

HM SENDS CONGRATULATIONS

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Dr. Alain Berset of the Swiss Confederation on being elected as his country's President. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to President Dr. Alain in leading the people of his country towards further progress and prosperity. — **ONA**



HIS MAJESTY RECEIVES THANKS CABLE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received a cable of thanks from President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev of the Republic of Kazakhstan in reply to His Majesty's congratulatory cable on being re-elected for a new presidential term. In the cable, President Tokayev expressed his appreciation for His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments. He also wished His Majesty good health and wellbeing and the Omani people further progress and prosperity. The President of Kazakhstan also wished the bilateral relations further development and growth. — **ONA**



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5 JANUARY

Sayyid Theyazin to preside over ROP annual day celebration



MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, will grace Royal Oman Police's anniversary celebrations, which falls on 5 January 2023.

The ceremony, which will take place on the military parade grounds of Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences in the Wilayat of Nizwa, includes the passing out of officer cadets.

The ROP has been accorded great attention by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander. Under His Majesty the Sultan's patronage, the ROP, has undergone major transformation in different fields of police action and realised tangible success in various security, service, traffic, customs and technical aspects. — **ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN Oman football team arrives in Basra

1 The national football team and the accompanying OFA delegation arrived in Basra on Monday to compete in the 25th Arabian Gulf Cup. The first training session of the Red Warriors is scheduled for Tuesday. **>A5**



SPORTS Al Nassr to unveil Ronaldo today

2 Al Nassr Football Club's new signing Cristiano Ronaldo will mark his first appearance in Saudi Arabia in front of tens of thousands of jubilant fans at 7pm local Saudi time on 3 January. **>A8**

MARKET Tough year ahead for global economy

3 For much of the global economy, 2023 is going to be a tough year as the main engines of global growth - the United States, Europe and China - experience weakening activity, the IMF said. **>B2**



BIG STEP FORWARD

'Ban on imported plastic bags to help in safeguarding Oman's environment'

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's endeavour to make the country environment-friendly took a big step forward after the ban on import of plastic bags came into force from January 1, 2023.

The decision, 519/2022, was issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion (MOCIIP) in September 2022, and prohibited companies, institutions, and individuals from importing plastic bags. Breaching the ban is punishable by a fine of OMR1,000 and the amount may be doubled for a repeat offence.



Leading environment activist Rumaitha Al Busaidi welcomed the ban and said that "it would go a long way in preserving the Omani environment from pollution and waste harmful to the rich marine

life and wildlife."

Rumaitha, who is serving as director of the Environmental Society of Oman (ESO), said: "It is a welcome decision that shows Oman is taking appropriate steps to ensure that the country is able to achieve its commitments towards local value and the environment. I hope that this is one of many more monumental steps that Oman strives to achieve its newly announced net-zero target by 2050."

It may be mentioned that the Environment Authority (EA) of Oman implemented the ban on single-use plastic shopping bags in January 2021.

established the IGC, the Ministry said, was in improving the fiscal performance of Oman by removing the expenses of purchasing and transporting of gas from the State's general budget, and transferring the net gas revenue to the treasury.

Also the IGC will aim to enhance the efficiency of the gas sector besides ensuring the adherence of producers and consumers to the contracts/agreements signed in the gas sector.

The ministry also seeks to increase economic activity and in-country value (ICV) in the gas sector and relevant activities.

Another project to improve fiscal performance is the setting up of the Social Protection System.

This covers several schemes such as social welfare schemes, retirement benefits, social security and others. Also, various pension funds will be under the umbrella of the Social Protection System, with the aim to establish an integrated and comprehensive

social protection for vulnerable people and to boost investment efficiency and ensure fiscal sustainability.

Another initiative launched by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) is the introduction of Government Services Pricing with the aim to revisit government fees and set a clear methodology that strikes a balance between service fee and its cost.

Thus, the Fee Setting Policy Handbook was introduced which would help to streamline government services by reducing the procedures and addressing the duplication in fees.

The Ministry's Supply Chain Financing (SCF) scheme is another initiative introduced with the aim to accelerate the payment of government contractors and suppliers that have payment vouchers, worth OMR100,000 and more.

The scheme also aims at ensuring supply chain sustainability and expedites the payment process. **>A3**



PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....	12:16pm
Asr.....	3:17pm
Maghrib.....	5:38pm
Isha.....	6:53pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	5:29am



IN NORTH AL BATINAH, AL BURAIMI

Municipal Council members elect Deputy Chairman

SOHAR: The Municipal Council of North Al Batinah Governorate held its first meeting for the third term. During the meeting, chaired by Mohammed Suleiman Al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah, the members of the Council were sworn in for the third term.

They also elected a Deputy Chairman for the Council and formed standing committees.

The Deputy Chairman was chosen through the use of “Tanmia” app, which is launched for the first time.

The position went to Abdullah Yahya Al Jabri, who won 14 out of the 21 votes.

The meeting also saw the selection of heads of standing committees, which were the Legal



Committee, the Social Affairs Committee, the Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Governorate’s Development Committee.

Al Buraimi Municipal Council Members
AL BURAIMI: The Municipal Council in Al Buraimi Governorate held its first extraordinary meet-



ing, marking the opening of the third term of Municipal Councils. The meeting was chaired by Sayyid Dr. Hamad Ahmed Al Bursaidi, Governor of Al Buraimi.

During the meeting, Mohammed Khalifa Al Jabri, was elected as Deputy Chairman of the Municipal Council, after an electronic voting process in which



“Tanmia” app was used. The meeting also saw the formation of standing committees, which were the Governorate’s Development Committee, the Legal Committee, the Health and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Social Affairs Committee. -ONA

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SEASON 2022-2023

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Members elect Deputy Chairman in Al Dhahirah



IBRI: The Municipal Council in Al Dhahirah Governorate today held its first meeting since the start of Municipal Councils Third Term. The meeting was headed by Najeeb Ali Al Rowas, Governor of Al Dhahirah, Chairman of the Council.

The members of the Municipal Council took the oath of office before the council’s Chairman.

They also elected a Deputy Chairman during an electronic voting process in which the new

“Tanmia” app was used. The position went to Hamdan Nasser Al Yahya’ee, who won the majority of votes.

Committees
The meeting also saw the formation of standing committees, which were the Legal Committee, the Social Affairs Committee, the Health and Environment Committee and the Governorate’s Development Committee. -ONA

ACADEMIC FIELDS

EA and German university ink cooperation pact



AGREEMENT: The programme was inked by Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, and Prof. Michael Brown, Vice-President of GUTech.. - ONA

MUSCAT: The Environment Authority and German University of Technology (GUTech) signed a cooperation programme in academic and development fields.

The programme seeks to consolidate cooperation in the areas of research, consultancy and support for social, economic and environmental development. It also serves the goals of sustainable development in Oman and contributes to Oman Vision 2040, notably in the field of training for jobseekers.

The programme was inked by Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, and Prof. Michael Brown, Vice-President of GUTech. -ONA

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BUDGET

<FROM A1 Oman outlines initiatives to improve fiscal performance

The Public Debt Law scheme aims to manage public debt obtained by the government from banks, financial institutions or individuals to finance its public expenditures.

The law will help to regulate and manage public debt operations, diversify the sources of funding, monitor the level of in-

debtedness and associated risks, and improve the cash flow management mechanisms.

The Ministry of Finance further said that with an aim to modernise the financial processes and systems, the Financial Law and its Executive Bylaws are under revision by MOF in order to address the recent changes and meet the

current and upcoming initiative and systems.

Another initiative is the Programme Based Budget (PBB) scheme, an advanced approach of fiscal planning that identifies public spending priorities and links expenditures to objectives and activities.

The PBB aimed at providing

authenticated data about the government's performance, connect financial planning with public policies, and organise government programmes and activities, and integrate the efforts to prevent duplication.

Another important scheme of the MOF is the Tafakur Platform. It is an e-platform that aims to pro-

mote community's participation by sharing ideas, suggestions and solutions that will help improve public financial management and achieve fiscal sustainability. The platform seeks to promote participation between MOF and society by adopting new ideas and initiatives to enhance public revenue and spending efficiency.

SPORTS MEDICINE

Expat doctor elected as secretary general of Asian body

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Considered to be one of the founders of the sports medicine department in Oman, Muscat-based expert Dr E B S Ramanathan has been elected as the Secretary General of the prestigious Asian Federation of Sports Medicine (AFSM) body for 2023-2026.

Dr Ram Sethu, as he is better known as, was unanimously elected to the post during the AFSM Congress held during the AFSM Council meeting, held in Hong Kong recently.

Dr Sethu is the only office-bearer from the Sultanate of Oman and will remain at the post for four years.



Muscat-based expert Dr E B S Ramanathan.

Senior consultant

Dr Sethu is currently working as a senior consultant, orthopaedics and sports medicine, Muscat Private Hospital.

Prior to that, he was senior consultant, orthopaedics & head of arthroscopy and sports injuries unit at Khoula Hospital, from August 1987 to November 2013.

He has been largely credited to the setting up of the sports medicine department in the hospital.

Dr Sethu has also been past president of Indian Association of Sports Medicine from 2012-2014.

China's Prof Minhao Xie has been elected as the president of AFSM. The Asian body is one of the multi-national continental federations under the supervision of the International Federation of Sports Medicine (FIMS), which was established in 1928.

AFSM was inaugurated in 1990 at the time of the 11th Asian Games in Beijing. The main objective of the AFSM is to foster the development of sports medicine in Asia for sporting excellence and health for all.

Among the other goals of the AFSM are to help sports organisations, agencies associations federations in organising sports medicine facilities in Asia, to study and prepare medical protocols and documentation outlining all requirements of sports medicine in general, as well as specifically for each and every sport.

The body aims to establish, strengthen and practice medical code in sports and to establish medical ethics in the practice of sports medicine and to campaign against drug abuse in sports, (doping) and implement the anti-doping charter of International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Federation of Sports Medicine and World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

<FROM A1 Ban on imported plastic bags



Mohammed Al Kasbi



Rumaita Al Busaidi

"We are signatory to Basel Convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal. We already have strong measures, be it the replacing single-use bags with thicker 50-micron bags, which are provided free at most shops. "Oman is one of many countries in the region working towards reducing its dependency on single-use plastics that are responsible for thousands of marine animals getting killed each year by ingesting plastic or getting tangled in it."

Al Kasbi said: "Eliminating plastic bags is one of the chal-

lenges that the ministry seeks to overcome in cooperation with the concerned authorities and find specifications for manufacturers and suppliers to ensure the correct transition to alternatives to plastic bags that harm the environment. The ban will not affect plastic production facilities in the country. In fact, the decision intends to help local plastic production factories to augment sales and production to meet local market demands. The decision will limit unfair competition from imported products that do not meet environmental standards."

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OMAN TEAM ARRIVES IN BASRA FOR 25TH ARABIAN GULF CUP

The national football team and the accompanying Oman Football Association (OFA) delegation arrived in the Iraqi city of Basra on Monday afternoon to compete in the 25th Arabian Gulf Cup. The Red Warriors, coached by Croatian manager Branko Ivankovic, enjoyed a relaxed evening at the Basra International Hotel with the first training session scheduled for Tuesday. The Gulf Cup will be held from January 6-19 and Oman, two-time champions, will kick off their campaign with the opening match against hosts Iraq in Group A. Yemen and Saudi Arabia are the other teams in the group. The 23-member squad and the official delegation was received by Hamid bin Ahmed Aidarous, Oman's Ambassador to Iraq and members of the Iraq Football Association.



CRIME PREVENTION

Risk-assessment reports on money laundering, terror financing cleared

MUSCAT: In coordination with the National Counter-Terrorism Committee, the National Committee for Combatting Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing approved a number of substantive risk-assessment reports on the crimes of money laundering, financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The reports are a culmination of effective coordination between all relevant AML/CFT entities and a clear realisation of the national strategies, aimed at improving the prevention and control systems in Oman and in consistent with the developments at the local and regional levels. — **ONA**



Royal Oman Police

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Oman Police – Directorate General of Financial Affairs – announces that it would like to lease out 21 sites to carry out the activities of (coffee shops / cafeterias). Interested companies specialized in this field may visit the Royal Oman Police website / Tenders Section: **WWW.ROP.GOV.OM.**

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Workshop on plan to prevent bullying



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development, represented by the Department of Family Guidance and Counselling organised yesterday, a workshop on the Strategies to Control and Prevent Bullying for a number of psychologists and social workers of the Ministry of Social Development in order to develop their skills and knowledge in controlling and curbing bullying among students.

Dr. Jalal bin Yousef Al Mekhaini, Director of the Department of Family Guidance and Counselling at the Ministry of Social Development delivered three working papers on the concept of bullying, its forms and impacts; “the school environment and bullying” and the “strategies to curb and prevent bullying at school”.

Dr. Al Mekhaini reviewed a number of modern studies and their findings, the issue of bullying at the local and international level, the strategies and policy to curb bullying and the international programmes for control of bullying. — **ONA**

SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES

SAF continues with evaluation tests for recruiting citizens



MUSCAT: The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Command continues with its efforts in completion of evaluation tests for citizens applying for the various military and administrative jobs, earlier announced in coordination with the Ministry of Labour for the job vacancies available at SAF Command.

The appointment procedures will be facilitated for citizens in Dhofar Governorate in terms of evaluation tests which will be held in Dhofar Governorate. The successful candidates who pass all evaluation stages will undergo a military training at SAF training centres within an integrated programme. — **ONA**



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TENDER NOTICE

Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company hereby announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Tender Fee (RO)	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Bid Submission Date
T/2454442/2023	Design, Construction of Reinforced Concrete TE Tank for Royal Office at Macinat Al Ilam	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	R.O 100 (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	16/1/2023	13/2/2023
T/2454470/2023	Consultancy Services for Design Review and Supervision of Construction of Water Distribution Networks in Wilayat Manah in Al Dakhliya Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	RO 500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	16/1/2023	20/2/2023
T/2455506/2023	Construction of Tanker Filling Station at Al Hawra in Al Mudhaibi Wilayat	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned.	R.O 50/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	16/1/2023	13/2/2023
T/2447921-2/2022 Re-float	Supply of Sewer Jetting/Vacuum Units	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned.	500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	16/1/2023	13/2/2023
T/2453381-2/2022 Re-float	Call off Contract for General Buildings Maintenance Works for Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company in Muscat Governorate	Small and Medium Enterprises holding Riyada card and specialized in the works mentioned.	Free	16/1/2023	13/2/2023

The tender documents can be purchased from Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (OWWSC) e-tendering page (Supplier Login) from the date of publication of this announcement until 16/1/2023. The applicants shall pay the tender fee through electronic payment gateway through Supplier Login.

Applicants who are not registered with OWWSC shall register from <https://owwsc.nama.om/Business-with-Us/Vendor-Registration> to have the login credentials of Supplier portal.

All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through OWWSC e-tendering page (Supplier Login).

All participating Companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value in a sealed envelope to OWWSC's Chairman of Tender Committee not later than **3:00 pm** on the bid submission date. Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman and it should be addressed in favour of OWWSC.

The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through OWWSC e-tendering page not later than **3:00 pm** on the date specified above.

For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.owwsc.nama.om or Email to: tender@owwsc.nama.om



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AFTER COVID HIATUS

Japan’s Royal Family appears on balcony

TOKYO: Japan’s Emperor Naruhito and his family greeted crowds of well-wishers from the balcony at the Imperial Palace on Monday in an annual celebration that was suspended for the past two years due to the coronavirus pandemic.

It is the first time the Royal Family made public New Year’s greetings since 2020 and came as Japan

gradually returns to normalcy.

“The spread of the coronavirus has been difficult for everyone, but I am very pleased to be able to greet you again,” Naruhito told the flag-waving crowd at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

“We face many difficulties, but I hope for a peaceful and good New Year for all, and as the year begins, I pray for the happiness of people

in Japan and around the world,” he added.

For the last two years, the emperor skipped the public greeting and instead sent video messages.

Numbers limited to prevent the spread of the coronavirus

The emperor’s daughter, Princess Aiko, made her first appearance at the New Year’s public greeting, according to the Imperial

Household Agency.

Empress Masako and former Emperor Akihito, along with former Empress Michiko, were among the other royals that appeared with Naruhito on the glass-covered balcony at the palace.

Only about 1,500 well-wishers at a time, chosen by lottery, were allowed to enter the complex to attend the New Year’s event. — **DW**



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Russia and Ukraine should return to dialogue, diplomacy: Indian minister

External Affairs Minister said that India strongly advocates negotiations and discussions to end the conflict in Russia-Ukraine



“While the larger goal is being pressed, I think the Ukraine situation also produces specific problems which need priority addressing. One example of that was the negotiations that preceded the Black Sea Grain Initiative

S Jaishankar
External Affairs Minister

VIENNA: Weighing in on the ongoing military conflict between Russia and Ukraine during a joint press briefing with the Austrian Foreign minister in Vienna, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said India’s position has always been clear, which is for both nations to return to dialogue and diplomacy.

Jaishankar said there were close to 20,000 Indian students studying in Ukraine at the time the conflict broke out and the focus for the MEA in the early weeks of the conflict was get them out of the

combat zone. “I have laid out very clearly our position, which is that there has to be a return to dialogue and diplomacy. Now, since the conflict started in February, obviously the immediate pressures and anxieties have changed with the passage of time. In the initial weeks, a lot of that was centered for us around a very large number of Indian students that we

had more than 20,000 of them in Ukraine, and how to get them out of the conflict zone,” Jaishankar said at the joint presser.

The External Affairs Minister further added that India strongly advocates negotiations and discussions to end the Russia-Ukraine, recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s recent conversations with the presidents of both

countries. “This is not the first conversation he has had. They’ve been talking from time to time,” Jaishankar said, adding that as the Foreign minister, he also held talks with his Russian and Ukrainian counterparts Lavrov and Kuleba on the issue.

In a further statement, Jaishankar said as the Ukraine situation has thrown up specific

problems, they also need priority-addressing. He cited the negotiations that preceded the Black Sea Grain Initiative as a case in point.

Concerns over the security of the nuclear power facility in Zaporizhzhia were also raised by Jaishankar during the presser with his Austrian counterpart.

“Now, while the larger goal is being pressed, I think the Ukraine situation also produces specific problems which need priority addressing. One example of that was the negotiations that preceded the Black Sea Grain Initiative. And at that time too, this was mainly led by the Secretary General of the UN and by Turkey. And we had done our bit, including at Bali to be supportive of that and to address some specific concerns which at that time were still open. Another issue that had come up was regarding the safety of the nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia. So that too has been a subject where we have tried to do whatever is within our capabilities to create more stability,” Jaishankar said.

Jaishankar will hold a meeting with International Atomic Energy Agency Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi on Tuesday.

“I will be meeting Mr Grassy tomorrow at IAEA headquarters. So the point which I want to make

is, yes, I think there is today very strong global sentiment for ending this conflict, for getting back to negotiations. As I said, a large part of the developing world is feeling very painfully the escalation of prices of fuel, food, and fertilizer,” he added.

The EAM also highlighted India’s G20 Presidency, saying as the G-20 president of today, India has a duty to try to represent and channel global viewpoints in this regard.

Speaking at a joint press briefing with Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg, Jaishankar said he spoke with Austrian leaders about threats to international peace posed by terrorism.

Jaishankar said, “We spoke at length on the threats to international peace and security that are posed by terrorism, including its cross-border practices, violent extremism, radicalization, and fundamentalism.”

He added, “Their effects cannot be contained within a region especially so when they are deeply connected to narcotics and illegal weapons trade, and other forms of international crime. Since the epicenter is located so close to India, naturally our experiences and insights are useful to others.”

— **ANI**

GATHERING OUTSIDE THE BASILICA

Thousands pay tribute to late Pope Benedict at the Vatican

VATICAN CITY: The doors to St Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican opened on Monday to allow the thousands of people queued up outside the chance to pay their respects to the late Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who died on New Year’s Eve at the age of 95.

The body of the German former pope, who stepped down from the role in 2013, is lying in state for three days before his funeral.

People began gathering outside the Basilica at dawn before the doors opened. The public will be allowed to view the body for ten hours on Monday, while twelve hours are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Vatican has not yet released

the guest list for Benedict’s funeral aside from the fact that it will include delegations from Italy as well as Germany — where Benedict, formerly Josef Ratzinger, was born.

He will be buried in the papal tombs under St Peter’s Basilica in a “solemn but simple” funeral, the Vatican has said.

Officials said they are expecting around 25,000 people to come and pay their respects to the pope, who was considered by many an expert theologian but also a divisive and highly conservative figure in the Catholic Church.

The funeral for Benedict’s predecessor, Pope John Paul II, in 2005 was attended by a million

people, including heads of states from around the world.

Born in the German state of Bavaria, Ratzinger served as Archbishop of Munich until 1982. He left Germany to head up the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), one of the oldest bodies in the Catholic Church which seeks to defend Roman Catholic doctrine.

He was named pope in 2005 but ruled during a time when scandals and allegations of sexual abuse were rife.

Benedict came under fire for failing to respond to the numerous revelations of widespread abuse before he retired, citing health issues. — **ANI**

GERMANY

Police and firefighters call for ban on fireworks

BERLIN: German police and firefighters’ unions called for a ban on personal fireworks on New Year’s Eve, as well as increased surveillance capabilities for emergency services following dozens of attacks on personnel.

“It is unimaginable what our emergency forces had to experience on this New Year’s,” Lars Wieg, chairman of the police union for Berlin and Brandenburg, said late on Sunday.

At least 33 officers and firefighters were injured in the capital alone, and dozens of similar incidents were reported across Germany — not only accidents, but also “purposeful, targeted” attacks with fireworks, officials said.

“We don’t need tougher penalties. I just want these penalties to be enforced,” Germany’s national firefighters’ union President Karl-Heinz Banse told the German news agency dpa. “It cannot be that our people are endangered, almost run over, and afterwards it’s presented as a petty offense.”

After a two-year moratorium on personal fireworks due to COVID-19 regulations, hundreds of thousands of people across Germany rang in the New Year on Saturday night by setting off personal fireworks.

Police in Bavaria described it as the “most intense” celebrations in recent memory, while in Hamburg they spoke of being “aggressively approached” and “literally shot at” with the explosives.

Serious injuries

As with most years, there were several firework-related deaths and dozens of major injuries, including the loss of fingers and hands.

Drunk revelers not only shot off fireworks at emergency workers, but also random passersby, officials said.

— **DW**

BRIEFS

Nepal PM to face vote of confidence on January 10

KATHMANDU: Fifteen days after the formation of the government, Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal also known as Prachanda is set to face a vote of confidence on January 10. Appointed as the Himalayan nation’s Prime Minister for the third time on December 26, 2022, Dahal on Monday requested the parliament secretariat to include in the agenda a floor test on the second Tuesday of this month. “The Prime Minister has sent a letter to include the subject of a vote of confidence on the agenda of the Parliament on 10 January,” the spokesperson of the Parliament Secretariat Rojnath Pandey told ANI.

Quake of magnitude 4.2 jolts Northern Sumatra

JAKARTA: An earthquake of magnitude 4.2 on the Richter scale jolted Northern Sumatra in Indonesia, the National Centre for Seismology (NCS) said on Monday. The earthquake occurred at 16:10:04 IST and its epicenter was found to be at 5.26 degrees south latitude and 97.04 degrees east longitude. The depth was recorded at 10 km, according to the National Centre for Seismology (NCS). No casualties have been reported so far.



Canada bans foreigners from buying property

OTTAWA: Canada’s ban on foreigners buying residential properties took effect on Sunday after the spike in home prices since the pandemic started, CNN Business reported. The Canadian government passed this law as home prices surged after the start of the pandemic and some politicians also believed that buyers were responsible for snapping up the supply of homes as investments. The campaign site of Australian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s party this past year wrote that the desirability of Canadian homes is attracting profiteers, wealthy corporations, and foreign investors.

Mark Zuckerberg shares photo with pregnant wife

LOS ANGELES: 2023 is going to be a special year for Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg as he and his wife Priscilla Chan are all set to embrace parenthood for the third time soon. On Sunday, Mark wished everyone a happy new year with an adorable picture in which his wife is seen flaunting her baby bump. Mark can be seen caressing his wife’s bump and looking at her. — **Agencies**





SULTANATE OF OMAN

TENDERS NOTICE

The Tenders committee of Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender: -

Tender no.	Description	Tender documents price(R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
874/2022/MAFWR/HQ-89	Consultancy services for design and construction supervision of Fishery Harbour at Hask in Sadah Wilayat, Dhofar Governorate	150/-	First	Sunday 15/01/2023	Wednesday 08/02/2023

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +96824402200 or etenderhd@mtcoi.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources





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European Union looks ahead to a difficult year on migration policy

The bloc faces the biggest refugee crisis since World War II, EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said in Brussels

BRUSSELS: Russia's war against Ukraine has triggered a large movement of refugees towards the West. Some 4.8 million people were registered as temporary protection seekers by the UN Refugee Agency through early December, mainly in the eastern European Union: Poland, Germany, the Baltics, Romania and Slovakia. Depending on the course of the war, next year could see even bigger numbers.



The bloc faces the biggest refugee crisis since World War II, EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson said in Brussels in mid-December, adding that together Europe would continue to support people. However, some EU states already complain of being overwhelmed. In Germany, too, the federal and local governments

have cited difficulties with accommodation. Johansson faces the challenge of maintaining a sense of unity among the member states in 2023. That's because so far, the war refugees have not been distributed according to any formula, and are instead moving freely within the EU under a special protection status without asylum procedures.

Unresolved problems in the south
Concerns about Ukrainian refugees have also obscured growing migration movements in the southeast. In the past year, the numbers of asylum-seekers from Syria, Afghanistan, Pakistan or Egypt, along with irregular border crossings, have risen sharply. The

border management agency Frontex registered around 280,000 irregular entries by October — 77% more than in 2021 and the highest number since the peak of the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 and 2016, for which there are only estimations. In its “risk analysis” for the coming years until 2032, Frontex said that it expects migration pressure to continue increasing. “In the next decade, EU border management will experience a higher occurrence of migration/refugee crises (or disproportionate pressures) that will test the effectiveness of border controls. The complex interplay of geopolitics, security conflicts, and other megatrends will influence different regions of the world, including countries in close proximity to Europe,” the report says. Since migration movements would pose a massive threat to the security of Europe's external borders, the Warsaw-based organisation, also known as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, has recommended comprehensive precautions to strengthen border protection. European Union interior ministers have taken these

warnings seriously and promised at the last meeting of the year in Brussels to once again intensify their so far fruitless efforts in 2023. In the first half of the year, the Swedish presidency of the EU is expected to push for asylum reforms and border management, topics that the ministers have been unable to agree on for years. But the fundamental conflict between the states that want to further restrict access for migrants and those that are still willing to accept them is unlikely to be resolved in 2023. While the more migrant-friendly states are demanding solidarity and relief from the proponents of a “Fortress Europe,” this has hardly been forthcoming. As a result, countries of first entry such as Greece, Italy, Spain, Hungary or Croatia allow migrants and possible asylum-seekers to continue their journey northward. Austria and Germany then complain that tens of thousands of people file asylum applications with them, when they should actually file in the country where they entered the EU. — DW

Full story @ timesofoman.com/world

AUSTRALIA



Four dead, many injured after two helicopters collide over Gold Coast

GOLD COAST: Four people have died after two helicopters collided while flying over the Gold Coast in Australia on Monday. At least three people are in critical condition, police said, while several more were also injured. One of the helicopters was left overturned on a stretch of sand, while the other helicopter was able to land successfully, albeit with a damaged windshield. Australia's transport safety bureau described the incident as a “mid-air collision” and has opened an investigation. Queensland state Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said the accident was an “unthinkable tragedy.” “My deepest sympathies are with each of the families and everyone affected by this terrible accident,” she said on Monday. The Queensland Ambulance Service said paramedics treated at least 13 people at the scene. “Members of the public and police tried to remove the people and they commenced first aid and tried to get those people to safety from an airframe that was upside down,” said Queensland acting police inspector Gary Worrell. “(People on) Jet Skis, family boaters, ordinary members of the public rushed to assist

these people.” Helicopter debris was strewn over Main Beach, a northern suburb of the Gold Coast that is home to the Sea World theme park and resort. It is unrelated to the American theme park of the same name. Police cordoned off Sea World Drive near the site of the crash but the venue itself remained open. According to ABC News, a Sea World Helicopters logo was visible on the helicopter that landed successfully. Sea World Helicopters operates as a separate entity from the theme park. In a statement, the company said it was cooperating with authorities but added that it could not comment further on specific details. “We and the entire flying community are devastated by what has happened and our sincere condolences go to all those involved and especially the loved ones and family of the deceased,” Sea World Helicopters said in the statement. January is the peak holiday period in Australia, and when the Gold Coast is at its busiest. The city in Queensland is known for its beaches and is home to several large theme parks.

TO DETER ATTACKS

S. Korea, US discuss joint nuclear exercises

SEOUL/WASHINGTON: Seoul and Washington are discussing joint planning and exercises using US nuclear assets, South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said. “The nuclear weapons belong to the United States, but planning, information sharing, exercises and training should be jointly conducted by South Korea and the US,” he told the Chosun Ilbo newspaper in an interview published on Monday.

He also said the US was “quite positive” about the idea. Yoon said the planning and exercises would be aimed at a more effective implementation of the US “extended deterrence.” This refers to the ability of the US military to deter attacks on its allies. Yoon's statements come in light of an increased threat from North Korea. He also said maintaining the Treaty on the Non-Prolifera-

tion of Nuclear Weapons was still important. Tensions between the two nations have increased since Yoon came to power. A day ago, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for developing intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), saying he wished to increase the country's nuclear arsenal to counter the tensions with South Korea and the US. At a meeting of the ruling Work-

ers' Party last week, Kim rolled out new military goals. He said South Korea has now become the North's “undoubted enemy.” On Sunday, North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile off its east coast. A day prior to this, they had launched three ballistic missiles. North Korea ignored sanctions and conducted weapons tests nearly every month in 2022. — DW



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TENDER

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

Tender Ref	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 08:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
MOH/HQ-307/2022	Replacement of Ultrasound Machines for Various Health Establishments	12/January/2023	08/February/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	R.O 32.500 Per set
MOH/HQ-308/2022	Supply of Nuclear Medicine for The Royal Hospital				
MOH/HQ-311/2022	Provision of Cleaning and Pest Control Services to Various Health Establishments in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate				R.O 25.000 Per set
MOH/HQ-317/2022	Supply of Pharmaceuticals				

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> enclose Electronic Bank Guarantee issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200 , Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

SPORTS

Ronaldo to be unveiled as Al Nassr player today

Times News Service

RIYADH: Al Nassr Football Club's new iconic signing Cristiano Ronaldo will mark his first appearance in Saudi Arabia as he steps out on to the club's modern home ground, Mrsool Park, to be officially unveiled in front of tens of thousands of jubilant fans for the very first time 7pm local Saudi time on Tuesday, 3 January.

The five-time Ballon D'or winner put pen to paper on Friday evening in Madrid in one of the most transformational partnerships in history by committing his future over the next 2.5 years with Saudi Pro League (Roshn Saudi League) current leaders Al Nassr. Managed by French coach Rudi Garcia, the club enters the new year with their marquee signing as they hunt for their 18th league title.

Following his arrival to Riyadh's King Khalid International Airport on Monday, the 37-year-old star is set to start his day by undergoing a medical examination before being revealed to the club's supporters who will get the unique opportunity to see one of history's greatest footballers representing Al Nassr's colours for the first time.

Cristiano will also be accom-



panied by his family who now call the Saudi capital Riyadh their new home.

The historic transfer captured the world's attention with millions across the world anticipating Cristiano's latest chapter in

an illustrious career that spanned over two decades.

One of the most successful footballers of all time will finally put on the yellow and blue shirt with his iconic number seven before being presented to the Al Nassr

faithful, ushering the start of a new era of the club and league's history.

During a decorated and record-breaking career that saw the Portuguese star score over 800 goals for club and country, Cristiano Ronaldo has won five UEFA Champions League titles, four FIFA Club World Cups, seven league titles in England, Spain and Italy, becoming the first player in history to have lifted the league title in the three countries. On the national stage with Portugal, CR7 guided his country to the UEFA European Championship in 2016 and the UEFA Nations Cup in 2019.

The Madeira-born star has now signalled his readiness to undergo a new challenge on the Asian stage and adding a league title in Saudi Arabia and Al Nassr's first ever AFC Champions League triumph to his long list of achievements.

Celebrated by hundreds of millions over the world, the transformational partnership will bring together one of the world's most celebrated footballers with one of the most exciting sports nations in the world.

Ticket details for the event will be revealed in due course. Fans are encouraged to keep an eye out on Al Nassr's social channels.

RETIREMENT

Ex-Oman football team captain hangs up his boots

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Former captain of Oman's national team, Ahmed Mubarak Kano, has announced his retirement from football, after a successful career spanning 20 years.

Ahmed Kano announced on his Twitter account: "20 years I spent in the service of Omani football, during which I tried to present the best we had, and the most beautiful thing I learned a lot from internal and external professional opportunities. I carried the dreams and aspirations of the people who are passionate about football and very fond of this sport."

"My sporting career started from Al Oruba, with lot of efforts and sacrifices. The beginnings had unparalleled pleasure, but the endings have unparalleled sadness, but it must happen," he added.

Ahmed Kano also said: "I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to my family, who stood with me and was patient with me, and everyone I accompanied in my career journey. I will remain grateful to all my colleagues in the clubs I played for and also in the national team that I defended



for nearly two decades."

"Thank you to all the coaches who supervised my training, to all those responsible for sports in the country, the fans who supported me throughout my career, the media and all the media professionals."

"I am proud of everything I have done for my country and my professional career abroad. My football career as a player comes to an end and I will certainly continue my journey with it, but this time not inside the green rectangle," Kano added.

PREMIER DIVISION LEAGUE

Muscat CT beat IAS, AER stun Zawawi Powertech



Mohsin Qureshi, Aamir Kaleem, Arafat Islam of AER Bin Ali

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat CT beat IAS CT by 48 runs and AER Bin Ali stunned Zawawi Powertech by 22 runs in the Oman Cricket Premier Division games recently.

On Friday, put to bat first Muscat CT lost its 1st wicket in the 1st over of the match. Shoaib Khan (49 of 64) and Ashish Odedra stitched a 87-run partnership to rebuild the innings. Ayaan Khan's half century along with Suraj Kumar's run a ball 40 powered Muscat CT to reach 238 in 50 overs. Rana Naeem and Waseem Akhtar picked two wickets each.

In response, IAS struggled to get going. Muhammed Aqeel (33)



Ayaan Khan of Muscat CT

and Usman Haider's 46 did put up some resistance but IAS CT was bundled out for 190. Ayaan Khan bagged two wickets.

Brief scores: Muscat CT 238/5 in 50 overs (Ashish Odedra 56 (103) 3x4,1x6, Ayaan Khan 50 (57) 3x4; Rana Naeem 34/2, Waseem Akhtar 46/2) beat IAS CT 190 all out in 45.1 overs (Usman Haider 46 (65) 3x4, 3x6; Ayaan Khan 35/2).

On Saturday, AER Bin Ali got off to a cautious start with a 28-run first-wicket partnership. However, none of AER batters stayed long as the team was bowled out for 106. Yashas GL grabbed four wickets while by Suhil K and Nishad KS took two each.

In response, Powertech lost half its side in the powerplay for just 44 runs, thanks to a disciplined bowling from Mohsin Qureshi and Arafat Islam.

Only Kalaiaarasan (17 of 11*) put up some resistance as the team was all out for just 84.

Arafat Islam was the wrecker in chief as he picked up five wickets while Mohsin Qureshi and Aamir Kaleem claimed two wickets each.

This was first victory of the season for AER Bin Ali while it was the first defeat for Zawawi Powertech in the league this season.

Brief scores: AER Bin Ali 106 all out in 34.2 overs (Usama Aqeel 20 (27) 3x4; Yashas GL 23/4, Suhil K 7/2, Nishad KS 12/2) beat Zawawi Powertech 84 all out in 18 overs (Kalaiaarasan N 17 (11) 2x4, 1x6; Arafat Islam 31/5, Mohsin Qureshi 21/2, Aamir Kaleem 24/2).

NEW YEAR DELIGHTS

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Offer valid from 1st January - 1st March 2023 on select models sold for personal use. This offer is not valid with any other promotions, on taxis, driving school, Rent-a-car usage, companies and any form of commercial usage and government purchases. @ Service: As indicated in the maintenance schedule. 3YRS /60,000 kms (whichever is earlier). Service Package covering 6 services @ 10,000 kms service interval applicable only on Taurus, Mustang, Territory, Edge, Explorer, Bronco Big Bend, Bronco Wiltrak, Bronco Badlands, Ranger 3.2L Wildtrak & Ranger Raptor. * Registration: First year registration applicable on Taurus, Mustang, Territory & Edge.

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MUZN SHARIA BOARD MEETS
Committed to creating an effective and Sharia-compliant customer experience, Muzn, National Bank of Oman's (NBO) Islamic banking window, recently held its 4th Sharia Board Meeting.

MARKET BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER
The MSX index closed at 4,842.39 points, down by 0.62 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.39 per cent at 507.89 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 6.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Takaful Oman, down 9.43 per cent, was the top loser.

NCSI DATA

Oman's production of crude oil, condensates rises by 10%



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's production of crude oil and condensates recorded a rise by 10 per cent till the end of November 2022 to stand at 355,473,100 barrels compared to 323,174,600 barrels during the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Separately, crude oil production increased by 13.5 per cent to reach 283.534 million barrels,

while the production of condensates dropped by 2 per cent till the end of November 2022.

The average price of Oman's crude oil surged by 52.7 per cent by the end of November 2022 to reach \$95.8 per barrel compared to \$62.77 per barrel by the end of November 2021.

Total exports
Oman's total exports of oil increased by 12.7 per cent by the end of November 2022 to stand at 293,944,600 barrels compared

to 260,804,100 barrels during the corresponding period in 2021.

Gas production (including imports) in Oman registered a growth of 2.3 per cent to reach 47,113.1 million cubic metres. Consumption of natural gas increased by 12.5 per cent in industrial areas and 7.5 per cent in industrial projects. Meanwhile, natural gas consumption declined by 7 per cent in oil fields and 1.8 per cent in electricity power plants.

-ONA

OIA, affiliates achieve success in mining and gas sectors

OIA's quarterly newsletter also highlights the Mazoon Mining project, one of the most promising mineral investment projects that will revive the copper industry in Oman



Al Naamani, CEO of Oman LNG, which sheds light on the growing and successful business of the LNG industry in Oman. He expressed that the company will soon sign more binding term-sheet agreements with international companies, similar to the three contracts it recently inked with Japanese companies to deliver 2.35 million tonnes per year (mtpa) of Oman LNG annually starting in 2025.

The company's success and flawless reputation as a trusted source and supplier of LNG over 22 years have been the bedrock for its success, noting that the company became one of the leading LNG companies in concluding very competitive deals in the global market by promptly seizing business opportunities diversions, swaps or spot cargos; thanks to its shareholders' trust, as well as its values of credibility and transparency.

The issue also highlighted the Mazoon Mining project, one of the most promising mineral investment projects that will revive the copper industry in Oman. With an estimated cost of \$300

million, the project targets the development of five mines with considerable copper reserves amounting to 22.9 million tonnes and a production capacity of approximately 1.5 million tonnes annually. Exploration work has so far revealed promising reserves of copper ore in the area surrounding these mines, particularly in Block No. (12A2), known for its good mineral potential.

The project, located in the Wilayat of Yanqul in Al Dhahirah Governorate, seeks to position Oman among the leading global copper-producing countries, help to establish copper manufacturing projects, while also helping to boost the economic landscape in the Wilayat, create job opportunities, and support SMEs development.

The Centre for Sustainability and Circular Economy, established by Oman Environmental Services Holding Company - be'ah is a first of its kind in Oman. The latest issue of the newsletter highlights the services offered by this centre including R&D, transfer and marketing of technology, training and consulting services.

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Abdulsalam Al Mursidi, President of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) commended the talents of OIA and its companies, noting that their collective efforts have led to the realisation of many goals of OIA as a whole or its individual companies.

He called upon them to continue their efforts with an even stronger resolve in 2023, to achieve bigger goals and aspirations, and boost OIA's contributions in developing the national economy.

The call was made by Al Mursidi in the new issue of its quarterly newsletter *Enjaz & Eejaz*. The new edition of the publication covers a variety of topics and highlights the key achievements of OIA and its companies.

The issue also includes an exclusive interview with Hamad

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Labour announces the following auction:-

Auction No.	Auction title	Last date for bid submission	Document's Fee
04/2022 (Refloated)	Submitting bids for renting and operating car cleaning activities for the cars of the Ministry's employees	Sunday 25/01/2023 At 10 a.m.	RO 25/-

- Specialized establishments may obtain the documents of the auction No. 04/2022 from the Treasury Section at the 3rd floor of the Ministry's building at the Airport Heights, starting from Monday 02/01/2023.
- Each bid shall enclose a bank guarantee issued by a local bank for 1% of the total bid value addressed to the Ministry of Labour and valid for 90 days from the date of bid submission.
- Bids shall be submitted in closed envelopes sealed with red wax, addressed to the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, bearing the auction number and subject with no indication to the name of the bidder.
- Bids shall be deposited in the Tender Box located at the Secretariat of the Internal Tender Committee at the 3rd floor of the Ministry's building at the Airport Heights, not later than the date and time mentioned against the auction. Bids shall be opened at 11 am on the same day.

(The Ministry shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other bid)

labour_OMAN

LABORATORY FOR CONVERTING INDUSTRIES AND FUTURE INDUSTRIES

Lab designed to achieve key objectives of industrial sector

MUSCAT: Tasks of the 'Laboratory for Converting Industries and Future Industries' kicked off in Muscat yesterday.

As many as 190 participants from different government departments shared expertise during the laboratory, implemented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion in conjunction with Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit and Industrial Innovation Academy.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Qais bin Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

Dr Saleh Said Masan, Commerce and Industry Undersecretary, said in a speech on the occasion that the lab has been designed to achieve key objectives of the industrial sector, improve its performance and augment its contribution to the gross domes-



tic product. He added that the lab also seeks to furnish a suitable investment environment in the industrial sector.

Masan pointed out that the lab constitutes a step forward in forging the best possible solutions for challenges facing the local converting industries sector.

Dr Ayman Abdullah Al Fudhaili, CEO of Industrial Innovation Academy, said that the lab was the outcome of a study on projects and initiatives in the field of converting industries and future

industries. The lab explores options for converting these projects and initiatives into executive plans whose applicability will be entrusted to the Supervisory Committee.

The lab, which runs till January 26, revolves around five main themes: Investment Opportunities, Future Industries, Industrial Strategy, Governance and Industrial Sector Enablers, in addition to outputs of converting industries' clinics held in December 2022. -ONA

Announcement

The Tax Authority would like to draw the attention of taxpayers to file their VAT returns for the last quarter of the year 2022 in accordance with the tax return form which is available on e-services portal www.taxoman.gov.om

And attach all required documents to it, no later than **30 January 2023**.

We hope all taxpayers comply with the deadline.

MSX index ends lower



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,842.39 points, down by 0.62 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.39 per cent at 507.89 points. A'Saffa Foods, up 6.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Takaful Oman, down 9.43 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Ahli Bank were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover.

A total number of 353 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR1.36 million, with more than 8.86 million shares changing hands. Out of 39 traded securities, 12 advanced, 13 declined, and 14 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR690,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR596,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR94,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at 7,908.64 points, down 0.64 per cent. Prices of Al Sharqia Investment, Ominvest, Al Madina cent, 0.91 per cent and 0.87 per cent respectively. Prices of Ooredoo was down by 0.46 per cent.

— United Securities

Takaful and Al Anwar Investment were up by 2.50 per cent, 2.38 per cent, 2.17 per cent and 1.12 per cent respectively. Prices of Takaful Oman, Ahli Bank, United Finance, Global Financial Investments, and Bank Dhofar were down by 6.00 per cent, 2.92 per cent, 2.90 per cent, 1.75 per cent and 1.71 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,458.77 points, up 0.18 per cent. Prices of A'Saffa Foods, Raysut Cement, Voltamp Energy and Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 6.00 per cent, 2.50 per cent, 1.05 per cent and 0.84 per cent respectively. Prices of Galfar Engineering, Dhofar Cattle Feed and Oman Fisheries were down by 2.30 per cent, 1.41 per cent and 0.92 per cent respectively.

Services Index was up by 0.3 per cent before closing at 1,623.81 points. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Phoenix Power, National Gas and Oman National Engineering were up by 3.57 per cent, 2.33 per cent, 0.91 per cent and 0.87 per cent respectively. Prices of Ooredoo was down by 0.46 per cent.

— United Securities

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,875.52	4,837.96	4,842.39	4,872.67	-30.28	-0.62
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,976.01	7,898.72	7,908.64	7,959.48	-50.84	-0.64
Industry Index	6,491.39	6,445.49	6,458.77	6,447.13	11.64	0.18
Services Index	1,625.28	1,619.30	1,623.81	1,618.89	4.93	0.30
MSX Shariah Index	511.10	506.77	507.89	509.87	-1.98	-0.39
MSX TR INDEX	6,153.80	6,106.39	6,111.98	6,150.20	-38.22	-0.62
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,346.01	8,265.13	8,275.51	8,328.70	-53.19	-0.64
SERVICES TR IDX	1,717.78	1,711.46	1,716.23	1,711.02	5.21	0.30
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,758.33	6,710.56	6,724.37	6,712.26	12.11	0.18

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.....	Up.....	Down.....	Equal.....	Sec. Traded
8,861,880.....	1,355,147.....	353.....	23,730,254,370.....	12.....	13.....	14.....	39.....

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JANUARY 2

[illegible]

Parallel Market

OM0000000284	ASAFA FOODS	13.407	3.553	4	0.965	0.965	0.965	0.965	0.965	0.250	0.015	6.000	0.965	0.250	0.963	0.100	31.800	0.000
OM0000000493	AL SUWADI POWER	871.433	24.683	29	0.028	0.030	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.001	0.001	3.571	0.029	0.028	0.930	0.100	20.77784	0.000
OM0000000114	RAYSUT CEMENT	61.652	10.155	9	0.164	0.167	0.162	0.164	0.160	0.004	2.500	0.164	0.162	0.167	0.100	32.800	0.000	
OM0000000563	PHOENIX POWER	89.231	3.841	3	0.043	0.044	0.043	0.044	0.043	0.001	2.326	0.044	0.043	0.044	0.100	64.35446	0.000	
OM0000000478	MADINA TAKAFUL	70.000	6.502	10	0.062	0.094	0.062	0.094	0.062	0.002	2.174	0.094	0.085	0.082	0.100	16.45000	0.000	
OM0000000172	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	37.772	3.396	15	0.087	0.090	0.087	0.090	0.089	0.001	1.124	0.090	0.086	0.092	0.100	18.000	0.000	
OM0000000361	VOLTAEM ENERGY	137.889	13.238	20	0.095	0.100	0.094	0.096	0.095	0.001	1.053	0.096	0.095	0.096	0.100	7.61466	0.000	
OM0000000190	NATIONAL GAS	165.300	38.342	26	0.113	0.115	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.001	0.311	0.110	0.111	0.111	0.100	9.43555	0.000	
OM0000000267	GULF MUSHROOM P	31.098	7.464	11	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.240	0.238	0.002	0.840	0.240	0.238	0.241	0.100	9.985265	0.000	
OM0000000102	OMAN CHROMITE	182	400	2	2.200	2.200	2.200	2.200	2.200	0.000	0.000	2.200	2.200	2.200	0.100	6.600	0.000	
OM0000000139	ALUMINIUM DPOH	6.300	473	2	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.078	1.000	2.517855	0.000
OM0000000190	MUSCAT FINANCE	80.717	5.418	5	0.068	0.068	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067	0.065	0.068	0.100	20.57880	0.000
OM0000000181	OMAN EMIRATES HO	7.500	582	2	0.075	0.075	0.078	0.078	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.075	0.078	0.078	0.100	9.506255	0.000
OM0000000438	SIN POWER HOLDING	98.200	4.739	6	0.049	0.049	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.000	0.000	0.048	0.047	0.049	0.100	8.882500	0.000	
OM0000000190	ALBANKIN POWER	62.385	1.809	1	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.100	0.72472	0.000	
OM0000000157	HSCB BANK OMAN	100	17	1	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.168	-0.001	-0.602	0.165	0.160	0.168	0.100	330.05161	0.000	
OM0000000156	OMAN FISHERIES	75.590	8.096	11	0.109	0.109	0.106	0.108	0.109	-0.001	-0.917	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.100	1.966447	0.000	
OM0000000101	DHOFAH FOODS AND INVESTMENT	780	55	2	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.071	-0.001	-1.408	0.070	0.070	0.075	0.100	5.65500	0.000	
OM0000000249	BANK DHOFAH	335.613	58.489	8	0.172	0.175	0.172	0.172	0.175	-0.003	-1.714	0.172	0.172	0.176	0.100	515.372447	0.000	
OM0000000321	GALFAR ENGINEER	180.020	30.761	5	0.173	0.173	0.170	0.170	0.174	-0.004	-2.299	0.170	0.168	0.173	0.100	34.507698	0.000	
OM0000000190	ALBANKIN POWER	1.085.000	79.815	38	0.098	0.098	0.096	0.096	0.097	0.000	0.439	0.097	0.097	0.098	0.100	9.43555	0.000	
OM0000000476	TAKAFUL OMAN	2.500	120	1	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.048	0.053	0.005	0.434	0.048	0.048	0.052	0.100	12.000	0.000	
Total		32,722,549	303,846	202														

4TH SHARIA BOARD MEETING

Muzn Sharia Supervisory Board meeting discusses performance data

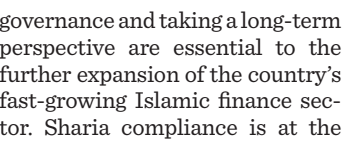
Times News Service

MUSCAT: Committed to creating an effective and Sharia-compliant customer experience, Muzn, National Bank of Oman's (NBO) Islamic banking window, recently held its 4th Sharia Board Meeting.

Chairman Sheikh Dr Muhammad Zubair Usmani, was joined by other board members, including His Highness Sayyid Dr Adham bin Turki Al Said, Sheikh Dr Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al Saadi, and Sheikh Saleh Al Kharusi, to discuss performance data, Muzn's long-term strategy and other relevant topics on the board's agenda, including digital transformation.

The discussion included the approvals of the Sharia Compliance Report, Sharia Audit Report and Fatawa Pronouncement Guidelines.

Salima Al Marzouqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer, said, "We understand that good corporate



heart of what we do and through frequent meetings with our effective and knowledgeable Sharia board members, we are creating new experiences for our custom-

ers, which should not only be seamless but also in keeping with their integrity and values. We have a lot planned for the business year 2023 and we are keeping abreast with emerging technologies because we know that the digital transformation is driving the customer experience.”

Muzn offers a host of innovative, competitive and quality financial solutions with the values of Islamic Shar'a at the core. Among its latest are its Islamic Personal Financing facility, Kids Wakala account, and enabling cash deposits through a diverse network of CCDMs operated by its parent organisation NBO. Moreover, its pioneering digital services continue to grow, with a new Wallet Transfer feature its latest addition, enabling users to send and receive money locally and instantly using a mobile number, and Scan & Pay using QR codes.

AGREEMENT

National Finance signs pact with Danube Home to offer consumer-financing solutions

Times News Service

MUSCAT: National Finance, Oman's leading finance company, has signed an agreement with Danube Home, a major home improvement and furniture retail brand in Oman, to offer consumer-financing options to customers for home refurbishments.

This financing option enables both partners to serve a broader customer base and boost sales, as well as allow customers to purchase high-quality items and pay later for the furniture.

Commenting on this partnership, Lina Mubarak Al Abduls-

laam, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communication said, "Our goal at National Finance is to help individuals meet their needs. As a result of our strategic partnership with Danube Home, we aim to offer more financing options to a wider range of customers. We believe that customers will find refurbishing their spaces easier and more rewarding than ever before. As part of our commitment to providing financing solutions, we plan to partner up with various furniture brands to assist clients in meeting their needs."

This strategic partnership builds on National Finance's mis-

sion to offer the wider society access to seamless financial solutions that facilitate their day-to-day activities and enhance their lifestyle. In addition, it affirms the company's vision of becoming the Sultanate's non-banking leading financial services provider. With top-notch customer service, cutting-edge solutions and technology-driven initiatives and solutions, the company strives to deliver the best quality experience in a convenient and timely manner.

Hassle-free shopping experience

Shubhojit Mahalanobis said,

IMF

Tough year likely for global economy in 2023



economies - the US, EU and China - are all slowing down simultaneously," she said.

Outlook

In October, the IMF cut its outlook for global economic growth in 2023, reflecting the continuing drag from the war in Ukraine as well as inflation pressures and the high interest rates engineered by central banks like the US Federal Reserve aimed at bringing those price pressures to heel, Reuters reports.

Since then, China has scrapped its zero-COVID policy and embarked on a chaotic reopening of its economy, though consumers there remain wary as coronavirus cases surge. In his first public comments since the change in policy, President Xi Jinping on Saturday called in a New Year's address for more effort and unity as China enters a "new phase".

“For the first time in 40 years, China’s growth in 2022 is likely to be at or below global growth,” Georgieva said. **-BNA**

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LIFESTYLE

IT'S TIME TO CLEANSE YOUR SYSTEM

We have bid farewell to 2022 and entered the new year. While some of us are feeling fresh and rejuvenated as the 365 days of 2023 await us with various opportunities, others might still be a little heavy from all the food and partying that happened during the New Year's eve.

Fun and frolic at parties are unmissable during this time of year, and so are the accompanying fatigue and haziness. Once all the lights go out and the music stops, our body requires a quintessential detox session to lighten up and zone back to a healthier state. Fret not. Here are 5 items you can consume to cleanse your system after an intense night out.

1

WATER

You're bound to get dehydrated at some point. Water comes to the rescue here. It will also assist in the digestion of all the junk food consumed.

2

PROBIOTIC DRINK

Probiotic drinks help in the elimination of toxic elements from the body and relieve it from bloating and digestion-based problems.

3

COCONUT WATER

While normal water helps with dehydration and digestion, coconut water also helps lock in the body's water levels and relax the body due to the presence of electrolytes in it.

4

EGGS

While eating may not be something you'd want to do right after a party, having some eggs after taking enough rest and letting the body generate some appetite would be really beneficial for your body, as they help in maintaining blood sugar levels.

5

GINGER TEA

Mixed with honey, or even without it, ginger tea is an instant relief from bloating and heaviness resulting from an intense night out. Ginger also helps reduce headaches or inflammation in the gut resulting from fast food. -ANI



IN-PICTURES



Nepal's Pokhara International Airport operations begin
Pokhara International Airport, a national pride project of Nepal, was inaugurated on Sunday by Nepali Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal. *xinhua*



Major wind power project goes into operation in NE China
The picture shows a major onshore wind power project in northeast China's Liaoning Province. Liaoning Province in northeast China saw a major onshore wind power project connect to the state grid and became operational on Saturday. *xinhua*



Wintering whooper swans seen at Yellow River in Qinghai
Wintering whooper swans are seen at the Yellow River in Hualong Hui Autonomous County of Haidong City, northwest China's Qinghai Province. *xinhua*

China moves to fast-track agriculture production in Uganda
Pictur shows fishponds at the Aquaculture Research and Development Centre in Kajjansi, Wakiso District, Uganda. *xinhua*



Virat Kohli and his wife Anushka Sharma enjoy sunrise
India cricketer Virat Kohli and his wife and actress Anushka Sharma enjoy the last sunrise of the year 2022. *ANI File Photo*



Bangladesh's largest annual trade fair kicks off
Visitors look at products at a stall during the Dhaka International Trade Fair in Purbachal on the outskirts of Dhaka, Bangladesh. The 27th edition of the fair, the largest annual commercial and trade event in Bangladesh, kicked off Sunday. *xinhua*

HOW CAN WE STOP THE SUPER-RICH FROM POLLUTING THE PLANET?

From Roman Abramovich’s yacht and Taylor Swift’s private jet to the sprawling warehouses of Jeff Bezos’ Amazon, the lifestyles and business interests of billionaires are baking the planet.

The fury came fast when makeup mogul Kylie Jenner posted a photograph last July of her and her boyfriend Travis Scott flanked by two private jets and captioned “you wanna take mine or yours?”

“Europe is on fire, meanwhile Kylie Jenner is taking 15-minute trips in her private jet,” wrote eating disorder campaigner Cara Lisette in just one of the many viral tweets about Jenner’s post. “I could recycle everything, buy all my clothes second hand, compost and grow my own food for the rest of my life and it wouldn’t even begin to offset the footprint from one of her flights.”

Jenner’s Instagram post brought to the surface some of the resentment brewing among young people in rich countries who feel pressured to cut their carbon footprints. It showed the disconnect between the world’s biggest polluters and a generation terrified by climate change, angry about injustice and reluctant to give up the unsustainable parts of their own lifestyles.

“This is literally why I stopped trying,” wrote one 24-year-old Twitter user.

Recently, private jets owned by celebrities like Taylor Swift and Kim Kardashian have flown distances that could have been driven in a few hours. Their journeys spewed more carbon dioxide in a matter of minutes than the average Indian emits in a year. Flight data shows that one night in early December, the private jets of Kylie Jenner and Travis Scott took the same journey, landing at Van Nuys airport in California, US, just 5 hours apart.

Even then, celebrity emissions in the air are a fraction of those at sea. Mega yachts – like Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich’s 162-metre-long boat that comes with two helipads and a swimming pool – emit several times more CO2 than most mansions, planes and limousines combined. A study published in 2021 estimated that Abramovich’s yacht emitted more carbon dioxide in 2018 than Tuvalu, a pacific island nation of 11,000 people.

“This is particularly sad,” said Beatriz Barros, a researcher at the University of Indiana who led the study, “because the island nations are also the ones who are more at risk of consequences of climate change like rising sea levels.”



‘Ridiculous’ levels of carbon pollution

The biggest inequalities in carbon emissions have for decades been between rich and poor countries. Now, inequalities within countries explain more of the gap between clean and dirty lifestyles. The top 1% of global earners – somebody earning a yearly salary of about €124,000 (\$132,000) – are responsible for one-fifth of the growth in carbon pollution in the last 30 years. They live in cities from Miami to Mumbai.

“The top 1% use basically a similar amount to the bottom 50% of humanity – and so obviously that, just in terms of scale, is a ridiculous proportion of the carbon budget,” said Anisha Nazareth, a scientist at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) studying emissions inequality.

People who fall into that top income bracket do not lead the lavish lifestyles of billionaires. But

while private jets and mega yachts are on the extreme end of the scale, cruise ships and commercial passenger planes are close behind.

Flying, for instance, is one of the most polluting activities in the world. Though aviation makes up about 3% of global carbon dioxide emissions, it is the biggest source of pollution for those who fly. Experts estimate just 2-4% of the global population gets onto a plane each year.

In the same way billionaires burn more fossil fuels than almost anyone else, “there are people in the world who would rightly see us in the same relative light,” said Ketan Joshi, an independent writer and consultant on clean energy, referring to middle-class people in rich countries. “You are someone’s Kylie Jenner.”

‘Surprising support’ for wealthy lifestyles

Researchers have explored ways

to fix this. By raising taxes, closing legal loopholes and cracking down on tax havens, policymakers could stop the wealthiest funding the carbon-intensive excesses of their lavish lifestyles. It would also free up more money to invest in clean energy infrastructure needed to stop the planet heating.

But policies to raise taxes often face fierce opposition – even from those who would benefit from them. “In reality, we see a surprising support of the lifestyles of the very wealthy,” said Stefan Gössling, a professor at Lund University in Sweden who has studied inequalities in flight emissions. People brought up in cultures that idolize the rich often oppose policies to restrict their lives.

The burden of a flight tax, for instance, would mainly hit richer people – particularly business travelers. In the EU, half the spending on air travel comes from the richest 20%. In the US and

Canada, the 19% of adults who take more than four flights a year account for 79% of the flights. Some scientists and politicians have called for a frequent flier levy, where each extra flight a person takes carries a higher cost.

These inequalities mean policies to tax flights could generate vital revenue from those most able to pay. A study published in October by the International Council on Clean Transport, an environmental think tank, found that a global frequent flier levy could generate the \$121 billion needed in investments each year to decarbonise aviation through 2050. Frequent fliers who take more than six flights per year – and make up just 2% of the population – would pay 81% of it.

Policymakers could also curb emissions from the very richest by banning private jets that run on kerosene. Such a ban would hit only a small percentage of flights but could push billionaires with cash to spare to invest in clean technologies that are needed for greener ways of flying. Experts say early investments like this would help advance sustainable aviation fuels and electric flights for everybody, scaling them up sooner and bringing costs down faster.

Researchers also stress that the

top 1% of earners – and even the top 10% making €37,200 a year – should not limit climate action to what they purchase.

A study published in the journal “Nature” in 2021 found rich people have a major role in slowing climate change as consumers, investors, role models, organizational participants and citizens. That could mean taking savings out of banks that lend to fossil fuel companies, campaigning for public transport at a local council meeting, or pressuring their company management to replace business flights with virtual meetings.

“If these people in the top tier of society, measured in income and influence, actively went for this, we would see changes happening much quicker than what we see today,” said Kristian Nielsen, a climate scientist and lead author of the study. “This is not available to the average person.”

But it also works the other way. Some of the world’s richest people and companies have poured money into lobbying against policies that threaten fossil fuels. For the richest, said Nazareth from SEI, “a bigger problem is really the way they exert political influence through campaign donations – and influence in general on the lifestyles of everybody else.” -**ow**

PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa down Tottenham, Nottingham Forest draw with Chelsea

LONDON: Aston Villa worsened Tottenham Hotspur woes as the hosts slumped to a 2-0 defeat at their home ground of Tottenham Hotspur Stadium in their Premier League tie on Sunday.

With this win, Aston Villa is now in the 12th spot in the points table with 21 points. They have won six out of 17 matches, lost eight and drawn three. Tottenham, who suffered their fourth loss in seven games, is in the fifth spot with 30 points.

They have won nine out of their 17 games. They have lost five and drawn three matches. Spurs was absolutely listless in the first half. Aston Villa produced some superb defending, keeping all kinds of threat from Spurs at bay. At the end of the first half, the scoreline was goalless.

The hosts fell behind for the 10th consecutive match when Emiliano Buendia took full advantage of an error by goalkeeper Hugo Lloris after the break in the 50th minute.

Spurs missed the services of Dejan Kulusevski and could not muster much response. They could not even register a shot at the target in the second period.

Douglas Luiz scored for the Villa in the 73rd minute to double the lead.

The hopeless display of the hosts was such that the fans aired their frustrations with boos at the final whistle.



Tottenham will be playing Crystal Palace on Wednesday while Villa will be playing Wolverhampton on the same day.

Nottingham Forest secure 1-1 draw

Serge Aurier’s maiden goal for Nottingham Forest served as a neutraliser for Raheem Sterling’s first-half strike as the hosts and Chelsea shared points after a 1-1 draw in their Premier League tie at The City Ground on Sunday.

With this win, Chelsea is in the eighth position in the points table with 25 points. They have won seven of their 16 matches in the league so far, drawn four and lost five. On the other hand, Nottingham is in the 18th position in the points table.

They have won only three games out of 17 so far and have lost nine and drawn five. They have only

14 points to their name, but they are yet to move out of the relegation zone. Nonetheless, they have a valuable point to their name. Chelsea were not able to showcase their usual dominant side in the first half.

Chelsea barely got out of second gear in the first half and could have been behind when Brennan Johnson burst clear, but Kepa Arrizabalaga did well to keep out the Wales international’s effort.

The Blues were able to secure a lead in 16th minute though. Willy Boly became a villain for his own side by turning Christian Pulisic’s cross onto his own team’s crossbar. Raheem wasted no time in tapping in a rebound from a few yards away.

But that was the only attack Chelsea could make in the first half and they managed to coast through the first 45 minutes with a lead.



In the second half, Graham Potter’s side produced a horrible display. Nottingham took full advantage of it. Kepa Arrizabalaga was beaten by Aurier in the 63rd minute. Chelsea could not defend the ball well after a corner, leaving an opportunity for Aurier to volley it under the keeper and to make things even.

Forest appeared happy to settle for a point as Chelsea attempted

to establish control in the final few minutes. The Blues could have scored a winner but Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang failed to meet Hakim Ziyech’s cross.

Following the match, Nottingham boss Steve Cooper expressed pleasure with his team’s performance. He said that his side was tactically good in both halves.

“You are playing Chelsea, we have to accept that. Tactically we

were really good in the game, first and second half,” said Cooper as quoted by Sky Sports.

“First half we were not aggressive enough with our press. We waited too long before going after the ball. You cannot just go after the ball against Chelsea because you will get played through and you are too open, but you have got to get up to the ball at the right time.” -**ANI**



ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat receives Insights Middle East Call Centre Award

The awards symbolise unmatched validation and peer-judging processes that enable winners to build and strengthen world-class call centre teams and showcase continuous, ongoing improvement

MUSCAT: In recognition of its customer-centric vision, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has been announced as the regional winner for the Best Call Centre (Banking) at the prestigious Middle East Call Centre/CX Awards 2022, which was recently held in Dubai.

Instituted by Insights, the leading call centre-based professional services organisation in the region, the awards symbolise unmatched validation and peer-judging processes that enable winners to build and strengthen world-class call centre teams and showcase continuous, ongoing improvement.

Speaking about the outstanding achievement, Talal Abdul Hameed Al Zadjali, Deputy General Manager – Operations, Bank Muscat, said, “I would like to take this opportunity to thank Insights for this prestigious award, which endorses the bank’s customer-centric strategy and recognises our efforts to continuously improve and set new benchmarks. As a vital link between our valued customers and the bank, the bank’s Contact Centre continues to provide various services around the clock, seven days a week, with a minimal waiting period. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the Contact Centre employees for their dedication and efforts to enhance the implementation of the bank’s customer-centric vision and the

overall customer experience.”

He added that the bank would strive to attract qualified and talented Omani cadre to the Contact Centre and continuously upgrade it with the technologies.

Bank Muscat operates the largest Contact Centre in the banking sector in the Sultanate with over 160 team members and enjoying 99 per cent Omanisation and a male-to-female ratio of 65:35. Featuring the best-in-class technology, the Contact Centre handles over 5.4 million interactions and 1.3 million social media queries annually through its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system as well as customer service champions who answer inbound queries via phone calls and WhatsApp chats. It is indeed a matter of great pride that the vast majority of incoming telephone calls are responded to within as little as 20 seconds. To enhance the customer experience, language options provided to customers include Arabic, English and Hindi.

Phone banking services offered include fund transfers to own account, third-party accounts within Bank Muscat and outside Bank Muscat as well as utility bill payments such as water, electricity, telephone, Internet, mobile top-ups, school fees and credit card payments. Other services include requests for chequebooks and application forms; real-time deposit and exchange rates for select currencies using an exchange rate cal-



culator and branch locator to identify the nearest branch, in addition to special services.

To use 24/7 phone banking, customers need to call on 24795555 and follow the audio instructions in the language of their choice. They can also contact customer service through WhatsApp by first saving the bank’s contact centre number (24795555) in the contacts list on their smartphone and then initiating a chat session once

the number automatically appears within WhatsApp as the verified Bank Muscat account. WhatsApp Customer service executives are available on all days from 8am to 10.30pm, while automated WhatsApp chat is available 24/7 to help answer different queries that customers may have. The service can also be used by customers to share feedback and suggestions.

Phone banking services are very important, especially during

holidays or non-banking hours to report card loss and other urgent matters. In case of lost or stolen cards, customers have the option of blocking the card themselves. As part of the constant vigil against fraud, a dedicated team continuously monitors online and PoS transactions, especially at high-risk vendors. The bank’s products and services have evolved over the years in line with the specific requirements of its customers.

In 2016, the bank was the first in Oman to launch Twitter-based customer service through @bank-muscatcare. In 2019, Bank Muscat became the first bank in the Sultanate to launch a dedicated WhatsApp channel for its customers, later launching a dedicated WhatsApp channel in 2021 for its Asalah Priority Banking customers as part of its efforts to serve customers better, every day and set new benchmarks.

RAFFLE CONTEST



Al Maha picks ‘Fill & Win’ promotion winners

MUSCAT: Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company has announced the winners of its month-long ‘Fill & Win’ raffle contest. As promised, this special promotion, commemorating the Sultanate’s 52nd National Day of the Renaissance, shortlisted 55 lucky winners through an electronic lucky draw rewarding 52 individuals with e-rail cards worth OMR52 each, 2 others received iPhone 14. One lucky winner re-

ceived a Changan Alsvin car, the campaign’s grand prize.

Ahmed Bakhit Al Shanfari, Division Head - Marketing & Business Development, Al Maha, handed over the Changan Alsvin to Sameeh Al Bareiki, winner of the “Fill and Win” grand prize. Speaking at the ceremony, Ahmed said, “The Fill & Win campaign was just a medium to celebrate the National Day of the Renaissance with our valued customers and the response we re-

ceived in turn, was tremendous. We are happy with the results of this campaign and glad to have organised it successfully.”

The Al Maha customers entered the National Day exclusive raffle by scanning the QR code and filling in the details requested such as Mobile Number and Tax invoice number on the purchase of M91 and M95 petrol for OMR5. The promotion which commenced on the November 15 ended on December 15.

FOR NISSAN MODELS

Nissan to use Kobe Steel’s low carbon steel, green aluminium



YOKOHAMA: Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. (Nissan) and Kobe Steel, Ltd. (Kobe Steel) announced that Nissan plans to use Kobenable Steel for Nissan models from January 2023 onward. Kobenable steel, commercialised by Kobe Steel, significantly reduces CO² emissions in the blast furnace process. Kobe Steel will also supply Nissan with aluminium sheets made from green-aluminium raw materials. This will be the first time Kobenable Steel will be used in mass-produced vehicles.

Nissan aims to achieve carbon neutrality throughout the entire product life cycle by 2050. Since approximately 60% of a vehicle’s weight is made up of steel parts

and around 10% of its weight is made up of aluminium parts, the use of green steel and green aluminium is a very effective way to reduce CO² emissions during parts manufacturing, which is part of the vehicle’s lifecycle.

Therefore, the companies’ decision to use steel and aluminium for Nissan vehicles is due not only to the significant CO² emission reductions but also because the same level of high quality as conventional products can be achieved.

Nissan models will use the KobenablePremier, which reduces 100% of CO² emissions during manufacturing through the mass-balance method. The specific

amount of steel to be used by Nissan will be determined through further discussions.

The green aluminium raw materials purchased by Kobe Steel to produce aluminium sheets for Nissan are electrolytically smelted using only electricity generated by solar power, thereby reducing CO₂ emissions during aluminium ingot production by approximately 50%. Recycled aluminium materials generated at Nissan’s manufacturing sites will also be used to further reduce CO² emissions during production.

Both companies will continue their efforts to reduce CO² emissions to realise a carbon-neutral society in the future.



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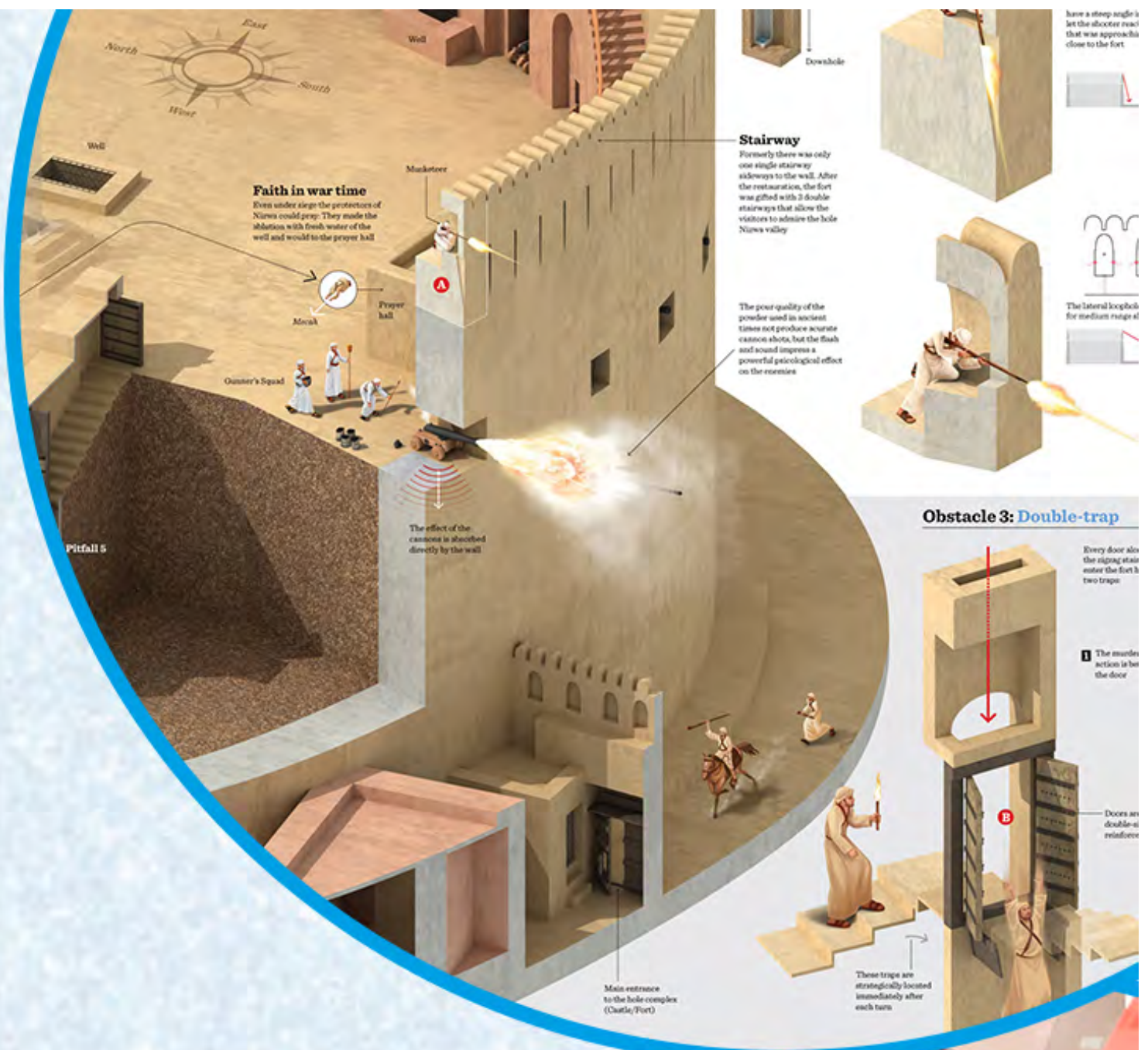
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DUNE BASHING IN THE

GOLDEN SANDS OF BIDIYAH



There is perhaps nothing more thrilling and adventurous than experiencing dune bashing in Oman and one of the best places is Bidiyah, on the edge of the Sharqiyah Sands that is located some 233km from Muscat.

Wilayat Bidiyah is a beautiful oasis located at the entrance of Sharqiyah Sands. It is considered a starting point to explore the depths of the sand and enter into a world full of excitement and vitality, away from the bustle of the city and a change from daily routines. These sands embrace many oases. For example, Al Raka Oasis, which is surrounded by sand dunes on three sides and forms a spectacular landscape, as well as Shahik Oasis and Al Hawiyah Oasis, the largest oasis, which contains a number of trees and is surrounded by sand dunes that form a splendid scene.

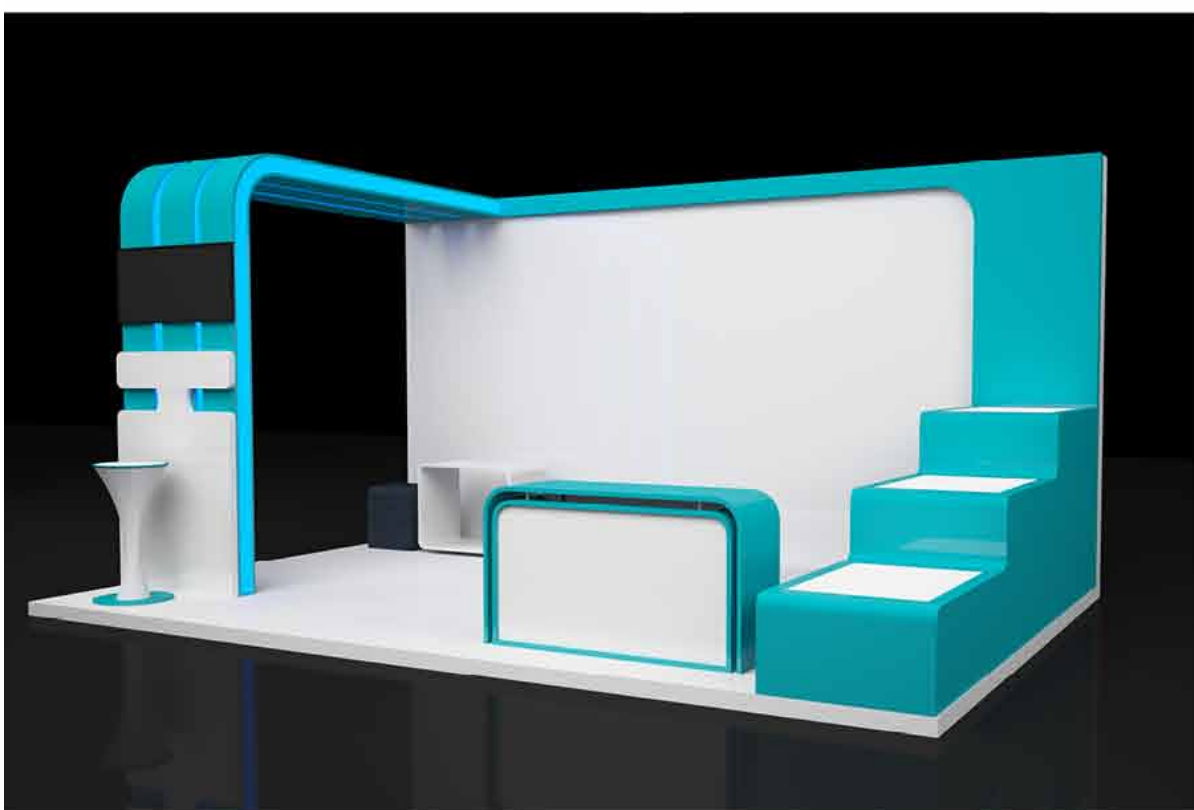
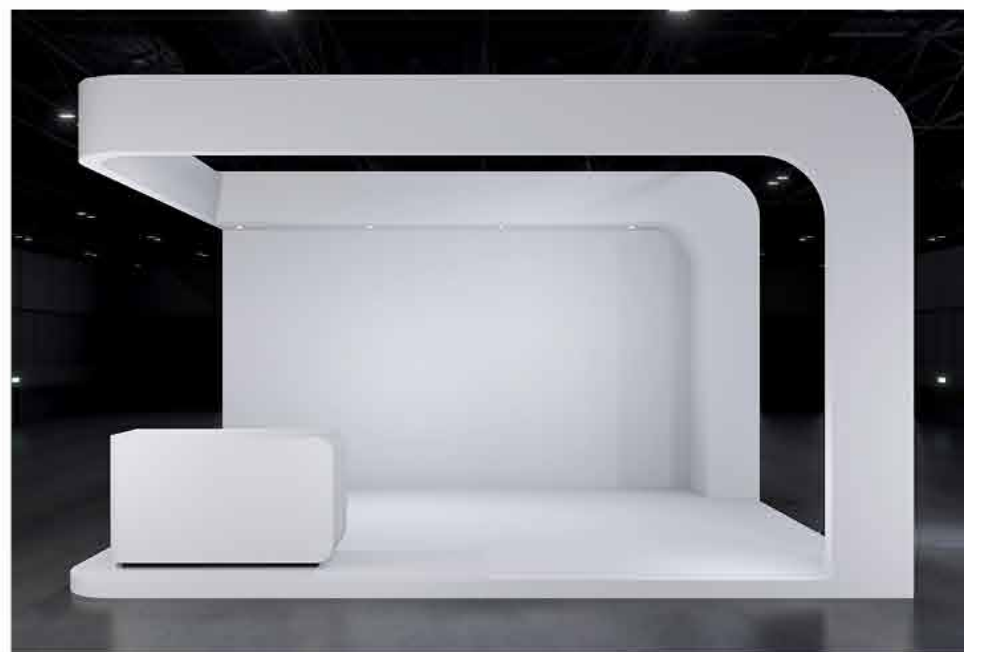
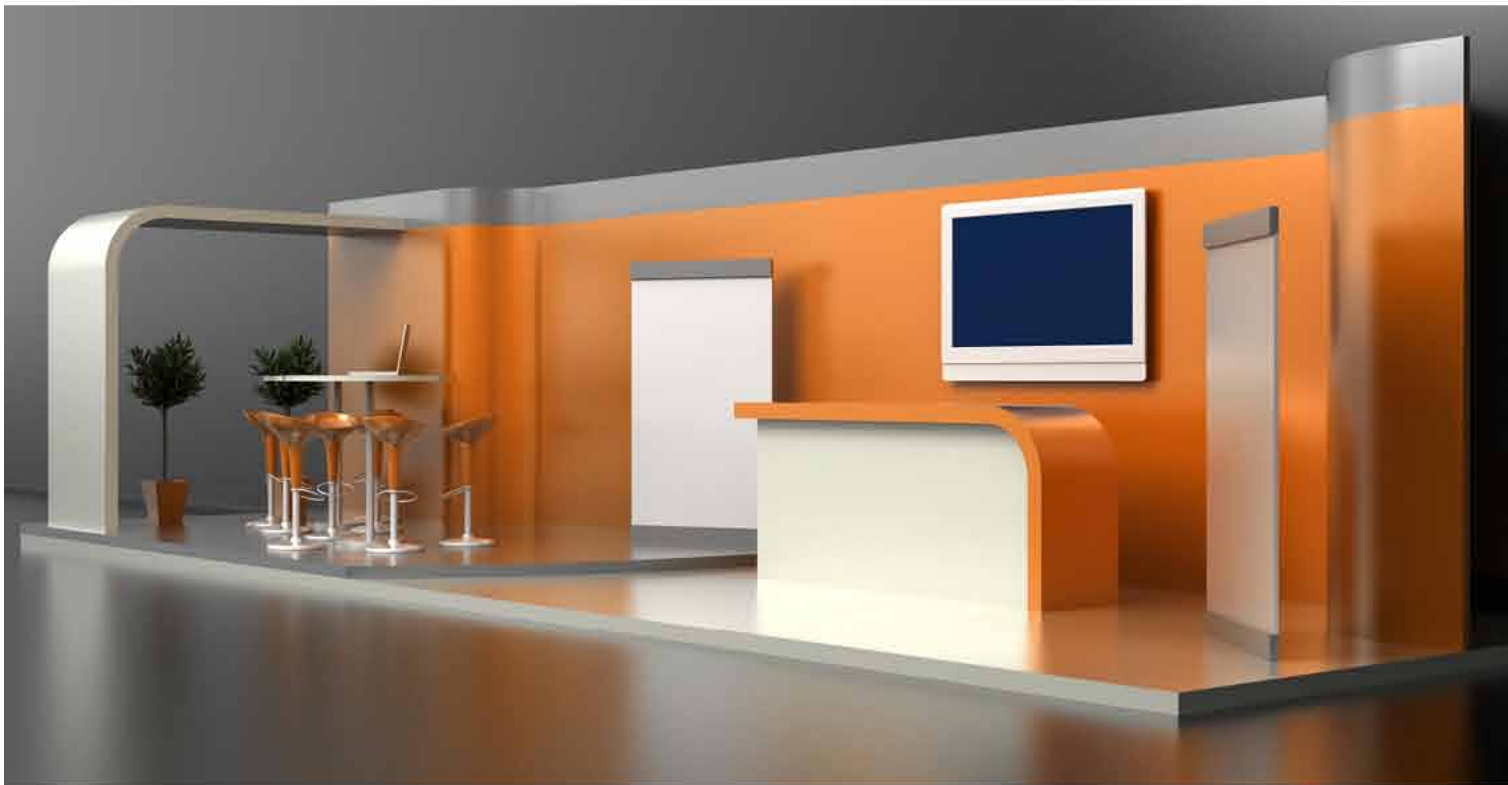
Well known for the golden sand dunes that attract tourists from Oman and outside Oman, there are some ancient forts spread over Bidiyah, including the Al Muntarib Fort.

According to the Ministry of Tourism, “No visit to Oman would be complete without seeing these spectacular seas of sand, and there are other historic sites and natural wonders in the surrounding areas of the Sharqiyah region, including the waterfalls and river of Wadi Bani Khalid. Bidiyah is the village that serves as the jumping-off point for the region’s tourism.” Bidiyah is a collection of villages at the edge of the Sharqiyah Sands. Home to Bedouin people from the desert, it is the perfect place to experience traditional camel or horse races.



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