

**HM THE SULTAN GREETES
PRESIDENT OF SURINAME**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Chan Santokhi of the Republic of Suriname on his country Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Santokhi and the people of his country. **-ONA**



**HM GREETES CHAIR OF PRESIDENCY
OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Zeljka Cvijanovic, Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Zeljka and the people of her country. **-ONA**



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**S&P upgrades Oman's credit rating to BB with
stable future outlook again this year**

MUSCAT: Standard and Poor's (S&P) has upgraded the Sultanate of Oman's credit rating from BB- to BB, with stable future outlook due to improved fiscal performance of the state.

S&P also cited other indices, including improved performance in the balance of payments, measures undertaken by the government within the Medium Term Fiscal Balance Plan and a rise in

oil prices as factors projecting positive outlook, coupled with the amelioration of net asset position in 2023.

S&P pointed out that the government of Oman exerted extensive efforts in bringing down the State's indebtedness, making use of additional financial returns. The international agency projects a decline in the public debt rate vis-à-vis the Gross Domestic

Product (GDP) from 61 percent in 2021 to 44 percent in 2022.

The agency also projects a rise in Oman's revenues over the next two years, along with sustained fiscal surplus in the State's Budget 2024—which will enhance levels of the country's financial reserves and achieve a 5.8 percent financial surplus over the GDP this year (2022).

Current account is also set to post a 5.2 percent surplus vis-à-vis the GDP, compared to deficits of 4.9 percent and 16.2 percent in 2021 and 2020, respectively. It said that economic growth in Oman will be supplemented by a projected rise in hydrocarbon production, improved investment

rates and government measures directed at supporting society and the private sector. S&P expects Oman's GDP to pick up by about 4 percent in 2022 and 3 percent in 2023.

Meanwhile, non-oil activities are scheduled to be the prime motivator of growth over the coming years, according to S&P, which projects a private sector growth of 1.8 percent in 2022 and 2.5 percent over the period 2024-2025. The international agency commended the government's tangible efforts in consolidating the principle of transparency and disclosure of financial statements and GDP data through the publication of regular circulars. **>A3**



**Oman can emerge as a key
destination for astronomy
and scientific research**

A2

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

**Call to desist from
illegal remittance**

1 Bangladesh Embassy Muscat and Bangladesh Social Club have conducted a series of events in different parts of Oman to build awareness about the need to transfer money through legal channels. **>A3**

WORLD

**Brazil school shootings
leave 3 dead, 11 injured**

2 At least three people were killed and 11 severely wounded after an armed gunman opened fire at two schools in the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo on Friday, Brazilian authorities said. **>A6**



MARKET

**Omani banks' credit
to private sector up**

3 The total bank credit extended by commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman to the private sector rose by 1.2 per cent, to reach OMR19.4 billion at the end of September 2022. **>B1**

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YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Activities of Amad Duqm 22 begin

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The activities of Amad Duqm 22 started on Friday afternoon with the organisation of a youth auto march, in which the local community, employees at the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and others took part.

The march started from Amad Duqm village to Saay Commercial District.

The sky of Duqm was also adorned with paragliding that accompanied the march.

The event, which runs through for 9 days, is organised in cooperation between the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. The event embraces many youth activities in various fields such



as culture, sports, innovation, technology, sustainability and entertainment.

Eng. Tariq bin Mohammed Al Mujaini, Head of the team preparing the site for Amad Duqm 22 event, said, “We faced challenges in preparing the site before the start of the event, due to the lack of some materials that we had to bring from the capital, Muscat. Thanks to the efforts of Omani youth, we were able to overcome the challenges. All facilities were completed on schedule and now many visitors are enjoying the

event and its activities.

“Preparing such a large site within a short period of time is not easy at all. We had to pave the ground and connect electricity to the site. Thanks to everyone who contributed to preparing this event in Duqm for the first time,” he added.

As part of the events accompanying Amad Duqm 22, the Special Economic Zone Department of Duqm organised a number of visits to the Sculptors’ Forum in Nufoon village. The programme included visits to a number of school students and members of the Omani Women’s Association in Duqm. Visitors expressed their admiration for the aesthetics of these sculptures, which will be transferred to decorate a number of sites in Duqm.

Nufoon village also received many tourists and visitors to see the sculptures, made by a group of international sculptors who came from Spain, Germany, Bulgaria, Romania and Tunisia, in addition to a number of prominent Omani sculptors. The statues reflect the geological nature of the Sultanate of Oman.

The sculptors participating in the event produced sttues of different sizes, ranging in height from 2-3 metres. The Sculpture Forum, which will last until December 3, includes conducting workshops to introduce the art of sculpture to locals, employees of companies operating in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, and school students.

Full story @ timesofoman.com/oman

OMAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY



Oman can emerge as a key destination for astronomy and scientific research

Times News Service

MUSCAT: With a long history of marine heritage, Oman has the potential to become a key destination for astronomy, astronomical exploration, discoveries and scientific research, according to Muhammad Al Battashi, Chairman of the Studies and Research Committee of the Oman Astronomical Society (OAS).

Astronomy’s association with the Sultanate of Oman goes back to hundreds of years ago. Sailors used the position of the sun to track their route.

At night, sailors used the stars and their knowledge of the constellations to navigate.

He said: “If we want to describe the Sultanate of Oman in an astronomical way, it is the country of ten thousand solar hours, because in every village there are aflaj, and the age-old water distribution system is calculated by a sundial. Oman has been known for its astronomical calculations from early times. Farmers and landowners were fully aware of the movement of stars and the time difference between each star. The Omani sailors were well-versed with the navigation through stars and movement of the sun and the moon.”

Al Battashi added: “Despite the glorious history of our sailors using astronomy for travel and judging time, it is time for the government to invest more in this field.

We should provide incentives to such companies who would like to launch space programmes or research projects in astronomy. It will also help in the development of knowledge distribution.”

Ahmed bin Salem Al-Naabi, a member of the Oman Astronomical Society, said: The Sultanate of Oman is one of the countries that has a long history of interest in investing in the astronomical field.”

Since the year 2019, the Al Hajar Al Gharbi mountain range in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate has been given the status of a natural reserve.

Located in Jabal Shams with peaks towering up to 3009 metres and spread across 387 square kilometres, this particular area is a haven for astronomers, star gazers and photographers owing to the area’s clear skies, free from the lighting effects of the urban population.

This is the first reserve in the Gulf region to protect an area from the detrimental effects of light pollution, thereby promoting star gazing tourism and allowing photographers and nature enthusiasts to capture the wonders of the world above without the disturbance of the artificial light from nearby settlements.

He added: “Light pollution is one of the most important challenges facing amateurs and scientists interested in the astronomical field, and the issuance of this reserve comes as a first step in this investment, in order to develop a lighting management plan (LMP) to identify areas of high environmental sensitivity that are safe from the extension of the emitted light flare. Some other steps have also been taken to reduce light pollution within the country.”

He pointed out: “The Environment Agency announced the desire to invest in this reserve, which clearly reflects the Sultanate of Oman’s endeavour to be a destination for investment in the astronomical field in the region.”

The Oman Astronomical Society had several successful activities in the field of holding astronomical camps for families and children.

Another major event was the organising a month-long simulated mission to the red planet, Mars, called AMADEE-18 in the deserts of Dhofar in 2018. The project’s main goal: to test the tools, procedures, and mental and physical challenges that a real future Mars mission might face.

Al Naabi said that he hopes the government will continue to invest in the field of astronomy as it provides promising opportunities in diversifying sources of income and financial sustainability, which is one of the most prominent goals of Oman’s Vision 2040.

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‘Desist from using illegal means to remit money home’

Anti-money laundering laws are being enforced all over the world and those involved in the activity are bound to face the

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bangladesh Embassy Muscat and Bangladesh Social Club Oman, in association with renowned Bangladeshi Bank owned exchange house GulfOverseas Exchange, have conducted a series of events in different parts of the Sultanate to build awareness among the Bangladeshi community members on the need to transfer money through legal channels only.

They conducted two seminars recently, one in Sohar and the other in Nizwa.

Bangladeshi expatriates coming from all walks of life in Sohar and Nizwa areas attended those programmes which were organised on November 11 and 18 respectively.

Both the seminars were presided over by the Chairman of Bangladesh Social Club Oman Sirajul Hoque.

Counsellor of Passport & Visa wing Rawshan Ara Poly and Third Secretary and HoC Thuaina Aye of Bangladesh Embassy Muscat attended the events as Chief



AWARENESS DRIVE: Bangladesh Embassy Muscat and Bangladesh Social Club Oman conducted seminars in Sohar and Nizwa to build awareness among community members of the need to transfer money through legal channels.

Guest. Eng. Mustafa Kamal and CEO of Gulf Exchange Iftakher Chowdhury also attended as Special Guest.

In both the events, speakers highlighted the importance necessity and benefits of sending remittances through legal channels. They also highlighted the harms and disadvantages of sending money through illegal means.

Officials of Bangladesh Embassy Muscat, explained the Government initiatives to curb illegal money transfer. They also warned that those sending money through illegal channels as well as those involved in the business of

sending money illegally are liable to face legal consequences.

They also explained that various law enforcing agencies are actively working to catch such illegal money dealers. Anti-money laundering laws are being enforced and implemented all over the world. Such money dealers are bound to face consequences of their illegal actions in whichever country they are in.

Azimul Hoque Babul, Vice President and MN Amin, General Secretary of Bangladesh Social Club delivered the inaugural speeches and Md. Noman coordinated both the events.

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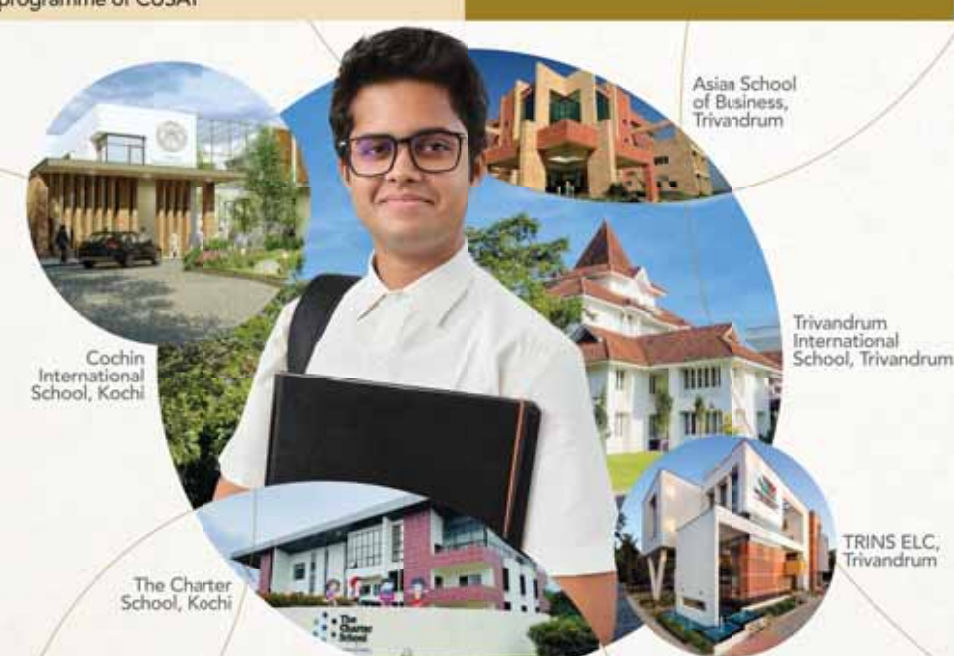
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ECONOMY

‘Oman’s credit rating expected to maintain its upward trend’

Earlier this year, S&P upgraded Oman’s credit rating twice, from BB- to BB, a notch higher over B+ in 2021. This was credited to the government’s efforts to rectify financial conditions and cut down public debt



< FROM A1 S&P noted that Oman’s credit rating may persist in its upward trend, provided measures to enhance the State’s financial position are maintained by channeling more financial surplus into the public debt reduction course and augmenting fiscal flexibility to help address any unexpected crises or upheavals.

Earlier this year, S&P upgraded Oman’s credit rating twice, from BB- to BB, a notch higher over B+ in 2021.

This was credited to the government’s efforts to rectify financial conditions and cut down public debt, placing the country on the right path to achieve its desired national goals. - OMA



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Located some 200km from Muscat, Wadi Bani Khalid is very popular among the tourists.

Take the Bidbid – Sur Road in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, which forks into a side road leading to Wilayat Bani Khalid, and then weaves up across the Eastern Hajar Mountains to Bida village deep in the mountains. There, you can enjoy the spectacular views of the fertile valley with its trees and abundant water that tumbles down in the form of waterfalls in some areas to form natural pools of water. The road then cuts through the valley to reach Muqal town, which is well known for its cave. The water pools are one of the most prominent tourist attractions in Wadi Bani Khalid. Tourists from various nationalities come here throughout the year to enjoy the beautiful and varied nature of the wilayat and spend an enjoyable time.

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OMAN'S 52ND NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATED AT MUTTRAH SOUQ

Muttrah Souq on November 18 witnessed outpouring of joy and pride for people in the Souq commemorating the celebrations of 52nd National Day. The day witnessed cake-cutting event with children, elderly and young all in a festive mood marking the 52nd National Day. - Picture by Purushothaman/ Times of Oman









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SAYYID BADR
RECEIVES PHONE
CALL FROM
SPANISH MINISTER

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Bussaidi, Foreign Minister received on Saturday a phone call from Jose Manuel Albares, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain. The phone call dealt with the bilateral relations, joint cooperation between the two countries and consultation on a number of regional and international issues and causes of common concern. — OMA

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OMAN HOUSING BANK

Loans worth OMR1.4bn disbursed

Times News Service

MUSCAT:

Since its establishment until the end of October 2022, Oman Housing Bank has disbursed loans worth about OMR1.4 billion to 51,466 citizens. The bank is currently studying adding new banking products to the to support its revenues, enabling it to expand its services in light of the increasing demand for its loans, and to enhance its pioneering role in the housing and construction movement. Musa bin Masoud Al Jadidi, CEO of the Housing Bank, explained that the study also includes the development of technical systems to enhance its banking services in line with the requirements of modern banking operations, and the required accuracy, ease and speed of procedures, which contributes to achieving more achievements in various areas of the bank's operations, and supports its vision of an integrated housing pioneer.

He said: "The Oman Housing Bank, since its inception more than 45 years ago, has had clear imprints in the record of achievement through its effective contribution to the economic and urban development of the country."



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LANDSLIDES

Several reported missing after landslides in Italy



MILAN: Heavy rains triggered landslides on the Italian island of Ischia on Saturday, with destructive waves of mud sliding down a hill in the small town of Casamicciola Terme in the early hours of the morning, engulfing at least one house and sweeping cars down to the sea, according to media reports citing emergency services.

Infrastructure Minister Matteo Salvini had told Italian media outlets Saturday morning that at

least eight people were killed in the landslide. However, shortly thereafter, Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi told reporters that there were no confirmed deaths.

“At the moment there are no confirmed deaths, there are some difficulties in the rescue operations because the weather conditions are still challenging,” Piantedosi said.

Italian media earlier reported 13 people were missing on the island, which lies off the coast of

Naples. A family of three — mother, father and a newborn baby — were among those missing, ANSA news agency reported.

The Ischia fire service said that at least one house had been buried under the mud and that two people were rescued from a car swept into the sea.

Fire service personnel also said that they were expecting help from Naples, the nearest major city, but that weather conditions were making things difficult. **DW**

TRAVEL BANS

Taliban calls out UNSC to permanently end all travel bans

KABUL: Claiming that an isolating approach of Taliban would do no good to Afghanistan and its people, the Deputy Spokesperson of the Islamic Emirate Bilal Karimi called out the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to lift all the sanctions related to travel bans, saying there should be a less gap between the Islamic Emirate and the world, TOLO news reported on Friday.

“An isolating approach would not work and there should be less of a gap between the Islamic Emirate and the world,” Taliban’s Deputy Spokesperson Bilal Karimi said. Earlier in September, Human Rights Watch urged the UNSC not to extend the existing government officials’ travel exemption as a result of the closure of girls’ schools in Afghanistan and the Taliban’s atrocities against women and girls in the war-torn nation.

—ANI



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SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

3 killed, 11 injured in twin school shootings in Brazil

BRASILIA: At least three people were killed and 11 were severely wounded after an armed gunman opened fire at two schools in the Brazilian state of Espirito Santo on Friday, CNN reported citing Brazilian authorities.

The gunman who opened fire on schools in Brazil was reportedly carrying a semi-automatic weapon which was captured in security footage. The alleged shooter was found to be wearing

military attire while the face was covered. However, the shooter is suspected to be a 16-year-old. The attack, notably, took place in the small town of Aracruz, 50 miles north of the state capital, Vitoria, as per CNN.

In a tweet, the governor of Espirito Santo, Renato Casagrande confirmed on Friday, “security teams caught up with the attacker who, cowardly, attacked two schools in Aracruz.” **ANI**





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PARTNERSHIPS IN EDUCATION

Indian minister holds meetings with Tanzania, Zimbabwe counterparts

NEW DELHI: Union Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan held series of bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Mauritius, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Ghana.

During the meeting with Mauritius Vice PM and Minister of Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Mauritius, Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Pradhan said that India and Mauritius enjoy a special relationship and are united by history, culture, language and the Indian Ocean.

He highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accorded highest priority to deepen bi-

lateral relations with Mauritius.

He assured that India remains committed to work together with Mauritius and provide assistance in building capacities in all areas of education and skill development. Pradhan said that India will be privileged to work with Mauritius for establishing it as a knowledge and skills hub of Africa and South-east Asia.

Both the countries agreed to work to further deepen engagements in the knowledge domain and also make partnership more vibrant. During the meeting with Minister for Education and Vocational Training, Zanzibar, Lela Muhamed Mussa, Pradhan said

that India is happy to assist Tanzania with the IIT project.

IIT in Tanzania can be a hub for technology education in Africa. He put forward the support required for implementation of the project and also shared India’s willingness to establish a 21st century skill centre in Zanzibar.

He also said that NEP is creating new avenues for education in India. Pradhan invited Tanzanian and African students to study in India. Leela Muhamad Musa assured of all the requisite support to make education and skills co-operation more vibrant and also for the prosperity of Tanzania and Zanzibar. **ANI**



Tender Announcement

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MEDC 093/2022	Construction of 2x20MVA Ruwi Valley (P174) Primary Substation	07/12/2022	27/12/2022	A	12/12/2022 9:00 AM at MEDC Head Office	1,575.00

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

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Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com , one week before bid submission date. - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
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POLES PACK A PUNCH



Poland's Zielinski and Lewandowski strike on either side of Szczesny penalty heroics against Saudi Arabia

DOHA: Midfielder Piotr Zielinski netted in the opening half and an emotional Robert Lewandowski scored his first World Cup goal to settle an absorbing, see-sawing encounter at Education City Stadium – and enable Poland to leapfrog surprise package Saudi Arabia in an intriguing Group C table on Saturday.

Zielinski struck against the run of play on 39 minutes and Wojciech Szczesny brilliantly denied the Saudis a prompt equaliser when the keeper repelled a pen-

alty from Salem Al Dawsari, before producing a wonderful stop to deny Mohammed Al Burayk on the follow up. Lewandowski capitalised on a defensive lapse to roll in Poland's second goal with eight minutes remaining.

The 34-year-old was visibly moved after adding a World Cup strike to an enviable list of club and individual honours. Szczesny tipped over Mohamed Kanno's rising drive as Herve Renard's team picked up where they left off in their astonishing victory over Argentina on Tuesday.

But Zielinski briefly silenced the Saudi din when he struck Poland's first goal of the tournament. Matty Cash sprang on to a return pass down the right to square for Lewandowski. He couldn't create an opening to shoot but had the presence of mind to turn back a pass for Napoli's Zielinski, who finished into the roof of the net.

Saudi Arabia were awarded a penalty late in the opening half when a VAR check detected Krystian Bielik's nibble at the calves of Saleh Al Shehri.

Al Dawsari supplied the gorgeous strike to defeat Argentina but, here, his contact was tame,

allowing Szczesny to save. Al Burayk was incredulous when the goalkeeper denied his rebound effort.

Szczesny celebrated a block to deny Al Dawsari 10 minutes after the restart and Feras Al Brikan and Al Shehri both thrashed off target from good positions. It wasn't all one-way traffic, however, and shortly after Arkadiusz Milik headed flush against the bar, Lewandowski struck the upright with an untidy effort.

The Barcelona forward wouldn't be frustrated for long. Abdulelah Al Malki's heavy touch invited Lewandowski to run through and finish and he gratefully accepted. It was his 77th goal for Poland but first from five World Cup matches and, perhaps, the only one to move Lewandowski to tears.

Saudi Arabia goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais stayed tall to deny Lewandowski a second but for jubilant Poland and their star striker, the job was done. Poland claimed three points and moved within touching distance of reaching the last 16 for the first time since Mexico 1986. - **FIFA+**

PIOTR ZIELINSKI STRUCK AGAINST THE RUN OF PLAY IN THE 39th MINUTE

ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI'S GOAL WAS THE 2,600th GOAL IN FIFA WORLD CUP HISTORY

TODAY'S MATCHES			
Group E	Group F	Group F	Group E
2pm (Oman time)	5pm	8pm	11 pm
JAPAN VS COSTA RICA	BELGIUM VS MOROCCO	CROATIA VS CANADA	SPAIN VS GERMANY
Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium	Al Thumama Stadium	Khalifa International Stadium	Al Bayt Stadium

FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar 2022

TEAM STANDINGS

As of November 26, 8pm

Group A									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Netherlands	2	1	1	0	3	1	4		
Ecuador	2	1	1	0	3	1	4		
Senegal	2	1	0	1	3	3	3		
Qatar	2	0	0	2	1	5	0		

Group B									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
England	2	1	1	0	6	2	4		
Iran	2	1	0	1	4	6	3		
USA	2	0	2	0	1	1	2		
Wales	2	0	1	1	1	3	1		

Group C									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Poland	2	1	1	0	2	0	4		
Saudi Arabia	2	1	0	1	2	3	3		
Mexico	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Argentina	1	0	0	1	1	2	0		

Group D									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
France	1	1	0	0	4	1	3		
Australia	2	1	0	1	2	4	3		
Denmark	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Tunisia	2	0	1	1	0	0	1		

Group E									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Spain	1	1	0	0	7	0	3		
Japan	1	1	0	0	2	1	3		
Germany	1	0	0	1	1	2	0		
Costa Rica	1	0	0	1	0	7	0		

Group F									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Belgium	1	1	0	0	1	0	3		
Croatia	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Morocco	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Canada	1	0	0	0	0	1	0		

Group G									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Brazil	1	1	0	0	2	0	3		
Switzerland	1	1	0	0	1	0	3		
Cameroon	1	0	0	1	0	0	0		
Serbia	1	0	0	1	0	2	0		

Group H									
COUNTRY	MP	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS		
Portugal	1	1	0	0	0	0	3		
South Korea	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Uruguay	1	0	1	0	0	0	1		
Ghana	1	0	0	1	2	3	0		

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DUKE’S DELIGHT FOR AUSSIES

Australia’s chances of making the knockout stage received a massive boost with a battling victory over Tunisia



@FIFAWorldCup

DOHA: Mitchell Duke was the hero as Australia claimed their first FIFA World Cup win in over 12 years with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Tunisia at Al Janoub Stadium, Al Wakra on Saturday. The forward, who plays his club football for Fagiano Okayama in Japan’s second tier, provided the game’s decisive moment with a brilliant header midway through the first half. Tunisia, who were roared on by another passionate and highly vocal support, toiled tirelessly in search of an equaliser but often lacked in composure and inspiration in the final third.

Australia defended heroically, too, no-one more so than Harry Soulttar. The giant Scotland-born defender earned hugs and high fives from his team-mates late in the first half when he threw himself to block from Mohamed Drag- er with a goal seemingly inevitable. Tunisia’s best chances there- after came when Youssef Msakni fired wide from close range and, later, when Wahbi Khazri shot straight at Mat Ryan during some frantic closing stages. Duke has never been a high- profile or much-lauded member of Australia’s squad. That will all change now, though, after he pro-

vided a goal of real class and intelli- gence to secure this landmark win. Remember Jared Borgetti’s match-winner for Mexico against Italy in 2002? This had shades of that famous crafty header, with Duke - despite facing away from goal - determining just the right amount of contact and re-direc- tion needed to divert Craig Good- win’s cross just inside the far post. In 17 previous World Cup matches, Australia had never once led at half-time. This match represented a notable first, there- fore, and paved the way for the Socceroos to end a seven-match winless run at the global finals. (FIFA+)

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GROUP B

MAGUIRE PROVIDES ENGLAND SILVER LINING

DOHA: England are no strangers to stalemates at the World Cup. They have had 12 in all – more than any other nation. Even their best tournament campaigns have featured a 0-0. The first match of their triumphant 1966 World Cup run was a 0-0 Wembley draw with Uruguay. The second game of their fondly remembered Italia 90 campaign went the same way against the Netherlands in Cagliari.

There were some boos on the final whistle at the Al Bayt Stadium too on Friday night, even though the point gained after a 0-0 draw against the USA took England a step closer to qualification from Group B.

It was not the night’s only positive either. At the other end of the field featured a significant plus point in the display of Gareth Southgate’s two defenders, Harry Maguire and John Stones.

Maguire delivered on his 50th appearance for his country. It was been a difficult period for a player who has lost his starting place at Manchester United and committed two errors for goals in England’s 3-3 draw with Germany in September.

Southgate noted afterwards: “We never had a single doubt about how important he is for us and the faith we needed to show. He’s shown that with and without the ball in the two games we’ve played.”

Friday night found Maguire at



his robust best defensively. “H is a leader in the camp” was how Kieran Trippier summed up his significance when asked by FIFA+.

“Harry Maguire was superb for England,” tweeted former Liverpool and England defender Jamie Carragher.

Gareth Southgate afterwards applauded both Maguire and Stones. “Our two centre- backs were absolutely outstanding with the ball,” he said.

“Yes, we lacked a bit of zip and quality in the final third. But we had to show another sign of ourselves without the ball.

“To be a successful team in the tournament you have to show a lot of faces.”

After a run of one clean sheet in seven, a shutout at the World Cup is not to be sniffed at. The next step is to combine those faces in a complete performance. (FIFA+)

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BREAKBULK MIDDLE EAST

The 2023 edition of Breakbulk Middle East (BBME) is all set to bring the region's breakbulk and project cargo service providers under one roof on February 13 and 14, 2023. BBME will cover a series of significant themes, and looks forward to the participation of leading industry experts.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MINISTRY ISSUES CIRCULAR

The Ministry of Finance issued Circular No. 1/2022 on the preparation of the closing account of the State Fiscal Year 2022. The circular requires all units of the State Administrative Apparatus to present their final accounts by March 15, 2023 at the latest.

Credit granted by Omani banks to private sector tops OMR19bn

An analysis of the activities of conventional commercial banks during the period (September 2021-September 2022) indicates continued credit growth in Oman

MUSCAT: The total bank credit extended by commercial banks in the Sultanate of Oman to the private sector rose by 1.2 per cent, to reach OMR19.4 billion at the end of September 2022.

An analysis of the activities of conventional commercial banks during the period (September 2021-September 2022) indicates continued credit growth in the Sultanate of Oman, as the total credit balance granted by banks increased by 2.3 per cent.

Concerning the investment type, the total investment of con-

ventional commercial banks in securities witnessed a decline of 8.3 per cent, to reach about OMR4.6 billion at the end of September 2022.

Investment in government development bonds decreased by 0.9 per cent compared to the same period last year, to reach OMR2.2 billion. Their investments in foreign securities also witnessed a decline of 11.4 per cent to reach OMR0.761 billion at the end of September 2022.

On the liabilities side, total deposits with conventional commer-



cial banks increased by 4.1 per cent to reach OMR21.6 billion at the end of September 2022.

In terms of total deposits, government deposits with commer-

cial banks increased by 13.3 per cent to reach about OMR5 billion, as well as deposits of public sector institutions, which increased by 57.7 per cent to reach

Islamic banking sector assets reach OMR6.4bn

MUSCAT: Data issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicates that the total assets of the Islamic banking sector (Islamic banks and windows combined) have increased to about OMR6.4 billion, or 16.2 per cent of the total assets of the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman, at the end of September, 2022, recording an increase of 9.1

per cent compared to the same period last year. As for the total balance of financing granted by the units that carry out this activity, it increased by 11.8 per cent, to reach about OMR5.3 billion. Deposits with Islamic banks and windows also recorded an increase of 12.5 per cent, to reach about OMR4.8 billion at the end of September 2022. - **ONA**

AGREEMENT

Bank Muscat onboards General Federation of Oman Workers on B2B Connect solution

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has signed an agreement with the General Federation of Oman Workers for its cutting-edge digital banking solutions for host-to-host connectivity.

The General Federation of Oman Workers, the trade union representing the Sultanate's workers before official authorities and in local, regional and international forums, has been on-boarded to Bank Muscat's B2B Connect.

Speaking on the occasion, Wafa Ibrahim al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager, Bank Muscat said: "We are delighted to onboard the General Federation of Oman Workers to our sophisticated Corporate Banking solutions. Our solutions are designed to enable the General Federation of Oman Workers to process their large-scale banking transactions in an efficient way through digital channels. The straight-through nature of our payment solutions will support the General Federation of Oman Workers to provide faster responses to their stakeholders. The General Federation of Oman Workers will be able to achieve a high degree of automation in payables, reconciliation and minimise risks



related to payment processes. We continue to enhance our relationship with the General Federation of Oman Workers with our complete range of products and services which includes collections and payment solutions."

Nabhan Ahmed Al Battashi, Chairman of the General Federation of Oman Workers, said: "We are proud to partner with Bank Muscat to use the bank's state-of-the-art B2B Connect solution to greatly improve our operational efficiencies. Our members, vendors

and partners will find it easier to complete their transactions with us, and we are confident that this will improve their satisfaction. Our partnership with Bank Muscat has fortified the digital transformation of the General Federation of Oman Workers, and we look forward to further augmenting this successful partnership for serving and benefiting private sector employees."

Bank Muscat's comprehensive B2B Connect solution is a Host-to-Host solution built on an advanced

architecture and addresses various corporate needs. The B2B Connect Solution connects the ERP system of the corporate / institution with the online banking platform of the bank in such a way that payment requests automatically flow from the ERP to the Online Banking platform and payment status and account reconciliation information from the bank's system will flow to the organization's ERP. Leveraging this connectivity, the corporate / institution can make salary and vendor payments with more efficiency and less operational risks. The B2B Connect solution can easily be implemented by the corporate as the solution is not specific to any ERP system and can be configured across both standard and custom-built ERP solutions.

As the trusted banking partner in Oman, Bank Muscat is committed to supporting government entities and corporates to make a mark in digitalisation to create a successful business environment. Bank Muscat's processes and technology are designed to drive future corporate transactions and digital banking requirements. Bank Muscat provides a complete range of products, services and technology-driven digital offerings catering to government entities, corporates, SMEs and retail.

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

India-GCC decide to pursue resumption of FTA negotiations

NEW DELHI: Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution and Textiles, Government of India, and Dr Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, Secretary General, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), held a joint press conference, in New Delhi, to announce the intent to pursue negotiations on the India-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

With forward-looking and solution-oriented deliberations, bilateral engagements witnessed significant progress on all matters of mutual interest across the entire gamut of bilateral economic relations between India and the GCC nations.

Both sides agreed to expedite the conclusion of the requisite legal and technical requirements for the formal resumption of the FTA negotiations. The FTA is envisaged to be a modern, comprehensive agreement with substantial coverage of goods and services. Both sides emphasized that the FTA will create new jobs, raise living standards, and provide wider social and economic opportunities in India and all the GCC countries. Both sides agreed



to significantly expand and diversify the trade basket in line with the enormous potential that exists on account of the complementary business and economic ecosystems of India and the GCC.

It may be noted that the GCC is currently India's largest trading partner bloc with bilateral trade in FY 2021-22 valued at over \$154 billion with exports valued at approximately \$44 billion and imports of around \$110 billion (non-oil exports of \$33.8 billion and non-oil imports of \$37.2 billion). Bilateral trade in services between India and the GCC was valued at around \$14 billion in FY 2021-22, with exports valued at \$5.5 billion and imports at \$8.3 billion.

SPECIAL OFFERS

Inflation hovers over shoppers heading into Black Friday

NEW YORK: Black Friday marks a return to familiar holiday shopping patterns, but inflation is weighing on consumers, reports AP.

Elevated prices for food, rent, gasoline and other household costs have taken a toll on shoppers. As a result, many are reluctant to spend unless there is a big sale and are being more selective with what they will buy — in many cases, trading down to cheaper stuff and less expensive stores.

Shoppers are also dipping more into their savings, turning increasingly to "buy now, pay later" services like Afterpay that allow users to pay for items in instalments, as well as running up their credit cards at a time when the Federal Reserve is hiking rates to cool the US economy. Such financial hardships could help drive shoppers to look for bargains. - **BNA**

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MARKET



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State units urged to present their final accounts by March 2023

Ministry of Finance calls upon all units to enclose major outcomes and goals achieved when implementing the endorsed budgets during the Fiscal Year 2022

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance issued Circular No. 1/2022 on the preparation of the closing account of the State Fiscal Year 2022. The circular requires all units of the State Administrative Apparatus to present their final accounts by March 15, 2023 at the latest. It calls upon all units to enclose major outcomes and goals achieved when implementing the endorsed budgets during the Fiscal Year

2022, as well as revenues and actual spending of funds as compared to the sums endorsed, in line with the terms of collection or expenditure. The respective fiscal position of ministries and government units has to include a breakup of credits in bank accounts, government treasuries, debit, credit and advance balances, financial stamp trusts and financial rights owed to the government by third parties.



This is in addition to the preparation of statements on non-financial assets for real estate and land plots, assets of government stores,

and government movables like machinery, equipment and means of transportation, among others. The units are also required to

include copies of reports prepared by their respective internal audit units for the last quarter of Fiscal Year 2022, and copies of

the account's balances at banks under the names of the departments concerned. The ministry stressed that public bodies and institutions that do not apply the systems for commercial accounts submit their accounts and financial statements for the fiscal year 2022 to the Ministry of Finance not later than February 5, 2023. The Ministry of Finance also called on all government units to stick to the procedures stipulated in the Financial Law and its executive regulations, as well as the pertinent directives. It demanded that the units adhere to the specified dates — since any violation of the provisions of this circular is deemed a financial violation or failure to apply the provisions of Article (41) of the Financial Law promulgated under Royal Decree No. 47/98. -**ONA**

TRAVEL AND TOURISM SUMMIT

World tourism leaders to discuss future of travel and tourism

RIYADH: World tourism experts from the public and private sectors will gather in Riyadh from November 28 to December 1, to participate in the 22nd World Travel & Tourism Council Global Summit (WTTC), which discusses ways to contribute the travel and tourism sector to the development and sustainability of the economy, and to the creation of new job opportunities that contribute to the development of societies. Under the slogan "Travel for a Better Future", summit delegations will engage in multiple sessions, during which they will discuss means of strategic cooperation in the travel sector, and enhancing its ability to face various future challenges. The event will

also include several main and various dialogue sessions, in which the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and former British Prime Minister Theresa May will participate as keynote speakers. **Vital time** Minister of Tourism Ahmed Al-Khateeb said, "This summit comes at a fundamental and vital time for the travel and tourism sector globally, so what we will discuss here in Riyadh will have a great impact on the global travel and tourism sector, for a better future for all." The WTTC summit will discuss several important subjects, including the need to develop the travel and tourism sector, search

for attractions that meet the requirements of tourists and meet their expectations, and achieve a balance between sustainability and growth and promoting innovation. This parallels the Kingdom's efforts through its ambitious tourism development strategy, which is based on major factors that adopt concepts of sustainability through projects supported by renewable energy, such as the NEOM and Red Sea projects. The summit also aims to discuss how to restore travel enthusiasm globally and support the sector's recovery from the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to discussing current political and geographical issues affecting travel. -**SPA**

BREKBUK AND PROJECT CARGO SERVICE PROVIDERS

Breakbulk Middle East 2023 to kick off on February 13

DUBAI: The 2023 edition of Breakbulk Middle East (BBME) is all set to bring the region's breakbulk and project cargo service providers under one roof on February 13 and 14, 2023. Held under the patronage of the UAE Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, the region's only event dedicated to the breakbulk and project cargo industry will cover a series of significant themes and looks forward to the participation of leading industry experts. Capitalising on its long-standing history of successful editions, BBME 2023 has attracted the trust and support of some of the biggest names in the sector such as DP World, Abu Dhabi Ports, AMSteel, DHL IP, ADNOC L&S, DSV, QTerminals, Hareket, Bureau Veritas, and TT Club, to name a few. Mohammad Jaber, Managing Director, Air & Sea and COO DSV Solutions Abu Dhabi, said, "Over the years, BBME has proven to serve as an ideal platform for us to network with existing and potential clients, discuss key matters of concern, and strike valuable business deals with entities working towards similar goals as us. Having some of the most renowned industry experts from around the globe talk about pressing issues in the sector will certainly provide insightful solutions. Through these ground-break-



ing solutions, BBME will provide industry players such as ourselves the opportunity to reiterate the UAE's leading position in the project cargo sector, and enable the nation to raise the standards of the industry globally." Andy Tite, Vice President, Global Business Development & Commercial Director Industrial Projects, DHL IP, said, "DHL Industrial Projects is extremely pleased to be exhibiting at BBME in 2023, with comprehensive coverage throughout the entire Middle East and Africa Region we are very much looking forward to connecting with our existing valued clients and sub-contractors and to make new connections. The Break Bulk events are always a catalyst for positive engagement in our industry through their informative workshops and panel

discussions and during this event we look forward to engaging on our comprehensive existing service provision and sharing DHL Industrial Projects innovations and future strategies in relation to sustainability, digitalisation and industry growth." Ben Blamire, Event Director of Breakbulk Middle East, highlighted, "The 2022 edition of BBME successfully attracted over 3,300 attendees, more than 2,100 companies, and 96 exhibitors. With a 25 per cent expansion in our exhibition floor, we look forward to adding to these numbers significantly. Considering the kind of support we have received from some of the most renowned industry players, we are confident that we will be able to host our largest and so far, the most successful Middle East Event." -**WAM**

Two decades of transforming the education landscape of Kerala to be at par with the world



An ambitious venture in the education sector, the TRINS Group of Institutions is the brainchild of Mr. George M Thomas. He is the Managing Director of Saif Al Harasi Group in Oman. Twenty years ago, he founded Trivandrum International School (TRINS) with the aim of pioneering education of international standards in Kerala. The Group has now expanded to also include the Asian School of Business, TRINS Early Learning Centres and in Cochin, The Charter School and Cochin International School. The TRINS mission is to empower a new generation of global leaders, with a lifelong passion for learning and caring. Nestled in a pristine 20-acre campus is a perfect blend of nature and state-of-the-art infrastructure. The school was the first one in the state to offer the IB Primary Years and Diploma Programmes, IGCSE & A Level qualification of Cambridge International Examinations along with ICSE. It has been awarded the 8th Best day-cum-boarding International School in India by Education Today. At TRINS, there is a balance of academic rigour, commitment to social service and exposure to a varied range of extra-curricular and outbound activities. A teacher-student ratio of 1:20 or less ensures ample personal attention to each child. TRINS also has an exclusive department which practices inclusive education for special children (children

with various levels of learning disabilities). Opportunities are made available for children who are exceptionally gifted for their fast track development. TRINS is the first School from Kerala to be awarded Global Membership into the prestigious league of Round Square Association Of Schools. Membership of the Round Square organisation offers links to a global network of around 100 other similarly progressive schools, and students also participate in the International Award for Young People. TRINS also participates in a range of overseas exchange programmes and visits to broaden the horizons of students. An active Counseling and Placement Cell ensures individual guidance for an admission in any part of the world, and that has taken our alumni into prestigious universities across the world including Lady Shri Ram's College, St. Xavier's Mumbai, National Institute of Technology (NIT), in India; Columbia University, Stanford University, Berkeley, New York University in the USA; King's College London, Imperial College, Warwick Business School in the UK; Delft University, Netherlands. TRINS Early Learning Centre is an exclusive purpose built Campus with International Standard situated in Technopark, Trivandrum offering infant Care to Grade 2. It provides daycare and IB's play-based learning within

a safe and secure environment. Young, working parents can avail flexible timings for premium child-care under qualified and trained professionals. The Charter School was taken under the wings of the TRINS management in 2019. It is a CBSE school with an innovative approach to teaching delivered with a tailored curriculum, The Charter Curriculum Design (CCD). The CCD framework provides opportunities for experiential learning through differentiated learning approaches. The school is spread over 10 acres in an idyllic campus at Upper Kakkanad. Cochin International School in the same campus offers the IB and Cambridge curricula, the launch of which comes just as the Group enters its 20th year of creating changemakers. The state of the art campus will have exclusive blocks for academics, design and performing arts, and an elaborate sports grounds and swimming pool complex. There will also be a multi-purpose hall, concert hall and in-house catered dining hall. This is also a day-cum-boarding school. Asian School of Business has a sprawling campus with world-class infrastructure located near Technocity, Trivandrum. The MBA programme is affiliated to the Cochin University of Science and Technology and prides itself on 100% placement into the leading corporates.

AGREEMENTS

Chinese lenders step up credit support for property market

BEIJING: China's six major state-owned commercial banks have signed agreements with high-quality real-estate enterprises, aiming to facilitate the stable and healthy development of the real-estate market. The six banks announced the provision of credit support amounting to more than 1 trillion yuan (about \$140.2 billion), mainly for real-estate development, mortgages to consumers, mergers and acquisitions, supply chain financing and bond investments. The six commercial banks are the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, Agricultural Bank of China, Bank of China, China Construction Bank, Bank of Communications, and Postal Savings Bank of China. The move comes after a 16-step guideline issued by the People's Bank of China (PBOC) and the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission (CBIRC) on Wednesday, which encouraged commercial banks to grant loans for the acquisition of real-estate projects in a prudent and orderly manner. Support will also be given to two policy banks on issuing specific loans to qualified borrowers to ensure the delivery of housing projects, the guideline noted. -**Xinhua**



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Teams battle for final fleet positions on third day of world championships

Poland's pair of Piotr Cichocki and Olga Gornas-Grudzien shone on day three, scoring a win and a second place to lead the Para category

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The third day of racing at the 2022 RS Venture Connect World Championships on Friday, organised by Oman Sail, brought with it yet more exceptional sailing and many more surprises. Oman's Sultan Al Wahaibi and Ahmed Al Balushi lead the Open category, accruing one win and one second place finish from Friday's races and staying one point ahead of Genevieve Wickham and Grant Alderson of Australia, and three points ahead of Clementine Gorisse and Lucien Bermont of France. Piotr Cichocki and Olga Gornas-



Grudzien of Poland shone on day three, scoring a win and a second place to lead the Para category by seven points from Sweden's Fia Fjeldahl and Patric Rosenberg. Ange Margaron and Olivier Ducruix of France are in third, just one point back from second, and fourth to 10th are separated by just

five points in a close fleet. Malik Al Qartobi and Ghaliya Al Jabri currently sit in joint 12th position, seven points behind the medal placings. Zaher Al Atbi and Ali Al Ghassani are in 18th place after struggling with a disqualification earlier in the week, Hassan Al Lawati and Sami Al Sulaimi two points back in 20th. Rayyan Al Mujaini and Hamed Al Subhi also encountered problems following a premature start, ending the fleet racing in 22nd, and Adil Al Siyabi and Nasser Al Rahbi finished in 25th. Dan Jaspers, International Business Development at RS

Sailing, said, "This is the first time we have held an RS Venture Connect event outside of Europe, and this decision has paid off with an increase in participating teams. As a venue, as a destination, the Barceló Mussanah Resort has proved very popular with sailors, and indeed their families. Having everything so close in one venue is amazing for the competition and the feedback has been excellent. The dedicated team at Oman Sail has been incredible and very helpful in managing the event, ensuring we can tune the arrangements to the changing day-to-day needs of sailors." "There is a great legacy to this event and the SailFree program is a real credit to Oman Sail, bp Oman and the Oman Paralympic Committee. The performance of the sailors so far this week is something the whole of Oman should be very proud of. Oman is a key location for the RS class and we see this as a hub for growing inclusive sailing across Asia, especially with the #BacktheBid and #SailtoLA campaign from World Sailing to reinstate sailing to the paralympics. Being able to increase the number of nations competing in the RS class in a venue where equipment can be supplied really helps to attract more teams, and this event has

had the most participating nations of any para class event in the last two years." An exhibition featuring representatives of SMEs owned by people with disabilities kicked off on Friday and will be present for the remainder of the championships, showing the innovation and creativity of people across Oman who have started their own business. Athletes and coaches also took part in a special celebration in honour of Oman National Day, held under the patronage of HH Sayyida Hujaija Al Said, Chair of the Association for the Welfare of Handicapped Children. Racing continues with the Group Finals to get underway ahead of the Grand Finals on Sunday. In total, there are 36 teams and representing 18 nations at the 2022 RS Venture Connect World Championships, the first exclusively para sailing event to take place in Oman. The RS Venture Connect World Championships is supported by bp Oman, the Oman Paralympic Committee, Oman Maritime Sports Committee, Oman Air, the Barceló Mussanah Resort, Tanuf, the International Maritime College Oman (IMCO), RS Sailing, and environmental partners Clean Seas and Environment Society of Oman (ESO).

CRICKET

If India don't come for Asia Cup, Pakistan will not go for 2023 World Cup: PCB boss

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ramiz Raja has said that if India choose to opt out of the Asia Cup which will be held in Pakistan next year, then Pakistan will also not travel to India to take part in 2023 50-over World Cup. Earlier in October, BCCI secretary Jay Shah completely dismissed the speculations of Team India travelling to Pakistan for the event and said that the Asia Cup would be held at a neutral venue. Raja pointed out that an aggressive approach will be adopted, considering their performances have been great and they defeated the "board of billion dollar economy" twice in one year, referring to India's losses to arch-rivals Pakistan in the 2021 T20 World Cup and Asia Cup this year. "Our position is blunt that if they (Indian team) come then we will go to the World Cup, if they do not come then let them do it. Let them play without Pakistan. If Pakistan does not participate in the World Cup scheduled in India next year, who will see it? We will adopt an aggressive approach, our team is showing performance, we have defeated the biggest business-making cricket team in the world, we have played in the final of the T20 World Cup," Ramiz told Pakistan media on Friday.



"I have always said that we have to improve the economy of Pakistan cricket and that will only happen when our team performs well, we have done it in the 2021 T20 World Cup. Beat India, we beat India in the Asia Cup, Pakistan cricket team has beaten the board of billion dollar economy twice in one year," he added. After Shah's statement about holding Asia Cup at a neutral venue, PCB issued a statement saying, "The overall impact of such statements has the potential to split the Asian and international cricketing communities and can impact Pakistan's visit to India for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 and future ICC Events in India in the 2024-2031 cycle."

Following PCB's statement, Union Sports Minister Anurag Thakur said that India will host the 2023 WC with all teams. The Sports Minister said that India is not afraid of any threat and it will not stop them from hosting the tournament. "It is an internal matter of BCCI and it will handle the issue smartly. We have not done anything wrong yet while hosting international tournaments before. We have hosted World Cup successfully before and all teams participated happily. We will host the tournament next year and all teams will play in it," Thakur had said in October. BCCI President Roger Binny also said that touring Pakistan for Asia Cup 2023 is not the board's call, but they will rely on the government's decision. "That is not our call. We cannot say where our team has to go. We need to take clearance from the government if we leave the country, or other countries come here. We cannot take that decision on our own, we have to rely on government," Binny had said. Afterwards, Indian skipper Rohit Sharma also said that the Men in Blue would focus on the T20 World Cup and stick to guidelines set by the apex board for cricket in India referring to BCCI secretary Jay Shah's remarks concerning India's travel to Pakistan for the 2023 Asia Cup. "My focus is on World Cup. Whatever BCCI decides we will go by that," Rohit had said while addressing a press conference ahead of the high-voltage clash against Pakistan. 2023 will mark the first time ever that India will host the marquee cricketing event by itself. It co-hosted the 1987 World Cup with Pakistan and the 1996 World Cup with Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The tournament made its return to India in 2011 when it co-hosted it along with Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. India also emerged victorious in the 2011 edition of the tournament. Also, flagship tournaments are supposed to be held in Pakistan as the country is scheduled to host the forthcoming edition of the Asia Cup in 2023 followed by the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy. Cricket teams stopped touring Pakistan after a terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan team back in 2009. It was only in 2015 that international tours resumed in the country. Since then, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Australia and England are some of the teams that have toured Pakistan for bilateral series. -ANI

PHYSICAL AND MENTAL BURNOUT

Ashwin defends decision to give Dravid a break

CHENNAI: Spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Saturday defended the decision to rest Indian head coach Rahul Dravid, saying that physical and mental burnout ahead of and during ICC T20 World Cup is the reason why India has a completely different team and coaching staff for New Zealand tour. The current head of National Cricket Academy (NCA) and former Indian batter VVS Laxman is the head coach of the Indian squad led by all-rounder Hardik Pandya that does not feature seniors like regular captain Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Mohammed Shami and Ashwin himself. "I will explain why Laxman has gone there with a completely different team because even that could be interpreted differently," Ashwin was quoted as saying by ESPN-Cricinfo on his YouTube channel. "Rahul Dravid and his team put in extensive hard work ahead of the T20 World Cup - right from planning. Since I saw this from close quarters, I am saying this. They had specific in-depth plans for each venue and each opposition. So they would have been under not only mental but also physical burnout, and every-



one needed a break. As soon as the New Zealand series ends, we have the Bangladesh tour. That is why we have a different coaching staffed by Laxman for this tour," he added. India was a semifinalist in the recently-concluded ICC T20 World Cup in Australia and went down to champions England in the second semifinals. Ashwin's comments come after former India head coach and Dravid's predecessor Ravi Shastri had questioned the need for rest for the head coach when they get it during "two-three months" of the Indian Premier League (IPL). "I do not believe in breaks," Shastri had said during a press interaction ahead of the first T20I between India and New Zealand in Wellington. "Because I want to understand my team, I want to understand my players and I want to then be in control of that team." -ANI

DAVIS CUP

Australia defeat Croatia to end 19-year-old drought for a berth in Davis Cup final

MALAGA: Australia ended their 19-year drought, after a resilient comeback to reach the final of the Davis Cup, ousting 2021 finalists Croatia in a thrilling encounter in Malaga. The win saw Australian players celebrating wildly after a thrilling comeback win for Australia over two-time champions Croatia. Australian ace tennis star Alex de Minaur outraced the experienced Marin Cilic, to tie the match at 1-1 in the second semifinal. After Borna Coric had defeated Aussie tennis player Thanasi Kokkinakis, De Minaur dominated his singles match against Cilic, breaking the World No. 17's serve four times for a 6-2, 6-2 victory. Then, in the doubles round, Max Purcell and Jordan Thompson put on an incredible serving performance against Nikola Mektic and Mate Pavic to give their country a 2-1 victory and secure its first appearance at the Davis



Cup final since 2003. "It's been a long time. Obviously, we are a very proud Davis Cup nation. I'm just thrilled for these boys, they deserve to go out there and get the opportunity to play in the final of a Davis Cup, and now it's going to happen on Sunday," said Australia captain Lleyton Hewitt after his team's victory as quoted by atptour.com. Hewitt participated in his nation's previous Davis Cup final appearance, a triumph against Spain in Melbourne in 2003. In the final

on Sunday, Australia will either play Italy or Canada in an effort to win the Davis Cup for the 29th time. In a boisterous setting in southern Spain, Purcell and Thompson defeated 14-time tour-level champions Mektic and Pavic 6-7(3), 7-5, 6-4. After Coric had earlier pushed Croatia ahead with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Kokkinakis, that win sealed the turnaround victory. "There's nothing like it, honestly, there's nothing like it. That's the best thing I've ever experienced ever. Anything for the green and gold, honestly," said Purcell after his and Thompson's dramatic two-hour, 14-minute victory. "We were [just] holding serve. I feel like we did a good job of that. The opportunities weren't coming, but we hung in there and eventually we did get a couple of opportunities and we took them on the first go each time. Doubles can change so quickly, and it did," added Thompson. -ANI

JOURNEY OF A FAN

A die-hard fan from Kolkata in Qatar to support Messi's Argentina

KOLKATA: Uttam Saha, an Argentina football team fan from Kolkata, left for Doha to support his favourite team in the ongoing FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, which also features his favourite player Lionel Messi, who is playing his final World Cup. Saha is the founder and secretary of Argentina Football Fan Club, Kolkata. "I will be watching Argentina and Mexico's match live from the stadium. They (Argentina) lost the first match. I have tickets for 10 matches, including knockout games and it would be great if Argentina reaches the final. I pray to god that Messi stays fit. This would be his last World Cup and it would be great if Argentina becomes champion," said Saha to ANI. Saha has attended the previous four World Cups on behalf of the fan club founded by him. This Messi die-hard fan wants to see Brazil and Germany in the final. "We have lost to Germany in finals before. It would be really great if Argentina avenges their



losses," he added. Uttam has been following the sport since 2002 and has watched every major league and tournament religiously, like UEFA Champions League, La Liga, Bundesliga, English Premier League, Copa America among others and is hopeful that India

will play World Cup someday. Argentina is due to take on Mexico at the Lusail Stadium on Sunday night. They are placed in Group C and lost their previous match to Saudi Arabia by 1-2. They are at the bottom of the points table with zero points. -ANI



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ROUND-UP



RECOGNITION

Continental Tyres honours Saud Bahwan Automotive with Distinguished Award as Best Distributor in GCC

MUSCAT: Recently at a special ceremony – Contivention 2022, held at Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, Karel Kucera, Managing Director, Continental Middle East, honoured Saud Bahwan Automotive with the prestigious HVT Exceptional Growth Award 2022.

The award recognises Saud Bahwan Automotive's efforts for exceeding sales targets for High Value Tyres (HVT) and becoming the Best Distributor for Continental Tyres in the GCC and LE-VANT region. Receiving the award was Abdullah Mohamed Bahwan, Managing Director Corporate, Saud Bahwan Group.

Speaking on the occasion, Karel Kucera said, "I would like to congratulate Sheikh Mohammed Saud Bahwan, Chairman, Saud Bahwan Group, for this noteworthy achievement. Saud Bahwan Automotive has demonstrated exceptional results owing to its innovative marketing practices and customer-focused initiatives. I would like to thank Chairman for his strong leadership and strategic investments in development of the Continental Tyres brand in Oman. These have resulted in Continental Tyres benefitting with outstanding sales in the High Value Tyre segment in GCC and LEVANT region."

Sharing his views on the occasion was Juan Uruburu, Head of Sales – Passenger and Light Truck tyres (PLT) and Commercial Vehicle Tyres (CVT) for Middle East Region. He said, "Saud Bahwan Automotive is a very important partner for us. We greatly appreciate their commitment to customer care and various marketing initiatives that reflects in all their activities. Indeed we are very delighted that they have won this prestigious award and we wish them the best for the future. We are confident that Saud Bahwan Automotive will continue its journey of success while exceeding all expectations year-on-year."



Abdullah Mohamed Bahwan receiving the award.

Accepting the prestigious award, Abdullah Mohamed Bahwan said, "On behalf of our Chairman, Mohammed Saud Bahwan, I dedicate this honour to our esteemed customers. I also take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to Continental Tyres for their commitment to bring in state-of-the-art product range, continued support and encouragement, without which this achievement would not have been possible. I would also like to thank Karel Kucera, Juan Uruburu and their team, for continued guidance and willing support extended to us at all times. Last but definitely not the least, I would like to thank our dedicated team at Saud Bahwan Automotive, whose hard work and dedication have made this distinguished achievement possible."

Speaking about Saud Bahwan Automotives' continued efforts

and focus on achieving high levels of customer satisfaction Abdullah Bahwan said, "At Saud Bahwan Automotive prompt attention to customer needs has always been a top priority. Towards this, we have made substantial investments in building a nationwide network of branches and state-of-the-art facilities. These systematic efforts along with focussed marketing strategies and unique customer care initiatives, ensure that customers have the finest experiences at any Continental Tyres outlet in Oman."

Continental Tyres' High Value Tyres (HVT) are the premium tyres that are integral to the high-end premium car brands like Lexus, Toyota, Lincoln, Ford and more. HVT tyres renowned for their impressive safety features, riding comfort and ultra-high performance. Reason why they are so popular with customers.

Founded in 1871, Continental is a multinational company that manufactures safe, efficient and performance-oriented tyres for passenger cars, commercial vehicles and two-wheelers. Continental Tyres is one of the foremost leaders in tyre technology and tyre production, with a broad product range suitable for use in a variety of conditions and applications. And through continuous investment in research and development, Continental makes a significant contribution to mobility that's secure, cost-effective, and ecologically friendly.

In Oman, the association between Saud Bahwan Automotive and Continental Tyres began in 1975. What began as a single showroom back then has now grown to having an extensive network of 40 branches and over 300 dealers spread across Oman.



296 GTB: Defining fun to drive

The 296 GTB ushers in an authentic revolution for Ferrari

MUSCAT: The 296 GTB, the latest evolution of Maranello's mid-rear-engined two-seater Berlinetta, was premiered during an online event broadcast on Ferrari's social media and web channels. The 296 GTB redefines the whole concept of fun behind the wheel, guaranteeing pure emotions not just when pushing the car to its limits, but also in day-to-day driving situations.

The 296 GTB ushers in an authentic revolution for Ferrari as it introduces a new engine type to flank the marque's multi-award-winning 8- and 12-cylinder power units: a new 663 cv 120° V6 coupled with an electric motor capable of delivering a further 122 kW (167 cv). This is the

first 6-cylinder engine installed on a road car sporting the Prancing Horse badge: it unleashes its massive 830 cv total power output to deliver previously unthinkable performance levels and an innovative, exhilarating and unique soundtrack.

The car's name, which combines its total displacement (2.992 l) and the number of cylinders with the GTB (Gran Turismo Berlinetta) acronym, in the finest Ferrari tradition, was chosen to underscore this new engine's epoch-changing importance to Maranello: it is not simply the living, beating heart of the 296 GTB but also ushers in a new V6 era that has its roots deep in Ferrari's unparalleled 70-year-plus experience in motorsports.

The very first Ferrari V6, in fact, featured a 65° architecture and debuted on the 1957 1500 cc Dino 156 F2 single-seater. This was followed in 1958 by bigger displacement versions on the front-engined sport prototypes - the 196 S and 296 S - and F1 cars, such as the 246 F1 which powered Mike Hawthorn to the F1 Drivers' Championship title the same year.



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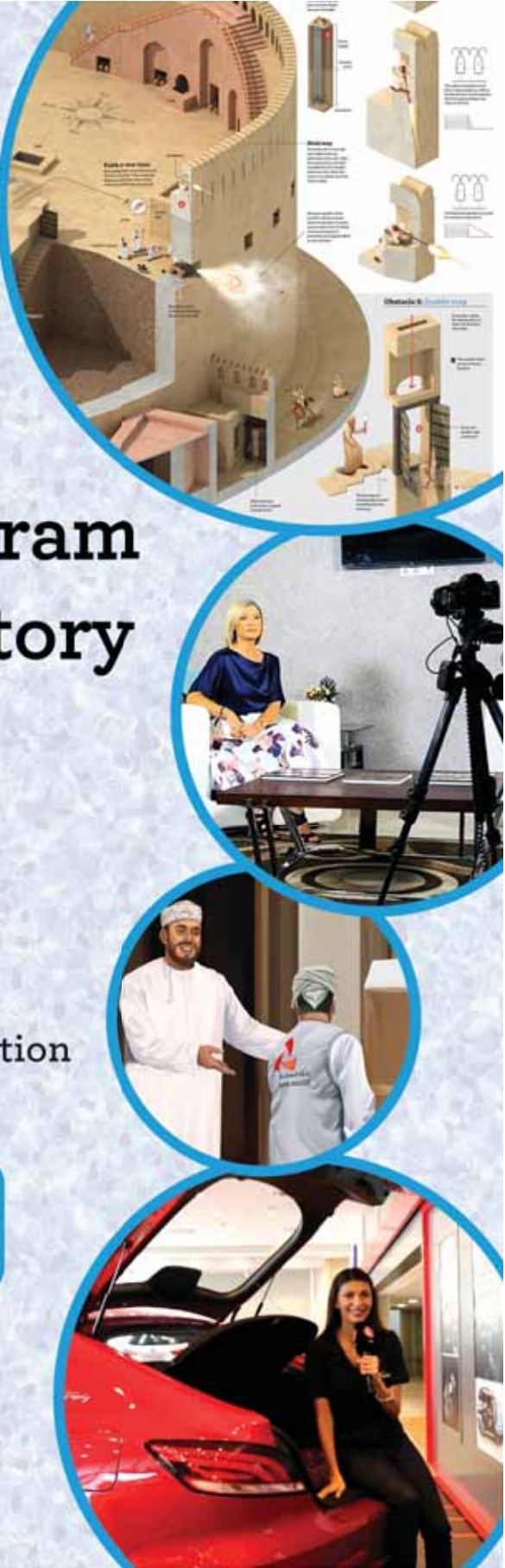
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ROUND-UP



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Children's Public Library celebrates 5th anniversary

The ceremony was held under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth



number of their highnesses, excellencies, CEOs, trainers, children and parents.

During the celebration, Her Highness Mona Fahad Al Said, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Children's Public Library, expressed her appreciation for the library's efforts in spreading knowledge in various fields as the number of visitors to the library since its inauguration reached more than 126,000 visitors.

Ibrahim Al Hinai, bp Oman's Social Investment Specialist, commented: "We are proud of our partnership with the Children's Public Library in Marifah programme,

which aims to develop the knowledge and skills of children through a series of workshops, courses and events for children, parents and those interested in children's literature, which is a core part of education and seeking knowledge in line of Oman's 2040 vision of advancing education."

Buthaina Ahmed Makki, Activities Manager at Children's Public Library, added: "During the fourth edition of the programme, the library implemented 50 workshops in various fields, benefiting more than 1,500 children from different governorates from March to November 2022."

SPECIAL OCCASION



Indian School Sur celebrates National Day

MUSCAT: Indian School Sur celebrated the 52nd National Oman Day of Oman with great enthusiasm. Mohamed Ali Musallam Al Alawi, Section Head, Department of Lands, MOE Sur, was the chief guest of the day. School Principal Dr Sreenivasan presided over the function in the presence of the School Management Committee Convenor, Jami Srinivas Rao and member Pradeep Kumar.

The programme began with a brief narration of the history of modern Oman. It was a memorable moment for students to reminisce about the new Renaissance and its illustrious rule under His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said, who underlined his ongoing efforts to elevate Oman's contemporary cultural and economic position.

The programme was enthralled with Arabic news, national day special quiz, Arabic group songs and an Indian folk group dance.

AT BAHRIYAT RESTAURANT

Grand Millennium Muscat launches 'A taste of home'



MUSCAT: Grand Millennium Muscat, a luxury five-star hotel located at the heart of Muscat, invites everyone to experience a selection of authentic signature dishes featuring cuisines from nations competing at the World Cup 2022.

During the world cup, guests dining at Bahriyat Restaurant will experience mouthwatering delicacies from around the globe featuring signature dishes from five continents.

This initiative will take guests on an extraordinary culinary journey from various countries such as Brazil, the USA, Canada, Mexico (American continent), Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, France, Denmark, the Nether-

lands (European continent), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Japan (Asian continent), Tunisia (African continent) and Australia.

The exclusive dinner runs until December 18. The A la carte dinner is daily from 7pm to 11pm.

Luca Medda, Cluster General Manager at Grand Millennium Muscat, commented, "In every opportunity, we always strive to find ways to create a concept that is new, unique, and fun in order to deliver an exceptional guest experience. Our focus is to make Grand Millennium hotel a place where food, culture, arts, and music collide. With the help of SalamAir, this event allows us to keep bringing special moments to our guests at Millennium."

AT JEBEL SIFAH

Sifawy Boutique Hotel: Your perfect escape for unforgettable experience



MUSCAT: Sifawy Boutique Hotel is ideally located in the heart of the picturesque marina town of Jebel Sifah - 45 minutes away from Muscat.

With 68 guest rooms, including 29 suites, each room has a private terrace and is equipped with all the essential amenities and services. Guests looking for authentic regional and international dining experiences will be pleased to try the various delicious dining options available at the hotel.

Sifawy Boutique Hotel also features a large swimming pool, outdoor Jacuzzi, fitness centre, and treatment room, in addition to a range of activities and excursions.

Dunes Beach Club is the hotel's signature private beach offering unforgettable experiences! A mouth-watering gastronomic experience that comes to redefine luxurious entertainment by the sea in Oman offers visitors beautiful mountainous surroundings and crystal-clear waters. All elements that make

Dunes the place to visit are here; signature seafood cuisine with a twist, stunning waterfront views, stylish open-concept architecture as well as sandy beaches for families, those looking for some beach sports, and much more. A place for those who want to chill, drink, and dine in an atmosphere that is elegant yet relaxing while boasting an immersive atmosphere all day long - Dunes leaves you speechless.

Our newest authentic Turkish restaurant Tugra will make all your Turkish food dreams come true. From rich and savoury traditional dishes to savoury soups and mouthwatering desserts, you'll find plenty of delicacies to fill your appetite.

"Sifawy Boutique Hotel offers guests and visitors an ideal escape to a paradise of natural surroundings, blended with Arabian service, generous hospitality, and signature dining options catering to all ages. Whether you're looking for a weekend getaway, considering



a proper staycation, or craving a delicious meal with a unique experience, Sifawy has it all. Families, couples, travellers, and residents are invited to experience true Omani hospitality set within a majestic landscape. We are here to ensure you a memorable experience and we look forward to welcoming you," said Tarek Eid - the Hotel Manager at Sifawy Boutique Hotel.







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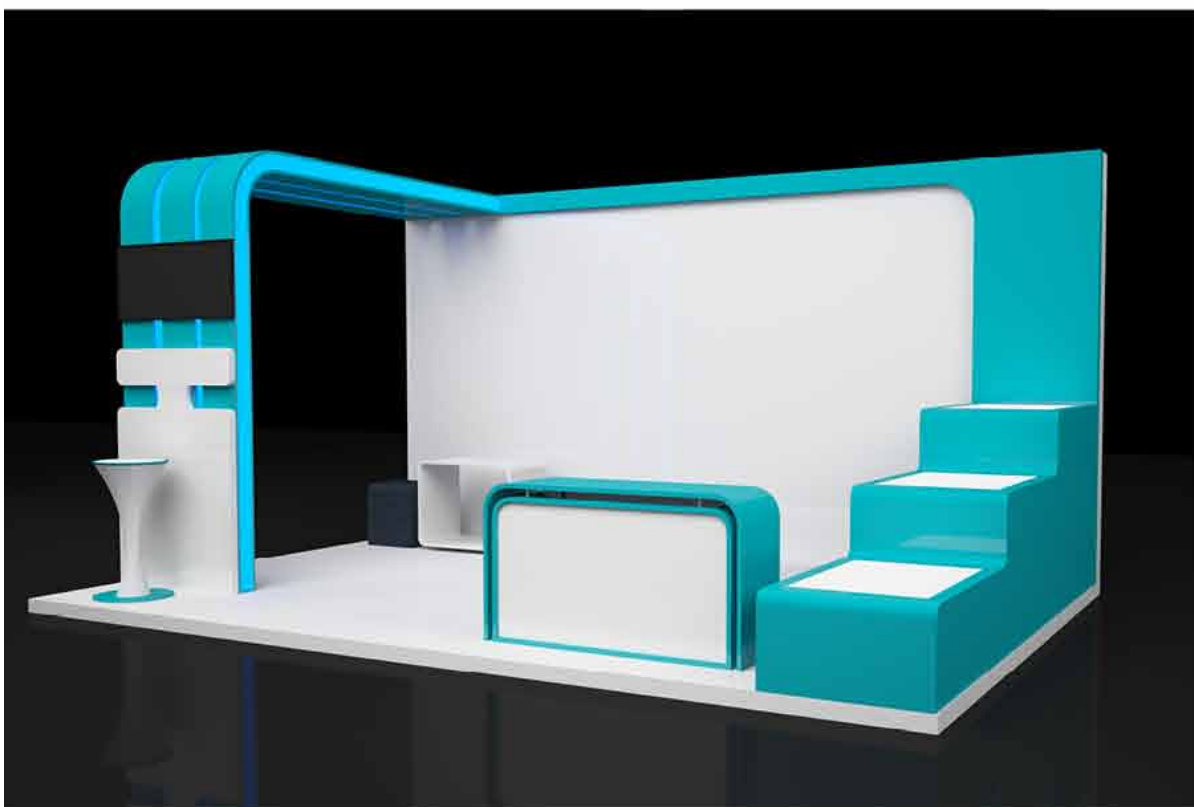
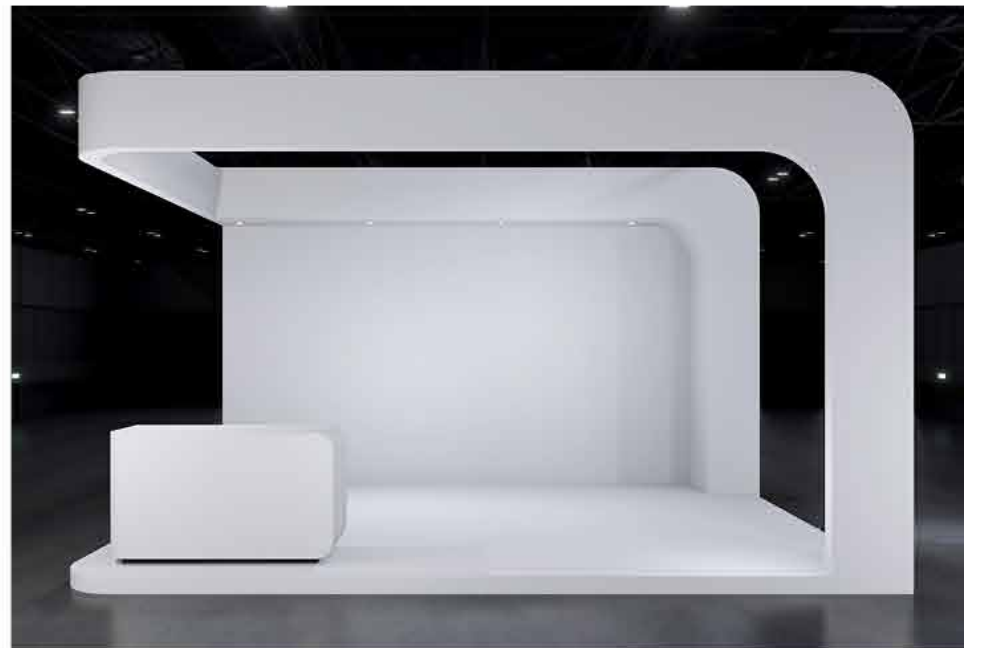
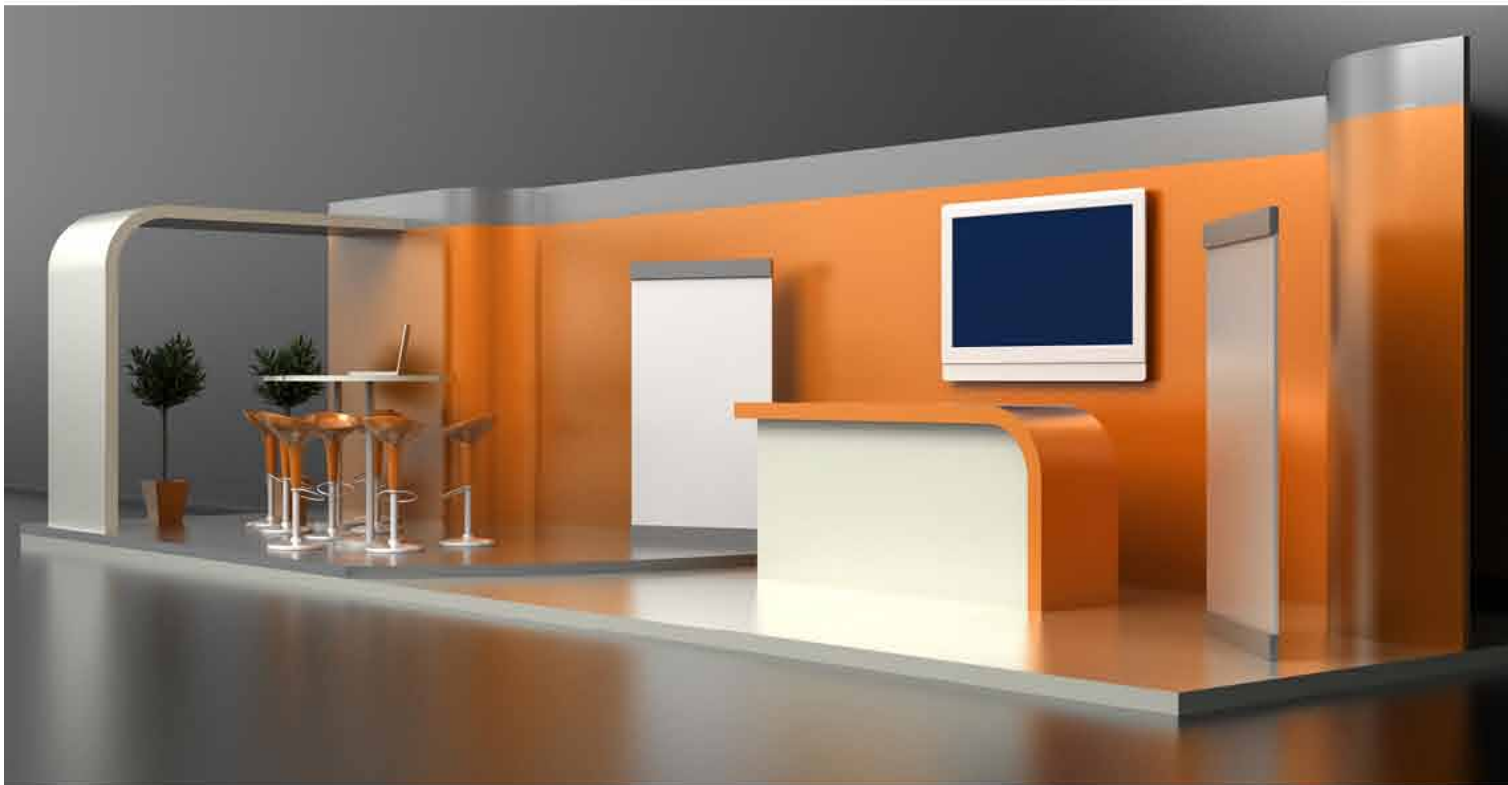
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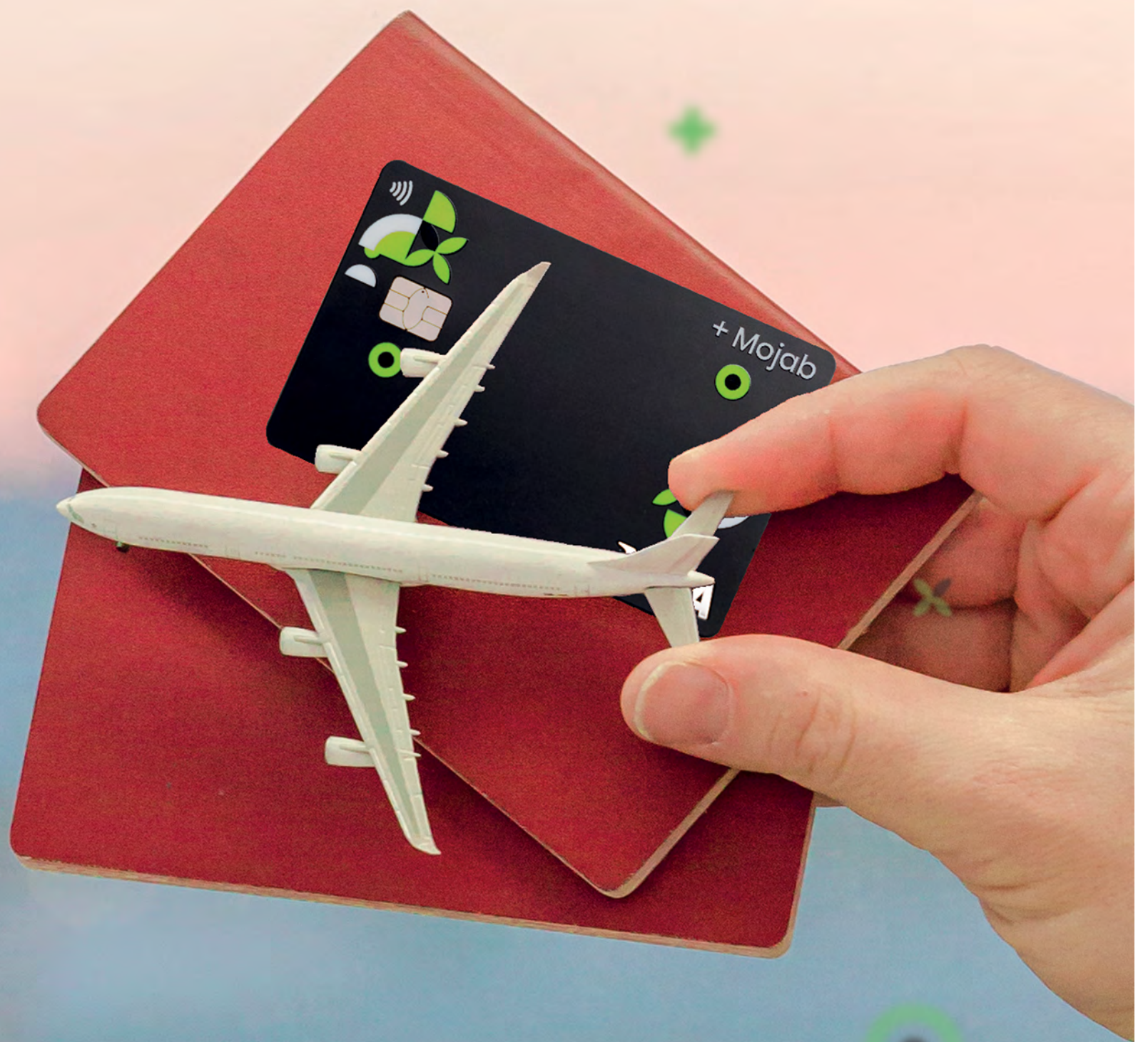
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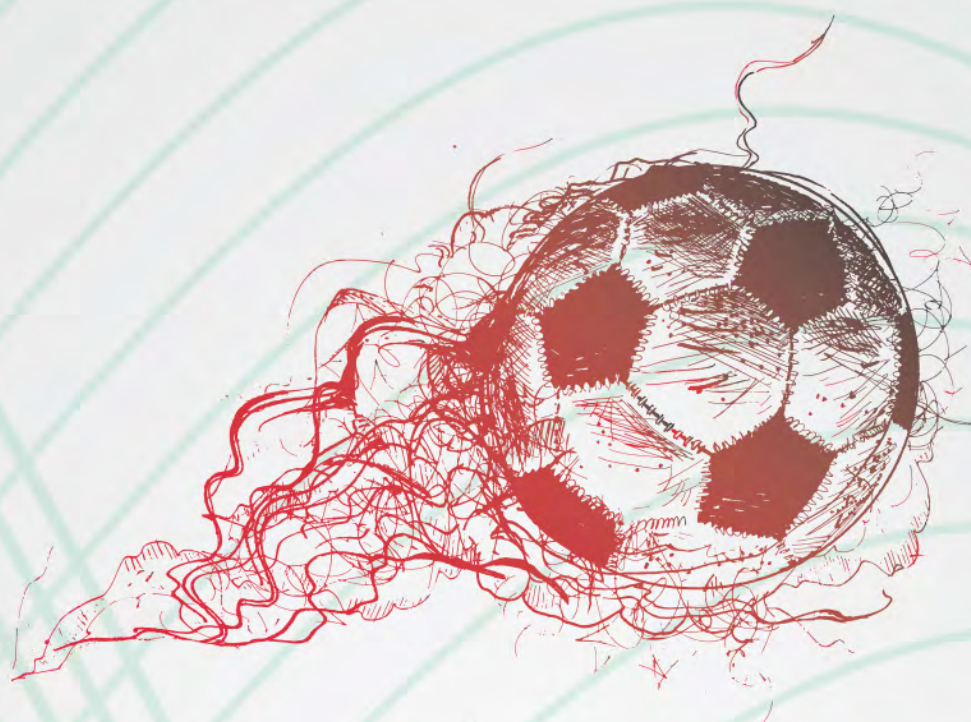
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