

FREE LEAGUE

COROLIS



THE MAHANJI OASIS

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Under the scorching sun and in almost unbearable heat, life on Lubau somehow continues. Nomad caravans, Zenithian explorers and ancient cultists manage to live their lives on the inhospitable planet closest to the star of Kua. They all meet at the Mahanji Oasis, to escape the oppressive heat, make deals and scheme plots of intrigue. Welcome into the shadow.

THE LUSH MAHANJI Oasis is located in Lubau's northern hemisphere, wedged in between the glistening Crystal lakes. For centuries, the oasis has been a hub for local tribes of Firstcome nomads, but has grown rapidly in the last years thanks to a large influx of Zenithian settlers.

The Mahanji Oasis open sector is a place the PCs could visit for many different reasons. They could be prospectors looking for petroleum, on the hunt for an ancient scroll in the Tayasuf Ilm Library or maybe they have been hired to spy on the Factory and Omar din Nimatallah, the mysterious bionic. Read up on Lubau on page 282 of the Rulebook before introducing the Mahanji Oasis into your game.

OVERVIEW

The Mahanji Oasis is located in the Kerahana province in northern Lubau. From orbit, the oasis and the surrounding Crystal lakes are visible as a string of blue pearls framed by green, surrounded by the vast desert. The Crystal lakes are supplied by a large network of underground springs, and the mountains around Mahanji are full of caverns and tunnels. Before the Zenithian colonization began, the region's only permanent residents were a couple of Firstcome tribes living around Lake Mnembau. The tribes traded with the local nomads and those at an old temple. The nomads are divided between the Beri and Xinghur tribes, with the latter being humanites.

The area known as the Mahanji Oasis includes all of the smaller camps and settlements around Lake Mnembau, but the major hub is Mahanji village.

MAHANJI VILLAGE

The village of Mahanji consists of around a hundred low, sand-colored houses built in the traditional style of the Kerahana province. The houses have slightly slanted walls, are partly dug down, have cool basements underneath, and roof terraces covered in grapevines and other climbing plants. Palm and fruit trees grow around the houses. A few important places in Mahanji village are described below.

Achalom's Cantina: The hub of the village is the cantina run by the Zenithian Achalom Herohm. The cantina is a sandstone building dominated by a large, circular common room where visitors are treated to food and drink by Achalom's four daughters. There are several hookahs here, but the guests will have to make do with tabak – Achalom is strongly opposed to heavier drugs – or visit Fraytor's Bar for something more potent. A winding spiral staircase leads from the common room up to the roof terrace. Locals, nomads from the seraglio and the occasional, tired spaceport worker during the day watch, mainly frequent Achalom's.

Caravan seraglio and loader park: The old caravan seraglio has recently been restored with funds from the petroleum companies. It is constructed in an antique style said to come from Al-Ardha. The outer parts consist of arched colonnades leading to small stalls, rooms and corridors where dromedons can rest away from the heat, and are always full of nomads, dromedon drivers and peddlers. Outside of the main gate leading to the courtyard, a marketplace has formed where

locals sell fruits, vegetables, and sometimes fish. This is also where the loader park can be found – a large gravel yard where rows of enormous petroleum loaders are parked.

The petroleum companies: The architectural style of these houses stands out in the village. These white, two-storey buildings with rounded domes are connected to each other by whitewashed colonnades, and house Mahanji Petroleum, Free Petroleum and the Free League offices for petroleum and spaceport workers. The largest building does, of course, belong to Mahanji Petroleum. This is where Kehoni Mahnon can be found, in an elegant office opening up onto a balcony shaded by vines. Parts of the building are empty, kept ready for when a new colonial agent is appointed.

The Well of Dreams: Along the beach of Lake Mnembau, there is a string of low, sandstone buildings. They look rather anonymous when observed from land, but this is, indeed, the Well of Dreams pleasure house. Facing the lake, the houses have long wooden jetties and beautiful, covered balconies where patrons and courtesans enjoy the view and each other's company – there is even a small stretch of the beach kept raked and clean of rocks and debris for those who wish to go for a swim in the hot waters of Lake Mnembau.

THE MAHANJI OASIS

- ◆ **AVERAGE TEMPERATURE:** 40-60 degrees centigrade during the day and around 30 degrees at night.
- ◆ **POPULATION:** 1,000 permanent residents at the Mahanji Oasis, plus around 500 workers at the spaceport and in the petroleum industry. The Firstcome residents are of Beri and Xinghur descent.
- ◆ **GOVERNANCE:** The Mahanji Oasis is an independent settlement governed by the Firstcome clans. The Colonial Agency and the Free League govern the petroleum companies, the spaceport, NimaBionics and the Foundation's Geochemical Outpost.
- ◆ **LAW AND ORDER:** The local sharif, working alone, keeps the peace. The petroleum companies, the spaceport and NimaBionics have their own security staff, and are officially not included in the sharif's responsibilities, but anything that happens in public is still the sharif's business. Certain elements of the population are aware of an additional, secret organization called the Guardians.
- ◆ **IMPORTS:** Medicine, spare parts, meat.
- ◆ **EXPORTS:** Petroleum, fruits, spices, bionic derivatives.





MAHANJI VILLAGE



MAP: MAHANJI VILLAGE

- A. Achalom's Cantina
- B. Caravan seraglio
- C. Loader park
- D. The petroleum companies
- E. The Well of Dreams
- F. Fraytor's Bar
- G. The doctor's office
- H. Matil Hamila's Emporium



The Well's proprietor, Cantara Usiel, brags about this being the finest pleasure house on the planet. Petroleum workers, stevedores and ship crews wanting to relax and spend their hard-earned birr frequent the house.

Fraytor's Bar: Known simply as "The Bar", this is the nadir of the Mahanji Oasis. The hangar-like building is ugly, cast in grey concrete and covered with a rapidly deteriorating, sand-colored plaster. There are large metal double doors in the front with the settlement's only neon sign above them. Pink, curly letters invite visitors inside. At night, kohôl, drugs and even the occasional proxy trip can be found here.

The doctor's office: A small house containing the settlement's medical office. Patients are shown into a small room with red carpeting both on the floor and on the walls. This is the medlab. Navid Allomon, the settlement's medicurg and pathologist, runs the clinic with the assistance of his apprentice Chaga. There is an autopsy room in the house as well, but it is rarely used.

Matil Hamila's Emporium: Matil Hamila, a Zenithian peddler with an eye for business, runs Mahanji's general store. The store can offer most ordinary tech, but no weapons – unless the customer is really insistent, that is. Matil can order advanced tech through contacts in Mehrabi and via certain freighter captains, but the delivery times are often many months.

⚙️ THE FOUNDATION'S GEOCHEMICAL OUTPOST

The outpost is operated by a group of enthusiastic scientists and engineers under the command of Professor Minemoka. They study the unusual mountain ridges between the Crystal lakes that contain curious levels of various rocks and rare radioactive isotopes, but Lake Mnembau itself is, of course, the most fascinating element of the region, believed to have formed after an asteroid crash eons ago. The locals stay away from the outpost, and say extra prayers against bad luck if they have to pass it. The outpost is a small cluster of domed, concrete buildings. Professor Minemoka's pride and joy – a pontoon boat loaded with advanced geochemical sensor equipment – can be found moored by the beach.

⚙️ XIN-MAL'S DIVING CENTER

Xin-Mal's Diving Center is located next to the geochemical outpost. Xin-Mal is an eccentric Xinghur who runs the center with

the help of the family's three sons. Xin-Mal is known throughout the system and in Mira among those of the privileged strata who practice the curious sport of diving. Now and then, a biologist comes through the center, usually to obtain a specimen of the exotic mouri-mouri fish. The center consists of three sandstone buildings with roof terraces, and an underground garage where Xin-Mal keeps a bahtrol-powered sand crawler. A concrete boathouse on the beach contains two inflatable speedboats.

⚙️ THE ESTATE AND THE FACTORY

The estate of Omar din Nimatallah covers most of the large mesa that overlooks the lake. The mesa towers sixty meters above the water and the estate is made up of several independent buildings circling a domed main house in the middle. Trees and bushes surround the estate. During the nights, the buildings are lit up and can be seen from across the water. One of the houses is balanced on the edge and contains a big elevator used to transport the estate's residents and servants to the Factory and Mahanji village. The Factory, a huge, one-storey concrete building without windows, is located beside the mesa in a small valley. It is completely smooth and doesn't appear to be guarded, but advanced electronic security systems make sure no trespassers make it inside. The Factory has many subterranean levels and this is where most of the bionic research takes place.

⚙️ THE SPACEPORT

The spaceport is basically a couple of long concrete runways on a wide field. Enormous, mobile hangars are kept ready nearby to protect landed ships from sandstorms. There is a small terminal for the modest number of passengers who visit the oasis, and sharif Hector Akoub lives in a small house next door. Behind the terminal, there are some ten round petroleum vats and usually several petroleum loaders, either parked nearby or busy pumping petroleum into the vats. Tubes run from the vats to pumping stations on the runways for transport off world. There is a fusion reactor in the spaceport, powering the bahtrol refinery, the pumping stations and parts of the village.

⚙️ THE TAYASUF ILM TEMPLE AND LIBRARY

Tayasuf Ilm is an ancient Icon temple and library, surrounded by sandstone mountains. The complex is very old and consists of two parts. The round main building has a high dome that was gilded in ages past, but sandstorms have chipped away at its splendor over the years and left no trace of its former

glory. Inside the main house there is only one big room, surrounded by several balconies. Lanterns and candles, aided by sunlight coming in through an opening in the ceiling, keep the shadows at bay. In the back of the house, facing the mountain, a spiral staircase leads from the main hall to the library, an oblong building on the mountain ledge high above. A corridor from the library leads to a small ravine lake surrounded by hanging terraces and small plantations. Temple elder Rahmana can usually be found here.

⚙️ THE HERMITAGE

In the middle of the desert there is a small palm grove and a tiny hut. This is the home of ascetic hermit Moaciri. She spends most of her time meditating in the shadows of the trees.

⚙️ THE RIG CEMETERY

A few kilometers outside of the village rests the remains of the mobile oil rigs brought here in the last oil rush a few years back. The enormous, rusted carcasses on their twenty-meter-wide tracks have become quiet palaces for the sparse, local fauna. Two spaceship wrecks can also be found here. Their captains foolishly attempted to land here instead of in the spaceport and paid a bitter price for it. The nomads stay away from the place, as there are plenty of rumors going around about raiders and other, more mysterious, creatures living here.

⚙️ THE RUINS

Between a couple of oddly spiral shaped cliffs, a group of ruined buildings protrude from the sand. Archaeologists who have attempted to study the site have been chased away by local raiders (the Guardians). A high wall used to be the most well known landmark in the area. The wall was not made from any indigenous stone, but from some incredibly dense rock of unknown origin. It followed a slight but perfect curve – undetectable without advanced sensors –, which seemed to hint at an original construction with a circumference of two thousand kilometers. Sensor data pertaining to this has never made it off Lubau, as the wall section was blown up by bandits (the Guardians) before more than a preliminary scan had been completed, and the investigating archaeologist was mysteriously killed in a landslide shortly thereafter. This incident, together with other stories of researchers and prospectors going missing in the area, has created a strong air of mystery around the ruins.



THE SITUATION

The peaceful days in the Mahanji Oasis are coming to an end. The nomads have been on edge ever since the Zenithians arrived to drill for petroleum in the desert and NimaBionics constructed the Factory next to Lake Mnembau. Rumors have it that experiments outlawed in the core of the system are secretly being performed there. When people start disappearing (see Events below), the dams can no longer hold – the Beri have sent out word and are preparing for a war council in the desert. At the same time, the old Firstcome order of the Guardians has increased their activity in guarding the ancient ruins found at the perimeter of the Oasis. Their purpose and origin remain a mystery.

CHARACTERS AND CREATURES

Most of the Oasis' residents are not described in detail, only named and given a location. A few key NPCs are described below.

HECTOR AKOUB, SHARIF AND GUARDIAN

Sharifhood is a prestigious honor among the nomads, and can loosely be translated into "protector of the clan". Sharif Akoub's position is special in that he is responsible for the safekeeping of several clans belonging to different tribes, although he himself is Beri. He is of the strict opinion that everything that happens in and around the Oasis is his business, which puts him on a collision course with the petroleum companies. In the Firstcome community, Akoub's mandates are absolute, as many there – correctly – believe him to be a member of the Guardians – he is actually the current master of the secret order. Hector's main concern this day is that time is beginning to catch up with him. He is considering taking on some sharif apprentices, and eventually grooming the best one for the day when he will be gone. Hector is in possession of the Guardians' most valuable artifact, the Arrow of Ulung.

APPEARANCE: Hector normally dresses in a wide, black caftan over his thermostatic suit and with his accelerator pistol clearly visible. As a Guardian, he wears red and uses a combat bow and duralite arrows.

CHARACTERISTICS: Firm and decisive.



ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 3, WITS 4, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 6

MIND POINTS: 7

REPUTATION: 8

SKILLS: Observation 5, Infiltration 4, Ranged Combat 4, Survival 4, Dexterity 3, Manipulation 3

TALENTS: Nine Lives, Combat Veteran, Rugged

ARMOR: Heavy [6]

WEAPONS: Accelerator pistol, accelerator rifle, combat bow

GEAR: Thermostatic suit, exploding arrows, the Arrow of Ulung (negates Armor), personal communicator, personal sensor, sand crawler.

OMAR DIN NIMATALLAH, BIONICS SCIENTIST

Omar din Nimatallah comes from a prominent Zenithian pilot family, but was disowned at an early age. He has an adventurous spirit,



and travelled the Horizon for many years before settling in the Mahanji Oasis. In

Lake Mnembau, he discovered the mouri-mouri fish, and, using a rather primitive bionics lab, was able to study its fascinating genetic code. After being ignored by the Foundation when seeking funds for more advanced research, he came into contact with Celer-Delekt and commercialized his theories instead. This partnership proved very rewarding for Omar, who today works in a state-of-the-art laboratory and lives in an estate as large as a palace. He is still fascinated by the possibilities of bionics, and is always interested in acquiring rare organisms to study. Lately, he has been devoting himself to the creation of new life forms – often very simple ones – but his initial success has made him impatient and he has attempted to create semi-intelligences – with mixed results. His biggest dream is to discover the genetic sequence for mystical powers. Omar firmly believes that the mysterious powers that are manifesting themselves across the Horizon are rooted in genetics, and is doing everything he can to unlock their secrets – even going as far as “inviting” mystics to the Factory to experiment on them.

APPEARANCE: Dark brown eyes, short-cropped hair, obese and has a big double chin. Wears a vest with a geometrical pattern.

CHARACTERISTICS: Pensive, but can become very agitated in conversations.

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 4, AGILITY 2, WITS 5, EMPATHY 3

HIT POINTS: 8

MIND POINTS: 8

REPUTATION: 7

SKILLS: Technology 5, Science 5, Culture 4, Manipulation 4, Data Djinn 3, Ranged Combat 3

TALENTS: Faction Standing, Licensed, Wealthy Family, Tough

ARMOR: -

WEAPONS: Thermal pistol

GEAR: Arrash pipe, arrash, transactor with 20,000 birr.

RAHMANA, TEMPLE ELDER

As Elder in the Tayasuf Ilm temple and library, Rahmana is one of the oldest living people in the Oasis, and even remembers the time before the colonization. She is usually found wandering around in the temple gardens, bent over her cane. Her life's goal has been to categorize all of the library's ancient scrolls, and she is almost done. Despite her age, Rahmana is young at heart and has begun transferring the knowledge of the library onto more modern media with the help of some of her younger colleagues. She is always interested in new visitors, and will gladly show them around the temple grounds.

APPEARANCE: A crooked old Beri lady with white hair.

CHARACTERISTICS: Talkative, but also a good listener.

ATTRIBUTES:

STRENGTH 2, AGILITY 2, WITS 5, EMPATHY 4

HIT POINTS: 4

MIND POINTS: 9

REPUTATION: 7

SKILLS: Culture 5, Science 4, Manipulation 3, Mystic Powers 3.

TALENTS: Bless, Rugged, Premonition, Intuition, Mind Walker

ARMOR: -

WEAPONS: -

GEAR: Cane, Ulung talisman.

KEHONI MAHNON, MERCHANT WITH MAHANJI PETROLEUM

Kehoni Mahnon is the closest thing the Mahanji Oasis has to a Colonial agent. She is akbar and top dog of Mahanji Petroleum, a subsidiary to the Colonial Agency. She can usually be found at her cool, air-conditioned offices in the Mahanji Petroleum building in the village. Her two biggest interests are pumping petroleum from the ground and trying to make Free Petroleum go bankrupt. That she has not been officially named Colonial agent yet irritates her enormously – but on the other hand, most of the profits from the oil end up in her pockets. She has been considering applying for the position as Colonial agent for many years and turn the Oasis into an official colony, but she would prefer to eliminate the competition, Free Petroleum, first. Kehoni is always protected by her two bodyguards Agmal and Lior (use the Soldier stats from the Rulebook, p 343).

APPEARANCE: Black hair, studded with gems. Dresses in fancy djellabas. Always wears a brooch with the Mahanji Petroleum logotype.

CHARACTERISTICS: Analytic, quick to bribe or threaten to get her way with people.

ATTRIBUTES:**STRENGTH 3, AGILITY 2, WITS 3, EMPATHY 4****HIT POINTS:** 5**MIND POINTS:** 7**REPUTATION:** 6**SKILLS:** Manipulation 4, Culture 2**TALENTS:** Judge of Character**ARMOR:** -**WEAPONS:** Thermal pistol**GEAR:** Tag with 20,000 birr.**EVENTS**

The events below are related to the petroleum, NimaBionics and the two nomads tribes in the area.

⚙ BLOOD FIEND

A series of gruesome murders haunts the Oasis. The victims range from drunken stevedores to nomad hunters, but they have all been killed at night. The PCs could become involved in this for many reasons – maybe they are hired by the sharif, or approached by members of the Guardians posing as local merchants afraid for their commerce unless the murderer is brought to justice. Analyzing the victims and the evidence will show that they have been killed in various ways, but with an increasing amount of violence and sophistication: from blunt force trauma, via stab wounds, to gunshot wounds on the latest victims. All of the bodies have suffered various degrees of post mortem mutilation. The attacker has often removed and eaten the victims' livers and brains. The explanation for the killings is that a pack of blood fiends (see the Rulebook, p 333) have escaped from the Factory, and are terrorizing the area.

TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFACTS

The tech around the Oasis is mainly concentrated in the village – landed spaceships, loaders and whatever Zenithian visitors bring with them. The desert around the settlement is as good as empty, except for the ruins and the library, where valuable, archaeological finds can be dug up.

⚙️ ULUNG AWAKENS!

A freighter suffers a reactor meltdown during its approach to the spaceport and crashes into Lake Mnembau and the east beach. A heroic rescue operation is launched, and the PCs are recruited to help out. After the crash, the luminescent plankton that usually lights up the lake at night disappears (because of toxic emissions from the wreckage), and the Firstcome mumble about bad omens. When mangled body parts from missing spaceport workers float ashore onto the beach, many view it as proof of what has been quietly feared – that mighty Ulung is upset by the crash. Ulung is the local spirit deity that the nomads worship as an Icon. Ulung is the negative aspect of the deity and Zahdak its positive aspect. This is, of course, not true – it is actually another one of din Nimatallah's mutants on the rampage. A bionic shark (use the Nahang stats in the Rulebook, p 323) has escaped from the sublevels of the Factory and made its way to the lake. The shark is allergic to the luminescent plankton that live close to the surface, and has until recently been forced to stay in the depths, but now the plankton are gone and the shark is loving its new diet: humans.

⚙️ THE PETROLEUM WELL

The Oasis is suddenly boiling with rumors – apparently, someone has been drilling for oil on the western beach of the lake, and possibly found something! The truth is that Olim, a poor date farmer, has found petroleum coming out

of the ground behind his grove. Olim has recently lost his wife and has two daughters to support, and when he saw the petroleum, he immediately contacted Mahanji Petroleum to try to claim the find, despite being fully aware that this is against the customs of the Oasis. The new find causes an uproar among the players in the area: the Guardians wish to destroy all evidence of a new well, the petroleum companies want to secure it for themselves, and the sharif has to keep the peace. As Olim is of Beri blood, Xinghur emotions might run high, possibly leading to tribal war or blood feuds.

⚙️ THE MURDER OF THE PROFESSOR

Professor Minemoka has been murdered! There could be several different suspects – from the grad student who got passed up for a position at the outpost, to the Guardians whose other methods of getting the professor to stop disturbing Lake Mnembau have failed. Maybe the PCs themselves end up accused of the crime?

⚙️ THE VISION

One or several PCs have a vision or dream of being in the desert, dehydrated and close to death. The vision then goes on to show images of white, endless corridors, people in padded cells rocking catatonically, a ruined building under a burning sun and finally, a crushing sensation of drowning in the blue abyss. The vision is a cry for help from one of the mystics held captive at the Factory.



