

P13
OMAN CEMENT
UNVEILS
INITIATIVES TO
BOOST CAPACITY



P18
MAKAN STUDIOS
GIVES AN INTIMATE
PEEK INTO ARTISTS'
SKETCHBOOKS



P12
SHAKIB LEADS
BANGLADESH TO
WIN AFTER 'TIMED
OUT' DRAMA



MUSCAT

SULTAN QABOOS AWARD WINNERS TO BE ANNOUNCED

The winners of the tenth edition of the Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature will be announced on Wednesday, the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science said, on Monday. The award's tenth edition is dedicated to Arabs and spans media and communication studies in the Culture category, film directing in the Arts category and novels in the Literature category.

COLLABORATING CENTRE BY WHO



The Ministry of Health, represented by the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases, has been designated as a collaborating centre for research and training in the area of chronic respiratory diseases by the World Health Organization (WHO). The Ministry of Health has enhanced and developed health services for patients with chronic respiratory diseases at all levels of healthcare. It has established 161 asthma clinics at the primary healthcare level and continues to provide a wide range of medications. In addition, the Ministry of Health has invested in training and building the capacity of pharmacists, doctors and nurses to ensure optimal healthcare delivery to patients.

OPINION

P9



Joseph S Nye, Jr
What is the Global South?

P16



Huda Al Maamari
Building effective compliance culture

OMAN'S LARGEST SOLAR PV PROJECT OPENS



Eng Salim bin Nasser al Auqi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, inaugurated the 17-megawatt peak (MWp) solar photovoltaic (PV) farm producing green energy to power the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant in Sur. It is the largest solar system for a desalination plant in the Sultanate of Oman with an annual capacity of over 32,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) of green electricity which will cover 100 per cent of the desalination plant's consumption over the daylight period.

DETAILS ON P13

GAZA DEATH TOLL
TOPS 10,022, SAYS
HEALTH MINISTRY

UN AGENCIES CALL
FOR TRUCE AS WAR
CROSSES 30 DAYS

EUROPE PLEDGES
\$26.9 MILLION
IN AID FOR GAZA

GAZA-EGYPT
BORDER REOPENS FOR
EVACUATIONS

UN says ‘enough is enough’

GAZA: UN agency leaders saying “enough is enough” demanded a humanitarian ceasefire on Monday nearly a month into Gaza’s war, as the enclave’s health authorities said the death toll from Israeli strikes on the enclave now exceeded 10,000.

“An entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship. This is unacceptable,” the UN chiefs said in a joint statement.

“We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It’s been 30 days. Enough is enough. This must stop now.”

The 18 signatories include the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk, World Health Organization head Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and UN aid chief Martin Griffiths.

The reported number of fatalities in Israeli strikes on Gaza since October 7 has now surpassed 10,000, with the health ministry in the enclave saying at least 10,022 Palestinians were killed including 4,104 children.

A Reuters journalist in Gaza said an overnight bombardment by air, ground and sea was one of the most intense since Israel began its offensive following the



A Palestinian man reacts as others check the rubble of a building in Khan Yunis on Monday. – AFP

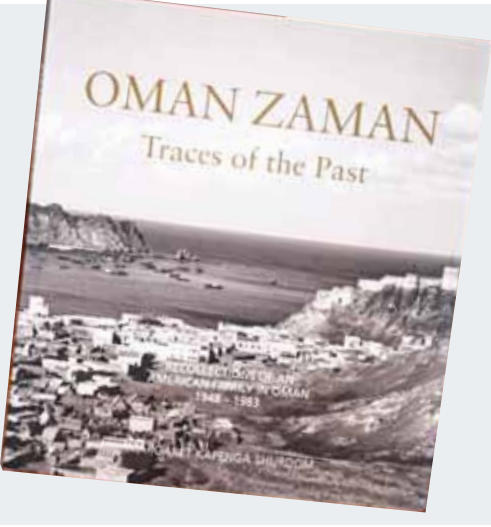
October 7 attack. A US diplomatic push in the region is intended to reduce risks of the conflict escalating.

The health ministry in Gaza said dozens of people were killed by the Israeli air strikes in Gaza City and further south in Gaza neighbourhoods such as Zawaida and Deir Al-Balah. Al-Aqsa TV quoted medical sources as saying at least 75 Palestinians were killed and 106 hurt in the attacks. Gaza border officials said the Rafah crossing has resumed operations to allow foreign passport holders and critically wounded Palestinians into Egypt. Hundreds of foreign nationals and wounded were allowed to leave Gaza for Egypt last week but no such exits have been reported since November 3.

BLINKEN IN TURKIYE

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told his US counterpart Antony Blinken in a meeting in Ankara that a ceasefire needed to be declared urgently in Gaza, a Turkish foreign ministry source said. Blinken made an unannounced visit to the West Bank on Sunday to meet Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who joined international calls for an immediate ceasefire. **SEE ALSO P6 & 7**

‘Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past’ sheds light on history



KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in association with the Oman Historical Association, launched a book titled ‘Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past, authored by Margaret Kapenga Shurdom, under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, at the National Museum on Monday.

The book, published in English, delves into the bygone era dealing with various aspects of ancient life in the Sultanate of Oman, and elucidates the various facets of life of yesteryears.

LIGHT ON THE HISTORY

Kapenga, who has lived and worked in the Sultanate of Oman between 1948 and 1983, feels the book is a dedication to the country which once was her home, and aims to shed more light on the history of Oman for the generations to come.

“For me, it (the book) is a trace of the life of Oman in the past which can enlighten the knowledge of the generations to come, and I take pride and privilege to document the same on the Sultanate of Oman which was my home for many years,” she said.

The book launch was attended by the author, officials and experts from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman Historical Association, the National Museum, besides a number of dignitaries. **SEE ALSO P3**

WEATHER

MUSCAT: Max 31°C Min 24°C SALALAH: Max 33°C Min 23°C NIZWA: Max 32°C Min 21°C

PRAYER TIMINGS

SUNRISE: 06:16 FAJR: 04:59 DHUHR: 11:56 ASR: 15:07 MAGHRIB: 17:30 ISHA: 18:42



Academy for defence studies’ Board of Trustees meets

MUSCAT: The Board of Trustees of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies held its annual meeting at Bait Al Falaj Garrison for 2023.

The meeting was chaired by HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik bin Taimour al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Chairman of the Academy’s Board of Trustees.

At the outset of the meeting, HH Sayyid Shihab welcomed the board members, hoping that the meeting would contribute towards the realisation of the Academy’s goals and mission. The board members reviewed various topics on the agenda.

The Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies deals with developing strategic studies in line with approved plans and programmes, expanding the scope of strategic thought, implementing analytical aspects of strategic



The Board members reviewed various topics on the agenda. – ONA

planning and honing the skills of Omani nationals to help them undertake leadership tasks.

The Academy conducts strategic and defence studies and develops scholarly research in different domains. It also seeks to consolidate ties with universities, centres and specialised institutes.

The meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda

al Said, Vice Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Hassan bin Mohsin al Shuraiqi, Inspector General of Police and Customs, Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis bin Abdullah al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan’s Armed Forces, Maj Gen Sulaiman bin Khalid al Zakwani,

Secretary-General of Military Affairs at the Royal Office, Maj Gen Hamid bin Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, and Commodore Khalid bin Amir al Sulti, Director General of Studies and Academic Affairs at the Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies, rapporteur of the meeting.

— ONA

Minister of Education heads Oman delegation to Unesco meet

MUSCAT: Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education and Chairperson of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, on Monday left for Paris to head the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman participating in the forty-second session of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), which will be held during the period from November 7 to 22 at the organisation’s headquarters.

The delegation included Dr Hamad bin Saif al Hamami, Permanent Representative of Oman to the Unesco, and Amna bint Salim al Balushiya, Secretary of the Omani National Commission for Education, Culture and Science. Also, part of the delegation, representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the Environment Agency, Sultan Qaboos University, and the General Authority for Academic Accreditation and Assurance of Education Quality. This is to attend a number of specialised committees emanating from



Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education

the General Conference in education, culture, science, and communication.

The minister will deliver Oman’s speech before the General Conference on November 8. The programme for opening of this session includes a speech by the Director-General of the Organization, a speech by the President of the Executive Council, the approval of the agenda of the session, and the election of the President of the General Conference, Vice-Presidents, Committee Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Rapporteurs. It will discuss the Director-General’s report on the organisation’s activities in the period (2018-2021), as well as a report on the activities and programmes of the organisation’s Executive Council.

World Climate Action Summit: Oman geared up for COP 28 conference

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahalbalushia

A preparatory workshop discussed the 28th session of the Conference of the Parties on Climate Change (COP 28) and the World Climate Action Summit, scheduled to take place in Dubai from November 30 to December 12.

The event, held under the banner of ‘Oman is a sustainable future,’ underscores Oman’s commitment to tackling global environmental challenges, promoting sustainable development, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The preparatory workshop aimed to equip the national implementation teams representing

Oman with the tools and knowledge required for effective participation in the global conference. These teams will play a pivotal role in presenting Oman’s strategies, plans, policies, initiatives, and projects designed to mitigate climate change, protect the environment, and advance renewable energy.

Dr Ghazi bin Ali al Rawas, Dean of Scientific Research at Sultan Qaboos University and head of the Supervision and Governance Team emphasised Oman’s support for policies, systems, and initiatives that safeguard the environment and combat climate change. He highlighted the integral role that Oman plays in environmental sustainability and renewable



The preparatory workshop aimed at equipping national implementation teams representing Oman with knowledge for effective participation in the conference

energy, reflecting the vision of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

“The workshop is designed to ensure our teams are well-prepared for the conference, with a focus on our seven participating teams,” Dr Al Rawas stated.

“The summit’s central theme

is achieving zero neutrality by 2050. Our teams will present Oman’s progress towards this goal and highlight the measures we are taking to promote renewable energy and green hydrogen,” he said.

COP 28 will address a range

of global climate change issues, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from various sectors, such as industry, transportation, agriculture, energy production, and waste management. Additionally, the conference will explore strategies for adapting to the vulnerabilities and risks posed by climate change across various development sectors, developing national plans to reduce these risks, and identifying financial opportunities to support these initiatives, particularly in developing countries.

The logistical support team confirmed the readiness of Oman’s preparations for the conference. This includes the reservation

of Oman’s pavilion and media accommodations. The team has also engaged with relevant authorities to secure hotel reservations and facilitate visits to Oman’s pavilion.

Maryam bint Ali al Alawiyah, the team leader of Oman’s pavilion at the conference, expressed confidence in the Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion, measuring 165.5 square meters. She revealed that the pavilion would utilise cutting-edge technology to showcase Oman’s achievements in environmental protection, emissions reduction, environmental sustainability, renewable energy promotion, and its role in biodiversity. The pavilion will feature daily changing topics during the event.

Oman participates in World Travel Market in London



MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, is taking part in the World Travel Market London 2023, which began today in London.

Oman’s delegation in the three-day event is headed by Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism.

As many as 4,000 exhibitors will take part in the event, representing 155 countries.

The Omani pavilion at the expo aims to bring together partners from the government and private sectors, whose participation in the global event stems from a promotional programme aimed at highlighting Oman’s competitive tourism capabilities. — ONA





MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee in Ministry of Information announces its Tender for the following work:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Class & Grade	Last Date For Collection	Submission Date	Purchase Fees (R.O.)
4/2023 2023/257 13 - د ع / ر	CONSTRUCTION OF RADIO AND TV STATION IN DABBA (MUSANDAM GOVERNORATE)	Third	19/11/2023	21/12/2023	25/-

1. All specialized companies in the field of the tender shown above and are registered with the Tender Board to the degree indicated above, may obtain tender documents, against non-refundable fees, from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

2. Companies and institutions are exempted from providing a temporary insurance of 1% when submitting their bid, provided that they sign a document committing themselves to the submitted bid for a period determined when the bidding strategy is approved in accordance with the document attached to the Isnad platform. As for international companies that do not have a headquarters in the Sultanate of Oman, they are required to provide temporary insurance of 1%.

(For more information, please see the original circular issued by the Tender Board on the Isnad platform.)

Note that the last date for accepting bids as mentioned above is before 10:00 am. Any bid received after the time and date mentioned in the submission date will be rejected automatically.

You are requested to provide 2 hard copies for your offer after the submission in Projects Department at Ministry of Information.

3. The Ministry has the right to:

1) Add or Cancel some works in the tender if necessary.

2) Cancellation of the tender without giving reasons.

For clarifications you may contact via:

Telephone : 24943785, 24943177, Email: (Moi.Tenders@omaninfo.om)





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MOH No: 384/2023



Heritage ministry unveils ‘Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past’

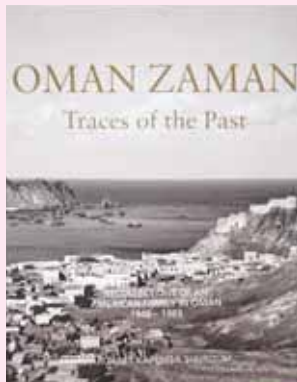
MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Oman Historical Association, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Monday launched a book titled ‘Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past’, authored by Margaret Kapenga Shurdom.

The book deals with various aspects of ancient life in the Sultanate of Oman.

Kapenga lived and worked in the Sultanate of Oman between 1948 and 1983. The book launch ceremony, held at the National Museum, was held under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism.

It was attended by the author, officials and specialists from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Oman Historical Association, the National Museum and Omani dignitaries.

Published in English, ‘Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past’ will



be translated at a later stage. It comprises more than 300 photos and images of paintings, manuscripts, letters and the writer’s family memos that describe social life during their period of residence in Oman.

A photo exhibition was opened on the sidelines of the ceremony. It showcased paintings by artist Evelyn Underwood, the author’s grandmother, whose works were inspired by her visit to the Kapenga family in the first years of their stay in Oman in the 1950s. — ONA



The book launch ceremony was held under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism



— ONA

HOTEL REVENUES IN OMAN INCREASE BY 26 PER CENT

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 6

The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman exceeded RO 153 million as of the end of September 2023, up by 26.4 per cent over the corresponding period in 2022, according to statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The total number of hotel guests rose by 27.3 per cent to 1.43 million by the end of September 2023, compared to 1.13 million during the corresponding period in 2022.

Meanwhile, the hotel occupancy rate registered a growth of 10.1 per cent. According to the NCSI report, among the nationalities, as many as 567,447 of the hotel guests were Omanis, 156,703 were GCC citizens (up by 27.6 per cent), 295,155 were European citizens (an increase of 43.4 per cent), 41,079 were Americans (up by 1.8 per cent), 8,361 were citizens from African countries (up by 41.2 per cent), while the number of guests from Asian countries increased by 43.6 per cent to 213,980.



The total number of hotel guests rose by 27.3 per cent to 1.43 million by the end of September 2023

Oman chairs GCC retirement meeting

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Social Protection Fund, on Monday chaired the 22nd meeting of the committee of GCC Heads of Civil Retirement and Social Insurance Agencies.

Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance, Chairman of the Board of the Directors of the Social Protection Fund, said

that what has been achieved throughout the march of GCC cooperation reflects the strong relations between the council’s countries.

Moreover, the two-day meeting reviews the implementation of recommendations of the committee’s 21st meeting which was held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during November 2022.

— ONA



The two-day meeting reviews the implementation of recommendations of the committee’s 21st meeting which was held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during November 2022

— ONA

Misfat Al Abriyeen a self-sufficient rural unit

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

Misfat Al Abriyeen (around 200 km from Muscat) situated in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate was among the Best Tourism Villages, which was announced by the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) for the first time two years ago in 2021.

No governorate from the Sultanate of Oman has made to that elite list since, including this year, when the new list of Best Tourism Villages was announced recently.

According to UNWTO, what makes Misfat Al Abriyeen a stand-out among other villages in the country is that it is a village with a self-sustaining cohesive community based on the ancient falaj irrigation systems for around 2,000 years.

“Misfat Al Abriyeen is a fully

functioning, self-sufficient and networked rural unit that also plays its important role in the creation of a sustainable future for the country following ‘Oman Vision 2040’ through tourism and heritage-led initiatives. The tourism-led initiatives under its flagship residents’ cooperative, Al Misfat Al Ahlia, seeks to create jobs for local people and opportunities for local and regional businesses, optimising the sustainable use of natural and human resources in the area.”

Misfat al Abriyeen tourism’s strategy goals are to focus on the following key aspects—community cooperative and resilience, developing and strengthening the flagship community cooperative, according to UNWTO.

“The village has worked towards the broad goals of wider environmental protection, sanitation, domestic and

agricultural water management, traffic reduction and sustainable energy production due to solar panels and micro turbines, and energy storage systems. The village has developed five Bed-and-Breakfast facilities through guest houses that provide local rural values, and offer food and beverage supplied by the local community members.” UNWTO said.

The Best Tourism Villages 2023 recognised villages that are leading the way in nurturing rural areas and preserving landscapes, cultural diversity, local values, and culinary traditions.

In the third edition 54 villages from all governorates were selected from almost 260 applications.

Around 20 villages joined the Upgrade Programme, and all 74 villages are now part of the UNWTO Best Tourism Villages Network. The villages were named



The village has worked towards the broad goals of wider environmental protection, sanitation, domestic and agricultural water management, traffic reduction and sustainable energy production

during the UNWTO General Assembly that took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

“Tourism can be a powerful force for inclusivity, empowering local communities and distributing benefits across governorates,” emphasises UNWTO Secretary-

General Zurab Pololikashvili. “This initiative acknowledges villages that have harnessed tourism as a catalyst for their development and well-being.”

Launched in 2021, the Best Tourism Villages by UNWTO initiative is part of the UNWTO

Tourism for Rural Development Programme. The Programme works to foster development and inclusion in rural areas, combat depopulation, advance innovation and value chain integration through tourism and encourage sustainable practices.



KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

THE education sector is grappling with a new challenge of Artificial Intelligence. The issue is forcing educators and scholars to brainstorm as to how should the education system change to address, incorporate, or challenge today's AI systems.

Experts are divided over the use of AI. Some call the adoption of it in the education system a compromise with the values and ethics, while others are in favour of its use in moderation.

Dr Ali al Bimani, Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Science & Technology, called Artificial Intelligence a valuable tool if used in moderation. He, however, cautioned that overdependence on technology could be counterproductive, with consequences like loss of critical thinking skills and compromise on ethics.

“It can be a valuable tool for students, offering personalised learning, research assistance, and homework support when used responsibly and in moderation. However, overdependence on AI can hinder critical thinking, raise ethical concerns, exacerbate technology gaps, and compromise data privacy. Balancing AI use with developing essential skills and ethical awareness is crucial for responsible integration into education.” It is essential, thus, for educators and institutions to strike a balance and ensure that students develop critical thinking skills and ethical awareness alongside their use of AI technology.

The intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and education sparks a multitude of engaging conversations.

Expert views need to be noted because this new technology has an impact on almost every sector.

Some question AI's role in learning, cognition, and human interaction. Others guide educators in preparing students for active participation in societal issues such as information integrity, the impact on employment, and energy consumption.

Others shed light on the rights of educators and students concerning AI and urge educators to contribute their expertise to the ongoing discourse about AI's future in society and industry.

There is no doubt about the technology's influence and its revolutionising impact on the entire education system. E-learning platforms and educational institutions are making substantial investments in AI integration. According to reports, the AI in Education sector is projected to surpass \$20 billion by 2027. One of the most significant systemic challenges is the need for educators and institutions to adapt to AI's evolving landscape.

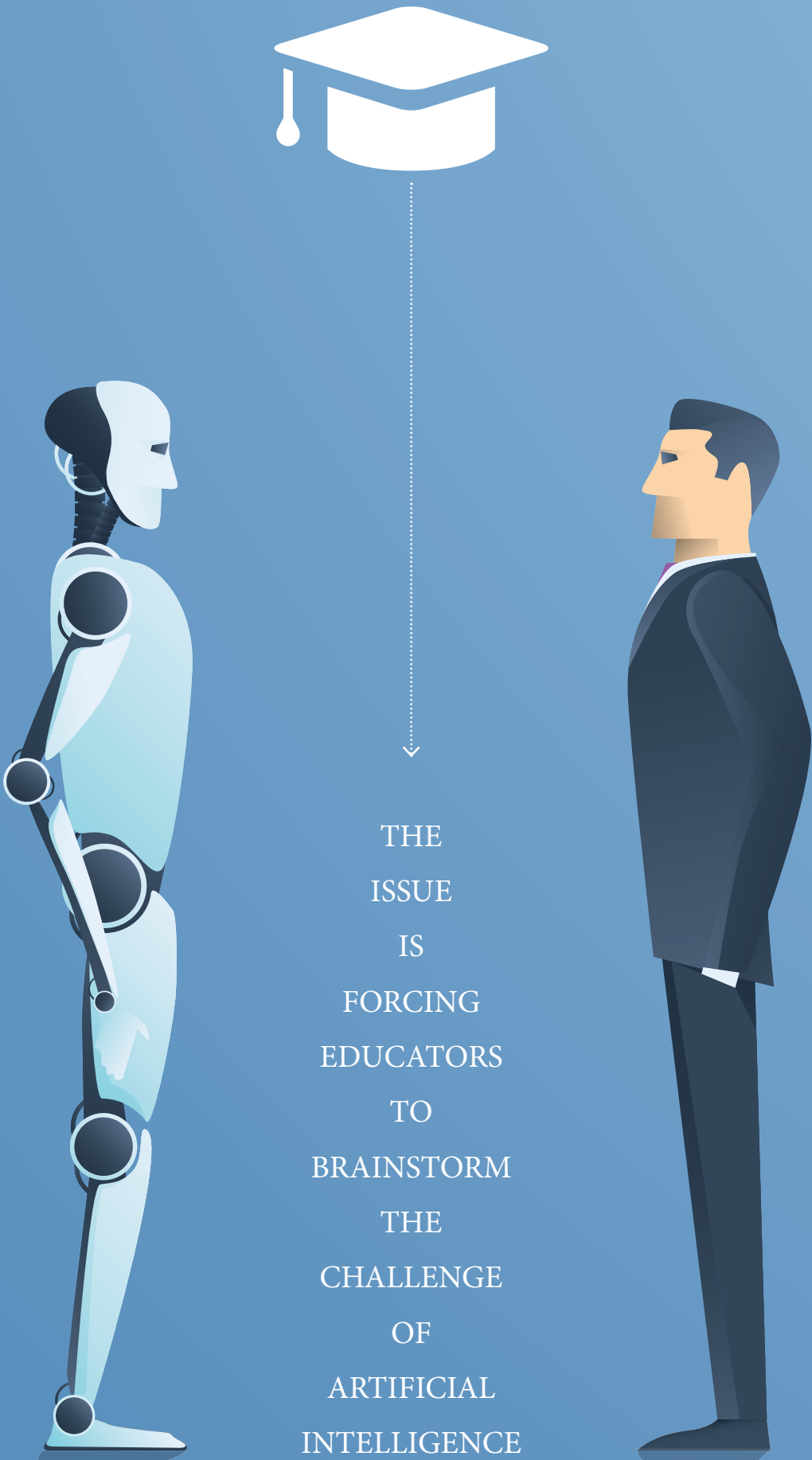


Artificial Intelligence a valuable tool if used in moderation. However, cautioned that overdependence on technology could be counterproductive, with consequences like loss of critical thinking skills and compromise on ethics

DR ALI AL BIMANI
Vice-Chancellor, National University, Science & Technology



MODERATION IS THE BEST SOLUTION



Recall Date: 07/11/2023

LINCOLN AVIATOR,CORSAIR & FORD EXPLORER

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production*	Number of Affected Commodities
LINCOLN AVIATOR	October 19, 2018 - August 23, 2023	42
LINCOLN CORSAIR	January 7, 2019 - December 15, 2022	4
FORD EXPLORER	October 19, 2018 - August 20, 2023	53

*Not all vehicles in this production period, are affected.

Recall consequence

In some of the affected vehicles, customers may intermittently experience a rear camera blue image or a full blue or black image on the SYNC screen when the vehicle is placed in reverse, or when the 360 degree view is selected and available (during low-speed operation). Once displayed, the rear camera blue image or a full blue or black image may persist for the remainder of the ignition ON cycle. Once present, the issue is likely to reoccur on subsequent key cycles. The loss of the rear camera image while in reverse increases the risk of a crash.

Recall Action

Replace rear camera and update IPMB software, if FDRS indicates an update is available.

To check the serial Numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website for Recalls & Warnings: <http://recall.pacp.gov>



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5

Omantel hosts GCCM Middle East 2023

MUSCAT: Represented by the Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel), the Sultanate of Oman is hosting the annual Global Carrier Community Meeting (GCCM Middle East 2023).

The two-day event is organised by the Carrier Community, headquartered in Berlin, Germany. GCCM Middle East 2023 is attended by more than 600 telecommunications professionals, representing decision makers of more than 300 telecom operators, content providers and suppliers from more than 50 countries. The event offers an opportunity for members of the wholesale telecom operators community to hold business meetings. The community represents companies providing international services for phone calls, data, SMS, services via submarine cables, satellites and data centres, among other sectors.

—ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialize companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tender in Dhofar Governorate.

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/ 2023/149	RECOVERY AND DEFAULTER MANAGEMENT SERVICES	21/11/2023	07/12/2023	RO. 105.000

- To view the tender details, you can visit www.dhofarservices.nama.om / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- For any clarifications contact us on:
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email: purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om



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www.dhofarservices.nama.om



Best Omani teachers to get award



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 6

The Ministry of Education organised a ceremony to announce the second edition of Educational Excellence Award for Omani teachers under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education. It is a national educational award granted every two academic years to good Omani teachers in public schools to highlight and enhance their efforts in

the educational field.

In his speech Dr Ambusaidi, said: "The ministry wanted to continue this award to sharpen the motivation of teachers and empower them for creativity and innovation in the educational process. The Educational Excellence Award focuses on the teacher as the active element in the educational system, and the Ministry has worked hard to maintain the financial value of the competition to be a motivating award for teachers to continue and

progress in this award. A supervisory committee was formed to review the themes and review the indicators, and another committee worked on amending the indicators, and technical committees will begin their work with registration in the award. I call on all Omani teachers in government schools to register in this award and participate with their creativity and proficiency in the educational process.

Dr Sulaiman al Jamoudi, Director-General of the

Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, presented a paper on the latest developments in the Educational Excellence Award. After that, Said al Wahaibi, Head of the Educational Portal Interface Management Department, gave a presentation to introduce the site.

The award details were presented in the educational portal, and Sultan al Shuraiqi, Senior Information Systems Specialist, reviewed the registration form and process.

Children discuss their rights, issues

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, NOV 6

Children First Association (CFA) and UNICEF hosted many students from Al Batinah North Governorate with the support of governor's office in Suhar to discuss children's issues and rights recently.

It was attended by Sumaira Chowdhury, Unicef Representative to Oman; Mohammed bin Sulaiman bin Hamoud al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North; and HH Sayyidah Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, chairperson of Children First Association.

In a rapidly changing



Sumaira Chowdhury, Unicef Representative; Mohammed bin Sulaiman bin Hamoud al Kindi; and HH Sayyidah Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said at the meeting in Suhar

world, empowering children to become advocates for their own rights is an essential step towards a brighter and more inclusive future. Conducting

such initiatives play a pivotal role in shaping young minds, and empowering them for their future. Giving children the opportunity to participate in

raising awareness of children's issues is of paramount importance and expressing themselves and well-being.

Children's rights and the global perspectives were widely discussed, and children were given a chance to involve and raise their questions.

When children engage in activities related to children's issues, they develop essential life skills such as critical thinking, communication, and empathy.

These skills are invaluable in their personal development and can have a profound impact on their communities and the world.

25 Omani youths gain jobs after Ruwad training

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

As many as 25 young Omanis have been trained and absorbed through the Ruwad national training programme, thanks to the collaborative Omani employment programme of bp Oman in partnership with Oman Energy Association and Haliburton.

Their induction ceremony and graduation were celebrated at an event held under the auspices of Sayyid Munthir al Busaidi, Vice-Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation and Follow-Up Unit, and several high level official dignitaries in attendance.

Ruwad programme is a one-year programme that prepares graduates with skills and competencies needed to gain employment. In Ruwad's first batch with Haliburton, the first contractor to partner in this initiative, 30 people were trained, out of which 18 were hired by Haliburton and seven found employment through different entities.

Speaking to the media, Yousuf al Ojaili, President of bp Oman, said that over 80 per cent of the total trainees have been hired.

"The Ruwad programme plays a pivotal role in our journey to build a skilled national capability in line with Oman Vision 2040 and our sustainability aims. Ruwad is also an ideal platform to foster effective interactions between stakeholders and candidates. Thanks to our partnership with Haliburton and Oman Energy Association," Al Ojaili said.



Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre

Auctions Advertisement for Leasing Ground & First Floor Coffee Shops

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre announces the following Auctions:

Auction No.	Auction Title	Site Visit Date & Timing	Last Date for Collection of Auction Document	Bid Submission Closing	Auction Specification Fees
CCCRC/ AUC/004/ 2023	Leasing Ground Floor Coffee Shop	19/11/2023 10:00 AM <u>Meeting Point:</u> SQCCRC Main Lobby	23/11/2023	30/11/2023	No fees
CCCRC/ AUC/005/ 2023	Leasing First Floor Coffee Shop	19/11/2023 12:00 PM <u>Meeting Point:</u> SQCCRC Main Lobby	23/11/2023	30/11/2023	No fees

Qualified companies interested in participating in this Auction shall collect the Auction specifications from the date of this advertisement from the following address:

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre – Purchase Department.

Biddings that meet the above requirement should be submitted (Hardcopy & Softcopy) in a sealed envelope by an Omani National from your company addressed to the head of Purchase Committee in the tender box.

Please note:

- Bids received after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, will not be considered.
- Queries/clarifications should be submitted immediately, but not later than Two weeks before the date of tender submission.
- For Queries you may Contact via e-mail: purchase@ccrc.gov.om



Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

Announcement of an International Tender

Tender No.	190/2023/ MHT/HQ-39 International Tender	Tender Name	Appointing a company specialized in Construction, Installation, Storage and Disassembly of Fair Stands at International Travel Trade Shows (2024-2026)
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)		292 RO	
Tender Document Sales End Date		26/11/2023	
Last Date for Bid Submission		18/12/2023	
Grade		International	
E-Tendering Portal		https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om	

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Bids are submitted that fulfill the technical conditions and specifications, accompanied by electronic tender bond from a local or International bank registered in Oman not less than (1%) of the bid value, valid for (90) days from the date of its submission.
 - The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids.
- The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
	For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om or 24402200
For further information	Email : sotic@mht.gov.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085



Türkiye presses Blinken for ‘immediate’ ceasefire in Mideast



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken walks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, after their meeting, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ankara, Türkiye. – Reuters

ANKARA: Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Monday pressed visiting US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to support an “immediate” ceasefire in the Mideast war, a Turkish diplomatic source said.

“Minister Fidan requested an immediate ceasefire in Gaza,” the source said, adding that the sides agreed “on the need to prevent civilians from being harmed in Gaza”.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday that Washington was working “very aggressively” to dramatically expand the amount of aid reaching trapped civilians in Gaza.

The top US diplomat held 2.5 hours of one-on-one talks with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan focused on soothing the anger at both Israel and the West.

Nato member Türkiye has been an increasingly vocal critic of the way Israel has been pursuing its month-long offensive against Palestinians.

Blinken told reporters after the meeting that Washington was aware of “the deep concern” in Türkiye “for the terrible toll” in Gaza.

“We are working, as I said, very aggressively on getting more humanitarian assistance into Gaza and we have very concrete ways of doing that,” Blinken said before boarding a plane for Japan.

“I think we will see in the days ahead that the assistance can expand in significant ways,” he added without providing details.

Ankara has a muscular foreign policy and stakes in conflicts across the Middle East that occasionally fail to align with those of Washington or other Nato allies. — AFP

Israel steps up war as Gaza d



This picture shows smoke rising from northern Gaza after Israeli strikes. – AFP

GAZA: Israeli forces pushed on with intense strikes in Gaza on Monday as the war neared one month and health ministry’s death toll approached 10,000 inside the besieged territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed no let up despite mounting international calls for a ceasefire.

Ground forces with tanks have flooded the northern half of

the Gaza Strip and tightened an encirclement of Gaza City, even as hundreds of thousands of civilians remained in the north.

The health ministry in Gaza Strip said on Monday the death toll from Israeli bombardment of the Palestinian territory had surpassed 10,000, nearly one month after the start of the war.

The toll of 10,022 deaths was announced in a press conference in

Gaza by health ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidreh.

“These are massacres! They destroyed three houses over the heads of their inhabitants — women and children,” one resident, Mahmoud Mechmech, said in Deir al-Balah in central Gaza.

“We have already taken 40 bodies out of the rubble,” he said as crowds prayed around corpses wrapped in white shrouds outside

a nearby hospital.

Israeli troops and Palestinians have engaged in fierce house-to-house combat in densely populated Gaza, where the war has sent 1.5 million people fleeing to other parts of the territory.

Netanyahu has remained firm on his position, vowing on Sunday that “there won’t be a ceasefire until the hostages are returned”.

Shortly before the latest barrage

UN leaders demand humanitarian pause

GAZA: UN agency leaders saying “enough is enough” demanded a humanitarian ceasefire on Monday nearly a month into Gaza’s war, as the enclave’s health authorities said dozens more people were killed in overnight attacks by Israeli fighter jets and troops.

“An entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship. This is unacceptable,” the UN chiefs said in a joint statement.

“We need an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. It’s been 30 days. Enough is enough. This must stop now.”

The 18 signatories include the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk, the head of the World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and UN aid chief Martin Griffiths.

In the Gaza Strip, the overnight bombardment from the air, ground and sea was described as one of the most intense since Israel launched its offensive.

Health officials in Gaza said more than 10,022 Palestinians



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike on a house, in Deir Al-Balah, in central Gaza Strip. – Reuters

have been killed in the war since October 7.

Israel, which says its forces

have encircled Gaza City, faces mounting pressure over civilian casualties. A US diplomatic blitz

in the region is intended to reduce risks of the conflict escalating.

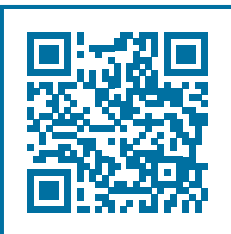
The health ministry in Gaza



A woman holds an injured toddler following the Israeli bombardment of Deir Balah in the central Gaza Strip. – AFP

Palestinians sift through the rubble of a building in Khan Yunis. – AFP





Deaths surpass 10,000



of strikes, internet and telephone lines were cut, the army said.

A US official said on Saturday at least 350,000 civilians remained in the worst-hit areas.

Deepening the desperation in the crowded territory, the sole border crossing into Gaza from Egypt has remained closed for days.

The evacuations of foreign passport holders were suspended

after Israel had refused to allow some wounded Palestinians to be evacuated.

The Rafah crossing between reopened on Monday to allow the evacuation of foreigners and dual nationals from the Palestinian territory being shelled by Israeli forces, the Palestinian government said.

The terminal was opened for three days on Wednesday,

Thursday and Friday last week to allow dozens of wounded Palestinians and hundreds of foreign passport-holders to cross before closing on Saturday and Sunday amid a dispute over the passage of ambulances.

Meanwhile, the war has exacerbated tensions in the West Bank, where more than 150 Palestinians have been killed in clashes with Israeli forces.. — AFP

se as strikes kill dozens



said dozens of people were killed by the Israeli air strikes in Gaza City and further south in Gaza

neighbourhoods such as Zawaida and Deir Al-Balah. Al-Aqsa TV quoted medical sources as saying

An entire population is besieged and under attack, denied access to the essentials for survival, bombed in their homes, shelters, hospitals and places of worship

UN CHIEFS JOINT STATEMENT

at least 75 Palestinians were killed and 106 hurt in the attacks.

Palestinian health officials said eight people were killed in an air strike overnight on Gaza City's Rantissi cancer hospital.

Israel said 31 soldiers had been killed since it began expanded ground operations in Gaza on October 27, fighting thousands of Palestinians who believe they can hold off Israel's advance from a warren of tunnels under the enclave. — AFP

Military operations in Gaza Strip visible on satellite images

Tracks of vehicles and shelling were visible on November 1st in the northern and central Gaza Strip, two zones of clashes where the Israeli army has crossed



South Africa recalls diplomats from Israel signalling concerns



Pro-Palestinian supporters gather during demonstration in front of the US Consulate in Johannesburg, South Africa. — AFP file photo

JOHANNESBURG: The South African government said on Monday it would recall all its diplomats from Israel to signal its concern over the situation in Gaza. Pretoria also said the position of the Israeli ambassador to the country was becoming "more and more untenable."

"The South African government has decided to withdraw all its diplomats in Tel Aviv for consultation," Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, a minister in the president's office, told a press briefing without providing further details.

Since October 7, Israel has relentlessly bombarded Gaza and sent in ground troops. The health ministry in the territory says more than 10,022 people have been killed, mainly civilians.

Pretoria has long been a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, with the ruling African National Congress (ANC) often linking it to its own struggle against apartheid.

Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor said the recall of the diplomats was "normal practice", adding the envoys would give a "full briefing" to the government, which will then decide whether it can be of assistance or if a "continued relationship is actually able to be sustained".

"We are... extremely concerned at the continued killing of children and innocent civilians in the Palestinian territories and we believe the nature of response by Israel has become one of collective punishment," Pandor told a press conference on Monday, as she hosted her Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba.

"We felt it important that we do signal the concern of South Africa while continuing to call for a comprehensive cessation (of hostilities)."

Earlier, Ntshavheni accused Israeli Ambassador Eliav Belotsercovsky, of making derogatory comments about South Africans, including members of government.

The foreign ministry had been instructed "to convey the South African government displeasure with the ambassador" through diplomatic channels, she said.

"We felt it important that we should call the ambassador in," added Pandor.

"There seems to be a strange practice among some ambassadors in South Africa, that they can just say what they like... I don't know if it's because it's an African country and they disrespect us but it's something that we should not tolerate."

Numerous pro-Palestine protests have taken place across South Africa over the past month.

President Cyril Ramaphosa is among several ANC officials who have participated sporting flags and keffiyeh scarves, in a show of solidarity with the Palestinians. — AFP

Do we always have to feel good?

How are you today? I asked my friend who has been finding it difficult to handle the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. It has been the case for most of the people, but especially for him being from the Middle East. One day he brought me the map and said, “Can you name the countries?”

And I started with the easier ones, which I am familiar with and then narrowed down to the places of conflict.

I was curious to know where she would be?

She, a social media influencer from Gaza has been giving regular updates on Instagram.

Two months ago, her posts on social media were about beautiful spots in Palestine, farms, sceneries and neighbouring countries. There was also a video of her winning an award for the content creators.

The social media influencer @wizard_bisan1 has been actively updating each day and she often signs off with “I will be back if I am alive.” Lately she has been breaking down and once she had explained how her family allotted a certain amount of water to each individual per day in order to save it. It is the small water bottles, and one day she had lost her share because a kid had come and taken it from her bag. She said it was understandable because water has become scarce in Gaza. She explained how the main source of water has now become sea. “We need water,” she pleaded.

Once again it is not a natural calamity that has come down on them, but a man-made conflict. It is unthinkable to see it happen in this era where the world has come out of a pandemic, is talking about climate change and measures to be taken before it is too late. The Artificial Intelligence is to make the world easier and efficient, while requiring the world to learn new skills. And there they



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

are children who are not even able to dream about their future, leave alone attending classes.

Children anywhere in the world often develop a fear of abandonment, but in the last few days we have seen the children cry for their mother and father with fear in their eyes. We have seen young children look out for their younger siblings.

But it is not just children the community as a whole could be developing a sense of abandonment. Without water and electricity expected mothers are hoping to delay their delivery.

Paramedics after rescuing babies try to cheer the little ones and when one baby smiled, the paramedic broke down in tears. What are these children going to do as they grow, if they are given that opportunity?

When we sit down for a coffee, we know that not too far away there are adults and children who have not had a warm meal or a cup of hot coffee, tea or milk. The face of a tearful girl emerges in mind who had said her mother was cooking when she was killed. The basic necessities are becoming unthinkable luxury. And we have begun to realise the value of what we have around us.

Whether we know it or not we have begun to be affected by the happenings across the region — the violence of war. The civilians of Gaza are now without human rights and children are without any basic rights which ought to have guaranteed them right to clean water, health facilities and education. Their classrooms are empty because majority of the students have bid goodbye forever.

If the world had been boasting about the recovery from Covid after fighting with an unseen force, where did that fear go when we see part of humanity belonging to a civilised society where negotiations and diplomacy are failing. In other words medical records will have to now rewrite on life expectancy.

ONCE AGAIN IT IS NOT A NATURAL CALAMITY THAT HAS COME DOWN ON THEM, BUT A MAN-MADE CONFLICT

CALL FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE



French skyscraper climber Alain Robert, known as the 'French Spiderman,' climbs the Coupole Total tower in Puteaux at La Defense business district, west of Paris, on Monday, to call for peace in the Middle East. – AFP

What is the Global South?

THE term “Global South” is in constant use nowadays. For example, some commentators warn that Israel’s incursion into Gaza is “alienating the Global South,” and we often hear that the “Global South” wants a ceasefire in Ukraine. But what do people mean when they use it?

Geographically, the term refers to the 32 countries below the equator (in the southern hemisphere), in contrast to the 54 countries that lie entirely north of it. Yet it is often misleadingly used as shorthand for a global majority, even though most of the global population is above the equator (as is most of the world’s landmass). For example, we often hear that India, the world’s most populous country, and China, the second most populous, are vying for leadership of the Global South, with both having recently held diplomatic conferences for that purpose. Yet both are in the northern hemisphere.

The term, then, is more of a political slogan than an accurate description of the world. In this sense, it seems to have gained traction as a euphemism to replace less acceptable terms. During the Cold War, countries that were not aligned with either the United States or the Soviet Union blocs were said to belong to the “Third World.” Non-aligned countries held their own conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955, and there are still 120 countries constituting a weak non-aligned movement today.

Nonetheless, with the Soviet Union’s demise in 1991, the idea of



Joseph S Nye, Jr

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IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ALTERNATIVE SHORTHAND, POLITICIANS AND JOURNALISTS MOST LIKELY WILL CONTINUE TO USE ‘GLOBAL SOUTH’ FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

a non-aligned Third World no longer made much sense. For a time, it became common to refer to “less-developed countries.” But that term had a pejorative ring to it, so people soon began to refer to “developing countries.”

Although that term has its own problems — not all low-income countries are developing, after all — it proved useful in the context of United Nations diplomacy. The Group of 77 (G77) now comprises 135 countries, and exists to promote their collective economic interests. Outside the UN context, however, there are too many differences between members for the organisation to serve a meaningful role.

Another fad term that has come into vogue is “emerging markets,” which refers to countries like India, Mexico, Russia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, Brazil, and a few others. In 2001, Jim O’Neill, then a managing director at Goldman Sachs, coined the acronym BRIC in a paper that identified Brazil, Russia, India, and China as emerging economies with high growth potential. Though he was offering investment analysis, some political leaders, including Russian President Vladimir Putin, seized on the grouping as a potential diplomatic platform to counter American global influence.

After a series of meetings, the first BRIC summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009.

With the addition of South Africa the following year, the group became the BRICS. Then, at the 15th BRICS summit this past August, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that six emerging-market countries (Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates) would join the bloc on January 1, 2024.

Ever since it became a conference-holding body, the BRICS has often been seen as representing the Global South. But, again, Brazil and South Africa (and now Argentina) are the only members from the Southern Hemisphere, and even as a political replacement

for the Third World, BRICS is rather limited conceptually and organisationally. While a few of its members are democracies, many have ongoing conflicts with each other.

The term’s main value is diplomatic. Though China is a middle-income country in the Northern Hemisphere that is competing with the US for global influence, it likes to describe itself as a developing country that plays an important leadership role within the Global South. Still, in conversations with Chinese academics on a recent trip to Beijing, I found differences among them. Some saw the term as a useful political tool; others

suggested that more accurate terminology would divide the world into high-, middle-, and low-income countries. But even then, not all low-income countries have the same interests or priorities. Somalia and Honduras, for example, have very different problems. For journalists and politicians, the high-, middle-, low-income terminology does not roll easily off the tongue or fit well in headlines. For want of an alternative shorthand, they will continue to rely on “Global South.” But anyone interested in a more accurate description of the world should be wary of such a misleading term.

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Geographically, the term refers to the 32 countries below the equator.

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Hamood stuns Fide player Sergey in fourth round



Ragavesh Velavaa of India



Anujin Bat Amgalan of Mongolia



Baldanjantsan Khuslenzaya of Mongolia



Fide President Arkady Dvorkovich makes the first move of fourth round.



Hamood al Busaidy of Oman

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Oman's Hamood al Busaidy upset Fide player Sergey in the fourth round of the 2023 World Amateur Chess Championship in Muscat late on Sunday. With the victory in U-2000 category, Hamood was placed fourth in the overall category rankings with 3.5 points, trailing by 0.5 point from the top positions.

The fourth round commenced with the first move made by Fide President Arkady Dvorkovich.

The World Amateur Chess, organised by the Oman Chess Committee in coordination with the world chess body Fide, saw 194 matches till now featuring the participation of 394 ranked players representing 64 countries. They competed across three distinct categories: 1700, 2000 and 2300, for

both men and women.

In the Open U-2300 category, Kazakhstan's Abilmansur shone as he won in the fourth round after a tough match against Maldives' Muhammed Shawaw. The match was distinguished by exceptional intellectual and tactical performance from both sides, but Abilmansur succeeded in securing the match points and emerging victorious. He topped the category with a total of four points.

Mongolia's Aldar was second in the same category with 3.5 points, as his match in the round ended in a draw with his team-mate Naranbold.

In the Open U-2000 category, Fide player Sebastian is leading with four points. He defeated Finland's Esa in the fourth round.

Afterward, Mongolia's Dashtogtokh came with the same point total. Behind them is Sri Lanka's Gamage,

with same four points.

In the Open U-1700 category, Mongolia's Batnyam topped the overall standings with four points. This came after he managed to outperform his Indian competitor Anshu KR, in a highly competitive and calm match, securing his lead in the category. Following closely behind, India's Deepak holds the second position with the same score, and Sweden's Imani is also tied for the same points.

NARANBOLD TOPS STANDINGS

In the women's category under 1700, Mongolia's Naranbold topped the standings with four points after her victory over her team-mate Baldanjantsan in a round game. Following closely behind is Mongolia's Bat-Amgalan, also with four points.

The competition for the championship in this

category is intensifying after this round.

Fide chief Arkady Dvorkovich expressed his positive impressions during his visit to the World Amateur Championship 2023.

He remarked that the event's venue provided excellent conditions for chess players, with spacious and comfortable facilities and good air quality. He commended the organisers for their dedicated efforts in ensuring top-notch amenities.

Furthermore, he highlighted the remarkable international participation, emphasising the high level of competition and the unique blend of sports and social aspects at the event. Dvorkovich concluded by praising the decision to host the championship in the region, foreseeing it as a positive step to encourage more participation in chess and expressing his excitement for future developments.

Seeb, Al Salam, Al Bashayer and Majees post wins



Saham and Majees players during the Oman First Division Volleyball League match.



Al Salam and Sohar players in action.

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Defending champions Seeb commenced their campaign in 2023-24 Oman's First Division Volleyball League with a 3-0 win over Bahla at Al Amal club. The eight teams club championship began on Friday with four thrilling matches. After an absence of two years, Al Salam bounced back to the league strongly as they registered a 3-1 victory against Sohar at Sohar Sports Complex while Majees stunned Saham 3-0 at the same venue. Al Bashayer captured a crucial 3-1 win against Oman Club.

The title owners Seeb managed to earn their first three points against Bahla after they won in all the three sets at: 25-13, 25-15 and 25-13. The runners-up of the previous edition, Oman Club suffered a 3-1 loss against Al Bashayer. Despite Oman Club leading in the opening set at 25-23, Al Bashayer managed to register strong comeback as they won the following set by 25-20. In the rest two sets, Al Bashayer spikers continued their strong show to end the deciding sets at 25-18 and 28-26.

In another thrilling match on Friday at Al Amal club for the opening round, Al Salam began their campaign on a right note with a strong start as they won against Sohar 3-1 with scores of 25-12, 25-21, 23-25 and 25-20. Al Salam's star Murad Jehan delivered top performance and assisted his team to the victory.

Majees, coached by Faisal al Maqbali, earned an essential victory against Saham by 3-0 with set scores of 25-20, 33-31 and 25-12.

In the second round of the league, Majees and Al Salam will look for their second win as they will meet each other in a tight match on Friday while Saham will look for their first win when they face Seeb at Al Amal club. Oman Club will host Sohar while Bahla will take on Al Bashayer at Nizwa Sports Complex.

AL HARTHY ROUNDS UP WEC SEASON FINALE

- HUGELY COMPETITIVE GTE AM CHALLENGE FROM OMAN RACING IN BAHRAIN
- AL HARTHY, DINAN AND EASTWOOD IMPRESS DURING FIA WEC SEASON FINALE
- ENGINE FAILURE DURING FINAL 20 MINUTES OF 8HR RACE COSTS POTENTIAL PODIUM
- OMAN'S AL HARTHY THANKS 'INCREDIBLE' SPONSORS AND FANS FOR 2023 SUPPORT

Oman's number one racing driver Ahmad Al Harthy watched hopes of a glorious conclusion to his debut year in the FIA World Endurance Championship disappear during the closing stages of the season finale in Bahrain on Saturday – engine failure ending a major podium push.

Al Harthy, a two-time GTE Am podium finisher in his maiden WEC campaign along with Oman Racing with TF Sport team-mates Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood, got things off to a very strong start in the eight-hour contest with an impressive opening stint.

Having qualified the No 25 Aston Martin Vantage GTE an excellent third fastest on Friday, 3rd November, the Omani started the final race of the season for the team and was as quick and competitive as always.

Although having the knock-back of needing to err on the side of caution at the start, in order to avoid a tangle between LMP2 prototype Hypercar runners ahead, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports



and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICSsupported racer Al Harthy recovered the lost ground very impressively with a faultless drive around the Sakhir track.

Dropping to eighth as a result of the delay, he charged back through and delivered a masterclass in overtaking to pass car after car in the GTE Am class. Storming back through toward the podium placings in the opening hour, after handing over the Aston Martin to Dinan the progress continued.

Back behind the wheel in hour three, Al Harthy ran a comfortable third and all looked well placed for a potential podium finish. Dinan returned to the car midway through the race, before Eastwood

got behind the wheel for a triple stint to conclude the Middle East encounter.

Holding fifth with over two hours to go, Eastwood was back into fourth with more than 90 minutes on the clock and within little more than 25 seconds of the podium. Pushing on, with half an hour to go the gap was down to 18 seconds and silverware looked a distinct prospect. Shortly after, though, the challenge came to a devastating end – the engine giving way and leading to instant retirement.

While, ultimately, a disappointing end to the FIA World Endurance Championship for Al Harthy and Oman Racing

with TF Sport, the drivers conclude a very impressive maiden season together in WEC a creditable fifth in the GTE Am driver standings with the squad also fifth in the team points table.

Ahmad al Harthy: “It’s a very difficult way to end the season, unfortunately we lost the engine in the last 20 minutes of the race – we were catching and the podium was there to be fair. Charlie was driving an amazing triple stint at the end to see us closing the gap to P3.

“I had a good start to the race but, unfortunately, the incident in front between some LMP2 and the Hypercars caused me to be cautious and we were down to P8 I think. The most important thing then was

for me to try and catch up, and I was really happy with the way I did that by overtaking so many cars in the fastest period of time I could to make sure we were chasing P2.

“We had an interesting strategy, which we had to run for the sake of the pace, but at the end of the day it’s all about driver development and my performance. I was really happy with how it went, we performed well and did the absolute best we could. I really want to thank the Omani Ambassador to Bahrain, Sayyid Faisal bin Hareb bin Hamad Al Busaidy, for coming to the race with us, all the sponsors from Oman who attended the final event of the season to support us and so many friends and family too - with

us and back home in Oman as well.

“The support this year has been unbelievable, it’s an historic year for Oman and an historic year for me. Being part of WEC for 2023 has allowed us to race in Le Mans for the 100th year of that race, it’s actually very emotional summing it all up. We competed at the maximum capacity in every race, and now we focus on what comes next. I’m very proud of all we’ve achieved together this year.”

Final 2023 FIA WEC GTE Am Driver Standings:
5. Ahmad al Harthy/Michael Dinan/Charlie Eastwood, 65pts
Final 2023 FIA WEC GTE Am Team Standings:
5. Oman Racing with TF Sport, 65pts

ISC National Day Open badminton 2023 comes to a grand conclusion



The winners and runners-up with the ISC officials and other dignitaries.

MUSCAT: Indian Social Club (ISC) Oman National Day open badminton tournament 2023 came to a grand conclusion on Saturday evening with the crowning of winners in the six categories.

Ishrath Habibulla, Managing Director of Majees Technical Services LLC, was the chief guest for the concluding ceremony. Percy Pereira, General Manager of Supa Sportsman LLC, was the guest of honour in presence of Babu Rajendran, Chairman of ISC, CM Sardar ISC Vice-Chairman and Shakeel KM, ISC General Secretary, and other dignitaries.

The two-day tournament witnessed participation of 150 players including Omani teams.

In the Omani National doubles category, Saleh al Mamari and Mehdi al Lawati beat Ali al Manthari and Yousuf al Lawati to clinch the title.

In the men's singles final, Jithesh Pandian edged out

Rajesh R 21-14, 19- 21, 21-11 to emerge champion.

Jithesh won a double when he combined with Vedanth Anand bagged the honours in the under-17 boys doubles. Jithesh-Vedanth duo won in straight sets 21-13, 21-12.

In the keenly fought mixed doubles final, Himesh Haridas and Christine Danthi edged out Harshpreet Singh and Kamya Sharma 21-19, 17-21, 21-16.

In the men's open doubles, Danish R and Riyas Sadiq were the victors after beating Vinod Abraham and Alvin Aloshyous 22-20, 21-17. In the men's veteran doubles, Vinod Abraham and Mohammed Haroos emerged champions with a 23-21, 21-13 win over Nadeem Dalwai and Jinesh in the final.

Mementoes were presented as a token of appreciation to the tournament referee Madhu Nambiar, tournament coordinator Vinod Kumar and support staff.

Majees Technical Services

LLC was the main and title sponsor while Supa Sportsman LLC was the support sponsor along with Oman Oasis and Kosmos Badminton Academy.

ISC chief Babu Rajendran mentioned in his speech that there will be more Omani participations in ISC's forthcoming sports events such as badminton, tennis, table tennis, volleyball and cricket.

“It was a fabulous tournament. I am happy with the positive response received from the players. Participation was not only limited to the capital city as we had received good number of entries from Suhar, Sur, Nizwa and Ibri. We will conduct our Annual Badminton Tournament in February 2024,” said Sanjit Kanojia, ISC Sports Secretary.

The winners and runner-ups were presented with trophies and cash prizes during the award ceremony. Special gifts were given to the lucky coupon winners from the spectators as well.

Seeb thump Dhofar, Ahli Sidab win

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

In a thrilling match within the Oman Basketball League for the 2023-2024 season, Seeb delivered an impressive performance, securing a convincing 109-53 win against Dhofar at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Basher on Sunday.

Throughout the four quarters, Al Seeb displayed exceptional teamwork and determination, putting pressure on Dhofar players and seizing control of the game. Key players like Prince Johnson, Mazen al Hadidi, Ahmed al Maamari, Ayman al Muharami, Al Waqas al Hinai and Ahmed al Sinani played crucial roles in scoring points and ultimately achieving a resounding victory.

The game kicked off with Mazen al Hadidi managing to score a three-pointer that motivated Seeb to press and confine Dhofar on their court. Johnson succeeded in scoring six points after three lay-ups. Dhofar responded by scoring two points through Mohamed al Muharami. Both teams continued their efforts, with each team adding a number of points, ending the first quarter with Seeb leading Dhofar 25-10.

In the second quarter, Seeb maintained their offensive advantage, adding 33 points, while Dhofar added 12 points. The first half ended with Seeb leading Dhofar 58-22.

The third quarter saw no



A Dhofar player tries to make a basket against Seeb.

change in the gameplay from the first half, as players added 25 points for Seeb, while Dhofar could only score 13 points. The third quarter ended with Seeb leading Dhofar 83-35.

In the fourth and final quarter, Seeb added two more points to their total, while Dhofar fought back with a total of 18 points. The match ultimately concluded with a decisive victory for Seeb, securing a final score of 109-53.

AHLI SIDAB EDGE
OMAN CLUB

In the second match, Ahli Sidab managed to win against

the Oman club by a four-point difference, with the match ending with a score of 68-64.

The game was characterised by fluctuations in performance, with both teams taking turns dominating the four quarters and sharing the results, with a relative advantage in some periods for Ahli Sidab, thanks to the standout performances of Hamiar al Hasani, who scored 29 points, Will Jalilati (14 points) and Walid al Hattali, who scored seven points. On the other hand, Fahad al Ajmi scored 11 points and Haitham Bani Orabah scored eight points for Oman Club.



Bangladesh's Najmul Hossain Shanto and Shakib Al Hasan takes a run against Sri Lanka in New Delhi. – Reuters

Shakib leads Bangladesh to win after ‘timed out’ drama

NEW DELHI: Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan triggered a debate on the spirit of cricket before smashing a rapid 82 in their three-wicket victory against 1996 champions Sri Lanka, who were eliminated from the 50-overs World Cup on Monday.

The all-rounder collaborated in a 169-run stand with Najmul Hossain Shanto (90) to help Bangladesh chase down a 280-run victory target in 41.1 overs.

Charith Asalanka’s 108 underpinned Sri Lanka’s 279 all out after they were put into bat by Shakib, who was in the eye of a storm on an eventful day.

It was Shakib’s appeal that led to Sri Lanka’s Angelo Mathews becoming the first player to be ‘timed out’ in an international match. Put into bat, Sri Lanka lost Kusal Perera in the first over when Bangladesh wicketkeeper Mushfiquir Rahim flew to his left to grab a one-handed blinder in front of the first slip. Pathum Nissanka (41) and Sadeera Samarawickrama (41) could not convert the starts but Asalanka smashed five sixes and six fours in his second ODI century to help Sri Lanka post a competitive total.

Nearly 20,000 spectators witnessed drama at the halfway stage of the Sri Lankan innings when Mathews walked out to bat after Samarawickrama’s exit.

After the chinstrap of his helmet broke, Mathews waited for a new helmet to arrive before facing Shakib, but was adjudged ‘timed out’ after failing to take strike within the stipulated two minutes. Bangladesh lost both

openers inside seven overs but Shakib and Shanto put their chase back on track.

Mathews denied Shakib a hundred, and tapped his wrist in a send-off as if to tell the Bangladesh captain it was his time to go.

Shanto missed out on a hundred too but Sri Lanka still succumbed to their sixth defeat in eight matches. Following the team’s poor performance in the tournament, the entire Sri Lankan board was sacked and replaced with an interim committee earlier on Monday. The prevailing filthy air in New Delhi was the talking point ahead of the match between the Asian sides.

The air quality index (AQI) near the Arun Jaitley Stadium read close to 400 on Monday noon triggering speculation that the match might get delayed if not cancelled altogether.

An AQI of 0-50 is considered good while anything between 400-500 affects healthy people and is considered a danger to those with existing diseases.

Both teams had cancelled a training session in the buildup, and on Sunday, asthmatic Bangladesh cricketers remained indoors while Sri Lankan players wore masks. Organisers installed air purifiers in the players’ dressing rooms while water sprinklers were used to reduce pollutants in the air.

New Delhi has stood on top of a real-time list of the world’s most polluted cities compiled by Swiss group, forcing the local government to extend the closure of primary schools until November 10. — Reuters

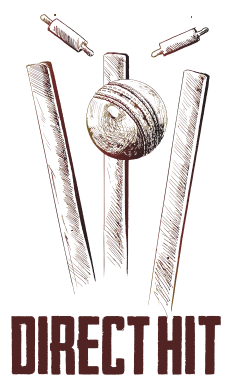
For the first time, Mathews given ‘timed out’

The World Cup is at its last week of the league stage and there are two important things at stake, one is to obviously qualify for the semifinals where two spots are still vacant, and the other is qualification for the Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. And if this World Cup did not have much spice except hosts India dominating all teams completely, Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan added by appealing against Angelo Mathews who was late in taking strike at the fall of Sri Lanka’s fourth wicket and his appeal was upheld and for the first time in the history of cricket and Mathews was given timed out.

What is timed out? Law 40.1 states that after the fall of a wicket or the retirement of a batter, the incoming batter must be ready to receive the ball or for the other batter to be



ANIS SAJAN



DIRECT HIT

ready to receive the next ball within 2 minutes of the dismissal of the previous better or retirement. If this requirement is not met, the incoming batter will be given out, which is called as ‘timed out’. We all know the rivalry which has been existing between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh which started in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka four years back but that it would take this turn today nobody expected it as both teams were almost knocked out of the World Cup with Sri Lanka having won two games and Bangladesh having won just one game.

At fall of the fourth Sri Lankan wicket, Angelo Mathews was already on the pitch and his final preparation before taking strike against Shakib al Hassan, his helmet strap broke just as he was tightening around the chin. Mathews called in for a replacement helmet which was bought in by the

12th man Chamika Karunaratne. The Bangladeshi skipper Shakib had a word with the umpire Marais Erasmus which was an appeal that Mathews was not ready to take strike. The umpire asked Shakib, ‘Are you serious, at which Shakib said he was, the umpire again asked are you serious, Shakib said yes again and within the laws of the game Mathews was given out, which in cricketing laws is ‘timed out’.

The umpire declared Angelo out as he was not ready to take strike within the stipulated time. Well, this sounds absurd, but this is what actually happened. Mathews did plead his cause requesting both the umpire and the Bangladeshi captain but to no respite. He stormed back to the pavilion throwing his bat and gear in anger.

The drama was not to end there. Due to the dew, the ball had become wet like a soap bar and the frustrated Sri Lankan team wanted the ball to be

changed and all the Lankan players charged on to the umpire for a ball change, but it did not happen. But finally, when Mathews got the wicket of Shakib, he pointed at his wrist and gave a send-off to Shakib saying it’s time to go.

Cricket is known to be a gentlemen’s game and if getting player out doing a ‘Mankad’ was not enough, today Mathews given out as ‘timed out’ gave a sorry message to youngsters watching the game. Yes, there are rules in cricket, and it needs to be followed but appealing for a wicket for him being late left a sour taste. I feel it was against the spirit of the game even though the fielding team was running late in completing the overs. This World Cup has seen some terrific cricket specially from Team India and so many players, but this is the last thing one wanted to see, a batsman given timed out.

business

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Oman’s largest solar PV project inaugurated

NASRULAH AL AJMI
SUR, NOV 6

Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, inaugurated the 17-megawatt peak (MWp) solar photovoltaic (PV) farm producing green energy to power the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant in Sur.

It is the largest solar system for a desalination plant in Oman with an annual capacity of over 32,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) of green electricity which will cover 100% of the desalination plant’s consumption over the daylight period.



Solar PV farm powering the desalination plant in Sur.

Developed by Veolia in partnership with TotalEnergies, the plant is a significant milestone towards decarbonisation efforts in the region as it will help cut about 27,200 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year, equivalent to the emissions generated by approximately 6,000 internal combustion engine-powered vehicles over the same period.

The solar plant’s construction began in August 2022, and testing was conducted from March 30, 2023 to April 15, 2023. The commercial operation was achieved on April 16, 2023, and

the lease agreement for the solar farm operation is until March 31, 2036.

Speaking during the event, Al Aufi said: “I am glad to witness the official inauguration of this crucial solar photovoltaic facility at the Sharqiyah Desalination Plant, which serves over 600,000 inhabitants of the Sharqiyah Governorate with clean drinking water. The solar plant aligns well with global efforts towards energy

transition for a net-zero world.

It will also be one of the significant contributors to water security in Oman and our National Energy Strategy, which aims to derive 30% of electricity from renewable sources by 2030 — one of the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

I commend Veolia, its partners, and everyone involved in the development of this plant for their unwavering commitment and

hard work in bringing this project to fruition.” Philippe Bourdeaux, Vice President of Veolia, Near & Middle East of Veolia, said: “We are delighted to see that our solar project has started serving its mission.

This achievement would not have been possible without the support of the leadership in the Sultanate of Oman, particularly the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

We express our gratitude to them and our private sector partners for helping us join local efforts towards energy transition and decarbonisation.

Veolia aims to be the world leader in ecological transformation.

Water and renewable energy are therefore areas of major interest for the Group, and given the mounting issues related to climate change, we have developed real expertise in reducing carbon emissions in our operations and projects.

In this journey, renewables play an important role in providing green energy while also ensuring an uninterrupted supply of vital resources for human consumption such as

drinking water.”

The inauguration was attended by Veolia’s and Total Energies senior management and Group’s partners including government officials and representatives of the Sharqiyah Desalination Company SAOG (SDC) and the Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (NPWP).

Commenting on the occasion, Denis Le Maout, Chairman of the Board of Sharqiyah Desalination Company SAOG, said: “With desalination capacity of 131,837 cubic metres per day (m3/day), producing over 400 million m3 of water since 2007, our desalination plant in Sur is among the most important projects in the Sultanate and one of the lifelines for delivering drinking water for local communities, while reducing the extraction of already scarce freshwater resources.

As the conventional desalination process comes at a heavy price for both the environment and the economy, our efforts have been to tap the potential of innovative technologies, including renewable energy to positively impact the environment, create economic opportunities and contribute to the community’s overall welfare.”

For his part, Ahmed bin Salim al Abri, acting CEO of Nama Power and Water Procurement Company (PWP), stated: “NPWP is collaborating with water desalination plants to support them in transitioning to the use of renewable energy for desalination purposes.

This effort aligns with Oman’s objectives to reach 30% of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2030 and 40% by 2040.

NPWP congratulate Sharqiyah Desalination Company for the inauguration of the solar farm which will ensure water supply to North and South Al Sharqiyah Governorates using renewable energy.”

Veolia has worked in the Middle East for over 40 years, including over 15 years in Oman, where it operates in Muscat, Sur, Duqm, Nizwa, Suhar, Barka, Salalah, Rima and Khazzan.

The Sultanate of Oman is one of Veolia’s most essential and strategic locations, where it has developed and delivered a wide range of innovative, cost-effective, and sustainable solutions while contributing to Oman’s objectives for a green and circular economy.

Oman Cement unveils initiatives to boost capacity

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Oman Cement has outlined plans to raise the capacity and overall efficiency of its complex at Misfah in Muscat Governorate through a number of modernisation and decarbonisation initiatives.

Majority-owned by Hong Kong-based Huaxin International Holdings Limited through its wholly-owned subsidiary, the Mauritius-based Abra Holdings Limited, publicly-listed Oman Cement reported a net profit after tax of RO 7.355 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2023, which was 58.26 per cent higher than net earnings of RO 4.638 million for the corresponding period of 2022.

“The company has continued its efforts to overcome the adverse impact of rise in prices of some major elements of cost, and extensive efforts have been made in this direction in the current period also with better cost management and sustained efforts to improve productivity,” said Li Yeqing, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Oman Cement.

Writing in the latest Directors’ Report, Yeqing noted that the industry continues to be buffeted by fierce market competition,



Modernisation efforts will help boost Oman Cement’s clinker production capacity.

particularly from players in the neighbourhood.

“Cement market in Oman has continued to witness intense price competition plus supply chain constraints between major suppliers, which include local cement companies as well as cement manufacturers from neighbouring countries.

The company has continued with its dynamic pricing policy and adjusted the pricing responsive to the market.

The company continues to innovate varieties of product during the period coupled with its high emphasis on quality and cost reduction while maintaining

highest quality standards. Market demand in rest of year 2023 is expected to be stable,” he stated.

As part of its ongoing modernisation and capacity expansion efforts, Oman Cement is proceeding with the planned upgrade of the capacity of Line 3 of its existing plant.

The debottlenecking and enhancement project will lift the clinker production of Line 3 from 4,000 tonnes per day (tpd) to 6,000 tpd, while also boosting clinker quality, according to the CEO.

Additionally, the company has decided to install a new cement mill (CM 6) with a packing and truck loading facility to meet increased cement demand. Also approved for implementation is a fly-ash storage and handling system designed to support the production of fly-ash oil well cement, as well as improve dust emission reduction.

However, plans for the establishment of a 5,000 tpd-capacity cement plant at the Special Economic Zone in Duqm are “under consideration”, the Chairman said.

The proposed project, dubbed ‘Al Sahawa’ has “encountered issues in supply of gas”, according to the company.”

New initiative to streamline cargo flows in SEZs and free zones of Oman

BUSINESS REPORT
MUSCAT, NOV 6

A workshop organised by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) focused on reviewing the results of an advisory study for the project aimed at establishing a system to track the movement of goods, shipments, and customs clearance procedures in special economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities across the Sultanate of Oman.

The primary objective of this study is to implement advanced digital solutions and streamlined processes that enhance the management of goods movement and customs clearance in line with international best practices and globally applicable operational standards.

The workshop was attended by Eng Ahmed bin Hassan al Dheeb, Vice President — OPAZ, along with representatives from the Royal Oman Police Customs, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and other officials responsible for areas under the Authority’s supervision.

During the workshop, the existing procedures for managing goods and shipments, as well as the proposed modern procedures outlined in the advisory results of the freight management and customs procedures project,



The objective is to achieve its vision for the areas under its supervision, making them an ideal destination for investment by developing and organising these areas while providing an attractive and sustainable investment environment.

were examined. The evaluation included an assessment of the associated challenges and the formulation of solutions aimed at improving the efficiency of goods movement between ports, customs zones, and areas overseen by the Authority.

The ultimate goal is to reduce financial and administrative burdens associated with conventional methods, regulate the customs movement of goods within Oman, establish a comprehensive database for monitoring trade volume, and implement other effective solutions.

This advisory study was conducted by the Authority in collaboration with Crimson Logic to document existing procedures for goods management and

shipping and re-engineer them.

The approach emphasises compliance with established procedures, integration with national digital platforms, and optimising their utility.

The study’s implementation stages involved site visits, coordination meetings with relevant authorities, including ROP Customs, an assessment of customs procedures, and a review of related regulations within various regions and other relevant entities.

The Authority is committed to finalising the project’s requirements in collaboration with the concerned authorities.

OPAZ is actively working on its digital transformation programme to enhance the investment environment.

Renaissance Services, Omantel and Marafiq lead way at Oman Golf League debut

MUSCAT: The first round of the Oman Golf Corporate League teed off at Al Mouj Golf, with Renaissance Services emerging as the leaders with 97 points. Marafiq closely followed with 97 points, while Omantel secured third place with 94 points. This thrilling event showcased a remarkable lineup of teams representing diverse industries, including banking, oil and gas, telecommunications, and logistics. The golf course witnessed spectacular moments, including a hole-in-one, and individual performances that shone brightly in the Oman Golf Corporate League. Alistair Stock from Marafiq won the closest-to-pin award, while Ahmed Al Wahaibi from Medco LLC claimed the longest drive award on hole 15. Abhishek Kalla from Europcar Oman solidified his position at the top by delivering the best overall individual performance



Marafiq's Alistair Stock Claims Closest-to-Pin Award, and Ahmed al Wahaibi from Medco LLC Wins Longest Drive on Hole 15

with a remarkable 39 stableford points. The tournament will span five months, with teams from over 14 leading businesses in Oman competing over 18 holes each month at the Sultanate of Oman's inaugural links-style course. This not only showcases the corporate world's golfing talent but also brings together people from various industries. Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, expressed his delight, stating, "We were

thrilled with the participation and results of the inaugural round of the Oman Golf League, an extraordinary event that is destined to set a standard for golfing events in Oman. Our aim was to facilitate connections between individuals and companies through an unparalleled golfing experience. Congratulations to this month's champions. I eagerly anticipate the upcoming rounds at our premier golfing destination." The second round is scheduled for November 17, with Al Mouj Golf's fairways ready for corporations to engage in friendly competition. This offers numerous networking opportunities and access to Al Mouj Muscat's exceptional amenities, including a vibrant dining and retail district and five-star stay-and-play options with the development's seven luxury hotels.



signed a MoU for supporting the omani women's association.

OQ supports Women's Association in Bukha

MUSCAT: OQ, the global integrated energy group represented by OQ Exploration and Production, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for supporting the Omani Women's Association at the Wilayat of Bukha in Musandam Governorate. This step was taken with the objective of empowering members of the association and honing their skills in many fields that serve the society as part of OQ's community partnership initiative and its social investment programme adopted to enhance the role played by Omani women in the society. The MoU was signed by Shaikh Dr Saif bin Mohammed al Ghaithi, Wali of Bukha and Head of the Social Development Committee in the Wilayat; and Eng Ahmed bin Said al Azkawi, Chief Executive of Upstream at OQ Group.

The pact aims to enhance the roles played by managers of the Omani Women's Association at the Wilayat of Bukha and enabling the association to perform its role in serving the society in a better way by providing its members with skills that qualify them to perform many tasks carried out by the association. On this occasion, Shaikh Mohammed al Ghaithi stated: "We appreciate the efforts exerted by OQ in the field of community service as part of its social investment programmes. OQ's contribution in Musandam Governorate through this programme is clear and appreciated. We signed this MoU to support the Omani Women's Association at the Wilayat of Bukha in aspects that could enhance the skills of the association's members and enable them to serve the society in the Wilayat."

MBPS graduates 26 Omani youth as drilling engineers

MUSCAT: Mohammed Al Barwani Petroleum Services (MBPS) has recently celebrated the graduation of 26 Omani Drilling Fluids Engineers who are now well-prepared to step into the field as highly sought-after Drilling Fluids Engineers in Oman's Energy industry. This achievement follows 18 months of comprehensive theoretical and practical training. The 26 graduates are set to be integrated into MBPS's ongoing service contracts, catering to four different clients across the oil fields in northern and southern Oman. This initiative is part of MBPS's commitment to the In-Country Value (ICV) programme, aimed at increasing the number of qualified local professionals ready to contribute to this vital industry. Mr Ahmed al Khodhouri, GM of Drilling Fluids at MBPS, expressed, "This marks the third successful round of the programme, and we've now graduated a total of 56 engineers

since its inception in 2015. The programme is a well-rounded combination of theory classes held at our MBTi centre in Athaiba and hands-on experience gained in the field. Drilling fluids play a crucial role in the industry, and the demand for skilled drilling fluid engineers is ever-present. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the graduates on this significant accomplishment and wish them great success as exceptional professionals." Mr Abdulraouf al Barwani, Acting Training Manager at MBTi, explained, "This programme ensures that engineers are fully equipped to thrive in the actual work environment as future Drilling Fluids Engineers. It encompasses a diverse range of courses related to drilling fluids, including oilfield health, safety, and environment (HSE) regulations, industry-specific protocol and terminology, and various engineering skills required for drilling and drilling fluid operations. Additionally,



26 Omani Drilling Fluids Engineers who are now well-prepared to step into the field as highly sought-after Drilling Fluids Engineers in Oman's Energy industry

it provides practical skills, procedures, and tests related to drilling fluid. The programme also offers courses in identifying drilling challenges and fluid-related issues, equipping graduates with the knowledge and skills to address these challenges effectively. In essence, it's a well-balanced blend of theoretical knowledge and practical expertise.

Lincoln Navigator now with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Own the Lincoln Navigator and enjoy exclusive benefits, including 5 Years / 100,000 km of service and 1st-year registration. (Conditions apply. For more details, visit the Arabian Car Marketing showroom in Wattayah). The Lincoln Navigator, with its spacious body and impressive interior, is the ideal luxury SUV for large families. Its stylish design and a range of advanced features and technologies make it the perfect companion for long journeys with your loved ones. The Navigator is equipped with a twin-turbo V6, 3.5L engine featuring auto start-stop technology, delivering an exhilarating 440 horsepower through a 10-speed automatic transmission with

SelectShift paddle activation. Its attractive profile is enhanced by adaptive pixel projector LED headlamps with signature lighting, predictive curve lighting, and sign-based lighting. Adding to its allure are the panoramic vista roof with a power sunshade and Lincoln Embrace, which includes LED-illuminated exterior door handle pockets, the Lincoln approach detection system, an illuminated star on the grille, and Lincoln signature lighting with fade on/off. For a comfortable and relaxing journey, the Navigator offers 1st-row passenger seat memory, a 3rd-row PowerFold 60/40 split bench seat with power recline, a 12" configurable LCD instrument cluster, Head-up Display, ambient LED lighting, enhanced active noise control, a wireless charging pad, and more.

Enhancing the interior experience is the available Revel Ultima 3D audio system with 28 speakers designed to complement the Navigator's interior design and acoustics. The standard SYNC 4 system allows clients to manage audio, phone, navigation, and more from the vehicle's touchscreen or steering wheel-mounted controls. The Navigator makes every drive exceptional with a range of features, including adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go and lane centring assist, auto high-beam headlamps, blind spot information system with cross-traffic alert and trailer coverage, evasive steering assist, lane-keeping system with blind-spot assist, which includes lane-keeping aid, lane-keeping alert, a driver alert system, and pre-collision assist.



Lincoln Navigator

The Navigator is also equipped with driver and front passenger dual-stage front airbags, front seat side airbags, safety canopy side-curtain airbags with a rollover sensor, AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control), MyKey technology, and a SecuriCode invisible keypad.



FAKHAMA TOUCH WINS IN DIGITAL ECONOMY

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

In a recent achievement that highlights the growing significance of digital innovation, Fakhama Touch, an Omani tech company, has been honoured with the 2023 Youth Excellence Award in the field of digital economy.

The award, presented by His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, recognises the company's outstanding contributions to digital innovation in Oman.

Fakhama Touch, operating under the trademark "C Joneal," emerged as the winner of this prestigious award in the 4th edition of the Youth Excellence Award. The award ceremony celebrated the achievements of Omani youth across various categories and sectors.

The company's founder, Prof Al Zahraa bint Rashid al Fahdiyah, shared insights into their journey to winning this coveted award.

She described how their participation initially stemmed from a broader initiative, the "Digital Youth Initiative," which was initiated in 2022.

The primary goal of this initiative is to foster a culture of embracing emerging technologies and entrepreneurship among the new generation.

Prof Al Zahra explained how the "Digital Youth" programme selects students from universities and colleges, as well as recent graduates, and provides them with hands-on training through a dedicated "Tech Lab."

This training covers a range of cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence and virtual reality, with a focus on raising the tech awareness of the participants and expanding their entrepreneurial horizons. The initiative also targets enabling young Omanis to invest their skills and experiences in serving the community and driving advancements in technology.

To make this initiative a



Fakhama Touch has been honoured with the 2023 Youth Excellence Award.

reality, Fakhama Touch invested in training its employees, and eventually young Omanis, at specialised institutes both within and outside Oman.

This comprehensive training equipped the participants with the necessary skills to use state-of-the-art technologies effectively.

However, one of the major challenges was procuring the resources required for the initiative, particularly the high costs associated with obtaining the latest technologies and devices. With the support of their family, Fakhama Touch began with a modest number of devices, such as virtual reality headsets and modern screens.

Over time, they expanded their tech capabilities to include robotics and holograms, continuously striving to stay on the cutting edge of technological advancements.

The "New Generation Tech Center" project, under the umbrella of Fakhama Touch, plays a significant role in equipping the youth with the skills and tools necessary to build a responsible, innovative, and creative generation.

In the rapidly evolving world of technology, initiatives like this are crucial to preparing the younger generation for the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.

Oil rises by 1% as Saudi Arabia and Russia stick to cuts

LONDON: Oil prices rose on Monday after top exporters Saudi Arabia and Russia reaffirmed their commitment to extra voluntary oil supply cuts until the end of the year.

Brent crude futures rose by \$1.03, or 1.21 per cent, to reach \$85.92 a barrel by 08:34 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$81.58 a barrel, up by \$1.07, or 1.33 per cent.

Oil rebounded on Monday after Brent and WTI futures each experienced around a 6 per cent loss in the week ending November 3.

Saudi Arabia confirmed on Sunday that it would continue its additional voluntary cut of 1 million barrels per day (bpd) in December to maintain output at around 9 million bpd, as stated by a source at the Ministry of Energy.

Russia also announced that it would continue its additional voluntary supply cut of 300,000

bpd from its crude oil and petroleum product exports until the end of December. ING analysts, in a note, mentioned that the oil market is expected to be in surplus in the first quarter of next year, "which may be enough to convince the Saudis and Russians to continue with cuts."

However, price gains could have been capped by a decrease in crude oil throughputs at Chinese refineries. Refinery runs are decreasing from record levels in the third quarter due to eroding profit margins and a shortage of export quotas until the end of the year, according to sources cited by Reuters.

PVM analyst Tamas Varga noted, "The reaction to the Saudi/Russian decision over the weekend to extend their respective output and exports cuts throughout December has been, to some extent, countered



View of fuel station pumps at Poland's largest refiner Orlen in Bialystok, Poland

by the anticipated fall in China's refinery throughput this month."

Investors will be keeping an eye on more economic data from

China after the world's second-largest oil consumer released disappointing October factory data last week. — **Reuters**

Indonesia's economy sees slowest growth in two years

JAKARTA: Indonesia's economy grew at its slowest pace in two years in the third quarter due to a decline in exports caused by softer commodity prices, according to data released on Monday.

The 4.94 per cent year-on-year expansion fell below the forecasts in a Bloomberg survey.

However, Amalia Adininggar Widyasanti, head of the Central Statistics Bureau (BPS), pointed out that this figure still exceeded the global average.

"In the midst of a slowing global economy, climate change, and decreasing commodity prices, Indonesia's economic



A woman picks up a bucket with a Marlin fish at a beach in Kedonganan near Denpasar on Indonesia's resort island of Bali on November 4, 2023. (Photo by SONNY TUMBELAKA / AFP)

resilience is reflected in the 4.94 per cent economic growth," Widyasanti stated during a news conference on Monday.

Exports contracted by 4.26 per cent, marking the most significant drop since the end of 2020, primarily due to reduced demand for commodities, including coal and palm oil.

Bloomberg reports that overseas shipments have shrunk for six of the past seven months.

Last month, Indonesia unexpectedly raised interest rates by 25 basis points to six per cent to protect the rupiah against increasing global economic uncertainty. — **AFP**

MENA tourism likely to be hit by Gaza War

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 6

The human tragedy unfolding in Gaza could have widespread implications for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

An escalation could open up additional fronts in the region, according to a report by S&P Global Ratings.

In the report, S&P Global Ratings says that, when looking solely at the impact on tourism, it believes Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan are most exposed, due to their geographic proximity and the potential for some aspects of the conflict to expand across their borders.

"Our view stems from the results of our scenario analysis, in which we tested the financial impact of a 10%, 30%, or 70% loss in tourism receipts on each country.

Last year, tourism contributed 26% of Lebanon's current account receipts.

For Jordan and Egypt, the figure was 21% and 12%, and for Israel, 3%," it stated.

Tourism is just one sector facing risks.

Likely impacts of the war include physical destruction,



S&P Global Ratings says that, when looking solely at the impact on tourism it believes Lebanon, Egypt, and Jordan are most exposed.

an outflow of portfolio and nonresident deposits, and a reduction in foreign direct investment. Increased protests across MENA could also exacerbate social instability and political risks.

What's more, further deepening of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza or a serious escalation in the West Bank could lead to a new wave of refugee flows that would burden economies in the region.

"As we saw in Jordan (and

Lebanon following the Syrian refugee crisis), this could undermine fiscal and credit metrics.

A prolonged conflict may lead to a significant loss of GDP and foreign exchange receipts across MENA," the ratings agency noted.

The tourism sector is a big employer and an important source of foreign currency in many MENA countries.

Tourism sectors globally have been recovering robustly in 2023,

particularly in the Middle East. According to the UN World Tourism Organization, the region received 20% more tourists in the first seven months of this year than in the same period in 2019.

This makes MENA the only region, where tourism has returned to and exceeded pre-pandemic levels, supporting economic growth and the economies' current account positions.

The consequences of war put this progress at risk, it added.

Asian markets surge as hopes rise for rate cuts

SYDNEY: Asian shares rallied for a fourth consecutive session on Monday after markets factored in earlier rate cuts in the United States and Europe, bullish wagers that will be tested by a swarm of central bank speakers this week.

Battered bond markets also enjoyed a welcome recovery as a benign US payrolls report and upbeat productivity numbers suggested the labour market was cooling enough to obviate the need for further rate increases from the Federal Reserve.

"This year's better-than-expected US supply-side performance raises hopes for a soft landing," said Bruce Kasman, head of economic research at JPMorgan.

"By encouraging disinflation, strong productivity and labour supply gains might allow for job growth and low inflation to coexist," he added.

"This, in turn, would open the path for early Fed easing."

Futures markets swung to imply a 90 per cent chance the Fed was done raising rates, and an 86 per cent chance the first policy easing would come as soon as June.

Markets also imply about

an 80 per cent probability the European Central Bank will cut rates by April, while the Bank of England is seen easing in August.

Central bankers have their own chance to weigh in on this dovish outlook, with at least nine Fed members speaking this week, including Chair Jerome Powell.

Also on the docket are speakers from the Bank of England and the European Central Bank.

An outlier is Australia's central bank, which is likely to resume raising rates at a policy meeting on Tuesday as inflation stays stubbornly high.

The Bank of Japan is also on the road to tightening, albeit at a glacial pace.

The head of the central bank on Monday said they were closer to achieving their inflation target, but it was still not enough to end ultra-loose policy.

Elsewhere, hopes for lower borrowing costs helped MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan gain 2.0 per cent, having already rallied 2.8 per cent last week and moving away from one-year lows.

— **Reuters**

Building effective compliance culture



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Building a robust culture of compliance within an organisation is not just a prudent choice; it is a fundamental necessity for safeguarding its legal and ethical integrity, as well as its reputation and long-term success.

Such a culture serves as a sturdy foundation, ensuring consistent adherence to laws and regulations while upholding high ethical standards. Beyond mitigating the risk of legal issues, fines, and penalties, it fosters a sense of trust and integrity within the organisation, radiating outwards to external stakeholders.

In certain industries, this culture of compliance can even be a potent competitive advantage, signalling a commitment to sustainability and trustworthiness.

Stakeholder involvement: Stakeholder involvement and engagement in the lawmaking process stand out as a powerful catalyst for enhanced compliance within a company.

This approach deepens the understanding of laws and regulatory requirements, cultivating a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders.

It not only allows for early issue identification but also paves the way for proactive solutions,

making the compliance journey smoother and more effective.

Moreover, the input from stakeholders, who often operate on the front lines of compliance, is invaluable in crafting regulations that are practical and responsive, resulting in a more successful compliance framework.

The tone set from the top: At the heart of this culture of compliance is the commitment and tone set by management at the highest level. It is a strategy that establish clear expectations, leading by example and ingraining adherence to laws, regulations, and ethical standards into the company's DNA.

The tone set from the top emphasises accountability, creating a culture where every individual is responsible for compliance.

This approach not only strengthens the organisation's ethical compass but also ensures that compliance is not just a checklist but a shared commitment that permeates the entire workforce.

Responsibility and accountability: An effective responsibility and accountability system are what fortify these compliance efforts.

By assigning distinct roles and responsibilities to employees and be well informed of what are the



A robust compliance system is not static; it must evolve to address the ever-changing regulatory landscape and emerging risks.

consequences of non-compliance.

This system brings clarity and transparency, ensuring that everyone comprehends their compliance duties.

This fosters a culture of openness and understanding, where employees are not just aware of the rules but actively engage in maintaining compliance.

A clear accountability system nurtures a commitment to regulatory adherence, fostering a proactive approach and facilitating continuous improvement in compliance processes.

Continuous improvement and adaptation: Simultaneously, continuous improvement

and adaptation are critical components of building an effective compliance culture within a company.

A robust compliance system is not static; it must evolve to address the ever-changing regulatory landscape and emerging risks. By consistently reviewing and enhancing compliance processes, organisations can stay ahead of new regulations and expectations.

This adaptability ensures that the compliance system remains relevant and responsive, reducing the likelihood of non-compliance and associated penalties.

Moreover, a culture of continuous improvement encourages employees to

proactively identify and report potential compliance issues, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability throughout the organisation.

As a result, the compliance system becomes a dynamic and ingrained part of the company's DNA, helping to safeguard its reputation and long-term success.

Monitoring and control system: To ensure this culture endures, an effective monitoring and control system is crucial.

This system offers real-time oversight, early issue detection, data-driven insights, and the ability to mitigate risks.

It collects valuable compliance data and automates alerts, while also promoting continuous improvement and accountability.

Most importantly, it underscores the company's commitment to compliance and reinforces the message that adherence to laws and regulations is non-negotiable. In conclusion, building a culture of compliance is not just a checkbox on a to-do list; it is the foundation upon which a company's legal and ethical integrity, reputation, and long-term success are built.

By cultivating this culture, organisations can not only minimise legal and ethical risks but also gain a competitive edge in an environment where trust and integrity are paramount.

The stunning resilience of emerging markets



Kenneth Rogoff, Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Harvard University and recipient of the 2011 Deutsche Bank Prize in Financial Economics

As finance ministers and central bankers convened in Marrakesh for the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings on October 9-15, they faced an extraordinary confluence of economic and geopolitical calamities: wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, a wave of defaults among low- and lower-middle-income economies, a real-estate-driven slump in China, and a surge in long-term global interest rates – all against the backdrop of a slowing and fracturing world economy.

But what surprised veteran analysts the most was the expected calamity that hasn't happened, at least not yet: an emerging-market debt crisis. Despite the significant challenges posed by soaring interest rates and the sharp appreciation of the US dollar, none of the large emerging markets – including Mexico, Brazil, Indonesia, Vietnam, South Africa, and even Türkiye – appears to be in debt distress, according to both the IMF and interest-rate spreads.

This outcome has left economists puzzled. When did these serial defaulters become bastions of economic resilience? Could this be merely the proverbial calm before the storm?

Several mitigating factors come to mind. First, although monetary policy is tight in the United States, fiscal policy is still extremely loose. The US is poised to run a \$1.7 trillion deficit in 2023, compared to roughly \$1.4 trillion in 2022. And, excluding some accounting irregularities related to President Joe Biden's student-

Contrary to many analysts' expectations, emerging markets have not spiralled into a debt crisis. This can be partly attributed to central banks' decision to reject populist policy proposals in favour of a modern iteration of macroeconomic orthodoxy



The US is poised to run a \$1.7 trillion deficit in 2023, compared to roughly \$1.4 trillion in 2022.

loan forgiveness programme, the 2023 federal deficit would be close to \$2 trillion.

China's deficits, too, have been soaring; its debt-to-GDP ratio has doubled over the past decade, and the IMF expects it to exceed 100 per cent in 2027. And monetary policy is still loose in Japan and China.

But emerging-market policymakers deserve credit as well. In particular, they wisely ignored calls for a new "Buenos Aires consensus" on macroeconomic policy and instead adopted the far more prudent policies advocated by the IMF over the past two decades, which amount to a thoughtful refinement of the Washington Consensus.

One notable innovation has been the accumulation of large foreign-exchange reserves to fend off liquidity crises in a dollar-dominated world. India's

forex reserves, for example, stand at \$600 billion, Brazil's hover around \$300 billion, and South Africa has amassed \$50 billion. Crucially, emerging-market firms and governments took advantage of the ultra-low interest rates that prevailed until 2021 to extend the maturity of their debts, giving them time to adapt to the new normal of elevated interest rates.

But the single biggest factor behind emerging markets' resilience has been the increased focus on central-bank independence. Once an obscure academic notion, the concept has evolved into a global norm over the past two decades. This approach, which is often referred to as "inflation targeting," has enabled emerging-market central banks to assert their autonomy, even though they frequently place greater weight on exchange rates

than any inflation-targeting model would suggest.

Owing to their enhanced independence, many emerging-market central banks began to hike their policy interest rates long before their counterparts in advanced economies. This put them ahead of the curve for once, instead of lagging behind. Policymakers also introduced new regulations to reduce currency mismatches, such as requiring that banks match their dollar-denominated assets and liabilities to ensure that a sudden appreciation of the greenback would not jeopardise debt sustainability. Firms and banks must now meet much more stringent reporting requirements on their international borrowing positions, providing policymakers with a clearer understanding of potential risks.

Moreover, emerging markets never bought into the notion

that debt is a free lunch, which has thoroughly permeated the US economic-policy debate, including in academia. The idea that sustained deficit finance is costless due to secular stagnation is not a product of sober analysis, but rather an expression of wishful thinking.

There are exceptions to this trend. Argentina and Venezuela, for example, have rejected the IMF's macroeconomic policy guidelines. While this earned them much praise from American and European progressives, the results have been predictably catastrophic. Argentina is a growth laggard grappling with runaway inflation, which exceeds 100 per cent. Venezuela has experienced the most profound peacetime output collapse in modern history. Evidently, the "Buenos Aires consensus" was dead on arrival.

To be sure, not every country that spurned macroeconomic conservatism has collapsed. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has kept a lid on interest rates despite soaring inflation, firing every central-bank head who advocated rate hikes. Even with inflation approaching 100 per cent and widespread predictions of an imminent financial crisis, Türkiye's growth has remained robust. While this shows that there is an exception to every rule, such anomalies are unlikely to last indefinitely.

Will emerging markets remain resilient if, as one suspects, the period of high global interest rates persists into the distant future, thanks to rising defence spending, the green transition, populism, high debt levels, and deglobalisation? Perhaps not, and there is huge uncertainty, but their performance so far has been nothing short of remarkable. @ Project Syndicate, 2023



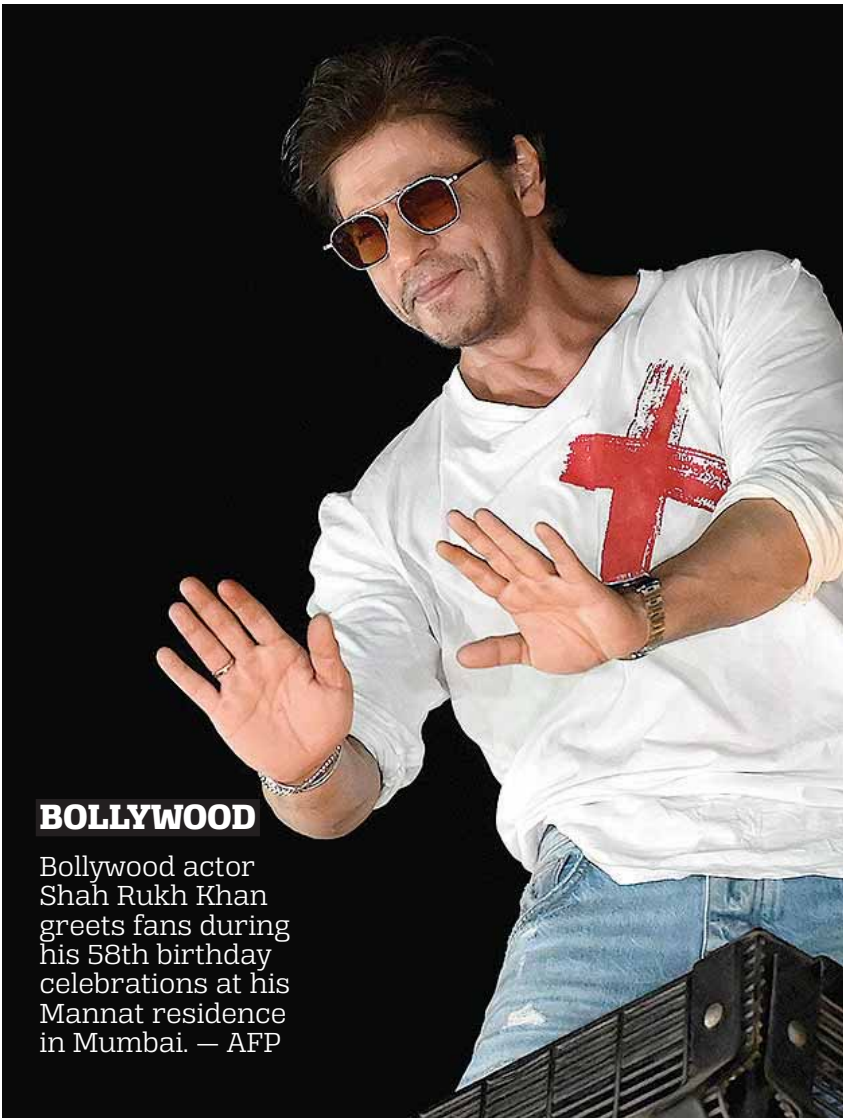
TRAVEL

Commuters make their way along a road amid heavy smoggy conditions in Amritsar. — AFP



ART

A pencil drawing by Lebanese-American writer, poet, and visual artist Gibran Khalil Gibran on display at his museum in his hometown of Besharre (Bsharri) in northern Lebanon. — AFP



BOLLYWOOD

Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan greets fans during his 58th birthday celebrations at his Mannat residence in Mumbai. — AFP



FASHION

A model presents a creation from design house Be Beautiful on the opening night of Soweto Fashion Week, at the Soweto Theatre in Soweto, South Africa. — Reuters



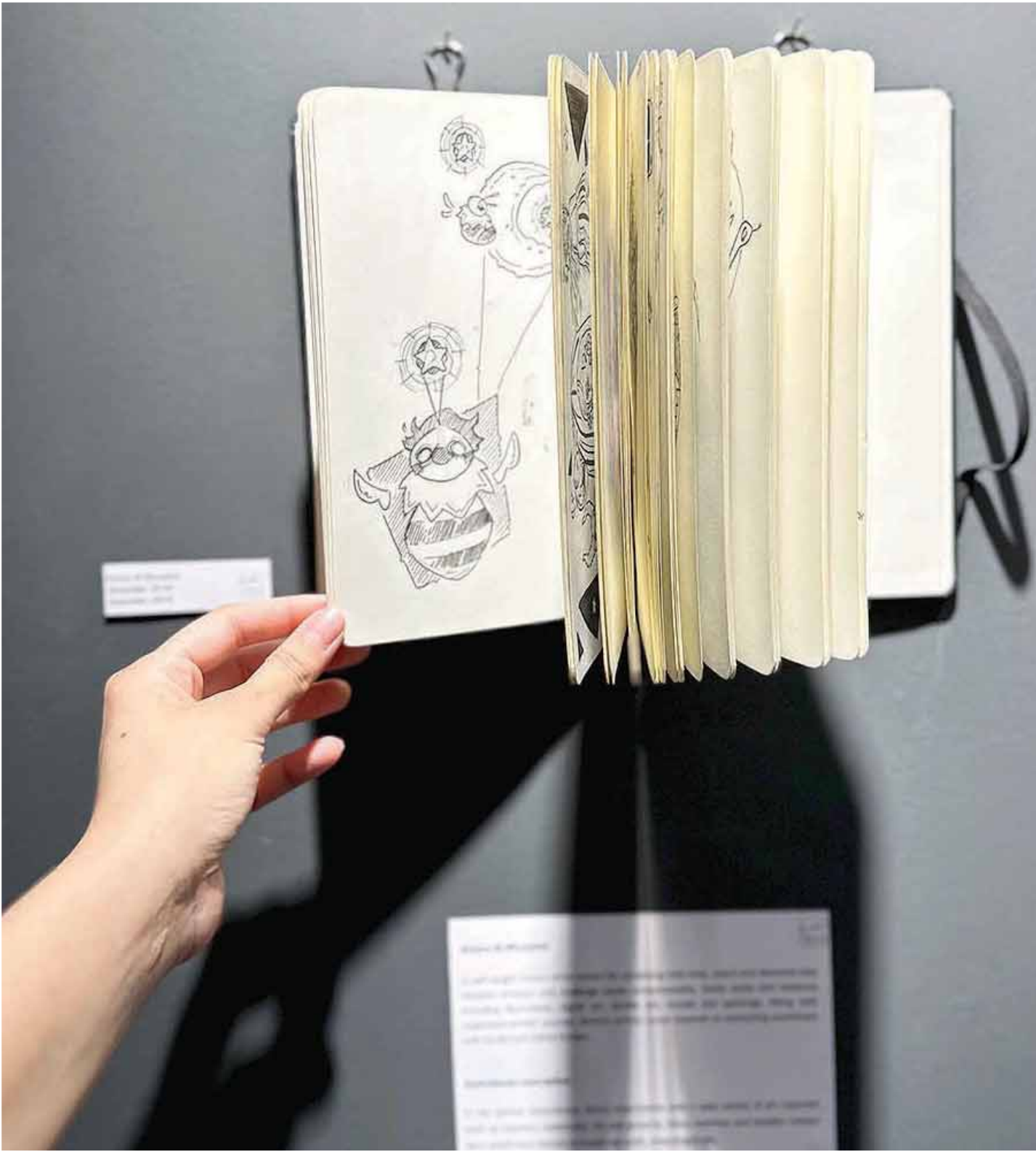
CULTURE

A guagua de pan (bread 'baby', sweet bread shaped into a doll-like figure) is pictured at the cemetery in Salasaca, Ecuador where families come together to share their food and remember their deceased. — AFP

art & life

TUESDAY | NOVEMBER 7, 2023 | RABEE AL THANI 23, 1445 AH

OMAN OBSERVER f x i t y www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om



Makan Studios gives an intimate peek into artists' sketchbooks

Makan Studios is currently hosting 'Art in Pages' exhibition that showcases intimate sketchbooks from Oman, India, Russia, and Iran. Diverse artworks offer unique insights, reflecting creators' backgrounds and experiences... **P20**

FROM NOVEMBER 8 to 14, 2023, the 8th edition of the Italian Cuisine Week in the World is back under the theme "At the table with Italian cuisine: well-being with taste". The initiative, which is endorsed each year by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, aims to promote the Italian gastronomic culture emphasising the regional specialties, the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and attention to the environmental dimension of food consumption.

During the week, many initiatives will provide the opportunity for the public to taste the best of the Italian culinary tradition. Michelin-starred chef Paolo Gramaglia, the founder of the "President" restaurant in Pompeii in Italy, will be in Muscat and will participate in a special evening at the Italian Residence indulging the guests with delicious Italian recipes and live cooking.

As the Embassy of Italy in Muscat also focuses on education, a Master Class will be presented by Chef Gramaglia at Oman Tourism College, highlighting the importance of having a healthy lifestyle through rich ingredients found in the Mediterranean Diet. The Embassy of Italy in Muscat also aims at promoting exchanges with young Omani chefs.

The Embassy of Italy in Muscat invites everyone to experience the Italian taste around the city.

BREZZA - JUMEIRAH MUSCAT BAY: Brezza at Jumeirah Muscat Bay presents 'A Taste of Italy - a Journey from North to South.' From the rich, olive oil-infused dishes of the North to the sun-

COMMUNITY EVENT

Italian cuisine week in Oman kicks off on November 8

drenched, seafood-laden specialties of the South, the menu captures the vitality and authenticity of each region's culinary heritage, embracing the harmony between taste and well-being. For more information: +968 7199 7759

COME PRIMA - CROWNE PLAZA MUSCAT HOTEL: Taste the essence of Italy through an exquisitely curated White Truffle Menu at Come Prima Restaurant. For more information: +968 24 660 660

FRESCO - ALMOUJ MUSCAT: Join Fresco Al Mouj for the Italian Cuisine Week and savor Michelin Star Chef Paolo Gramaglia's dishes that capture the essence of Italy's culinary excellence from November 8 to 14, 2023. For more information: +968 9424 5174

TOMATO - INTERCONTINENTAL MUSCAT: Special Italian menu prepared with care of your well-being at Tomato at InterContinental Muscat from November 8 to 15, 2023. For more information: +968 24 680 000 or +968 9137 3243

TUSCANY - GRAND HYATT MUSCAT: Revel in the simplicity of fresh products with the art of fine cooking put together for you in Muscat's timeless Italian restaurant, Tuscany at Grand Hyatt Muscat. Experience the Italian Taste from November 8 to 14, 2023. For more information: +968 24 641 234

The Embassy will be sharing the promotions and very interesting videos of the week on its website: <https://ambmascate.esteri.it> and social media platform: Instagram @italyjinmuscat

Instagram Top Picks

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AROUND THE WORLD

ENVIRONMENT

Hurricane Otis leaves Acapulco sea turtle refuge in ruins



A **35-YEAR-OLD** sea turtle refuge in Acapulco is fighting for its life after the most powerful hurricane on record to strike Mexico's Pacific coast tore it apart last week.

Campamento Tortuguero Playa Hermosa (Playa Hermosa Turtle Camp) has since the 1980s been working on Acapulco's beachfront to protect the marine reptiles, collecting their eggs so they can safely nest, hatch and return to the Pacific Ocean.

But it faces an uncertain future since Otis, a Category 5 hurricane, slammed into Acapulco on Oct. 25 and devastated the camp and home of founder Monica Vallerino - alongside thousands of other dwellings in the city of nearly 900,000 people.

"We have a camp to protect the sea turtle, my mother has worked and fought for it for 35 years, but this time the hurricane destroyed our whole house, where we live with my daughters," said Michelle Montero, Vallerino's daughter.

Mexico's government this week launched a \$3.4 billion rescue plan in response to Otis, which is known to have killed nearly 50 people. Dozens more are still missing.

Olive ridley turtles visit the camp in the rainy season, and Vallerino was preparing for the arrival of the brown leatherback turtle in cooler waters when Otis struck.

"We were expecting a storm, but not one of such magnitude," she said. "Unfortunately, it hit us so fast that we didn't even have time to protect the nests."

Initially forecast just to become a tropical storm, Otis strengthened with a ferocity that stunned weather experts.

Vallerino hopes the camp can recover from the destruction so her family's work can go on.

"Sea turtles have been around since the time of the dinosaurs and are totally enigmatic animals," she said. "So we fight for them and want to keep preserving them on our planet." — **REUTERS**

MUSIC

New Beatles song set to reach number one on UK singles chart



A **NEW BEATLES** song, produced with the help of AI, is on track to be named number one on the UK's official singles chart on Sunday night, the chart company said.

The song, "Now and Then", that used artificial intelligence to include the vocals of John Lennon and guitar by George Harrison, who died in 1980 and 2001 respectively, was released last Thursday.

"Now And Then debuted at Number 42 in the UK last week based on just 10 hours of sales, but is now expected to jump 41 places to the top of the Official Singles Chart when Friday's chart is announced on BBC Radio 1's The Official Chart," Official Charts said.

The song is set to be the Fab Four's 18th UK chart-topper and their first in 54 years, since The Ballad of John and Yoko in 1969.

The Beatles remain second to Elvis Presley, who has scored 21 number ones on the chart since his first hit in 1957.

"Now and Then" is currently ahead of the song "Standing Next to You" by Jung Kook, and last week's number one, "Is it Over Now?" by Taylor Swift, according to the chart which is based on preliminary sales and early streaming reports from key distribution channels in the UK.

Despite being highly anticipated, "Now and Then", which comes more than four decades after it was originally recorded as a demo by Lennon, received lukewarm reviews from music critics after its release.

"Now And Then" was one of several tracks on a cassette that Lennon had recorded at his home in New York's Dakota Building in 1979 — a year before his death.

It was given to McCartney by Lennon's widow Yoko Ono in 1994.

Two other songs, "Free As A Bird" and "Real Love", were cleaned up by the producer Jeff Lynne, worked on by the other former Beatles, and released in 1995 and 1996.

An attempt was made to do the same with "Now And Then" but the project was abandoned due to background noise on the demo.

AI has now made it possible to extract the vocals from that recording, although the use of the technology in music is the subject of industry-wide debate, with some denouncing copyright abuses and others praising its prowess.

The two surviving Beatles finished "Now And Then" last year, including George Harrison's electric and acoustic guitar parts recorded in 1995. — **AFP**

"Now And Then" was one of

CULTURE

Print of King's painting of Balmoral snapped up for more than



Thousands of people lined the streets of Mexico City on Saturday to enjoy a colourful parade in celebration of Day of the Dead, one of the country's most important holidays.

As part of the festivities, dozens of dancers dressed as skeletons or wearing traditional costumes made their way down Paseo de la Reforma, one of the capital city's most prominent streets.

Day of the Dead has become an internationally recognised symbol of Mexican culture.

From November 1-2, people across the country normally decorate their homes, streets and relatives' graves with candles, colourful skulls and flowers — especially marigolds. Food offerings are also made.

The festival, which in 2003 was added to the Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage list, centres around the belief that the living and the dead can commune during the brief period.

The holiday is rooted in the indigenous Mexico culture, mixed with Christian superstition brought by Spanish colonisers. The Mexico were the dominant indigenous population in pre-Hispanic Mexico.

Mexican cartoonist and lithographer Jose Guadalupe Posada created "La Calavera Catrina" — a famous skeletal representation of death — more than a century ago.

Day of the Dead gained new worldwide recognition when it was depicted in the Oscar-winning 2017 Disney film "Coco." — **AFP**



Makan Studios gives an intimate peek into artists' sketchbooks

By Zuwaina Al Suliemani

The Makan Studio, located at the Intercontinental Hotel, occupies a quaint little space that makes it easy to miss at first. This space has been hosting numerous exhibitions that put some of Oman's creative emerging artists at the forefront, and we have seen countless creative activities that explore the complexities of human experiences.

Currently, the studio has been hosting a group of artists that allows onlookers to take a peek into some of their most intimate ideas scribbled on sacred pages.

"An artist's sketchbook offers an insight into the most intimate parts of art-making. It's where ideas come about and develop."

This statement pretty much summarises the "Art in Pages" exhibition, which was launched on October 10 and will wrap up on November 9, 2023.

The event is a collective exhibition that brings together a diverse group of artists from Oman, India, Russia, and Iran. Each artist's sketchbook serves as a window into their creative souls, offering a glimpse of their thoughts, inspirations, and artistic journeys. The audience is invited to explore the world of doodles, drawings, and stories found inside the pages of these artists' sketchbooks as this exhibition highlights the beginnings of these artists' masterpieces.

The sketchbook, which is occasionally conceived as a private journal containing an artist's deepest thoughts, is transformed into a piece of art in "Art on Pages." While some sketchbooks are purposefully organised and thoughtful, others are full of impulsive scribbles and whimsical doodling. Every sketchbook is a tale unto itself, a reflection of the creator's uniqueness. These sketchbooks' diversity reflects the origins and experiences of the artists themselves, providing the viewer

with a wealth of visual storytelling to pore over.

With several artists on showcase, visiting the gallery is like venturing into the rabbit hole only to emerge in a beautiful world where thought processes were formed and then later on, give life to the artists' vision.

In one of the sketchbooks, an Indian artist collected several of India's beautiful creative traditions as one flips through the pages of the sketchbook, one is not only taken on a trip down

The event is a collective exhibition that brings together a diverse group of artists from Oman, India, Russia, and Iran. Each artist's sketchbook serves as a window into their creative souls, offering a glimpse of their thoughts, inspirations, and artistic journeys.

memory lane but by extension, also educating the onlookers that while India is a country of heritage and tradition, there is a possibility that it will lose some of them.

Several of the Omani artists showcase the beautiful complexity of what it is like growing up not just as an Arab and Omani artist but also how their thinking shaped their reality and as a result, have given birth to artworks they

hope will communicate the inner workings of their souls.

The sketchbooks not only came in different sizes but they also vary in the number of pages and volumes and while many of them are in black and white, it was a showcase of a beautiful world nonetheless, one that is not seen in many more commercial exhibitions.

Simultaneously with the exhibition, there had been a couple of workshops that also took place. One of them is the "Let's Figure It Out" workshop, which allowed participants to learn the basics of hand-made pottery.

A free demo lesson was also conducted by Nasra al Adwani on "Healing through Words," centred around the therapeutic power of writing one's name and associating it with words that help emotional clarity.

As part of the exhibition, a sketchbook gathering night was held with a famous Omani artist, Mohammad al Attar. In this gathering, the artist shares with the participants some of his artistic secrets in doodling; how to draw a thin line and how to create characters.

In addition to the sketchbooks and publications, "Art on Pages" offers for sale a selection of prints made by each participating artist. These prints provide guests with a real piece of the artists' work that they can take home and appreciate.

For this writer, three unique artists to check at the exhibition should include Fajer al Akhzami for her extraordinary life drawing practice, Shalini Gupta for her special Covid memoir book, and Wadhah al Rashdi for his study on the human body and its mortality.

With artists coming from different countries around the world, visiting the gallery would allow one to find a wide range of creative inspirations and styles—amazing evidence of the ability of art to bridge gaps and unite individuals from all backgrounds and civilisations.

