

EXCHANGE RATE INDEX OF OMANI RIAL RISES 1.6%

The effective exchange rate index of the Omani Rial rose by 1.6% to 115.3 points by the end of June 2023, compared to 113.5 points at the end of the same period in 2022, according to the data issued by the NCSI. **>A4**



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OMAN, KOREA INK MOU ON GREEN ENERGY TRANSITION

The Sultanate of Oman on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Republic of Korea in the field of green energy transition. Oman was represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, while Korea was represented by the Ministry of Environment. **>A5**



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GCC BUSINESS SUMMIT

MMG announces strategic partnership with Opal

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Muscat Media Group (MMG) has announced a strategic partnership with the Oman Energy Leaders Circle (GLC).

As part of the agreement, Opal will become the main partner for the upcoming GCC Business Summit, to be organised by Gulf Leaders Circle.

The forum aims to promote Omani products, enhance cooperation and review investment opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman as well as other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, with a special focus on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The forum will also promote the

sharing of knowledge and expertise among the participants.

On behalf of the MMG, Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MMG and the Editor-in-Chief of Al Shabiba, signed the agreement while Opal was represented by Abdulrahman Al Yahyaei, its CEO.

In a statement, Al Zedjali said, "At MMG, we believe that media establishments can go beyond the mere dissemination of news reports and the distribution of reliable and authentic information and play a significant role in the national economy while promoting economic cooperation with various companies and establishments across GCC countries. This cooperation can be achieved



through various events such as forums and conferences and through coordination between the leaders in economic fields."

Speaking on the Gulf Leaders Circle division, he said that the main goal was to boost understanding of business trends in GCC states and enhance trade relations among the countries.

"Gulf Leaders Circle recently organised a round table meeting on 'Change through Technology' in association with Microsoft, which shed light on how emerging companies in the Sultanate of Oman can adopt new technologies to provide the best services," he said.

Another round table meeting, held to enhance cooperation be-

tween Omani and Saudi companies operating in the field of energy, also witnessed large-scale success, he said, adding that the current strategic partnership with Opal was a delightful step in the right direction.

"MMG, through GLC, will organise several such forums and conferences in the future aimed at creating partnerships with establishments and companies of other countries."

Abdulrahman Al Yahyaei, CEO of Opal, also expressed his support for the agreement and said that this partnership would focus on organising a conference to bring together CEOs from the Sultanate of Oman and the KSA in Muscat.

G20 MEETING

Al Yousef calls for sustainable global growth



NEW DELHI: Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, took part in the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers' meetings in Jaipur, India.

The meetings discussed issues related to trade and investment, most importantly means of supporting multilateral trade for global growth and prosperity, digitising trade (digital transformation in government services), building comprehensive and flexible trade, benefiting from technology to achieve global growth, managing supply chains, supporting small and medium enterprises and increasing their competitiveness in global trade.

During the meeting, Al Yousef underlined the importance of collective international efforts to achieve sustainable global growth and strengthen global supply chains and e-commerce.

He affirmed that the Sultanate

of Oman, under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan, has made many achievements in various areas of investment, logistics and digital transformation. Oman also took giant strides in streamlining the investment climate by upgrading the legislative system and infrastructure projects, added Al Yousef, who explained that the outcome of the meetings would lead to achieving clear benefits for Omani companies as they enter and expand their operations in global markets.

Al Yousef affirmed that Oman looks forward to participating in WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi, UAE, next February.

Meanwhile, Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion held meetings during the visit with a number of trade ministers and officials from the G20 countries, invited countries and international organisations. **>A4**

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT TO IMPLEMENT OVER 240 PROJECTS UNDER OMAN VISION 2040



The ongoing road projects under the current five-year plan amount to OMR890 million

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is executing over 240 projects under 19 programmes as part of the Oman Vision 2040, according to Dr. Saif bin Said Al Sinani, Director General of Planning at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and

Information Technology.

He also said that the ministry is executing 35 investment projects and initiatives related to economic diversification, financial sustainability, private sector, investment and international cooperation.

"These projects and initiatives are aimed to attract investments and increase the revenues of the



infrastructure for transport, logistics, communications and information technology sectors," said Al Sinani.

He said that the projects and

initiatives include construction of infrastructure in partnership with the private companies in transport sector for roads or specialised ports, operation of existing ports such as the ports of Khasab, Shinas, Al Suwaiq and Dhalkut, and provision of marine and land services among others.

Al Sinani reaffirmed that all these projects and initiatives aimed to attract local and foreign investments to generate revenues and are associated with key performance indicators that are measured regularly to achieve the priorities of economic diversification, financial sustainability and creation of new job opportunities. **>A2**



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36° MUSCAT

ADVICE

ROP urges school bus drivers to adhere to traffic rules as new academic year begins

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With the start of the new academic year, the Royal Oman Police (ROP) has urged school bus drivers to adhere to traffic regulations for the safety of school students.

With the start of each new academic year, the ROP works to reduce traffic congestion, and maintain the safety of students, in addition to educating vehicle drivers to cooperate and adhere to traffic regulations for the safety of students.

Major Issa bin Salem Al Nabhani, Assistant Director of the Traffic



Safety Institute Department, said: "The Royal Oman Police always seeks to ensure the safety of road users and reduce traffic congestion by securing bus lanes, increasing police presence, removing traf-

fic jams if they exist, and other measures that ensure safe access for students to and from schools. There is an existing cooperation mechanism between the ROP and the Ministry of Education to educate students and school bus drivers by holding awareness lectures and workshops related to traffic safety."

Traffic safety institutes in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman also play a major role in awareness, training and services provided to the public. There are specialised training institutes that train vehicle drivers and road users from all segments of society

and play an integral role in instilling the concept of road safety and traffic culture among road users.

The Assistant Director of the Traffic Safety Institute Department stated that community partnership between government and private agencies is a basic requirement in which all segments of society participate.

From this standpoint, PDO has initiated the signing of a cooperation programme with the ROP and the Ministry of Education to train school bus drivers in Oman. The programme also included practical training for driving vehicles using simulation systems.

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN OHB housing loans

1 Oman Housing Bank (OHB) approved more than 2,000 housing loans. **>A3**

WORLD Data on Moon relayed

2 The Chandrayaan-3 lander module has begun relaying data to ISRO. **>A7**

SPORTS Pakistan top ODI team

3 Pakistan on Sunday topped the ODI rankings, overtaking Australia. **>A8**

PRAYER
TIMINGS

Dhuhr12:13pm
Asr3:41pm
Maghrib6:34pm
Isha7:47pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....4:30am

Oman schools gear up to welcome students for new academic year

Programmes introduced for new teachers aim to create positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, empower them, and support their professional growth in learning and teaching processes

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The return to schools for the new academic year “2023/2024” began on Sunday morning, with the supervisors, members of the educational and administrative bodies, related positions, and support groups starting their work in the schools of the Sultanate, in preparation for ringing the school bells to welcome their students on Tuesday.

Dr. Sulaiman bin Abdullah Al-Jamudi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, spoke about receiving the new teachers, saying: “The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, has adopted several mechanisms for receiving new teachers, the most prominent of which is the introduction programme for new teachers in areas of current residence. The programme aims to create positive attitudes towards the teaching profession, empower new teachers, and support their professional growth in learning and teaching processes, in addition to providing new teachers with knowledge, and functional skills to prepare them for practicing the learning and teaching processes.”

In the same aspect, Dr. Intisar Ambosaidi, Director-General of the Specialised Institute for Vocational Training for Teachers, said: “The Specialised Institute for Vocational Training for Teachers, within its training plan for the academic year 2023/2024, is implementing the strategic programme for new Omani teachers. The programme targets new Omani teachers in public schools, and its general objective is to develop their performance to become effective and creative teachers who discover new teaching methods to improve learning opportunities for all students in their classes.”

Talal bin Nasser Al-Adawi, Assistant Director-General of the Directorate-General of Administrative Affairs for Human Resources Development, said: “The Directorate has included in its plans a set of ideas and visions, which will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the Ministry’s efforts to prepare and motivate new teachers, as the Directorate has striven in coordination with the private sector institutions to obtain benefits and offers that can be presented to this category of teachers, where coordination has been made with some local banks, health institutions, and institutions operating in the scope of insurance to present some offers, and announce them on the Ministry’s website, the educational portal, to benefit from them.

“The processes of readiness, co-operation, and coordination taken by the General Directorate of Administrative Affairs to follow up



set in order to achieve the goals of proficiency in the educational process in line with Oman’s vision 2040.

He said: “The number of new teachers appointed in the governorate for this year reached 347, and the number of teachers transferred to the governorate reached 387, and they were distributed to schools according to available vacancies. The governorate hosts this year 7,579 teachers, and 1,084 administrators and support staff, and the number of schools is 153, with an increase of four schools compared to last year, and a number of 101,661 students studying in all schools in the governorate. The distribution of most textbooks to schools has been completed according to the approved quota for each school. Preparations have also been made to implement targeted and varied training programs to raise the competencies of those assigned to the position of assistant principal of a school, and other programmes to raise the competencies of those assigned to the position of a school principal.

Meetings will also be held with assistant principals of schools in charge of managing school, in addition to a number of development and training programmes for supervisors, teachers, administrators and other support groups.”

Aisha Al Hosni, a second field teacher from Shams Al Maaref School in Muscat Governorate, spoke about the beginning of the school year and the preparation she is doing, and said: “At the beginning of every academic year, I remember Alan Quinn’s saying, “Do not wait until the conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect.” And with the sunrise of the first day of the new year, I am certain that the obstacles of the past turn into gates that lead to new beginnings. The first day of the new academic year is like a celebration of dreams and new wishes. I will work hard to carry this generation to their goals and aspirations, surround them with the collar of success, motivate them to obtain a lot of science and knowledge, saturate their minds with inspiring ideas,

and nourish their hearts with the love of effort, diligence, and competition to attain higher ranks.”

Issa Al-Rawahi, an Arabic language teacher from Abdullah bin Rawaha School for Basic Education, in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, said: “Returning to schools in which the teacher’s feelings are mixed between the paradox of vacation, comfort, and ease, to longing for a new academic year, new students, and perhaps a new curriculum. Once the teachers receive their school schedule, know the curriculum, they will teach, they roll up their sleeves in seriousness, and begin their first steps in preparing well, setting the quarterly plan, preparing records, and searching for the various means designated to implement the curriculum perfectly. A teacher must realise that conveying information to the student needs art, and it needs auxiliary tools, as it comes with challenges, and they must invest modern technology in facilitating the access of information to the student’s mind, or in consolidating it in them.”

MEETINGS

OMAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Oman reviews cultural relations with India, UK



CULTURAL RELATIONS: Sayyid Said Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture held a meeting with Lord Parkinson, UK Parliamentary Undersecretary of State of Department for Culture. - ONA

NEW DELHI: Sayyid Said Sultan Al Busaidi, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture held a meeting with Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture in the Republic of India.

It discussed aspects of cooperation and means of promoting cultural relations between Oman and India.

Sayyid Al Busaidi also held a meeting with Lord Parkinson, UK Parliamentary Under Secretary of State of Department for Culture.

The two sides discussed means of promoting cultural cooperation between Oman and the UK, including the participation in book fairs. - ONA

OHRC reviews ongoing preparations to hold the GCC forum of human rights institutions

MUSCAT: Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) on Sunday held a meeting during which it reviewed ongoing preparations to hold a GCC forum of human rights institutions in mid-September 2023 in Muscat.

The forum will be attended by representatives of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) human rights bodies and institutions, Office of

the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the international organisation’s regional office in Beirut, the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions and the Arab League’s permanent commission for human rights.

During the meeting, Oman Human Rights Commission also looked into preparations for hold-

ing a human rights cultural event at the United Nations headquarters in September 2023.

Spreading public awareness

The event will include an exhibition showcasing some of the competencies of the OHRC and its role in spreading public awareness and education.

During its meeting, the OHRC

discussed steps to prepare for its annual report of the year 2023, which includes statistics on the committee’s efforts and the reports it shared with international organisations, as well as programmes that the commission undertook in conjunction with government departments and civil society institutions.

- ONA

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Priority is for completing road projects

<FROM A1 The ongoing road projects across the Sultanate of Oman under the current five-year development plan amounting to OMR890 million.

According to Dr. Saif bin Said Al Sinani, Director General of Planning at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, “The priority is to focus on the successful completion of the road projects underway for the development of governorates as part of the sustainable cities project under Oman Vision 2040.

“In this regard, tenders have already been issued for completion of Al Sharqiyah Expressway and some road links of Al Batinah Expressway, completion of Adam

-Haima-Thumrait Road, remaining works of Al Abailah-Al Fayadh Road in the Governorate of Al Buraimi and Raysut-Al Mughsayl Road in Dhofar Governorate,” he further added.

Al Sinani said that the ministry has already awarded construction tender for Dibba -Khasab road project and the work is expected to start before the end of the current year.

“To preserve and protect the road assets, 21 agreements on road maintenance in the various governorates have also been awarded,” he added.

New laws in marine sector

Al Sinani said that the ministry is in the process of executing over

30 draft laws and legislations associated with the priority of the governance of the administrative apparatus of the state, resources and projects.

He said: “The purpose is good governance and organisation of the sectors under the supervision of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology. The key laws and legislations on which the ministry is proceeding with is the updating of the marine law issued by Royal Decree No. 19/2023 Oman’s Roads Law, other regulations in the marine sector, draft law regulating communications and information technology, law on combating information technology crimes, and law regulating postal services,

among others.”

Al Sinani said that the ministry is working in close coordination with the Ministry of Labour and other departments in the government sector and the private sector for training of the national cadre for working in the marine field, digital industry, 4th industrial revolution technologies, artificial intelligence and space science in cooperation with the specialized leading establishments.

He added: “This is in addition to creation of job opportunities in the various sectors under the supervision of the ministry including land transport, sea transport, and information technology, which is a top priority in Oman Vision 2040.”

- (With inputs from ONA)



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GRADUATION

MCBS celebrates graduation of second batch of students

MUSCAT: Under the patronage of His Excellency Jamal bin Ahmed Al-Abri, Head of the Education and Research Committee of the Shura Council, and in the presence of Dr. Moosa bin Abdullah Al-Kindi, Dean of the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS), and parents, the Modern College of Business and Science celebrated on Saturday, August 26, 2023 at the Intercity Hotel in Al Khuwair, the graduation of a new batch of students from the international (BTEC) programme, majoring in business administration and information technology. Modern College of Business and Science is the only institution in Oman to offer BTEC Level III programme.

In his opening speech, Dr. Moosa bin Abdullah Al-Kindi, Dean of the College, referred to the originality of this international (BTEC) programme in terms of its efficiency in professional preparation for its students and providing them with competencies for employability after graduation, and the ability of this type of education to contribute to achieving what Oman Vision 2040.

In his speech, the Dean of the College called on the students to benefit from the skills and knowledge they acquired from the programme and consider it as a starting point for a successful practical life and to efficiently assume the expected national responsibilities.

His Excellency Jamal bin Ahmed Al Abri, the patron of the ceremony, pointed out the economic importance of the presence of various educational programmes in the Sultanate, such as this international programme that attracts Omani students as well as international students, which embodies two fundamental issues in the education file, namely, the international cooperation and benefiting from international experiences efficiently on the one hand, and improving the indicator of attracting international students to the Sultanate so that Oman is an educational



In his speech, the Dean of the College called on the students to benefit from the skills and knowledge they acquired from the programme and consider it as a starting point for a successful practical life and to efficiently assume the expected national responsibilities.

Dr. Moosa bin Abdullah Al-Kindi
Dean of the Modern College of Business and Science (MCBS)

destination for students from different countries of the world.

Ms. Princy Goerge, the Programme Director, emphasised in

her opening speech the central role played by teachers in extending unlimited support to students in a creative way. This has led to impressive results in students' learning and personality development, she added.

Ms. Goerge also expressed her appreciation of Modern College of Business and Science efforts to provide an encouraging learning environment aligned with today's global developments. Finally, Ms. Goerge invited the students to stick to the values, morals, and ethics they were raised into and honor them every day in their lives and to face life changes with positive spirit and dedication.

Graduate Abdullah Al Busaidi, who delivered graduates speech of this batch, indicated that the (BTEC) system includes various programs that take into account the students' interests, and students are not expected to study a large number of courses that are not directly related to his academic interests in the future, as it is an international system recognized in the Sultanate and its programmes are practical and closely related to the requirements of the labor market, and this gives the graduate better opportunities to join the labor

market, either directly or after further education.

MCBS private Omani college
The Modern College of Commerce and Science is a private Omani college licensed by the Ministry of Higher Education. Modern College of Business and Science, founded in 1996 and located in Bausher- Muscat governorate, is the country's oldest full-fledged private college. With approximately 5,500 undergraduate and graduate students, MCBS is a mid-sized, accredited institution with nearly 80 percent of the student population being from Muscat. The college is known as Muscat's campus of choice for those seeking a personal, supportive, student-centered learning community where every class is taught by faculty members and each student has access to diverse education opportunities. It offers accredited academic programmes at diploma, bachelor's, and master's levels, in academic affiliation with the University of Missouri, St. Louis and Franklin University in the Americas.

And in cooperation with other prestigious academic institutions at the regional and international levels.

Level III BTEC
Modern College of Business and Science is the only institute in Oman to offer Level III BTEC. The international (BTEC) programme with its various levels and specialisations is a British programme applied in many countries of the world, due to its practical and professional nature and its close connection with the needs of labour markets in various countries and societies. It is applied in the Sultanate in cooperation with Pearson International, which specialises in providing high quality educational services. It mainly focuses on providing students with the necessary skills and competencies to join the local and international labour markets directly, with the ability of its outputs to continue academic study at its various levels. These two goals are achieved through a special equation to balance between the theoretical and practical aspects.

OMAN HOUSING BANK

OHB approves over 2,000 housing loans in first half



MUSCAT: During the first half of 2023, Oman Housing Bank (OHB) approved more than 2,000 housing loans having a lump sum value of more than OMR86 million.

The loans, endorsed in various governorates of Oman, seek to enhance the bank's role in meeting the needs of deserving applicants.

The number of housing loans awarded through OHB in the Governorate of Muscat stood at 502. OHB also approved 92 housing loans in Salalah, 276 loans in Sohar, 115 in Sur, 267 in Nizwa

and 17 in Khasab.

OHB's Al Rustaq branch garnered the highest percentage of approved housing loans (a total of 515 loans), compared to 147 loans in Al Buraimi and 89 loans through OHB's Ibra branch.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Musa Masoud Al Jadidi, CEO of Oman Housing Bank, said that, since its foundation in 1977 and until the end of 2022, OHB approved more than 52,000 subsidized housing loans worth more than OMR1.4 billion. -ONA





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SCAN TO WIN

Research team to collect, preserve plant species of economic value

The team will visit Jabal Samhan, the wilayat of Rakhyut, Taitam, and its neighbouring areas in the Dhofar Governorate to carry out operations in coordination with the Nature Conservation Society and a group of local experts in the governorate

Times News Service

MUSCAT: A research team from the Oman Centre for Animal and Plant Genetic Resources affiliated to the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Innovation will start a project to collect and preserve plant genetic resources of social and economic importance in the Sultanate of Oman by visiting Dhofar Governorate from August 27 to September 1.

The team will visit Jabal Samhan, the wilayat of Rakhyut, Taitam, and its neighbouring areas in the Dhofar Governorate to carry out operations in coordination with the Nature Conservation Society and a group of local experts in the governorate.



The project aims to collect and preserve local plant genetic resources in the Sultanate of Oman, which are of social and economic importance.

The research team at the Oman Centre for Animal and Plant Genetic Resources carries out collection tasks in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, according to the priority of plant species identified by researchers at the centre based on data experts in the book of 'Economic and Social Plant Conservation Strategy' in the Sultanate of Oman, which was published by Mawared Centre in 2017 in cooperation with the participating agencies.

Dr. Muhammad bin Nasser Al Yahyai, an expert on genetic resources at the Oman Centre for Animal and Plant Resources, said: "The Sultanate of Oman contains approximately 1,408 species of local plants, while the centre was able to identify about 1,200 plant species of economic and social importance. However, these numbers change day by day due to the discovery of new types of plants."

He pointed out that medicinal plants were given priority for collection, as the methods of benefiting from plants differ, some of which are important in food and agriculture, and some of them are important for the development of varieties and strains, and are called wild relatives of crops, and some of them are used for decoration, and there are important types in the forests.

He added, "The team has so far carried out 65 missions in more than 29 states in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, where it has collected more than 100 accessions of medicinal plants. Those seeds are tested and their data is entered into the Plant Genetic Resources Data Platform."

Al-Yahyai explained that this data will be available for researchers to benefit from through the platform's website, and the collected genetic resources will be preserved and protected from the risks that threaten them and that put them at risk of extinction, as these seeds are preserved in the seed gene bank, which will provide them with a safe haven, and their survival period may reach hundreds of years. In the asset storage room of the genetic bank, under -20 degrees Celsius temperature."



ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITY

Campaign to clean coral reefs launched

SUWAIQ: The Environment Authority, represented by the North Al Batinah Department, organised an extensive campaign to clean the coral reefs in the Wilayat of Suwaiq, in cooperation with the Sohar Diving Team, and with the participation of many government and private agencies, civil associations and volunteer teams.

This campaign comes within the programme implemented by the Authority to clean the marine environment and coral reefs of the coastal governorates of the Sultanate of Oman for the year 2023.

The campaign aims to clean the marine environment and coral reefs from plastic waste, fishing residues, etc., and through it, the health of the marine ecosystems of coral reefs and their biodiversity is also monitored, and the environment of coral reefs is preserved from pollutants and the remains of fishing tools and equipment.

The campaign also aims to spread environmental awareness among the community, in addition to achieving the participation of community in spreading the culture of preserving Oman's environment clean. The campaign resulted in the recovery of a large amount of plastic and fishing waste estimated at 500-600 kilograms. -ONA



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G20 MEETING

Trade, investment issues discussed

<FROM Qais Mohammed Al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion discussed a number of issues of importance, strengthening relations between Oman and countries of the world and exploring potential investment opportunities for cooperation in various sectors.

On the sidelines of the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers' meetings, the Sultanate of Oman took part in the G20 Business Forum, which was held during 25-27 August in New Delhi.

Hydrom

The Omani delegation comprised Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Omran Company, Duqm Refinery, Hydrogen Oman SPC (Hydrom) and a number of private sector institutions.

The delegation discussed trade and investment issues with the main trading partners and highlighted the investment environment and opportunities in the Sultanate of Oman. -ONA

NCSI

Exchange rate index of Omani Rial up 1.6%



MUSCAT: The effective exchange rate index of the Omani Rial rose by 1.6 percent to 115.3 points by the end of June 2023, compared to 113.5 points at the end of the same period in 2022, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total foreign assets at the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) increased by 3 percent by the end of June 2023 to stand at OMR6,586.8 million compared to OMR6,392.3 million during the same period in 2022.

The statistics showed that local liquidity grew by 3.4 percent to reach OMR21,479 million.

The total currency issued by the end of June 2023 also rose by 1.9 percent to reach OMR1,765.8 million compared to OMR1,733 million by the end of the corresponding period in 2022.

Narrow Money Supply (M1) went down by 4.6 percent to reach OMR5,786.6 million compared to OMR6,065.2 million during the same period in 2022.

Meanwhile, the private sector's deposits in commercial banks and Islamic windows in the Sultanate of Oman rose by 2.7 percent to reach OMR17,999 million at the end of June 2023 compared to OMR17,524.1 million during the same period in 2022.

The total loans and financing in commercial banks and Islamic windows in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 6.5 percent to reach OMR30,272.2 million by the end of June 2023 compared to OMR28,416.8 million during the corresponding period in 2022.

The average interest rate on total credit declined by 1.2 percent at the end of June 2023. -ONA

SHRIMP FARMING IN SOUTH AL SHARQIYAH

A picture of the shrimp farming project in the village of Khuwaima in the Wilayat of Jalan Bani Bu Ali in the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate. This project has been undertaken in the Sultanate of Oman as part of the economic diversification. -ONA





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COMMENTARY

The hard life of a labourer

Saleh Al-Shaibany

I often see this Indian labourer at the beach sitting alone watching the waves crashing on the beach. There is always a thoughtful look on his face as he sits there alone oblivion to everything except the sea in front of him.

I often try to get into his mind to find out what went on in his thoughts. Perhaps, far away from home, he finds himself a stranger in a surrounding with very little to look forward to after long working hours. Obviously, it is never easy for him. But many of us take labourers for granted.

Gulf countries

No one in the Gulf countries spare a thought for labourers and their vital contributions. Over the years, Asian labourers built roads, buildings, bridges, our houses and the rest of the infrastructure. We normally pay rich tributes to bureaucrats, businessmen and engineers for the development but nobody gives a second thought to their contributions to the progress.

They toiled in the hot sun and some collapsed from the construction sites from the heat while we work comfortably in the air conditioned rooms. I am not sure what history would record about people like them that we pass without noticing every day in our lives. However, we do notice, without fail, what they build and enjoy the perks. Collectively, their contributions, not only in Oman but in the entire region, is immeasurably.

So that evening, perhaps out of guilt, or just curiosity, I stopped where the labourer

was sitting and lowered myself on the beach sand.

He looked surprised and a little nervous when I turned to him to enquire about his health. He politely mumbled something to acknowledge that all was well. He told me that his name was Basu and confirmed that he was a construction labourer.

I sat with him not more than a couple of minutes because I felt sitting with him longer was not what he wanted. I was obvious there to intrude the privacy of his thoughts. So I left him in peace and continued with my customary beach walking. But I had more questions than answers about people like him and the way we never noticed them.

Are they properly compensated? Would the citizens of the region cope if these labourers did not come here? What would happen if they suddenly pack their bags and go home? I bet very few of us thought about that possibility and take for granted that they will always be here.

Labourers are people in a mission who gave up luxuries and comfort knowing what they denied themselves is passed on to their loved ones back home. Unfortunately, their sacrifices is unnoticed. But life goes on for them because we rarely hear them complain. They are our unheralded heroes.

They all have one story to tell but with a few variations. They were all very far from home, most terribly missing their families. They throw themselves into their work from morning to dusk, where they have very little time for anything else.

In the weekends, we see them sit together trying to make most of their off days by sharing their thoughts to each other. That is the only time they relax before starting all over again carrying bricks, mixing cement and erecting tons of scaffoldings.

The only thing that keeps them going is a thought that they keep their families well provided for back home. In conclusion, let us spare them a thought next time they cross our paths for their hard work and dedications.

OAAAQA SECOND MEETING

Vital issues discussed at meeting

MUSCAT: The Board of Oman Authority for Academic Accreditation and Quality Assurance of Education (OAAAQA) on Sunday held its second meeting of the year under the chair of Dr. Rahma Ibrahim Al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

The meeting discussed a set of topics including the ISA 2.0 standards, the estimated budget for 2024, the approval of a number of the Authority's policies and the Authority's hosting of the Fifth Regional Conference of the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, due to be held in the forthcoming December. — **ONA**

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Oman, Korea ink MoU on green energy transition

The MoU, signed in Muscat, reflects the advanced status of bilateral relations and the two countries' keenness to consolidate cooperation in green transition

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Republic of Korea in the field of green energy transition.

Oman was represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, while Korea was represented by the Ministry of Environment.

The MoU, signed in Muscat, reflects the advanced status of bilateral relations and the two countries' keenness to consolidate cooperation in green transition.

The MoU was signed by Eng. Salim Nasser Al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, and Han

Hwa-jin, Minister of Environment in Korea.

The MoU seeks to achieve better understanding of green transition policies and technologies, discuss various aspects of cooperation between the two countries' governmental and industrial establishments, organizations and research institutions, and enhance coordination between the two sides during respective forums around the world.

The MoU encourages the two countries to cooperate in devising green transition policies and programmes and developing technologies for environment conservation during the production, storage, delivery and use of green energy. It also provides for building capacities to respond to the climate crisis.

The MoU covers cooperation in industries that contribute to green transition, research activities, development affairs and other areas related to green transition.

Oman is developing strategic plans for energy transition to help cut down carbon emissions, strike a balance between sustainable development and climate change, benefit from clean technology and diversify sources of energy in line with the global 2050 carbon neutrality goals.

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals is also embarked on forging local and international partnerships that contribute to achieving the country's transition to green energy.

Towards this end, the ministry took practical steps by introducing clean energy projects and launching green hydrogen investment packages. — **ONA**



سلطنة عُمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology



إعلان مناقصة Tender Notice

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MTCT/168/2023	CONSULTANCY SERVICES OF SUPERVISION FOR CONSTRUCTION OF COMPLETION OF DUALIZATION OF EXISTING ROAD FROM LNG ROUNDABOUT TO BILAD-SUR ROUNDABOUT	24-8-2023	5-9-2023	3-10-2023	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(45/-) FORTY FIVE OMANI RIAL (FOR LOCAL) (10/-) TEN OMANI RIAL (FOR SME) (45/-) FORTY FIVE OMANI RIAL (FOR REGIONAL) NON-REFUNDABLE

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INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE



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AFGHANISTAN

Taliban ban women from visiting national park

KABUL: As the Taliban's atrocities continue to add to the miseries of the women in Afghanistan, the organisation has banned women from visiting Band-e-Amir National Park in Afghanistan's central Bamyan province in another regressive move, according to Khaama Press.

Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, the Taliban's Minister for the Propa-

gation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, stated in a speech in Bamyan that they are creating a mechanism that will eventually allow women to enter the park.

However, until the system is established, women are not permitted to enter the park, reported Khaama Press.

Hanafi also urged the Taliban security forces and the elders of

the Bamyan province to help them enforce the prohibition on women entering parks.

People criticised

During his speech, he also criticised people for disobeying Taliban directives and women for not adhering to the hijab rules set by the Taliban.

The organisation reintroduced

a strict ban on girls attending secondary schools after seizing control in August 2021. The depressing trend continued in December 2022, when limitations were expanded to include women and girls, prohibiting them from attending universities and from working for non-governmental organisations and assistance organi-

— ANI



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SECOND AND FINAL TERM

Mnangagwa re-elected as President of Zimbabwe

HARARE: Zimbabwe's President Emmerson Mnangagwa was on Saturday re-elected for a second and final term in an election marred by widespread allegations that the governing party, ZANU-PF had committed fraud, according to media report.

Mnangagwa's victory over his closest competitor, Nelson Chamisa, after his first full term in office, strengthened ZANU-PF's grip on power in a nation it has led since independence from Britain in 1980. Zimbabwe has over the past two decades suffered under disastrous economic policies that have led to soaring prices, high unemployment and a medical system lacking basic drugs and equipment. With Mnangagwa, 80, winning another five years in office, Zimbabwe is likely to continue to struggle to break out of its isolation from Western nations, which have demanded greater democracy and respect for human rights in exchange for helping it grapple with USD 18 billion in debt.

The South African nation of 16 million, has a history of election irregularities, and such tactics helped Robert Mugabe, a liberation leader turned autocrat, maintain power for nearly four decades.

Mugabe was removed in a coup in 2017 by Mnangagwa and his allies. The following year, Mnangagwa eked out a victory over Chamisa in an election, winning just over 50 per cent of the vote. — ANI

Vivek Ramaswamy wants Elon Musk as his advisor if elected

The Indian-American Presidential candidate from the Republican Party said at a town hall meeting in Iowa that he would bring in people with “a blank fresh impression” to provide guidance in his administration

WASHINGTON DC: The youngest Presidential candidate from the Republican Party Vivek Ramaswamy suggested that he would like to bring Elon Musk on as an advisor if elected President in the US Presidential elections 2024, according to The Hill.

The conservative entrepreneur said at a town hall in Iowa that he would bring in people with “a blank fresh impression” to provide guidance in his administration, including the billionaire owner of SpaceX, Tesla and X, Elon Musk, reported The Hill citing NBC News. “I have enjoyed getting to know better Elon Musk recently. I expect him to be an interesting adviser of mine because he laid off 75 per cent of the employees at Twitter,” Ramaswamy said.

He has previously complimented Musk's management of the social media company 'X', formerly known as 'Twitter', adding that he would like to run the government the way Musk runs the company.

“What he did at Twitter is a good example of what I want to do to the administrative state,” Ramaswamy said in an interview on Fox

News last week. “Take out the 75 per cent of the dead weight cost, improve the actual experience of what it's supposed to do,” he added.

The Indian-American Presidential candidate further said, “He put an X through Twitter, I will put a big X through the administrative state. So, that's where I am at on common tactics with Elon.”

Earlier, Musk in an interview said that he had cut down the company's workforce from 8,000 to 1,500 since he bought Twitter for \$44 billion last fall, reported The Hill.

Last week, Musk said that he found Ramaswamy to be a “very promising candidate.”

Ramaswamy, an entrepreneur, has previously engaged in a number of heated discussions with other GOP candidates during the debate stage.

Ramaswamy is a biotech and healthcare entrepreneur who has written two books, 'Nation of Victims: Identity Politics, the Death of Merit, and the Path Back to Excellence' and 'Woke, Inc.: Inside Corporate America's Social Justice Scam', CNN reported.



“To put America first, we need to rediscover what America is. That's why I am running for president,” Ramaswamy wrote in a Wall Street Journal editorial earlier this year, adding, “I am launching not only a political campaign but a cultural movement to create a new American Dream—one that is not only about money but about the unapologetic pursuit of excellence.”

While Ramaswamy is competing with seasoned politicians in Republican primary surveys, he is still in the single digits and far behind former President Donald Trump, CNN reported.

The 37-year-old lawmaker was born on August 9, 1985, and was raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. His parents migrated to the US from Kerala.

He is the third Indian-American — along with Nikki Haley and Hirsh Vardhan Singh — who will

be up against former President Donald Trump in the primaries in January next year.

Trump's campaign

The Trump 2024 presidential campaign has raised \$7.1 million since former President Donald Trump's mugshot was taken at the Fulton County jail in Georgia after surrendering himself in the Georgia election subversion case, CNN reported.

Over the last three weeks, Trump's campaign raised around \$20 million, following his indictment and arraignment in Washington related to the federal January 6 case and then his surrender and processing at the Fulton County jail in Georgia.

The source further revealed that the campaign had raised \$4.18 million after his arrest in Georgia. It is the highest-grossing day of the entire campaign, as per CNN.

The fundraising figures were first reported by Politico.

Following Trump's arrest, his 2024 presidential campaign started selling merchandise featuring the first mug shot of a former US president, The Washington Post reported.

In the mug shot, Trump has throughout tried his best to appear “unfazed and unbowed” by having been indicted four times since March, as per the New York Times.

“It is not a comfortable feeling — especially when you have done nothing wrong,” he told Fox News's website in an interview.

However, Trump has been able to make the most of his mug shot, according to The Washington Post.

The merchandise, including T-shirts, mugs, koozies and bumper stickers of Trump's mug shot, was for sale about 90 minutes after he was released from an Atlanta jail on Thursday. — ANI

INCREASED RISK OF DEVELOPING PTSD

Extreme weather is a cause of post-traumatic stress

BERLIN: It is not unusual for soldiers who have fought in a war to suffer from post-traumatic stress after their missions. People who have experienced violence, who have been driven out of their homes or who have been forced to flee may also develop Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as can emergency workers deployed to disaster zones to rescue the injured and recover the dead.

Such disasters might be caused by extreme weather events. People may have to fight for their survival, escape from floods or wildfires, and even witness others dying. If a person has been acutely and directly endangered by extreme weather conditions and has felt helpless in the face of disaster, they have an increased risk of developing PTSD.

“Hurricanes Katrina and Rita have been studied very closely,” says the psychiatrist Andreas Meyer-Lindenberg. Back in 2005, the current president of the German Association for Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics (DGPPN) worked to administer psychological first aid in the US, after Hurricane Katrina caused terrible destruction across several states and claimed the lives of more than 1,800 people.

“Basically, not every person who is exposed to extreme weather events has mental health problems as a result,” Meyer-Lindenberg says. “But there is a significant increase in mental health problems and illnesses after extreme weather events.”

He explains that almost half of those affected by the devastation of Katrina developed PTSD. While people may also suffer from depression, anxiety and even addiction after an extreme event, PTSD is a direct, causal result of what they have experienced.



“The definition of PTSD is that an extremely threatening event has been experienced by the person themselves or by someone close to them, and this event is at the center of their problems,” Meyer-Lindenberg says. A typical symptom is that a disaster is relived over and over again in the form of flashbacks, dreams, and memories. People will therefore try to avoid anything that might trigger these flashbacks. For flood victims, this could be rain.

The psychiatrist explains that this avoidance strategy prevents victims from dealing with what they have experienced, and that consequently they are often unable to overcome their post-traumatic stress without therapy.

Little data is available on the impact of extreme weather events on the mental health of victims from developing countries — which are often among those worst affected by fire and flood. “Most of the research has been done in Europe, North America, and Australia,”



Meyer-Lindenberg says, adding that there is a particular lack of available data from Africa.

Yet the countries of the Global South have already been dealing with extreme weather events, exacerbated by ongoing climate change, more frequently and for longer than those in the north. “If countries have experience of extreme weather, and are better able to deal with the consequences as

a result, this can, of course, cushion the impact of such events,” Meyer-Lindenberg.

For example, stable dikes not only protect people's houses and possessions from floods, they also protect their mental health by providing a sense of security. But good protection against extreme weather events requires financial resources that in poorer countries are often lacking.



How does psychological first aid work?

Money is also needed to provide psychological first aid in the aftermath of a disaster. Meyer-Lindenberg lists five key points that are vital for the psychological stability of survivors.

First, they need a place to sleep, something to eat, and clean drinking water. “You don't need to think about anything else until this has

been ensured,” he says.

His second point is that it's important to reassure victims by listening to them if they want to talk. However, under no circumstances should they be forced to talk about what they have experienced.

Thirdly, people should be able to contact relatives as quickly as possible. “It's hugely important for children in particular to be able to be with someone familiar as soon as possible.”

The psychiatrist's fourth point is that people are better able to cope with a disaster if they experience self-efficacy. This is a sense of active participation in helping to shape a situation, rather than simply feeling that you are at its mercy. “Helping others is one way of achieving this,” Meyer-Lindenberg said.

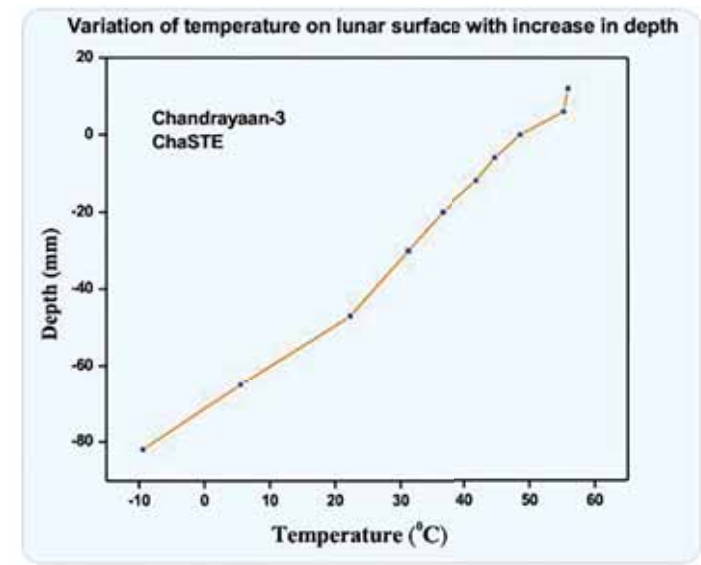
Finally, it is essential to keep people's hope alive: “Not with platitudes, but with actions that give those affected the feeling that they can get through this difficult period together.” — nW

Chandrayaan-3: Vikram lander relays data on Moon’s temperature

ISRO shared a graph on X, formerly Twitter, which showed the change in temperature on the moon’s surface and underneath

NEW DELHI: The Chandrayaan-3 lander module which landed on the Moon’s surface successfully has begun doing its set experiments and subsequently relaying them back to ISRO headquarters.

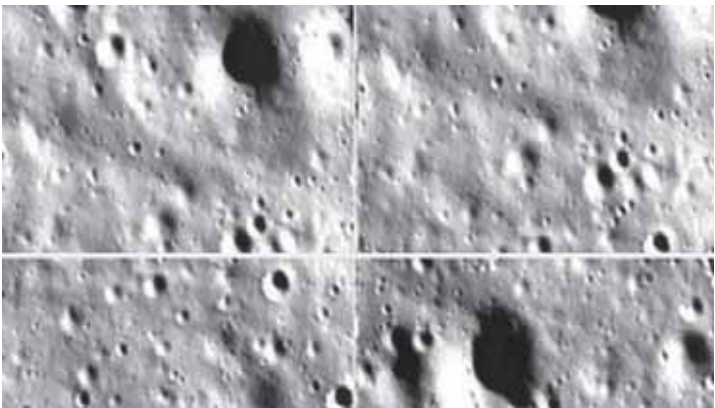
In its latest update, ISRO on Sunday put out the first observations recorded by the ‘ChaSTE’ payload onboard Vikram Lander. Chandra’s Surface Thermo-



physical Experiment (ChaSTE) payload was attached to measure the thermal conductivity and temperature on the moon. The payload was developed by a team led by the Space Physics Laboratory (SPL), VSSC in collaboration with Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad

The payload attached to the lander recorded the variation of temperature on the lunar surface with an increase in depth. ISRO shared a graph on X, formerly Twitter, which showed the change in temperature on the moon’s surface and underneath.

At a depth of 8 cm, the payload



recorded temperature as low as (-) 10 degrees centigrade. With the gradual rise towards the surface, the temperature too could be seen rising.

Above the surface, the graph showed a relative stagnancy in temperature between 50-60 degrees centigrade.

“This is the first such profile for the lunar south pole. Detailed observations are underway,” ISRO said.

On Wednesday, India took a giant leap as the Chandrayaan-3

lander module successfully landed on the moon’s South Pole, making it the first country to have achieved the historic feat and bringing to an end the disappointment over the crash landing of the Chandrayaan-2, four years ago.

Overall, India became the fourth country – after the US, China, and Russia – to have successfully landed on the moon’s surface.

Chandrayaan-3 mission’s estimated cost is Rs 600 crore.

Meanwhile, the Pragyan rover rolled out of Chandrayaan-3

Vikram lander’s belly and walked on the lunar surface. A video was released by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on Thursday, which showed the rover coming out of the lander through a ramp.

Upon landing, the lander and the rover are operating and doing their set tasks and experiments for one lunar day. One day on the Moon is equal to 14 days on Earth.

The stated objectives of Chandrayaan-3, India’s third lunar mission, were a safe and soft landing on the lunar surface, the rover moving on the moon’s surface, and in-situ scientific experiments. The spacecraft was launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Andhra Pradesh’s Sriharikota on July 14.

Chandrayaan-2 mission was only “partially successful” since the lander lost contact after a hard landing. The ISRO though recently managed to establish a two-way communication between the Chandrayaan-3 lander module and the still-orbiting Chandrayaan-2 orbiter. – **ANI**

WEST AFRICA

EU planning new Africa mission in Gulf of Guinea

LUXEMBOURG: European Union member states have agreed to begin a mission in the Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, with police and soldiers deployed to Ghana, Togo, Benin and Ivory Coast, German newspaper Die Welt am Sonntag reported on Sunday, citing diplomats.

Anti-terror operations

According to the paper, the mission will aim to train and advise local security forces, help prepare for anti-terror operations, give technical support and implement confidence-building measures in the security sector.

The mission is to be launched after formal approval is given by EU foreign ministers at a meeting in October in Luxembourg.

What else did the report say about the mission?

The reason behind the planned mission is the EU’s concern that



militant groups “could extend their activities in West Africa from the Sahel zone toward the southern coastal countries on the Gulf of Guinea, leading to even

more widespread instability in the region,” Welt am Sonntag reported.

Militant activity from extremist groups linked to “IS” and al-

Qaidahave rocked countries such as Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso in recent years. The EU also wants to counter Russian influence in the region which has been spread

through Wagner mercenaries who have supported military regimes in the Sahel.

Situation further complicated

The situation was further complicated for the EU after Mali kicked out French and German forces that had been training Malian soldiers and police.

Benin and Ghana had already officially invited the EU to deploy the mission on their territories, according to the paper.

The report comes as several countries in the region have fallen under military governments following coups, the latest being on July 26 in Niger. Military juntas have also taken power in Mali and Burkina Faso.

The fall of Niger to junta control has been especially concerning as it had been a key ally to Western powers operating throughout the region. – **DW**

BRIEFS

3 people killed in ‘racially motivated’ shooting in Florida

FLORIDA: Three people were killed in a ‘racially motivated’ shooting at a Dollar General store in Florida’s Jacksonville on Saturday afternoon, officials told local media outlets. The officials said the person suspected of opening fire and killing multiple people in the “racially motivated” attack is also dead. “This shooting was racially motivated and he hated Black people,” Jacksonville Sheriff T.K.

N. Korea reopens borders to citizens living abroad



PYONGYANG: North Korea has moved to further open up from strict COVID-19 pandemic-era isolation, allowing the return of its citizens who were stranded abroad, state media KCNA reported on Sunday. The move marks a significant shift after years of stringent border controls imposed during the global health crisis. According to a statement released by the State Emergency Epidemic Prevention Headquarters and reported by KCNA, this decision aligns with the country’s revised approach to managing the epidemic, prompted by the “eased worldwide pandemic situation.”

Romania: Gas station explosions kill 1, injure 57



BUCHAREST: One person has died and at least 57 others have been injured in two explosions at a gas station near Romanian capital Bucharest, the Romanian Interior Ministry said on Sunday. The two successive explosions occurred on Saturday at a liquefied petroleum station (LPG) in the town of Crevedia.

Japan to launch lunar lander

TOKYO: A revolutionary satellite that will reveal celestial objects in a new light and the “Moon Sniper” lunar lander are preparing for launch. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, is expected to launch its XRISM mission, pronounced “crism,” from Japan on Monday.

— Agencies

PUSHING FOR MORE ENGLISH

English language use gets a boost in Germany

BERLIN: Gone are the days when German politicians refused to speak English. In 2009, then Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle made headlines for rebuffing a BBC reporter’s request to answer a question in English.

“In Germany, obviously, we speak German,” Westerwelle said in German.

But now, many top officials are ready to brandish their linguistic credentials. Defence Minister Boris Pistorius and Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock often do so when on official business abroad, and Finance Minister Christian Lindner has appeared on Bloomberg TV to debate the state of the German economy.

Former Chancellor Angela Merkel herself almost never spoke English, even when it came to a 2019 commencement address at Harvard or a CNN interview with Christiane Amanpour. When her successor, Olaf Scholz, has appeared on the same US broadcaster, however, he has held his own in his second language.

And when a British journalist asked him for an answer in English at a post-election news conference, he didn’t answer with a Westerwellian smirk but in Scholzian earnestness — delivered as dryly in English as he often comes across in his native German tongue.

But today, it is the party Westerwelle once led — the business-first Free Democrats (FDP) — which is pushing for more English in official state matters.

Economy and judiciary

Given the size of Germany’s economy, which is export-dependent and home to major global companies, English is the language of choice in the business context.

Inevitably, cross-border commercial disputes can “frequently



arise” and require “rapid and professional resolution,” Christiane Hoffmann, the government’s deputy spokesperson, told reporters at a news conference last week. So earlier this month, the cabinet approved a bill put forward by the FDP’s Justice Minister Marco Buschmann to expand commercial courts in Germany, which could also handle cases in English.

An aim of the bill, which will need parliamentary approval to come into force, is to “strengthen Germany’s attractiveness as a judicial and business location,” Hoffmann said.

One commercial court that can handle matters in English was set up in Frankfurt, Germany’s financial capital, in 2018. It is part of a growing number of commercial courts around the European Union, which member states have established in the aftermath of Brexit. With the United Kingdom out of the bloc, Germany, France and the Netherlands are among

those looking to serve as an alternative to the British legal system.

A ‘generational divide’

But this transition may take years, as a “generational divide” affects Germany’s courts, Michael Weigel, a practicing commercial lawyer and German Federal Bar Association member, told DW.

“Just like it is with any kind of specialisation, people need the time to master these skills. That costs money,” Weigel said.

The scepticism echoes sentiments in other areas marked for anglicisation. Last year, the FDP announced its interest in introducing English as an official second language in public administration.

The recently passed Skilled Workers Act aims to make it easier for foreigners to find work in Germany, including having their non-German qualifications more speedily recognised.

But Germany’s legal code states

German as the sole official language: Applications and documents submitted to an authority in a foreign language must come with a translation.

The inclusion of English as a second official language would have to be approved by the federal and state governments — but so far, only the FDP has advocated such a change.

Companies are expected “to be open to English-speaking applicants,” FDP Secretary General Bijan Djir-Sarai told newspapers in February 2023. “Then you can also expect our authorities and administrations to be able to offer these people full service in English.”

Ulrich Silberbach, the head of the German Civil Service Association (DBB), claims that English is already widely spoken in government offices. “Language competence in administration is primarily a question of money,” he told the tabloid Bild, adding that

many customers speak French, Arabic or Farsi rather than English. “We need training, translation tools and language mediators, but these are all investments in personnel,” he said. “A blanket English requirement won’t help us,” Silberbach added.

Since 2005, English has been taught at all German elementary schools, with the French border regions the only exception. Around 10% of higher-education degree programs in Germany are now offered in English, according to a database maintained by the German Academic Exchange Service. Most of these are graduate programs, and the results include private institutions that operate outside the public system, which is largely tuition-free.

Expat Insider survey

Despite hosting a large expat population, Germany frequently performs poorly on so-called expat surveys. Language was a key factor affecting Germany’s low rank in the 2023 Expat Insider survey, conducted by InterNations, a Munich-based expat network.

Berlin stands out: In 2017, then Health Minister Jens Spahn famously complained that it is impossible to get by with German only in the capital: “It bothers me that in some Berlin restaurants, the waitresses only speak English. I’m sure that wouldn’t happen in Paris,” he said.

Indeed, it has become perfectly okay for young expats to work in Berlin’s hip stores without any knowledge of German, while their parents were denied access to the German labor market — despite good English — because they didn’t speak German well enough.

With the modernisation of immigration laws, this is now likely to change.

— DW

SPORTS

Pakistan climb to No.1 in ODIs; Rizwan, Shadab seal 3-0 sweep

Mujeeb Ur Rahman struck Afghanistan's fastest ODI fifty, but the team fell short of the 269-run target

COLOMBO: A splendid bowling performance led Pakistan to a clinical 59-run win over Afghanistan and sweep the ODIs 3-0 in Colombo on Saturday night. Crucially, with the win, they also zoomed to the top of the ODI rankings just ahead of the Asia Cup.

Batting first on a two-paced Colombo surface, attritional half-centuries from Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan helped them reach 268 for eight.

In reply, Afghanistan never really found their bearings on a pitch that seemed to have quickened up under lights.

Mujeeb Ur Rahman tried his best to briefly throw a spanner into Pakistan's works as he struck the fastest fifty by an Afghanistan batter in ODIs - off 26 balls and eventually finishing on a 37-ball 64. But the target proved to be a bridge too far.

Eventually, they were bowled



out for 209 in 48.4 overs with Shadab Khan being the pick of the bowlers taking three for 42.

Chasing 269, Afghanistan needed a strong start from their openers which they never got. It did not help that Ibrahim Zadran couldn't open, because he spent the last few minutes of the first innings off the field and hence had to serve time before walking out. Riaz Hassan and Rahmanullah Gurbaz were

third wicket but took 61 balls.

Riaz's chancy 66-ball 34 was ended by Shadab, who then also sent back Shahidi in the same over as Afghanistan stared down the barrel. From 60/2, they slipped to 75/6 and then 97/7. At that point, it seemed another quick end was certain. But Mujeeb and Shahidullah Kamal held fort.

They added 57 off 42 balls for the eighth wicket with Mujeeb

but took 145 balls and had 84 dots.

The under-fire Fakhar Zaman was off the blocks early climbing into Fazalhaq Farooqi, slamming him for five fours in the 20 balls he faced. Imam-ul-Haq, on the other hand, struggled all through. He played back-to-back maidens off Mujeeb and in general lacked timing.

Gulbadin Naib, playing his first game of the series, made an immediate impact as he got Fakhar caught out. Naib then removed Imam as well.

Babar and Rizwan got together in the 13th over and gradually collected runs. Rizwan was the one to break the shackles and he reached his tenth ODI fifty off 69 balls while Babar joined him soon taking 77 balls to reach the landmark.

Both batters, however, failed to post a three-figure score. While Rashid Khan induced an outside edge off Babar's blade, Rizwan fell lbw to Fareed Ahmed.

In between, Afghanistan also ran out Saud Shakeel as Pakistan lost three for 9 in 15 balls. Mohammad Nawaz and Agha Salman, however, made sure to give Pakistan a good end. They stitched a 61-run stand off 47 balls for the seventh wicket. Pakistan went past 250 with ease, smoking 80 runs off the last ten overs.

Brief scores: Pakistan 268/8 (Rizwan 67, Babar 60, Naib 2-36, Fareed 2-70) beat Afghanistan 209 in 48.4 overs (Mujeeb 64, Kamal 37, Shadab 3-42, Shaheen 2-31). - Agencies

PAKISTAN ASIA CUP SQUAD

Shakeel called up in place of Tahir

LAHORE: Saud Shakeel has been added to Pakistan's squad for the 2023 Asia Cup. Tayyab Tahir, who had initially been named in the 17-member squad, misses out but will be part of the travelling reserves.

Shakeel has only played five ODIs so far but made an impressive start to his Test career. He has amassed six fifties and two hundreds in seven Tests including a match-winning 208* against Sri Lanka in Galle after Pakistan's top order was dismantled by the home spinners. He has 2489 runs in List A matches at an average of 44.44.

Shakeel was part of the final ODI against Afghanistan, where he made 9 of 6 before being run-out. He will travel along with the team to Multan on Sunday.

The Asia Cup-bound players who played against Afghanistan in Sri Lanka are set to arrive in Multan on Sunday. A PCB release said that Babar Azam, Imam-ul-Haq and Naseem Shah will travel to Lahore on Sunday and join the side on Monday evening.

Pakistan are scheduled to play Nepal in the Asia Cup opener in Multan on August 30.

Squad: Babar Azam (capt), Shadab Khan, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Saud Shakeel, Fakhar Zaman, Abdullah Shafique, Imam-ul-Haq, Saud Shakeel, Salman Ali Agha, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Haris Rauf, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Afridi, Mohammad Haris (wk), Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Wasim. Travelling reserve: Tayyab Tahir. - Agencies

DUTCH GRAND PRIX

Record-equalling win for Verstappen

ZANDVOORT: Max Verstappen won a chaotic, deluge-hit and red-flagged Dutch Grand Prix on Sunday to match Sebastian Vettel's record run of nine consecutive victories.

Fernando Alonso for Aston Martin took second with Alpine's Pierre Gasly completing the podium at Zandvoort after Red Bull's Sergio Perez, who finished third on the track, was penalised for speeding in the pit lane.

"Fantastic job, the weather didn't make it easy for us," said Red Bull's double world champion.

The home favourite's 11th success from the 13 races staged this season extended his lead in the championship to 138 points and moved him ever closer to a third straight world title.

"I'm incredibly proud, I had goosebumps with the national anthem playing at the start, an



incredible atmosphere," said Verstappen, to roars of delight from his orange army of fans.

A shower just as the race started dropped Verstappen to sec-

ond behind team-mate Sergio Perez before he repassed on lap 13, while heavy rain with eight laps to go forced a red flag and a 45-minute delay.

But through it all Verstappen was always in control, as he has been for the entire season, and never really looked like losing the race. - Agencies

ASIA CUP

Janat, Ashraf back in Afghanistan squad



KABUL: Karim Janat is in line to play an ODI after more than six years having been included in Afghanistan's 17-member squad for the Asia Cup that will get underway on August 30.

Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) announced the team on Sunday for the tournament that will be held from August 30-September 17. A total of 13 games will be played, out of which 9 will be played in Sri Lanka and 4 will be played in Pakistan.

Hashmatullah Shahidi will be captaining the Afghanistan side.

Janat played his only ODI in February 2017 against Zimbabwe, and has not featured in the format since. He, however, did play a T20I as recently as July this year.

Sharafuddin Ashraf, who has

not been part of the ODI side since January 2022, also made a comeback. Of the squad that took part in the three-match ODI series against Pakistan recently, Wafadar Momand and Azmatullah Omarzai missed the cut for the Asia Cup.

Omarzai had missed the third ODI against Pakistan due to a side strain and was replaced by Gulbadin Naib in the side.

Squad: Hashmatullah Shahidi (c), Rahmanullah Gurbaz (wk), Ibrahim Zadran, Riaz Hassan, Rahmat Shah, Najibullah Zadran, Mohammad Nabi, Ikram Alikhil, Rashid Khan, Gulbadin Naib, Karim Janat, Abdul Rahman, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Mujeeb Ur Rahman, Noor Ahmad, Mohammad Saleem Safi, Fazalhaq Farooqi. - Agencies

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INDIA'S IMPORTANCE

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India is the solution for all problems and holds an important place in building an efficient and trusted global supply chain.

MARKET
BUSINESS & FINANCE



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MONDAY, AUGUST 28, 2023



MSX INDEX ENDS LOWER

The MSX index closed at 4,772.13 points, down by 0.08 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.22 per cent at 471.67 points. Al Batinah Power, up 4.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Phoenix Power, down 3.23 per cent, was the top loser

ASMED amendments pave way for better SME funding

The amendments will also encourage entrepreneurs to launch and expand their projects locally and abroad, besides motivating job seekers to explore opportunities in the entrepreneurial sector



MUSCAT: The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) has issued amendments to the regulation governing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and artisans' businesses. The step introduces

the necessary flexibility to develop SMEs and sustain their growth.

The amendments will also encourage entrepreneurs to launch and expand their projects locally and abroad, besides motivating job seekers to explore opportunities

in the entrepreneurial sector. The outcome will reflect positively on raising the contribution of SMEs and start-ups to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The amendments augment the value of the loan ceiling, without

adding administrative fees. This applies to investments seeking as much as OMR20,000 of funding, compared to a previous cap of OMR5,000 beyond which the fees are added.

The amendments cancel the

maximum value of a loan value while determining the loan's value in financing programmes that are issued following the nature of each financing programme.

The amendments also lift the ban on the upper limit on the legal age of

an applicant for financing through the ASMED. Yet the amendments retain the upper age limit condition in specific determinants for each financing programme.

ASMED statistics show that 170 applications received funding approvals to the tune of more than OMR15,777,431.

The funding approvals cover four different programmes: A programme for financing industrial projects and service projects (110 applications, worth OMR11,490,905), a programme for financing contracts (33 applications, worth OMR2,877,000), a programme for funding working capital and fixed assets (26 applications, worth OMR1,339,526) and a programme for financing business incubators and accelerators (one application worth OMR70,000).

The Governorate of Muscat took the lead in terms of approved funding of businesses (63 applications worth OMR4,996,762 got the nod), followed by the Governorate of North Al Batinah (29 applications worth OMR3,209,869) and the Governorate of South Al Batinah (19 applications worth OMR1,667,800). -ONA

SOHAR PORT AND FREEZONE

Sohar Freezone signs lease agreement to manufacture industrial, medical gas units

MUSCAT: Sohar Port and Freezone announced the signing of a land lease agreement with Air Care Systems Company (FZO) for the production of industrial and medical gas units in Sohar Freezone.

Under the terms of this agreement, Air Care Systems Company is set to manufacture crucial gases, including liquid oxygen, liquid nitrogen, and liquid argon.

The signing ceremony took place in the presence of His Highness Sayyid Juland bin Jaifar Salim Al Said, Chairman of Pak Oman Investment Company and Imran Chaudry, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the Sultanate of Oman, along with executive management of Sohar Port and Freezone and Air Care Systems Company.

This advanced production unit will be empowered by Air Separation Unit (ASU) technology, ensuring top-tier quality and efficiency with Pak Oman Investment Company the structural and financial advisor for the project.

Covering a land area of 15,000sqm, this project is a convergence of Chinese and European technologies, backed by a robust \$10 million investment. Leveraging natural air as a feedstock, the ASU project manages power and fuel resources strategically for optimal production efficiency.



timal production efficiency.

With a target daily production capacity of 110 tonnes per day, the project aims to extend its market reach across the GCC, Yemen, and the Mena region, positioning Oman as a key player in the gas manufacturing industry.

Ahmed Ali Babar, Director of Air Care Systems stated: "Choosing Sohar Freezone to anchor this project

was a strategic decision driven by the unparalleled opportunities it offers to investors.

"By leveraging the strategic advantages provided by Sohar Freezone and its proximity to key markets, this signing aligns with our vision to enhance the availability of critical gases locally, benefiting healthcare and industries."

The primary objective of this

project is to cater for the escalating regional demand for industrial and medical gases while simultaneously reinforcing the self-reliance of the healthcare sector.

The project aligns with several objectives, including fostering industrial growth, supplying local contractors with essential gases, and promoting technological advancement. -ONA

NAMA HOLDING



Roadshow organised to enhance Nama's ICV performance

Times News Service

MUSCAT: As part of its endeavour to enhance its contribution to the national GDP and economic growth, the In-Country Value team of Nama Holding organised a series of workshops on the ICV performance and indicators of the group companies.

These workshops targeted senior management, executive management, and technical teams in the group companies to discuss the latest updates and current performance of the group-related ICV projects and initiatives, as well as to highlight the significance of reinforcing the role of small and medium-sized enterprises to contribute to executing the group's businesses.

On August 7, 2023, the ICV roadshow began with a workshop with Nama Supply's top management, which was followed by sessions with the concerned teams of other companies within the Group to discuss the scale of businesses and projects given to local enterprises and SMEs. Several themes were covered at the seminars, including the main issues and obstacles that businesses experience while implementing the ICV policy and the unified operating model, as well as how to turn them into opportunities. The ICV team extends its efforts to conduct these workshops for group companies within the agreed-upon program and timeframe.

Commenting on organising ICV workshops, Saleh Al Salmi, Senior Manager of Group Financial Service and Procure-

ment, said: "We remain committed to adopting the ICV policy and its standards in Nama Group, and the team is diligently working to implement the operating model of the group that was issued by the Oman Investment Authority effectively.

"Through organising these workshops, we aim to evaluate the ICV's performance and measure the current indicators of the implementation of the unified operating model by the group companies. This step will certainly create a paradigm shift in successfully adopting ICV initiatives and projects by the group companies, thus contributing to enhancing the vital role of the sector in supporting the national economy."

"To further enhance synergies and purchasing operations among the group companies and associated institutions with the Oman Investment Authority, we have formed a full team from each group company that is specialised in defining business opportunities available to be allocated to the local SMEs and companies," he added.

Positioning itself as a key player in stimulating the national economy, Nama Group is planning to schedule meetings with local SMEs, vendors, and suppliers during the last quarter of this year, to present and discuss potential projects and business opportunities. Nama Group has been at the forefront of adopting the strategic ICV framework in its core operations, and it is constantly working on maximising local procurements.

B20 SUMMIT

UN Special Envoy urges multilateral development banks to focus on climate transition capital

NEW DELHI: The B20 Summit 2023 witnessed a discussion on 'Financing the Climate Transition' during its plenary session held at the Taj Palace on Saturday.

Mark Carney, UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance, Co-Chair of Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero (GFANZ) and Chair and Head of Transition Investing at Brookfield Asset Management, addressed the need for a shift in the operational orientation of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) towards mobilising capital to catalyse the climate transition.

Carney emphasised the colossal amount of capital required to finance the climate transition, especially in challenging, hard-to-abate sectors and the community's dependence on them.

He urged the focus to be on transition finance and highlighted the necessity for developed countries to commit around \$100-150 billion annually to assist emerging econo-

Mark Carney emphasised the colossal amount of capital required to finance the climate transition, especially in challenging, hard-to-abate sectors and the community's dependence on them

mies in their transition efforts.

Furthermore, Carney stressed the importance of governments in emerging economies in creating an enabling ecosystem for the climate transition.

This involves establishing regulations that support nature-based solutions, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, promote renewable energy adoption, and facilitate the development of carbon markets.

The panel discussion, moderated by Lynn Forester De Roths-

child, CEO of E.L. Rothschild and Founder and co-chair of the Council for Inclusive Capitalism, UK, emphasised the role of partnerships between private and public markets, as well as various stakeholders, in the success of the climate transition.

Bernard Looney, CEO of BP, UK, underscored the need to address emissions directly in the hard-to-abate sectors and prioritise energy security, access, and affordability. He emphasised that a swift and

well-organised transition is vital.

Uday Kotak, CEO of Kotak Mahindra Bank, India, emphasised the importance of capital that is willing to take losses and called for collaboration between businesses and governments to fund clean technology initiatives.

He highlighted the need for governments to offer loss guarantees through gap funding.

Mark E Tucker, Group Chairman of HSBC Holdings Plc, UK, discussed innovative mechanisms globally and the importance of government de-risking.

He stressed the role of businesses in adapting to new models and announced HSBC's commitment to providing \$1 trillion by 2030 for the climate transition.

Verena Lim, CEO-Asia and member of the Global Management Committee at Macquarie Group, Singapore, mentioned the increasing interest from investors in funding the transition. -ANI

MARKET

MSX index ends lower

Al Batinah Power, up 4.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Phoenix Power, down 3.23 per cent, was the top loser.



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,772.13 points, down by 0.08 per cent from previous close. The Sharia Index ended down by 0.22 per cent at 471.67 points. Al Batinah Power, up 4.00 per cent, was the top gainer while, Phoenix Power, down 3.23 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of number of shares traded as well as in terms of turnover. A total number of 705 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating turnover of OMR2.66 million, with more than 946 million shares changing hands. Out of 43 traded securities, 10 advanced, 11 declined, and 22 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR78,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR49,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR29,000 worth of shares. Financial Index closed at 7,796.85 points, down 0.12 per

cent. Prices of Oman & Emirates Investment, Oman United Insurance, Bank Nizwa, Ominvest were up by 1.47 per cent, 1.08 per cent, 1.02 per cent, 0.51 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Batinah Development Company, Takaful Oman, Muscat Finance, National Bank Oman, Al Madina Takaful were up by 3.16 per cent, 1.96 per cent, 1.82 per cent, 1.34 per cent, 1.16 per cent respectively. Industrial Index closed at 6,004.92 points, down 0.01 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement, Gulf Mushroom Products were up by 1.86 per cent, 0.87 per cent respectively. Services Index was down by 0.18 per cent before closing at 1,651.52 points. Prices of Al Batinah Power, Muscat Gases, National Gas, Ooredoo were up by 4.00 per cent, 1.64 per cent, 1.10 per cent, 0.78 per cent respectively. Prices of SMN Power Holding, Renaissance Services were up by 1.41 per cent, 0.48 per cent respectively. — United Securities

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INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff%
MSX 30 INDEX	4,780.44	4,753.06	4,772.13	4,775.96	-3.83	-0.08
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,813.58	7,780.20	7,796.85	7,806.06	-9.20	-0.12
Industry Index	6,006.14	6,004.92	6,004.92	6,005.61	-0.69	-0.01
Services Index	1,655.52	1,648.31	1,651.52	1,654.51	-2.99	-0.18
MSX Shariah Index	473.72	471.41	471.67	472.70	-1.04	-0.22
MSX TR INDEX	6,290.96	6,254.93	6,280.02	6,285.06	-5.05	-0.08
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,526.05	8,489.62	8,507.80	8,517.84	-10.04	-0.12
SERVICES TR IDX	1,827.49	1,819.53	1,823.08	1,826.37	-3.30	-0.18
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,416.05	6,414.74	6,414.74	6,415.48	-0.74	-0.01

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap.	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
9,468,531	2,662,092	705	23,819,189,983	10	11	22	43

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY, AUGUST 27

SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR.	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PAR VALUE	MARKET CAP	
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	63,549	4,372	6	0.068	0.070	0.068	0.069	0.068	0.001	1.471	0.070	0.069	0.070	0.100	8,409,375
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	16,000	4,460	5	0.274	0.280	0.274	0.280	0.277	0.003	1.083	0.280	0.272	0.282	0.100	28,000,000
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,888,658	725,450	96	0.384	0.387	0.382	0.386	0.383	0.003	0.783	0.386	0.386	0.386	0.100	251,264,473
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	285,000	111,440	58	0.390	0.392	0.390	0.392	0.390	0.002	0.513	0.392	0.392	0.392	0.100	261,999,247
OM0000001152	OMAN NATIONAL ENGINEERING & INVESTMENT	5,000	530	1	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.106	0.000	0.000	0.106	0.105	0.106	0.100	15,900,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	5,000	1,750	1	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.350	0.000	0.350	0.350	0.355	0.355	0.100	115,805,449
OM0000002176	JAZEERA STEEL PRODUCTS	3,000	816	1	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.272	0.000	0.000	0.272	0.270	0.272	0.100	33,972,245
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	10,000	600	1	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.000	0.060	0.060	0.064	0.064	0.100	21,367,638
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,760,996	786,168	92	0.284	0.286	0.284	0.284	0.284	0.000	0.284	0.284	0.256	0.100	2,131,816,766	
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	630,197	642,614	124	1.000	1.020	1.000	1.020	1.020	0.000	1.020	1.020	0.918	0.100	765,006,000	
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	75,663	4,388	4	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.058	0.000	0.058	0.058	0.060	0.100	11,600,000	
OM0000003388	SCHAH INTERNATIONAL BANK	275,586	29,305	15	0.107	0.107	0.106	0.107	0.107	0.000	0.000	0.107	0.104	0.107	0.100	585,964,070
OM0000005005	ALMAHA CERAMICS	3,041	867	4	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.000	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	15,675,000
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	27,058	11,193	21	0.412	0.414	0.412	0.412	0.414	-0.002	-0.483	0.412	0.412	0.373	0.100	97,400,920
OM0000004788	MADINA TAKAFUL	15,736	1,338	5	0.086	0.086	0.085	0.085	0.086	-0.001	-1.163	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.100	14,875,000
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	49,208	14,623	18	0.290	0.290	0.290	0.294	0.298	-0.004	-1.342	0.294	0.294	0.269	0.100	478,028,228
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	217,100	15,273	22	0.071	0.071	0.070	0.070	0.071	-0.001	-1.408	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.100	13,974,492
Total	17	6,330,772	2,355,186	474												
Parallel Market																
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	187,000	4,676	12	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.001	4.000	0.026	0.023	0.026	0.100	17,547,073
OM0000001178	MUSCAT GASES	11,886	1,462	4	0.122	0.124	0.122	0.124	0.122	0.002	1.639	0.124	0.122	0.124	0.100	3,720,000
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	5,906	545	3	0.091	0.094	0.091	0.092	0.091	0.001	1.099	0.092	0.091	0.092	0.100	7,820,000
OM0000004420	BANK NIZWA	2,115,472	209,432	94	0.099	0.100	0.099	0.099	0.098	0.001	1.020	0.099	0.099	0.099	0.100	221,458,350
OM0000008868	THE PEARL REIF	100	12	1	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.124	0.123	0.001	0.813	0.124	0.120	0.125	0.100	52,671,506
OM0000001020	OMAN CHERMITE	245	1,250	1	5.100	5.100	5.100	5.100	5.100	0.000	0.000	5.100	5.010	5.100	1.000	15,304,000
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	57,850	4,687	6	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.081	0.000	0.081	0.080	0.085	0.100	16,686,000	
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	1,150	46	2	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.040	0.037	0.040	0.100	3,400,000	
OM0000002333	SALALAH PORT SERVICES	1,930	811	1	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.420	0.000	0.420	0.000	0.420	0.100	75,531,708	
OM0000003141	BARKA WATER AND POWER	75,106	2,923	7	0.040	0.041	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.000	0.038	0.038	0.038	0.100	6,080,000	
OM0000003821	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	7,000	1,120	1	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.160	0.000	0.160	0.160	0.162	0.100	32,477,831	
OM0000003681	VOLTAMP ENERGY	7,982	1,002	6	0.128	0.127	0.128	0.128	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.128	0.127	0.100	10,254,747
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	252,500	8,313	8	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.024	0.025	0.100	17,890,159
OM0000005260	OMAN ARAB BANK	6,464	918	1	0.142	0.142	0.142	0.149	0.149	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.142	0.149	0.100	248,742,090
OM0000007084	MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION	370	34	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.000	0.092	0.090	0.094	0.100	14,310,637	
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	100	9	1	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.000	0.090	0.090	0.090	0.100	42,406,775	
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	29,772	8,890	21	0.298	0.299	0.297	0.298	0.298	0.000	0.298	0.297	0.299	0.100	229,519,600	
OM0000002200	AHLI BANK	3,480	806	2	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.174	0.175	-0.001	-0.571	0.174	0.174	0.175	0.100	408,840,399
OM0000002267	GULF MUSHROOM PRODUCTS	15,787	3,595	6	0.228	0.228	0.227	0.227	0.229	-0.002	-0.873	0.227	0.225	0.227	0.100	10,388,836
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	33,096	1,787	4	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.055	-0.001	-1.818	0.054	0.054	0.054	0.100	16,585,902
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	235,699	37,561	27	0.161	0.161	0.158	0.158	0.161	-0.003	-1.863	0.158	0.150	0.160	0.100	31,600,000
OM0000004776	TAKAFUL OMAN	25,000	1,250	6	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.051	-0.001	-1.961	0.050	0.050	0.050	0.100	12,500,000
OM0000002386	AL BATINAH DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT HO.	100	9	1	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.092	0.095	-0.003	-3.158	0.092	0.088	0.092	0.100	2,760,000
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	39,933	2,372	9	0.062	0.062	0.060	0.060	0.062	-0.002	-3.226	0.060	0.060	0.061	0.100	87,756,088
Total	24	3,113,468	291,308	225												

AT B20 SUMMIT

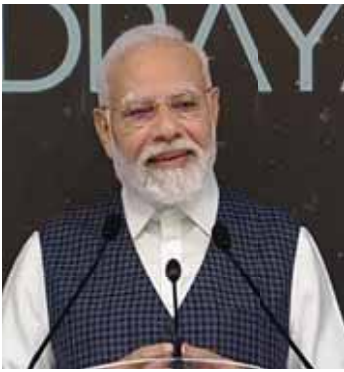
India holds important place for efficient, trusted global supply chain: PM Modi

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India is the solution for all problems and holds an important place in building an efficient and trusted global supply chain.

In his keynote address at the closing session of B20 Summit, 2023 in the national capital on Sunday, PM Modi recalled how India supplied vaccines beyond its borders and became the 'Pharmacy of the World' during the "once-in-a-century pandemic" — Covid-19.

"India holds an important place in building an efficient and trusted global supply chain," PM Modi, said referring to supply chain issues during the pandemic.

"When the world needed medicines, during the Covid pandemic, India, as the 'Pharmacy of the World', provided life-saving drugs to more than 150 countries. When the world needed a Covid drug, India enhanced production of its



own vaccines to save the precious lives of millions across the globe," he said.

Advocating a sustainable approach to business, PM Modi said global businesses should understand that sustainability itself is an opportunity and a business model. He noted when lifestyle and business become pro-planet, problems are poised to decline.

During his opening remarks,

The theme for the B20 summit is 'R.A.I.S.E – Responsible, Accelerated, Innovative, Sustainable and Equitable Businesses'

PM Modi spoke about the success of the Chandrayaan-3 lunar landing mission, adding that the festive season has come early.

"The long festival season in India has been brought forward this year. During our festive season, not just our people but even our businesses are immersed in celebrations. This year, the celebration has started early, from 23rd August. We are celebrating the success of our maiden lunar landing mission — Chandrayaan-3," he added.

The three-day B20 summit started on August 25. The theme for the event this year is 'R.A.I.S.E – Responsible, Accelerated, Innovative, Sustainable and Equitable Businesses'.

The B20 Summit India brings policymakers, business leaders and experts from across the world to deliberate and discuss the B20 India Communique. The B20 India Communique includes 54 recommendations and 172 policy actions for submission to the G20.

The Business 20 (B20) is the official G20 dialogue forum with the global business community. Established in 2010, B20 is among the most prominent Engagement Groups in G20, with companies and business organisations as participants. The B20 works to deliver concrete actionable policy recommendations to spur economic growth and development. —ANI

SIGNIFICANT PLATFORM





LIFESTYLE

HOW TO HELP KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE AND HEALTHY

As students return to classrooms, doctors say that it's important to ensure that children are up-to-date with routine childhood vaccinations



The evidence around vaccinations is abundantly clear; they're safe, effective and will help protect you, your loved ones and your community from preventable diseases. If you have questions about vaccines, their safety, or effectiveness, please speak to your physician. We are here for you, eager to answer your questions, and ensure your family is protected," says Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, M.D., M.P.H., president of the American Medical Association (AMA).

IN AN EFFORT to promote a safer, healthier school year for everyone, the AMA is sharing these vaccine facts and insights:

Vaccines are safe, effective and save lives. Routine childhood immunization is highly effective at preventing disease over a lifetime, reducing the incidence of all targeted diseases, including measles, mumps, rubella, polio and chickenpox. For the U.S. population in 2019, vaccines prevented more than 24 million cases of disease.

The benefits of vaccines can be quantified. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), vaccination of children born between 1994 and 2021 will prevent 472 million illnesses, almost 30 million hospitalizations and more than 1 million deaths, saving nearly \$2.2 trillion in total societal costs, including \$479 billion in direct costs.

Vaccination rates have fallen. Even before the rise in vaccine misinformation and disinformation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine hesitancy was increasing, elevating the risk of community outbreaks, which put under- and unvaccinated children at risk for serious illnesses, like measles. According to a mid-January 2023 report from the CDC, vaccination coverage decreased in most states for all vaccines among kindergarteners for the 2021-22 school year when compared with the previous school year, which was already below pre-pandemic levels.

Physicians can also answer questions on the new monoclonal antibody therapy, nirsevimab, available for infants and children under the age of 19 months, for the prevention of RSV disease.



Don't let cost be a barrier. Programs like Vaccines for Children (VFC) are federally funded to provide no-cost vaccinations to children whose families otherwise could not afford them. Parents can learn more by contacting their state or local health department.

"Make an annual well-child visit and immunizations a part of your household's back-to-school routine," says Dr. Ehrenfeld. "Doing so will protect you and your family from a number of preventable illnesses. It's something I do for my own children, and I urge you to do so, too." -Statepoint

Speak to your child's physician. With increased misinformation around vaccinations, it is critical that you seek out reliable, evidence-based sources for information. These sources may begin with websites like getvaccineanswers.org, but they should also include your child's physician.

THIS SCHOOL YEAR

SPORTS

Kiplangat clinches Uganda’s second ever marathon title

The 23-year-old wins the men’s race as two-time Olympian Maru Teferi of Israel settles for the silver ahead of Ethiopia’s Leul Gebresilase

BUDAPEST: Uganda’s Victor Kiplangat is the new world marathon men’s champion. The 23-year-old gallantly protected his lead to win his country’s second ever world marathon title in 2 hours 8 minutes 53 seconds on Sunday at the 2023 World Athletics Championships, exactly 10 years after compatriot Stephen Kiprotich won the title in Moscow in 2013.

Israel Maru Teferi survived a fall after the 30km point to finish second in a season best of 2:09:12, as Ethiopia’s Leul Gebresilase took bronze in 2:09:19.

Kiplangat added a world marathon gold to the Commonwealth Games title he clinched last year in Birmingham on the final day of the championships, on what is expected to be the hottest day this year in the Hungarian capital.

So hot were the conditions that championships’ organisers reduced the 10km mass run that also began on the same course after the official men’s marathon race at Heroes’ Square to 6km “to protect the health of the participants”.

With the temperature at about 25 degrees and a humidity of 65 percent at the finish, Kiplangat, the World Mountain Running champion in 2017, was part of a



group that caught up with early breakaway leader just before half-way point and was able to control the pace when he took charge at the 37km mark until the end.

But even the heat couldn’t hold back Kiplangat from making history.

He comfortably rushed to the finish line, grabbing the Ugandan flag from his team officials and waving it across the finish line, celebrating his biggest career victory.

“It was my day today, it was hot but the weather favoured me. I got a lot of experience from running

had to come here and fight for the medal, and today we have got a gold medal.”

Danish-based Omar Hassan, running for the Athlete Refugee Team, was 41st.

Kipyegon completes world double in 5,000-1,500m

Faith Kipyegon claimed a grand double at the worlds. The Kenyan, racing in just her sixth competitive 5,000m, clinched victory on Saturday night to add to 1,500m gold earlier in the week.

Kipyegon maintained her posi-

holder, showed that her relative inexperience in the event was no hindrance as she held off the charge from both Hassan and Chebet to win in 14:53.88.

She celebrated with her fans in the crowd after her lap of honour, giving high-fives out to Kenyan supporters.

Hassan took silver in 14:54.11 while Chebet made it two Kenyans on the podium, finishing in 14:54.33.

“This has been an amazing year for me,” Kipyegon said. “Making history today, winning two gold medals in championships is what I was dreaming for this season.”

Indian men’s 4x400m relay team breaks Asian record

Indian men’s 4x400m relay team qualified for the final with a new Asian record at the ongoing worlds.

The Indian team comprising Muhammed Anas, Amoj Jacob, Muhammed Ajmal and Rajesh Ramesh clocked 2:59:05 to finish second overall in the heats at Budapest.

The Indian men’s 4x400m relay team clocked a new Asian record and progressed to the final on Saturday.

They broke the Asian record of 2:59.51, set by Japan at the world championships in Oregon last year.

The Indian team finished behind the USA in a nine-team heat 1. The USA clocked a time of 2:58.47 and finished first while Great Britain finished third with 2:59.42 to take the final qualifying spot in heat 1. The first three finishers from each of the two heats and two other teams with the fastest times made the cut for the final.

Indian men’s timing also shattered the national record of 3:00.25, set by Muhammed Anas, Noah Nirmal Tom, Arokia Rajiv and Amoj Jacob at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. - Agencies

LIGUE 1



Mbappe on target as PSG defeat Lens 3-1

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe’s double helped Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) beat Lens 3-1 to claim their first Ligue win of the season on Saturday.

Making his first start of the campaign following a dispute over his future at the club, the French forward thumped a first-time effort into the top corner to double the hosts’ lead and added his second late on.

Marco Asensio’s curling effort had put PSG ahead on the stroke of half-time.

But Morgan Guilavogui got one back for Lens with the last kick of the game.

Mbappe, who came off the bench to score at Toulouse last weekend, was lively from

the off and had PSG’s best two chances of the first half but denied by Lens keeper Brice Samba in the first instance before his deflected effort was cleared off the line.

A surging run from Vitinho created the opening for Asensio, whose shot took a slight nick off the defender before the ball found the bottom corner.

Lucas Hernandez then teed up Mbappe for the second eight minutes after the break before Mbappe and Guilavogui each benefitted from ricochets to find the net in added time at the end of the match.

After two draws to start the campaign, victory lifts Luis Enrique’s side up to fifth. - Agencies

PREMIER LEAGUE

Rodri strikes winner for City

LONDON: Rodri scored a late winner to earn Manchester City a 2-1 victory over battling Sheffield United at Bramall Lane on Sunday.

Jayden Bogle thought he had earned the Blades a point with a drilled equaliser after 85 minutes, but Spain midfielder Rodri blasted into the top left corner three minutes later to give City the win.

Erling Haaland missed a first-half penalty before heading the opener from Jack Grealish’s cross after the break.

In the other early match on Sunday, Matty Cash scored twice as Aston Villa outplayed Burnley 3-1, with the latter without a point since their Premier League return.

Villa suffered a 5-1 thumping at Newcastle in their opening game but have recovered in fine fashion with three consecutive victories in all competitions.

Full-back Cash was the unlikely hero at Turf Moor, scoring two fine goals as Unai Emery’s men showcased why they will be a force to be reckoned with this season.

It took just seven minutes for the visitors to prise open the Clarets backline as Ollie Watkins ran through and chipped the ball to the back post for Cash to finish.

The second was a fine team move volleyed in by Poland international Cash following a cutback from summer signing Moussa Diaby, who impressed once again.



But Vincent Kompany’s hosts hit back immediately after the break as Lyle Foster swivelled and struck a calm finish for his first top-flight goal.

Burnley were much improved in the second period and exerted real pressure on Villa, but the visitors scored a brilliant goal on the counter-attack as Diaby rolled home to seal a deserved victory.

Earlier on Saturday, Manchester United sealed a 3-2 comeback win over Nottingham Forest at Old Trafford. United fought back to win despite trailing by two goals inside four minutes.

SERIE A



Giroud hits double as AC Milan rout Torino

MILAN: Olivier Giroud scored two penalties as AC Milan maintained their winning start in Serie A with a 4-1 victory over Torino at San Siro on Saturday.

Christian Pulisic tapped in from close range to open the scoring for Milan before Perr Schuurs equalised.

Veteran France striker Giroud converted from the spot either side of half-time while Theo Hernandez also got on the scoresheet with a deft angled chip.

Giroud is France’s all-time leading goalscorer with 54 goals in 124 matches

Jose Mourinho’s Roma remain winless after a 2-1 defeat by Hellas Verona.

Giroud has picked up where he left off last season and has scored in five straight Serie A matches for Milan.

Since his Serie A debut in August 2021, the 36-year-old has also scored the most goals (27) in the Italian top flight of any Milan player.

Meanwhile Roma, who drew their opening game of the season with Salernitana 2-2, were left frustrated after the loss in Verona.

Ondrej Duda punished Rui Patricio from close range to give Hellas the lead before Cyril Ngonge broke clear in first-half injury time and calmly finished.

Houssem Aouar pulled one back for Roma with a header after the break but Hellas, reduced to 10 men after Isak Hien’s red card with six minutes left, held on. - Agencies

COMMENTARY

Can India-Pakistan 50-over match be a thriller this time?

Anis Sajan
Vice Chairman, Danube Group

THE big clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan for the Asia Cup is on September 2 and fans from both countries are all excited. The last time the two countries met in a 50-over-a-side clash was way back in 2019 in Manchester, United Kingdom, during the ICC World Cup in England, where India trounced Pakistan on the back of a brilliant hundred by Rohit Sharma. The last three T20I clashes



between both teams have been typical of an India-Pakistan humdinger and have gone till the last over. However, the last six one-day international (50-over-a-side) matches since

2015 have been all one-sided with India winning five and Pakistan winning the big one - the Champions Trophy final.

Fans from both countries eagerly wait for an India-Pakistan clash as both the teams don’t play regularly due to the political tensions. Fans now wait for Asia Cup, which happens once every two years, and the 50-over ICC World Cup, held every two years. Sadly, the ODI matches have not lived up to the high drama and tension in the last eight years.

One main reason for India’s dominance against Pakistan in the 50-over format in the last eight years is their superior batting where the likes of Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan and Virat Kohli have scored big runs and given India the edge as compared to Pakistan’s batting. It was only in the 2017 Champions Trophy final when Pakistan’s Fakhar Zaman scored a big hundred and then Mohammed Amir ripped apart India’s top-order to power them to their only win.

With Babar Azam, the No.1

batter in ODI cricket, Pakistan will hope that he will come to the party and get those big runs and will be supported by other batters like Imam Ul Haq and Fakhar Zaman. India and Pakistan are expected to play a minimum of three 50-over games in the next two months, twice in the Asia Cup, hoping both India and Pakistan beat Nepal, and then in the big ICC World Cup. All the fans will hope that the matches go down to the wire and don’t turn out to be a one-sided affair as the previous six games.

IN-PICTURES



Daily life of Bandung Station in Indonesia
This photo taken by cellphone shows a train leaving Bandung Station in Bandung, Indonesia. *Xinhua*



Angolan president welcomes visiting Brazilian president in Luanda, Angola
Angolan President Joao Lourenco (left, front) welcomes visiting Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (right, front) at the Presidential Palace in Luanda. *Xinhua*

2023 Bucharest International Air Show & General Aviation Exhibition
A pilot takes photos of a child visiting a military airplane on display during the 2023 Bucharest International Air Show & General Aviation Exhibition in Bucharest, Romania. *Xinhua*



Kalki Koechlin, Deepthi Naval and Nandita Das during the special screening of their movie 'Goldfish'
Bollywood actresses Kalki Koechlin, Deepthi Naval and Nandita Das pose for a picture during the special screening of their movie 'Goldfish', in Mumbai. *ANI Photo*



People visit 20th Richmond Maritime Festival in Canada
People visit the 20th Richmond Maritime Festival in Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. *Xinhua*



Couple committed to promoting development of rock climbing
Xiao Ting (right) protects Liu Yongbang during his climbing in Yangshuo County, Guilin City, south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Yangshuo of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region is the most popular rock climbing destination in China, famous for its dramatic karst mountain landscape and outdoor recreation. *Xinhua*



Digital culture exhibition at 10th West China Culture Industries Expo in Xi'an
Visitors experience digital display technology in the digital culture exhibition area at the 10th West China Culture Industries Expo in Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province. *Xinhua*

ROUND-UP

Make the most of luxury with impressive Lincoln Navigator

The Navigator is powered by a twin-turbo V6, 3.5L engine with auto start-stop technology, that produces 440 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed automatic transmission with SelectShift paddle activation

MUSCAT: The large and impressive Lincoln Navigator makes more than just a lasting impression with its bold stance, sheer size, thoughtful attention to luxury details and a range of features that make the Navigator stand out in its category. The Navigator is powered by a twin-turbo V6, 3.5L engine with auto start-stop technology, that produces and thrilling 440 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed automatic transmission with SelectShift paddle activation. Highlights the Navigator's distinctive looks are adaptive pixel projector LED headlamps with signature lighting, predictive curve lighting and sign-based lighting.



Adding to its allure are panoramic vista roof with power sunshade and Lincoln Embrace: LED-illuminated exterior door handle pockets, Lincoln approach detection system, Lincoln logo illuminated mats and Lincoln signature lighting with fade on/off. The Navigator is equipped with 1st-row passenger seat memory, 3rd-row PowerFold 60/40 split bench seat with power recline, 12" configurable LCD instrument cluster, Head-up Display, ambient lighting-LED, enhanced active noise control, wireless charging pad and more. Enhancing interior experiences are an available Revel® Ultima 3D audio system with 28 speakers that work in concert with Navigator's interior design and acoustics. Standard SYNC® 4 enables clients to manage audio, phone, navigation and more from the vehicle touch screen or steering wheel-mounted controls. Promoting fun experiences that last longer are adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go and lane centering assist, auto high-beam headlamps, blind spot information system with cross-traffic alert and trailer coverage, evasive steering assist, lane-keeping system with blind-spot assist which includes lane-keeping aid, lane-keeping alert, driver alert system and a pre-collision assist. The Navigator is also equipped with driver and front passenger-dual-stage front airbags, front-seat side airbags, safety canopy side-curtain airbags with rollover sensor, AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control), MyKey technology and SecuriCode invisible keypad. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co.

FASHION LANDSCAPE

NaseejOman offers elegant drapes for unique personality in you

MUSCAT: NaseejOman, the flagship brand of Oman Textile Mills (OTM), has been defining the fashion landscape of Oman and GCC for over three decades with its wide range of womenswear designs, colours, and prints. Each design is a woven tale of modernity that entwines with Oman's rich culture and heritage to offer a range of exquisite dress materials that provide comfort, versatility, and style, empowering women to embrace and express their individuality. Emphasising on the brand's commitment to empowering women through fashion, Huda Al Falahi, of OTM, says, "Today's woman knows what she wants. She is strong and independent, who uses her style as a means of self-expression and empowerment. Our aim is to ensure we continue to inspire and do our bit to support women achieve this sense of unique style through our designs." Faseem P. P., the Chief Marketing Officer of Oman Textile Mills, adds, "Our highly experienced in-house team of experts carefully curate designs that seamlessly blend ethnic charm of the Sultanate's rich culture and tradition with evolving modern flair in the fashion landscape. Our mission is to empower every woman to feel beautiful, confident, and comfortable as she continues to scale new heights every day." Made from the finest, luxurious High Twist Cotton and spun Polyester yarns NaseejOman's highly popular Voile creations are brought to life through Flat Bed and Digital printing machines. Be it 100% Cotton or Polyester Voile, 100% Cotton Cambric, Lawn, and Satin or 100% Silk Satin, Chiffon,



and Georgette, all come in multitude of captivating hues and designs, offering the best in fashion, comfort, and versatility. The in-house design and technical teams offer a bespoke service that can help you create co-branded textile products that include laysoo, lihaaf, and Scarves, all tailor-made to meet every fashionista's requirement. All materials are meticulously manufactured in the mill in Rusayl, Muscat, which houses an impressive set up of state-of-the-art European production lines, including the best Shuttle less Projectile Looms in its weaving department. Explaining the stringent manufacturing process, Devraj Mehta, Factory Manager, Oman Textile Mills – says, "Equipped with cutting-edge dyeing and finishing machines, as well as screen and digital printing technologies in its Process House, OTM leaves no stone unturned in its quest for excellence. With an annual processing capacity of 6 million metres, OTM possesses the remarkable ability to dye and print a wide range of fabrics comprising various fabrics such as cotton, polyester, silk, and viscose. In addition, the mill is outfitted with specialised machinery designed to create high-value embellishments, including computerised embroidery, crystal embossing, gold foiling, and flock printing." OTM's commitment to quality, craftsmanship and technological prowess has bolstered its reputation as a leader in the textile industry. It has also established Naseejoman as a brand that understands the fashion needs of today's modern women, making it a name to reckon with in the ever-evolving GCC fashion landscape.





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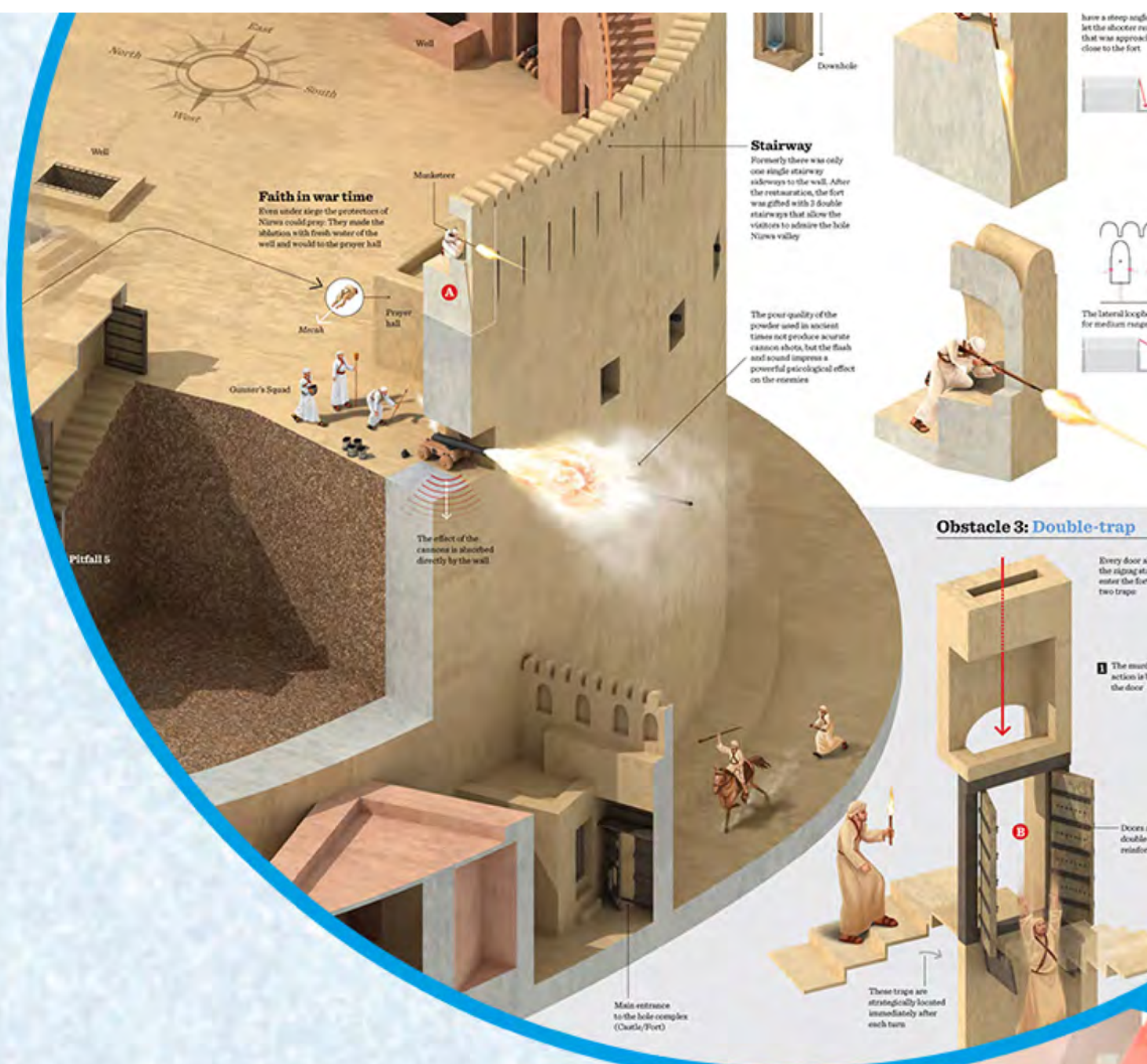
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