

## OMANI PAVILION IN DOHA SHOWCASES COUNTRY'S FLORA

The Sultanate is taking part in Expo 2023 Doha Horticultural Exhibition, held under the slogan 'Green Desert, Better Environment'. Oman's pavilion showcases 1,600 specimens of trees and plants transported from the country. **>A4**



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# EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCREASED BY 16.2% IN 2022

A sharp rise in the number of expats during 2022 showed the economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Overall employment opportunities during 2022 increased by 16.2 percent, reflecting the impact of sustained recovery of economic activities in the post-pandemic period, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) said in its Annual Report for the year 2022. "The employment opportunities for Omani citizens and expatriate workers increased by 3.6 percent and 23.3 percent,

respectively. A sharp increase in expatriate workers during 2022 primarily reflected the economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic," the report added.

The CBO's insightful report says that the Omani government has been according high priority to provide employment opportunities to citizens in line with the Oman Vision 2040.

Oman has a diverse economy that relies on several sectors, including oil and gas, financial sector, tourism, construction, and agriculture.

The government has been making efforts to diversify economic activities to create more employment opportunities for citizens. Even though the oil sector remains the mainstay of the Omani economy, other sectors are also supporting employment generation in an increasing manner.

The government encouraged adoption of remote work during the pandemic that helped contain the adverse impact on employment conditions. Besides, the government has been focusing

on skill-building through various initiatives so that new employment opportunities in the area of information and technology, and digitalisation could engage Omani citizens.

Additionally, several schemes have been launched to encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment among young Omani nationals, as well as promote small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The government has been taking various initiatives to create a more enabling environment for SMEs, including providing funding, training programmes, and business development services.

### Public Sector

The number of Omani employees in the public sector increased by 3.5 percent, while the number of expatriate workers grew by 5.8 percent. Looking from the other perspective, Omani nationals constituted 89.2 percent of the total employees in the public sector in 2022 as compared with 89.4 percent in 2021. **>A5**

## Al Farsi bags bronze in 800m at Hangzhou Asian Games

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** It turned out to be a terrific Tuesday for Oman at the 19th Asian Games in the Chinese city of Hangzhou. And rewriting the Sultanate of Oman's sporting history was a 20-year-old middle-distance runner named Hussain Al Farsi.

Al Farsi, who recorded his personal best time of 1min47.68s to storm into the 800m final on Monday, ran another solid race to clinch a historic bronze medal with a third-place finish in a time of 1:48.51.

Al Farsi's medal is the first for Oman in the 800m track event and the second at the ongoing 2022 Asian Games making it the best ever Asian Games result for the Sultanate since Oman made their debut at New Delhi Asiad in 1982. Since then, Oman athletes have never won more than a single medal at any Asian Games making Hangzhou the most successful ever.

Oman's sailors, Musab Al Hadi and Waleed Al Kindi, gave Oman the first ever silver medal



when they finished second in the men's skiff 49er event at the Hangzhou Games.

Saudi Arabia's Essa Ali Kzwani took the 800m gold in a time of 1:48.05 while India's Mohammed Afsal Pulikkalakkath, who had won the round one heat, bagged a silver with a time of 1:48.43 at the Hangzhou Olympic Centre Stadium.

Qatar's Abdurahman Hassan came fourth behind Al Farsi with a time of 1:48.56. India's Krishna Kumar, who has a personal best of 1:45.88, and was one of the favourites was disqualified in the

final for jostling and obstruction along with China's Dezhu Liu. At the 400m mark, Dezhu was in the lead before the others surged past him.

Al Farsi's medal put him along athletics legend Mohammed Amur Al Malki and sprint star Barakat Al Harthi, the only two other runners who have won medals at the Asian Games.

Tuesday's achievement was the fifth medal in athletics for Oman since the first bronze medal in 1986 Seoul Asiad, which was won by Al Malki in 400m. **>A2**

### TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

## OMAN Amazing shows at ROHM in October

**1** The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) announced the line-up of shows which will fill the calendar for October 2023. Following the successful launch of the season with the opera *The Barber of Seville*, October is packed with shows, which offer variety and choice to audiences. **>A3**

## WORLD Three share Nobel Prize in Physics

**2** Pierre Agostini, Ferenc Krausz and Anne L'Huillier got the Nobel Prize in Physics for developing tools to explore the world of electrons inside atoms. Their work had yielded "experimental methods that generate attosecond pulses of light for the study of electron dynamics." **>A6**

## MARKET Hotel revenues top OMR138 million

**3** The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in Oman by the end of August 2023 grew by 26.3% to OMR138,380,000 as against OMR109,535,000 by the end of August 2022. The NCSI data showed that the total number of hotel guests and tenants increased by 26.7% by the end of August 2023. **>B1**

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Expect amazing shows at ROHM in October month

Majida El Roumi will come to the stage for two solo concerts, performing favourite hits from her wide repertoire of songs



MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) announced the line-up of performances which will fill the calendar for October 2023.

Following the successful launch of the season with the stunning opera *The Barber of Seville*, October is packed with shows, which offer variety and choice to audiences.

For two nights, on 11 and 12 October at 7pm, dynamic jazz duo Igor Butman and Randy Brecker will perform a soul stirring concert with a sextet of charismatic jazz musicians, filling the ROHM Musical Arts with a magnificent jazz fusion.

Omani Women's Day hits the right notes on 17 October, drawing together the community of Oman to celebrate the extraordinary contribution of women to music, society, and industry.

Majida El Roumi will star, alongside the phenomenal orchestra of visually impaired young women in Al Nour Wal Amal Orchestra, brilliant Moroccan pianist, Nour Ayadi, and ROSO's pioneering Ladies' Ensemble.

On the following two nights, Majida El Roumi will come to the stage for two solo concerts, performing favourite hits from her wide repertoire of songs, delivering messages of hope, unity, and love to her loyal crowds of fans.

Lastly, over the final weekend



of the month, join ROHM for the awe-inspiring acrobatic ballet from the Xi'An Acrobatic Troupe of China. They will perform their stunning version of Swan Lake, taking classical inspiration from



this historical ballet, harnessing the magic of Tchaikovsky's music, and bringing to the show a unique cultural explosion of Chinese heritage, costumes, and fresh choreography. From the startling acrobatic

feat of ballet 'en pointe' performed on the head of the supporting dancer, this ballet is mesmerising. Choose from shows on either the 26 or 28 October, with an evening and matinee performance.

Meeting of Arab Charter on Human Rights organised

CAIRO: The Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday chaired a meeting of states that are parties to the "Arab Charter on Human Rights". Organised at the headquarters of the Arab League in Cairo, the meeting was dedicated to electing three members to the Arab Human Rights Committee, known as "The Charter Committee."

In the meeting, which saw

the participation of 18 member states, Oman was represented by Abdullah Nasser Al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Arab Republic of Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League.

Oman attended the meeting for the first time, after depositing the document of accession to the Arab Charter on Human Rights on 9 April 2023. -ONA

Meeting on engineering, aviation, technology held

MUSCAT: The Military Technological College (MTC) on Tuesday organised the first international conference for aerospace sciences, engineering and technology.

Speakers from 16 countries participated in the three-day conference, held under the auspices of Eng. Naif Ali Al Abri, Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The participants discussed various research papers and studied experiments and scholarly deliberations about aerody-

namics, the development of avionics systems and innovations in emerging technologies.

On the sidelines of the conference, an exhibition was held on innovations in the field of aviation, engineering, technology and electronic applications.

The event seeks to highlight technological updates and innovation. It serves as a platform for displaying new technologies and enhancing interaction between researchers, academics and other parties operating in the aviation sector. -ONA



REVIEW PROJECTS

WHO team visits Wadd Health Village in Wilayat of Sur



SUR: A delegation from the World Health Organization (WHO) office in the Sultanate of Oman visited Wadd Health Village in the Wilayat of Sur, in the governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, to review the initiatives and projects implemented in the health village.

The programme included a presentation on health indicators and community initiatives on the

project, a tour of its facilities and the walkway project that was undertaken by Al Jisr Foundation.

The delegation consisted of Dr. Jean Yaacoub Jabbour, WHO Representative for Oman, Saud Amer Al Nadhairi, Director General of Health Services in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, and Sheikh Dr. Hilal Ali Al Habsi, Wali of Sur. -ONA

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ARABIAN WOMEN MEDIA SERVICES

Seminar to focus on financing small and medium enterprises

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Arabian Women Media Services organisation will organise a seminar on financing Omani small and medium enterprises (SMEs), opportunities and challenges, on October 16, 2023, at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

The seminar seeks to raise awareness on the

importance of entrepreneurship in the Sultanate, especially among young people.

Financing SMEs

Speakers from Councils and those responsible for financing SMEs in the government and the private sector in Oman will be hosted to shed light on developments in this aspect. Also the forum will discuss how to over-

come the difficulties facing small companies and the Omani private sector in order to increase their contribution to the national economy in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Aziza Al Habsi, Executive Director of the Arabian Women media and event company, confirmed that the seminar will address working papers on government financing support for

SMEs and its role in enhancing the value addition of the economy.

The seminar will also discuss the importance of financial support for small and medium enterprises in achieving sustainability and growth, in addition to the government's financial support to the private sector in enhancing the gross domestic product (GDP) of the Sultanate.



OMANI PAVILION IN DOHA SHOWCASES COUNTRY'S FLORA



**DOHA:** The Sultanate of Oman is taking part in Expo 2023 Doha Horticultural Exhibition, held under the slogan "Green Desert, Better Environment."

Oman's pavilion showcases 1,600 specimens of trees and plants transported from the Botanical Garden and planted on the designated land in Oman's pavilion.

The pavilion constitutes an embodiment of different types of Omani environments. It offers a simulation of terraced farming environments at Al Jabal Al Akhdar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, the Dhofar monsoon environment and the semi-arid environment. It also comprises some perennial trees in Oman, including the frankincense tree and the perennial baobab tree found in the Dhofar Governorate—the last extension of such plants in the Arabian Peninsula.

The pavilion allows the visitors to learn about the engineering heritage of the centuries-old Omani aflaj irrigation system, which reflects the values of cooperation, tolerance and dialogue among local communities.

The visitors are also given a treat through exhibits of the Omani Botanical Garden and a foun-

The pavilion allows the visitors to learn about the engineering heritage of the centuries-old Omani aflaj irrigation system, which reflects the values of cooperation, tolerance and dialogue among local communities.

tain made of high-density Peridotite rocks. The rocks are common in all parts of Oman and they are known for their property of capturing and storing carbon dioxide gas, which contributes to protecting the ozone layer.

The exhibition, in which 68 countries and international organizations participate, focuses on several themes, including sustainability, environmental awareness, technology, innovation and modern farming.



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STATISTICAL INDICATORS

Social forum reviews non-custodial measures in juvenile justice

**MUSCAT:** The Social Inspectors Forum themed “Non-custodial Provisions and Measures in Juvenile Justice” began on Tuesday under the patronage of Sayyid Salim Musallam Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development.

The two-day event is organised by the Ministry of Social Development, represented by the Department of Juvenile Affairs.

The forum aims to review alternative non-custodial measures in juvenile justice and to identify the role and efforts of various departments and institutions in the Sultanate of Oman in facilitating the implementation of rulings and measures, as well as creating continuous partnership and co-

operation among various sectors to limit the problems of juvenile delinquency.

The forum seeks to come up with results, indicators and recommendations on the mechanism for implementing alternative provisions for non-custodial measures in a manner that serves the interest of the juveniles, and benefiting from Arab developments in the same field.

Fahd Zaher Al Fahdi, Director of the Juvenile Affairs Department at the Ministry of Social Development, said in the ministry’s speech, “The Ministry of Social Development has adopted the “2016-2025” social work strategy pertaining to social protection as one of the basic pillars that seek to provide the necessary social care

and protection within the ministry’s development plans and programmes”.

He reviewed the statistical indicators in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman by the end of 2022. The number of juvenile offenders reached 398 including 358 juvenile delinquents, and 40 juveniles at risk of delinquency. He perceived alternative non-custodial measures and sentences as one of the contemporary trends in the rehabilitation and reform of juveniles.

The forum witnessed a discussion by the joint working group to review the Juvenile Accountability Law. The UNICEF presented a paper on “Health and Safety for the Employment of Juveniles.”

-ONA

MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Boosting job opportunities

**< FROM A1** The government continued its effort towards enhancing the job opportunities for young Omanis. The Ministry of Labour introduced the “Sahim” initiative in April 2022 aiming at encouraging jobseekers to utilise their skills, abilities and practical experiences to develop the economy, opening up new visas for investments, and gaining better competitive advantage. The Sahim initiative has successfully employed 5,000 jobseekers under a temporary contract work system in government agencies in various governorates. Private sector is expected to play a key role in the diversification of economic activities in the Sultanate and generate employment opportunities for both Omani citizens and expatriate workers.

The government has been implementing policies and initiatives to unlock Oman’s private sector potential in order to support the growth the sector has been witnessing. Many segments in the private sector showed robust recovery in the post-pandemic period, leading to significant expansion in the sector’s employability. As a result, overall employment in the private sector increased by 19.0 percent in 2022.

OFFICIAL VISIT

Air Force Commander of UAE leaves Oman

**MUSCAT:** Air Vice Marshal Ibrahim Nasser Al Alawi, Commander of the Air Force and Air Defense of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) leaves Oman after an official visit which lasted several days.

He was seen off at A’Seeb Air Base by Air Vice Marshal Khamis Hammad Al Ghafri, Commander of the RAFO, as well as the ambassador of the UAE to Oman and several senior officers of RAFO. -ONA

NOTICE

The Royal Guard of Oman announces that an error occurred in the announcement published in the local newspapers on 03/10/2023 regarding the start date for purchasing the tender documents. The start date was mentioned as Monday 03/10/2023, while the correct one is Tuesday 03/10/2023.

COMMENTARY

Oman’s majestic mountain: Hiking through Jebel Shams and beyond!

Bhavna Batra

**ONCE UPON A TIME**, in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula, there lay a land of mesmerizing beauty and hidden treasures. This land was Oman, a place where rugged mountains met endless deserts, and where the spirit of adventure called out to those willing to heed its call.

Our story begins with a group of young explorers, each with a heart full of curiosity and a backpack brimming with dreams. Among them were Sarah, Ali, and Maya, all just 12 years old but with a sense of adventure that knew no bounds.

Their destination was Jebel Shams, Oman’s highest mountain. They had heard tales of its majestic and the breathtaking views that awaited those who dared to hike its rugged trails. With their hiking boots laced up and their spirits high, they set off on a journey that would forever change their lives.

As they ascended the mountain, the air grew cooler, and the landscape transformed from arid desert to lush greenery. Along the way, they encountered a kind-hearted shepherd named Ahmed, who welcomed them with a warm smile and offered them refreshing goat’s milk. He regaled them with stories of the mountain’s rich history and its significance in Omani culture.

With Ahmed as their guide, the young explorers ventured deeper into the heart of Jebel Shams. They marveled at the sheer cliffs and deep canyons that surrounded them, a testament to the power of nature’s

sculpting hand. The sense of awe and wonder was palpable as they gazed upon the grandeur of the mountain.

As they continued their ascent, they faced challenges that tested their resolve. Steep inclines, rocky terrain, and unpredictable weather pushed them to their limits. But they pressed on, spurred by the desire to reach the summit and the promise of panoramic views that awaited them.

Finally, after hours of hiking, they reached the peak of Jebel Shams. The sight that greeted them was nothing short of awe-inspiring. Before their eyes stretched a vast expanse of jagged peaks and deep valleys, bathed in the golden light of the setting sun. It was as if they had reached the very edge of the world.

The young explorers sat in silence, taking in the beauty that surrounded them. In that moment, they felt a profound connection to nature and a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunity to witness such majesty. The world seemed vast and full of endless possibilities, and they realized that there was so much more to explore beyond the horizon.

Their journey did not end with Jebel Shams. Inspired by their adventure, Sarah, Ali, and Maya continued to explore Oman’s natural wonders. They trekked through wadis with crystal-clear pools, camped under a blanket of stars in the Wahiba Sands desert, and swam in the azure waters of the Arabian Sea.

Throughout their travels, they encountered the warmth and hospitality of the Omani people, who welcomed them into their homes and shared their traditions and stories. They learned about the importance of preserving the environment and the delicate balance between humans and nature.

As they returned home, their hearts were filled with memories of Oman’s mountain majesty and the kindness of its people. They carried with them a newfound appreciation for the beauty of the natural world and a sense of responsibility to protect it for future generations.

The story of Sarah, Ali, and Maya serves as a reminder that the world is a vast and wondrous place, waiting to be explored by those with a spirit of adventure. It teaches us that the majestic aura of nature can inspire us, and the kindness of strangers can touch our hearts.

And so, as the young explorers looked out at the horizon from the summit of Jebel Shams, they knew that their journey was just beginning. There were more mountains to climb, more trails to blaze, and more stories to tell. Oman’s mountain majesty had awakened their sense of wonder, and they were ready to embrace the adventures that lay ahead, for the world was their playground, and the possibilities were endless.

*The writer is an HR Expert, Writer, Intuitive Energy Healer, Reiki Master, Miracle Coach, Motivational Speaker, and a life fighter.*

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ZIMBABWE

At least 10 killed in gold mine collapse

**HARARE:** At least 10 people were killed after a gold mine collapsed in Zimbabwe's Chegutu district, according to report.

According to local media reports, the search for survivors is underway even three days after the disused mine collapsed.

Quoting Marian Chombo, a province official, Al Jazeera reported that 42 artisanal miners

were said to be working underground at the Bay Horse Mine in Chegutu on Friday when it collapsed on them.

Local sources state that 21 of them have been rescued and that 10 more may still remain under the wreckage. Ten deaths have been confirmed so far, the reports further said. Some of the deceased were found pinned beneath rocks,

CNN reported citing the state media.

Zimbabwe's Vice President Constantino Chiwenga has said that the government will cover the deceased's funeral expenses, and that the toll may rise further.

The mine, which is located in Zimbabwe's Mashonaland West province, sits 62 miles west of the Zimbabwean capital, Harare. The

miners had gone into the mine - said to be about 150 meters deep, "using undesignated entry points," Chombo added, according to CNN.

Chombo requested assistance from the province's mining businesses for rescue efforts.

In Zimbabwe, which has abundant resources of gold and diamonds, artisanal mining is prevalent. - ANI



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NO HUMAN CASUALTIES

Five hospitalised as three back-to-back earthquakes strike Nepal

**KATHMANDU:** A third earthquake of 3.8 magnitude struck Nepal shortly after twin earthquakes jolted the western part of the Himalayan country on Tuesday afternoon.

At least five people have been admitted at the District Hospital Bajhang after the earthquakes and traffic movement on major highways was disrupted following a landslide triggered by the quake blocked a highway, the District Police Office said.

No reports of human casualties were reported but aftershocks has continued to rattle the district. Cracks were seen in buildings at various locations of the district.

Visuals from spot showed several houses collapsed and damaged.

Three earthquakes and two aftershocks with Bajhang district as the epicentre were recorded between 2:30 pm to 4:50 pm (IST).

The third earthquake of magnitude 4.1 on Richter Scale was felt at 3:45 pm with epicentre again in Bajhang district.

The first two earthquakes were of magnitude 5.3 and 6.3 on the Richter Scale, according to Nepal's National Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre.

Tremors were also felt in large parts of India.

**We recorded two aftershocks**

Meanwhile, The National Centre for Seismology said they have recorded two aftershocks after two earthquakes of magnitude 6.2 and 4.6 struck Western Nepal, a zone near Uttarakhand, in quick succession on Tuesday afternoon.

The earth-quake monitoring



nodal agency further informed that tremors were reported from Delhi, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Jaipur and Ahmedabad.

Sanjay Kumar Prajapati, scientist at National Centre for Seismology told ANI, "The earthquake hit western Nepal, which is a zone near our Uttarakhand region...This was a 6.2 magnitude earthquake at a shallow depth of 5 km. We have recorded two aftershocks...In the Delhi region, the magnitude was 3..."

"We have received responses from people that it was felt in Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi, Lucknow region, and Jaipur region. A few people in the Ahmedabad region are also telling us that they felt it there..." the official said.

The two tremors were felt within less than half an hour time. The first quake occurred at 14:25:52 IST, followed by another at 14:51:04 IST.

"Earthquake of Magnitude:4.6, Occurred on 03-10-2023, 14:25:52 IST, Lat: 29.37 & Long: 81.22, Depth: 10 Km, Location: Nepal," the NCS wrote on X, formerly known as Twitter. - Agencies

SOUTH AFRICA

Can Ramaphosa secure a 2024 victory?

**JOHANNESBURG:** For the last 12 years, Dimakatso Ragedi has lived with her mother and daughter in a low-cost house in Cosmo City, a residential project in an upmarket suburb of Johannesburg that was co-financed by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party.

The young woman and her family know too well that power outages are a part of everyday life in South Africa.

Load shedding — the practice of scheduling power cuts to keep the country's power grid from collapsing — means that Ragedi's house is often plunged into darkness, her kettle stops boiling, her washing machine grinds to a halt and she has no way to charge her cell phone.

"If the electricity stays away, we use a gas stove and rechargeable light bulbs," Ragedi told DW.

Broken promises

Ragedi's standard of living has improved since 1994, the year Nelson Mandela became the president of a new post-apartheid democracy. In its first-ever election manifesto, the ANC had promised South Africans adequate housing, water, and electricity. Nearly three decades after taking power, the governing party barely manages to keep the lights on in people's homes.

Raika Wiethé, who lives in Parkview, a green residential district in the north of South Africa's economic capital Johannesburg, said that during the first half of the year, she experienced up to 12 hours of power outages every day.

When South African President Cyril Ramaphosa hosted the BRICS summit in August, the energy supply was consistent — but power outages are more frequent now, said Wiethé.

The leaders of the five-country grouping met in Johannesburg to



discuss expansion and increasing global influence.

"Cyril Ramaphosa used the BRICS summit to enhance his own standing and significantly increase South Africa's diplomatic weight in a changing global community," said political analyst Daniel Silke.

But that matters little to local politics, Silke said.

South Africans are concerned about fundamental problems on the ground, such as poor governance, rising prices, and unemployment, he said.

"The ANC needs to take more responsibility and make sure the lights don't go out," Silke told DW.

Eskom, the state-owned utility that produces 90% of South Africa's electricity, has debts of around €21 billion (\$19.8 billion) and is struggling with ailing coal-fired power plants that regularly break down. The company was mired in corruption scandals under former President Jacob Zuma.

Can Ramaphosa secure a second term?

The daily blackouts across South Africa are affecting businesses and households that already suffer from severe inflation amid the country's weakened economy.

"The biggest fear is that there will be a complete collapse of the power grid," Ragedi said.

Confidence in the ANC has dwindled. Before every election, the government promises more jobs and more houses for the poor, as well as less crime and corruption, Ragedi said. "But we are moving toward conditions like in Zimbabwe."

Neighbouring Zimbabwe went from a well-diversified economy into the region's problem child during nearly four decades under the rule of former President Robert Mugabe.

"We are a democracy, however at the moment it looks like we are an autocratic country, it is in shambles," Ragedi said of South Africa.

When Ramaphosa first became president in 2018, he was seen as a beacon of hope after former president Jacob Zuma resigned amid corruption allegations.

But in 2019, Ramaphosa's party only managed to garner 57% of the vote — the lowest share ever for the ANC.

ANC losing ground

For Priyal Singh, a fellow at the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), it is the first election in South Africa's post-apartheid history that will be highly contested.

"For the first time, we are predicting that support for the ANC will fall below the 50% threshold

and plunge us into a turbulent period of coalition politics," he told DW.

Political resistance has been brewing for a long time.

In August, seven opposition parties agreed to form a coalition to replace the ruling ANC — if the party fails to win an absolute majority in 2024. Among them is the country's largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance.

At the local government level, the ANC has had to form political partnerships as far back as 2016. "These coalition governments have not been able to address the administrative deficiencies that have plagued many major cities," said Singh.

A stagnant economy

Despite all the scandals that have surrounded Ramaphosa's government, he still benefits from a substantial support base in the ANC, according to Singh. He has survived politically — notwithstanding the attacks by the pro-Zuma factions within the party. That speaks to how smart Ramaphosa is as a politician, he said.

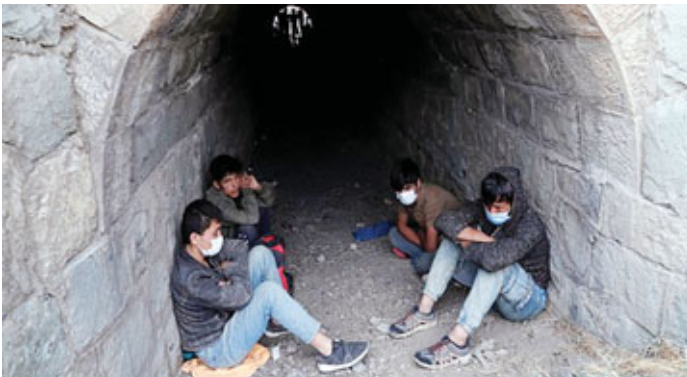
In post-apartheid South Africa, there has been no democratically elected president who has lasted a full two-year term, Singh said, adding that "I trust him to do it despite the political divisions."

The most pressing problem for Ramaphosa, he said, is the economy, which has been stagnant for more than a decade and has grown by barely 1% so far. This tiny increment is totally insufficient to address major challenges such as unemployment, inequality and poverty, Singh said.

The interruption of the power supply has held the economy hostage for years. The priority, he said, was to fight corruption, including in the ANC.

- DW

IRANIAN INTERIOR MINISTRY



Afghan refugees in Iran increase to 5mn in past two years

**KABUL:** The number of Afghan refugees in Iran has surged from approximately 2 million to 5 million over the past two years, reported Khaama Press.

Iranian Interior Ministry stated that before the Taliban took over Afghanistan, 2 million people lived in Iran but the number has now risen to 5 million, reported Khaama Press citing Iranian media.

Moreover, Afghan people have been forced to move to Iran due to unemployment and an uncertain future in Afghanistan.

Recently, a member of Iran's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Fadahossein Maleki announced that the "migration trend from Afghanistan" has been reviewed by this commission.

Maleki on Sunday told the Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA), "The influx of many migrants, most of whom enter illegally, has raised concerns for our people, and these concerns are valid."

Furthermore, he called on

Iran's representative to the President's Office for Afghan Affairs to reconsider their strategies regarding the Taliban, Khaama Press reported.

"The diplomatic apparatus or the special representative of the president, who has extensive powers, should reconsider their policies towards the Taliban, who are the current rulers of Afghanistan," he said.

Moreover, some Tehran newspapers have also raised concerns regarding the issue of Afghan migrants in Iran.

According to Khaama Press, a state-owned newspaper 'Iran' emphasised the words of a political analyst in its headline and stated, "Anti-Afghan sentiment is a security threat."

The analyst further noted that out of 5 to 6 million people, only 10 per cent of them have entered Iran illegally, and the rest got their visas to come to Iran.

However, accurate and official statistics of individuals entering Iran from Afghanistan do not exist, reported Khaama Press. - ANI

IN DECEMBER POLLS

# Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi to run for third term



**CAIRO:** Egypt’s President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi has announced that he would run for a third term in the next election in December, according to media report.

El-Sisi is largely predicted to win the election at a time when the middle eastern country is dealing with an economic crisis, record inflation, and a dramatic depreciation of the local currency.

“I have decided to nominate myself to complete the dream during a new presidential term,” El-Sisi said, making the announcement during a televised speech on Monday evening, according to Al Jazeera.

“I call on all Egyptians to participate in this democratic scene to choose with their patriotic conscience who is worthy,” he said.

An estimated 65 million Egyptians are reported to be eligible to vote in the election, which will be held over three days from December 10 to 12. Egyptians living abroad will be able to cast their ballots on December 1-3.

A few politicians have already declared their candidatures for presidency, but none of them of

fer a real threat to el-Sisi, who has been in power since 2014.

Ahmed al-Tantawi’s campaign, who is the most well-known possible challenger to El-Sisi and a former member of parliament, has stated that voters were prevented from endorsing him, according to Al Jazeera. To run for office, prospective candidates require 25,000 public signatures or the backing of 20 lawmakers in a parliament that is overwhelmingly pro-Sisi.

El-Sisi, a former army chief who has been president since 2014, had been widely expected to run again

and secure a third term after constitutional amendments four years ago that would allow him to stay in office until 2030.

In recent weeks supporters have mounted a campaign using billboards and public messages urging El-Sisi to stand reported Arab News.

El-Sisi came to power after leading the ousting of Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013. He was announced winner of presidential elections in 2014 and 2018 with 97 percent of the vote. — **ANI**

OVER BUDGET DEAL

## Far-right Republican triggers motion to oust US speaker Kevin McCarthy

**WASHINGTON:** A far-right Republican lawmaker has filed a motion to oust US Speaker Kevin McCarthy from his post, after he brokered a budget deal with Democrats to avoid a government shutdown.

Florida legislator Matt Gaetz, a long-time McCarthy critic and Donald Trump supporter, accused fellow Republican McCarthy of “working at the pleasure of the Democrats.”



**What prompted the motion?**

Gaetz had threatened to use the “motion to vacate” against McCarthy before. But his decision to deliver on the threats was prompted by the weekend’s budget deal, which McCarthy reached with the Democrats, preventing a government shutdown.

**Fresh federal funding**

Many conservatives within the Republican Party’s lawmakers had rejected the budget deal. They refused fresh federal funding without deep spending cuts, as well as opposing additional US support to Ukraine.

Gaetz acknowledged that the motion was unlikely to work. He nevertheless said: “If the Democrats want to own Kevin McCarthy, they can have him. Because one thing I’m at peace with is, when we stand here a week from now, I won’t own Kevin McCarthy anymore.”

“Bring it on, let’s get over it,” was McCarthy’s response in comments during a TV interview with CBS.

How would the motion play out?

Gaetz’s rare motion has only been used twice against Republican speakers in the past century. If it works, McCarthy will be the first US speaker to be ousted.

In an effort to appease fellow Republicans back in January, McCarthy introduced amendments, including one which allowed for the motion to be triggered by a single lawmaker. McCarthy was then able to secure the speaker post, on the 15th vote.

The House should next schedule a vote on the motion within two legislative days. It is unclear whether McCarthy will need to rely on Democrats’ votes to protect him against an ouster.

The move comes as tension grows within the Republican Party, especially with a divide over Donald Trump’s presidential bid.

Democrat lawmaker Gregory Meeks described it as “another day at the show.” — **DW**

BY ARMED INSURGENTS



## 29 Nigerian soldiers killed in deadly attack

**NIAMEY:** At least 29 Nigerian soldiers were killed in an attack by armed insurgents near the country’s border with Mali, the Niger Defence Ministry said in a statement on Monday.

“The provisional toll of the attack is as follows, 29 soldiers fell in battle and two were wounded,” the statement read.

Several dozen assailants were also killed, the statement said, but there was no further information on who was responsible for the attack.

Soldiers were returning from operations against militants when they were targeted by more than 100 assailants in vehicles using explosive devices, the defence ministry said.

The attack is one of the deadliest in the country since soldiers toppled the democratically elected leader of the country, Mohamed Bazoum, in a coup in July.

Three days of national mourning have been declared, the statement said.

**Niger’s relations with Western partners**

Relations between the West African nation and Western partners changed dramatically following the coup.

Niger, a French colony until 1960, was seen as the West’s last reliable partner in battling jihadists in Africa’s Sahel region.

Niger’s security situation appeared to have been not as bad as that of neighbouring Burkina Faso or Mali, which have also been battling an separatist insurgency linked to al-Qaida and the so-called “IS” group.

Last year, Niger was the only one of the three to see a decline in violence, according to the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project.

The French ambassador to Niger left the country last month after daily calls for the diplomat to exit since the coup. Germany and the EU have suspended aid to Niger.

SECURITY COUNCIL

## UN approves international force to aid Haiti

**PORT-AU-PRINCE:** The United Nations Security Council approved on Monday deploying a multinational force to Haiti, where authorities have been struggling for nearly a year to control criminal gangs.

The force was described as a Multinational Security Support mission “to take all necessary measures.”

The resolution authorises the force to deploy for one year, with a review after nine months.

“More than just a simple vote, this is in fact an expression of solidarity with a population in distress,” said Jean Victor Geneus, Haiti’s foreign affairs minister.

“It’s a glimmer of hope for the people who have been suffering for too long,” he added.

The deployment was approved by 13 votes, with permanent members Russia and China both abstaining.

The council also approved widening a UN arms embargo to include all gangs, rather than just some individuals, following a push from Beijing.

The taskforce is expected to be led by Kenya, which pledged last summer to send 1,000 troops. Neighbouring Caribbean countries Jamaica, the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda also expressed readiness to contribute forces.

# Over 100 dolphins die in Amazon amid severe drought, heat



a researcher from the Mamiraua environmental institute, said.

**Threatened species**

The Amazon river dolphins — some pink in color — are a unique freshwater species found only in the rivers of South America.

A slow reproductive cycle makes their populations especially prone to threats.

The freshwater dolphins, or “Tucuxis,” are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s red list of threatened species.

“Ten percent is a very high percentage of loss, and the possibility that it will increase could threaten the survival of the species in Lake Tefé,” Marmontel warned.

Researchers on Monday were still recovering dead dolphins in the region where dry rivers have also impacted impoverished riverside communities, beaching their boats on the sand. — **DW**

Following a decline for a few days, the water temperature again soared to 37 degrees Celsius (99 Fahrenheit) on Sunday.

The region around the lake is a key habitat for mammals and other aquatic species. Large amounts of fish have also died according to local media reports.

The scientists are working to rule out other causes like bacterial infections as they do not know with certainty that drought and heat are to blame for the rise in dolphin mortality.

“We have around 900 river dolphins and 500 Tucuxis (in the Tefe Lake) and in one week we have already lost around 120 animals between the two of them, which could represent 5% to 10% of the population,” Miriam Marmontel,



### TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialize companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tender in Dhofar Governorate.

| Tender Number | Tender Name                                                          | Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents | Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission | Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%) |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| DISC/2023/144 | Drilling of Water Production Wells at Jabjat and Bathoor (Taqah)     | 18/10/2023                                   | 15/11/2023                               | RO. 52.500                          |
| DISC/2023/145 | Drilling of Water Production Wells at Ardait and Thetenety (Rakhyut) | 18/10/2023                                   | 15/11/2023                               | RO. 52.500                          |
| DISC/2023/146 | Drilling of Water Production Well at Matoorah (Al mazyounah)         | 18/10/2023                                   | 15/11/2023                               | RO. 52.500                          |
| DISC/2023/156 | UNE-LOT 09 B-2023                                                    | 18/10/2023                                   | 26/10/2023                               | RO. 52.500                          |
| DISC/2023/157 | UNE-LOT 09 A-2023                                                    | 18/10/2023                                   | 26/10/2023                               | RO. 52.500                          |

- To view the tender details, you can visit [www.dhofarservices.nama.om](http://www.dhofarservices.nama.om) / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- For any clarifications contact us on: Tel No. 23232554, email: [purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om](mailto:purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om)



Dhofar Integrated Services Company s.a.o.c.  
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SPORTS

HANGZHOU ASIAN GAMES

# Thrilled to watch Al Farsi make history: Top OOC official

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The sporting fraternity in the Sultanate of Oman erupted in joy on Tuesday after Husain Al Farsi claimed Oman's second medal at the ongoing 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, in the 800m race final.

Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) secretary general Taha Al Kishry, who was present at the Hangzhou Olympic Centre Stadium to watch Al Farsi make history for Oman was overjoyed at the young athlete's feat.

In his exclusive remarks to *Times of Oman* from Hangzhou, Al Kishry said: "I am thrilled to witness the remarkable achievement of Husain Al Farsi at the Asian Games. To be present at the stadium when the young Omani won a bronze was an amazing feeling and we are all proud of him. There were tears of joy on my face as he completed the challenging race in a great fashion.

"This accomplishment reflects the dedication, talent, and unwavering commitment of our athletes. We applaud Husain's exemplary performance, which not only brings glory to our nation but also showcases the potential of Omani sportsmanship on the international stage.

"The Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) wholeheartedly congratulates Husain on this historic win and remains committed to nurturing and supporting our athletes as they strive for excellence in their respective fields."

As'ad Al Hosni, Oman Athletics Association (OAA) general secretary, expressed his pride on Al



Farsi's medal-winning effort.

Al Hosni said: "Al Farsi has brought glory to the nation and his achievement puts him along the ranks of other Omani greats in athletics like Mohammed Amur Al Malki and Barakat Al Harthi.

"Husain has written history. It is a great and proud achievement and Oman Athletics Association would like to thank the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Oman Olympic Committee for their excellent support in providing the best possible environment to Husain and all our other athletes."



As'ad Al Hosni, OAA gen secy



Taha Al Kishry, top OOC official



# Al Nahda outplay Jabal Al Mukaber

Domestic top-flight league champions posted an impressive 4-0 win to boost their hopes of advancing to the AFC Cup West Zone semi-finals

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Oman's domestic league title holders Al Nahda cruised to a 4-0 win over Jabal Al Mukaber Club of Palestine in Group A of the AFC Cup 2023/24 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex (SQSC) on Monday night.

The win was extra special for Al Nahda coach Hamad Al Azani as his former boss and Oman's former Gulf Cup-winning coach Claude Le Roy was in attendance at the stadium. Azani was assistant to Frenchman Le Roy during the latter's stint in Oman.

The win revives Al Nahda's hopes of advancing to West Zone semi-finals following their 2-1 defeat to Lebanon's Al Ahed in the previous group game.

The group was thrown open on Monday as Mustafa Juned's strike



earned Syria's Al Futuwa SC a 1-0 win over Al Ahed FC of Lebanon at the Prince Abdullah bin Jalawi Stadium in Al Hasa.

With all the four teams earning three points after three rounds, the battle intensifies in the next round, with only the group winners assured a place in the West Zonal semi-finals.

Al Nahda lead the table after two rounds on better goal-difference, having scored five and conceded two to have a difference of 3 goals. Al Ahed have scored two and

conceded two while Al Futuwa have scored one and let in one so far while Jabal Al Mukaber have scored just one goal and conceded four.

At the SQSC, a late kickoff at 9pm meant that temperatures were much pleasant to play and the match got off to a lively and sizzling start with the visiting Palestine club Jabal threatening in the 12th minute but Mahdi Issa failed to find the target with a headed effort.

Al Nahda got into the action at

the 17th-minute mark with Billel Bensaha seeing his effort from an acute angle blocked, while Salah Al Yahyaei had his shot from distance denied. It was not until the half hour mark that Al Nahda really threatened and they finally broke the deadlock four minutes later with Al Yahyaei setting up Issam Al Subhi nicely to score from close range.

The Buraimi Governorate side, who won a domestic double last season under coach Hamad Al Azani, with Omantel League and His Majesty's Cup titles, increased the pressure and were rewarded with their second goal in the 39th minute with Al Yahyaei the orchestrator once again as he relayed the ball for Bensaha to slot home.

Jabal tried to force their way back but neither Shihab Qumbor, Mohammed Obaid nor Mohammed Yamin could reduce the deficit going into the break.

Al Nahda picked up from where they left off with Abdul Aziz Khalfan extending their advantage in the 51st minute when he finished off a wonderful team effort from inside the box following Bensaha's through ball.

Jabal fell further behind in the 64th minute when Abdullah Fawaz scored in style following a counter-attacking move involving Yahyaei.

Al Nahda take on Syria side Al Futuwa, while Jabal will be aiming to bounce back when they face Al Ahed on Matchday Three on October 23.

OMANTEL LEAGUE

# Seeb trounce Ibri to stretch lead at top



Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** Former champions Seeb consolidated their position at the top in the 2023-24 Omantel League with an impressive 3-0 win over bottom-placed Ibri.

Seeb's opening round match against Ibri was postponed due to the former's Asian Champions League preliminary round commitments. On Sunday, the rescheduled match was played and Seeb's victory extended their lead on top. They now lead by four points from second placed Oman Club who have 12 points.

Two-time champions Seeb are sitting pretty with 16 from six games while Ibri remain stuck at the bottom.

Seeb have won five of the

six matches and played out a draw under their new Brazilian coach Jorvan Viera.

Seeb's Jackson Bisan opened the account when he nodded in a strong header off a cross from Omar Al Fazari in the 34th minute. Al Fazari also ensured his name on the scorer's list with a powerful volley in the 49th minute. Oman international Mohsin Al Ghasani rounded off the impressive win with a goal in the dying minutes of the match.

Only defending champions Al Nahda, who were in action in the AFC Cup on Monday and Sur have played five matches while the remaining ten teams have all played their six games so far. The seventh round of the Omantel League will resume on October 10.

AIRBADMINTON IN FOCUS

# ORSC marks Omani Day of Physical Activity

**MUSCAT:** The Oman Racket Sports Committee (ORSC) launched various activities on the Omani Day of Physical Activity, which was organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, on Monday at Al Sahwa Park.

Dr. Hilal Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, and other dignitaries were briefed on the ORSC plans and the forthcoming events beside the importance of AirBadminton and its advantages.

ORSC held an exhibition and demonstration of AirBadminton during the event.

AirBadminton is an ambitious new development project of the world governing body, BWF, designed to create opportunities for



people of all ages and ability to play badminton on hard, grass and sand surfaces in parks, gardens, streets, playgrounds and beaches around the world.

Khalid Ali al Sulaimani, ORSC member said: "By participating in



the Omani Day of Physical Activity we got an opportunity to show the activities of racket sports which fit for all the community categories. Racket sports support to raise the physical activity level and the health of the individuals.

The ORSC will work hard towards providing a varied range of activities and it will include a mix of competitive events for the professionals and fun activities to assist people's developing their physical activity and health care."

It may be mentioned that the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth announced the formation of ORSC in July.

The committee is headed by Dr. Abdul Rahim al Daroushi while Tahir Al Barwani is the general secretary. Besides Al Sulaimani, the other members as Ruqaya Al Omairi and Amal Al Mahrouqi. The committee is responsible for managing badminton and squash sports in Oman.

### OMAN CRUDE PRICE FALLS

The price of Oman oil has decreased, with prices for delivery by December 2023 reaching \$91.01, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil fell by \$1.99 from the price of Monday, which was \$93. - **ONA**

## MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



### MSX INDEX ENS HIGHER

The MSX index closed at 4,739.61 points, up by 0.09 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.20 per cent at 465.09 points. Al Suwadi Power, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 4.29 per cent, was the top loser.

# Oman's hotel revenues rise by 26% to reach OMR138 million

The Omani hotel guests grew by 5.3 per cent to 499,840 while other GCC hotel guests increased by 25.1 per cent to 137,367 and the number of European guests grew by 44.1 per cent to 275,672

**MUSCAT:** The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in Oman by the end of August 2023 grew by 26.3 per cent to OMR138,380,000 as against OMR109,535,000 by the end of

August 2022.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that the total number of hotel guests and tenants increased by 26.7 per cent to 1,284,640 by the end of August 2023, compared to 1,013,876 in the corresponding period in 2022. The rate of hotel occupancy also grew by 10.4 per cent.

The NCSI statistics indicate a rising trend in the number of hotel guests/tenants. The Omani hotel guests grew by 5.3 per cent to 499,840 while other GCC hotel guests increased by 25.1 per cent to 137,367 and the number of European guests grew by 44.1 per cent to 275,672.

The number of American hotel guests stood at 36,970 (up by 2.8 per cent), as against 7,336 hotel guests from the African continent (up by 39.5 per cent); the number of Asian hotel guests also increased by 44.2 per cent to 187,486 while the number of hotel guests from Oceania surged by 228.7 per cent to 27,110. - **ONA**



### OPEC

## Global energy demand to rise 25% by 2045

**ABU DHABI:** Global demand for all forms of energy is forecast to rise by 25 per cent through 2045, according to Haitham Al Ghais, Secretary-General of the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

"By 2045, the world's energy demand is expected to increase by 25% from current levels, as the global population is projected to grow by approximately 1.6 billion people. This indicates that the world will need more energy in the future," Al Ghais told the Emirates News Agency (WAM) on the sidelines of the now-running Adipecc 2023.

Al Ghais added, "No single energy source can meet the world's growing needs as the economy expands and the population increases. That's why Opec supports investment in both oil and renewable energy."

"Opec will have a dedicated pavilion at the upcoming United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28), for the first time, to showcase its work, plans, and support for the transition to a clean energy system and reducing carbon emissions."

"Despite some setbacks, global growth continues, and we're optimistic about future oil demand. The global economy is going through different stages, and Opec will release updated demand forecasts next week," he continued.



"Opec is committed to both providing the world with energy and investing in both oil and renewable energy."

Al Ghais emphasised that several leading countries, notably the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and several African nations, have successfully used technology in the oil industry. "These countries have invested in carbon capture technologies, green hydrogen, and circular economies, and are efficiently working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions."

He underscored the need for the oil industry to continue contributing solutions to climate change challenges, noting that the UAE is a leading country in reducing carbon emissions and investing in renewable energy. - **WAM**

### NEW OFFER

## Bank Muscat, GIG Gulf partner to offer 40% discount on home insurance plans

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** In line with its vision "To Serve you Better, Everyday" and its efforts to provide services and offers that meet customers' needs and aspirations, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, in partnership with GIG Gulf, has announced a new offer on home insurance plan from GIG.

The discount will be available to customers on home contents and personal belongings insurance cover during a special promotional period, which ends on November 30.

Speaking on the new offer, Abdullah Tamman Al Maashani, General Manager - Products at Bank Muscat, said, "We are proud to once again enhance our partnership with GIG Gulf, to provide this exciting offer for our customers. This came in response to the great demand witnessed on insurance plans due to the various benefits offered. The bank is always keen to listen to customers' feedback to provide the best and most up-to-date services to enhance their banking experience. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to our customers for their continuous trust in the services and products offered by the bank."

Mehdi Salim Al Harthy, General Manager & Head of Partnership - Oman, GIG Gulf, said, "We are delighted to see the positive feedback



the Home Insurance plan receives from customers as it is an ideal solution for protection against unexpected events. The plan offers various benefits including a comprehensive protection, cover for alternative accommodation in the event of any covered damage to the home, slab-based premiums among others. I would like to invite customers to benefit from the new offer to keep their home safe and protected."

GIG's Home Insurance plan offers exceptional value to both

“

This came in response to the great demand witnessed on insurance plans due to the various benefits offered. The bank is always keen to listen to customers' feedback to provide the best and most up-to-date services to enhance their banking experience

**Abdullah Tamman Al Maashani**  
General Manager - Products at Bank Muscat

### WORLD BANK

## Indian economy to grow at 6.3% in 2023-24

**NEW DELHI:** The World Bank has retained India's GDP growth forecast for the financial year 2023-24 at 6.3 per cent and noted that the country continued to show resilience against the backdrop of a challenging global environment.

The World Bank in its April report had cut India's growth forecast for 2023-24 to 6.3 per cent from the earlier 6.6 per cent.

According to the World Bank's latest India Development Update (IDU) released Tuesday, the international financial institution's flagship half-yearly report on the Indian economy observed that despite significant global challenges, India was one of the fastest-growing major economies in 2022-23 at 7.2 per cent.

"India's growth rate was the second highest among G20 countries and almost twice the average for emerging market economies. This resilience was underpinned by robust domestic demand, strong public infrastructure investment and a strengthening financial sector," the World Bank said.

This fiscal, bank credit in India grew 15.8 per cent in the first quarter



compared with 13.3 per cent in the first quarter of the previous fiscal.

India's service sector activity is expected to remain strong with growth of 7.4 per cent and investment growth is also projected to remain robust at 8.9 per cent.

"An adverse global environment will continue to pose challenges in the short-term," said Auguste Tano Kouame, World Bank's Country Director in India.

"Tapping public spending that crowds in more private investments will create more favourable conditions for India to seize global opportunities in the future and

thus achieve higher growth."

The World Bank expects that global headwinds will continue to persist and intensify due to high global interest rates, geopolitical tensions, and sluggish global demand and as a result, global economic growth is also set to slow down over the medium term.

About adverse weather conditions in India that contributed to the spike in inflation in recent months, the World Bank in the report said the price rise is expected to decrease gradually as food prices normalise and government measures increase the supply of key commodities.

"While the spike in headline inflation may temporarily constrain consumption, we project a moderation. Overall conditions will remain conducive for private investment," said Dhruv Sharma, Senior Economist, at the World Bank, and lead author of the report.

"The volume of foreign direct investment is also likely to grow in India as rebalancing of the global value chain continues."

Headline inflation in India rose to 7.8 per cent in July due to a surge in prices of food items like wheat and rice, to later fall to 6.8 per cent in August.

Further, the World Bank expects fiscal consolidation to continue in 2023-24 with the central government fiscal deficit projected to continue to decline from 6.4 per cent to 5.9 per cent of GDP.

Public debt is expected to stabilize at 83 per cent of GDP. On the external front, the current account deficit is expected to narrow to 1.4 per cent of GDP, and it will be adequately financed by foreign investment flows and supported by large foreign reserves. - **ANI**

### ENGINEERING, PROCUREMENT AND CONSTRUCTION

## Adnoc Gas awards \$615 million contract for one of Mena's largest integrated carbon capture projects

**ABU DHABI:** Adnoc Gas plc announced it has awarded a \$615 million (AED2.26 billion) Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) contract to Petrofac Emirates for constructing carbon capture units, pipeline infrastructure and a network of wells for carbon dioxide (CO2) injection at the Habshan gas processing plant, as part of Adnoc's accelerated decarbonisation plan.

The Habshan Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) project is one of the largest carbon capture projects in the Middle East and North Africa (Mena) region and will have the capacity to capture and permanently store 1.5 million tons per annum (mtpa) of CO2 within geological structures deep underground, as Adnoc builds a unique platform to connect sources of emissions and sequestration sites. Adnoc Gas will be responsible for building, operating and maintaining the project on behalf of Adnoc.

Ahmed Mohamed Alebri, Chief Executive Officer of Adnoc Gas, said: "Integrated carbon capture projects, such as the Habshan CCUS project, are essential building blocks for Adnoc Gas to achieve its decarbonisation goals. This project represents our commitment to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while unlocking new and attractive commercial opportunities for delivering sustainable, lower-carbon growth for the Company."

"This large-scale project reaffirms our steadfast commitment to maximising energy output while minimising our emissions, steering us toward a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future."

CCUS projects are recognised by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) as critical decarbonisation enablers in achieving global climate goals. - **WAM**

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

Al Suwadi Power, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 4.29 per cent, was the top loser



**MUSCAT:** The MSX index closed at 4,739.61 points, up by 0.09 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.20 per cent at 465.09 points. Al Suwadi Power, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while A'Saffa Foods, down 4.29 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Sohar International Bank were the most active in terms of number of shares traded while Oman Telecom were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 362 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR1.24 million, with more than 5.64 million shares changing hands. Out of 38 traded securities, 9 advanced, 10 declined, and 19 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR40,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR38,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR3,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at

7,729.57 points, up 0 per cent. Prices of Bank Muscat, Ahli Bank were up by 0.71 per cent, 0.61 per cent respectively. Prices of Muscat Finance, Al Madina Takaful, Ominvest were up by 1.85 per cent, 1.18 per cent, 0.25 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 5,612.58 points, down 0.13 per cent. Prices of Dhofar Cattle Feed, Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 9.43 per cent, 1.63 per cent respectively. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Galfar Engineering, Raysut Cement, Jazeera Steel Products were up by 4.29 per cent, 1.24 per cent, 0.75 per cent, 0.41 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.24 per cent before closing at 1,633.20 points. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Oman National Engineering, SMN Power Holding, Abraj Energy were up by 10.00 per cent, 4.76 per cent, 1.89 per cent, 1.39 per cent, 0.68 per cent respectively. Prices of Ooredoo were up by 0.80 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT  
STOCK  
EXCHANGE

INDICES

| Index             | High      | Low       | Value     | Prev. Value | Diff   | Diff% |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|--------|-------|
| MSX 30 INDEX      | 4,742.166 | 4,718.042 | 4,739.612 | 4,735.477   | 4.135  | 0.09  |
| FINANCIAL INDEX   | 7,733.219 | 7,693.438 | 7,729.565 | 7,729.428   | 0.137  | 0.00  |
| Industry Index    | 5,635.290 | 5,605.760 | 5,612.582 | 5,619.899   | -7.317 | -0.13 |
| Services Index    | 1,633.831 | 1,626.186 | 1,633.197 | 1,629.264   | 3.933  | 0.24  |
| MSX Shariah Index | 465.471   | 464.513   | 465.092   | 466.020     | -0.928 | -0.20 |
| MSX TR INDEX      | 6,243.631 | 6,211.869 | 6,240.269 | 6,234.825   | 5.444  | 0.09  |
| FINANCIAL TR IDX  | 8,438.362 | 8,394.954 | 8,434.376 | 8,434.226   | 0.150  | 0.00  |
| INDUSTRIAL TR IDX | 6,019.892 | 5,988.347 | 5,995.634 | 6,003.450   | -7.816 | -0.13 |
| SERVICES TR IDX   | 1,804.480 | 1,796.036 | 1,803.780 | 1,799.436   | 4.344  | 0.24  |

Trading Summary

|                 |                 |              |                      |          |            |             |                   |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Volume .....    | Turnover .....  | Trades ..... | Market Cap .....     | Up ..... | Down ..... | Equal ..... | Sec. Traded ..... |
| 5,640,715 ..... | 1,236,032 ..... | 362 .....    | 23,592,383,459 ..... | 9 .....  | 10 .....   | 19 .....    | 38 .....          |

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3

| SN              | SECURITY NAME                          | VOLUME    | TURNOVER | TRADES | OPEN PRICE | HIGH  | LOW   | CLOSE PR | PREV. CLOSE | DIFF (RD) | DIFF % | LAST PR | LAST BD | LAST OFFER, BID VALUE, SECURITY SYMBOL, MARKET CAP |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------|-----------|----------|--------|------------|-------|-------|----------|-------------|-----------|--------|---------|---------|----------------------------------------------------|
| REGULAR MARKET  |                                        |           |          |        |            |       |       |          |             |           |        |         |         |                                                    |
| OM0000001087    | OMAN UNITED INSURANCE                  | 15,629    | 4,220    | 5      | 0.275      | 0.275 | 0.270 | 0.270    | 0.270       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.270   | 0.270   | 0.270...0.100...OUIK...27,000,000                  |
| OM0000001152    | OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT | 32,701    | 3,617    | 4      | 0.116      | 0.116 | 0.108 | 0.108    | 0.106       | 0.002     | 1.887  | 0.109   | 0.109   | 0.109...0.100...ONES...16,200,000                  |
| OM0000001533    | OMINVEST                               | 124,200   | 49,632   | 4      | 0.398      | 0.400 | 0.398 | 0.399    | 0.400       | -0.001    | -0.250 | 0.399   | 0.399   | 0.400...0.100...OMVS...266,677,805                 |
| OM0000002168    | AL ANWAR CERAMIC                       | 115,000   | 21,505   | 7      | 0.187      | 0.187 | 0.187 | 0.187    | 0.184       | 0.003     | 1.630  | 0.187   | 0.185   | 0.187...0.100...AACT...41,140,000                  |
| OM0000002176    | JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS                 | 63,000    | 15,299   | 3      | 0.243      | 0.243 | 0.242 | 0.242    | 0.243       | -0.001    | -0.412 | 0.242   | 0.242   | 0.244...0.100...ATMI...30,225,306                  |
| OM0000002226    | ALJAZEERA SERVICES                     | 3,780     | 809      | 1      | 0.214      | 0.214 | 0.214 | 0.214    | 0.214       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.214   | 0.212   | 0.216...0.100...AJSS...13,097,714                  |
| OM0000002440    | AL SHARQIYA INVESTMENT HO              | 38,000    | 2,703    | 3      | 0.072      | 0.072 | 0.071 | 0.071    | 0.071       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.071   | 0.071   | 0.074...0.100...SIHC...6,390,000                   |
| OM0000002796    | BANK MUSCAT                            | 869,320   | 246,057  | 29     | 0.280      | 0.284 | 0.280 | 0.284    | 0.282       | 0.002     | 0.709  | 0.284   | 0.280   | 0.284...0.100...BKMB...2,131,816,766               |
| OM0000003026    | OMAN TELECOM                           | 265,679   | 268,861  | 27     | 1.001      | 1.016 | 1.000 | 1.015    | 1.015       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 1.015   | 1.015   | 1.015...0.100...OTEL...761,250,000                 |
| OM0000003125    | GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO         | 79,364    | 4,771    | 4      | 0.061      | 0.061 | 0.060 | 0.060    | 0.060       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.060   | 0.060   | 0.060...0.100...GFIC...12,000,000                  |
| OM0000003224    | RENAISSANCE SERVICES                   | 233,848   | 95,900   | 5      | 0.410      | 0.411 | 0.407 | 0.410    | 0.410       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.410   | 0.410   | 0.410...0.100...RNSS...96,928,100                  |
| OM0000003398    | SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK               | 1,382,245 | 144,991  | 23     | 0.104      | 0.105 | 0.104 | 0.105    | 0.105       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.105   | 0.105   | 0.106...0.100...BKSB...574,128,293                 |
| OM0000003968    | OOREDOO                                | 176,489   | 66,158   | 34     | 0.375      | 0.375 | 0.374 | 0.374    | 0.377       | -0.003    | -0.796 | 0.374   | 0.374   | 0.377...0.100...ORDS...243,453,142                 |
| OM0000004248    | SMN POWER HOLDING                      | 159,339   | 11,632   | 22     | 0.073      | 0.073 | 0.073 | 0.073    | 0.072       | 0.001     | 1.389  | 0.073   | 0.072   | 0.073...0.100...SMNP...14,573,399                  |
| OM0000004768    | MADINA TAKAFUL                         | 88,098    | 7,400    | 5      | 0.084      | 0.084 | 0.084 | 0.084    | 0.085       | -0.001    | -1.176 | 0.084   | 0.084   | 0.087...0.100...AMAT...14,700,000                  |
| Total           | 15                                     | 3,646,692 | 943,556  | 176    |            |       |       |          |             |           |        |         |         |                                                    |
| Parallel Market |                                        |           |          |        |            |       |       |          |             |           |        |         |         |                                                    |
| OM0000001160    | NATIONAL GAS                           | 1,000     | 91       | 1      | 0.091      | 0.091 | 0.091 | 0.091    | 0.092       | -0.001    | -1.087 | 0.091   | 0.091   | 0.093...0.100...NGCI...7,735,000                   |
| OM0000001301    | DHOFAR FOODS AND INVESTMENT            | 1,000     | 58       | 1      | 0.058      | 0.058 | 0.058 | 0.058    | 0.053       | 0.005     | 8.434  | 0.058   | 0.050   | 0.058...0.100...DFIN...11,465,262                  |
| OM0000001418    | RAYSUT CEMENT                          | 510,387   | 67,768   | 40     | 0.134      | 0.134 | 0.130 | 0.132    | 0.133       | -0.001    | -0.752 | 0.132   | 0.132   | 0.132...0.100...RCCL...26,400,000                  |
| OM0000001590    | MUSCAT FINANCE                         | 10,000    | 530      | 1      | 0.053      | 0.053 | 0.053 | 0.053    | 0.054       | -0.001    | -1.852 | 0.053   | 0.052   | 0.055...0.100...MFCI...16,278,755                  |
| OM0000001772    | ALANWAR INVESTMENT                     | 60,902    | 4,870    | 4      | 0.079      | 0.080 | 0.079 | 0.080    | 0.080       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.080   | 0.080   | 0.082...0.100...AAIC...16,480,000                  |
| OM0000002077    | AL OMANIYA FINANCIAL SERVICES          | 75,300    | 10,926   | 5      | 0.140      | 0.154 | 0.140 | 0.154    | 0.154       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.154   | 0.140   | 0.146...0.100...AOPS...47,381,858                  |
| OM0000002200    | AHLI BANK                              | 174,437   | 28,782   | 5      | 0.165      | 0.165 | 0.165 | 0.165    | 0.164       | 0.001     | 0.610  | 0.165   | 0.160   | 0.165...0.100...ABOB...387,693,482                 |
| OM0000002804    | ASAFA FOODS                            | 100       | 29       | 1      | 0.290      | 0.290 | 0.290 | 0.290    | 0.303       | -0.013    | -4.290 | 0.290   | 0.290   | 0.333...0.100...SPFI...34,800,000                  |
| OM0000003521    | GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING       | 241,559   | 38,713   | 18     | 0.158      | 0.164 | 0.158 | 0.160    | 0.162       | 0.002     | -1.235 | 0.160   | 0.160   | 0.162...0.100...GECS...32,477,831                  |
| OM0000004420    | BANK NIZWA                             | 324,810   | 32,064   | 21     | 0.097      | 0.099 | 0.097 | 0.099    | 0.099       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.099   | 0.099   | 0.100...0.100...BKNZ...221,458,350                 |
| OM0000004735    | SEMBORP SALALAH                        | 40,000    | 4,280    | 4      | 0.107      | 0.107 | 0.107 | 0.107    | 0.107       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.107   | 0.102   | 0.107...0.100...SSFW...102,139,199                 |
| OM0000004776    | TAKAFUL OMAN                           | 300       | 15       | 1      | 0.051      | 0.051 | 0.051 | 0.051    | 0.051       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.051   | 0.048   | 0.051...0.100...TAOI...12,750,000                  |
| OM0000004925    | ALBATINAH POWER                        | 137,500   | 2,958    | 6      | 0.021      | 0.022 | 0.021 | 0.022    | 0.021       | 0.001     | 4.762  | 0.022   | 0.021   | 0.022...0.100...BATP...14,847,523                  |
| OM0000004933    | AL SUWADI POWER                        | 140,445   | 3,068    | 11     | 0.020      | 0.022 | 0.020 | 0.022    | 0.020       | 0.002     | 10.000 | 0.022   | 0.020   | 0.022...0.100...SUWP...15,716,939                  |
| OM0000005260    | OMAN ARAB BANK                         | 8,047     | 1,110    | 3      | 0.138      | 0.138 | 0.138 | 0.138    | 0.138       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.138   | 0.138   | 0.000...0.100...OAB...230,378,580                  |
| OM0000005963    | PHOENIX POWER                          | 1,925     | 111      | 2      | 0.057      | 0.058 | 0.057 | 0.058    | 0.058       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.058   | 0.056   | 0.058...0.100...PHPC...84,830,885                  |
| OM0000007910    | AMAN REAL ESTATE                       | 600       | 60       | 2      | 0.100      | 0.100 | 0.099 | 0.099    | 0.099       | 0.000     | 0.000  | 0.099   | 0.095   | 0.099...0.100...AMAN...19,800,000                  |
| OM0000008868    | THE PEARL REIF                         | 14,000    | 1,638    | 3      | 0.117      | 0.117 | 0.117 | 0.117    | 0.118       | -0.001    | -8.847 | 0.117   | 0.115   | 0.123...0.100...PRPD...59,448,115                  |
| OM0000008934    | ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES                  | 181,654   | 53,374   | 47     | 0.293      | 0.295 | 0.293 | 0.295    | 0.293       | 0.002     | 0.683  | 0.295   | 0.295   | 0.298...0.100...ABRJ...227,209,000                 |
| Total           | 19                                     | 1,923,966 | 250,445  | 176    |            |       |       |          |             |           |        |         |         |                                                    |

INVESTMENT AWARENESS PROGRAMME

GCC Smart Investor Award promotes financial awareness

**MUSCAT:** The GCC Investment Awareness Programme, Mulim, has announced the launch of the 2nd edition of the GCC Smart Investor Award, featuring prizes totaling more than OMR100,000.

This year, the award has expanded to include four categories: videography, drawing, photography, and writing. Notably, the addition of the writing category brings a new dimension to the competition. Participants are grouped into individuals, higher education students, and school students. Impressively, this year's edition will have 36 winners, a significant increase from the previous edition, which had only 9 winners.

The primary objective of the award is to inspire citizens and residents across the GCC countries to create awareness content and share innovative ideas related to saving and investment. By doing so, the award aims to enhance financial literacy, enabling individuals to

The award aims to enhance financial literacy, enabling individuals to plan for their futures effectively

plan for their futures effectively and make informed financial decisions for long-term stability. Furthermore, the award strives to elevate the level of financial knowledge, imparting essential skills and promoting effective ways to manage financial resources successfully.

Participants can submit their entries on the program's website between September and November. Additionally, the program encourages interested individuals to reach out to program officers for inquiries via the website. Comprehensive information about the campaign can be accessed on the

program's website as well as its social media platforms on Twitter and Instagram.

A committee comprising experienced members from the GCC will oversee the award and assess the submissions. The inaugural edition, launched in March 2022, featured three categories: videography, drawing, and photography, producing 9 winners from across the GCC. The total prize value exceeded OMR28,000.

Mulim, initiated under the umbrella of the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council in collaboration with the regulators of the GCC capital markets, is dedicated to promoting awareness of financial transactions and investment in the capital markets. Through various awareness activities and campaigns, Mulim continues to play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of financial responsibility and understanding among the citizens of the GCC countries.

US PAYMENT PROVIDER

Visa to invest \$100mn in generative AI

**NEW YORK:** US payments provider Visa announced on Monday it will invest \$100 million in companies developing generative artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and applications. The investments will be made through Visa Ventures, the company said in a statement, according to dpa.

"While much of generative AI so far has been focused on tasks and content creation, this technology will soon not only reshape how we live and work, but it will also meaningfully change commerce in ways we need to understand," Visa's chief product and strategy officer Jack Forestell said.

Visa said it considered the initiative an extension of its leadership in using AI to drive innovation in payments, create value for partners and clients, and enable and empower global commerce. —BNA

SPORTS CAR

Looking for perfect mix of exhilaration, performance and style? The new Ferrari 296 GTS has all answers

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Middle East sports car market is thriving. Which is why, at times, buyers can feel a little overwhelmed. Especially in the popular sweet spot – the mid-rear-engine, two-seater convertible.

The trick is to choose a model that combines the concept of fun behind the wheel yet guarantees pure emotions not just when pushing the car to its limits, but in practical, everyday life. Sounds perfect, right?

Which brings us neatly to the latest evolution of Maranello's two-seater Berlinetta spider – the Ferrari 296 GTS. This latest offering from Maranello has all the above, and more.

Its new 663 cv 120° V6, coupled with an electric motor capable of delivering a further 122 kW (167 cv), is the first 6-cylinder engine installed on a road-going spider sporting the Prancing Horse badge, and ushers in a new V6 era that has deep roots in the marque's unrivalled 75-year history.

Unleashing its class-leading 830 cv total power output to deliver previously unthinkable performance levels and an innovative, exhilarating and unique soundtrack – the 296 GTS sounds even more magnificent with the top down.

The 296 GTS's plug-in hybrid (PHEV) system guarantees an



incredibly usable car and cuts pedal response times to zero, while delivering a 25km range in all-electric eDrive mode. Its RHT (retractable hard top) take a mere 14 seconds to retract or deploy at speeds up to 45km/h. With the roof stowed it features a sleek, sporty design and with the roof up, the silhouette remains similar to the 296 GTB.

Sound-wise, the V6 engine creates a sense of unprecedented involvement even with the roof off, and marking the turning of a new page in Maranello's berlinetta history. The 296 GTS's cabin raises the concept of the formal purity of the functional elements to new heights. Exclusive Italian leather trim to the seats and trim is further enhanced by the noble technical materials used on the func-



tional components.

And of course, for the more competitive, race-minded owners, the 296 GTS is also available with the Assetto Fiorano package, which includes lightweight features and aero modifications.

Finally, for peace of mind, an

extended seven-year maintenance programme is offered with the Ferrari 296 GTS and covers all regular maintenance for the first seven years or 120,000 km of the car's life – added value that you don't find with many premium automotive brands.

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# SEARCHING FOR SUSTAINABLE, CONVENIENT COFFEE?



## HERE’S WHAT TO KNOW

**M**usic, hairstyles and fashions may change over time but one thing remains constant: Americans love their coffee and it seems, will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. In fact, the number of Americans who drank coffee in the past day (65%) -- more than any other beverage -- is on the rise, according to the latest “Atlas of American Coffee.” And Market Research Future predicts that the global coffee market will be worth \$112.8 billion by the year 2030.

If you're like many coffee drinkers these days, you may find yourself preferring your daily dose of caffeine come in the form of specialty coffee. At a time when many consumers are cutting back on discretionary spending, 2023 data from the National Coffee Association of USA shows that the specialty coffee market continues to thrive.

At the same time, you likely also prioritize both sustainability and convenience. As with many products, you may be doing your research about your coffee, looking into your brand of choice's manufacturing and production processes to see how eco-friendly they are, while continuing to expect a quick and handy cup of coffee.

With these values in mind, coffee technology companies are working to innovate the game. For example, NuZee Inc., a leading coffee technology and co-packing company, recognized the growing popularity of single-serve coffee and has made brewing just one cup of coffee as convenient as preparing a cup of tea.

“We saw a need to bring high-quality, single-serve coffee options to the market that are also more sustainable and eco-friendly,” says Masa Higashida, CEO of NuZee Inc.

The brand sells both single serving pour over kits and coffee brew bag filters that make it possible to prepare a cup of coffee from anywhere you have access to hot water, including your home, the workplace and when traveling. And because NuZee will soon be rolling out industrially compostable brew bag filters, and the company uses recyclable foil boxes for its single-serve coffee products, it's also an eco-conscious way to enjoy a fresh, single serving of coffee. To learn more, visit [mynuzee.com](https://mynuzee.com).

When it comes to your cup of joe, convenience and sustainability don't have to be at odds. Thanks to recent innovations, you can enjoy a fresh-brewed cup of coffee at home or on-the-go that you can feel good about. -StatePoint

# Chelsea outplay Fulham for second victory of the season

Mykhailo Mudryk and Armando Broja on target for Blues at Craven Cottage

**LONDON:** Mykhailo Mudryk's first goal for Chelsea and a strike from Armando Broja saw the Blues beat Fulham 2-0 for only their second Premier League win of the campaign on Monday night.

Mudryk has had a mixed time at Stamford Bridge since signing in January from Shakhtar Donetsk but his first-half performance looked as though it could be a turning point in his Chelsea career, *BBC Sport* reported on Monday.

The Ukrainian gave the away side the lead in the 18th minute when he controlled Levi Colwill's chipped cross with his chest before finishing under Bernd Leno.

Broja doubled the Chelsea lead a minute later with his first goal since October 2022 following a serious knee injury, as Chelsea moved up to 11th in the Premier League.

Fulham did not create much and their best chance came from Sasa Lukic in the second half when his shot from inside the six-yard box was well saved by Robert Sanchez.

Mudryk was withdrawn at half-time with a quad injury but boss Mauricio Pochettino was hopeful the winger would be fit enough to play at Burnley on Saturday.

This match was Mudryk's third start in a row and he looked to be benefiting from regular game time, with the 22-year-old a constant threat in the first half.

Pochettino has spoken about the need to improve Mudryk's confidence and has been playing



the 'crossbar challenge' with the winger after training to help - and it certainly looks to be paying off.

At times in his 24-game Chelsea career, it has looked as though Mudryk was not confident in his decision making but everything he did in this game showed a real assertiveness as demonstrated by his clinical finish from Colwill's pass.

"Misha [Mudryk] played because he's showing in the training sessions that he deserved to be," said Pochettino.

"He was really focused and his

performances in training provided us the confidence to put him on the pitch. I'm pleased for Misha and for Armando.

"Misha scored his first goal in the Premier League and for Armando after a long period out he scored again, the competition is really good for the team.

"Young people need time to settle and it has been a massive change for Misha when he arrived here.

"It's not easy to settle. It's about time and being patient. It is to trust

these guys, these young talented players."

Chelsea, who have 12 first-team players injured as well as striker Nicolas Jackson and defender Malo Gusto missing through suspension, were dominant in the opening half with Cole Palmer also impressing on his first league start since signing from Manchester City.

In Jackson's absence, Pochettino will have been thankful he had Broja to call on, especially when the striker took advantage of



some hesitant Fulham defending to make it 2-0 soon after Mudryk's opener.

Fulham centre-back Tim Ream gifted the ball to Palmer and then kicked the Chelsea forward's pass against Broja's outstretched foot, with the ball rebounding into the net.

It was only a second Chelsea goal for 22-year-old Albanian Broja, who is working his way back to fitness after rupturing his anterior cruciate ligament in December.

Fulham's best chance of the

first period came at the end of the half when a Raul Jimenez header from a corner went well wide of Sanchez's post.

Ian Maatsen, who replaced Mudryk at half-time, smacked the Fulham post as Chelsea looked for a third in the second half.

The final 15 minutes could have been much different had Lukic done better from close range when Tom Cairney's pass found him in the Chelsea area but in the end Chelsea comfortably held on.

- Agencies

## AUSTRALIAN OPEN



# Grand Slam extends to 15 days in bid to avoid late finishes

**MELBOURNE:** The Australian Open will become a 15-day event for the first time in 2024 in an attempt to reduce the number of late-night finishes at Melbourne Park.

The tournament's scheduling was questioned in January after Britain's Andy Murray described his 4am finish as a "farce".

Now the Grand Slam has added a day and will start on Sunday, January 14.

A minimum of two matches will be scheduled for day sessions on the main courts, rather than three, to cut the risk of night sessions being delayed.

Tournament director Craig Tiley said: "We've listened to feedback from the players and fans and are excited to deliver a solution to minimise late finishes while continuing to provide a fair and equitable schedule on the stadium courts.

"The additional day will achieve this, benefiting sched-



ing for fans and players alike. The first round will now be played over three days instead of two."

The French Open is also a 15-day tournament, while Wimbledon and the US Open are played over 14 days.

The Australian Open has staged five singles matches on each of the two main show courts, Rod Laver Arena and Margaret Court Arena, during the opening six days of past tournaments.

Three matches took place dur-

ing the day session from 11am, and two were scheduled from 7pm for the night session.

While the minimum number of night matches will remain as two, it is hoped that reducing the minimum day schedule to two matches will prevent the night matches - for which there is separate ticketing - finishing painfully late.

This year, Murray's five-set win over Australia's Thanasi Kokkinakis in round two started at 22:20 local time and lasted five hours 45 minutes, finishing at 4:05am.

The British former world No.1 said he managed only three hours' sleep following that match before exiting in the next round.

Meanwhile, night sessions will continue to feature a minimum of two matches with the John Cain Arena schedule also remaining unchanged.

From Jan. 14 to 28, 2024, the Australian Open will take place in Melbourne, kicking off a new Grand Slam season. - Agencies

## CHINA OPEN

# Alcaraz defeats Ruud to reach semi-finals; Sabalenka wins

**BEIJING:** Spain's Carlos Alcaraz progressed to the semi-finals of the China Open with a straight-set win over Norwegian Casper Ruud.

The No.2 seed had a tough opening to the match, falling 3-0 behind, but came back to win 6-4, 6-2.

Seventh seed Ruud put the Spaniard, 20, on the back foot at the start but Alcaraz played superbly from then on.

He will face Italian Jannik Sinner, 22, in the last four after the sixth seed overcame Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 6-4 3-6 6-2.

In the other semi-final, world No.3 Daniil Medvedev will take on eighth seed Alexander Zverev.

If Alcaraz and Medvedev were to meet in the final, it would be a repeat of the US Open semi-final that saw the 27-year-old end the Spaniard's run at Flushing Meadows.

**Sabalenka advances**

Top-ranked and Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka defeated British No.1 Katie Boulter 7-5, 7-6 (7-2) in the second round at the China Open on Tuesday.

That was despite Boulter, 27, serving for both sets when leading 5-4.

Sabalenka, runner-up at the US Open in September, fought back to take the first set before the Belarusian sealed victory by winning six successive points in a dominant tie-break display.

World No.1 Sabalenka will face Italy's Jasmine Paolini for a place in the quarter-finals.

American world No.3 Coco Gauff and compatriot Jessica Pegula both also progressed in Beijing.

US Open champion Gauff, 19, prevailed in a third set tie-break against Croatia's Petra Martic, clinching her first match point to seal a 7-5, 5-7, 7-6 (7-2) victory.

Fourth seed Pegula came back to defeat Russian Anna Blinkova 6-7 (2-7), 6-2, 6-1 and set up a meeting with Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko.

However, Wimbledon runner-up Ons Jabeur was knocked out by Ukrainian 21-year-old Marta Kostyuk.

Tunisian seventh seed



Jabeur was broken when serving for the first set at 5-4 and, after falling short in the tie-break, managed to win only one more game as Kostyuk, ranked 33, wrapped up a 7-6 (7-5), 6-1 victory by winning the final five games.

The Women's Tennis Association decided to resume tournaments in China this year after accepting an investigation will not be carried out by the Chinese govern-

ment into assault allegations made by former player Peng Shuai.

Gauff had never played tennis in China before Monday's match win over Ekaterina Alexandrova.

American Gauff, 19, had not played since winning her first Grand Slam title at the US Open in September. World No.2 Iga Swiatek reached the second round with a 6-4, 6-3 win over Sara Sorribes Tormo. - Agencies

# IN-PICTURES



**Highlight of Paris Fashion Week**  
A model presents a creation of Shiatzy Chen's Spring/Summer 2024 ready-to-wear collections during the Paris Fashion Week in Paris, France. *Xinhua*



**Kite Fest held in Canberra, Australia**  
People gather for the Kite Fest at the National Arboretum Canberra in Canberra, Australia. The National Arboretum Canberra held its yearly Kite Fest in Canberra on Sunday. *Xinhua*



**World Animal Day celebrated in Pasay City, the Philippines**  
A pet cat dressed in a colourful costume is seen during a World Animal Day event at a mall in Pasay City, the Philippines. The World Animal Day is celebrated each year on October 4. *Xinhua*



**Over 1mn Afghan mothers, children short of nutrition assistance**  
This picture shows a malnutrition ward at a hospital in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan. More than one million mothers and children in Afghanistan are no longer receiving nutrition assistance due to a massive funding shortage, World Food Programme (WFP) Afghanistan announced on social media. *Xinhua*

**Chinese scientists establish meteorological observation stations on Mt. Cho Oyu**  
Zhao Huabiao (right), a member of a Chinese expedition team, sets up an automatic meteorological station with a colleague at the altitude of 6,450 metres on Mount Cho Oyu. A meteorological monitoring system of Mount Cho Oyu, consisting of 5 automatic meteorological stations, has been established. *Xinhua*



**Pakistan sees significant drop in polio cases amid continuous vaccination**  
A health worker administers polio drops to a child during a door-to-door vaccination campaign in southern Pakistan's Hyderabad. Pakistani caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar said that his country has witnessed a significant drop in the number of polio cases amid vigorous efforts and continuous vaccination campaigns. *Xinhua*



**Preventive measures needed to tackle climate change: Tunisian minister**  
Tunisian Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Moncef Boukthir speaks at the opening of the Arab-Africa Conference on Science and Technology for Disaster Risk Reduction in Tunis, Tunisia. *Xinhua*

# ROUND-UP

## BankDhofar’s RD account transforms aspirations into achievements

Embarking on a journey towards financial security and empowerment has never been more accessible as with BankDhofar’s Recurring Deposit (RD) Account

**MUSCAT:** With unparalleled flexibility, competitive returns, and sustainable growth, BankDhofar’s Recurring Deposit (RD) Account is designed to transform aspirations into achievements; it is a dynamic savings solution that redefines the art of saving.



Designed to empower customers to achieve their financial goals, the Account seeks to elevate their savings journeys with flexible and hassle-free solutions. It is inte-

grated with unique features and benefits to set new standards for discerning customers, who seek dependable and rewarding financial solutions.

The Account, available for all segments of customers, can be opened with a minimum amount of OMR 10, for deposit frequencies fixed at the time of opening the ac-

count. This unique deposit product is designed for children starting from 6 months till 18 years.

As per the deposit structure, customers can commit as low as OMR 10 every month to the account in order to earn higher returns rather than a regular account, with maximum amounts of OMR 1,000, OMR 250, OMR 50 and OMR 10, respectively. The deposit amount matures 30 days after payment of the last installment or on due date, whichever is later.

Ghada Al Raisi, Head of Capital Branches at BankDhofar stated, “Our Recurring Deposit Account exemplifies our commitment to enhancing our customers’ financial well-being. We have incorporated unmatched flexibility into the Account by allowing customers to deposit a fixed amount of money every month on a regular basis. This user-friendly feature caters to various saving preferences and income streams. Besides, account holders have the distinct advantage of earning competitive interest rates in the market, which translates as better returns on in-

vestments. It is intended to help customers achieve specific financial goals, whether it’s planning a dream vacation, funding higher education, or building an emergency fund. This goal-oriented approach sets BankDhofar’s Recurring Deposit apart from traditional savings accounts.”

BankDhofar’s Recurring Deposit Account has emerged as a true game-changer; the savings tool has been a driving force in leveraging customers’ financial goals, offering them flexibility, convenience, and rewarding returns on their investments. Crafted to cater to the changing needs of customers, the account has become a symbol of financial freedom for customers from different walks of life. Customers can walk in to any of BankDhofar’s branches to open the account.

Currently, BankDhofar’s national wide network consists of more than 100 branches including Maisarah and three corporate branches. The network also includes more than 300 ATMs, CDMs, FFM’s and MFKs.

### ATTRACTIVE INSTALMENTS



## Scratch & win prizes with Toyota Oubess campaign

**MUSCAT:** Get closer to owning your favourite Toyota vehicle and stand a chance to scratch and win fuel cards from 50 litres up to 100 litres or cash vouchers from OMR100 up to OMR2,000.

Apart from that customers can also avail attractive instalments and benefits that include Service from 2 Years/20,000 km up to 5 Years/ 50,000 km (whichever is earlier) and Insurance 1 Year. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. EMI calculated are for base models with 20 percent down payment for 10 years. Loan approval is based on the sole discretion of banks. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.)

Toyota’s range in Oman includes a mix of SUVs, sedans, MPVs and more.

The Toyota Land Cruiser is available with attractive instalments starting from OMR192. The Land Cruiser leads the pack with its powerful performance and inspiring capability. Powering the Land Cruiser is a choice of two powertrain options.

The Toyota Hilux is available with attractive instalments starting from RO 83. The popular pick-up choice of many in Oman – the Toyota Hilux is available as rugged Hilux with J-Deck and the sporty 4.0 Litre V6 Hilux Adventure with the A Deck.

The Toyota Urban Cruiser is available with attractive instalments starting from RO 75. The Toyota Urban Cruiser is a five-seater vehicle which features

a 1.5-liter gasoline engine and Integrated Starter Generator (ISG) that functions as both an electrified generator and motor. Combined with a compact Lithium-Ion battery, the powertrain delivers 102 hp and 135 Nm of torque, with an average fuel consumption of 19.8 km/l and is paired with six-speed automatic transmission.

The Toyota Crown is available with attractive instalments starting from RO 188.

The all-new Toyota Crown with its exceptional design, stunning technology and a host of features is becoming popular with enthusiasts here in Oman.

The new Crown comes exclusively with a choice of two environmentally friendly powertrains. The first hybrid electric powertrain consists of a front electric motor and Toyota’s first-ever 2.4-liter inline four-cylinder turbo engine, paired with direct shift six-speed automatic transmission with a combined power of 340 HP and 40.7 Kg.m. torque. The second hybrid electric powertrain consists of two electric motors and a 2.5-liter four-cylinder petrol engine, generating a total power of 222 HP.

The Toyota Camry is available with attractive instalments starting from RO 96. The reliable partner for many customer – the Toyota Camry is available with a choice of three powertrain options. They include a 2.5-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine that produces 204 hp and 24.8 kg.m of torque which is paired with an eight-speed Direct-Shift Multi-mode automatic transmission.

### LIMITED-TIME SERVICE PACKAGE

## Mercedes-Benz Oman announces exclusive offers on AMG GLE Coupé, S-Class models

**MUSCAT:** Elevating the luxury driving experience, Mercedes-Benz Oman unveils an exclusive, limited-time service package, available with the purchase of a Mercedes-AMG GLE Coupé or the S-Class luxury sedan.

The five-year/105,000-kilometre service package, valid from October 1 to December 31, offers many benefits to enhance vehicle safety, efficiency and value retention. The service package covers all scheduled maintenance procedures carried out by skilled Mercedes-Benz technicians.

The technicians use quality tested Mercedes-Benz Genuine Parts – made to the highest standards to ensure an uncompromising vehicle performance, reliability, and safety.

Shaun Michael, Chief Executive Officer of Mercedes-Benz Oman, said, “Our exclusive service package completes the effortless ownership of a new Mercedes-Benz vehicle. Regular servicing not only guarantees safety but also preserves the long-term value and enhances fuel efficiency. Our team of diagnostic technicians applies their specialised and up-to-date skills and know-how to our services to ensure Mercedes-Benz vehicles continue to perform at their best and offer a driving experience like no other.”



Mercedes-Benz vehicles continue to perform at their best and offer a driving experience like no other.”

The Mercedes-AMG GLE 53 4MATIC+ Coupé boasts a turbo-charged 3.0-litre six-cylinder inline engine. It combines dynamic power with elegant sportiness and make a clear performance state-

ment, ensuring even better acceleration and outstanding driving stability. The vehicle is manufactured according to the ‘one man, one engine’ principle and receives additional power from the 48-volt electrical system for an even livelier driving experience.

Meanwhile, the Mercedes-

Benz S-Class sits at the pinnacle of timeless and modern vehicle luxury. The line of S-Class models forms the heritage of the future in motion and epitomises the promise of luxury, excellence, and effortless and reliable performance that dates back to when Mercedes-Benz was first founded.

### GRADUATION

## MHA completes its cabin crew training programme

**MUSCAT:** Muscat Hospitality Academy (MHA) announced the graduation of its cabin crew batch for the year 2023. The graduation ceremony took place in September at the state-of-the-art MHA campus in Muscat. This event marks a significant milestone for the academy, which has been dedicated to providing high-quality vocational education for Omani students since 2020. The graduation ceremony not only celebrated the achievements of the students but also highlighted the success of MHA’s highly specialised, industry-recognised training programmes.

The graduates underwent a comprehensive training programme that equipped them with the essential skills and knowledge required



for a successful career as cabin crew. Covering safety procedures and customer service, the curriculum has been meticulously designed to meet the highest industry

standards and is delivered by experienced industry professionals.

Ameena Al Zadjali, Founder and Chairperson of MHA, stated, “We take immense pride in the accom-

plishments of our cabin crew graduates. Their hard work and dedication are a testament to the quality education we offer, in collaboration with the globally renowned British School of Excellence.”

The graduation ceremony was a grand affair, attended by personnel from Oman Air, representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, and members of the media. Their presence not only added prestige to the event but also underscored MHA’s strong industry reputation and the goodwill it enjoys. This gathering of industry professionals and educational authorities signifies the academy’s unwavering commitment to excellence and its successful collaboration with key stakeholders.



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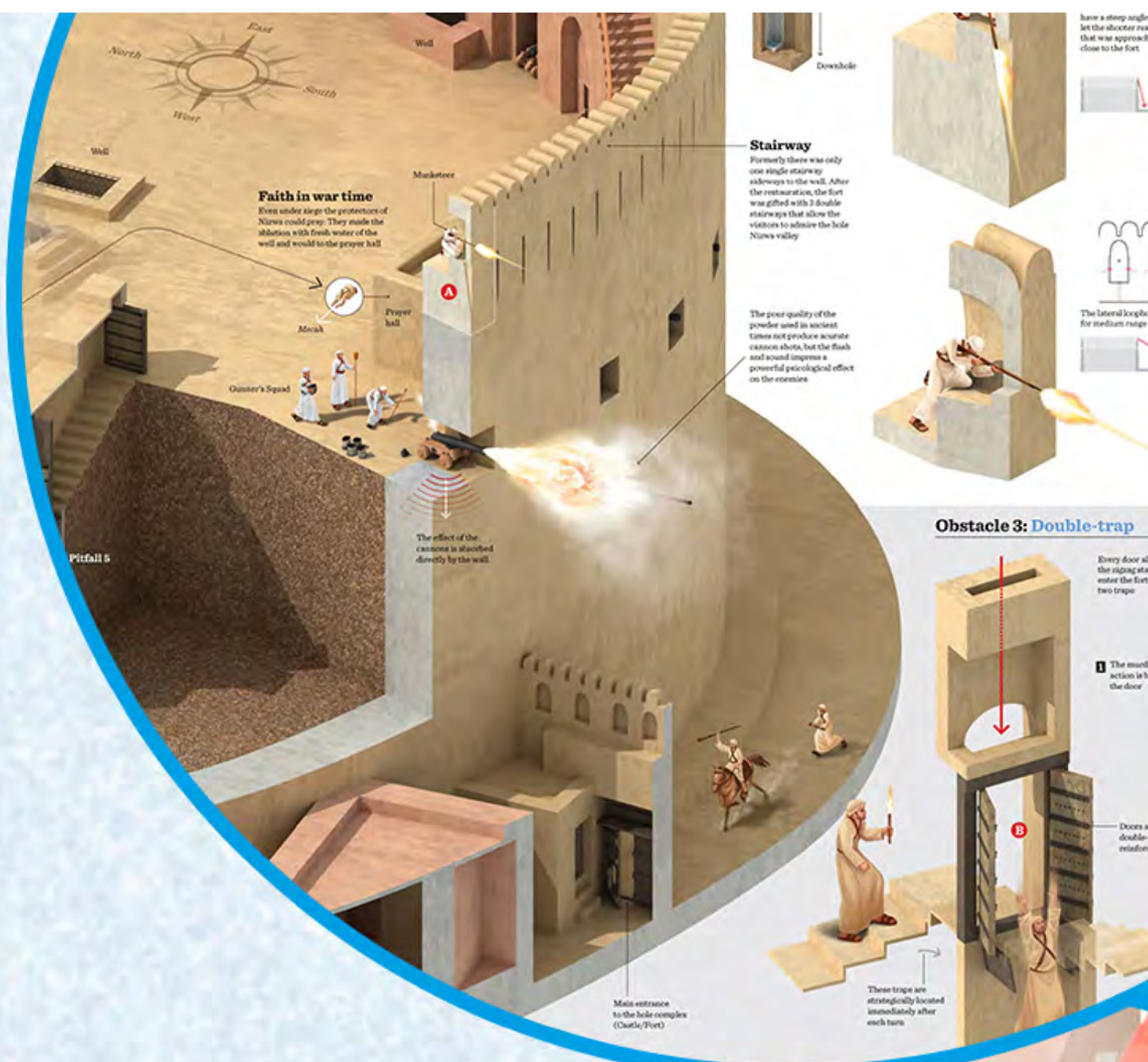
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