blessed by Mother Nature, yet in contrasting ways, have much to explore such areas of cooperation in which one could complement the other. My predecessor has rightly mentioned in his recent book on Sri Lanka – Oman Relations that the current level of bilateral economic cooperation between the two countries does not reflect the true potential of the opportunities available in both the countries. Today, it is of paramount importance to explore such opportunities and augment the numbers in every sector.

Since my arrival in Oman mid-September last year, I was lucky enough to present my credentials to His Majesty within just a month's time so that I could be fully functional working towards the filling of gaps. Besides the

audience with His Majesty, I had exclusive interactions with Their Excellencies the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Labour, Health, Finance, Heritage & Tourism, Higher Education, Social Development, Energy and Internal Affairs of Oman as well as Their Excellencies Chairman of Shura Council, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Under Secretary for Agriculture and the Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry, focusing on strengthening of bilateral cooperation. Several bilateral Agreements and MOUs in multiple areas of cooperation including in the fields of Tourism, Agriculture, Skill Development and Mutual Recognition of Qualifications, Promotion and Reciprocal Protection of Investments, Financial Sector are under negotiation and finalization.

The Embassy facilitated a first ever visit of a 17- member Omani business delegation to Sri Lanka from Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in March last year. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities available in trade and investment between

Sri Lanka and Oman and to establish business links between the private sectors of the two countries. The delegation, besides several B2B meetings and site visits, also had discussions with the Honourable Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Trade Minister, Labour Minister, State Minister of Foreign Employment Promotion and Market Diversification, Hon. State Minister of Regional Cooperation and Governor of the Central Bank.

In January last year the delegation of the National Chamber of Exporters of Sri Lanka undertook a visit to Oman and had several meetings with the Omani business fraternity including the Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce & Industry, officials of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and investment Promotion and successfully promoted the exhibition of Sri Lanka Export Brands.

The delegation led by Hon. Bandula Gunawardhana, then Trade Minister of Sri Lanka visited Oman in March 2022. They met with His Excellency the then Minister of Energy and Minerals of



A. L. Sabarullah Khan, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Sultanate of Oman

Oman and handed over a letter addressed to His Majesty the Sultan of Oman from Hon. Prime Minister of Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka and Oman also took stern action against human traffickers who tend to abuse tourist visas for the illegal practice of cheating innocents. The Embassy, with the help of Sri Lankan and Omani authorities as well as philanthropists, repatriated several hundreds of stranded workers last year. In continuation of addressing this matter and to increase bilateral cooperation in the field of legal migration, the Minister of Labour and Foreign Employment is scheduled to visit Oman in the coming weeks.

Last year had been rather challenging to Sri Lanka as political and socio-economic stabilities underwent unprecedented acid tests. Although many countries worldwide were still recovering from the unpredicted economic shock caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic, Sri Lanka was unfortunate to face multiple challenges. Since the year 2019, Sri Lanka has had to face disturbances to

its tourism and export industries as well as declining investments and remittances due to terrorism, COVID-19 and Ukraine situation. For an economy which depends on tourism, exports and remittances for much needed foreign exchanges to import essentials including petroleum and medicine, such prolonged disruptions were very acute to face.

However, as a country with an uninterrupted democratic process beginning even from before independence, as a country with a high literacy rate and as a country which successfully eliminated separatist terrorism, Sri Lanka has shown social maturity by rapidly calming down and settling for parliamentary political stability which in time moves towards economic stability, slowly but steadily. At this testing time, I humbly call upon all my fellow Sri Lankans to act responsibly and collectively work towards the economic stability of our motherland.

The commemoration of Independence Day is an important event that unites people under one flag. This year being 75th Anniversary, the Sri Lankan Embassy in Muscat has planned a year-long celebration, beginning in February 2023 and through to January 2024. The celebration commences with the flag hoisting ceremony at the Embassy premises on 4th of February 2023. It will be followed by 'The 75th Independence Day Cricket Tournament', which will take place on 28th April at the Amerat Cricket Grounds, in Muscat. Trade shows, food festivals, tea promotion and cultural shows will be arranged in the coming months.

Let's jointly travel towards a bright and prosperous future and be partners in progress.

Message by A.L. Sabarullah Khan, Ambassador of Sri Lanka to the Sultanate of Oman to mark the 75th Independence Day of Sri Lanka



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ECONOMY

Value of non-oil exports rises 50%

<FROM A1 The increase in the surplus in trade balance is attributed to the increase in the value of exports. Merchandise exports increased by about 61 percent at the end of the third quarter of the year 2022 reaching OMR19.1 billion compared to OMR11.9 billion in the same period of 2021.

The value of merchandise imports also increased by 26.6 percent reaching OMR11.3 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2022 compared to OMR8.9 billion at the end of the corresponding same quarter of 2021. On the other hand, the value of re-exports decreased by 4.5 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2022 reaching OMR972.6 million.

The data indicated an increase in commodity exports, attributed to the increase in the value of oil exports by 76.1 percent in the third quarter of 2022 compared to the same period of the year 2021. Also the value of non-oil exports increased by 50.1 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2022 compared to the same period of 2021.

In terms of monetary situation indicators, the broad money supply (M2) increased by 3.8 percent reaching OMR20.7 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2022 compared to the end of the same quarter of 2021.

The narrow money supply (M1) increased by about 1.8 percent reaching OMR5.8 billion at the end of the third quarter of 2022 compared to the end of the same quarter of the year 2021.

The total value of private sector deposits increased by 0.3 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2022 reaching OMR17.3 billion, compared to OMR17.2 billion at the end of the same quarter of 2021.

The purchasing power of the Omani riyal increased by 12.6 percent at the end of the third quarter of 2022, as the real exchange rate index scored 118.2 points compared to 105.0 points at the end of the same quarter of 2021.

The total value of loans and financing granted through commercial banks and Islamic windows increased by about 3.9 percent at the end of the third quarter of the year 2022 to reach about OMR28.8 billion, compared to OMR27.7 billion at the end of the same quarter of 2021. The total value of personal loans also increased by 2.4 percent to reach OMR8.9 billion, while the average interest rate on total loans reached 5.4 percent at the end of the third quarter of this year, down by 1.4 percent from the same period of the previous year.



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THREE-DAY MEET



Symposium on combating human trafficking held

MUSCAT: The annual symposium on combating human trafficking kicked off yesterday under the theme of “Addressing Challenges and Optimising Opportunities and Roles of Effective National Actors”.

The three-day symposium is organised by the Foreign Ministry and the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, in cooperation with the UN Office tasked with narcotics and crimes in GCC states.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Sheikh Khalifa Ali Al Harthy, Foreign Ministry’s Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Chairman of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking.

Al Harthy said that Oman played a major role in combating the crime of human trafficking and all malpractices that violate noble human values or degrade human dignity.

The committee presses ahead with its mission in accordance with relevant international and regional treaties and agreements aimed at addressing human trafficking through cooperation with local and international partners, he added.

This symposium underscores the solidarity of all national authorities entrusted with combating human trafficking. It also reflects Oman’s keenness to spread community awareness and train specialists within the context of global cooperation in this regard. -ONA

Blood units collected at Bausher bank rise

The percentage of Omani blood donors increased to 77 percent and the voluntary blood donation rate reached 97 percent

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The number of blood units collected at the Central Blood Bank in Bausher during 2022 rose by 21 percent compared to 2021, according to the statistics of the Blood Banks Services Department at the Ministry of Health.

The percentage of Omani blood donors increased to 77 percent, the voluntary blood donation rate reached 97 percent, while the percentage of new donors who donated for the first time reached 49 percent.

More than 78,000 different components were disbursed to



health institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Health, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, Sultan Qaboos Integrated Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, Armed Forces Hospital, Royal Oman Police Hospital, in addition to private health institutions.

Dr. Zainab bint Salim Al-Ararmi, Director of the Blood Banks Services Department, said: “The daily demand for blood units and its components is constantly increasing. The demand is between 140 and 160 blood units at the Central Blood Bank, and the blood bank suffered a decline in the stock of some blood groups, platelets and other components as a result of low number of donors in some periods of the year 2022.

She added that the increase in the number of collected units does not mean reaching the stage of sufficiency, as the need for blood is still present and continuous. Therefore, we urge the community to continue donating blood to maintain a safe stock of blood units and to meet the increasing needs in light of the expansion of health services in the Sultanate of Oman.

NCSI

Production of electricity, water in Oman increases

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman’s total production of electricity increased by 1.6 percent till the end of November 2022 to reach 39,081.9 GW per hour compared to 38,483.5 GW during the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The Governorate of Dhofar recorded a rise in electricity production by 9 percent, to reach 3,934.7 GW per hour till the end of November 2022. The governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah recorded an increase in total electricity production by 5.2 percent to reach 25,456.2 GW per hour.

Oman’s net production of electricity till the end of November 2022 went up by 2 percent to reach 37,833.2 GW per hour. The net figures are inclusive of purchases by Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP)



and the Rural Areas Electricity Company (RAEC).

The highest volume of net electricity production was registered by the Governorate of Dhofar, which recorded a rise by 9.5 percent to reach 3,753.1 GW per hour. The governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah recorded a rise by 5.9 percent of net electricity production to reach 24,602.6 GW per hour.

Meanwhile, water produc-

tion in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 5.1 percent to reach 469,658.4 million cubic metres by the end of November 2022 compared to 446,893 million cubic metres during the corresponding period in 2021.

The governorates of Dhofar and Muscat recorded a rise by 9.2 percent and 7.1 percent in water production, respectively, compared to the corresponding period in 2021. -ONA

FIRST EDITION

Governorates Marathon to kick off on Friday



MUSCAT: Activities of the Governorates Marathon in its first edition will kick off this Friday.

The marathon is organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in partnership with Oman Broadband Company, Sabco Sport Group and Aspire Zone of Qatar.

The marathon includes a series of running events with high and international standards. It will be held in various governorates in the Sultanate of Oman.

The marathon provides a platform for runners of all ages to adopt a more active and healthier

lifestyle. It includes 10 km, 6 km and 2 km races for all age groups.

The 1st marathon will be held in the Wilayat of Nizwa this Friday, then in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi on 18 February, in the Wilayat of Sohar on 25 February, in the Wilayat of Al Buraimi on 11 March, in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq on 18 March, in the Wilayat of Salalah on 5 August, in the Wilayat of Ibri on 21 October, in the Wilayat of Sur on 4 November, in the Wilayat of Duqm on 17 November and in the Wilayat of Khasab on 30 December.

-ONA

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SAOG



A SHOW OF PRECISION AND FINESSE



The Show jumping tournament held as part of Muscat Nights concluded recently in Qurum Natural Park. The aim of the tournament was to involve private stables, especially the Olympic Equestrian Sports and attract fans in equestrian sports.

In the finals, trainer Muhammed bin Salim Al-Hadrami from the Royal Cavalry, on the horseback of Dhikrayat, won the first place in the Grand Prize category at a height of 1.3 metre.

The second place went to Hamoud bin Sultan Al Touqi on a Tallo BZ horse for the Olympic equestrian training centre, and the third place was taken by Al Khalid Bin Darwish Al Sabahi on Perfect Z from the Al Rayyan stable.

For the height of 1.2m, the prize went to Muhammed bin Salim Al-Hadrami on the horseback Raja from the Royal Cavalry of Oman, the second for Khalid Bin Darwish Al Sabahi riding Otania from Al Rayyan stable, and the third place was taken by the Royal Cavalry by Madin bin Saeed Al Yousfi riding Wadud.

For the junior category, the first place went to Khalid Bin Darwish Al Sabahi on Charman from Al Rayyan stable, the second place was taken by Khalfan bin Hamad Al-Hattali on Ips from the Royal Cavalry, the third place went to Mazin bin Fadel Al Ghafri on the horse Shumukh, the fourth place went to Jamal Bin Humaid Al Shariani on Al Tufan from the Royal Guard of Oman, and the fifth place went to the rider Barbara on the horse Custard from the Al Said stable.

The tournament was launched on the official opening day of Muscat Nights 2023, and the opening ceremony was attended by His Excellency the Governor of Muscat, His Excellency head of Muscat Municipality, and a number of Excellencies, Sheikhs, organisers and sponsors of Muscat Nights.



BHA AWARD



Qualifiers express their thanks to Sayyid Bilarab



< FROM A1 The qualifiers expressed their thanks and appreciation to HH Sayyid Bilarab for supporting youth and encouraging them to showcase their talents in architectural design.

The qualifying projects were distributed to adjudication over three days.

Three projects were presented to the jury in the first day. The participants have an opportunity to submit the final version of their projects by mid-February. The names of the top three winners will be announced during the final ceremony. -ONA



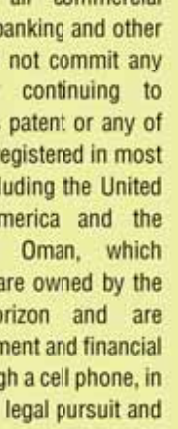
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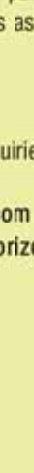
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WARNING OF PATENT INFRINGEMENT

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(12) United States Patent

Al-Sabli

(10) Patent No.: **US 10,032,156 B2**

(24) Date of Patent: **Jul. 24, 2018**

(54) SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CONDUCTING FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS USING A MOBILE DEVICE

(71) Applicant: **Mahmoud Anwar Mahmoud Al-Sabli, Mississippi (U.S.A.)**

(72) Inventor: **Mahmoud Anwar Mahmoud Al-Sabli, Mississippi (U.S.A.)**

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(a) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **11,875,628**

(22) Filed: **May 1, 2013**

(95) Prior Publication Data

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(51) Int. Cl.
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G06Q 20/20 (2013.01)

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CPC — G06Q 20/22 (2013.01); G06Q 20/181 (2013.01); G06Q 20/18 (2013.01).
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(53) Field of Classification Search
CPC — G06Q 49/00; G06Q 20/12; G06Q 20/14; G06Q 20/06; G06Q 20/108; G06Q 40/02; G06Q 40/04; G06Q 40/06
(Continued)

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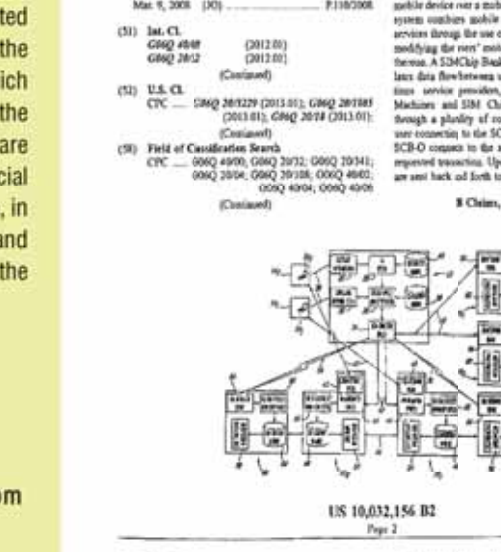
Canadian Office action dated Feb. 11, 2013 in Canadian Application No. 2,716,276.
(Continued)

Priority: Emerson — Eliot Toys
(24) Attorney, Agent, or Firm — Hayes Soloway PC

(57) ABSTRACT

A Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Chip Bank system and method for enabling users registered in the system to control their financial and telecommunications resources from their mobile device over a mobile communications network. The system enables mobile network providers and financial service providers for use of SIM chips without the need for modifying the user's mobile device or SIM chip installed therein. A SIMChip Bank System Operator (SCBO) registers two free-form text, audio, mobile communications service providers, SIM Chip Automated teller Machine and SIM Chip Service Providing Machine through a plurality of communications channels. Upon a user connecting to the SCBO to request a transaction, the SCBO connects to the appropriate bank to facilitate the requested transaction. Upon successful completion, reports are sent back up both to users confirming the event.

8 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



US 10,032,156 B2

Page 2

(51) Int. Cl.
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G06Q 20/20 (2013.01)
G06Q 20/18 (2013.01)

(52) U.S. Cl.
CPC — G06Q 20/22 (2013.01); G06Q 20/181 (2013.01); G06Q 20/18 (2013.01).
(Continued)

(53) Field of Classification Search
USPC — 705/25-45
See application file for complete search history.

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Report of Attorney dated Feb. 15, 2013 in Canadian Application No. 2,716,276.
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On line registration for admissions to classes KG I to Class IX in Indian Schools in the capital area for the academic year 2023-2024 will start from 1st February 2023 for the children of Indian nationals.

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4	Indian School Al Ghubra	KG I – IX
5	Indian School Bousher	KG I – IX
6	Indian School Al Seeb	KG I – IX
7	Indian School Al Maabala	KG I – IX

For the online application form and for more details about the admission process, please visit www.indianschoolsoman.com

A non-refundable processing fee of OMR 15/- will be payable on each application. The closing date of online registration for admissions will be Thursday, 28th February 2023.

Children of other nationalities who are seeking admissions in Indian Schools may write to admissions2023@indianschoolsoman.com with an attachment of the duly filled 'Application for Unique Number'; their online registrations will commence in the first week of March 2023 subject to availability of seats.

Admissions for children with special needs are open at Care and Special Education (CSE) which is located on the Indian School Muscat premises. Parents can approach the CSE administration directly for admission (www.cseoman.com)

Admissions are purely subject to availability of seats in the respective schools.

The image shows the official logo of the Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Health, which consists of a circular emblem with a sword and a crescent moon. To the right of the logo, the text "Sultanate of Oman" and "Ministry of Health" is displayed in a large, bold, black font. Below this, the word "ANNOUNCEMENT" is written in a large, bold, black font. Underneath the announcement title, a line of text states: "The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -". This is followed by a table with six columns: "Tender Ref", "Description", "Last date for Collection of tender Document", "Closing Time/ Day/ Date", "Eligibility", and "Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)". The table contains one row of data for tender 367/2023. Below the table, there are three bullet points providing details about the tendering process, including the website for tendering, submission requirements, and the Ministry's policy on accepting the lowest tender. At the bottom, contact information is provided, including the website, a statement that any clarification should be contacted via the provided telephone number, and an email address.

Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/ Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non- Refundable)
367/2023	Providing upload and download services for DGHS and IBRA health center	Before 10 am Thursday 9/ February /2023	Before 10 am on Monday 13/March /2023	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board	R.O 25 Per set

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Tenders should be submitted on line on the given website signed and sealed. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee or a certified Cheque issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee before one day of date submission.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

Any Clarification, you may contact via

Telephone: 24402200

Email id: etenderhd@mtcif.gov.om

Death toll rises to 28 in Pakistan mosque blast, 150 wounded

The casualties were confirmed by Peshawar Commissioner Riaz Mehsood, who also stated that a rescue attempt was ongoing within the mosque

ISLAMABAD: The death toll has risen to 28 in the suicide blast that took place in a mosque in the Police Lines area of Peshawar in Pakistan on Monday, according to media report.

The casualties were confirmed by Peshawar Commissioner Riaz Mehsood, who also stated that a rescue attempt was ongoing within the mosque.

"An emergency has been imposed at hospitals across the city and injured persons are being provided the best medical facilities," the media reported citing the senior official as saying.

Those who are injured in the blast, are reportedly said to be in



critical condition.

The blast took place in the mosque located in the Police Lines area of Peshawar during afternoon prayers.

Suicide attacker

The security officials said that the suicide attacker was present in the front row during the prayers when he exploded himself, as per local media reports. The injured were taken to the Lady Reading Hospital of Peshawar for treatment.

An eyewitness said that there were at least 120 people in the mosque when the explosion took place.

Injured include police

He said that the injured mostly included police personnel.

Former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has condemned the terrorist suicide attack in a mosque in Peshawar. He called for improving intelligence and equipping police forces.

"Strongly condemn the terrorist suicide attack in police lines mosque Peshawar during prayers. My prayers & condolences go to victims families. It is imperative we improve our intelligence gathering & properly equip our police forces to combat the growing threat of terrorism," Khan wrote in a tweet.

The area has been completely sealed and only ambulances are being allowed to enter the locality, according to media report. — ANI



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NEW ZEALAND

Auckland expects more rain after deadly floods

AUCKLAND: Auckland is expected to receive further heavy rain in the coming days, authorities said on Monday.

New Zealand's largest city was hit by flash floods and landslides over the past three days, with record rainfall. Four people have lost their lives. A state of emergency is in place for Auckland, but was lifted for the Waitomo region.

"My team's current focus and our big worry is that some Aucklanders might think the worse is behind us, but it isn't," Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown told reporters.

How much rain is expected in Auckland?

More heavy rains have been predicted on Tuesday. "We have more adverse weather coming and we need to prepare for that," Auckland Emergency Management duty controller Rachel Kelleher told a media conference.

The north of New Zealand's

North Island is receiving more rain than normal due to the La Nina weather event.

The National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) said Auckland has already recorded more than eight times its average January rainfall and 40% of its annual average rainfall.

"This rain is expected to cause dangerous river conditions and significant flooding. Slips and floodwaters are likely to disrupt travel, making some roads impassable and possibly isolating communities," a MetService statement said.

At least 5,000 homes and businesses were being assessed for flood and landslide damage and several roads remained closed after more than 15 centimetres (6 inches) of rain fell in three hours.

The city council has designated 69 houses as uninhabitable, and another 300 were at risk. — DW

MILITARY ALLIANCE

Erdogan hints Finland could join NATO without Sweden



ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has suggested that Ankara could approve Finland's application for NATO membership before making a decision on Sweden's bid.

The NATO military alliance is set to hold a summit in July in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. Hungary and Turkey are the only two countries in the alliance that have not ratified Sweden and Finland's accession, which requires unanimous agreement from all

member states.

Erdogan said in a pre-recorded video released on Sunday — in which he is seen addressing young people in the central-western Bilecek province — that Turkey could choose to approve Finland's NATO membership and not Sweden.

"If needed, we could give a different message about Finland," Erdogan said. "Sweden will be shocked when we give the different message about Finland."

"If you absolutely want to join NATO, you will return these terrorists to us," Erdogan said, referring to Ankara's demands that Sweden extradite Kurdish militants.

Earlier this week, Finland hinted that it could join the NATO military alliance separately from Sweden if progress isn't made on Stockholm's bid.

"We still have to evaluate the situation if it turns out that Sweden's application is stalling for a

long time to come," Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said.

In light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Sweden and Finland applied jointly to accede to NATO, ending their longstanding military non-alignment.

Turkey has accused Stockholm of supporting Kurdish militants and groups it accuses of carrying out a failed coup attempt in 2016.

Ankara has also been angered by far-right Danish-Swedish activist Rasmus Paludan, who set fire to

a copy of the Quran in front of the Turkish embassy in Stockholm. Following the far-right protest, Erdogan told Sweden not to count on Turkey's support for Stockholm's NATO bid.

Norway, Denmark and Sweden issued a travel advisory urging citizens in Turkey to avoid large gatherings due to demonstrations against Paludan's Quran burning. On Saturday, Turkey followed suit and issued a travel advisory for Europe. — DW

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PROVISIONAL FIGURES



Tunisia's parliamentary election witnesses 11.3% voter turnout

TUNIS: Voters shunned Tunisia's parliamentary elections Sunday, with only 11.3% showing up to the booths, according to provisional figures.

The numbers were almost as low as the first round, held in December 2022.

The elections were seen as a test in Saied's move to consolidate power, but the legitimacy is now being questioned due to the low turnout.

The influential party Ennahdha and other opposition movements boycotted the elections.

The last parliament, led by Ennahdha, was suspended in 2021 and later disbanded. Saied also altered the country's constitution to reduce the legislature's power, and give himself more autonomy.

What we know about the election

In the first round, 10 candidates secured seats without getting any votes, as they ran unopposed. For

seven constituencies, there were no candidates. Electoral officers said those seats would be filled in special elections later.

Independent organisations

Independent organisations such as Chahed (Witness) and Mourakiboun (Controllers) said some polling station heads refused to provide observers access to data on the turnout.

Chahed also said that rules against election day campaigning were violated, and that authorities used administrative vehicles to transport voters to their stations.

An official from the electoral commission denied wrongdoing, but said there might have been "isolated cases" of issues.

The vice president of the National Union of Tunisian Journalists, Amira Mohamed, said on Mosaïque Radio that journalists were barred from some voting stations.

Low government popularity

The opposition Work and Achievement Party, which had boycotted the elections, held a meeting on Sunday.

"The next parliament has no control over the government. So for parliament members who make promises to the people, what is the mechanism by which they will keep their promises?" party chief Abdellatif Meki said to the Associated Press news agency.

Some Tunisians initially welcomed Saied's grabbing of powers in 2021, after previous governments were unable to revive the economy or improve public services.

But his popularity has declined in recent years as Tunisians struggle with an economic crisis. Unemployment and shortage of staples are among the biggest issues facing the citizens.

— DW

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- RBS
- Creatinine
- Sickie Cell
- HIV
- HCV
- VDRL
- HBSAg
- Urine Routine
- Blood Grouping
- TSH
- Antenatal Scan

PREMIUM (First Trimester) OMR 99

- OBG Consultation – 3 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Creatinine
- Sickie Cell
- HIV
- HCV
- VDRL
- HBSAg
- Urine Routine
- Blood Grouping
- TSH
- Antenatal Scan
- Dietitian Consultation – 3 visits
- Physiotherapy Consultation – 1 visit

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- CBC
- GTT
- Urine Routine
- Growth Scan

PREMIUM (Second Trimester) OMR 101

- OBG Consultation – 6 visits
- CBC
- GTT
- Urine Routine
- TSH
- Growth Scan
- Dietitian Consultation – 3 visits
- Physiotherapy Consultation – 3 visits

BASIC (Third Trimester) OMR 40

- OBG Consultation – 6 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Urine Routine
- Cardio Tocography
- Growth Scan

PREMIUM (Third Trimester) OMR 99

- OBG Consultation – 6 visits
- CBC
- RBS
- Urine Routine
- TSH
- Cardio Tocography
- Growth Scan
- Dietitian Consultation – 3 visits
- Physiotherapy Consultation – 1 visit

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ELECTION COMMISSION

Nepal to hold Presidential elections on March 9

KATHMANDU: Nepal will hold Presidential elections on March 9, said the Election Commission of Nepal.

The Election Commission of Nepal also decided to hold the vice presidential elections on March 17. Notably, Nepal's President Bidhya Devi Bhandari is due to retire on March 13.

Successor

Her successor is being elected four days in advance. The Nepal Vice President's election is due to be held one day before incumbent Nanda Bahadur Pun retires.

Nepal Constitution has a provision of electing the president and vice president through an electoral college consisting of members of both houses of the federal parliament and all seven provincial assemblies. The weights of votes of lawmakers of federal parliament and provincial assemblies are different.

According to the office of the President of Nepal, Bidya Devi Bhandari is the second president of Nepal after the Himalayan nation adopted the democratic-republican system. — ANI

‘G20 provides key platform to exchange ideas and solutions’

United Nations

General Assembly

President arrived on

Sunday in India for

a three-day visit

NEW DELHI: United Nations General Assembly President Csaba Korosi met G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant, saying that G20 provides an important platform to exchange ideas and solutions.

Taking to Twitter, Korosi said, “G20 provides an important platform to exchange ideas & much-needed solutions. Good to meet again with @g20org Sherpa @amitabhk87 & team to discuss measures/solutions devised under ‘s leadership of the group to support transformation.” Kant tweeted that they held a fascinating discussion on the geopolitical scenario, multilateralism, and global supply chains at the work-



ing dinner, which was hosted by Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Deputy Executive Director UN Women, Lakshmi M Puri.

On Sunday, Korosi arrived in India for a three-day visit. Ministry of External Affairs Official spokesperson Arindam Bagchi in a tweet on Sunday said that Korosi's visit is an opportunity to exchange views on global challenges that the United Nations is currently seized with.

“A warm welcome to @UN_PGA Csaba Korosi to India. This is

his first bilateral visit to any country. An opportunity to exchange views on global challenges that the United Nations is currently seized with,” Bagchi tweeted on Sunday.

Bagchi also shared an image of Korosi with India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ruchira Kamboj, and Joint Secretary (UNP), Ministry of External Affairs, Prakash Gupta.

Korosi upon his arrival to India, tweeted: “Namaste, India. Glad to be in New Delhi, to commence my first bilateral visit as PGA. Heart-

ened by the very warm welcome by PR @ruchirakamboj, UNRC @ShombiSharp, @MEAIndia Joint Secretary UNP @PrakashMEA.”

A press release issued by the Ministry of External Affairs on Saturday said that Korosi at the invitation of the External Affairs Minister, will visit India from January 29-31, 2023 and the visit will be Korosi's first bilateral visit to any country since he assumed UNGA Presidency in September 2022.

The release said that the PGA during the visit will hold talks with EAM on key multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest. PGA has outlined five priorities for his UNGA Presidency: i) Standing firm on basic principles of the United Nations Charter; ii) Making significant and measurable progress in sustainability transformation; iii) Aiming at integrated, systemic solutions; iv) Enhancing role of science in decision-making; and v) Increasing solidarity to better endure new chapters of crises facing the world.

According to the ministry release, given PGA's strong interest in India's expertise in water man-

agement and experience in SDG's, he would also be interacting with senior officials of NITI Aayog and India's G20 Presidency team to explore the scaling up of India's best practices. On 30 January, PGA will deliver a public address at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) on his Presidency theme of “Solutions through Solidarity, Sustainability and Science in the UN”.

Korosi will pay floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat on January 30, the occasion of Martyrs Day.

He will travel to Bengaluru on January 31, where he will interact with scientists at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). He will pay a field visit to an IISc-led water conservation project. PGA is expected to visit development projects in/around Bengaluru and interact with the UN-India country team. The Governor of Karnataka would be hosting a dinner in his honour.

According to the ministry press release, PGA's visit to India would help reinforce India's abiding commitment to multilateralism, including through its ongoing G20 Presidency. — ANI

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SPORTS

OVER 130 GOLFERS REGISTER FOR ASSARAIN CLASSIC



The tournament will take place at Ghala Golf Club on 3 and 4 February 2023

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 27th Assarain Golf Classic, one of the most prestigious golf tournaments of the Sultanate, will take place at Ghala Golf Club on 3 and 4 February 2023.

More than 130 Golfers have registered for the tournament as per the Organisers.

According to a press statement issued by the organisers, the Assarain Golf Classic, sponsored by Assarain Group of Companies, is a premium golfing event that gives amateur golfers the opportunity to participate in a professional tournament that meets international



golfing standards.

Ibrahim Al Wahaibi, Director, Assarain Group of Companies, and the pioneer of the Assarain Golf Classic, said: "We support golf and are committed to help the game flourish in Oman. We look forward to the 2023 edition of the Assarain Golf Classic and are confident that it will exceed expectations."

"The 2023 Assarain Golf Classic is a highly anticipated golfing tournament, one that the entire Golfing community in Oman looks forward to. The Classic, to be staged at Ghala Golf Club, will witness the coming together of golfers of varying handicap who will take on the challenge of taming the greens. Open to men, ladies and juniors, the Assarain Golf



Classic 2023 is a highly awaited golfing tournament in Oman. This tournament sets a new standard every year, and I keenly look forward to it."

The 36-hole competition is one of the largest golfing tournaments in the region and is open to all players with a verifiable handicap. Another not-to-be-missed attraction will be the colourful presentation ceremony planned for 4th February to felicitate the winners of different categories, where there are surprises waiting for the golfers!

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS

Brighton knock Liverpool out of FA Cup

BRIGHTON: Brighton caused an upset by knocking defending champions Liverpool out of the ongoing FA Cup after a 2-1 win at home to progress to the fifth round of the tournament.

A 92nd-minute winner from Kaoru Mitoma helped Brighton clinch a memorable win to knock one of the top clubs in English football out of the tournament. The hosts were without midfielder Moises Caicedo, who made his intentions to leave the club public after Arsenal had a £60m bid rejected on Friday.

The Reds gained the lead 30 minutes into the game after Mo Salah went through his opponent's defences, and found Harvey Elliott, who smashed the ball past an onrushing Jason Steele.

Brighton's response was valiant and they were even with their opponents in the 39th minute after Lewis Dunk was able to net a deflection made by a long-effort from Tariq Lamptey.

At the half-time, both sides were even at 1-1.

Jurgen Klopp tried to up the ante in the second half and introduced James Milner, Jordan Henderson and Darwin Nunez but Brighton was extremely firm and fired a killer blow in the stoppage time.

Kaoru Mitoma had threatened



his opponent's goal on multiple occasions and his persistence paid off two minutes into the stoppage time. He stormed through a crowd of players at the back post before rifling the winning goal into the roof of the net.

Mitoma, outstanding all afternoon, had threatened Allison's goal on multiple occasions and was rewarded for his persistence in the dying embers of the game, shimmying through a crowd of players at the back post before rifling the winner into the roof of the net (90+2).

The warning signs were there but they went unheeded by Liverpool's often lifeless backline.

Back at the scene of a 3-0 thumping a fortnight ago which Klopp described as the worst of his managerial career, the Reds were improved in patches, but powerless to prevent Mitoma's wonderful improvisation late on.

The Japanese international, who terrorised Trent Alexander-Arnold enough to warrant the

full-back's withdrawal after just 59 minutes, had presented Solly March with the chance to tie up proceedings not long before his decisive strike.

Following the win, Brighton manager Roberto De Zerbi was quoted as saying by Sky Sports, "This was a different team to the last game. It was very difficult to win this game and we are very happy. If you ask about the quality I did not like the game, we can improve a lot. We made too many simple mistakes."

"We have to work. The most important in football is to have heart, you understand? To become a great team you have to win this game. We did not play so well like the last game [against Liverpool]."

"You think it is very nice today because we won the game, but to become bigger we have to understand the game. The result is important but the performance also."

"We are not like Manchester City, Man United, Arsenal, Tottenham or Liverpool and Chelsea. We are not the same level. But we want to fight to improve. In the moment we are playing well. In the table, we stay in sixth," concluded the manager.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp also said that his side will not fall apart. **-ANI**

MEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP

Bavuma's ton keeps SA's automatic 2023 WC qualification hopes alive

BLOEMFONTEIN: South Africa's late push for automatic qualification to the 2023 Men's Cricket World Cup in India received a significant boost on Sunday after their incredible run-chase in Bloemfontein in the second ODI against England, which saw them win by five wickets.

A century from skipper Temba Bavuma (109 off 102 balls) laid the platform for South Africa's third-highest successful ODI run-chase on Sunday as they gained a 2-0 lead in the three-match series against England. Bavuma's second ODI ton was followed by valuable contributions from the middle order during the 343-run chase, including an unbeaten 65-run stand for the sixth wicket between David Miller (58*) and Marco Jansen (32*).

The hosts chased down the total with five balls to go. Every batter from the top seven crossed 25 as South Africa recorded a stunning win to give their aspirations of automatic qualification to the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 a boost.



Aiden Markram (49), Rassie van der Dussen (38) also played some solid innings. Olly Stone (2/48) was the pick of the bowlers for England. Spinner Adil Rashid also got two wickets but gave away 72 runs in his 10 overs. Sam Curran got one wicket.

Earlier, England put up a total of 342/7 in 50 overs. After the top three consisting of Jason Roy, Dawid Malan and Ben Duckett disappointed, Harry Brook (80 off 75 balls), skipper Jos Buttler (94* off 81 balls) and all-rounder Moeen Ali (51 off 45 balls) helped bring England back into the game.

Anrich Nortje (2/64) was the pick of the bowlers for SA. Wayne Parnell, Lungi Ngidi, Marco Jansen, Aiden Markram and Keshav Maharaj took a wicket each.

Bavuma was given the 'Man of the Match' for his brilliant ton.

South Africa did their chances of qualifying directly some harm when they withdrew from a scheduled ODI series in Australia earlier this year but back-to-back wins in this series have given the Proteas hope of avoiding the tricky qualifiers in Zimbabwe. **-ANI**



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OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by March 2023 reaching \$82.50, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.98 from the price of Friday, which was at \$84.48. - **ONA**

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,750.26 points, down by 0.26 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.67 per cent at 487.55 points. National Finance, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Phoenix Power, down 5.00 per cent, was the top loser.

Oman LNG inks pact with Turkey's BOTAS

The term-sheet agreement will see Oman LNG supplying BOTAS with a total volume of 1 million metric tonnes per annum of LNG based on a 10-year contract, starting from 2025



MUSCAT: Oman LNG announced the signing of a binding term-sheet agreement with Turkish BOTAS Petroleum Pipeline Corporation (BOTAS) to supply 1 million metric tonnes per annum (mtpa) of LNG, starting in 2025.

This agreement helps to strengthen Oman LNG's partner-

ship with international firms in the energy and LNG industry.

The signed term-sheet agreement will see Oman LNG supplying BOTAS with a total volume of 1 million metric tonnes per annum of LNG based on a 10-year contract, starting from 2025.

This will help to emphasise

Oman LNG's role in leveraging the Sultanate of Oman's reputation and Oman LNG as a reliable and trusted LNG supplier, coupled with the effective management of business processes to produce clean energy delivered to customers around the world safely and reliably.

The agreement was signed here, in the presence of Eng. Salim bin Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals by Hamed Mohammed Al Nu'amani, CEO of Oman LNG and Burhan Ozcan, Chairman of the Board and General Manager of BOTAS Petroleum Pipeline Corporation. -**ONA**

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



ASMED joins hands with DHL Express to empower SMEs

MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) signed a cooperation programme with DHL Express to empower small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and craftspeople by enhancing the growth of their businesses through a package of initiatives.

The agreement was signed by Abdulaziz Said Al Raisi, ASMED Deputy Chairman for SMEs Development, and Moustafa Osman, DHL Express Country Manager, Oman.

As per the programme, SMEs

and artisans will be offered special services, training opportunities, contracts, tenders and preferential rates in inbound and outbound shipping and storage areas at DHL sites in Oman.

The company will also provide SMEs and artisans with technical consultancy in logistics and electronic programmes.

These include imparting knowledge about types of packaging, weighing goods and other tips that might help in manufacturing products bound for global markets. -**ONA**

JOINT OPERATING AGREEMENT

Maha signs agreement with Mafrag for Block 70 in Oman



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Maha Energy (Maha), through its wholly-owned subsidiary Maha Energy (Oman) and Mafrag Energy (Mafrag Energy) have entered into a Joint Operating Agreement (JOA) for Block 70 in Oman, on January 28.

The signature of the JOA, alongside the governmental approval ratified by Royal Decree 74/2022 and other relevant procedures, marks the satisfaction of all conditions precedent required for the conclusion of the assignment of Maha's 35 per cent work interest to Mafrag Energy, as provided in the relevant Farmout Agreement signed by the parties in August 2022. Maha and Mafrag Energy will address the post-transfer obligations moving forward.

Maha is the Operator of Block 70, with a 65 per cent shareholding interest. The agreements require Mafrag Energy to reimburse Maha for their prorated share of all past costs, including the signature bo-

nus required under the relevant agreement with the government. Mafrag Energy will also be required to pay its share of all future expenditures on Block 70.

Paulo Mendonça, Maha's CEO said: "We are proud to have finalised yet another major milestone in what is to be a great partnership. Maha is moving forward to commence the testing aiming for fast production of Block 70 and having Mafrag Energy as its local partner with a competent and experienced Omani team, bringing knowledge of the local market to the operations."

Talal Al Subhi, Director of Mafrag Energy, said: "It is exciting times. Mafrag Energy is honoured to play its part in achieving Vision 2040 as set by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said. This partnership is a true embodiment of enhancing the ICV content of Block 70."

"The focus now is to collaborate to kick off the production testing stage. Proving the productivity of the field is a key aspect to declare

commerciality. We look forward to bringing that value to the Sultanate of Oman," he further added.

Block 70 is an onshore block that includes the shallow undeveloped Mafrag heavy oil field. The Block is located in the middle of the prolific oil-producing Ghaba Salt Basin in the central part of Oman. The Mafrag oil field was discovered by Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) in 1988 and was further delineated by four wells and 3D seismic in stages until 2010. Two wells were placed on pump production tests, of which one was placed on an extended test to prove long-term productivity.

The Block covers an area of 639 km² and is covered by both 2D and 3D seismic data that has been acquired by previous operators and has been made available to Maha.

Maha Energy is a Swedish international upstream oil and gas company and its business activities include the exploration, development and production of crude oil and natural gas.

MARSA AL DUQM INVESTMENT COMPANY



Agreement inked for power, water and sewage services at Duqm Fishing Port

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Marsa Al Duqm Investment Company signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Centralised Utilities Company (Marafiq) for the provision of power, water and sewage management services to Duqm Fishing Port.

The MoU was signed by Eng. Nabil bin Salim Al Bimani, Chairman of Marsa Al Duqm Investments Co., and Eng. Abdullah bin Mohamed Al-Hashimi, Marafiq's Managing Director.

"The MoU signing between the two parties is considering the possibility of the provision of services to Duqm Fishing Port, the Sultanate's biggest fishing port, which is the focal point of fisheries support business and all fishing activities as well as a great attraction for investment which develops the supporting sectors," said Eng. Nabil bin Salim Al Bimani, Chairman of

Marsa Al Duqm Investments Co. Nabil Al Bimani trusted that such MoU would have economic and environmental benefits in achieving Oman's planned sustainable development goals, most importantly environmental sustainability.

"We are pleased to cooperate with Marsa Al Duqm Investment Company. Specialised in providing industrial services of all types, Marafiq endeavours to provide Duqm Fishing Port with highly reliable, efficient services, maintain high-quality standards in all of our operations and adopt environmentally friendly practices for Duqm is the cornerstone for Oman Vision 2040 that achieves the future development goals. We trust that our capabilities and resources can bring long-term, sustainable benefits for all of our stakeholders across the various supporting sectors and industries as well as all supply chain activities," said Abdullah Al-Hashimi.

TELECOMMUNICATION

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Vodafone in Oman and Ericsson have carried out the first successful test call that will pave the way for the commercial introduction of 5G standalone voice and data services for Vodafone subscribers in the Sultanate.

Oman's first successful Voice over New Radio (VoNR) proof of concept call over a standalone 5G network is part of Vodafone and Ericsson's ongoing project to develop a highly efficient and reliable nationwide standalone network - allowing for high-quality, seamless voice and data services.

Using Ericsson dual-mode 5G Core and Ericsson IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) technology, the proof of concept showed the potential of the mobile network to enhance speech quality across the country. It also demonstrated the capability of Vodafone's network to enable 5G-specific voice and communication services for both consumers and enterprises, using an experimental terminal, which will subsequently be replaced by commercial terminals made by Vodafone's partners.

Unlike non-standalone 5G networks, standalone 5G networks do not build on existing 4G networks and technology, instead pairing 5G radios with a cloud-native 5G core network - allowing for flexibility and speed to meet current and future customer demands.



Stelios Savvides, Vodafone's Technology Director in Oman

Stelios Savvides, Vodafone's Technology Director in Oman, says: "As we continue to push boundaries as an innovation leader in Oman, this successful VoNR proof of concept call is a milestone in our mission to enhance our 5G capabilities and deliver superior user experiences. High-quality and seamless voice calling will soon become a must-have service for residents across Oman, as Vodafone becomes one of an extremely select group of operators around the world to deploy a standalone 5G network. These developments are important stepping



Abdullah Al Balushi, Country Manager of Ericsson Oman

stones on the road to the future, providing the capability to support data requirements that can enable all manner of cutting-edge technologies, from real-time virtual reality and augmented reality to driverless cars and the latest advances in health care, improving quality of life en route. Our collaboration with Ericsson is another move towards providing our customers with advanced 5G voice and data services. We look forward to developing this proof of concept further and exploring a range of immersive applications that 5G standalone data and

VoNR capabilities will enable for customers and digital enterprises across the country."

Abdullah Al Balushi, Country Manager of Ericsson Oman, says, "We are confident these latest VoNR achievements will open doors to new business models and use cases and help Vodafone Oman deliver high-quality voice services and immersive experiences across the country. Through Vision 2040, Oman is embarking on a new phase of growth. Cellular technology is set to play a huge role in this journey and through our advanced communication technologies we aspire to help Oman realise the advanced digital economy mandated by Vision 2040. We remain committed to fostering collaborations and delivering our top-class 5G capabilities to support digitalisation and innovation across the Sultanate of Oman."

Since its inception in Oman, Vodafone has partnered with Ericsson to introduce innovative cellular services to consumers and enterprises, accelerating the deployment of Industry 4.0 technologies in the country. The two companies are working closely together to deliver a state-of-the-art 5G standalone network and enhance Vodafone's Radio Access Network (RAN) and transport capabilities, as well as develop a cloud-native 5G infrastructure and microservices architecture.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

National Finance, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Phoenix Power, down by 5 per cent, was the top loser

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,750.26 points, down by 0.26 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.67 per cent at 487.55 points. National Finance, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Phoenix Power, down 5 per cent, was the top loser.

Shares of Al Suwadi Power were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 459 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.21 million, with more than 10.93 million shares changing hands. Out of 41 traded securities, 16 advanced, 11 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, foreign investors were net sellers for OMR206,000 while domestic investors were net buyers for OMR195,000, followed by GCC

& Arab investors for OMR12,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,628.53 points, down 0.2 per cent. Prices of National Finance, Takaful Oman, Dhofar Insurance, Bank Nizwa, and Al Anwar Investment were up by 10.00 per cent, 7.90 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 2.04 per cent and 1.25 per cent respectively. Prices of Bank Dhofar, Al Omaniya Financial Services, Sohar International Bank and National Bank Oman were down by 5.44 per cent, 1.38 per cent, 0.97 per cent and 0.35 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,861.27 points, down 0.07 per cent. Prices of Voltamp Energy was up by 5.44 per cent respectively. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Oman Fisheries, Oman Chromite and Galfar Engineering were down by 2.44 per cent, 1.09 per cent, 0.83 per cent and 0.56 per cent respectively. — **United Securities**

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDEXES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,774.02	4,742.99	4,750.26	4,762.85	-12.60	-0.26
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,676.68	7,626.92	7,628.53	7,643.97	-15.44	-0.20
Industry Index	5,879.19	5,834.01	5,861.27	5,865.57	-4.30	-0.07
Services Index	1,696.03	1,686.96	1,692.31	1,692.81	-0.50	-0.03
MSX Shariah Index	487.55	484.59	487.55	484.31	3.24	0.67
MSX TR INDEX	6,028.01	5,988.83	5,998.00	6,013.91	-15.91	-0.26
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,023.37	7,980.72	7,982.41	7,998.56	-16.15	-0.20
SERVICES TR IDX	1,799.26	1,789.64	1,795.31	1,795.84	-0.53	-0.03
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,120.97	6,073.93	6,102.31	6,106.79	-4.47	-0.07

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
10,935,281	1,208,765	459	23,587,312,480	16	11	14	41

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 30

	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BD	LAST OFFER	PRE VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
	OM0000001152 OMAN NAT ENG	134,000	14,736	7	0.117	0.119	0.117	0.119	0.117	0.002	1.709	0.119	0.119	0.119	0.100	16,660,000
	OM0000003000 AL MAHA PETROLEUM	38,596	35,308	6	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.912	0.008	0.877	0.920	0.920	0.920	0.100	63,480,000
	OM0000001525 OMAN INVST&FIN	198,680	25,309	17	0.127	0.128	0.127	0.127	0.126	0.001	0.794	0.127	0.127	0.127	0.100	30,090,000
	OM0000002796 BANK MUSCAT	680,184	193,444	38	0.276	0.278	0.275	0.277	0.276	0.001	0.382	0.277	0.277	0.278	0.100	20,792,198
	OM0000002200 AHLJ BANK	5,000	800	1	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.000	0.160	0.000	0.160	0.100	311,945,195
	OM0000003026 OMAN TELECOM	70,100	66,454	3	0.948	0.948	0.936	0.948	0.948	0.000	0.000	0.948	0.920	0.948	0.100	711,000,000
	OM0000003125 GLOBAL INV H	51,000	2,958	2	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.000	0.058	0.057	0.059	0.100	11,600,000
	OM0000003968 OOREDOO	222,688	97,103	7	0.436	0.438	0.436	0.438	0.438	0.000	0.000	0.438	0.436	0.438	0.100	285,113,573
	OM0000005005 ALMAHA CERAMICS	4,500	1,935	3	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.430	0.000	0.000	0.430	0.430	0.450	0.100	23,650,000
	OM0000001483 NATIONAL BANK OMAN	208,475	60,418	3	0.289	0.290	0.289	0.289	0.290	-0.001	-0.345	0.289	0.285	0.289	0.100	469,898,497
	OM0000003398 SOHAR INT. BANK	20,000	2,040	1	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.102	0.103	-0.001	-0.971	0.102	0.102	0.104	0.100	468,186,354
	OM0000002077 AL OMANIYA FIN.S	644,900	90,374	13	0.145	0.145	0.140	0.143	0.145	-0.002	-1.379	0.143	0.133	0.140	0.100	43,359,550
	OM0000007407 DHOFAR GENERATING	112,000	6,017	5	0.053	0.057	0.053	0.057	0.058	-0.001	-1.724	0.057	0.054	0.057	0.100	12,667,680
Total	13	2,399,123	597,096	106												
Parallel Market																
	OM0000002648 NATIONAL FINANCE	19,541	2,471	4	0.125	0.132	0.125	0.132	0.120	0.012	10.000	0.132	0.132	0.132	0.100	71,442,420
	OM0000004933 AL SUWADI POWER	2,483,354	86,546	104	0.032	0.035	0.032	0.035	0.032	0.003	9.375	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.100	25,044,222
	OM0000004776 TAKAFUL OMAN	100	4	1	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.038	0.003	7.895	0.041	0.036	0.041	0.100	10,250,000
	OM0000004925 ALBATINAH POWER	310,100	10,770	26	0.033	0.036	0.033	0.035	0.033	0.002	6.061	0.035	0.035	0.036	0.100	23,621,000
	OM0000004248 SMN POWER HOLDING	654,100	35,028	23	0.052	0.055	0.052	0.055	0.052	0.003	5.769	0.055	0.055	0.054	0.100	10,979,958
	OM0000003661 VOLTAMP ENERGY	349,274	32,855	9	0.093	0.097	0.093	0.097	0.092	0.005	5.435	0.097	0.096	0.096	0.100	7,896,000
	OM0000001095 DHOFAR INSURANCE	10,000	2,050	1	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.200	0.005	2.500	0.205	0.000	0.205	0.100	21,476,219
	OM0000004420 BANK NIZWA	1,198,958	119,839	45	0.099	0.101	0.099	0.100	0.098	0.002	2.041	0.100	0.098	0.100	0.100	223,695,303
	OM0000001772 ALANWAR INVESTMENT	76,290	8,243	7	0.082	0.083	0.081	0.081	0.080	0.001	1.250	0.081	0.081	0.083	0.100	16,200,000
	OM0000004768 MADINA TAKAFUL	27,947	2,317	6	0.090	0.091	0.090	0.091	0.090	0.001	1.111	0.091	0.090	0.093	0.100	15,925,000
	OM0000001160 NATIONAL GAS	120,424	12,048	18	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	0.001	1.000	0.101	0.100	0.101	0.100	8,585,000
	OM0000006979 OMAN QATAR INSUR	60,000	10,080	1	0.168	0.168	0.168	0.167	0.167	0.001	0.599	0.168	0.151	0.168	0.100	16,800,000
	OM0000001418 RAYSUT CEMENT	226,735	29,672	24	0.130	0.135	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.126	0.143	0.100	26,000,000
	OM0000001517 HSBC BANK OMAN	592,588	95,999	11	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.162	0.000	0.000	0.162	0.162	0.164	0.100	324,050,672
	OM0000001590 MUSCAT FINANCE	33,630	2,023	3	0.061	0.061	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.058	0.061	0.100	18,428,780
	OM0000001681 OMAN EMIRATES HO.	9,228	220	2	0.078	0.078	0.074	0.074	0.074	0.000	0.000	0.074	0.074	0.076	0.100	9,018,750
	OM0000002374 UNITED FINANCE	153,000	9,486	8	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.060	0.062	0.100	21,646,953
	OM0000004669 SHARGIAH DESALIN	38,760	5,271	5	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.136	0.000	0.000	0.136	0.135	0.140	0.100	13,301,094
	OM0000007043 NATIONAL LIFE INS	2,100	714	1	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.330	0.340	0.100	135,447,276
	OM0000007084 MCT DESALINATE	10,000	990	1	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.095	0.099	0.100	15,399,490
	OM0000003821 GALFAR ENGINEER	54,000	9,320	7	0.172	0.178	0.171	0.178	0.179	-0.001	-0.559	0.178	0.171	0.178	0.100	36,131,587
	OM0000001680 OMAN CHROMITE	294	962	1	2.400	2.400	2.400	2.400	2.400	-0.000	-0.626	2.400	2.400	2.660	1.000	7,200,000
	OM0000001569 OMAN FISHERIES	12,700	1,156	1	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.091	0.092	-0.001	-1.087	0.091	0.089	0.091	0.100	16,569,134
	OM0000004735 SEMBICORP SALALAH	712,100	55,444	21	0.078	0.078	0.077	0.077	0.078	-0.001	-1.282	0.077	0.077	0.078	0.100	73,502,040
	OM0000002804 ASAFFA FOODS	500	100	1	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200	0.205	-0.005	-2.439	0.200	0.000	0.210	0.100	24,400,000
	OM0000002549 BANK DHOFAR	5,000	775	1	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.160	-0.005	-3.125	0.155	0.155	0.160	0.100	464,434,473
	OM0000005963 PHOENIX POWER	1,381,295	79,478	20	0.059	0.059	0.056	0.057	0.060	-0.003	-5.000	0.057	0.056	0.057	0.100	83,368,283
Total	27	8,535,658	611,660	352												

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Pact signed to exchange expertise and services in administrative fields

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with OQ, a global integrated energy group, to devise a three-year plan for the exchange of expertise and services in administrative fields.

The MoU explores solutions for the development of human resources. It was signed by Sayyid Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Labour Ministry's Undersecretary for Human Resources Development and Ashraf Hamad Al Ma'amari, CEO of Human Resources, Technology and Work Culture at OQ group.

The MoU provides for benefiting OQ's employees to share their experiences and offer their services to the Ministry of Labour in an attempt to provide the services required by the ministry. Additionally, OQ's employees will contribute to developing national competencies and study the possibility of training the MOL's employees by utilising the development and training programmes for human capital at OQ Group. Furthermore, they will share their experiences in personal empowerment (coaching), occupational competencies (The National Framework for Occupational Competencies), in addition to job succession and replacement (Human resources development system) and work



environment development. Al Busaidi commended the efforts exerted by OQ to develop national capacities and their contributions to educational, training and qualification programmes. He also praised their assistance in supporting the government efforts through the various initiatives that contribute to empowering some entities by implementing their programs and plans aiming at achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

environment development.

Al Busaidi commended the efforts exerted by OQ to develop national capacities and their contributions to educational, training and qualification programmes. He also praised their assistance in supporting the government efforts through the various initiatives that contribute to empowering some entities by implementing their programs and plans aiming at achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

APPOINTMENT

Yahya Al Jabri joins Alpen Capital's Advisory Board

DUBAI: Alpen Capital announced the formation of its Advisory Board consisting of highly experienced professionals with diversified business experience.

The advisory board comprising Yahya Al Jabri, Wim Wienk and Eric Sarasin, intends to provide support and guidance on business development and expansion into new markets.

"We are very pleased to have such industry stalwarts on our advisory board. Over the past few years, Alpen Capital has expanded its footprint beyond the GCC and is currently active in several markets in South Asia, Africa and the Levant. The rich background of our advisory board members and insights provided by them will only help Alpen Capital further expand and strengthen its foothold in regional as well as international markets," said Rohit Walia, Executive Chairman and CEO of Alpen Capital.

Having vast experience in



global corporate and investment banking, Yahya Al Jabri began his career at Oman International Bank and has held senior and board positions in several leading businesses and financial institutions in Oman.

He was the Chairman of the Special Economic Zone Authority at Duqm from 2011–2020 and Executive President of the Capital Market Authority from 1999–2011. Yahya Al Jabri is currently the Chairman of Alizz Islamic Bank in Oman.

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IN BAHRAIN

Zubair EDC participates in Gulf Business Incubators and Accelerators Conference

Times News Service

MUSCAT: For the fifth time in a row, The Zubair Enterprise Development Center participated in the Gulf Business Incubators and Accelerators Conference in the Bahraini capital, Manama.

The conference was held under the patronage of Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro, Bahrain's Minister of Commerce and Industry, in co-operation with Bahrain's Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, and with the participation of entrepreneurs from the Gulf Cooperation Council countries.

ZEDC was represented by Ali Shaker, Head of the Institutions Development and Partnerships Sector and entrepreneur Dr Salah bin Saeed Al-Mahturi, CEO of "Brandz+" company, and a member of the Zubair Center for Enterprise Development.

Commenting on the conference, Ali Shaker said: "I would like to thank Bahrain Development for Small and Medium Enterprises Society and particularly its chairman, Deputy Ahmed Al-Salloum, for inviting us to participate in the latest edition of this innovative conference. The event itself is an important learning opportunity as we share common experiences and challenges to develop a better entrepreneurial environment in the region.

"It remains a unique space for incubators, business accelera-



tors and SME entrepreneurs to exchange ideas and improve the whole environment itself."

ZEDC was proud to contribute to the conference by participating in the first-panel discussion on the importance of empowering entrepreneurs to choose viable sectors and ensure sustainable growth for their projects.

During his speech, Ali Shaker touched upon the lessons learned by the Zubair Center for Enterprise Development in the last ten years since its establishment in 2013. He described the centre's work with some of the participants of the Gulf Business Incubators and Accelerators Conference and gave some general insights into the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Sultanate of Oman.

Finally, he also gave some in-

novative ideas to improve the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Gulf and underlined the benefit of standardised legislation across the GCC.

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According to the report, which was based on more than 200 surveys

79%

parents claim their children use makeup and body items such as glitter, face paint, and lip gloss.

Children are particularly vulnerable to adverse health risks associated with chemicals often found in makeup and body products.



ARE YOUR TEENS USING TOXIC MAKE-UP PRODUCTS?

One should be careful while using beauty products. According to a recent study conducted by scientists at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health and Earth justice, most youngsters in the United States use make-up that may contain carcinogens and other harmful substances.

The findings were published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, a peer-reviewed journal.

According to the report, which was based on more than 200 surveys, 79 per cent of parents claim their children aged 12 and under use makeup and body items such as glitter, face paint, and lip gloss.

Prior research has shown that these products often have toxic chemicals, like lead, asbestos, PFAS, phthalates, and formaldehyde in them. Toxic chemicals found in children's makeup and body products (CMBP), like heavy metals, are especially harmful to infants and children. These chemicals, whether intentionally added or present as contaminants,

have been linked to cancer, neurodevelopmental harm, and other serious and irreversible health effects.

"There is increasing evidence of harmful ingredients often included in adult cosmetics and CMBPs, and children are more biologically susceptible to the effects of toxicants," said study co-first author Eleanor A Medley, who co-led the study with Kendall E Kruchten while both completed their MPHs in environmental health sciences at Columbia Mailman.

"In this context, it is important to uncover how makeup and body products are being used by children to characterize risk and improve safety," added Kruchten.

According to the Columbia and Earthjustice's study, of the surveyed children, about 54 per cent use children's makeup and body products (CMBP) at least monthly, 12 per cent use CMBP daily, about 20 per cent use CMBP for eight hours or more at a time, and a third of them reported un-

intentionally ingesting the products in the last year.

Over one-third of the surveyed children are Latino and 65 per cent of those children use CMBP. Compared to other racial groups, Latino children reported using CMBP more often and more for play.

This study comes as some states, like New York and Washington, consider tightening their consumer regulations around toys, makeup, and personal care products.

"Children are particularly vulnerable to adverse health risks associated with chemicals often found in makeup and body products," says study senior author Julie Herbstman, PhD, professor of environmental health sciences and director of the Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.

"In addition to dermal exposure through the skin, behavioural patterns such as hand-to-mouth activity may increase exposure to products

through unintentional ingestion. Additionally, children's small body size, rapid growth rate, developing tissues and organs, and immature immune systems make them biologically susceptible to the effects of toxicants."

"It is alarming that industry is being allowed to sell makeup and body products marketed to children that contain extremely toxic chemicals. Findings from this study can help better understand how children are using these products and will hopefully spur agencies to act to protect children from toxic chemical exposures," said Earthjustice Attorney Lakendra Barajas.

"Unfortunately, currently little is being done to protect children from toxic chemicals in children's makeup and body products." (ANI)

There is increasing evidence of harmful ingredients often included in adult cosmetics and CMBPs, and children are more biologically susceptible to the effects of toxicants



ROUND-UP

Premium SUV Nissan X-Terra: A capable on and off-road companion

Designed for adventure and the outdoors, its seven-passenger capacity also makes it suitable as a family vehicle

MARWAH MAHMOOD AL RAISI

MUSCAT: If you are looking for a vehicle that offers a hard-to-beat combination of technology, power, style, safety, space, and comfort, premium SUV Nissan X-Terra is a perfect choice.

Designed for adventure and the outdoors, its seven-passenger capacity also makes it suitable as a family vehicle. Yes, with a robust 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with a seven-speed automatic transmission powers, Nissan X-Terra is exceptionally capable. The petrol engine delivers 124kW /165 hp and 241Nm of torque that guarantees an exhilarating drive of speed and acceleration.

A catalyst for new experiences, Nissan X-Terra allows owners to connect with the people in their lives, and to confidently 'Go Anywhere' together. Addressing a variety of needs and all types of terrains as it is ideal for city use and great for an adventure. Additionally, its magnificent and well-equipped interior is balanced by numerous safety features, and excellent driving dynamics. What



is remarkable is the X-Terra has a solid four-wheel drive system, including a four-wheel lock, brake limited slip differential and electronic locking rear differential.

Accentuating a bold new design, innovative engineering and a collection of advanced Nissan Intelligent Mobility technologies, X-Terra offers impressive strength, driving capabilities and adventure-ready confidence for drivers to go 'beyond boundaries' and explore new places. Built in line with the "unbreakable" frame vehicles design philosophy, it combines masculine solidity with sleek and modern execution. That is why long-time Nissan X-Terra owners will vouch that the vehicle's sturdy frame enables its durability and practicality.

For those who like details - X-Terra stands at 4.9m in length, 1.9m in height and just over 2.1m in width - with a ground clearance of 243 mm. The dimensions of the X-Terra are strong and bold. The front face shows off a powerful

new V-motion grill, with its thick frame contrasting with the refined horizontal chrome bars within. The hood is tall and horizontal, the body is muscular, and the driver sits up high for a commanding road presence.

While the general image is daunting and rugged, the designers have also added expressions of sophistication and technology. This is underscored by the distinctive C-shaped LED signature headlamps, which are evolved and interpreted in a novel way. The quad LED projector lamps, like ice-cubes, have a high-tech vibe. Each one is intricately framed in its own bezel, showing off an attention to detail.

I am also impressed that the rear bumper uses squared-off shapes to show that the all-new X-Terra is well protected. As for the front bumper with its unique layers its overlaps each other creating an overall protected, yet sophisticated feeling.

The Zero Gravity seats to the

stadium seat layout of the second and third row are very impressive and offer a comfortable ride to families and large groups. It was also important to make it as easy as possible for young and old alike to get in and out of the rear seats with a remote fold-down second row feature, while the third row has a single action fold-down to easily convert to more cargo space.

The top-notch treatment continues with individual climate controls for each row to help passengers always stay cool, along with the subtle glow of ambient lighting. At high speeds, the cabin stays quiet thanks to significant sound deadening efforts around the engine compartment, while wind and road noise is kept in check due to acoustic glass on both the windshield and side windows.

Drivers are pampered an upscale centre console and dashboard with brilliant displays. A 7-inch TFT Meter is located in the centre of the instrument cluster and allows

for access to navigation, audio, car settings and five other information screens including an off-road meter that helps the driver quickly see the tilt of the vehicle and tire angle. The TFT also displays English and Arabic languages. Across the region, an 8-inch centre display screen and infotainment system is standard for the Titanium grade, while a 9-inch infotainment system with navigation is available for the Platinum grade.

Made for the tech obsessed generation, X-Terra provides seamless connectivity to your smartphone, equipped with go-to apps such as Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. Passengers can keep all their gadgets powered up with wireless charging as well as USB ports including USB-C. Additionally, NissanConnect brings Bluetooth, navigation, voice recognition and more to the driving experience, while the Bose Premium Audio System takes advantage of the unique interior acoustics of the X-Terra to provide every passenger with the ultimate listening experience.

The ever-resourceful X-Terra is also packed with features to keep the entire family entertained for hours. An optional 11-inch flip down monitor turns long road trips into a premium movie theatre, with HDMI connectivity to mirror your smartphone.

The selling point of Nissan X-Terra is its plentiful active safety systems. Lane Departure Warning, Blind Spot Warning, Intelligent Forward Collision Warning, Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Intelligent Driver Alertness and Intelligent Emergency Braking are all available for the vehicle's Platinum grade.

These features tell the driver when there is a possible danger - chiming when they stray out of

their lane or when another car is in their blind spot or approaching while the vehicle is reversing. They also help to actively prevent issues by braking the vehicle when a possible collision is detected while driving. Nissan's Intelligent Around View Monitor with Moving Object Detection is another class-exclusive feature in the X-Terra. It gives a bird's-eye view of the X-Terra's surroundings which is perfect for backing up and parallel parking and to determine any moving objects. These advanced safety features along with the all-new X-Terra's on-and off-road capability, comfort and the latest technology are a perfect match for today's adventure-seeking SUV buyers.

An Intelligent rear-view Mirror is a class-first for the X-Terra. A camera system creates an uninterrupted view of behind the vehicle to reduce stress for the driver when reversing, no matter how many passengers or how much cargo is taking up space inside the vehicle. Additional accessories available to purchase with the all-new X-Terra include an air purifier, welcome light, LED seat belt indicators, rear seat entertainment system, blind spot detection, door visor, trunk net and exhaust pipe finisher.

So, why should you buy a Nissan X-Terra?

It is an incredible vehicle for those looking for something a little rugged. It is perfect for off road trails yet suitable for the city commute. Features and technology provide peace of mind to the driver and occupants. It has the most up-to-date safety measures, giving you the best protection on the road. Nissan X-Terra is the way to go if you are looking for a reliable vehicle.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Al Mouj Muscat signs agreement with Tadweer to recycle e-waste

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat has entered into an agreement with an Omani SME Tadweer to remove and recycle e-waste generated by residents as part of the award-winning community's focus on environmental and economic sustainability.

Tadweer operates 'end-to-end' e-waste processing facility in Barka, the first of its kind in the Sultanate and now through the new partnership, the recycling service will now be available to the leading lifestyle destination an initiative that will benefit the environment and local enterprise.

Al Mouj Muscat are leaders in sustainability and its support of SMEs and green initiatives continues to have a demonstrable impact for Oman. Energy efficiencies have been introduced throughout the community and Tadweer will ensure that residents can safely dispose of household items, supporting the environmental aims of Oman Vision 2040 by recovering



value from materials and reducing the amount of waste produced.

Through Tadweer items that have reached the end of their product life, such as fridges, washing machines, printers and computers, will be collected and raw materials including plastic, steel, aluminium and silver, will be used again. The service for residents will also include the collection of domestic

batteries and used cooking oil.

Nasser bin Masoud Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: "The agreement with Tadweer is another example of the positive impact that our community continues to demonstrate. This young Omani company is bringing innovation and skills to tackle environmental challenges and contribute to change. Our sustainability strat-

egy ensures that we continually introduce ways to reduce our carbon footprint and seek opportunities to partner with SMEs to champion growth, job creation and economic diversification.

"By working with Tadweer, we will create a simple and efficient way to reduce e-waste and encourage enterprising solutions to meet the aims of a modern eco-conscious society."

Mazin Al Mamari, CEO of Tadweer added: "We are delighted to enter into this agreement with Al Mouj Muscat. By introducing an easy way for people to safely dispose of e-waste, we can protect our environment and contribute to Oman's circular economy. We are also set to create more job opportunities at our processing facility at Barka and we are confident that our adherence to the highest standards and to intelligent solutions will benefit Al Mouj Muscat and Oman."

AGREEMENT

Sohar International continues supporting Injaz Oman, collaborates on new programmes for students

MUSCAT: As an organisation that is invested in the youth of the country, Sohar International has consistently been a keen supporter of education and development programmes that aid in creating a knowledge-based economy.

The bank's most recent endeavour was signing an agreement with Injaz Oman to work together on two student programmes. Sohar International has provided assistance to the "Company Programme" and the "Personal Finance Programme" in accordance with the terms of the agreement, which was signed in the bank's main office on the Waterfront by Mazin Mahmood Al Raisi, the Chief Marketing Officer of Sohar International, and Khaula Al Harthy, the Executive Director of Injaz Oman.

Mohamed Mahfoodh Al Ardhi, Chairman of Sohar International, commented, "With Oman Vision 2040 underscoring the value of education and identifying it as



one of the key pillars to attaining sustainable human development, it becomes increasingly important to broaden the horizon and go beyond academic syllabuses - it becomes essential to provide students with targeted programs that focus on sharpening skills in their specific areas of interest. Through efforts to promote such programmes and platforms, Sohar International will remain commit-

ted to contributing towards fostering a self-motivated, capable, and socially-conscious generation that will uphold its roles and duties to the nation and drive sustained socio-economic progress."

The latest edition of the Company Programme, which was launched earlier in October 2022 and will continue until September 2023, focuses on guiding students from diverse academic back-

grounds on how to start, build, and sustain a business, including the fundamentals of carrying out various operational procedures in line with international standards and government regulations, and tackling various challenges in running a business. Going beyond imparting theoretical knowledge, the program provides students with an opportunity to launch their own companies. Meanwhile, the Personal Finance Programme is geared at acquainting students with real-world money management skills and the tactics of effective budgeting while instilling in them a savings mindset and encouraging them to start taking concerted efforts to invest in their future. Highly interactive, engaging, and stimulating, both programmes focus on promoting team spirit, collaboration, and healthy competition - essential elements that are vital to surviving and thriving in the modern world.

UNRIVALLED CAPABILITY



Toyota Gazoo Racing celebrates victory at 2023 Dakar Rally

MUSCAT: Renowned for their legendary quality, durability and reliability, Toyota's vehicles have continually proven their unrivalled capabilities in some of the world's harshest environments.

The Toyota Gazoo Racing (TGR) team's GR DKR Hilux T1+ further cemented this reputation recently with a stunning victory at the 2023 Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia.

Defending champions Nasser Al-Attiyah and co-driver Mathieu Baumel took first place in the No. 200 GR DKR Hilux T1+ to win the event overall by an outstanding margin of 1hr 20min 49sec. The victory marks the Qatari driver's third Dakar Rally victory for Toyota, and fifth overall of his career.

There was further success for Toyota during the event, with the Team Land Cruiser Toyota Auto Body (TLC)'s No. 250 Land Cruiser GR Sport driven by Ronald Basso and Jean-Michel Polato winning the Production Cars category for an incredible tenth year in a row. Meanwhile, Akira Miura and Laurent Lichtleuchter secured second place in the No. 246 Land Cruiser GR Sport in the same category.

Akio Toyoda, President of Toyota Motor Corporation and GR Team Founder, commented, "Congratulations to Nasser Al-Attiyah and Mathieu Baumel on winning the overall title for the second year in a row! On the long, tough roads of Dakar, it is very hard to win if you don't have a car that's not only easy to drive, but also reliable and durable. By continuing to challenge the Dakar, the GR Dakar Hilux T1+ will

be refined into an ever-better car. Thank you to all the fans for your support!"

Akio Toyoda added, "Congratulations to Team Land Cruiser Toyota Auto Body, with their tenth consecutive victory in the Production Cars category! Thanks to all the mechanics too! We at Toyota Motor Corporation will continue to make ever-better cars so that Team Land Cruiser Toyota Auto body can drive with even greater peace of mind next year. Let's do our best "together" for an 11th and 12th consecutive victory!"

Nasser Al Attiyah, driver of the No. 200 GR DKR Hilux T1+, said: "This is amazing feeling! I have to thank so many people, starting with every member of our team. It was a tough two weeks, but to be able to come back and defend our title is fantastic! I'm really proud of our GR DKR Hilux T1+, and to win the race three times with Toyota Gazoo Racing is truly something special."

Al-Attiyah and Baumel took over the lead during Stage 3 of the rally and maintained this position for the remainder of the two-week event. By the final stage, the duo had amassed a total of 85 points in the opening round of the FIA 2023 World Rally-Raid Championship (W2RC), placing the TGR team in a strong position for the five-round contest ahead.

Following last year's victory, TGR worked to upgrade the GR DKR Hilux T1+ to ensure the vehicle was fully prepared for the rigours of the Dakar Rally, the W2RC, and the SARRC.

ROUND-UP



Zubair Automotive Group celebrates 50th anniversary



“Honours its top six customers with a token of appreciation at the event

The event featured a gala dinner and entertainment while also highlighting five decades of achievements and milestones by the Zubair Automotive Group

MUSCAT: Commemorating five decades of success and growth in the country, the Zubair Automotive Group (ZAG) hosted a grand 50th anniversary celebration at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah on 29 January 2023.

The event featured a gala dinner and entertainment while also highlighting five decades of achievements and milestones by the Zubair Automotive Group. At the event, a token of appreciation was also presented to each of the Group's top six customers.

In attendance at the event were Mohammad Al Zubair, the founder of the Zubair Automotive Group, Rashad Mohammad Al Zubair, the Chairman of The Zubair Corporation, Al Zubair Mohammad Al Zubair, Vice Chairman, Ziyad Mohammad Al Zubair, Board Member, and Mohammad Al Farei, Chief Operating Officer of Zubair Automotive Group, along with representatives from each of the brands of the Group who travelled to be part of this event along with VIP customers from across the country. Several executive management members and personnel from The Zubair Corporation and Zubair Automotive Group companies were also present at the event.

Addressing the attendees at the event, Al Zubair Mohammad Al Zubair, said, “Over the past five decades, the Group has contributed significantly to the development of Oman by providing transport solutions and building and construction equipment to meet the requirements of modern markets and businesses.”

“We place great emphasis on staying current with the latest advancements in the market and providing cutting-edge technologies through our strategic partnerships with the best brands in the transportation and equipment industry. We cherish the partnerships we have formed and the unlimited support we have received over these past fifty years.”



A token of appreciation was also given to each of the Zubair Automotive Group's top six customers during the 50th anniversary celebration. This was meant to show the customers how much their loyalty was appreciated and to thank them for their continued patronage over the years. These included the 'Loyal Customer of the Year' presented to Al Tasnim Group, 'Most Enterprising Customer' presented to Gulf Petrochemical Services & Trading, 'Public Enterprise Customer of the Year' presented to Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company, 'Emerging Customer of the Year' presented to Towell Auto Leasing & Trading, 'Promising Customer of the

'Year' presented to Galfar Engineering & Contracting, and 'Customer of the Year' presented to Travel & Allied Services (Budget Rent A Car).

“Of all the achievements and accomplishments of our Group over the past five decades, one thing is certain; we would not be where we are today were it not for the loyalty and support of our valued customers,” said Mohammad Al Farei.

“This is why we remain just as committed to their success today as we were when the Group was founded five decades ago. We have always strived to ensure that the quality and performance of the world-class brands we represent are matched by superior customer



service and after-sales support, no matter where our customers are in the country. This commitment has always governed and shaped our journey and will continue to do so in the years to come.”

Five decades after the dawn of the Renaissance and the establishment of the modern Omani state, the automotive sector stands as one of the main contributors to the national economy. The sector owes much of its success to the founder of the Zubair Automotive Group, Mohammad Al Zubair.

As with many of the largest corporations we know today, Zubair Automotive Group's roots can be traced back to a small start-up. This

was a small business outfit set up by Mohammad Al Zubair at the onset of rising economic opportunities triggered by the Renaissance in the late 1960s, specifically 1967, called Muscat Trading Company. Under his guidance and leadership, the company grew and eventually became Zubair Enterprises in 1973 and commenced operations in the automotive sector by representing its very first automotive franchise – Chrysler, followed soon thereafter by Mitsubishi Motors. This set in motion a business initiative that would ultimately blossom into the highly respected and well-diversified business corporation we know today.

Under his leadership, the Zubair

Automotive Group has been a trendsetter in the Omani market for the past five decades. Over the years, the Group has continued to grow steadily, responding to market needs by expanding its brand portfolio and incorporating the latest technology and industry best practices. As a result, it is responsible for introducing some of the world's most prominent automotive brands to the country and has continued to set the standard for sales, after-sales and customer service excellence in Oman's Automotive Sector.

The Zubair Automotive Group has kept pace with the development of the Sultanate throughout the years and stands today as one of the country's largest and oldest automotive distributors, partnered with the world's most prestigious brands. Representing them is a diverse range of subsidiaries, including General Automotive Company, International Heavy Equipment (IHE), Dhofar Automotive, Sayarti and Zubair Commercial Trucks and Equipment. Each boasts its distinct business philosophy, country-wide sales and service network, various brand and product portfolios, and an unwavering focus on customer satisfaction.

“We don't consider our 50th anniversary as an occasion to only reflect on where we have reached; rather, it is part of our very ethos to challenge the norm and lead the way for the future of the Sultanate's automotive sector. We intend to achieve this through continued strategic investment in our businesses, staff, technology, and infrastructure,” said Rashad Mohammad Al Zubair, the Chairman of The Zubair Corporation.

Mohammad Al Farei offered his thanks to everyone involved in the success of Zubair Automotive Group over the past five decades, saying, “I would like to offer special thanks to each of our loyal clients, shareholders, suppliers, strategic partners, principals, and our staff. They have each played a critical part in the success of our organisation. We are also extremely grateful to each of our shareholders for their continued support of our vision.”

“Under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, Oman has entered an era of renewed Renaissance, and we will be there to support him and help guide the automotive sector towards a prosperous future.”

At the event, the Zubair Automotive Group showcased an array of cutting-edge technologies and product offerings from the diverse range of brands it represents, including Mitsubishi Motors, FUSO, Renault Trucks, Volvo Trucks, Liebherr, Bobcat, Putzmeister, Jungheinrich, Montabert, Eicher, Flli Ferrari, Cromwell, Hi-Force, and Resato, among others.

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat wins 2 global awards for US Dollar based fund transfers

The twin awards for operational excellence in the field of SWIFT-based dollar payments processing in both commercial and treasury payments, highlights Bank Muscat's commitment to the highest quality standards in fund transfers

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, was recently honoured with two elite awards by the New York headquartered JP Morgan, a global leader in financial services offering solutions to the world's most important corporations, governments and institutions.

The awards were received by Saleh Nasser Al Habsi, Deputy General Manager, Enterprise Growth & Capital Market Operations, Bank Muscat, in the presence of senior bank officials.

The bank won the 2022 USD clearing Elite Quality Recognition Award for outstanding achievement of best-in-class MT103 with straight-through processing rate of 98.77 per cent.

It also won the 2022 USD clearing Elite Quality Recognition Award for outstanding achievement of best-in-class MT202 with Straight-through Processing of 99.90 per cent.

The twin awards for operational excellence in the field of SWIFT-based dollar payments processing in both commercial and treasury payments, highlights Bank Muscat's commitment to the highest quality standards in fund transfers.

On this occasion, Zuwana Al-

dullah Al Sharji, Assistant General Manager – Central Operations & Change Management, Bank Muscat, said: "We are delighted to win this award once again and thank JP Morgan for recognising Bank Muscat's ongoing and continuous commitment to the highest standards in Straight-through Processing. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the operational teams at the bank for this achievement by consistently maintaining exceptional quality in both commercial payments and transfers, thereby ensuring the highest standards for processing throughout the payment chain."

The awards are a recognition of the bank's high standards in Straight-through Processing, which is backed by a state-of-the-art in-house payment structure and investments in cutting-edge technology. During the awards handover, JP Morgan representatives commended the operational teams involved in processing dollar payments at Bank Muscat for maintaining error-free transactions consistently. It should be noted that JP Morgan is one of the leading corresponding banks which Bank Muscat partners with to process US Dollar-based fund



transfers using the SWIFT global financial system.

Bank Muscat is focused on maintaining its leadership in offering cutting-edge products and services, including electronic payment and online services, through multiple channels and new prod-

ucts and services which cater to its different customer segments. The bank's performance, which is driven by its customer-centric vision and the adoption of global best practices, has been consistently lauded by the international financial and banking community

for decades, with the bank winning similar awards from Wells Fargo, Standard Chartered and Citibank in the past.

In 2022, Bank Muscat was also recognised as one of the "Top 100 Companies in the Middle East" and as one of the "Top 30 banks

in the Region" by Forbes Middle East. The bank has also won a number of awards from prestigious international publications like Global Finance, Euromoney, The Banker and EMEA Finance for its different lines of business in the recent past.

AREEJ VEGETABLE OILS AND DERIVATIVES



AVOD's non-hydrogenated products fortifies Oman's health and wellbeing

MUSCAT: Areej Vegetable Oils and Derivatives (AVOD)'s transformation strategy has always put health and customers' wellbeing at the forefront, and this has gained it the distinction of being Oman's Most Trusted Brand year after year.

The brand's Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is its consistent delivery of products, which offer the ideal balance of nutrition, health and wellness and taste, and encourage consumers to adopt healthier lifestyles for themselves and their families.

"Eat Right, Live Well" philosophy is the epicentre of the company's product development process and has made AVOD a trustworthy specialist in refining, processing, packaging and distribution of high-quality trans fat free cooking oils, non-hydrogenated margarines, vegetable ghee, fats and mayonnaise.

The company's continuous transformation takes a multi-pronged approach to create health-focused products. The state-of-the-art modern factory is constantly upgraded to meet stringent quality controls.

Packing materials such as tins, cans, plastic bottles, etc are manufactured in-house and filled immediately using automatic packing machines to ensure highest standards of hygiene.

The company's commitment to safeguarding health and safety has earned it the ISO 9001 certificate for Quality Management System, ISO 14001 certificate for Environmental Management System and ISO 22000 certificates for Food Safety Management.

Eng. Salem Bortmany, CEO – AVOD, says, "Every product that comes out of the AVOD stable is a testament to its commitment to

offer consumers the best of health and value. After thorough research on the health risks that hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils pose to the physical wellbeing, which is trans-fats is converted into saturated fat.

"AVOD decided to invest in technology to ensure that all its products are non-hydrogenated and free from harmful trans-fats. All products go through a heart-friendly process which is recognised and recommended by WHO. AVOD is the first company in Oman to fortify and enrich its top-quality cooking oils with vitamins A & D, making them healthier choices in this category while Khafef is the lightest frying oil, the first of its kind in the Sultanate."

He adds, "Our own transformation journey has mirrored that of our valued consumers. We are committed to building healthier

and happier communities to ensure that our nation-building process is fortified further."

With more than three decades of successful operations in the Sultanate of Oman, AVOD has built a product portfolio that prides itself on being both high on quality and taste. The company's leading brands Minara, Sohar, Khafef, Jabal Akhdar and Muscat Margarine are on every Omani kitchen.

A heritage brand and a market leader in delivering high quality and innovative products, AVOD is amongst the 20 largest public limited companies in the country and enjoys a substantial market share in Oman and its current exports are more than 75 per cent of its total business. All the products are marketed in the GCC as well as other 30 export countries through experienced dedicated distribution chains.

PATRIOTIC ZEAL

Indian School Muladha celebrates Republic Day



MUSCAT: The 74th Republic Day of India was celebrated with patriotic zeal at Indian School Muladha. Patriotic songs reverberated in the school campus. There was a large gathering of students, teachers and parents. The chief guest of the occasion was Syed Salman, Vice Chairman, Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman.

The celebration started with the prayer song followed by the National Anthems of Oman and India. The chief guest and dignitaries received the guard of honour from the march past contingents. Musthafa Madathodiyil, the President of SMC stressed the significance of the occasion and highlighted the sacrifices made by the great freedom fighters of our nation. The chief guest apprised the gathering briefly about the making of the Indian Constitution, its unique features and urged the students to take it as a challenge to be a good citizen of India by learning all the good virtues from school.

The Principal, in his message, remembered the leaders and soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the progress and prosperity of the proud nation. Excerpts from the address of the President of India Droupadi Murmu made on the eve of Republic Day were read out. The melodious patriotic songs and mesmerising dance performance highlighting the glory of the motherland enthralled the audience.

The members of school football team who secured the first runner up trophy in the CBSE Oman Cluster football tournament 2022-23 for boys-under 19 category were honoured. The school Head Boy Joshua S.V proposed the vote of thanks. The prize winners of the annual literary and cultural competition, Kalasangamam 2022-2023 were acknowledged in the prize distribution ceremony held on the same day. It was a proud moment for the students as they received their trophies, medals and certificates from the dignitaries.



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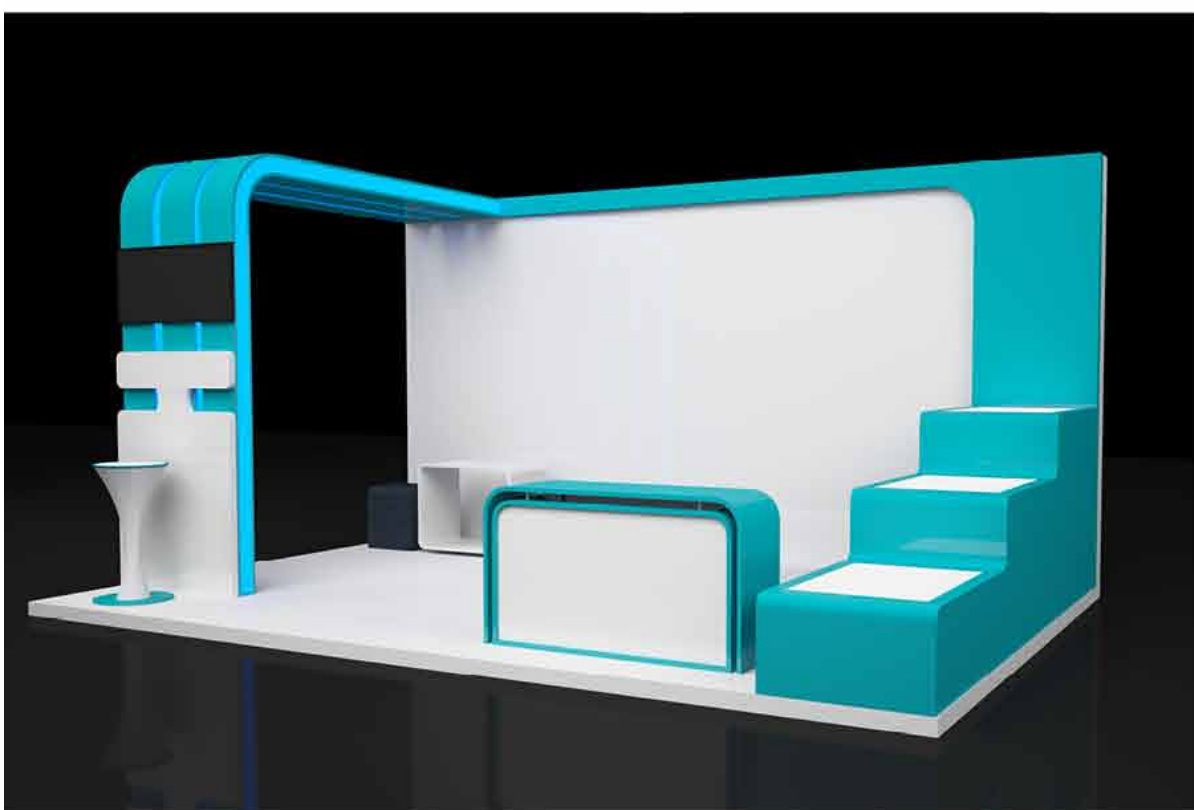
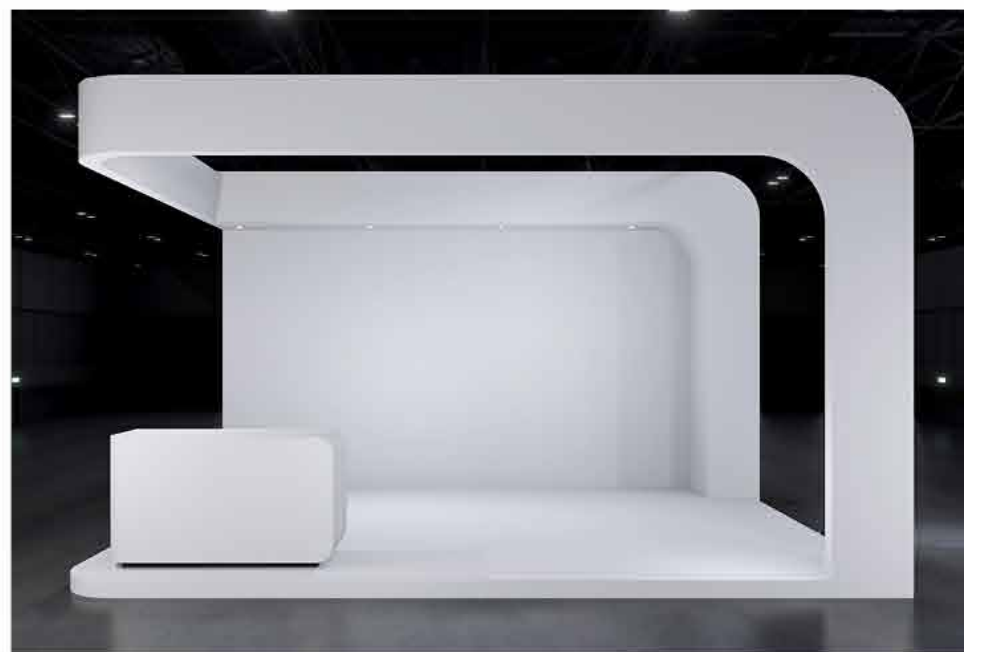
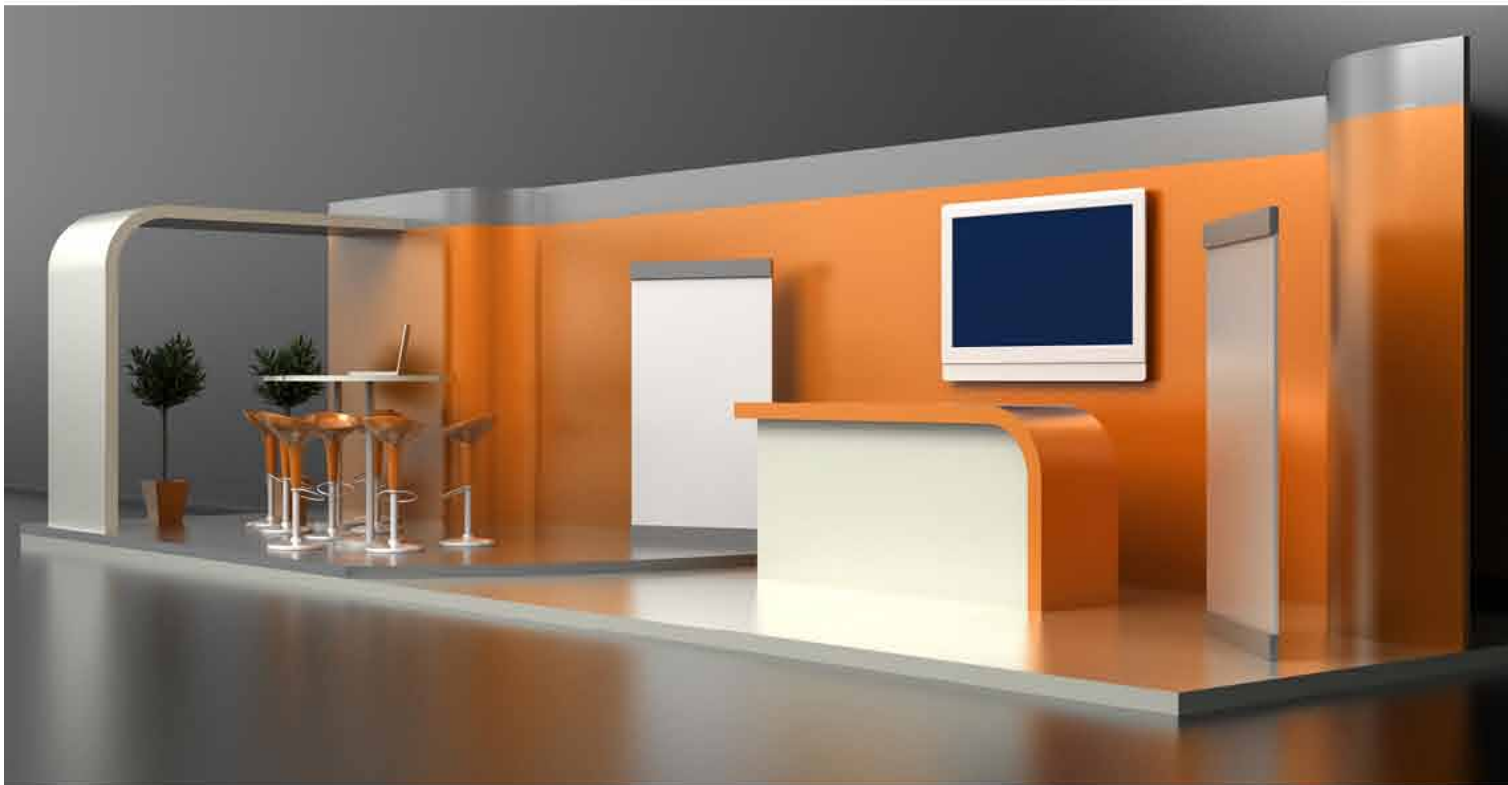
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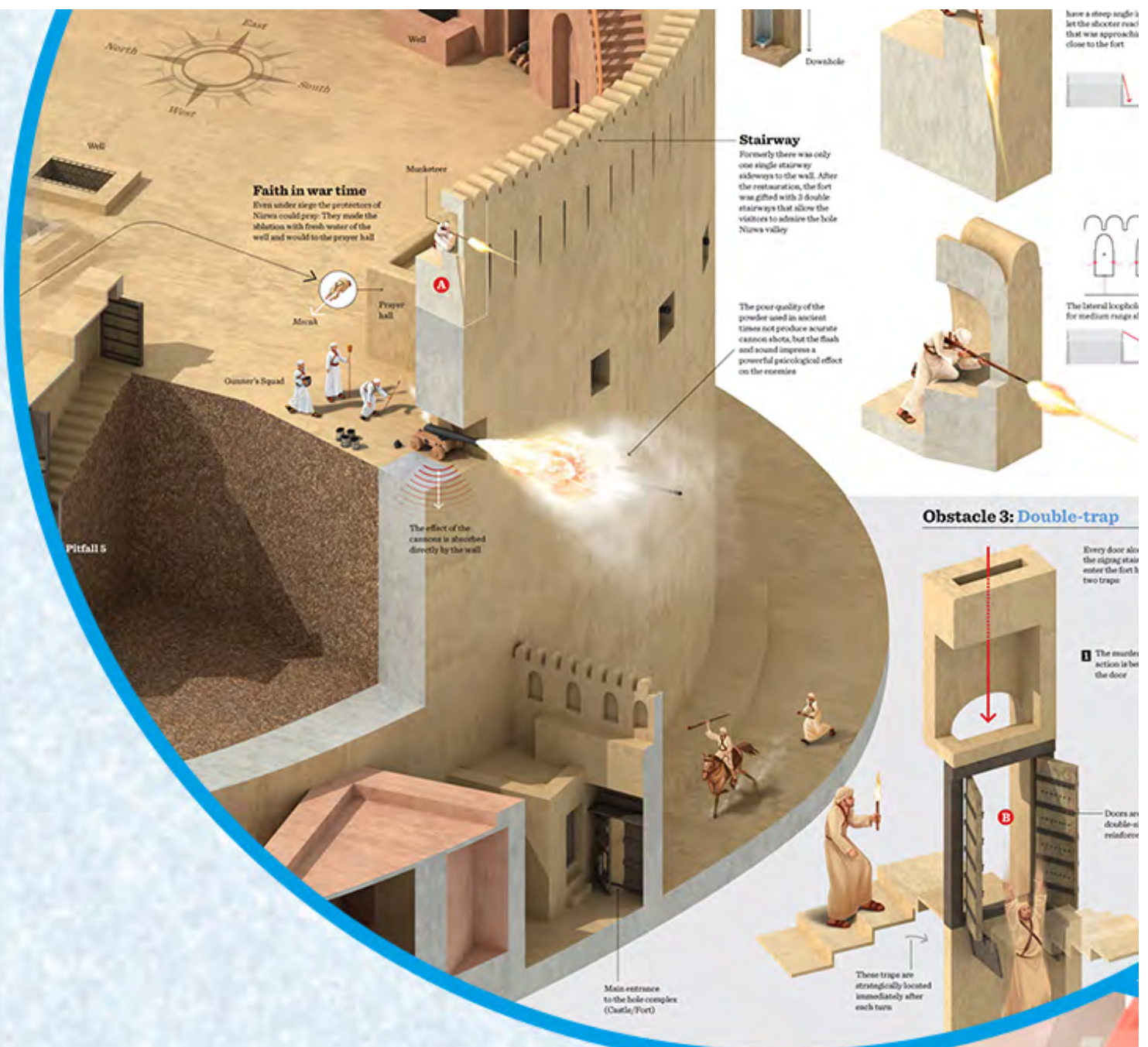
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