

OMAN-IRAN BUSINESS FORUM EXPLORES PARTNERSHIPS

The Joint Oman-Iran Business Forum was held here on Monday in a bid to boost trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran. **>A5**



STAR HOTEL REVENUES IN OMAN EXCEED OMR73MN IN MARCH

MUSCAT: The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a rise of 49.9 per cent at the end of March 2023 to reach OMR73.319 million compared to the corresponding period in 2022, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCST). **>B1**



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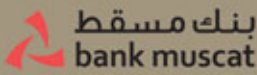
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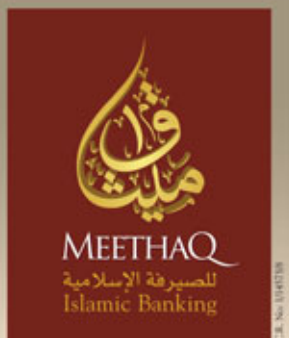
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SAYYID SHIHAB RECEIVES TOP IRANIAN MILITARY OFFICIAL

HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs received in his office at Al Murtafaa Garrison on Monday Maj.Gen Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The two sides reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on several matters of common interest. The meeting was attended by Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis Al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), the Iranian Ambassador to Oman and the Military Attaché at the Iranian Embassy in Muscat. — **ONA**

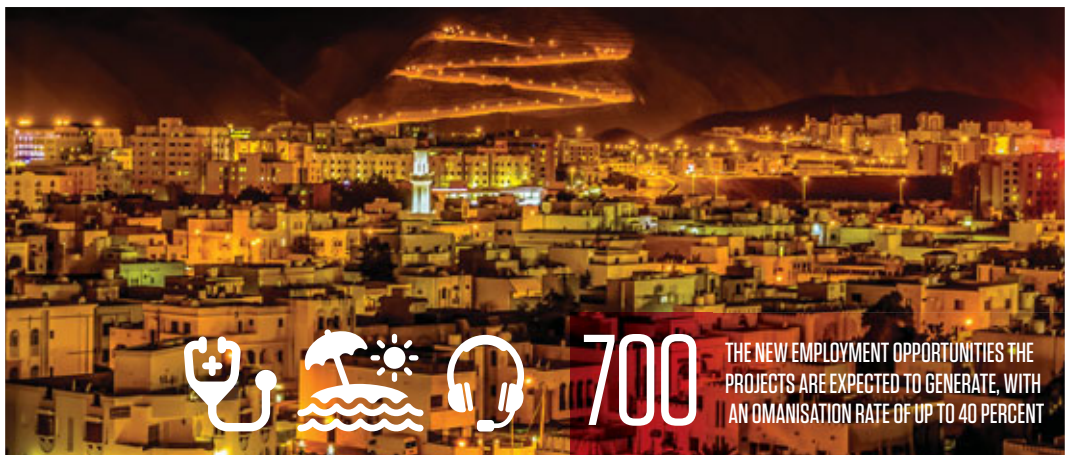
BIG BOOST FOR TOURISM, HEALTH AND ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRIES

Oman Development Bank approves 10 development loans worth more than OMR23 million

MUSCAT: Oman Development Bank (ODB) has endorsed 10 development loans to the tune of OMR23.18 million, among them three loans were worth more than OMR13.88 million.

The loans cover projects in various sectors, including the converting industries sector, tourism, health and entertainment.

The projects are expected to generate more than 700 new employment opportunities, with an Omanisation rate of up to 40 percent.



The loans were approved during the 4th meeting of ODB's Board of Directors meeting for 2023. The meeting was chaired by Eng. Mohammed Abu Bakr Al Ghassani, Chairman of ODB Board of Directors.

The loans are authorised in implementation of the Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to augment the lending

ceiling of Oman Development Bank to OMR5 million, while at the same time according comparative advantage to projects to be implemented outside the Governorate of Muscat.

Al Ghassani affirmed that ODB saw remarkable growth in the first quarter of 2023 in terms of lending, which exceeded 77 percent, compared to the

corresponding period in 2022.

New set of loans

Al Ghassani pointed out that the approval of the new set of loans will have a clear impact on the size and quality of funded projects and that it will bolster their contribution to economic diversification and employment of Omani youth. — **ONA**

RETURN TO NORMALCY

New admissions in Indian schools touch pre-pandemic levels

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Following a dip in admissions over the past couple of years, the new 2023-2024 session is set to return to normalcy witnessed by the Indian schools in the Sultanate of Oman. The fall in admissions was attributed to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic that had led to an exodus of the expatriate community.

However, with normalcy returning and a large number of expatriates returning to the country, admissions sought in Indian schools in Oman have touched the pre-COVID level, according to Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Indian Schools in Oman.

4,677 applications received
In his remarks to *Times of Oman*, Manickam said: "This year, the Indian School board received a total of 4,677 applications, up from 2,530 in 2021. In 2020, the number of new applicants for Indian Schools in the capital area was 3,744."

He added: "However, many



children of the kindergarten did not take admissions due to sudden lock down and the online classes. There was a sharp fall in admissions in 2021 due to COVID pandemic with only 2,530 students seeking admissions in the draw. There was less intake of admissions in kindergarten during that year. Many parents left for their homeland due to lay off and the exodus affected the entire

schooling system."

Manickam said: "The admissions in Indian schools regained strength in 2022 when all the kindergarten children who were home-tutored took admission directly in Class I. Besides the new admissions in the kindergarten, a total number of 3,621 participated in the draw for allotment of seats as the schools resumed onsite classes. The numbers last year were very close to the pre-Covid period.

Online draw for admissions
"However, in 2023, the numbers started rising and a total number of 3,732 participated in the online draw for admissions which was held in the first week of March 2023. Additionally, almost 1,000 more students have joined since then and the total intake of students in the schools in the capital area alone stands at 4,677 till date," he added.

It may be mentioned that Indian schools had received 4,400 applications in 2018 and the latest numbers underline the return of normalcy. **>A5**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES



**OMAN
New law to regulate
education sector**

1 Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation said that the Higher Education Law will help regulate higher education in the Sultanate of Oman. **>A3**

**OMAN
US Human Rights hails
Sultanate's efforts**

2 US human rights officials expressed their appreciation for the efforts exerted by Oman in the human rights field. **>A5**

**WORLD
27 people killed in
Peru gold mine fire**

3 27 people died after a fire broke out in a small gold mine in southern Peru make the country's single deadliest mining accident. **>A6**



OMAN

PRAYER
TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:08pm
Asr.....	3:33pm
Maghrib.....	6:43pm
Isha.....	8:00pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	4:06am



Meeting of Commission's delegation with Christopher Lee Moon, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights Affairs.



Meeting with Scott Turner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Asylum and Immigration Affairs.

Oman Human Rights Commission holds meetings and events in Washington

A DELEGATION from the Oman Human Rights Commission, headed by Sheikh Abdullah Shuwain Al Hosani, Chairman of the Commission, visited Washington within the framework of the Commission's work and role to introduce its work and responsibilities and human rights in the Sultanate of Oman to the international community.

The visit programme included a number of meetings and events in the field of human rights. Those meetings included meeting with officials responsible for human rights files in the US State Department, the US House of Representatives, civil society institutions, figures from research centers and American civil society organisations. In addition, a human rights event was held in the Sultan Qaboos Centre for Culture in Washington.

The programme began with separate meetings with a number of US State Department officials. The Commission's delegation met with those responsible for following up on labour rights, freedom of religion, combating human trafficking, immigrants, women's rights, children's rights, and other groups that deserve to be cared for according to United Nations classifications of human rights.

The Commission's delegation met with the Ambassador Cindy Dyer, Director of the Human Smuggling and Control Department at the US State Department and Scott Turner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Asylum and Immigration Affairs. The delegation also met with the Ambassador Rashad Hussein, official of the International Bureau for Freedom of Religion at the US State Department, and Christopher Lee Moon US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy and Human Rights Affairs. They also met with Daniel Benaim, US Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs, and Ty Lee, US Deputy Secretary of State for Labour Affairs.

During those meetings that took place at the US State Department, the Commission's delegation discussed the issues included in the annual reports issued by the US State Department related to human rights and freedoms in the world. The Commission's delegation reviewed the mechanisms and steps taken by the Commission regarding these reports, the extent of attention to their details, and the response to them, according to the facts, after coordination with the competent authorities in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Commission's delegation explained during those meetings the steps that the government is currently taking in the field of modernising legislation and laws related to human rights, most notably the issuance of the Royal Decree No. (57/2022), which included the new system for the Commission's work. This Royal Decree reorganised the Commission to be a national mechanism concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights, and granted it complete independence to perform its work in accordance with local legislation, taking into account the Paris Principles of National Hu-



The Chairman of the Commission presenting the Commission's shield to the Ambassador Cindy Dyer, Director of the Human Smuggling and Control Department at the US State Department.

man Rights Commissions.

The delegation visited some American research centres and civil society organisations, and held an open meeting with the president and members of the Middle East Policy Centre, who expressed their appreciation for the efforts being made to serve human rights in Oman.

During all these meetings, the

- The Commission reviews recent steps in the field of modernizing legislation and laws related to human rights in Oman
- The Commission expresses its willingness to enhance cooperation and communication on any issues related to human rights in Oman

Commission's delegation presented an illustration of all work mechanisms that take place in Oman to protect and preserve human rights, the role of the Oman Human Rights Commission in monitoring and receiving reports related to human rights, and its contribution to finding appropriate solutions and settling them in cooperation with the competent authorities and institutions, in addition to providing legal and human rights advice to individuals who communicate with the Commission through various means of communication.

With regard to the field aspect, the delegation explained that the Commission is empowered to carry out field visits in various governorates and wilayats, including the central prison, detention centres, workplaces, in addition to field visits that are carried out based on reports submitted by individuals.

Regarding the American reports that are issued annually dealing with the situation of human rights in various countries of the world, including Oman, the delegation explained to the concerned American authorities that these reports receive special attention by examining their contents, studying the topics contained therein, and then responding to them after verification of facts and correct information through the competent authorities in the state, in a way that

achieves the commitment of the Oman Human Rights Commission to the basic principles of the laws of the international community in the field of human rights.

The delegation also assured the American side of the Commission's readiness to make all efforts to enhance cooperation, develop communication, and coordinate between the two



The Commission's delegation at the headquarters of the US State Department.

sides for everything that serves human rights issues.

On the other hand, the Oman Human Rights Commission, during the delegation's visit to Washington, held a human rights event at the Sultan Qaboos Centre for Culture, in the presence of His Excellency Musa Hamdan Al Tai, the Sultanate's ambassador to the United States of America. More than 70 politicians and human rights workers and persons interested in fields related to human rights in the United States participated in the event.

The event began with a speech by Sheikh Abdullah Shuwain Al Hosani, Chairman of the Oman Human Rights Commission, in which he mentioned the main objective of the Commission delegation's visit to the capital of the United States of America, which is to meet with a number of officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US Congress, as well as other institutions concerned with human rights, in order to review all aspects of cooperation and coordination in the field of human rights. In his speech, the Chairman of the Commission stressed the importance of strengthening efforts and measures related to the protection of human rights, especially those that concern women, children, the disabled, and the elderly, in addition to combating human trafficking and

- More than 70 politicians and human rights workers and persons interested in human rights participate in the Commission's activity in Washington
- The Chairman of the Commission confirms commitment to the basic principles of the United Nations in the field of human rights

protecting the rights of workers, migrants, and refugees.

The Chairman of the Commissionsaid that all of these human rights principles can only be achieved through more guarantees of security and peace, justice and equality, freedom of expression, and combating human trafficking.

The Chairman of the Commission explained that these impor-

tant principles and basic pillars of human rights, through the follow-up and monitoring of the Commission, are witnessing continuous development and permanent reinforcement by the government in the Sultanate of Oman towards further ensuring the protection of human rights and the preservation



The Chairman of the Commission presenting the Commission's shield toTy Lee, US Deputy Secretary of State for Labor Affairs.

of human dignity.

The Chairman of the Commission concluded his speech by expressing the delegation's happiness at visiting Washington to discuss with those concerned about human rights files, and to exchange proposals to enhance communication and cooperation in this field.

An introductory film was pre-



The Chairman of the Commission presenting a souvenir to Daniel Benaim, US Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs.

- Joint meetings with political and civil figures in human rights institutions and councils in Washington
- The Commission clarifies the mechanism for monitoring and responding to international reports

sented on the mechanism of the Commission's work, the programs and visits it implements, its role in raising awareness and educating human rights, in addition to its communication with regional and international organisations, and its membership in the relevant commissions.

During the event, the Director of the Organisations and International Relations Department of the Oman Human Rights Commission, Shatha Abdul-Majid Al-Zadjali, gave a visual presentation. Through this visual presentation, she explained that the new system of the Commission stipulates that it is formed from experts and those interested in human rights, and from representatives of a number of relevant government agencies. This matter achieves the principle of pluralism in formation according to the Paris principles. The members of the Commission elect at their first meeting a chairperson and vice-chairperson who are not representatives of government agencies, and its decisions are issued by a majority vote of the

plaints, conducting field visits to examine human rights facts, raising awareness and education through organising conferences, courses and seminars, cooperation with international mechanisms related to human rights, preparing reports and participating in meetings at the regional and international levels.

The Director of the Organisations and International Relations Department of the Oman Human Rights Commission concluded the lecture by explaining that the Commission is in the process of submitting its file to the International Accreditation Committee of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions of the United Nations for re-accreditation in Category (A) after it has met all the required conditions, in accordance with Paris Principles, during March 2024.

After that, discussion started with the audience. The delegation answered all the questions raised regarding issues related to human rights in Oman, and related to the Commission, its terms of

- American personalities concerned with human rights express their appreciation for the attention and care achieved for human rights in Oman
- The Commission's delegation meets officials responsible for human rights files at the US State Department

reference and responsibilities, and clarified the efforts and steps that are being taken to serve and protect human rights.

During the discussion with the audience, the importance of cooperation and coordination with the competent authorities on the American side on all common issues in the field of human rights was stressed.



Part of the attendees during the Commission's event at the Sultan Qaboos Center for Culture in Washington.



A group photo of the Commission's delegation with the president and members of the Centre for Middle East Policy in Washington.



The ambassador of Oman in Washington, and some of the attendees during the Commission's event at the Sultan Qaboos Center for Culture.

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New education law sets standards for regulating the sector

MUSCAT: Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, has said that the Higher Education Law constitutes one of the most important mechanisms and tools to regulate higher education in the Sultanate of Oman. This applies to all academic, vocational, technical and professional tracks in line with the National Qualifications Framework, she affirmed.

The minister said, “The Higher Education Law corresponds to the future goals of Oman Vision 2040 and supports its implementation. It figures high among the top priorities of Oman Vision 2040, which views education, research and development of national competencies as pillars for the development of individuals and society. This approach is undertaken within a strategic plan designed to implement a comprehensive and sustainable system of education, learning and research that leads to the realisation of a knowledge-based society”.

Dr. Rahma pointed out that the law deals with everything



that could regulate the functions of higher education institutions in terms of establishment, specialisations, programmes, quality, scholarships and other mechanisms aimed at consolidating the higher education system in Oman.

The minister explained that the law was drafted after consulting laws and regulations in Oman, as

well as models of such statutes applied in other countries.

When the Higher Education Law was being drafted, emphasis was laid on its sustainability and its ability to accommodate all related provisions cited in executive and organisational regulations/bylaws, the Minister pointed out. -ONA





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AT INNOVATION PARK MUSCAT

5 students to represent Oman at science forum

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation announced that five winners will represent the Sultanate of Oman at the London International Youth Science Forum 2023, on Monday at Innovation Park Muscat.

During the event, 34 candidates presented their projects in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in front of an evaluation panel. Out of the 34 candidates, 5 participants have been chosen by the Ministry to represent the Sultanate of Oman for the fifth time at this year's forum.

The evaluation panel have selected Ilaf Yahya Al Kindi from Sultan Qaboos University with her project 'Treating Oil Spills and Produced Water Using a Plant Derived Extracts and Powders', Ibrahim Amur Al Barwani from Military Technological College with his project 'Rocket Propulsion - Breaking the Bounds of Gravity', Hamed Saleh Al Kalbnai from Sultan Qaboos University with his project 'Smart and Integrated Mobile Application Service for Community Waste Handling Using Image Processing', Nabras Hamdan Al Shukaili from Sultan Qaboos University with her project 'Producing highly efficient biodiesel from unused plant

seeds and recycling all production derivatives', and Abdullah Said Al Hasni from National University Of Science and Technology with his project 'Smart Gas Regulator' to represent the Sultanate of Oman at the London International Youth Science Forum 2023.

Under the theme of 'Science for Unity', the London International Youth Science Forum will be held from July 26 to August 9, 2023. Participants of the London International Youth Science Forum 2023 will be able to attend lectures, workshops and field visits to the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge and Imperial College London, and visit scientific laboratories, institutes and international companies.

It is worth noting that the participation of the Sultanate's youth in the London International Youth Science Forum comes as part of the Ministry's efforts to raise scientific awareness among young researchers by giving them the opportunity to meet with their peers from different countries of the world, and to inform them of the latest findings of scientists in various fields of research and knowledge, and provide an opportunity for young Omani researchers to benefit from successful research experiences and distinguished scientific programs that are offered to the youth around the world.



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ROYAL OFFICE MINISTER RECEIVES
PAKISTANI ARMY'S CHIEF OF STAFF
GEN. SYED ASIM MUNIR

Gen. Sultan Mohammed Al Nu'amani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office here on Monday Gen. Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Staff of the Army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged cordial conversation and discussed various matters of mutual interest. Earlier in the day Pakistan Army's Chief of Staff also visited the Maritime Security Centre. He was also received by Oman's Defence Secretary General, SAF Chief of Staff and RAO Commander. - ONA



UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES:

BAT, AL KHUTM
AND AL AYN

THE BAT SETTLEMENTS are among the most fascinating archaeological sites in Oman, famous for their ancient beehive tombs and cemeteries made from stone. The site is believed to go back to the third millennium BC. The tombs are one of many UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Oman, and are found near Ibri in the Governorate of Dhahirah. "The vast necropolis at Bat includes different clusters of monumental tombs that can be divided into two distinct groups," said UNESCO.

According to UNESCO, "The vast necropolis at Bat includes different clusters of monumental tombs that can be divided into two distinct groups. The first group is Hafit-period "beehive" tombs located on the top of the rocky slopes surrounding Bat, while the second group extends over a river terrace and includes more than a hundred dry-stone tombs. Another important group of beehive tombs is located at Qubur Juhhal at Al-Ayn, 22 km east-southeast of Bat. Most of these tombs are small, single-chambered, round tombs with dry masonry walls dating to the beginning of the 3rd millennium BCE. Others are more elaborate, bigger, multi-chambered tombs from the second half of the 3rd millennium BCE."

The archaeological sites of Bat, Al-Khutm and Al-Ayn encompass the most unique ensemble of 4000-5000 year-old burial monuments, towers, and remains of settlement in the Arabian Peninsula, representing an extraordinary example of the unique response of the



ancient people of Oman to the pressures of an increasing population and to the input from contacts with other civilisations.

Oman's Ministry of Tourism added: "A must-see attraction in the A'Dhahirah region, the Al Ayn and Bat Beehive Tombs are not only recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, but also boast the title of the most complete collection of necropolises and settlements in the world, dating back to the 3rd millennium BC.

"More than 100 tombs stand definitely on the hilltops of Northern Oman, all shaped like beehives. Little is known about the tombs, or the culture that constructed them, but they are thought to date from 3000 to 2000 BCE," added the ministry. "All together they form one of the largest prehistoric necropolises in the world."

It is a bit difficult to spot the tombs at first, since they merge harmoniously with the hills they were built on, but upon closer inspection they are easily spotted. The tombs are arranged in three main clusters, the one in Bat, which is arguably the most famous, as well as the sites of Al Ayn and Al Khutm.





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OHRC'S INITIATIVES

US Human Rights officials appreciate Oman's efforts

WASHINGTON: A number of human rights officials from the United States (US) expressed their appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Sultanate of Oman in the human rights field.

This came during a meeting between a delegation from Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) that is currently visiting the United States of America (USA) and several officials responsible with human rights files in the US State Department and the House of Representatives.

The delegation visited civil society institutions, figures from various research centres and American civil society organisations.

An event on human rights was held at Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre (SQCC) at Washington

D.C.. This event aimed at introducing the role, work and responsibilities of OHRC.

The delegation, headed by Sheikh Abdullah Shuwain Al Hosni, Chairman of OHRC, held separate meetings with the following: Cindy Dyer, Head of the US State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, Scott Turner, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Population, Migration, and Refugees, Rashad Hussain, Head of the Office of International Religious Freedom, Christopher Le Mon, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour, Daniel Benaim, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs and Thea Lee, Deputy Under-



secretary for Labour Affairs.

The delegation discussed the annual reports issued by the US Department of State that are related to human rights and freedoms in the world. The delegation highlighted mechanisms and steps

taken by the OHRC in response to these reports, the extent of attention accorded to their details, as well as responses, on a fact-based manner and after coordinating with the authorities concerned in the Sultanate of Oman.

The delegation explained that the OHRC conducts field visits in various governorates and wilayat, including the Central Prison, detention centres, workplaces and workers' residences, as well as field visits paid in response to reports raised by individuals.

Regarding American reports that are issued annually which deal with the situation of human rights in various countries of the world, including Oman, the delegation explained to the authorities concerned on the American side that these reports receive special attention. This covers examining the contents of the reports, studying their topics and responding to the reports after confirming facts and correct information through authorities concerned in the

country in order to meet the commitments of OHRC to the basic principles of the laws of the international community in the field of human rights.

The delegation also affirmed to the American side OHRC's willingness to exert all efforts that boost cooperation, develop communication and coordination between the two sides in a bid to serve human rights.

Moreover, the delegation held an event at Sultan Qaboos Cultural Centre in Washington D.C. that deals with human rights. Oman's Ambassador to the USA Moosa Hamdan Al Ta'ei was present during the event. As many as 70 politicians and human rights activists participated in the event.

— ONA

EDUCATION

Indian Ambassador, Dhofar University Vice Chancellor hold fruitful discussion

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Dhofar University Vice Chancellor Professor Amer Ali Al Rawas welcomed the Indian Ambassador to Oman His Excellency Amit Narang to the campus. Amit Narang on his first visit to Dhofar University had a fruitful discussion with the Vice Chancellor on the important issues of cooperation between the Higher Education Institutions of Excellences in India and Dhofar University in the areas teaching, learning and research.

Professor Amer Al Rawas briefed the visiting dignitary about the great progress made by Dhofar University in the field of education, research and community outreach.

He highlighted the close association of the DU Researchers with their Indian counterparts which yielded a total of more than 250



research papers in various areas.

Professor Amer thanked Amit Narang for the great continued support of the Indian embassy and the government of India in facilitating Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Indian Institutions like Indian Institute of Technology(IIT), Mumbai, and Indian Agricultural Research Institute(IARI), New Delhi.

With the support of the Indian Embassy Dhofar University has been offering Hindi Language as a foreign language elective for its students.

Amit Narang along with Praveen Kumar, Second Secretary toured the facilities of the University and had a fruitful discussion with the Indian academic community of the University.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

Oman and Iran Business Forum explores new trade partnerships

TEHRAN: The Joint Oman-Iran Business Forum was held here on Monday in a bid to boost trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The forum also aimed at consolidating bilateral business relations, conducting strategic partnerships to augment the volume of investments and business activity and accessing new economic fields.

Several B2B meetings were held during the forum between Omani and Iranian businesspeople. Those meetings targeted striking



business and investment deals. As many as 250 Iranian firms took part in the event.

The forum was attended by

members of the Joint Oman-Iran Business Council and the delegation that is taking part at Iran Expo 2023. — ONA

INDIAN SCHOOL IBRI

34th Annual Day celebrated

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Indian School Ibri celebrated its 34th Annual Day on 4th May 2023, with great enthusiasm and pride. The theme of the celebration was "Brotherhood".

The highlights of the annual day celebrations was the inaugural ceremony of Language Lab, Digital Library, 3D Lab, laying the foundation stone for a refurbished playground, upgraded Sports and Games facilities and a facelift to the auditorium by the Chief Guest Najeeb Ali Ahmed Al-Rawas, Governor of Al Dhahirah, Sultanate of Oman.

The state of the language lab was installed as it was felt that it was a dire necessity for the students to up-skill their language curve. The acute requirements



of the day is the Digital Lab leading the school towards a more modernised form of learning and introducing the students to future career options. The progress of the school could be seen in the installation of the 3D Lab, is the much-needed concept in the present scenario. It was felt that a modern playground was needed

to accommodate the demands of the new generation and the required amenities were attached so that students could enjoy modern games. A facelift to the auditorium is needed to maximise the sound and lighting experience, a visual treat for the students.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

INDIAN SCHOOLS

No child will be deprived of admission

<FROM A1 Manickam said: "All the 4,677 children who applied for admission in the capital area have been allotted seats. The numbers are of admission of students from KG 1 to Class IX standards. The board is committed to ensure that no child is deprived of admission in our schools."

He said: "The centralised admission system with online registration introduced by the board has facilitated the entire admis-

sion process, making it convenient for parents and schools to take care of the rush for admissions."

Manickam said: "The relaxation of rules by the Government of Oman in allowing families to stay with people having a salary of OMR150 have also helped people bring their kids. The post-COVID era has also led to many expats returning to Oman with their families."

The online registration for admissions in Indian schools in the

capital area is open for the new applicants.

For admissions in the international wing of Indian School Al Wadi Al Kabir and Indian School Al Ghubra, parents can approach these schools directly.

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



Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)
113/2023	Supply of machinery and equipment Vocational training workshops affiliated to the Vocational Assessment and Rehabilitation Center in Al Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of supplying electrical, mechanical and industrial machinery and equipment and spare parts and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Sunday 28-5-2023 02:00 PM	Sunday 18-6-2023 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), On Tuesday 9/5/2023

❖ For Inquiry , please contact through the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry"

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MEETING

US, Saudi Arabia, India, UAE share vision of a secure, prosperous Middle East region

RIYADH: India, US, Saudi Arabia, UAE on Sunday worked towards advancing their shared vision of a more secure, prosperous Middle East region interconnected with India and the world, according to a readout issued by the White House.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Sunday met with his Indian counterpart Ajit Doval, his UAE counterpart Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Saudi Prime Minister and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia, according to the official readout.

The four delegations agreed to maintain regular consultations and follow up on the matters discussed throughout the day.

The US NSA also held bilateral meetings with the Crown Prince,



Sheikh Tahnoon, and Doval to discuss bilateral and regional matters. Sullivan said he looks forward to further consulting with Doval

on the margins of the Quad Summit later this month in Australia.

With Crown Prince Mohammed, Sullivan reviewed significant

progress in talks to further consolidate the now 15-month-long truce in Yemen and welcomed ongoing UN-led efforts to bring the war to a close, as well as covering a range of other issues, according to the readout issued by The White House.

Sullivan thanked the Crown Prince for the support Saudi Arabia has provided to US citizens during the evacuation from Sudan.

Meanwhile, NSA Doval recently held talks with his Iranian counterpart Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reported Iran's IRNA news agency.

The two officials discussed economic, political and security issues concerning the two countries as well as the most important regional and international developments. -ANI

Times

OF OMAN

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HOMELESS PEOPLE

7 killed after driver ramps car into crowd of migrants in Texas



WASHINGTON: At least seven people were killed and several others were injured after a driver crashed his vehicle into a group of people outside a shelter housing migrants and homeless people in Brownsville, Texas, media reported citing authorities.

According to authorities in Brownsville, Texas, they received a call at 8:30 am CT about a land rover that hit multiple people who were waiting at a bus stop across the street from the Ozanam Center, CNN reported. Ozanam Center is a non-profit homeless shelter that has been helping house migrants, as per the news report. Brownsville police spokesperson Martin Sandoval said that seven people were killed and between four to six others were injured due to the crash, as per the CNN report. Sandoval further said that police believe those killed included migrants.

While addressing a news conference, Martin Sandoval said

that witnesses at the scene detained the driver until officers arrived at the spot. He said the driver of the vehicle received medical treatment and has been arrested on a reckless driving charge, as per the CNN report.

According to Martin Sandoval, it is "more than likely" that there will be other charges added.

Police have not revealed the identity of the driver. Sandoval said the driver was a Hispanic man, as per the news report. Brownsville police are carrying out the investigation with the help of the Border Patrol.

Sandoval said that the authorities were still carrying out an investigation into whether the crash was intentional or accidental. According to him, witnesses have said they saw the car "lose control," as per the CNN report. He said that the immigrants live in the shelter while they wait for permanent housing. -ANI

MINING ACCIDENT

27 killed in Peru gold mine fire

LIMA: As many as 27 people died after a fire broke out in a small gold mine in southern Peru on Sunday, in the country's single deadliest mining accident in more than two decades, CNN reported citing the local government.

In a statement, the local government said a short-circuit sparked the fire in the early morning hours of Saturday in the southern region of Arequipa. "It's been confirmed by the Yanaquihua police station, there are 27 dead," local prosecutor Giovanni Matos told local television on Sunday.

The Peruvian Council of Ministers expressed solidarity with the families of miners who died after a fire broke out in the shaft of the Yanaquihua mine in Arequipa, as per the CNN report.

The Peruvian Council of Ministers tweeted in Spanish tweeted, "We express our sympathy with the families of the miners who died after a fire in the shaft of the Yanaquihua mine in the Arequipa region."



Images on local media and on social media showed dark plumes of smoke pouring out of the site.

Peru's Presidency in a statement on Twitter said that the ministries have been working to rescue and transfer the bodies, as per the CNN report. Further, the Peruvian government will provide all the necessary support to the regional government and the Municipality of Condesuyos.

Peru's Presidency tweeted,

"We express our condolences to the relatives and the people of Arequipa for the death of the 27 miners, an event that occurred in the Yanaquihua sector, Condesuyos province in Arequipa."

Peru is the world's top gold producer and second-largest copper producer. According to data from Peru's Ministry of Energy and Mines, the incident is the single deadliest mining accident since 2000, CNN reported. -ANI

TOURIST BOAT TRAGEDY

Toll in Kerala boat tragedy rises to 21

MALAPPURAM: The death toll in the Malappuram boat capsizing incident rose to 21 on Monday, the Regional Fire Range Officer said.

The incident happened in the Malappuram district in Kerala, where a tourist boat capsized near the Tanur coast.

While talking to ANI, Regional Fire Range Officer Shiju KK said, "So far, we have recovered 21 dead bodies. We don't know the exact number of people on the boat, so we are continuing the search to find out whether there are more victims trapped in the mud or not."

Several vehicles reached the spot and started the rescue operation.

Meanwhile, Kerala Health Minister Veena George called an emergency meeting of the State Health Department at midnight following the incident and directed the officials to ensure better treatment for the injured. -ANI

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‘You can’t step the line at that point of time’



Rajasthan Royals’ skipper Sanju Samson rued the no-ball that cost his side the match against Sunrisers Hyderabad after Abdul Samad smashed a last-ball six

JAIPUR: Rajasthan Royals (RR) suffered a dramatic defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) at home in Jaipur on Sunday with Hyderabad’s Abdul Samad hitting a winning six off the last ball of the match.

SRH chased 215 to keep their hopes alive in IPL 2023. Glenn Phillips brought down the equation from 41 runs required to win to 17 from the last over as he scored 25 runs in 7 balls.

Rajasthan Royals’ Sandeep Sharma had 16 to defend off the final over, and when he had Abdul Samad caught at long-off off the final delivery the Royals players had started their celebrations.

But it was premature as the no-ball siren went off and they had to go through the process once more, except Samad had the benefit of facing a free hit. With four runs now needed, Samad drilled Sandeep back over his head to seal victory for Sunrisers.

Impactful knocks from Abhishek Sharma (55 off 34) and Rahul Tripathi (47 off 29) laid the platform for SRH before Glenn Phillips and Samad (17 n.o. off 7) powered the team past the finish line.

Earlier, Jos Buttler had put on a batting masterclass to entertain Jaipur with a scintillating innings of 95 (59) while captain Sanju Samson had played the support act of 66 (38) to take Royals to a daunting 214/2.

Royals captain Sanju Samson said that the nature of the IPL means that any team can conjure up a result even out of difficult circumstances, but admitted it hurts to bowl no-balls at crucial moments, like the last ball of the match.

“To be very honest, we all know that that’s what IPL gives you. Matches like these, that’s what makes IPL so special. You can never never never feel like you’ve won the game,” Samson said after the game.

“I was very confident with Sandeep. He has won us a game with almost a similar situation. He did it again today but that no-ball actually ruined our result,” he said.

“It’s a no-ball, you have to bowl it again, as simple as that. You don’t think about it too much,” Samson said when quizzed about how he reacted to having to regroup his troops.

“And I think Sandeep knows what to do. But definitely in the mindset there might be a small change for a few seconds when you think the job is done. Almost everyone was celebrating.

“But that’s the nature of the game. You can’t step the line at that point of time.”

Samad, the beneficiary of the no-ball, was quick to admit that he was fortunate as he finished unbeaten on 17 off seven.

“I was just waiting for the ball to get in the slot eventually and luckily I got a no-ball as well. I got lucky today,” Samad said.

“When I crossed the crease the umpire signalled no-ball, so I told Marco [Jansen] to come back. Umpire told us only one run will be given. I was waiting for the ball to hit in the right area. That’s it, it went there, I went for it and it worked out.”

Sunrisers captain Aiden Markram was “super grateful and relieved” with the close win and he heaped praise on Samad.

“Emotions turned quite quickly there, but it was nice for us to get over the line. Another close game,” Markram said at the post-game presentation ceremony.

“Means a lot to the guys, someone like Samad who works hard and only really bats when he is expected to sort of get 15 from an over. It’s never easy,” Markram said. - Agencies

AGAINST AUSTRALIA



Kishan replaces KL Rahul in India side for WTC final

MUMBAI: Ishan Kishan was on Monday named as replacement for the injured KL Rahul in India’s squad for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against Australia at The Oval in June.

Rahul, the captain of Lucknow Super Giants, had been sidelined from the rest of the IPL and the upcoming WTC final with a thigh injury.

Kishan is uncapped in Test cricket, but has played 14 ODIs and 27 T20Is so far. He is the second wicketkeeper in India’s WTC squad behind KS Bharat, who had recently made his Test debut against Australia in February this year in the absence of Rishabh Pant.

As Rahul had announced earlier on social media, he will undergo surgery and will subsequently report to the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru for rehab.

Rahul’s LSG team-mate Jaydev Unadkat is also out of the rest of the IPL with injury and a decision on his availability for the WTC final will be taken later, according to a BCCI statement. The left-arm seamer had sustained a left-shoulder injury while training at the nets during his IPL stint with LSG. He then travelled to Mumbai for scans and visited one of the specialist consultants appointed by the BCCI.

Umesh Yadav has also joined the injury list, having hurt his hamstring during Kolkata Knight Riders’ game against Royal Challengers Bangalore on April 26. The fast bowler has not played for KKR since, but has resumed “low-intensity bowling”. The BCCI’s medical team is working with KKR’s staff to get Umesh fit.

In the injury-enforced absence of both Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, Ajinkya Rahane might return to India’s XI, having last played in a Test on January 22.

Former India coach Ravi Shastri had backed Rahane’s inclusion in the squad, underlining Rahane’s desire to play Ranji Trophy as one of the key differentiators. Cheteshwar Pujara is already in the UK and is in excellent form, having scored three centuries in four games for Sussex in county cricket.

Meanwhile, batters Suryakumar Yadav and Ruturaj Gaikwad and seamer Mukesh Kumar have been named as reserve players for the WTC final. Among them, only Suryakumar has Test-match experience, having made his debut against Australia in Nagpur in February.

Squad: Rohit Sharma (capt.), Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli, Ajinkya Rahane, KS Bharat (wk), R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav, Jaydev Unadkat, Ishan Kishan (wk).

Standby players: Ruturaj Gaikwad, Mukesh Kumar, Suryakumar Yadav. - Agencies

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Happy to get out on top, says Phillips

JAIPUR: Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) hard-hitting batter Glenn Phillips was quite delighted to win the match for his team and gave credit to the pinch-hitter Abdul Samad for his heroics in the last over of the run chase against Rajasthan Royals (RR) on Sunday.

Phillips said: “It was a situation where it was going to go one of two ways. Happy to get out on top of this one. We are all here to do our job, this is what the team needed today. Fantastic for it to pay off, and I had so much fun today out there.”

Blistering cameos under pressure from Phillips (25 off 7) and Samad (17 n.o. off 7) powered the away team past the finish line.

“I felt I left a lot out there with 17 needed off the final over, but then Samad did what he did and obviously, we got that little bit of luck with the no-ball,” Phillips added. - ANI

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It was another last-ball thriller as Kolkata Knight Riders chased down Punjab Kings' 179 at Eden Gardens on Monday night

KOLKATA: A solid fifty from captain Nitish Rana coupled with breezy knocks from Andre Russell and Rinku Singh guided Kolkata Knight Riders to an exciting last-ball win over the Punjab Kings at Eden Gardens on Monday.

After winning the toss and electing to bat first, the Kings posted 179-7 off their 20 overs, courtesy a 57 off 47 balls from captain Shikhar Dhawan.

Chasing 180 to win, Nitish Rana made a 38 ball 51 before a blitz from Russell who hit 42, which included three sixes and three fours, saw the hosts claim victory.

Russell's knock came off just 23

balls and included a 20-run penultimate over leaving the Knight Riders needing six to win off the last over.

The Jamaican fell off the penultimate ball of the match with KKR needing two to win before Rinku Singh, who finished unbeaten on 21 off 10 balls, hit the final ball bowled by Arshdeep Singh for four to seal the win.

Earlier, a half-century by skipper Shikhar Dhawan and late cameos by Shahrukh Khan and Harpreet Brar guided Punjab Kings (PBKS) to a competitive 179/7.

Electing to bat first, PBKS opener Prabhsimran Singh hit Vaibhav Arora for three boundaries in the first over. Dhawan also joined the

onslaught as he hammered two straight fours. However, PBKS could not carry the momentum for long as Prabhsimran's topsy-turvy season continued with his dismissal for 12 by Harshit Rana.

Bhanuka Rajapaksa, who was making his return to the side, failed to capitalise on his chance and fell for a three-ball duck to Harshit.

Liam Livingstone joined his skipper and made his intentions clear by smashing Andre Russell for three straight boundaries in the fifth over. The over gave away 19 runs and PBKS raced to the 50-run mark in five overs.

Varun Chakravarthy bowled the final over of the powerplay and took the prized wicket of Living-



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A background image showing a cricket player in a yellow jersey with 'Gulf' and 'TVS EUROGRIP TYRES' logos. The player is smiling and has a beard. The background is slightly blurred, showing other players and a stadium setting.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Batting alongside Ruturaj [Gaekwad] is a real treat. I think he is one of the best players I have seen first-hand. I am very fortunate to be batting and watching him from the other end, going about his business.”

Devon Conway

Chennai Super Kings

TODAY'S MATCH

The logo of the Mumbai Indians cricket team, featuring a stylized 'MI' in blue and orange with the word 'INDIANS' below it.

Mumbai
Indians

VS

The logo of the Royal Challengers Bangalore cricket team, featuring a stylized 'RCB' in blue and orange with the word 'ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE' below it.

Royal
Challengers
Bangalore

6pm, Mumbai

POINTS TABLE

TEAM	P	W	L	NR	NRR	PTS
GT	11	8	3	0	+0.951	16
CSK	11	6	4	1	+0.409	13
LSG	11	5	5	1	+0.294	11
RR	11	5	6	0	+0.388	10
KKR	11	5	6	0	-0.079	10
RCB	10	5	5	0	-0.209	10
PBKS	11	5	6	0	-0.441	10
MI	10	5	5	0	-0.454	10
SRH	10	4	6	0	-0.472	8
DC	10	4	6	0	-0.529	8

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

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES

The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by July 2023 reaching \$76.10, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by \$2.86 from the price of Friday, which was \$73.24. - OMA

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,680.61 points, down by 0.78 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.55 per cent at 484.26 points. Oman Chromite, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser.

European Union looks at GCC for LNG supplies amidst crisis

State oil companies in the region such as UAE's flagship company Adnoc are taking advantage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict to expand their natural gas production and simultaneously increase their investment commitments to target Europe's gas market

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The GCC region has been one of the key regions eyed by the European Union countries for LNG supplies in their bid to diversify away from Russian energy, according to a new report.

State oil companies in the region such as UAE's flagship company Adnoc are taking advantage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict to expand their natural gas production and simultaneously increase their investment commitments to target Europe's gas market, the Kuwait-based Kamco Investment said in its latest Natural Gas Mar-



FALLING NATURAL GAS PRICES: The Kamco Invest report said that natural gas prices have been plummeting since the start of the year. - Photo used for illustrative purpose only

ket Update May 2023, report. "Adnoc (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company) is currently constructing additional LNG capacity and increasing its international natural gas production footprint in other states in the Middle East region. The company has announced it has taken a strategic stake in Israel's offshore gas company NewMed Energy."

"Moreover, the energy company has also reported that its subsidiary, Adnoc Logistics & Services deployed five new Very Large Gas Carriers (VLGCs) which were built in China. The ships are intended to ship LPG further developing Adnoc's ability to meet the growing worldwide gas demand.

On the other hand, Qatar regained its position as the world's largest LNG exporter in 2022 according to Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). The Kamco

Invest report further said that Qatar has exported an estimated 80 million tonnes of LNG during 2022 followed by Australia (79 million tonnes), the USA (78 million tonnes) and Russia (32 million tonnes).

In 2022, the US was the primary driver in global LNG exports with other gas-exporting countries such as Qatar, Russia and Norway contributing little to the rise in LNG exports. In contrast to 2022, things look different so far. In March-2023, Qatar was the driving force of LNG exports in GECF member states. Total growth in LNG exports by GECF states rose 6.7 per cent (1.11 million tonnes) y-o-y during March-2023 to reach 17.66 million tonnes. Qatar represented 0.62 million tonnes or 56 per cent of the total LNG export increases by the GECF member countries. The rise in Qatar's LNG

exports was attributed to lower maintenance activity in 2023 as compared to 2022.

World natural gas prices

The Kamco Invest report further said that natural gas prices have been plummeting since the start of the year. Moderate winter demand and negative sentiment towards industrial consumption fuelled by the US Federal Reserve's aggressive rate increases adversely impacted the demand outlook.

The monthly World Bank Natural Gas Index dropped 59.1 per cent in the last six months, underscoring the commodity's weaker global sentiment.

Last winter, European countries for the first time faced winter gas shortages as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict crisis.

However, the winter gas shortages have not materialised for Eu-

ropean countries because of mild winters and EU states securing alternatives to Russian gas. This eased negative gas market sentiment towards European countries' ability to obtain alternative gas supplies thereby pushing down global natural gas prices.

According to the World Bank, US natural gas prices for April-2023 decreased by 66.9 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) to reach \$2.16 per Metric Million British Thermal Unit (MMBtu). Similarly, European natural gas prices for April-2023 declined by 58.0 per cent y-o-y averaging the month at \$13.52 per MMBtu, while the average monthly Japanese LNG price for April-2023 witnessed a 3.4 per cent y-o-y drop at \$15.73 per MMBtu. Natural gas and LNG spot prices in Europe and Asia witnessed three consecutive monthly declines between December-2022

to March-2023. In March-2023, NEA LNG spot prices averaged \$13.35 per MMBtu while the TTF average monthly spot prices hovered around \$13.87 per MMBtu.

In terms of consumption, global natural gas consumption is forecasted to grow around one per cent in 2023 driven by the US, China, and certain emerging markets especially in the Asia Pacific region, according to the Gas Exporting Countries Forum. EU gas consumption has been falling throughout the last three months of the year. EU gas consumption fell 19 per cent y-o-y to 40 billion cubic metres (bcm) in January-2023 mainly driven by above-average temperatures which impacted demand for heating in the residential sector as well as gas consumption reduction measures.

Comparatively, US gas consumption declined by 8.8 per cent y-o-y mainly due to the deceleration of industrial activity as well as warmer temperatures. For February-2023, EU gas consumption recorded a marginal drop of 0.1 per cent y-o-y to reach 38.5 bcm while natural gas consumption in the US witnessed a 5.9 per cent y-o-y decrease during the same period. The European Union's natural gas consumption continued to decrease during March-2023 as the bloc recorded a 13 per cent y-o-y decline to 34.1bcm.

As natural gas demand in Europe and the US waned, China's natural gas consumption has increased since the start of 2023. In February-2023 natural gas demand in China increased by 4.6 per cent y-o-y to 31bcm, mainly due to the relaxation of the pandemic measures and the bite of colder than expected weather. China's natural gas demand is expected to grow by 19bcm or 5.1 per cent in 2023 to reach 386.5bcm, according to the CNPC Research Institute.

NCSI DATA

Oman's hotel revenues rise by 49.9% to surpass OMR73 million in March

Muscat: The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a rise of 49.9 per cent at the end of March 2023 to reach OMR73.319 million compared to the corresponding period in 2022, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of 3-5 star hotel guests stood at 522,753, comprising an increase of 25.6 per cent till the end of March 2023 compared to 416,287 guests during the same period in 2022. The occupancy rate stood at 56.4 per cent.

The number of guests from Oceania recorded a significant surge of 210.2 per cent from 4,049 guests by the end of March 2022 to 12,558 guests by the end of March 2023. Asian guests also recorded a rise of 53.4 per cent, going from 42,157 guests by the end of March 2022 to 64,686 guests by the end of March 2023. Guests from the African continent stood



at 2,899 guests, constituting a rise of 43.5 per cent compared to March 2022.

The number of European guests stood at 169,334 guests by the end of March 2023, comprising a rise of 41.8 per cent compared to March 2022. Moreover, the number of Arab

and other guests by the end of March 2023 stood at 21,639, comprising a rise of 38.1 per cent compared to March 2022. A rise of 30.9 per cent was recorded by the GCC guests, whose number jumped from 25,228 by the end of March 2022 to 33,021 by the end of March 2023.

Further, American guests stood at 17,053, going up by 6.4 per cent compared to the same period in 2022. Meanwhile, the number of Omani guests declined by 1.5 per cent from 184,060 by the end of March 2022 to 181,369 guests by the end of March 2023. -OMA

PREPARATORY MEETING

GCC countries review programme to achieve economic unity by 2025

MUSCAT: The committee of under-secretaries of ministries of finance in GCC states held its 68th preparatory meeting for the 119th meeting of the Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee in Muscat. The meeting was chaired by Abdullah bin Salim Al Harthy, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance.

Al Harthy said that the meeting aimed at consolidating financial and economic cooperation and integration among GCC countries.

The meeting discussed various topics, including the recommendations submitted by a number of GCC panels. These included the



Committee of Central Banks Governors, the Committee of Heads and Directors of Tax Departments, the Customs Union Authority's management and the Gulf Com-

mon Market Committee.

In addition, the meeting looked into the recommendations submitted by the team concerned with examining the G20 initiatives in

the financial track.

The meeting also reviewed developments of the programme designed to achieve economic unity among GCC states by 2025. -OMA

OER BUSINESS SUMMIT

Summit to deliberate on building resilience in fragile global economy

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The 14th edition of OER Business Summit, a flagship event by the Sultanate's premium business magazine, will be held at Sheraton Oman on May 10.

Badr Salim Al Maamari, Secretary General, Oman Tender Board will be the chief guest at the summit that will be held under the auspices of Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail Al Mashani.

His Highness Dr Adham Al Said, Assistant Professor for Economics at the College of Economics and Political Science, Sultan Qaboos University, and Founding Partner, The Firm for Business and Economic Consulting will be the keynote speaker and guest of honour.

ITHCA Group and Oman Banks Association are the endorsement partners of the summit that will also have an HR focus. Organised by UMS Events, the summit will also feature a fireside chat with Pankaj Khimji, Adviser for Foreign Trade and International Cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Mayank Singh, Executive Vice President and Group Editor will moderate the session.

The summit will deliberate on the topic, "Building resilience in a fragile global economy."

Panelists at the session include Ali Al Mani, General Manager, Alizz Islamic Bank, Ali Sultan Alhashmi, CEO, Wujha, Masoud Al - Rawahi, Founder and CEO at PhazeRO and co-founder and Partner at Phaze Ventures, Sunil Kohli, CEO, Dhofar Insurance, Sivakumar Thangaratnavelu, Founder and CEO of Sympfly.ai, an insurtech company and Vikesh Mirani, Chief Financial Officer, Bank Dhofar. Oommen John, Editor, Oman Economic Review (OER)

will moderate the session.

The summit will also have presentations by Ali Talib Al Farsi, Head of Strategic Planning, ITHCA Group, Vimal Kumar, President, Liveplex Inc - a Silicon Valley company in the Web 3.0 space and Venkatesh Palakkad, Director & Principal Consultant, RAB Consulting. The Summit will bring together government and business leaders to brainstorm and share their experiences on leading the country and companies into an uncertain future. Senior government officials and C-Suite executives will discuss a roadmap for building a responsible and resilient business.

The HR Segment will discuss the topic, 'A Year of Redefining Work, WorkForce and everything in Between.' The session will discuss how organisations can efficiently stitch together a 'systemic operation' that works together and new ways to Recruit, Retain, Reskill and Redesign to negotiate a changing economy. Panelists at the session include Haifa Abdul Ali Al Lawati, Assistant General Manager Chief Human Resource Officer, BankNizwa, Fathiya Al Hajri, HR Director, RSA Oman (Al Ahlia Insurance), Sharifa Al Balushi, Group Head of Human Capital Center of Excellence, The Zubair Corporation, Sangeeta Shankaran, CFO turned Business & Leadership Coach and Murali Sundar, Chief Executive Officer, National Detergent Company (NDC). The HR session will be moderated by Venkatesh Palakkad, Director & Principal Consultant, RAB Consulting.

A workshop on 'Driving a high-performance culture for growth,' will be held alongside the Summit. Sangeeta Shankaran Sumesh, Chief Financial Officer turned Business and Leadership Coach will conduct the workshop.

MARKET

MSX index ends lower



Oman Chromite, up 10 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 10 per cent, was the top loser at the end of trading session on Monday

MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,680.61 points, down by 0.78 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.55 per cent at 484.26 points. Oman Chromite, up 10.00 per cent, was the top gainer while Barka Water & Power Company, down 10.00 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 963 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR3.66 million, with more than 14.82 million shares changing hands. Out of 54 traded securities, 10 advanced, 23 declined, and 21 remained unchanged. At the session close, GCC & Arab investors were net buyers for OMR684,000 while domestic investors were net sellers for OMR595,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR88,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,565.74 points, down 0.65 per cent. Prices of Al Madina Investments, Al Anwar Investment and Bank Dhofar were up by 3.85 per cent and 2.27 per cent and 1.27 per cent respectively. Prices of National Bank Oman, Taageer Finance, Takaful Oman, United Finance and Global Financial Investments were up by 4.51 per cent, 3.16 per cent, 1.79 per cent, 1.67 per cent and 1.56 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 6,180.62 points, down 0.74 per cent. Prices of Oman Chromite and A'Saffa Foods were up by 10.00 per cent and 0.69 per cent respectively. Prices of Gulf International Chemicals, Oman Cables Industry, Construction Materials, Raysut Cement and Galfar Engineering were up by 6.74 per cent, 4.76 per cent, 1.79 per cent, 1.27 per cent and 1.05 per cent respectively. Services Index was down by 0.78 per cent before closing at 1,735.72 points. Prices of Muscat Gases, Abraj Energy, SMN Power Holding and National Gas were up by 7.55 per cent, 2.58 per cent, 2.27 per cent and 0.94 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Suwadi Power, Al Batinah Power, Muscat Desalination, OIFC and Renaissance Services were up by 3.23 per cent, 3.23 per cent, 2.00 per cent, 1.71 per cent and 1.56 per cent respectively. — United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE

INDECIES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff.	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,710.30	4,672.73	4,680.61	4,717.35	-36.74	-0.78
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,605.38	7,558.19	7,565.74	7,615.11	-49.38	-0.65
Industry Index	6,226.89	6,120.06	6,180.62	6,226.89	-46.26	-0.74
Services Index	1,758.51	1,733.69	1,735.72	1,749.38	-13.66	-0.78
MSX Shariah Index	488.37	483.61	484.26	486.95	-2.70	-0.55
MSX TR INDEX	6,192.64	6,143.25	6,153.61	6,201.91	-48.30	-0.78
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,284.84	8,233.42	8,241.65	8,295.44	-53.79	-0.65
SERVICES TR IDX	1,931.54	1,904.27	1,906.50	1,921.51	-15.01	-0.78
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,651.86	6,537.75	6,602.45	6,651.86	-49.42	-0.74

Trading Summary							
Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
14,826,658	3,659,416	963	23,830,895,650	10	23	21	54

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, MAY 8

RUN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF. (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST RD	LAST OFFER	PREV. VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	40,000	3,600	2	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.088	0.002	2.273	0.090	0.087	0.090	0.090	17,967,204
OM0000002549	BANK DHOFAR	249,955	39,988	3	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.158	0.002	1.266	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	473,416,230
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSUR.	32,668	8,755	11	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.000	0.000	0.268	0.268	0.268	0.100	26,800,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	5,100	1,574	2	0.308	0.340	0.308	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.310	0.340	0.100	112,496,721
OM0000002168	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	2,437	780	1	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.320	0.000	0.000	0.320	0.308	0.320	0.100	10,400,000
OM0000000786	BANK MUSCAT	3,424,172	924,507	85	0.271	0.271	0.269	0.270	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.270	0.269	0.270	0.100	2,028,727,207
OM0000003398	SOHAR INT. BANK	610,038	63,607	10	0.103	0.105	0.103	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.100	481,956,540
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	101,805	8,653	14	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.085	0.087	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000001532	OMINVEST	83,058	32,861	13	0.396	0.396	0.394	0.394	0.396	-0.002	-0.505	0.394	0.392	0.396	0.100	263,335,976
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	768,133	752,996	39	0.988	0.988	0.976	0.980	0.988	-0.008	-0.810	0.980	0.980	0.988	0.100	735,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	285,955	107,413	38	0.378	0.378	0.370	0.374	0.378	-0.004	-1.058	0.374	0.370	0.374	0.100	243,453,142
OM0000001517	HSCB BANK OMAN	11,500	1,817	2	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.160	-0.002	-1.250	0.158	0.158	0.158	0.100	316,048,421
OM0000003125	GLOBAL INV. H.	162,341	10,337	7	0.064	0.064	0.063	0.063	0.064	-0.001	-1.563	0.063	0.062	0.064	0.100	12,600,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SER.	237,943	89,670	25	0.382	0.384	0.374	0.378	0.384	-0.006	-1.563	0.378	0.378	0.378	0.100	89,362,980
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	109,400	6,523	5	0.059	0.060	0.059	0.059	0.060	-0.001	-1.667	0.059	0.058	0.060	0.100	21,011,511
OM0000001525	OMAN INVST. FIN.	122,250	14,884	10	0.116	0.116	0.115	0.115	0.117	-0.002	-1.708	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.100	28,617,750
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	30,620	8,624	8	0.282	0.282	0.275	0.275	0.288	-0.013	-4.514	0.275	0.277	0.281	0.100	447,135,248
Total	17	6,277,345	2,075,790	275												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001020	OMAN CHROMITE	2,438	8,846	12	3.630	3.630	3.600	3.630	3.300	0.330	10.000	3.630	3.630	3.630	1.000	10,890,000
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	19,000	2,166	6	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.114	0.106	0.008	7.547	0.114	0.107	0.114	0.100	3,420,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	13,196	648	8	0.047	0.054	0.047	0.054	0.052	0.002	3.846	0.054	0.047	0.054	0.100	4,590,000
OM0000000804	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	3,341,005	11,773,338	438	0.302	0.324	0.302	0.318	0.310	0.008	2.581	0.318	0.318	0.320	0.100	244,923,600
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	2,432,235	214,371	72	0.089	0.090	0.087	0.090	0.088	0.002	2.273	0.090	0.088	0.090	0.100	18,000,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	87,000	9,396	9	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.108	0.107	0.001	0.935	0.108	0.107	0.110	0.100	9,180,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	12,800	3,715	6	0.290	0.292	0.290	0.292	0.290	0.002	0.690	0.292	0.281	0.292	0.100	35,040,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	500	725	1	1.450	1.450	1.450	1.450	1.450	0.000	0.000	1.450	1.450	1.450	0.100	72,500,000
OM0000002077	AL OMANIYA FIN.	125,000	16,250	4	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.130	0.128	0.131	0.100	39,997,673
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	12,000	2,064	2	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.172	0.000	0.000	0.172	0.170	0.172	0.100	335,341,084
OM0000002387	GULF MUSHROOM P.	1,995	459	3	0.228	0.223	0.228	0.230	0.230	0.000	0.000	0.230	0.228	0.233	0.100	10,530,134
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MRK.	279	249	1	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.892	0.000	0.000	0.892	0.884	0.892	0.100	84,740,000
OM0000002366	AL BATINAH DEV.	5,000	450	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.094	0.100	2,700,000
OM0000003961	VOLTAMP ENERGY	20,548	2,301	2	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.112	0.000	0.000	0.112	0.108	0.115	0.100	9,117,108
OM0000004735	SEMBOOR SALALAH	525,000	52,609	12	0.100	0.105	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.103	0.100	85,457,195
OM0000007910	AMAN REAL ESTATE	3,000	297	1	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.000	0.000	0.099	0.096	0.104	0.100	19,800,000
OM0000008447	OMAN RET. FUND	1,100	85	2	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.077	0.000	0.000	0.077	0.074	0.077	0.100	36,281,352
OM0000008710	BANKA DESALINATION	1,000	139	2	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.000	0.000	0.139	0.139	0.139	0.100	10,497,558
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEER	3,000	564	1	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.188	0.190	-0.002	-1.053	0.188	0.187	0.198	0.100	39,161,452
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	423,153	39,819	6	0.094	0.095	0.094	0.094	0.095	-0.001	-1.053	0.094	0.094	0.095	0.100	210,273,585
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	12,000	1,872	3	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.156	0.158	-0.002	-1.266	0.156	0.143	0.156	0.100	15,243,939
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	297,698	19,770	15	0.067	0.068	0.066	0.066	0.067	-0.001	-1.493	0.066	0.066	0.067	0.100	96,531,696
OM0000001368	CONSTRUCTION M.	10,270	565	2	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.056	-0.001	-1.786	0.055	0.054	0.055	0.100	3,437,500
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	29,480	1,624	5	0.056	0.056	0.055	0.055	0.056	-0.001	-1.786	0.055	0.053	0.055	0.100	13,750,000
OM0000007084	MCT DESALINATE	23,900	2,394	8	0.099	0.100	0.098	0.098	0.100	-0.002	-2.000	0.098	0.098	0.098	0.100	15,243,939
OM0000003281	TAAGEER FINANCE	263,000	23,930	10	0.092	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.095	-0.003	-3.158	0.092	0.090	0.092	0.100	24,272,823
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	497,469	14,926	16	0.030	0.031	0.030	0.030	0.031	-0.001	-3.226	0.030	0.029	0.030	0.100	20,246,623
OM0000004033	AL SUWADI POWER	23,618	727	3	0.031	0.031	0.030	0.030	0.031	-0.001	-3.226	0.030	0.030	0.033	0.100	21,432,190
OM0000001707	OMAN CABLES INDSTR.	1,600	3,040	3	1.900	1.900	1.900	1.900	1.9	0.005	4.762	1.900	1.900	1.900	0.100	170,430,000
OM0000002028	GULF INT. CHEMI.	32,500	2,747	7	0.085	0.085	0.083	0.083	0.085	-0.002	-4.742	0.083	0.082	0.083	0.100	1743,000
OM0000003141	Baraka Water and Power	86,615	11,187	15	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.130	-0.013	-10.000	0.117	0.117	0.117	0.100	187,200,000
Total	31	8,516,399	1,565,395	676												

LISTENING TO MUSIC MIGHT HELP REDUCE THE DIZZINESS, NAUSEA, AND HEADACHES THAT VIRTUAL REALITY USERS MAY SUFFER AFTER USING DIGITAL GADGETS, AS PER A STUDY.

CAN RIGHT MUSIC PREVENT VIRTUAL REALITY HEADACHES?



Our study suggests calming or joyful music as a solution for cybersickness in immersive virtual reality. Virtual reality has been used in educational and clinical settings but the experience of cybersickness can temporarily impair someone's thinking skills as well as slowing down their reaction times.



LIFESTYLE

Cybersickness - a type of motion sickness from virtual reality experiences such as computer games - significantly reduces when joyful music is part of the immersive experience, the study found. The intensity of the nausea-related symptoms of cybersickness was also found to substantially decrease with both joyful and calming music.

Researchers from the University of Edinburgh assessed the effects of music in a virtual reality environment among 39 people aged between 22 and 36. They conducted a series of tests to assess the effect cybersickness had on a participant's memory skills reading speed and reaction times.

Participants were immersed in a virtual environment, where they experienced three roller coaster rides aimed at inducing cybersickness. Two of the three rides were accompanied by electronic music with no lyrics by artists or from music streams that people might listen to which had been selected as being calming or joyful in a previous study. One ride was completed in silence and the order of the rides was randomised across participants.

After each ride, participants rated their cybersickness symptoms and performed some memory and reaction time tests. Eye-tracking tests were also conducted to measure their reading speed

and pupil size. For comparison purposes the participants had completed the same tests before the rides.

The study found that joyful music significantly decreased the overall cybersickness intensity. Joyful and calming music substantially decreased the intensity of nausea-related symptoms. Cybersickness among the participants was associated with a temporary reduction in verbal working memory test scores, and a decrease in pupil size. It also significantly slowed reaction times and reading speed. The researchers also found higher levels of gaming experience were associated with lower cybersickness. There was no difference in the intensity of the cybersickness between female and male participants with comparable gaming experiences.

Researchers say the findings show the potential of music in lessening cybersickness, understanding how gaming experience is linked to cybersickness levels, and the significant effects of cybersickness on thinking skills, reaction times, reading ability and pupil size, Dr Sarah E MacPherson, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Philosophy, Psychology, Language Sciences, said: "Our study suggests calming or joyful music as a solution for cybersickness in immersive virtual reality. Virtual reality has been used in educational and clinical settings but the experience of cybersickness can temporarily impair someone's thinking skills as well as slowing down their reaction times. The development of music as an intervention could encourage virtual reality to be used more extensively within educational and clinical settings." -ANI

SPORTS

Verstappen victorious in Miami

It was a statement victory by the Dutchman, who inflicted a psychological blow on his Red Bull teammate and likely title rival Sergio Perez

BELJING: Max Verstappen came through the field to win Sunday's F1 Miami Grand Prix and inflict a psychological blow on teammate and likely title rival Sergio Perez. Verstappen started only ninth on the grid after a red flag meant he couldn't complete his final qualifying lap, while Perez looked the heavy favourite to take victory after lining up on pole position. However, starting on hard tires, Verstappen made quick work of the rest of the pack, and by Lap 15 he was up to second behind Perez, who had only pulled out a 3.5 seconds lead on his medium compound rubber. Perez then pitted on Lap 19 to fit hard tires, allowing Verstappen through into the lead. But despite being on much fresher tires, the Mexican was unable to make significant inroads into Verstappen's lead, and the Dutchman was still 18 seconds ahead of Perez when he finally made his own pit stop on Lap 45. Emerging just 1.6 seconds behind Perez, Verstappen was quickly on the Mexican's tail and breezed past his teammate on Lap 47 to take a lead he would hold to the flag. "I just had a clean race and



picked the cars off one by one," said Verstappen, who also picked up the bonus point for fastest lap. "I stayed out really long on the hard tires and I think that's what made the difference and then a good little battle with Checo at the end. "Yesterday was of course a bit of a setback, but today we kept it calm, kept it clean and winning a race from P9 is very satisfying."

Perez crossed the line second for Red Bull's fourth 1-2 finish in five races so far in 2023, but the Mexican rued his inability to seriously challenge Verstappen for the win. "I tried. I gave it my all. We had graining and the initial pace wasn't good," said Perez. "The medium [tire] we had initially was poor, more than expected. It really compromised our pace and Max had tremendous pace on the Hard and we will analyse what



went wrong today because we simply didn't have the pace." Behind the Red Bull pair, Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso continued his good form with his fourth third-place finish of 2023. George Russell took fourth for Mercedes, ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz, who was slapped with a five-second penalty for speeding in the pit lane. Russell's teammate Lewis Hamilton finished sixth, ahead of

a disappointing Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari. The Alpines of Pierre Gasly and Esteban Ocon took eighth and ninth on a better weekend for the French outfit, with Kevin Magnussen rounding out the top ten in his Haas. For only the 14th time in F1 history, there were no retirements, with all 20 cars seeing the chequered flag. Verstappen's win sees him extend his lead at the top of the Driv-

ers' Championship, and he now has 119 points. Perez remains second with 105, and Alonso is third with 75 points. In the Constructors' Championship, Red Bull are way out in front with 224 points, Aston Martin are second with 102, and Mercedes are third on 96 points. The next round of the 2023 Formula One season is the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at the Imola Circuit. - Xinhua

ODI SERIES VS PAKISTAN

New Zealand avoid clean sweep



KARACHI: New Zealand put up an all-round performance to clinch a 47-run win over Pakistan in the fifth and final ODI in Karachi, denying the host a clean sweep of the series. New Zealand proved too strong in the series finale, as Pakistan clinched the series 4-1 in a result that caused a major shake-up at the top of the ODI team rankings. The loss led Pakistan to relinquish the top spot on the ICC Men's ODI Team Rankings. Chasing a target of 300, Pakistan were rocked early losing Shan Masood, Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan for cheap scores. Fakhar Zaman, who has been in glorious form throughout the series, also could not make a

massive contribution after being dismissed on 33 by Rachin Ravindra. Iftikhar Ahmed and Agha Salman then embarked on a 97-run stand which gave Pakistan real hope but those were dashed as Salman was dismissed on 57 by Henry Shipley. Iftikhar tried his level best with a knock of (94*) but it wasn't enough as Pakistan succumbed to a 47-run defeat and were displaced from the top spot in the team ODI rankings. Winning the toss, skipper Tom Latham opted to bat first in Karachi, with the decision proving to be the right call. Will Young missed out on a third ODI century, scoring a brilliant 87 off 91 balls. He

got support from Latham, who notched up his third half-century of the series with a 58-ball 59. Mark Chapman (43), Cole McConehie (26) and Rachin Ravindra (28) also chipped in with handy cameos as New Zealand posted a score of 299 in 49.3 overs. If a lower-order collapse hadn't occurred, they might have added a few more runs. Shaheen Afridi (3/46) was the best bowler for Pakistan, which was disciplined in its bowling effort. **Brief scores:** New Zealand 299 in 49.3 overs (Will Young 87, Tom Latham 59; Shaheen Afridi 3-46) beat Pakistan 252 in 46.1 overs (Iftikhar Ahmed 94, Fakhar Zaman 33; Henry Shipley 3-34, Rachin Ravindra 3/65). - ANI

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal keep title hopes alive

LONDON: Arsenal clawed Manchester City's lead at the English Premier League summit back to one point after they came out on top in a 2-0 thriller against Newcastle United at St James' Park on Sunday. Mikel Arteta's side, who have played one game more than the champions, responded superbly to the pressure exerted by Manchester City's victory over Leeds United to prevail in an action-packed, edgy encounter littered with chances on Tyneside. Newcastle, attempting to strengthen their push for a place in the Champions League next season, started at lightning pace - Jacob Murphy hitting the post and having a penalty award overturned by VAR. Arsenal, however, showed their strength and it was inspirational captain Martin Odegaard who followed up his double against Chelsea in midweek by drilling his 15th Premier League goal of the season past Newcastle keeper Nick Pope from 25 yards after 14 minutes. What followed was a magnificent game full of opportunities in a frenzied atmosphere. Pope saving crucially from Gabriel Martinelli, Bukayo Saka and Odegaard before half-time. Martinelli also struck the bar after the break. Arsenal keeper Aaron Ramsdale also produced vital stops from Joe Willock and Fabian Schar, with Alexander Isak heading against the post, before The Gunners broke clear to wrap up the three points - Schar turning Martinelli's cross into his



own net in the 71st minute. **Howler by De Gea** In the second match on Sunday, howler from David de Gea gifted West Ham 1-0 victory over Manchester United to boost their chances of Premier League survival and deal a blow to the Red Devils' top-four hopes. De Gea let a tame Said Benrahma effort from distance slip through his grasp to put the Ham-

mers in front midway through the first half. The win moved David Moyes' side seven points clear of the relegation zone with a superior goal difference to all the sides below them. Fourth-placed Manchester United missed the chance to move above Newcastle into third as they remain just a point ahead of Liverpool in fifth, with a game in hand. - Xinhua

FRENCH LEAGUE



PSG win first game after suspending Messi

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) moved to within three wins of the Ligue 1 title with a routine victory at Troyes on Sunday. PSG were dominant playing in their first match since suspending World Cup winner Lionel Messi. Kylian Mbappe opened the scoring for the champions in the eighth minute before Vitinha doubled the lead midway through the second half. Xavier Chavalerin pulled a goal back for Troyes late on, only for PSG

to add a third through Fabian Ruiz. PSG, who came into this match having lost three of their past six games, now need just seven more points to win a record 11th French title. They are six points clear of second-placed Lens with four more fixtures remaining this season. Troyes stayed 19th, 12 points off safety, and must win all of their remaining games - and hope results go their way - to pull off an unlikely survival. Elsewhere, Alexandre Lacazette scored four goals, including a 100th-minute penalty, to help his Lyon side beat Montpellier in an epic 5-4 thriller. After Lacazette opened the scoring in the 31st minute, Montpellier's Elye Wahi scored four unanswered goals to put his side 4-1 up after 55 minutes. Goals from Lacazette and Dejan Lovren then reduced the deficit with Lacazette equalising in the 82nd minute. And the ex-Arsenal forward

netted the winner from the spot seconds from time. Lyon were awarded the penalty in the eighth minute of stoppage time after the video assistant referee adjudged Christopher Jullien to have brought Lacazette down in the area. The result saw Lyon stay seventh, three points off a Europa League qualification spot with four matches remaining in Ligue 1. Montpellier remained 12th, 11 points clear of the relegation places. - Agencies

IN PICTURES



Afghan children chase football dream despite war, poverty
Young people play football in front of the Buddha site in Bamyan province, Afghanistan. Millions of kids around the world dream of becoming football legend Lionel Messi. *xinhua*



Budapest International Contemporary Puppet Festival held in Hungary
People watch a puppet performance during the opening of the 1st Budapest International Contemporary Puppet Festival in Budapest, Hungary. *xinhua*



Flower festival parade held in Larnaca, Cyprus
Girls attend a parade during a flower festival in Larnaca, Cyprus. *xinhua*



Bellamkonda Sreenivas during the promotion of his film 'Chatrapathi'
Bollywood actor Bellamkonda Sreenivas interacts with his fans during the promotion of his film 'Chatrapathi', at City Centre Mall, in Patna. *ANI Photo*



Francois' leaf monkeys seen in Mayanghe National Nature Reserve
A Francois' leaf monkey is seen with a cub in the Mayanghe National Nature Reserve in Guizhou Province, southwest China. Francois' leaf monkeys, also known as Francois' langurs, is one of China's most endangered wild animals and is under top national-level protection. *xinhua*



Ancient city wall in Xi'an, NW China
This aerial picture shows a view of the Yongning Gate of the ancient city wall in Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. Xi'an, a city with over 3,100 years of history, served as the capital for 13 dynasties in Chinese history. It is also home to the world-renowned Terracotta warriors created in the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BC). *xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Bank Muscat wins Best Private Bank Award from EMEA Finance

The award sheds light on the professional standards achieved by the bank, in accordance with international standards and practices

MUSCAT: In recognition of its excellence in providing diversified and outstanding solutions for wealth management, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, was awarded as the Best Private Bank in Oman by EMEA Finance, the well-known publication specialised in reporting financial and banking developments in Europe and the Middle East.

The award sheds light on the professional standards achieved by the bank, in accordance with international standards and practices. It is an acknowledgment of the effective role and unique services of the bank that provide enriching solutions in the field of private banking.

Bank Muscat offers a wide range of private banking options, exclusive for high net-worth customers



including investment offerings that cover global markets and all asset classes, through a robust execution platform administered by experienced and dedicated Relationship Managers. The offerings also cover stocks, bonds, ETFs and mutual

funds across global markets.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulnasir N. Al Raisi, General Manager – Premier Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “We are proud for being recognised again as the Best Private Bank in Oman

by EMEA Finance. This reflects Bank Muscat’s entrepreneurship in providing various prominent banking services for its customers, who represent a top priority for the bank. They enjoy an exclusive banking experience starting

from investment solutions, wealth management, advisory and other services, which can meet their expectations and deliver excellence in all aspects. The bank’s efforts to maintain high-level standards of professionalism, wealth manage-

ment and investment solutions have been applauded by pioneer institutions around the world.”

Bank Muscat offers Private Banking customers a complete suite of services including private equity funds, real estate funds, ETFs, offshore banking and portfolio management through reputed global counterparties.

Bank Muscat Private Banking also sends regular research reports to its customers as part of new initiatives to improve customer experience. These reports cover investment ideas, global macroeconomic outlook and updates on key economic and geographic events impacting performance of various asset classes.

The Private banking services include conventional accounts, term deposits, currency exchange, domestic and international transfers, online banking and regular asset monitoring. Visa Platinum debit card holders enjoy luxury car finance and yacht finance along with competitive rates for deposits, loans and foreign exchange. At the same time, Private banking Visa Infinite credit cardholders enjoy 1% cashback rewards on all transactions made through the Private banking Visa Infinite credit card. The card also facilitates exclusive Hilton Honours Gold Membership, unlimited access to 1,000+ airport lounges globally, complimentary chauffeur service to and from Muscat International Airport, special offers at over 900 luxury hotels around the world, multi-trip travel insurance and a Global Concierge Service.

HONoured



Al Jenaibi wins two awards at BMW Group Middle East Marketing & Sales Conference

MUSCAT: Al Jenaibi International Automobiles, the official importer of BMW Group vehicles in Oman, has been honoured with two coveted awards at the BMW Group Middle East & Sales Conference 2022 - the 2022 GKL World Share Award and 2022 Key Opinion Leader Sales Champion Award.

Commenting on the awards, Rachid Zamani, Managing Director of Al Jenaibi International Automobiles, said, “We are delighted to win two of the most sought-after awards this year, reflecting the hard work of the entire team at Al Jenaibi International Automobiles. I’m proud of our achievements and the continued dedication of our whole team – from marketing to sales,

to service. Our continued aim is to provide exceptional services to our customers across the country and these accolades are a reflection of that.”

The Key Opinion Leader Sales Champion Award is honoured to the market that sold the most cars to influential and key opinion leaders in the GCC. This reward resembles the vision and mission of Al Jenaibi to be one of the best in the market and showcases the valued relationships that the importer holds. Meanwhile, the GKL (Grand Klasse) World Share Market recognises the importer for being the best-performing market in sales for Grand Klasse models in the world, which includes the BMW 7 Series, BMW 8 Series and BMW X7.

CAmpaign

Toyota’s ‘Biggest Excitement’ ending soon

MUSCAT: Own a Toyota and enjoy Biggest Excitement benefits before the campaign ends on May 10. The benefits include service from 2 years/20,000 km up to 5 years / 50,000 km (whichever is earlier) and insurance 1 year or cash gift in lieu of insurance OMR125 to OMR300 and 8 Toyota Raize SUV raffles. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply. Customers can visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom for exact details.)

In Oman, Toyota has an impressive range that continues to outdo expectations. Among them are the legendary Land Cruiser, the dependable Hilux, the popular corolla and more.

Toyota’s legendary Land Cruiser still remains unbeatable in many aspects and continues to be a leader in terms of its inspiring strength, durability and reliability. Powering the Land Cruiser is a choice of two powertrain options. The V6 twin-turbo 3.5-liter petrol engine achieves class-leading performance that surpasses that of a conventional V8, producing 409 hp and up to 650 nm. This is paired to a 10-speed automatic transmission. Also available is a naturally aspirated 4.0-liter V6 petrol engine that produces 271 hp and up to 385 nm paired to a 6-speed automatic transmission.

The Toyota Hilux is one of the most dependable and powerful pick-ups in its category. In Oman, customers have a choice of two versions of the Hilux. The rugged Hilux with J-Deck and the sporty 4.0 Litre V6 Hilux Adventure with the A Deck. The 4.0 Litre V6 Toyota Hilux Adventure is a truly exciting mean machine that’s been developed by Toyota to get your pulse racing. The powerful Hilux Adven-



ture is equipped with a mighty 4.0 Litre V6 Engine packing a mighty punch with 235 HP & 38.3 Kg-m Torque. It has an Auto Disconnect Differential to keep the tempo going. Similarly the Hilux 4X4 is equipped with a 2.7 Litre Petrol Engine that is available in 5-speed Manual Transmission and 6 Speed Automatic Transmission, outputting 164 HP.

The Toyota Camry takes style and performance to high levels with stylish exterior, advanced range of features and technology. The Camry is available with a choice of three powertrain options. They include a 2.5-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine that produces 204 hp and 243 nm of torque which is paired with an eight-speed Direct-Shift Multi-mode automatic transmission. A 3.5-litre V6 engine with D-4S fuel injection system that produces

298 hp and 356 nm of torque and which is mated to an eight-speed multi-mode automatic transmission. And an electrified hybrid system, which combines a petrol engine and two electric motors. The combined power of the two power sources is 208 hp. It is also paired with an Electrically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission (ECVT), delivering heightened driving pleasure.

Toyota Corolla continues to be an inspiration for the industry with popular combination of stylish design, advanced features, well-detailed interior and more. The Corolla is equipped with a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque. For more immersive driving experiences, the engine is paired to a Direct Shift CVT transmission. Customers looking for a more fu-

el-efficient option can choose the 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine Corolla that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque. This is paired with a CVT transmission.

Toyota popular Yaris promises a dynamic driving experience thanks to its four-cylinder engine that is equipped with 16-valve DOCH and dual VVT-I. The vehicle is available with 1.5-liter capacity engine that delivers smooth acceleration and a quick response, producing 105 horsepower and 138 Nm of torque with fuel consumption of 20.5 km/l.

This is paired with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), which simulates a seven-speed sequential shift transmission to deliver powerful, smooth acceleration from start-off and at low speeds, and quiet, efficient transmission at higher speeds with excellent fuel efficiency.



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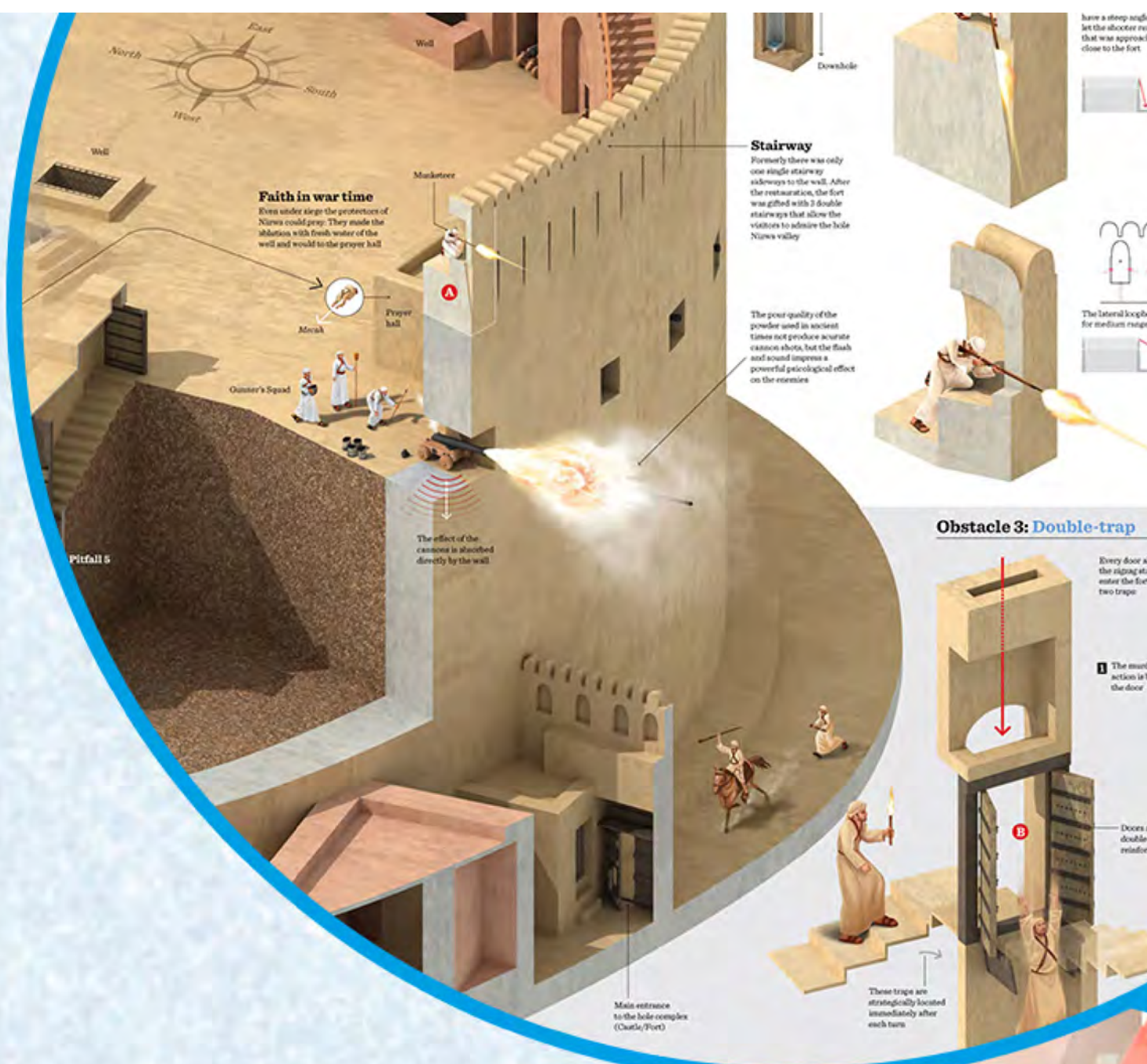


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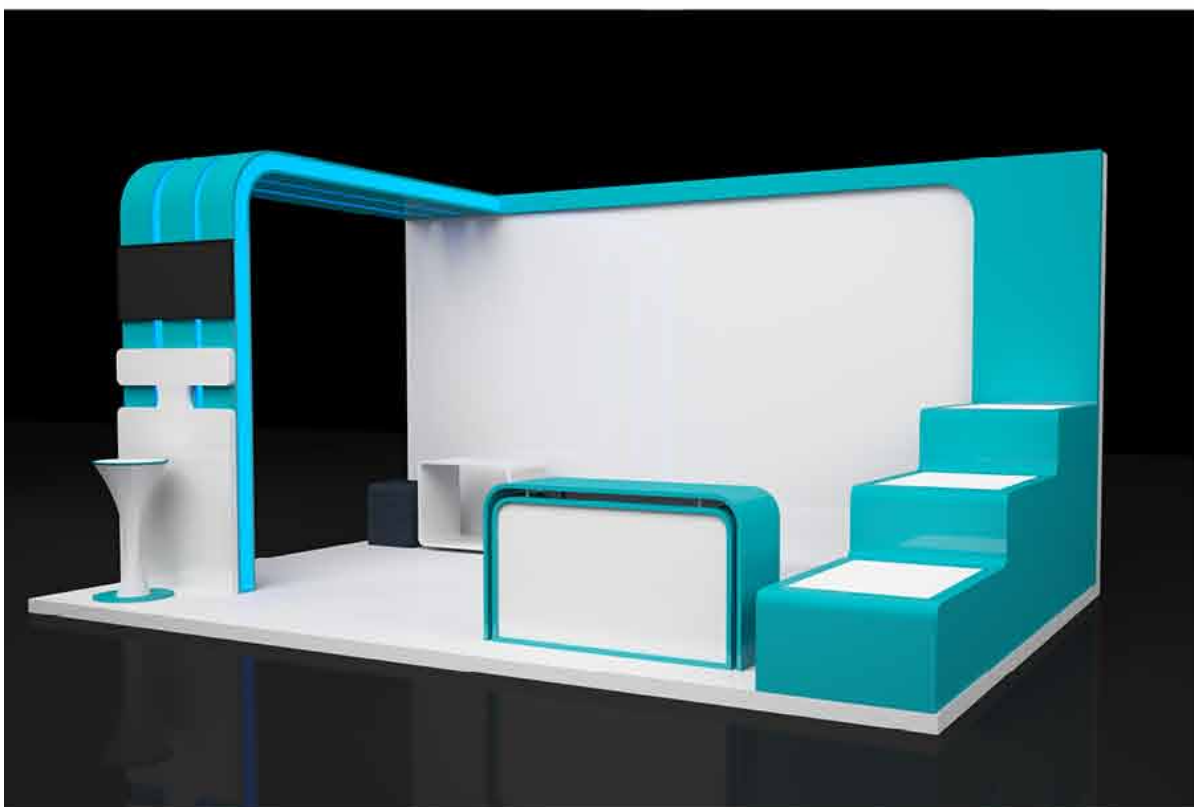
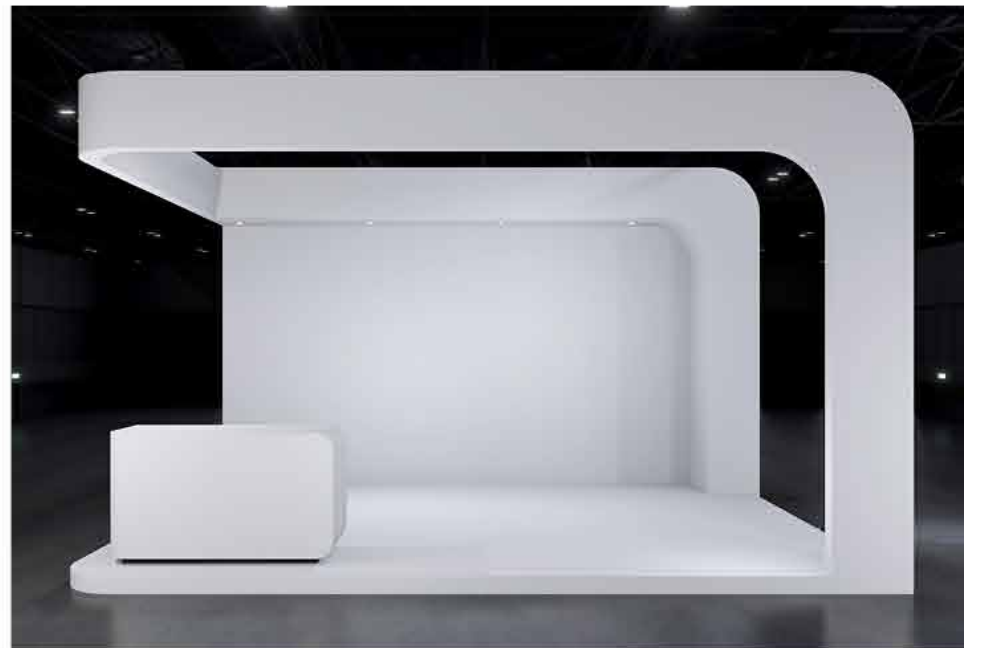
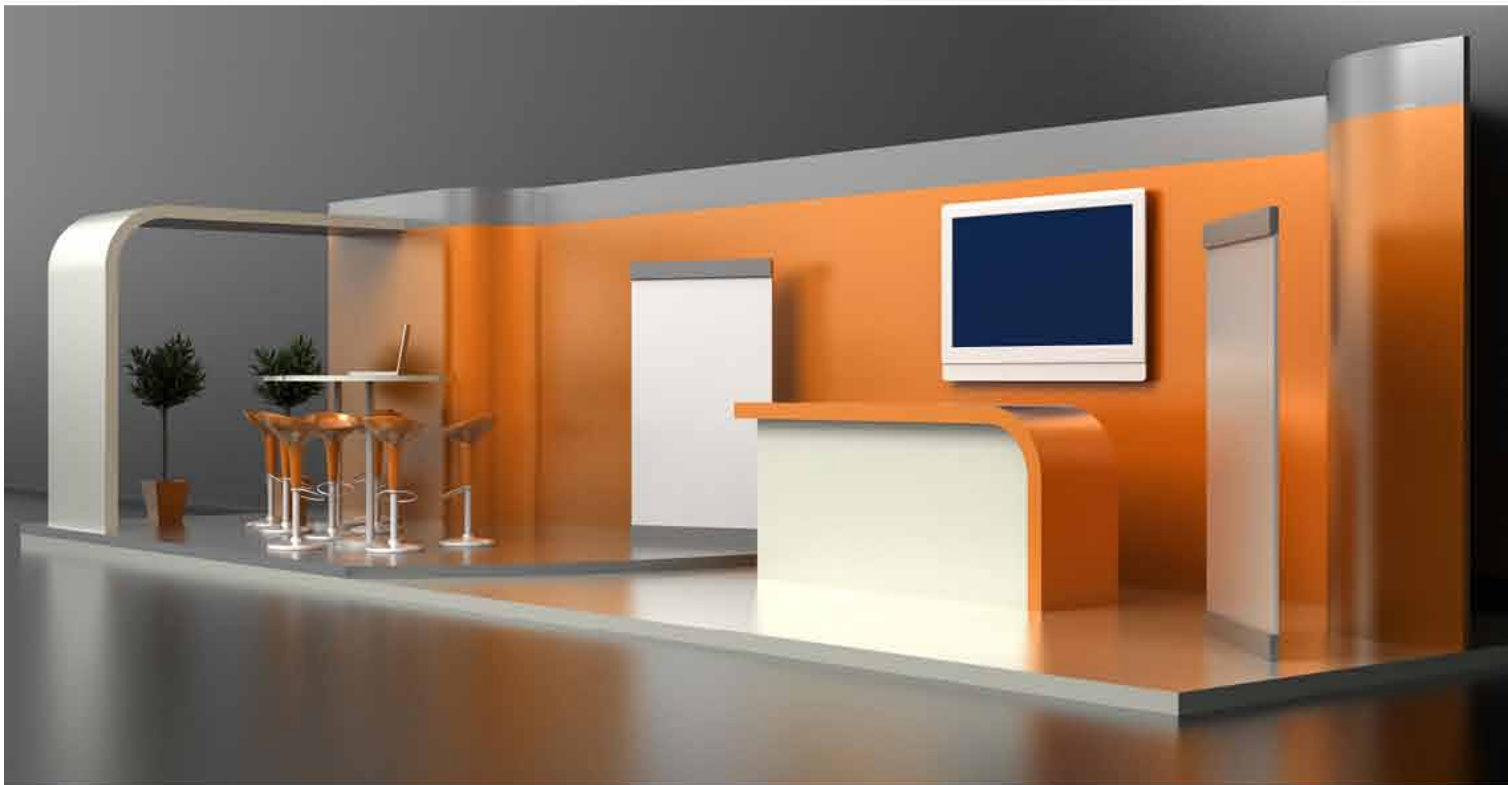
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