

OIA invests in BioGenomics

Oman Investment Authority (OIA) announced its investment in BioGenomics, a developer of biosimilar pharmaceuticals with a focus on diabetic therapeutics. The company produces and develops an array of insulin medications in collaboration with a local Omani company. This investment reinforces OIA's efforts in enabling the private sector in Oman and collaborating with it to attract foreign investment. **DETAILS ON P13**



P12

GERMANY'S MARIA REACHES WIMBLEDON QUARTERS



P15

OMAN LEADS IN SHIFTING AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS TO GREEN ENERGY



P20

OMANI ARTISTS AT KHALEEJ EXHIBITION TRACING EVOLUTION OF VISUAL ART



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO US PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Joe Biden of the United States of America on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments to President Biden, wishing him good health and happiness. His Majesty also wished the American people further progress and prosperity and the cooperation relations between the two countries further development and growth. — ONA

DEADLINE SET FOR MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

The Ministry of Interior has set July 7 as deadline for applicants wishing to contest the Municipal Council membership in the wilayats of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar (Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah) and Sinaw (Governorate of North Al Sharqiyah). Applications are still open for the Third Term of Municipal Council Membership in the two wilayats via the elections' website (elections.om).



A RARE 'EARTH IMAGE' RESTORED

A team from National Records and Archives Authority has restored a rare "Earth Image", an artwork by Al Sharif al Idrisi (who passed away in 560 AH). It is a compiled copy of maps drawn by renowned Arab geographer in 1154 AD. The team restored the map, which was damaged due to high acidity and loss of water qualities in the artwork, known in Arabic by the name 'Soorat Al Ardh'. The map constitutes an important historical reference and it is compiled from maps drafted by Arab and Muslim geographers and historians. **DETAILS ON P3**

4 dead, three injured in road accident

SAMUEL KUTTY
[@samkuttyp](#)

Four nationals died and three were injured in an accident on Adam-Haima road in the direction towards Dhofar Governorate on Sunday.

According to a statement

issued by the Royal Oman Police, the accident occurred when the car in which they were travelling overturned. All the victims belong to the same family.

"The police aviation personnel transported an injured person to Nizwa Hospital after a vehicle overturned resulting in the death

of four citizens and injuries to three others", the ROP said in a statement.

Although names of the victims have not been revealed, police shared footage of a helicopter landing on Adam-Haima road and taking one of the seriously injured to hospital.

Pacts signed for modernisation of defence units

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance, represented by Partnership for Development (PFD) programme, on Sunday signed four agreements with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to carry out modernisation projects at the MoD and the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF).

The agreements seek to support national industries, empower small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and provide training and job opportunities.

The agreements signed by Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of PFD programme, and executive directors of the companies concerned.

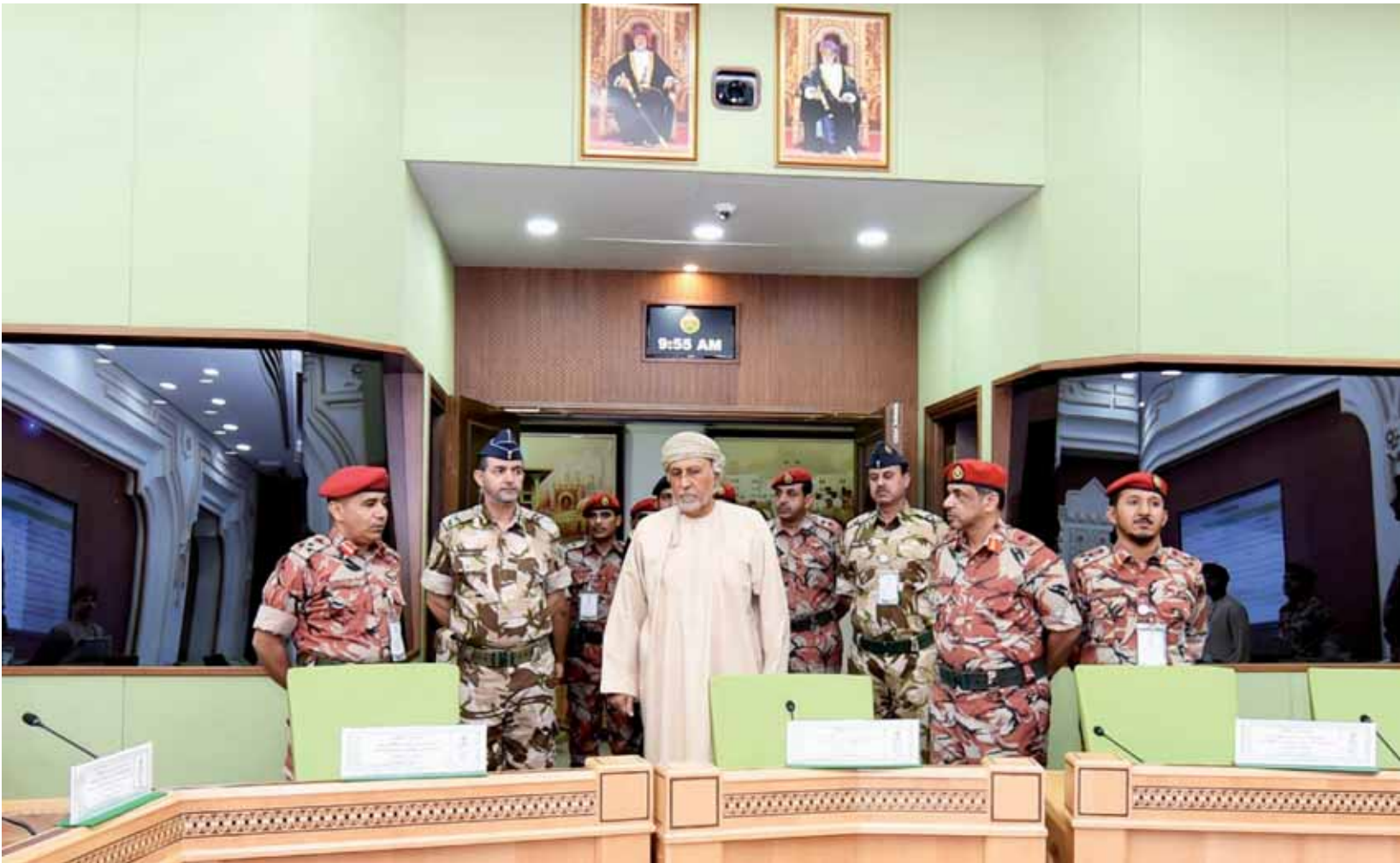
The signing ceremony was attended by Dr Mohammed bin Nasser al Za'abi, Secretary-General of the MoD, officials from the MoF and senior officers

The agreements aim to implement projects including establishment of a maintenance facility for armoured personnel vehicles of the RAO

from the MoD.

The pacts aim to implement four projects, including establishment of a maintenance facility for armoured personnel vehicles of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), an earth observation centre for the National Survey Authority, transfer of hawk aircraft engine maintenance capabilities to the Royal Air Force of Oman, supply of several specialised aircraft systems for the C130 and F16 Fleets of the Rafo. **SEE P13**





Shihab visits site of strategic drill Decision Making 9

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, on Sunday visited the site of the strategic drill “Decision Making 9”, being conducted at National Defence College (NDC), Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies. He took note of the activities of the exercise, carried out by participants in the 9th batch of the NDC.

The exercise runs till July 7. HH Sayyid Shihab was received upon his arrival at the NDC headquarters by Air Vice Marshal Saleh bin Yahya al Maskari, Head of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, and Maj Gen Hamid bin Ahmed Sakroon, Commandant of the NDC.

HH Sayyid Shihab listened to a briefing about the operations, delivered by Brigadier Abdullah bin Hamad al Harthy, Director-General of Studies and Academic Affairs at the academy. Then, he went on tour of the exercise sections. There, he was briefed about methods of handling international events, virtual national issues and appropriate response to all through ground-reality applications, including



the use of deduction and analysis methods, before formulating proper decisions that serve the goals of the exercise.

The operations of “Decision

Making9”, which began on June 26, constitute a core component of the training objectives of the current batch. They are a culmination of the sciences and knowledge

imparted to the participants in the 9th batch that comprises personnel from military, security and civil departments of the NDC.

— ONA

RAINS LASH SEVERAL WILAYATS

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Rains lashed a number of wilayats causing overflowing of several wadis including Dima Wattayeen, Al Rahba in the Wilayat of Nizwa and Qafifa in the Wilayat of Ibra. Rainfall was also reported in the wilayats of Izki, Ibri and Bahla. The Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar experienced heavy thunder showers over much of the wilayat.

The Directorate-General of Meteorology on Sunday said that thunder cloud activity over Al Hajar Mountains is likely to continue and there are chances of thunder showers of varying intensity levels associated with downburst and hail storms.

Al Hajar Mountains witnessed deep thunder cells accompanied by heavy rainfall and active wind over the mountainous areas located in the governorates of North Al Sharqiyah, Al Dakhiliyah and South Al Batinah. These areas also experienced thunder showers of varying intensity accompanied by downburst and hail storms.

Mountains and coasts of Dhofar Governorate experienced the monsoon clouds, drizzles and scattered rain.

Aerial images from Oman Met Office showed clouds of varying heights over most of the governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. Scattered rains had continued over parts of Al

Dakhiliyah and South Al Batinah governorates while continuous clouds formed over North and South Sharqiyah, Muscat and Al Wusta.

Oman Meteorology reported that satellite images showed the continuation of cloud activity in the north and central part of the Arabian Sea with the flow of high and medium clouds over most of the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman and the beginning of the formation of cumulus clouds on Al Hajar Mountains.

A citizen from Al Hamra said the rains are wonderful but summer rains only begin late afternoon after midday so one has to bear the summer heat.

The weather forecast for Monday states that skies along the coastal areas of Dhofar governorates and adjoining mountains will be partly cloudy with intermittent drizzle and chances of isolated rain. Clear to partly cloudy skies over rest of the governorates with chances of late night to early morning low level clouds or fog patches over parts of the Arabian Sea and Oman Sea coasts. Chances of convective clouds development and isolated rain occasionally thundershowers associated with downdraft and hail are expected over Al Hajar Mountains and adjoining areas towards the afternoon and evening. There are also chances for dust rising over desert and open areas, said the weather forecaster at Oman Met Office.



Slaughterhouses to work from July 9 to 11 for Eid

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 3

Muscat Municipality on Sunday announced working hours of slaughterhouses and health protocol during Eid al Adha. It said the workers who handle carcasses must wear light coloured clothes with gloves and shoes. Ticks are easy to detect if they are found on light coloured clothes. One must avoid exposure to ticks must not crush ticks by hand, the municipality said. It will start accepting the animals for slaughters from from July 9 to July 11.

A statement issued by Muscat Municipality said, “From 9 Dhul Hijjah until the second day of Eid, pre-reservation for sacrificing animals can be made by individuals at the slaughterhouses from 6 am to 6 pm. The carcass will be delivered next morning.”

The timing for individual sacrifices is 7 am and 11 am during the first three days of Eid. Slaughtering for shops and companies will be carried out in the evening from 7 pm

to 9 pm.

Those who want to take their animals (sheep, goats, cows and camels) for sacrifice to the slaughterhouses, can do so from 10th of Dhul Hijjah to the second day of Eid, in the evening from 7 pm to 9 pm. ‘The carcass need to be picked up on the same day.’

Institutions, charities and meat companies wishing to slaughter in Muscat Municipality slaughterhouses must communicate in advance with the operating company until 8 Dhul Hijjah, while applications made after this date are not accepted, the municipality stated.

Normal operation of Al Seeb and Al Amerat slaughterhouses will resume on the fourth day of Eid. For companies, it will be from 6 am to 8 am and for individuals from 8 am to 12:45 pm.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health has urged citizens and residents to use the official abattoirs during Eid al Adha to prevent the risks of infection with Crimean Haemorrhage Fever.

Shabab Oman II drops anchor in Norway



OSLO: The Royal Navy of Oman Ship, Shabab Oman II, arrived at the Norwegian port of Christian Sand as part of its sixth world tour titled Oman, the Land of Peace (Oman Ardh Assalam). Through its global tours, Shabab Oman II promotes the noble theme of extending bridges Of friendship and fraternity between the Sultanate Of Oman And different countries of the world. It seeks to popularise Omani culture and highlight the legacy of Oman's maritime history and artefacts.



National Museum launches full official version of its website



MUSCAT: The National Museum on Sunday launched the official version of its website after making some updates to the trial version to meet the current technological advances to serve the desired goals.

The website is an important gateway to introduce the vital role of the National Museum and learn about many historical and

cultural aspects of the Sultanate of Oman, additionally it serves the general categories of visitors and specialists within the museum field.

The website of the National Museum is characterised by several technical features that enables the browser to access the various divisions of the site, including the simplicity of the interface and the

design that reflects the identity and mission of the museum.

In addition to the ease of browsing and use in both Arabic and English language, compatibility with various browsers and smart devices furthermore it also includes some interactive services such as the interactive map that guides the browser to the different

museum galleries, which in turn contains a number of artefacts and collections. The website acts as a window for the browser to locate reliable sources for matters related to the museum on the Internet, including news, activities and events, in addition to a number of services provided by the National Museum. — ONA

National Competitiveness Committee meets

MUSCAT: Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, chaired this year's second meeting of the National Competitiveness Committee at the Ministry of Economy premises on Sunday. The meeting covered several topics on the agenda, including following up on approved decisions taken during the first meeting for this year.

The meeting also reviewed the executive position of the work of the National Competitiveness Office during (March — June) through which the Office sought to accelerate the process of improving Oman's ranks in international indicators.

The meeting further touched on the developments of the Environmental Performance Index to discuss a plan to improve it with the Environment Authority. It also discussed the plan to improve



global innovation indicators and network readiness. The National Competitiveness Office seeks to follow up and improve interna-

tional indicators in coordination with the authorities concerned in a bid to achieve the ultimate goal of reaching advanced ranks in inter-

national reports, which contributes to raising Oman's ranking in the GCC level, as well as regionally and globally. — ONA

RO 2,000 fine for drilling unlicensed wells

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabnassri

Digging of unlicensed wells attracts a fine of RO 2,000 and imprisonment for one year, warn officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The warning comes amid seizure of illegal drilling equipment during a raid by officials in Al Dhahirah Governorate recently. The rampant digging is depleting underground water reserves and is violating the regulations and laws governing public property.

Last June, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources issued a ministerial decision regarding the formation of a working group to develop an action to curb unlicensed wells, which have mushroomed over the past years.

Maqbool bin Hussein al Rawahi, Director of the Water Licensing Department at the ministry, said that the decision will strengthen, preserve, develop and ensure sustainability and management of water resources. It will also enable the monitoring teams to perform their work completely and faster than before in taking the necessary legal measures against drilling operators.

He said the rampant digging of wells damages aflaj and existing water sources. Besides, drilling runs the risk of breaking sewage tanks in residential premises and contaminating the underground water resources. Most of these unauthorised wells lack safety measures, which puts lives in danger. Al Rawahi said the ministry continued to give licenses to dig new wells, which are subject to the Water Wealth Protection Law and its related regulations. He requested the people to cooperate in limiting illicit digging.

The committee formed by the ministry consists of stakeholders and will work to define a mechanism to reduce random drilling of wells; prepare a mechanism for the immediate removal of unlicensed wells; control

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MAQBOOL AL RAWAHI

Director of the Water Licensing Department at the ministry

expatriate workers who drill unlicensed wells; seize drilling equipment of illegal operators; and form teams in the governorates.

Rampant drilling is done by citizens using expat labour to secure water for irrigation or gardening. The ministry also seeks to preserve water wealth and rationalise its consumption by enacting legislation aimed at preventing the drilling of new wells for farms and others, with the exception of some cases. The granting of licensing is in accordance with Article 8 of the Water Resources Protection law.

Anyone who violates the provisions of this law shall be punished by either imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or a fine not exceeding RO 2,000 or both. The penalty shall be doubled in case of repetition of the violation.

The ministry has prepared a series of video, audio and print awareness campaigns in various media, which aim to educate citizens and residents on the need to conserve water in addition to informing them of the importance of obtaining licenses from the authorities.

Arab geographer Al Idrisi's 1154 AD world map restored

MUSCAT: A team from the National Records and Archives Authority restored a rare map of the ancient world drawn by renowned Arab geographer Al Sharif al Idrisi in 1154 AD. The working team restored the map known in Arabic as Soorat Al Ard, which was damaged due to high acidity. The map constitutes an important historical reference and it is compiled from historical maps drafted by Arab and Muslim geographers and historians. It contains minute details of that historical epoch, including contemporary countries, seas and regions. The Sultanate of Oman is clearly indicated in the map as "Oman", along with markings showing key cities and districts like Muscat, Suhar, Dima, Qalhat, Sur, Dhofar, Mirbat, Hasik, Qubab-Qabr-Hood (the Dome of Prophet Hood), Sa'al and Sir-Oman (Al Dhahirah). — ONA





VACATION

A STRESS BUSTER



IF YOU FEEL TIRED AND
BROKEN, TAKE A BREAK
FROM THE DAILY GRIND

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JULY 3

As the world slowly crawls out of the pandemic, people are packing their bags to beat lockdown blues and reset mind and body. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes mental health as “a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.” Clearly mental health is integral to have a fulfilling life.

A 2020 study found that people who were consciously aware of the vistas and objects around them on a walk reported being more hopeful and upbeat than other walkers. What could be better than savouring exotic food, enjoying the wonderful scenery of a new destination on a hiking route or while skiing down a beautiful slope?

Another German study revealed that people who travelled for at least one week a year get sick much less than people who did not travel. People who did not like to travel called in sick 23 days a year compared to 14 days by travellers who saved money on health insurance.

Holidays have benefits on the performance of employees in particular and on the country’s economy in general. Time away from work can increase your energy and productivity at work. A Harvard Business Review study of over 400 travellers found that 94 per cent of respondents had as much or more energy after coming back from a good trip.

Many people who travel reported a reduction in stress and felt good. This extends for several weeks after finishing the trip. So many of these research findings and studies confirm what we knew already.

To learn about the impact of travel on stress levels, researchers at the Marshfield Medical Research Foundation in Wisconsin, USA, conducted a study partially funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as well as the National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety on two groups of women. Researchers compared psychological stress, quality of marital life and disruptive home life due to work among women who take vacations frequently and those who do not.

The results revealed that the first group who took vacations was less likely to feel tired and stressed, as well as less prone to stress and depression. They also had good relationships with their husbands, unlike other women. The study also showed that these benefits lead to an improvement in the quality of life as well as an improvement in their performance of work.

Staying away from the routine grind everyday life even for a short time provides relief and improves work, study and life.

In recent years, both psychologists and neuroscientists have begun to study the impact of travel on cognitive ability as well as creativity. Travelling and spending a lot of time in different places leads to a change in a person’s mindset and perception as s/he is exposed to new sounds, different smells, different languages that provoke the different synapses in the brain cells. This will enhance the cognitive flexibility of the person.

Travel provides an opportunity to know different countries and cultures as well as learn about food and people.

But travelling for work on long distance flights may expose frequent travellers to several health risks. Several recent studies have shown that such people face hearing damage, dehydration, sleep deprivation due to jet lags and deep vein thrombosis in limbs. They should take steps to limit the impact on their mind and body by regulating the sleep and drinking plenty of fluids.

Covid-19 is still among us. So are other infectious diseases. One should follow health protocols and take vaccines before embarking on travel whether for work or travel.



■ NEW BATCH OF WOMEN JOINS ROP



A new batch of women, who are holders of the General Education Diploma (GED), joined the Royal Oman Police (ROP) on Sunday. The move comes within the framework of the efforts made by ROP to recruit nationals in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and is aimed at providing ROP with women police to enhance the work of the security system. The new recruits will receive training at the Institute of Women Police of the Sultan Qaboos Academy for police sciences in order to be able to effectively perform various police tasks and duties. The training programme includes military training, academic and legal studies and practice. – ONA

Greenhouse to grow disease-free citrus plants

STAFF REPORTER
SUHAR, JULY 3

Jusoor Foundation announced the commencement of the first and second phases of production of its greenhouse project for citrus certification programme in North Al Batinah.

The project was inaugurated under the auspices of Dr Ahmed bin Nasser al Bakri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Agriculture.

The project, which is funded by OQ, is located in the Agricultural Research Centre of Suhar in North Al Batinah Governorate.

After the inauguration, the guests were briefed on the different phases of the project, its importance, as well as the growth and development of citrus trees and seedlings in the greenhouses.

Dr Hamdan bin Salim al Wahaibi, Director-General of Agricultural and Animal Research, highlighted the significance of the citrus certification programme. He noted that the production of



disease-free citrus seedlings will contribute to increasing crop productivity and reducing losses incurred by farmers from infected seedlings or those that exhibit symptoms of diseases.

The project aims to improve the quality of citrus seedlings distributed to citizens, in general,

and farmers, in particular, It also helps in enhancing the quality of citrus seedlings, as well as increasing the production capacity of nurseries from certified citrus seedlings.

This project contributes to increasing the number of high-quality citrus trees that are free



of diseases and pests, which will contribute to raising the productivity of citrus plants in the Sultanate of Oman. It also boosts the self-sufficiency of citrus plants of all kinds, as well as enables the distribution of citizens with citrus seedlings for their home gardens.

The allocation of citrus seedlings

for distribution to citizens will help in adding an aesthetic touch to home gardens. Additionally, an increase in the production of citrus crops will result in a surge in the supply and availability of this product at reasonable prices.

Jaber bin Suleiman al Busaidy, Executive Director of Jusoor

Foundation, explained that the project consists of two stages developed at a total cost of RO 105,000.

“In the first phase, three greenhouses were established, and in the second phase, two greenhouses were added, bringing the total planted area to 3,840 square metres. Special technical specifications that contribute to the protection of citrus mother trees from agricultural pests and infectious diseases have also been established. Approximately, 168 citrus trees of 25 types have been planted, including sour lemons, oranges, and mandarins,” he said.

Jusoor Foundation is the leading institution and the first non-profit corporate social responsibility institution established in the Sultanate of Oman in 2012. The Foundation aims to serve the Omani society by adopting the best CSR practices. The Foundation is keen on the implementation and development of sustainable social projects in local communities, thanks to its deep understanding of the real needs of the Omani society.

ESO protects turtles in Masirah island from ghost fishing

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 3

Each year, up to 1 million tonnes of fishing equipment is abandoned in the ocean. The abandoned nets and fishing gear often kill up to 650,000 marine animals in a phenomenon known as “ghost fishing”. As part of its long-term mission to reduce the entanglement of marine and coastal wildlife in abandoned fishing nets, the Environment Society of Oman (ESO), supported by the British Embassy Muscat, has launched an animated video as part of a larger initiative designed to mitigate the impact of abandoned fishing nets on sea turtle populations on Masirah Island and to accelerate the recycling of fishing nets in Oman.

A clean-up campaign undertaken earlier this year, where a total of 70 tonnes of abandoned fishing nets were cleared from important nesting beaches on Masirah Island. Highlighting the threats posed to marine life caused by abandoned fishing nets and other marine debris, the animation also sheds light on the community’s shared responsibility to keep Oman’s oceans clean.

The animation is part of a wider programme of outreach initiatives undertaken on Masirah Island, which has seen a 79 per cent decline in nesting loggerhead turtle populations over the last 30 years.

Since 2017, ESO has coordinated the



removal of over 685 tonnes of abandoned fishing gear from Masirah Island. As Oman’s only non-profit organisation focusing on environmental conservation, ESO has embarked on behavioural change campaigns targeting fishermen and the local communities to reduce the impact of net entanglements and move towards the safe disposal of nets. The aim of these

initiatives is to promote the safe return of native wildlife and endangered nesting turtles to the island and to Oman’s beaches.

For more information on ESO’s initiatives, or for those who wish to support ESO to carry on its important work, and secure Oman’s environmental health for the coming generations, visit <http://www.eso.org.om>.



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee in Ministry of Information announces the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Class & Grade	Last Date For Collection	Submission Date	Purchase Fees (R.O.)
6/2022	Supply, instillation, testing and commissioning a new data center infrastructure in MOI premises in Salalah	International Excellent	14/7/2022	14/8/2022	25/-
7/2022	Supply, Development, Implementation and Support “Ain”	Interantional Excellent	21/7/2022	31/8/2022	25/-

1. All specialized companies in the field of the tenders 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. Bidder shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of the a bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to the Ministry of Information. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for (90) days. Any tenderers which do not meet the required bond shall not accept. 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.

Note: The original bank guarantee should be submitted to the General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Project Department Building at Ministry of Information, if it **Requested**.

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 : 24943093, 24943785, Email id: (projects@part.gov.om)



Anti-coup protesters in Sudan defy security forces

KHARTOUM: Hundreds of Sudanese protesters demanding an end to military rule took to the streets of the capital Khartoum and its suburbs for a fourth straight day on Sunday, witnesses said.

A violent crackdown by the security forces during mass rallies on Thursday killed nine people, the deadliest day for several months in the long running protests against a military takeover last October led by army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan.

Recent protests have seen crowds burn tyres and barricade roads with bricks, with security forces using live bullets, firing barrages of tear gas canisters and using powerful water cannons, according to medics and the United Nations.

Demonstrators demand a restoration of the transition to civilian rule that was launched after the 2019 ouster of longtime autocrat Omar al Bashir, which the coup derailed.

“We will continue this sit-in until the coup is overturned, and we have a fully civilian government,” demonstrator Muayyad Mohamed said in central Khartoum.

The death toll from protest-related violence has reached 114 since last year’s coup, with the latest fatality recorded on Saturday



Blocks of brick are used to make barricades as people rally in the southern area of Khartoum. – AFP

when a demonstrator died from wounds sustained at a June 16 rally, according to pro-democracy medics.

“We will not compromise until the goals of our revolution are realised,” said Soha, 25, another protester, who gave only her first name. “We are here in the street

The demonstrators demand restoration of the transition to civilian rule that was launched after the 2019 ouster of longtime ruler Omar al Bashir

demanding freedom, peace, justice, a civil state and the return of the military to the barracks.”

The coup plunged Sudan further into political and economic turmoil which has seen rising consumer prices and life-threatening food shortages.

On Sunday, witnesses reported



Sudanese protesters take to the streets in the southern area of Khartoum. – AFP

a heavy deployment of security forces on the streets of Khartoum, including both army vehicles as well as those of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a feared paramilitary unit commanded by Burhan’s deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

The RSF incorporated members of the Janjaweed militia, which was accused by rights groups of atrocities during the conflict that erupted in 2003 in the western region of Darfur.

More recently, the RSF has been accused of taking part in crack downs on protesters marching against the army. The international

community has condemned the recent bloodshed, with the United Nations’ rights chief urging an independent probe into Thursday’s violence.

The UN, African Union and regional bloc IGAD have tried to facilitate talks between the generals and civilians, which the main civilian factions have boycotted.

On Friday, the three bodies jointly condemned the violence and “the use of excessive force by security forces and lack of accountability for such actions, despite repeated commitments by authorities”. — AFP

Floods hit southeast Australia, forcing evacuations in Sydney

MELBOURNE: Thousands of residents were ordered to evacuate southwest Sydney, Australia’s biggest city, on Sunday with torrential rain and damaging winds pounding the east coast and floods expected to be worse than those that hit the region in the past year.

Heavy rain and overflowing dams and rivers all combined to threaten flash floods and landslides along the east coast from Newcastle to Batemans Bay in New South Wales state, and rain was expected to intensify on Sunday night.

“If you were safe in 2021, do not assume you will be safe tonight. This is a rapidly evolving situation and we could very well see areas impacted that have never experienced flooding before,” New South Wales emergency services minister Steph Cooke said in a televised media briefing on Sunday evening.

Earlier in the day, she urged people to reconsider holiday travel, with the rough weather having hit at the beginning of school holidays.

“This is a life-threatening emergency situation,” Cooke said.

More than 200 millimetres of rain have fallen over many areas with some hit by as much as 350mm, the Bureau of Meteorology said, warning of flood risks along the Nepean and Hawkesbury Rivers. Camden in southwest Sydney was underwater, and the weather bureau

predicted water levels in the areas of North Richmond and Windsor northwest of Sydney would peak at higher levels than in the past three major flood events since March 2021.

“This could get significantly worse over the night,” State Emergency Service Commissioner Carlene York said.

The heavy rains caused Sydney’s main dam to spill early on Sunday morning, water authorities said, adding that modelling showed the spill would be comparable to a major spill in March 2021 at the Warragamba Dam.

“There’s no room for the water to remain in the dams. They are starting to spill. The rivers are

flowing very fast and very dangerous. And then we have the risk of flash flooding, depending on where the rains are,” York said.

There have been close to 2,000 calls for assistance on Sunday and in the past 24 hours, 29 people have been rescued from floodwaters, including one woman who was hanging on to a pole for an hour as workers struggled to reach her.

The body of a man who fell out of a kayak was pulled out of Sydney Harbour, police said, adding that the circumstances were under investigation but appeared to be linked to the windy conditions. — Reuters



People stand next to a flooded petrol station due to torrential rain in the Camden suburb of Sydney. – AFP



Fresh protests in Tripoli over political deadlock

TRIPOLI: Protesters angry with Libya’s political deadlock took to the streets again on Sunday amid fears of wider unrest in the country.

A video on social media showed a crowd of young people protesting overnight outside the Presidency Council in Tripoli, holding placards demanding its resignation.

Protesters rallied in other parts of Tripoli, where they torched car tyres and demanded an end to frequent power outages, witnesses said. Similar protests were reportedly held in the coastal city of Zliten and the city of Misrata, west of Tripoli.

The protests came a day after angry demonstrators attacked the parliament in Libya’s eastern city

of Tobruk and set parts of it on fire.

The violence coincided with a series of protests on Friday in several parts of the oil-rich country.

The United Nations said its Secretary General Antonio Guterres was following the demonstrations with concern.

He called on protesters to avoid violence and on security forces to exercise restraint, according to a statement attributed to his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

Libya has been in turmoil since the 2011 overthrow of dictator Muammar Gaddafi. Two governments are currently vying for power. Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh is seated in Tripoli. — dpa

SHORT TAKES

GUWAHATI

Landslide death toll in India rises to 37

The death toll from a massive landslide in India hit 37, authorities said, as rescue teams battled teeming rain to search for 25 others still missing three days later.

A wall of mud and rock swamped a camp housing railway construction workers and members of the Territorial Army in remote Manipur state in the northeast after heavy rain early on Thursday.

Emergency teams rescued 18 survivors within the first few hours of the incident.



But army spokesperson Angom Bobin Singh said that 28 people were still missing before an announcement later that three more bodies had been retrieved. — AFP

QUETTA

Bus crash kills 20 in southwest Pakistan

A passenger bus plunged into a ravine in southwestern Pakistan on Sunday killing 20 people, a government official said.

The road crash also injured another 13 people aboard the bus that was travelling from garrison city of Rawalpindi to Quetta, the capital of southwestern Balochistan province, said Ijaz Jaffar, deputy commissioner of Sherani district.

The ravine is some 350 kilometres north of Quetta. Poor road infrastructure and rash driving



often cause deadly road crashes in Pakistan. The province is home to several Chinese projects under an investment plan in which Beijing is seeking road and sea trade linkages with the world. — Reuters

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka grinds to a halt as fuel reserves shrink

Sri Lanka has less than a day’s worth of fuel left, the energy minister said, with public transport grinding to a halt as the country’s economic crisis deepened.

Petrol and diesel queues snaked through the capital for kilometres, though most pumping stations have been without fuel for days. Energy Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said petrol reserves were about 4,000 tonnes, just below one day’s worth of consumption.



“The next petrol shipment is expected on July 22,” Wijesekera told reporters. “We have contacted other suppliers, but we can’t confirm any new supplies.” — AFP



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In brief

■ CAIRO



SHARK KILLS TWO WOMEN IN EGYPT'S RED SEA

Egypt's environment ministry said that a shark killed two women this week in the Red Sea, with Austria's foreign ministry saying one of its citizens had died. "Two women were attacked by a shark while swimming" in the Sahl Hasheesh area south of Hurgada, the Egyptian ministry said on Facebook, reporting that both had died. APA said one of the women was a 68-year-old from the country's Tyrol region who was holidaying in Egypt. Austria's foreign ministry confirmed "the death of an Austrian citizen in Egypt", without providing further details. — AFP

■ BERLIN



SCHOLZ EXPECTS LIGHTER COVID-19 MEASURES THIS YEAR

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz expressed optimism that the country would require less severe Covid-19 measures this year to tackle the expected rise in cases during the autumn and winter months. His comments came as the country grapples with a summer wave of infections caused by new highly infections variants. "There should be no more school closures and I don't think we'll need the kind of lockdown that we've had in the last years", Scholz told the public ARD broadcaster. He spoke of a "completely changed situation", now that basic vaccination rates stood at 76 per cent in Germany. — dpa

■ AMMAN



JORDAN PORT WORKERS SUSPEND WORK TO PROTEST DEATHS

Workers at Jordan's Red Sea port of Aqaba began a work stoppage to protest poor safety precautions following the deaths of 13 people in a chlorine gas leak accident at a major berth. The deaths and injury of over 300 workers came after a crane loading chlorine containers onto a ship last Monday dropped one onto the quay, causing it to explode. "We are committed to the stoppage until our demands to provide the right industrial safety environment (are met)", said a leading unionist who said hundreds of workers had not shown up to work in the main port facilities. — Reuters

Russia takes control of Lysychansk

KYIV/KOSTYANTYNIVKA:

Russia said on Sunday its forces had taken control of Ukraine's eastern Luhansk region after capturing the final Ukrainian holdout of Lysychansk in heavy fighting, though Ukraine did not confirm the claim.

Control of Luhansk, a key war aim for Russia, would come after weeks slow advances, hand Moscow a limited political win and shift the battlefield focus to neighbouring Donetsk region, where Ukraine still controls substantial territory.

Driven back from the Ukrainian capital Kyiv following its February 24 invasion, Russia has concentrated its military campaign on the Donbas, which includes Luhansk and Donetsk. Moscow-backed separatist proxies have been fighting there since Russia's first military intervention in Ukraine in 2014.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu informed President Vladimir Putin that Luhansk had been "liberated", the defence ministry said, after Russia earlier said its forces had captured villages around Lysychansk and encircled the city.

The minister said Russian forces and their allies in the area had "gained full control over the city of Lysychansk".

Yuriy Sak, an adviser to Ukraine's defence minister, said over the phone that he "cannot confirm that Lysychansk is under full Russian control". Ukraine's defence ministry press service did not reply to a request for comment.

Ukrainian officials, who say references to "liberating" Ukrainian territory are Russian war propaganda, had reported intense artillery barrages on residential areas.

"Ukrainian forces likely



Rescue specialists work at the site of a destroyed residential building after the blasts in Belgorod, Russia. — Reuters

Ukraine staged fierce resistance in weeks of fighting as blasts hit Russia's Belgorod, southern Ukraine base

conducted a deliberate withdrawal from Lysychansk, resulting in the Russian seizure of the city on July 2", analysts at the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think-tank, wrote in a briefing note.

They based their assessment on footage showing Russia forces walking casually in northern and eastern neighbourhoods of Lysychansk, saying it suggested few or no Ukrainian forces remained.

It said the footage included images posted on social media and geolocated to confirm where



Swiss President and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal as they arrive for the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano, Switzerland. — Reuters

it was filmed.

West of Lysychansk, the Ukrainian city of Sloviansk was hit by powerful shelling from multiple rocket launchers on Sunday and many people were killed and wounded, the city's mayor Vadim Lyakh said.

Russia says what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine aims to protect Russian speakers from nationalists. Ukraine and its Western allies say this is a baseless pretext for its flagrant aggression that aims to seize territory. — Reuters

Flights axed as US kicks off long holiday weekend

WASHINGTON:

Airlines struggling to staff their planes cancelled hundreds of US flights on Saturday at the start of a long and almost certainly messy holiday travel weekend. As of mid-afternoon, with Americans gearing up for July 4 Independence Day celebrations, more than 600 flights within, into, or out of the United States had been cancelled, and more than 3,300 were delayed, according to flight tracking service flightaware.com.

The numbers on Friday were grim as well, with 587 US flights scrapped among a global total of 3,061 cancellations, the site said. Sunday was also looking problematic, with more than 100 flights already cancelled.

The airport chaos is prompting a record level of road travel by Americans seeking to dodge flight trouble, a travel industry group said.

For days, amid a surge in travel as summer rolls in, horror stories have abounded as travelers were stranded at airports, enduring odysseys to reach their destinations.

The airline industry was devastated in the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic as people stayed close to home, but air travel has rebounded as health measures were eased.

And although federal Covid-19



A child holds a US flag balloon as travellers wait for their luggage at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Arlington. — AFP

relief spared airlines from laying off staff, tens of thousands of workers left the industry after carriers urged early retirement.

Today's industry has about 15 per cent less staff compared with the pre-pandemic period to handle around 90 per cent of pre-2020 passenger volume, analysts at Third Bridge consultancy estimated.

The travel chaos has drawn scrutiny from Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and others

The airport chaos is prompting a record level of road travel by Americans seeking to dodge flight trouble

in Washington. On Saturday, Buttigieg tweeted a series of tips on what to do if one's flight is cancelled, such as whether to accept travel points or miles as compensation,

or demand a cash refund.

"You can often negotiate on this. That's between you and the airline", Buttigieg wrote. The travel season is at full speed, with 2,490,490 people screened at airport checkpoints nationwide on Friday, the most since February 2020 right before the Covid shutdown in the US, the Transportation Security Administration said. "We are back to pre-pandemic checkpoint volume", the TSA tweeted.

Delta pilots walked informational picket lines at several airports on Thursday to demand a new contract and complain of overwork, among other issues.

"Quite frankly, it's irresponsible scheduling, over scheduling. Coming out of the pandemic, we're scheduling more flights than we have people to fly them", Delta pilots association union leader Jason Ambrosi told CNN on Saturday. — AFP

Are we living in a perception of a perception?



Hyesha Barrett
coach.hyesha@gmail.com

The writer is a master neuro-transformational life coach

Do you live your life in accordance to your beliefs, values and dreams regardless of what anyone thinks - Or do you find yourself abiding by other people’s requests (opinions)? Do you find yourself trying to pursue the things that you know will award you joy and happiness yet your focus get diverted in order to bring pride to well-meaning family members, harmony between friends or stability among colleagues? This happens to the majority of us. As much as we might not like to, we do live life in accordance to others’ expectations. The desire to do something different which is in alignment with our biggest dreams, often gets quietened and lays dormant as the

voice of criticism and cynicism screams the loudest. However, this voice is not our own but that of our inner critic, which unfortunately listens intently to the external stimuli and hence constantly butts its’ negative head against the fragile window of our aspirations. In turn, these demeaning thoughts can become debilitating and in this sullen state they will easily arrest you from even starting – from the onset already labelling yourself a failure and incapable. Does this rhetorical question ring true to you: “I am doomed to fail, so why do I even bother to start?” We often live our lives according

WE DO MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON HOW WE THINK OTHER PEOPLE PERCEIVE US. THE KEY IS TO REFINE YOUR INTENTION AS THIS IS THE EASIEST WAY TO BE LED ASTRAY

to how we think others will perceive our actions. So we are not really living a life bountifully led by our ambitions, but we fill it with what we think others will judge us on. In all truth, we have no clue

what others think. Yet, we do make decisions based on how we think other people perceive us. Jay Shetty said it well: “we live in a perception of a perception of ourselves. If I think you think I am smart, then I feel smart. If I think you think I am stupid, then I feel stupid. So we are basing our own self-worth on a perception of a perception.” How fascinating is that? It is someone else’s subjective opinion, so in essence we are being subjective about someone’s subjectivity - which we live on a daily basis. This is not sustainable in the long run. To get out of this spiral, the key is to refine your intention, as

this is the easiest thing to be led astray. When we hold clarity as to why we do something and work tirelessly to achieve it, all the while being aligned with our values, then things will manifest organically, with more breadth and vigour. This will allow you to focus on the outcomes you want regardless of others’ opinions. Over time, leaning into your self-development, building your confidence, quietening the inner-critic and doing daily steps to improve the connection with yourself will allow you to be seen and heard. In turn, this will enable you to drown out the noise of others and focus on the wisdom that resides inside.

South African entrepreneur seeks to turn caterpillars into tasty snacks

LINDA GIVETASH & SUSAN NJANJI

A start-up entrepreneur from South Africa wants to change the way edible caterpillars popularly known as “mopane worms” are viewed and eaten. For many people, particularly from western European backgrounds, the idea of eating insects is still riddled with fear and inhibition. But they can be a valuable source of nutrition and farming them is not detrimental to the environment. South African chemical engineer Wendy Vesela has found ways of turning the spiky green and black caterpillars -- which are packed with protein and iron -- into a flour that can be used in savoury biscuits, sweet chocolate protein bars, cereals or smoothies. When steamed and sliced, mopane pieces can also be used as pizza toppings. Vesela says she has found domestic and international customers for her organic products. Edible insects and worms may indeed be gaining popularity in Western cultures. But food anthropologist Anna Trapido insists that the trend should not be seen as just another dietary fad, a “kind of adventure tourism, where you get a badge” for eating them. “Mopane need to be treated with respect because they are part of people’s emotional, spiritual, culinary genres,” she said. In Vesela’s home province of Limpopo, where she grew up in a town not far from the world-famous Kruger National Park, mopane is a staple food, cooked in a sauce of onions and tomatoes. The caterpillars are “a healthier option of protein”, she said. And it’s “not a worm. So people have just to get over that fear.” Vesela tried to woo reluctant customers with biscuits and protein bars at a recent food fair in Johannesburg’s upmarket Sandton district. “I won’t eat a worm. I’m sorry, it’s disgusting. But if you give it to me in the form of a chocolate... it’s really delicious,” said Gail Odendaal, 38, walking away with a bag of protein bars. Mopanes are environmentally friendly, too, requiring no extra water or land, as they breed and feed on mopane trees, which grow in hot and dry regions of southern Africa. They are a better source of protein than many other foods on the market, said dietitian, Mpho Tshukudu. “It’s high in protein, in essential fats and minerals, especially iron. It has more iron than the most expensive piece of steak,” she said. With demand rising since she started her venture seven months ago, Vesela plans to expand the business and have multiple harvests a year. — AFP



Isabel Kershner
The writer is a correspondent at NYT

Palestinians give US experts bullet that killed journalist

The Palestinian Authority has handed over to a team of US investigators the bullet it says killed Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, Palestinian officials said on Saturday, in a move meant to clarify the circumstances of the reporter’s death. Abu Akleh, a veteran television correspondent for Al Jazeera and a household name in the Middle East, was fatally shot May 11 during an early morning Israeli army raid in Jenin in the occupied West Bank, prompting international outrage. The circumstances around her death are disputed, but officials say that studying the bullet is necessary to conclusively determine who fired it. Palestinian officials say that Abu Akleh was intentionally killed by an Israeli soldier. Israeli authorities said a soldier might have shot her by mistake but also suggested that she might have been killed by a Palestinian gunman. “We are confident and certain of our investigations and the results we have reached,” Palestinian Attorney General Akram al Khatib told WAFA, the official Palestinian news agency, on Saturday, while specifying that the bullet had been handed over to a team of US ballistic specialists and not to the Israeli authorities. Khatib has previously said that the journalist was killed by a 5.56 mm armour-piercing round with a steel

THE UNITED STATES HAS CALLED FOR THE TWO SIDES TO COOPERATE AND SHARE THEIR EVIDENCE WITH EACH OTHER

component. Abu Akleh was wearing a helmet and a protective vest marked with the word “Press” when she was shot in the head. A month-long investigation by The New York Times found that the bullet that killed Abu Akleh was fired from the approximate location of an Israeli military convoy early that morning, most likely by a soldier from an elite unit, corroborating eyewitness reports from the scene. Israeli military officials have said it would only be possible to unequivocally determine the source of the gunfire if the Palestinian Authority, which exercises limited control over parts of the West Bank, handed over the bullet extracted from Abu Akleh’s body so that the army could either match it to a rifle used that morning by an Israeli sniper or rule out Israeli involvement in the killing. American and Israeli officials had

no immediate comment on the plans to examine the bullet. Israel had previously called for a joint investigation and offered to examine the bullet in the presence of Palestinian and US representatives. The Palestinian Authority has refused a joint investigation, citing distrust of the Israelis. The United States has called for the two sides to cooperate and share their evidence with each other. State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters last month that sharing evidence “will be able to facilitate what is our goal, what should be a collective goal, and that is an investigation that is impartial, that’s thorough, and that culminates in accountability.” The Biden administration has come under mounting pressure from members of the House and Senate to launch an independent investigation into the killing of Abu Akleh, who was also a US citizen. A letter to President Joe Biden dated June 23 and signed by 24 Senate Democrats called for direct US involvement in the investigation into her death. The Palestinian Authority’s decision to hand over the bullet comes two weeks before Biden is expected to visit the Middle East for the first time since he took office. — *New York Times*



Palestinian American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh

Disclose
privacy, become
a celebrity



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami

An author, columnist,
creative writer,
translator and a
communications
professional

Are you interested to catch hundreds of thousands of followers and fans? How creative are you to share mesmerising visuals and inspiring content that could captivate and charm the eyes of your followers? All you need to do is have these on your social media platforms to make your posts as fascinating as possible most of the time. Having useful content does not become a priority sometimes as you build your followers’ database. It all depends on the tools and ways to attract your audience; it could be done either ways, the easy or hard one.

The call is yours to take the path you like! You no longer need to be a well-known person to be a celebrity. Rather, sometimes breaking the rules and disclosing your personal privacy paves the way for you to join the world of celebrities. As becoming a social media celebrity is a big demand nowadays for many, it is becoming much easier than it used to be in olden days! One has to go for the content that attracts the public the most. Breaking your personal life privacy on your posts shortcuts the way for you to attract thousands of followers.

Unfortunately, it is as simple as that! Such approach is working well for many of the so-called social media influencers. If truth to be told, this

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is becoming a trend and a way of life and making business even for some. Sacrificing the privacy of their life and the life of others like spouse, kids and family is no longer an issue to them! They, perhaps, regard it as part of being an open-minded person or family who doesn’t mind publicising their lifestyle and introducing family members on their posts and broadcasts. On the other hand, some social media celebrities are being used as brand ambassadors for corporates or products. They have been appointed to promote brands, products and services too, making the most of their fans and followers’ database. Eventually, they are making a living and business out of this. Regardless of their credibility status and accountability, all that matters is completing the mission and delivering the message to public or target audience.

Unfortunately, in many cases their words are taken for granted, while it should not always be. With all respect to those serious and honest social media influencers, others are sometimes misleading audience or even deceiving them with their inappropriate or inaccurate messages or dishonest opinions and views. Displeasingly, it is becoming a business-oriented attitudes and behaviours by which they make money and become a celebrity.

In a different note, probably some of those influencers are having no sense of nationality in a way they don’t give back to the nation. They are only materialistic humans who get reluctant when called to promote the country or support a national project or a corporate initiative. Not all of course, but some are money-driven and social media hitmen. In addition to their business-making approach, they shall be more responsible towards giving back to community and nation alike.

Once you get your footsteps on the way, then you can discover this new experience, get viral and become a celebrity. Just be among the most famous influencers, models or even Hollywood’s next stars! Featuring your life, playing to choose your style, picking the hottest social media trend, interacting with friends and breaking privacy and even entertaining all the drama that happens around is all that makes one a celebrity nowadays.

I just wonder how those fake celebrities dare to do this to themselves, their families and public too; such irresponsible social media influencers indeed. One has to decide on what kind of a celebrity s/ he wants to be. Just make your mind and watch out when dealing with materialistic social media celebrities!



A FALSE
START

Italian jockey
Stefano Piras,
who races for the
'Bruco' district,
falls during a
false start of his
horse Uragano
Rosso during the
historical Italian
horse race Palio
di Siena on
Sunday in Siena,
Tuscany. – AFP

The European war project



Mark Leonard

The writer is Director of
the European Council
on Foreign Relations,
is the author of The
Age of Unpeace: How
Connectivity Causes
Conflict

For seven decades, European integration has been driven by the quest for peace. But since Russia’s war on Ukraine on February 24, Europe has found itself unifying in response to war. The peace project has given way to a war project, and this fundamental shift is forcing European governments to reconsider some of their longest-held principles.

Most obviously, they now must concern themselves with hard power. There has been much discussion about German rearmament, Denmark’s decision to participate in European joint defence arrangements, and Sweden and Finland’s bid for Nato membership. Taboos have been broken, with European Union member states sending heavy weapons to Ukraine and the EU’s “peace facility” pledging €2 billion (\$2.1 billion) to arm that beleaguered country. Moreover, the EU has fashioned its economy into a weapon to use against Russia, and it is now planning for a war economy, where security will take priority over efficiency.

A second major change is that Europeans must rethink interdependence. European integration previously reflected the belief that economic links between countries would create a foundation for political reconciliation. That was the idea behind the original European Coal and Steel Community (the precursor to the EU), which turned former enemies into friends by merging the national industries that had produced the munitions for World War II. The hope was that even if economic links between countries did not make war impossible, they would at least prevent a dangerous escalation in tensions.

But Russia’s war made a mockery of this idea, demonstrating that interdependence can also enable one party to blackmail the other. This realisation came hot on the heels of worries about “mask diplomacy” and “vaccine nationalism” during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many countries found themselves wholly reliant on others for critical supplies. It follows that Europe’s

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decoupling from Russian energy will also be accompanied by efforts to make Europe less dependent on China.

A third question involves the concept of sovereignty. For the past few decades, Europeans were mainly focused on taming this impulse in the name of supranational cooperation. But faced with an aggressive revisionist power, they now recognise that sovereignty must be protected before it can be pooled.

For its part, Russia has perverted the post-sovereigntist rhetoric used by Europeans during the Balkan wars to justify its own war in Ukraine, which it cynically describes as a mission to protect Russian speakers from genocide. In the 1990s, Europeans advanced the “postmodern” idea that if there were massive abuses of universal human rights (those recognised by the United Nations) taking place within a sovereign country, the international community had a duty to step in to protect the victims from their own government.

The Russian variant of the “responsibility to protect” is not postmodern but pre-modern. The Kremlin believes it can decide unilaterally to intervene in other countries to protect members of a loosely defined Russian civilisation. Earlier generations of Western leaders were wrong to assume that only their countries would ever be strong enough to override

others’ sovereignty. A fourth issue is the supposed universalism of the European project. In the early 2000s, I wrote a book titled Why Europe Will Run the 21st Century. I believed that the EU’s model of international cooperation would spread osmotically to all corners of the world. But the failure of the EU enlargement process in Turkey and the rise of a revanchist Russia have shown that the EU model is unlikely even to encompass all of Europe, let alone the whole planet.

In discussions with leaders from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, I have been struck by how few of them share the intense moral outrage that characterises the West’s response to Russia’s war. They see the conflict as a regional European conflict, rather than as a world war with which they should be concerned. Eurocentrism has not only led Europeans to misread leaders such as Russian President Vladimir Putin; it also is hindering Europe’s appeals to the rest of the world.

To correct course, European leaders must recognise that the EU experience is an exceptional product of a particular history and geography, and they must demonstrate enough curiosity to understand the world through others’ eyes. In a paradoxical way, decentring Europe could be the necessary first step to exercising European power in a multipolar world.

A fifth principle that needs rethinking is the idea of political order.

While some European leaders cling to a security framework that reflects the principles of the post-Cold War moment, the hard truth is that Europe’s unique order – based on a set of institutions and treaties – has already been destroyed. In the future, European security will look much more like that of other regions, such as Asia.

The balance of power and military might will matter as much as any treaties between Europeans and Russians.

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Europe has found itself unifying in response to war.

sport

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SSL TEAM OMAN SEAL STUNNING COMEBACK ON GOLDEN DAY

MUSCAT: Oman's Star Sailors League team claimed a stunning victory on the final day of competition on Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland. After the first two days, SSL Team Oman sat last place in the group with a one-point penalty for late registration but two wins on Golden Day, where the final two races carry double points, saw the 'Lions of the Sea' overtake Mexico, Guatemala and Cuba, themselves receiving a similar one-point penalty, to top the group and qualify for the SSL Gold Cup 2022 Finals Series in Bahrain in October.

SSL Team Oman produced an aggressive display in the first race of the day, timing their attack to perfection in the final downwind leg and forcing SSL Team Cuba into a costly double-gybe that proved decisive. Cuba finished second, ahead of Guatemala with Mexico in fourth. The result meant that the final race of the weekend turned into a winner-takes-all clash for the qualification places.

Oman made it two wins from two in a dramatic finish. In second place behind Cuba at halfway, which would have seen both teams qualify, the competitive spirit took over and both teams took turns in attacking each other to try and seize victory.

The Omani team went for gold on the final approach, forcing Cuba to tack out wide and surrender the lead with SSL Guatemala lurking dangerously behind.

While the Cuban team protested, the Guatemalans closed in, and briefly it looked like their dream of qualification was over but before it was too late, SSL Team Cuba found their composure to deny the Guatemala on the finishing line.

Musab al Hadi, SSL Team Oman Helmsman, said, "As I said before, the racing hasn't ended until we get a first, and we get the firsts today. This is a big achievement for my team, well done to the crew because they have done their job very well. Now we'll get ready to go to Bahrain!"

Skippered by Nasser al Mashari, the team of Ali al Balushi, Ahmed al Hasni, Abdul Rahman al Mashari, Yasir al Rahbi, Musab al Hadi, Raad al

SSL Team Oman produced an aggressive display in the first race of the day, timing their attack to perfection in the final downwind leg and forcing SSL Team Cuba into a costly double-gybe that proved decisive. Cuba finished second, ahead of Guatemala with Mexico in fourth. The result meant that the final race of the weekend turned into a winner-takes-all clash for the qualification places

Hadi, Haitham al Wahaibi, Waleed al Kindi, Akram al Wahaibi and Husain al Jabri, along with team administrator Marwa al Khaifi will now prepare for the SSL Gold Cup Final Series which begins on October 28 at the new Water City Garden development project, in front of the iconic Manama City skyline.

Star Sailors League, a World Sailing Special Event, was created by sailors for sailors and is the ultimate challenge between sailing nations. Held in the Kingdom of Bahrain from October 28 to November 20, 2022, the SSL Gold Cup Finals Series follows a similar format to the Fifa World Cup where groups of four teams face each other and the top two teams advance to the next round.

Forty nations start the competition, including the World's Top 23 Sailing nations plus 16 teams coming from the Qualifying Series – held between May and July 2022 - and host nation Bahrain, all racing on the exact same boat, the SSL47, a 14-metre performance racing boat. The Finals Series in October will see an initial 16 teams race in four Groups, with the top two being joined in the next round by high-ranking teams that have already qualified for the Last 16, Final 8 and Quarterfinals.

Al Harthy finishes sixth in Elms Monza qualifying

MUSCAT: Increased ballast and reduced power for Oman Racing's No.69 Aston Martin Vantage GTE this weekend at Monza in Italy halted any hopes Ahmad al Harthy had of challenging for the LMGTE class pole position, during qualifying for today's third round of the European Le Mans Series.

Omani racer Al Harthy, holding the joint-lead of the LMGTE championship going into the grid determining session on Saturday, July 2, had the thankless task of trying to compete in qualifying with, effectively, one hand tied behind his back.

As a result of Oman Racing's LMGTE class race victory at Imola last time out, championship officials not only applied an extra 25kg of ballast to the Aston Martin for Monza but have also taken away an amount of power boost – both having a major bearing around the ultra-quick Italian track.

It showed too through practice and qualifying, Al Harthy wringing every last bit of performance out of the car he could in the latter to post the sixth fastest time of 1m50.118 seconds (262.77km/h) but still ending the session some 1.2 seconds shy of pole position.

Initially closer to two seconds away from the pace after the first flying lap, the Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS supported racer determinedly plugged away and closed the gap as best he could against the odds.

Knowing a very tough and challenging four-hour race awaits today, Al Harthy remains his usual confident and professional self and will be giving it everything – along with team-mates San De Haan and Marco Sorensen – to deliver the best result possible in the circumstances for Oman Racing.

"I'm really happy with my performance in qualifying, it was one of my best qualifying sessions in this car and it was the best we could get out of it in the situation we've been placed in", commented Al Harthy, "We're carrying success ballast due to Imola and the championship position, which is really going to hamper our performance anyway of course, and now we have a BOP [Balance of Performance] change which means we are down on power compared to our competitors.

"So, overall, P6 is honestly the best we could have thought of coming into qualifying. The race will be very difficult, Monza is obviously a very fast circuit where power is key. In terms of Oman Racing, we always do the best we can in terms of capitalising on everything, such as strategies and teamwork, and hopefully we will come out with a reasonable result."





India strongly placed despite Bairstow's fine innings

ANDY JALIL AT EDGBASTON

BIRMINGHAM: Jonny Bairstow's magnificent form with the bat saw him to his third century in three consecutive Tests and helped England to a first innings total of 284 in reply to India's 416.

India in the second innings were 26 for the loss of Shubman Gill's wicket for 4 with James Anderson having him held at slip from the third ball of the innings and the tourists were in an overall lead of 158 shortly before tea.

Resuming on the third morning on the overnight score of 84 for five, Jonny Bairstow, on 12, picked up runs playing freely while Ben Stokes, uncharacteristically, was more cautious with England still trailing by 332. Bairstow brought up the 50 of their partnership with a flicked four off Mohammad Shami and his own half century, his 23rd in Tests, followed in the next over.

Stokes, on 18, had been fortunate to be dropped by Shardul Thakur from a skier at cover off Shami and then again was dropped by Jasprit Bumrah at mid-off. But on 25 his luck ran out on the next ball when he was held with Bumrah making amends for his earlier clanger with the catch at mid-off off Thakur's first over, having replaced Shami who had conceded 30 from his five overs.

Lunch was taken a quarter of an hour early with rain once again in his match causing a disruption.

On resumption, Bairstow drove the first ball to mid-on for four off Thakur to take his score to 95 and then in the bowler's next over a lovely square drive brought him his third century in three successive Tests.

It followed his score of 162 in the previous (third) Test, against New Zealand at his home ground, Headingley, and 136 prior to that in the second Test at Trent Bridge. The eleventh Test hundred had come quickly from 119 balls and contained 14 fours and two sixes,

one each off Shami and Siraj. He saw England to 241 before his was the seventh wicket to fall.

Shami had returned for a new spell and Bairstow, on 106 from 140 balls faced, edged his drive at the first ball which was just outside the off stump. Kohli, at first slip, held on to it smartly and England were still trailing by 168.

Ten minutes later Stuart Broad skied a top edge behind the stumps off Siraj. And after Sam Billings and Matt Potts had added 19, Billings played-on to a ball from Siraj that came into him for 36 and that was 267 for nine.

A six over mid-wicket by Potts off Siraj saw the batsman to 19 before the next ball ended the innings after the third umpire had a long look to decide the ball had been held above the ground at second slip. It gave Siraj four for 66 and Bumrah finished with three for 68.

SCOREBOARD	
India first innings: 416	S Broad c Pant b Siraj1
England first innings (O/n: 84/5):	M Potts c lyer b Siraj19
A Lees b Bumrah6	J Anderson (not out)6
Z Crawley c Gill b Bumrah9	Extras: (B-16, LB-5, NB-13, W-1)35
O Pope c lyer b Bumrah10	Total: (all out, 61.3 overs) 284
J Root c Pant b Siraj31	Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-27, 3-44, 4-78, 5-83,
J Bairstow c Kohli b Shami106	6-149, 7-241, 8-248, 9-267
J Leach c Pant b Shami0	Bowling: Bumrah 19-3-68-3, Shami 22-4-78-2,
B Stokes c Bumrah b Thakur25	Siraj 11.3-2-66-4, Thakur 7-0-48-1, Jadeja 2-0-3-
S Billings b Siraj36	0

Skilful Lyon has more to offer, says Vettori

GALLE, Sri Lanka: Australia's assistant coach Daniel Vettori on Sunday said Nathan Lyon's ability to combine spin with bounce makes him a lethal weapon on turning pitches — and for years to come.

The 34-year-old Lyon towered above the Sri Lankan spinners in the team's thrashing of the hosts in the recent opening Test in Galle to return with match figures of 9-121. The performance took Lyon into the top 10 leading wicket-takers of all time with 436 wickets in 109 Tests.

New Zealand spin great Vettori, who joined Australia's support staff full-time ahead of the two-match series, said it was more about conversing with the off-spinner than coaching him.

"It's a tactical conversation. Nathan has seen everything in world cricket. To be a finger spinner and be in the top 10 wicket-takers in the world is incredible," Vettori told reporters.

"Albeit the majority of the time it is down to his skill level. The ability to be successful with that much turn and bounce"

Vettori said, "And then you see the development of that bowler, to read conditions, to add things to his armoury and a desire to just keep wanting to get better.

"He has a number of years left



Australia's Nathan Lyon unsuccessfully appeals for a leg before wicket (LBW) against Sri Lanka's Kusal Mendis (not pictured) during the third day of first Test. — AFP

in him, so he can climb up that table even further."

Lyon, along with fellow spinners Mitchell Swepson and Travis Head bundled out Sri Lanka twice for 212 and 113 to bring victory in just over two days and lead the series 1-0.

Australian batsmen also stepped up their game to counter the spin with an effective sweep shot as Cameron Green (77), Usman Khawaja (71) and wicketkeeper-batsman Alex Carey (45) contributed to the team's first innings total of 321.

— AFP

■ OEF ORGANISES ENDURANCE RACE IN SALALAH



The Oman Equestrian Federation, in cooperation with the Dhofar Equestrian Committee and the General Directorate of Culture, Sports and Youth in Dhofar, organised the endurance qualifying race for 40 km and 80 km on Salalah beach, with the participation of 20 horses, including 14 horses in the 40 km race, and 6 horses in the 80 km race, in preparation for participation in the main Endurance Race in July for Salalah Tourism Festival. .

Raoum becomes first Omani to participate in international karate meet

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, JULY 3

Raoum bint Hamad al Fazariyah is the first karate player to represent the Oman national team in foreign forums, after winning a number of titles in local championships at Oman Karate Academy for several years.

She was invited by the Omani Karate Committee and the coach, Hussein al Desouki, to attend the Omani Karate team's training, which coincided with the plan of the Omani Committee to select top Oman players to represent Oman team for the first time in the history of the game.

Raoum began her professional career at the age of 15, where she represented the national junior team in the Asian Karate



Championship from April 2019 in Malaysia, and was also ranked fourth place in The UAE International Open Karate Championship in November 2019.

Oman National player Raoum al Fazari, who started her speech by saying "I started my karate playing in 2014 when I was ten years old, specifically at the Karate Academy

in Oman in Saham branch club, under the Egyptian coach Nasr Abbas, to take advantage of the free time during the summer vacation in 2014".

"I loved this sport and decided to continue training, and my parents were credited with giving me the first motivation during my professionalism in this game,



and despite the difficulties I faced in organising my time during school times, but I succeeded in continuing in this field and achieved my goals, while obtaining black belt with international accreditation from the Japan Karate Association on December 5, 2020 after 7 years of diligence and perseverance", she added.

Al Fazariyah participated in tournaments at the level of the Omani Academy in various branches and won many medals, including getting the kata gold in the Academy Championship in Al Buraimi in 2018.

She also won a kumite gold in Muscat in 2018, then she won two kumite and kata golds in

the academy championship in Al Dakhiliyah in 2018 and 2019, respectively. As well as the bronze kumite in the Oman Karate Championship in 2019, then the kumite silver in the international championship at the Shotokan Club in Muscat in 2020 also won the kumite gold in the Oman Karate Championship in 2021.



MOTHER OF ALL WINS AS MARIA REACHES WIMBLEDON QUARTERS

LONDON: Germany's Tatjana Maria saved two match points to reach her first Grand Slam quarterfinal at Wimbledon on Sunday.

The 34-year-old mother-of-two defeated former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko 5-7, 7-5, 7-5 after battling back from 1-4 down in the second set.

Maria, ranked 103, fired nine aces and exploited Ostapenko's all-or-nothing approach which resulted in 52 winners and 57 unforced errors for the Latvian.

Maria made her Wimbledon debut back in 2007, but had never previously got beyond the third round of a Grand Slam.

"It makes me so proud to be a mum — that's the best thing in the world", said Maria, who only returned from a second maternity leave less than a year ago.

"I love my kids. To be able to do it together, it makes this really special."

Maria will face fellow German Jule Niemeier for a place in the semifinals.

BOUZKOVA SNAPS GARCIA STREAK

Unseeded Czech Marie Bouzkova snapped Frenchwoman Caroline Garcia's eight-match winning run on grass with a 7-5 6-2 victory in the Wimbledon fourth round on Sunday to reach her first Grand Slam quarterfinal.

Since knocking out American seventh seed Danielle Collins in the opening round, the 23-year-old Bouzkova has grown from strength to strength at the grasscourt Grand Slam where she had never previously got past the second round.

The 66th-ranked Czech had



won her only previous match on grass against Garcia who was considered a contender to win Wimbledon this year after her title run at Bad Homburg and a wide open women's draw.

"If you would tell me before the tournament started I would be in the quarters, I probably wouldn't believe you", said Bouzkova, who will next meet either Ons Jabeur, the highest seed remaining in the women's draw, or 24th seed Elise Mertens.

"Always try to take it match by match. Since first match has been really tough journey for me. Just to be now in the quarters, it's something very special for me.

"I'm just really proud that I've been able to handle everything the way I have and just enjoy the moment."

With Wimbledon playing a full

schedule for the first time on the middle Sunday, Bouzkova broke 55th-ranked Garcia early on Court Two but was broken back in the eighth game.

From 4-5 down in the opening set, however, Bouzkova, who made only four unforced errors in the match, won nine of the next 11 games to seal victory in an hour and 23 minutes.

Bouzkova was forced to withdraw from Roland Garros after testing positive for Covid-19 ahead of her second-round match.

"I've actually been feeling really well physically after Covid in Paris", she told reporters.

"I always like to play on grass. I just know it takes a few days, maybe one or two matches, to get used to it, to make some small changes." — AFP/Reuters



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Ministry of Finance signs pacts for offset projects

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 3

Oman’s Ministry of Finance, represented by the Partnership for Development Programme (PFD) and in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, signed a number of offset agreements that will contribute to the modernisation of the Ministry of Defence and the Sultan’s Armed Forces, as well as support national industries, empower Omani SMEs and providing training and employment opportunities.

The agreements were signed by Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Partnership for Development Programme. Also present were Dr



Mohammed bin Nasser al Zaabi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence, and a number of officials representing the Ministry of Finance, Omani Investment Authority, Ministry of Defence and the Sultan’s Armed Forces.

The agreements include four

ALL OF THE PROJECTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY A GROUP OF INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES THAT ARE OBLIGORS UNDER THE PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

Notable are projects for the construction of a maintenance workshop for the Royal Army of Oman’s armoured vehicles, establishment of the National Space Authority’s multi-sensor direct space reception station, transfer of the hook engine maintenance technology, as well as the provision of a number of specialised systems for tactical

transport aircraft (C130) and fighter aircraft (F-16) with the Royal Air Force of Oman.

All of the projects will be implemented by a group of international companies that are obligors under the Partnership for Development Programme.

Besides enabling Oman to keep pace with rapid developments in the world of technology and manufacturing, the projects will also open up wider areas for national training and rehabilitation of cadres, and provide new openings for job-seekers in the fields of technical, technical, mechanical, logistics and others, as well as push towards the rehabilitation and empowerment of SMEs to play an active role at the national level.

(With inputs from ONA)

Galfar wins RO 16m road project

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, JULY 3

Well-known Omani contractor Galfar Engineering & Contracting SAOG has announced that it has been awarded a contract from the Ministry of Defence for the dualisation of Phase 2 of Al Murtafaat Street at a cost of RO 16.145 million.

The publicly listed company said in a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA) that the contract is for a total distance of about 16 kilometres,



which includes 8.30 km of dual carriageway featuring a total of six traffic lanes with three lanes in each direction. Also as part of its scope, Galfar will construct 7.70km of service roads, add three signalized junctions, two

roundabouts and 17 major culverts.

A 18-months timeframe has been specified for the completion of the project, the company stated, adding: “We are pleased to extend our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Defence for the confidence it has placed in Galfar by awarding this project.”

Founded in 1972, Galfar Engineering & Contracting specializes in the construction of roads, bridges and public facilities, and carries out oil and gas projects as well.

OIA investment to lead to insulin manufacturing plant in Oman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 3

Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the integrated sovereign wealth fund of the Sultanate of Oman, has announced an investment in BioGenomics, a developer of biosimilar pharmaceuticals with a focus on diabetic therapeutics.

The company produces and develops an array of insulin medications in collaboration with a local Omani firm.

This investment reinforces OIA’s efforts in enabling the private sector in Oman and collaborating with it to attract foreign investment.

This investment targets setting up a manufacturing plant in Oman to produce insulin. The production will initially target regional markets and then aim to expand to cover European and African markets.

In the recently published issue of its newsletter, ‘Enjaz and Eejaz’, OIA stated that its investment in BioGenomics represents its great interest in the healthcare sector, which proved to be vital during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

In addition to the returns it brings to the investors, the healthcare sector contributes to economic diversification and job creation. It



unburdens healthcare institutions, especially with the increase of diabetic patients.

In the foreword of this issue of the newsletter, which coincides with the second anniversary of OIA’s establishment, OIA President Abdulsalam al Murshidi said that over the last period, a roadmap was clearly drawn involving national and international investments.

Thus, OIA divided its assets into two different portfolios: the ‘National Development Portfolio,’ which will contribute to national economic growth and development, and the ‘Future Generations Portfolio,’ which targets achieving maximum returns from international investments for future Omani generations.

(With inputs from ONA)



Majan University College
كلية مجان الجامعية

Majan College SAOG

BOARD REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER ENDED 31 MAY, 2022

Respected Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Majan College SAOG (Majan University College), I am pleased to present this report on Majan’s financial performance and the accompanying unaudited interim condensed financial statements for the nine-month period ended 31 May 2022

Financial Performance

Majan financial performance was affected in the core business due to the impact of change in entry criteria of postgraduate students. However, that was counter balanced through increase in investment income and other income. In comparison to the same period in previous financial year, total income has decreased by 2% to be OMR 3.46 Million mainly from decrease in returning postgraduate students offset against increase in investment income and other income. Total expenses have decreased by 2% to be OMR 2.75 Million mainly from the decline in postgraduate fees income and corresponding reduction in affiliation fees and from the agreed reduction in affiliation fees rate with the academic partner for undergraduate programmes. Therefore, net profit before tax increased by 2% to be OMR 0.71 Million, however, Taxation has increased by 299% to be OMR 0.10 Million mainly because of deferred tax income on provisions on the impairment of fee receivables & fair value adjustment of investments FVPTL during prior period. Consequently, overall net profit after tax has decreased by 19% to be OMR 0.6 Million. Earnings per share has decreased from 8 Baiza per share to 7 Baiza per share.

Appreciation

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to his Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his unlimited support and guidance to higher education. Our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for its support to the

private higher education sector. This resulted in tremendous growth in the sector. It is our intention that Majan College SAOG (Majan University College) continues to support to achieve the vision of his Majesty by continuously improving and enriching the standards of its academic programmes and its resources.

Dr. Salam Salim Al Mur Al Kindi
Chairman

UNAUDITED CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Category	31ST MAY 2022 OMR	31ST MAY 2021 OMR	Audited 31ST AUG 2021 OMR
Assets			
Non-current assets			
Property and equipment	3,523,661	3,813,517	3,751,026
Deferred tax asset	276,657	271,598	260,883
Investments at fair value through other comprehensive income			
Total non-current asset	3,800,318	4,085,115	4,011,909
Current assets			
Receivables & prepayments	2,243,808	8,329,576	802,394
Cash & bank balance	141,636	765,158	1,163,403
Investments at fair value through profit and loss	1,174,411	992,748	1,329,682
Investments at amortised cost	6,418,857	-865	6,660,453
Total current assets	9,978,712	10,086,617	9,955,932
Total assets	13,779,030	14,171,733	13,967,841
Equity			
Share capital	9,000,000	9,000,000	9,000,000
Legal reserve	1,531,376	1,410,423	1,470,584
Retained earning	985,054	1,201,477	437,931
Proposed Dividend			1,305,000
Fair value reserve			
Total Equity	11,516,430	11,611,900	12,213,515
Liabilities			
Non-current liabilities			
Deferred government grant			
Employees end of service benefit	613,149	632,705	610,360
Students security deposits	272,105	351,455	327,805
Deferred tax liability			
Total non-current liabilities	885,254	984,160	938,165
Current Liabilities			
Payables & accruals	1,257,104	1,441,409	556,271
Dividends Payable			
Tax payable	87	641	17,580
Provision for tax	120,155	133,623	242,310
Total current liabilities	1,377,346	1,575,673	816,161
Total liabilities	2,262,600	2,559,833	1,754,326
Total Equity & Liabilities	13,779,030	14,171,733	13,967,841
Net assets value per share	0.128	0.129	0.136

Note: The complete accounts are available on Muscat Stock Exchange (www.msx.om)

Bank Muscat hosts talk by noted entrepreneur and personal finance coach

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat's Retail Banking Group recently hosted a seminar by noted entrepreneur and financial coach Mariam Aldakhil. The seminar was attended by a group of Najahi customers, Premier Banking customers, and senior officials from the bank.

Providing non-financial support is one of the most important forms of support that financial institutions are working to develop to respond to the rapid changes in the sector, aimed at entrepreneurs or individuals who seek to invest and develop their wealth.

Besides innovative services and financial facilities, Bank Muscat has been keen throughout the years to conduct various workshops, training and advisory programmes for different customer segments, offered by noted and specialised coaches on different topics concerning the



business sector.

On this occasion, Ilham Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank

Muscat has been keen to develop its services in line with the rapid changes in the sector and customers' needs by enhancing its non-financial services. The

bank offers seminars, workshops, training and advisory programmes to enhance financial inclusion and awareness. The bank is pleased to offer such seminars to support our SME and Premier Banking customers.

We are also delighted to have Mariam Aldakhil, one of the best-known personal finance experts in the region, share her insights and learnings with us." She also took the opportunity to thank Personal Banking customers for their partnership and strong confidence in Bank Muscat.

During the seminar, Mariam Aldakhil, noted entrepreneur and financial coach, spoke at length about the challenges of financial management, especially in the initial phase of one's wealth building journey, and provided valuable tips and advice to the customers gathered at the event.

In addition to training and advisory services, Bank Muscat

offers a wide array of financial products to its Premier Banking customers. These services include a complete suite of investment options in global asset classes through its wealth management platform and tie-ups with international counter parties.

The range of solutions offered to its clients includes stocks, bonds, ETFs and mutual funds across global markets. Bank Muscat Premier Banking also offers selective exposure to Private Equity Funds, Real Estate Funds and Commodity ETFs; Offshore Banking and Portfolio Management through globally reputed counterparties.

Premier Banking clients also receive regular research reports and briefings covering investment ideas, global macroeconomic outlook and updates on key economic and geographic events impacting performance of various asset classes.

OAB supports initiative as part of sustainability strategy



MUSCAT: In line with its sustainability strategy and its commitment towards supporting the community development, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently sponsored Design Muscat 2022 event. Held under the patronage of HH Dr Adham Turki al Said, Assistant Professor of Economics, Sultan Qaboos University, the event took place in Scientific College of Design on June 13-15.

The symposium witnessed various international and local participation from the public and private sectors. Many experts in the design and sustainability sector and those interested in the field also attended.

"Supporting effective initiatives that are aligned with our sustainability strategy comes at the forefront of our mandate. Through our contribution to these initiatives, we aspire to enhance socio-economic growth. Design Muscat is one of the essential events that resonate with Oman Vision 2040 which aims to uplift the quality of life by harnessing sustainability and keeping abreast with the latest international developments. Therefore, building a bright future for the Sultanate of Oman and its people," said Rashad al Zubair, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Arab Bank.

Under the theme "Re-thinking creative Industries Role towards Sustainability", the event organised several interactive workshops and delivered presentations that discussed applying the elements of sustainability in art and design. It also focused on the challenges and solutions related to implementing sustainability in the physical environment and integrating sustainability into academic modules and research.

Furthermore, the symposium shed light on the role of various entities in achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 concerning sustainability and supporting the innovative solutions presented by academic institutions, researchers, and artists.

Design Muscat 2022 is a non-profit international event and a brand with a focus on the creative industries. It is a professional platform for practitioners, academicians and students to share expertise and knowledge. It is a biennial gathering where professionals explore how creativity, innovation, business and social factors impact design. OAB delivered a presentation on sustainability during the event that highlighted its financial literacy initiative.

NBO appoints new AGMs



MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) has announced the appointment of Mohamed Abdullah al Dhahab, and Ghadeer Iqbal Ali as Assistant General Managers in its corporate banking division.

Bringing over two decades of combined experience to their new roles, they are set to steer forward the bank's award-winning Corporate Banking segment, reinforcing NBO as a pioneer in serving its partners with the support of experienced best-in-class expertise.

Anil Kumar, Head of Corporate Banking at NBO, said, "As Corporate Banking continues to grow and become more sophisticated, our offerings are evolving more rapidly than ever before as we face an increasingly competitive regional market. Our teams are critical to this and we are delighted to welcome Mohamed and Ghadeer to senior management, adding to the hand-picked and highly qualified

candidates that are supporting us in this segment.

Meanwhile, as we continue creating a digitally enhanced customer experience and putting today's technologies to their best use, their wealth of experience is certain to add value to our efforts, to strengthen our position in the corporate banking sphere and ultimately, serve our customers better."

Ghadeer has more than 10 years of experience in Corporate and Investment Banking, having worked in senior roles with leading financial institutions in Oman. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Finance from Sultan Qaboos University.

Mohamed has more than 13 years of solid experience in the area of Corporate Banking and has worked in various leadership roles in the banking industry. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Strayer University, Washington DC.

MUC wins Excellence in E-Learning Integration Award



MUSCAT: Majana al Macki, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs at MUC participated in the OERLive Digital Transformation Conference and Award held on June 29.

It is a conference that focuses on digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman under the foresight of Oman Vision 2040. The one-of-its-kind conference that focuses on topics from Artificial Intelligence and FinTech to cybersecurity, Information Technology, Space Research and Metaverse that provides insights into the industry to empower organisations across both the corporate and government sector.

Majana al Macki participated as the

Academic Partner in the conference and won the Excellence in E-Learning Integration Award.

This award came as an acknowledgment of MUC achievement of making E-Learning during the Covid-19 period a unique experience. Nabila al Macki, Deputy Dean for Academic Affairs at MUC presented Majana al Macki experience in transformation to online teaching during Covid-19 and highlighting MUC as a pioneer in using educational technologies to enrich the learning experience.

Al Macki emphasised that MUC provided an innovative learning environment that supports and empowers students to be creative, team players, and inspiring leaders.

Enjoy every drive in the popular Toyota Corolla

MUSCAT: Toyota Corolla with its dynamic driving experiences, impressive fuel-efficiency and more, makes it an ideal choice for every journey. The Corolla continues to grow, year-on-year in popularity across the world.

The Toyota Corolla is designed to make fine impressions with its unique combination of style, space and comfort.

The Corolla's interior is planned keeping the convenience of passengers in mind. The ergonomically designed seats feature new cushion material, while the armrest and ample legroom offer superior comfort for the rear-seat passengers. Depending on the trim level, occupants also benefit from

AC vents for the rear seat, a moonroof, 4.2 or 7-inch color multi-information display (MID), 7-inch touch-screen multimedia infotainment display, rear view camera, cruise control, six-speaker sound system, and 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

Exemplifying Toyota's continuous commitment to providing environmentally friendly vehicles is the addition of a hybrid electric model, which combines two power sources consisting of a petrol engine and electric motor with a combined power of 121 hp.

It is also mated to an Electrically Controlled Continuously Variable Transmission, which provides an outstanding fuel consumption



value of 27.6km/L (Fuel economy may vary due to driving conditions) while improving the driving experience.

The Corolla hybrid contributes to a greener future while allowing

customers to enjoy increased driving satisfaction provided by its advanced technologies which offers exceptional cabin quietness and smooth acceleration, especially when accelerating from

a stand-still.

The Corolla is also available as a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque and is mated to a new Direct Shift CVT transmission; and a 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque, which is paired with a CVT transmission.

For the latest press releases, test drive requests and more, please visit www.toyotaoman.com, www.youtube.com/toyotaoman, www.facebook.com/toyotaoman and instagram.com/toyotaomanofficial/. For any further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Toyota Showroom.

Oman leads MENA countries shifting away from fossil fuels to green energy

JOMAR MENDOZA

@JmObserver

The Sultanate of Oman leads the list of Middle East and North African (MENA) countries shifting away from fossil fuels to green energy, this according to the latest report of Global Energy Monitor.

With over 39.7 GW of prospective solar and wind energy projects, Oman, Morocco and Algeria are emerging as hotspots on MENA's green energy map, accounting for more than half of the region's planned solar and wind additions.

This race to the top of renewables capacity is demonstrating a marked shift away from fossil fuel power in some countries. The combined prospective solar and wind energy projects pursued by the top three countries in the region is nearly four times their prospective new gas-fired capacity.

Both Oman and Algeria are moving assertively on utility-scale wind and solar projects. The Sultanate of Oman, in particular, is demonstrating a marked shift away from fossil power — it has 15.3 GW of prospective utility-

(Image for illustration only)



Capacity in MW	Wind operating capacity	Wind prospective capacity	Solar operating capacity	Solar prospective capacity
Oman	50	0	130	13,500
Morocco	1,165	963	702	13,430
Algeria	10	5,030	434	4,982
Kuwait	10	132	20	9,500
Iraq	0	0	0	5,755
Saudi Arabia	400	500	376	4,590
UAE	0	30	2,600	3,970
Egypt	1,641	2,350	1,882	904

scale solar projects announced, in development, or on construction.

Roughly 20 per cent of Oman's

prospective utility-scale solar and wind capacity will come online in the next two years; the remaining

12.5 GW are associated with green hydrogen project that is projected to come online in 2038.

The top five countries in terms of prospective utility-scale solar and wind capacity additions are: 1. Oman (15.3 GW), 2. Morocco (14.4 GW), 3. Algeria (10.0 GW), 4. Kuwait (9.6 GW), 5. Iraq (5.8 GW)

Meanwhile, Morocco is looking

to maintain its early rise to the top of the region's renewables powerhouses — the 14.4 GW of utility-scale solar and wind projects the country is poised to roll out in the next five years are more than six times its prospective gas investments.

The MENA countries are planning 73.4 GW of utility-scale wind and solar projects which corresponds to a more than five-fold increase in current capacity and marks a serious shift away from oil and gas, the report shows.

The countries in the region, which include some of the world's leading oil producers, predominantly bet on solar energy with over 49.5 GW of prospective utility-scale solar projects forecast to go into operation by the end of the current decade.

The size of both solar and wind projects in the MENA region is considerably bigger than in the rest of the world. The average size of prospective solar parks in the region is about four times bigger than in the rest of the world, and the average wind phase farm size is more than one and a half times that of the rest of the world, the Global Energy Monitor report noted.

ODB approves investment loans worth RO 3.5 million

MUSCAT: Oman Development Bank (ODB) has approved loans for funding of four investment projects worth RO 3.5 million covering aviation training, education, tourism and livestock.

ODB pointed out that its strategic goals accord greater scopes for Oman Vision 2040 programmes by increasing the number of financed projects that provide added value to the national economy. The bank added that its goals include the development of governorates and the creation of employment opportunities for Omani youth.

It advised the heads and directors of ODB branches to play a bigger role in promoting economic activity in the governorates. ODB also accords importance to digital transformation as a means of upgrading the services the bank renders to beneficiaries. — ONA

Oman Arab Bank lauds verdict in embezzlement case

QASIM AL MAASHANI

MUSCAT, JULY 3

Oman Arab Bank (OAB) has welcomed the verdict issued by the Muscat Court of Appeal (Criminal Chamber) in relation to its criminal complaint stemming from the embezzlement of around RO 6 million in funds from the bank. In a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA) on Sunday, the bank noted that the court, in its verdict dated June 28, 2022, had convicted all the accused individuals charged in the criminal case.

Referring to its disclosure to the CMA on December 22, 2020, OAB said it had filed a criminal complaint before the Department for Combatting Economic Crimes at Royal Oman Police on suspicion of forgery and embezzlement of approximately RO 6 million in bank funds.



Besides awarding prison terms and fines, the court also referred OAB's civil claims to the civil court for consideration, the lender said.

It clarified however, that the bank had recovered the stolen amounts in question from the insurance companies as part of its insurance coverage. OAB noted that it reserves the right to file a civil case before the competent courts in coordination with the insurance companies and in line with the Muscat Court of Appeal's verdict.

Oman Air, Turkish Technic sign services pact

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 3

Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate of Oman and Turkish Technic, a leading provider of technical services and solutions for commercial airlines and private jets, have signed a comprehensive ten-year component pool and advance exchange contract for the airline's fleet of Boeing B737 Next Generation and Boeing 737 MAX family.

In accordance with the contract, Istanbul-based maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) provider, Turkish Technic, will provide component pool, component maintenance and advance exchange services for Oman Air's Boeing B737 Next Generation and Boeing B737 MAX family fleet.

This multi-year contract will enable Oman Air to benefit from Turkish Technic's decades of experience in component maintenance.

Captain Nasser bin Ahmed al Salmi, Chief Operating Officer of Oman Air, said: "We are pleased to entrust the leading trademark, Turkish Technic,



with the maintenance of our aircraft. We put our confidence in the globally recognised services provided by Turkish Technic. The services to be provided by Turkish Technic were selected for being the ideal solutions for Oman Air Boeing B737 Next Generation and Boeing 737 MAX operations."

Mikail Akbulut, the CEO of Turkish Technic, said: "We are happy that Oman Air has decided to partner with us for

component pool and exchange services.

As a leading component service provider of more than 900 aircraft from all around the world, we will do our best to help ensure Oman Air continues to meet its customers' expectations. With another milestone contract in our partnership, we look forward to supporting Oman Air's fleet of Boeing B737 Next Generation and Boeing 737 MAX family."

Pacts signed to boost education in PDO concession area

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 3

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) signed on Sunday a pair of agreements with the aim of supporting human capital development and increasing employment opportunities specifically in the area of education.

A Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) was signed with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation to support 150 students under the Company's Community Scholarship Programme (CSP) for 2022/2023.

The MOC was signed by



Prof Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister.

The programme will give students from PDO's concession area the freedom to choose any undergraduate programme that suits their interests and provides a monthly allowance to support them for five years up to the Bachelor's degree level.

More than 1,700 students have benefited from this programme so far.

The second MOC was signed with the Ministry of Education and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences to sponsor

the education of 20 students to become teachers so they can return to work in schools in their local towns and villages.

The agreement was signed by Majid bin Said al Bahri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs, Dr Saeed bin Hamed al Rubaie, President of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences and PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister.

The initiative provides a four-year teacher scholarship, and the total number of Tawteen students sponsored by PDO now stands at 285 since the programme's start in 2016, from a total of 500 students.

Bankers’ next pitch is corporate finance fiction

It’s not going to be a great year to be an investment banker. Fees from advising on mergers and initial public offerings slumped in the first half of 2022, while rising interest rates and jittery debt markets are inhibiting private equity buyers. So bankers need to come up with a new way to win business. There’s an opportunity preparing chief executives still reeling from a global pandemic and the attack on Ukraine to deal with the next calamity.

The value of global mergers announced so far this year is around \$2.1 trillion, down a fifth from the same period of 2021, according to data from Refinitiv. That’s despite big transactions, like Microsoft’s \$69 billion acquisition of games group Activision Blizzard and software maker VMware’s \$61 billion union with chip giant Broadcom.

The amount raised through IPOs around the globe plunged by almost two-thirds to less than \$70 billion as equity markets — especially technology firms — sold off.

Even buyout funds, which are sitting on hundreds of billions of dollars of unspent funds, aren’t taking advantage of the sell-off. Global private equity deal value sunk to a 12-month low in May.

Buyout firms have been involved in deals worth \$542 billion so far this year, up slightly on 2021, but the number of deals has plunged 24 per cent.

Debt is getting more expensive as interest rates rise; UBS estimates that leveraged finance loan volumes are set to decline by about half in the United States this year and 59 per cent in Europe. The market for debt-funded buyouts is therefore likely to get more challenging. On Tuesday Walgreens Boots Alliance scrapped plans to sell its UK pharmacy chain, saying no buyers were able to make an adequate offer.

Bankers from Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan and Morgan Stanley are therefore fighting over a shrinking pie. Investment banking fees were \$24.8 billion in the second quarter, the lowest quarterly tally since the third quarter of 2018.

That puts the onus on investment bankers to be more creative. Often advisers pitch ideas that are within a reasonable bandwidth of expected outcomes.

But corporate chieftains who have spent the past two years grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic and the consequences of Russia’s attack on Ukraine are justifiably concerned about so-called tail risks, or the chance that another unforeseen event could sideswipe their business. — Reuters

The amount raised through IPOs around the globe plunged by almost two-thirds to less than \$70 billion as equity markets — especially technology firms — sold off.



A MAZE AWAY FROM RUSSIAN OIL

A worker does routine checks during a press tour at the opening of a gas processing plant using the rich gas resources from the Black Sea, in Vadu, Romania. In the village of Vadu, southeastern Romania, precious gas extracted from the Black Sea is making its way through a maze of brand new pipes, feeding hopes of stepping away from Russian gas once and for all. — AFP

The World Trade Organization is back



NGOZI OKONJO-IWEALA

The author, Director-General of the World Trade Organization, is a former managing director at the World Bank, finance minister of Nigeria, board chair of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and African Union special envoy on Covid-19.

THE MULTILATERAL DEALS – OF A SCALE AND SCOPE THAT THE WTO HAS NOT ACHIEVED SINCE THE MID-1990S – WILL HELP PEOPLE, BUSINESSES, AND THE PLANET.

As a beautiful dawn crept over Lake Geneva on June 17, a remarkable thing happened at the World Trade Organization’s headquarters. After nearly six days of negotiations at the WTO’s 12th Ministerial Conference — culminating in a marathon 48 hours of non-stop talks — ministers and senior officials from the body’s 164 member states adopted a historic package of agreements.

The multilateral deals — of a scale and scope that the WTO has not achieved since the mid-1990s — will help people, businesses, and the planet.

For example, ministers struck a compromise on a long-debated proposal to waive intellectual-property protections related to Covid-19 countermeasures. Current Covid-19 vaccine supplies remain heavily dependent on the four WTO members that together account for over 90 per cent of exported doses.

As the pandemic has shown, many import-dependent regions are vulnerable to export restrictions introduced by other countries in the face of domestic crises. Governments at the centre of the negotiations believe that the outcome — which has been criticised by public-health activists for doing too little and by pharmaceutical firms for going too far — will contribute to ongoing efforts to deconcentrate and diversify vaccine manufacturing capacity.

This is significant for the future resilience

of global vaccine supplies. Ministers also pledged to keep cross-border trade in medical supplies and components open and transparent, which will help members to gain better access to products needed to fight this pandemic — and to prepare better for the next one.

Next, the new agreement on fisheries subsidies — finally concluded after nearly 21 years of negotiations — will curb the estimated \$22 billion in annual government support that contributes to the depletion of marine resources. By banning subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, as well as fishing in the high seas and in overfished stocks, the pact represents a major step forward in protecting ocean health.

The agreement — the first in WTO history with a primarily environmental objective at its core — also launches a second wave of negotiations to enhance the new rules on sustainability, including by further disciplining support for overcapacity and overfishing.

With the world confronting the worst food-security crisis in decades, WTO members pledged to make trade in food and agricultural inputs more predictable, which will help to make prices less volatile.

They adopted a long-standing proposal to help the World Food Programme by ensuring that national export restrictions do not bar the United Nations agency from accessing supplies for the humanitarian relief it provides to millions of people in

regions hit by war and natural disasters.

WFP Executive Director David Beasley tweeted that “this humanitarian exemption saves time, [money], and ensures critical relief reaches the most vulnerable.”

WTO members also preserved predictability in the global digital economy by extending a long-established moratorium on levying customs duties on cross-border electronic transmissions.

The decision is good news for consumers of streamed movies and video games, and better news for the millions of small and medium-size firms that rely on digital services and markets.

In addition, WTO members initiated a process of institutional reform, acknowledging that the organisation needs to update and improve the way it operates. They committed to making the WTO’s dispute-settlement system fully functional again within two years.

And, importantly, they recognised the role that trade and the WTO can play in empowering women, expanding opportunities for micro, small, and medium-size enterprises, and achieving global environmental goals.

Following the conference, one headline proclaimed that “A New Dawn Breaks for the Global Trading Order.” But success was hardly foreordained. All but a few previous WTO ministerial meetings had delivered little or broke down in acrimony.

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US multinationals grapple with soaring dollar



JULIETTE MICHEL

The author covers business news for Agence France Presse in New York.

The rapid rise of the US dollar since the start of the year is a double-edged sword for American multinational companies, pushing some of them to decide whether to hedge or reposition their activities abroad to avoid fallout.

For an importer, the surge in the greenback against the euro, yen or British pound is a plus, because it makes the products they buy cheaper.

But for a US export company, products sold in dollars have become more expensive, which increases the risk of losing clients and seeing sales decline. And they also lose money when converting foreign revenue back into to dollars.

Many firms already revised their earnings forecasts for the year to account for the changing exchange rate, including computing giant Microsoft, which warned its quarterly sales will fall by \$460 million and its net profit by \$250 million due to the currency hit.

Adobe, Salesforce, Biogen and Pfizer have all warned that the dollar’s rapid rise will have a greater impact on their accounts than expected.

Companies that generate most of their revenue outside of the United States are the most exposed, starting with tech giants, medical equipment makers and service companies, according to Kyriba, a corporate cash management platform.

Kyriba estimates the currency effects could mean a \$40 billion hit

to earnings of S&P 500 firms in the first half of the year.

The Federal Reserve’s decision to aggressively hike interest rates to combat rampant inflation, combined with an influx of funds into the country from investors looking for a safe haven in uncertain times, have combined to boost the US dollar.

The greenback has risen 13 per cent compared to the euro over the last 12 months, approaching parity, and gained 22 per cent against the yen. “Short term, that’s a good thing for the United States because it means all the imports are cheaper and it puts downward pressure on inflation,” said Desmond Lachman of the American Enterprise Institute think tank.

But further out, the effect on the US economy is more nuanced, because if exports fall, “the United States trade deficit widens and then we get more external debt.”

But multinationals “don’t have control over these big items,” he explained.

They can, however, mitigate the effect of fluctuations in foreign currencies in which they price and invoice goods by adopting hedging strategies — using financial instruments that provide a kind of insurance against losses caused by the changing exchange rate.

Most corporations already have hedging programmes in place, and they change their plans on a quarterly or even monthly basis, sometimes trying to predict currency movements, Kyriba’s Bob

Stark said.

But it’s not an exact science, he noted, especially in a time of great uncertainty about the direction of inflation, interest rates and the possibility of a recession.

But “since the start of the pandemic, CFOs have gotten very good at looking at multiple scenarios and building on them,” Stark said.

Sporting goods giant Nike, for instance, warned on Monday that currency effects would cut annual revenue by several percentage points. But the profit hit is much lower because of the hedging. The current high volatility in foreign exchange markets also means it costs more to hedge, so some firms are choosing not to use those instruments. — AFP

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#Living_with_COVID19

Omani artists take part in Khaleej exhibition tracing the evolution of visual art movements

Curated by art historian Dr Aisha Stoby, artists from Oman such as Anwar Sonya, Rabha Mahmoud and The Circle group, led by Hassan Meer will participate in the show Khaleej Modern: Pioneers and Collectives in the Arabian Peninsula which will highlight the younger generation of Omani artists who are leading the country's lively contemporary art scene in line with the Sultanate's Vision 2040... **P20**

Time's up for France's historic 'speaking clock'

FOR NEARLY 90 YEARS, anyone in France needing to know what time it is down-to-the-second could ring up the Paris Observatory and get an automated, astronomy-based response.

But the final countdown for the world-first service has begun.

Nostalgia fans hoping to dial 3699 and get the soothing voice of France's "speaking clock" will have to move fast because telecoms operator Orange is pulling the plug on July 1.

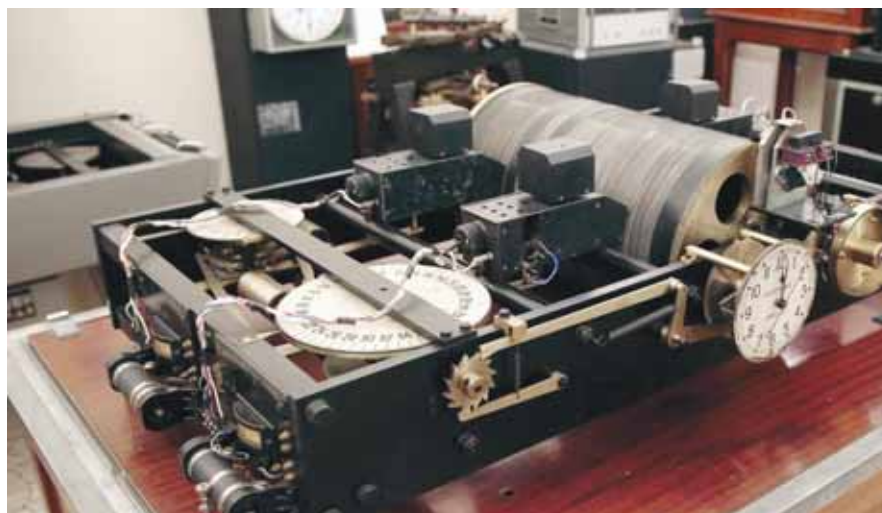
"When I was a kid my mom never stopped asking me to use the speaking clock," recalled Claire Salpetrier, an English teacher in Magnanville,

west of the capital.

It all started when in 1933, the astronomer and Paris Observatory director Ernest Esclançon, got fed up with people clogging up the centre's only phone line to ask the official time — an essential service in the days of mechanical clocks.

So he developed a concept that would later be adopted worldwide, incorporating the latest technologies as the decades went by.

Orange, the former state telecom monopoly, said the Observatory got several millions of calls in 1991, when dedicated infrastructure was set up to provide times accurate to the 10th



millisecond.

"The utility was pretty strong back then, but bit by bit we started seeing an erosion," Orange's marketing director Catherine Breton told.

"There were just a few tens of thousands of calls in 2021."

Hearing the famous "At the fourth beep, the time will be..." in alternating men's and women's voices last stood at 1.50 euros a pop (\$1.58), which may

also have proved dissuasive in the era of smartphones.

SAD AND NOSTALGIC

"I was surprised it still existed. It's something we knew about as kids, when we didn't yet have cell phones," said Antonio Garcia, a health clinic director in Meulan-en-Yvelines, outside Paris.

"It was super handy when you

needed to take a train or a plane — I can still remember the 'beep, beep, beep'," he said.

The current version is the fourth generation of the service and is calculated from Coordinated Universal Time in a temperature-controlled room by the Time-Space Reference Services lab (SYRTE) housed at the Observatory.

Much of the equipment needed to keep it up and running needs replacing, an investment that doesn't appear to be worth the effort.

Media relations specialist Charlotte Vanpeen said she used to use it "when the power went out and you needed to reset the time on everything".

"Hearing about its end makes me sad and nostalgic," she said.

"Kids these days have all these technologies and don't know about what we had. The good things are being forgotten."

For Michel Abgrall, the research engineer in charge of keeping the speaking clock running, its demise is "a bit emotional."

"It's part of our cultural heritage," he said.

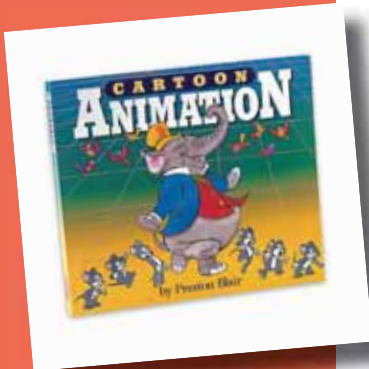
But for those worried about knowing the precise time, Abgrall says don't fret: It features prominently on the Observatory's home page. — AFP

READ

CARTOON ANIMATION

BY PRESTON BLAIR

In *Cartoon Animation*, acclaimed cartoon animator Preston Blair shares his vast practical knowledge to explain and demonstrate the many techniques of cartoon animation.



ART TRENDS

A pair of chalk sketches up for sale will be "as close as any collector is going to get" to owning Leonardo da Vinci's "The Last Supper" masterpiece. The drawings of apostles St John the Evangelist and St James the Less were completed by da Vinci's leading pupil Giovanni Antonio Boltraffio, who was heavily influenced by his master. — dpa



FASHION TRENDS

A model presents a creation during a fashion show celebrating the centenary of French fashion designer Pierre Cardin. — AFP





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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Big wins for veteran Singapore singer at Golden Melody Awards



VETERAN SINGAPOREAN singer Tanya Chua took home four top prizes at Taiwan's Golden Melody Awards, one of the most prestigious entertainment events in the Chinese-speaking world.

Chua, whose first album was the English-language "Bored" in 1997 and whose breakthrough Mandarin record was "Tanya" in 1999, won album of the year for "Depart", as well as best Mandarin album, best Mandarin female singer and best vocal album recording.

At the ceremony late on Saturday, Chua expressed some astonishment that more than two decades after her debut, people were still enjoying her music.

"To be honest I think that I have been singing for many years. I am very afraid that people get bored of it," she said at the ceremony in the southern Taiwanese city of Kaohsiung, having brought her mother as her plus one.

In a surprise, Chinese rocker Cui Jian, whose song "Nothing to My Name" became an anthem to protesters in 1989, won for best Mandarin male singer. He was not there in person and had a message of thanks read out for him on stage.

The Golden Melody Awards celebrate not only Mandopop but also artists singing in Taiwanese - also known as Hokkien - Hakka and indigenous languages.

Song of the year went to the Taiwanese-language "Oh Love, You Are Much Greater Than I Imagined" by the band EggPlantEgg.

Best indigenous singer was won by 83-year-old Osay Hongay, an ethnic Amis from Taiwan's eastern county of Hualien. She gave her acceptance speech in her native language, which was translated for her into Mandarin. — Reuters

ART

Young Arab artists dream of freedom in unique talent show



YOUNG MUSICIANS, dancers, actors and comedians from across the Arab world took to the stage in Tunisia to express their visions of freedom, more than a decade after the Arab Spring uprisings.

The show, performed under the stars at a seaside theatre in the resort of Hammamet and broadcast across the region, featured winners of an online video competition to complete the phrase: "I will only be free when..."

It was the latest in a string of talent and debate programmes organised by media action group Munathara ("debate"), which aims "to spark much-needed conversations about rights, freedoms and social change in the Arab world", according to founder Belabbas Benkredda.

"Public debates even about fundamental rights can be very polarising, especially on social media," the 43-year-old Algerian-German said.

Munathara was born in 2012, the year after the Arab Spring revolts, which resulted in the ouster of Tunisian ruler Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

But ironically, as Munathara marked its 10th anniversary with the show in Hammamet on Saturday, it was overshadowed by President Kais Saied consolidating of power that has sparked fears for Tunisia's democratic gains.

FREEDOMS UNDER ATTACK

Munathara was founded at "a time of great hope and aspiration — but the optimism has given way to cynicism, including among youth", Benkredda said. "The Arab world's Gen Z came of age politically amid

increasing despair and social division."

Syrian refugee and stand-up comedian Mohamed al Kurdi, one of the performers in Saturday's show, said that today, "young people's freedom is restricted, and not just in the Arab world".

"All over the world freedoms are under attack," the 23-year-old added, sitting at the edge of a stage bathed in spotlights during a break from rehearsals. Kurdi, whose TikTok account "MidoKrdi" has over 2.3 million followers, said that rather than dealing with politics, he wanted to discuss "the limits we impose on ourselves: fear of failure, fear of success. These things rein in our freedom."

For Saturday's event, he teamed up with fellow comedian and actress Dana Ali Makki, 22, in a comedy act about an overbearing husband and his wife.

Makki, from the southern Lebanese region of Nabatiyeh, said she believed young Arabs had slightly more freedom than a few years ago.

"People can be a bit different from their parents and from the society and culture they grew up in," she said.

"There's more subversion against customs, traditions, religion and society."

Asked how she defined her own freedom, she said: "I'm free when I'm able to say whatever I want, loudly, without being afraid of anyone. Free of all the restrictions society imposes, especially on women."

LEARN TO RESIST!

The show, the fourth of its kind, also served as a showcase for up-and-coming talent, such

as Ahmed al Qrinawi from Gaza, a Palestinian enclave under Israeli blockade for the past 15 years.

He was a twice-published poet when he started teaching himself the oud — a kind of lute widely played in the Middle East — at the age of 22.

He would sit under a shelter he built on the family's roof in Gaza City, to avoid the disappearing ears of his family.

To learn music theory, he used copies of music books borrowed from friends at a music school he couldn't afford to attend.

Last weekend, three years later, he appeared on stage playing an unusual seven-stringed oud, home-made with the help of a carpenter friend.

He said he had only heard about the competition shortly after the deadline, and composed, recorded and submitted his song in just an hour.

Fortunately, judges accepted the entry, and he went on to become one of the winners and perform with a professional band.

"I will only be free when I have a normal country, where death doesn't keep an eye on me," runs the first line of his song. "Freedom's not just about food and drink. You can get a bird and put it in a cage and bring it food, but it's still in captivity."

For Lebanese actress and comedian Makki, who has a tattoo on her forearm reading "resist", the show was a chance to deliver another message.

"You can't stay in your house with your hands tied or stay silent," she said.

"Learn to say no to oppression and repression." — AFP

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

Two men and the sea

LIKE MANY Omanis, I felt anxious when reading the news about the search for the cousin fishermen Ali and Salim Al-Jafari who disappeared while fishing in Al-Ashkharah in Sharqiya region on June the 9th.

I was equally relieved ten days later when I learned that they'd made their first contact from Pakistan. After arriving home, Oman Arabic newspaper published their first interview on the 21st of June where they shared their ten days ordeal.

It starts at 5 am of June the 9th when Ali and Salim went fishing on their 25-foot-long boat that has 200-horsepower engine, as they've done for years. The waters were choppy and the waves were high due to the start of monsoon season. It was 5 pm when they were done to discover that the engine wasn't working. They were almost 60 nautical miles (111.12 km) away from Al-Ashkharah.

For a whole hour, they tried re-starting the engine and contacting a few acquaintances but failed as there was no network in the middle of the sea.

Ali and Salim realised that it was time to put their survival skills to test. To keep the boat afloat, the first thing they did was to throw their catch back in the water. At that time, the intensity of the wind was increasing and went on for three days, leaving both men cold and fearful. The wind finally ceased by the fourth but they were far away from land by now.

However, many commercial and military ships were passing by very close to them but none of them stopped even after seeing them. This didn't dishearten the two fishermen who kept waving their hands whenever they spotted a sailing vessel and igniting a few torches by the evening, in hope that someone would eventually stop to rescue them.

They had 4 liters of water that they rationed carefully - taking a few sips daily just to quench their thirst - but no food at all.

When it was unbearably hot during the day, they'd fill the boat with sea water to cool their bodies. The sail was turned into a canopy to shelter them from the scorching sun and for ships to spot.

To keep their morals high, Ali and Salim shared stories they'd heard from their families about fishermen like them who went missing and came back months later - with a survival story to share. Meanwhile, ships kept passing by and never stopping which convinced them that they must think they were pirates!

By the morning of the tenth day, they ran out of water but noticed three wooden fishing ships near them. The two men kept waving their hands and shouting, yet - as always - the fishermen ignored them.

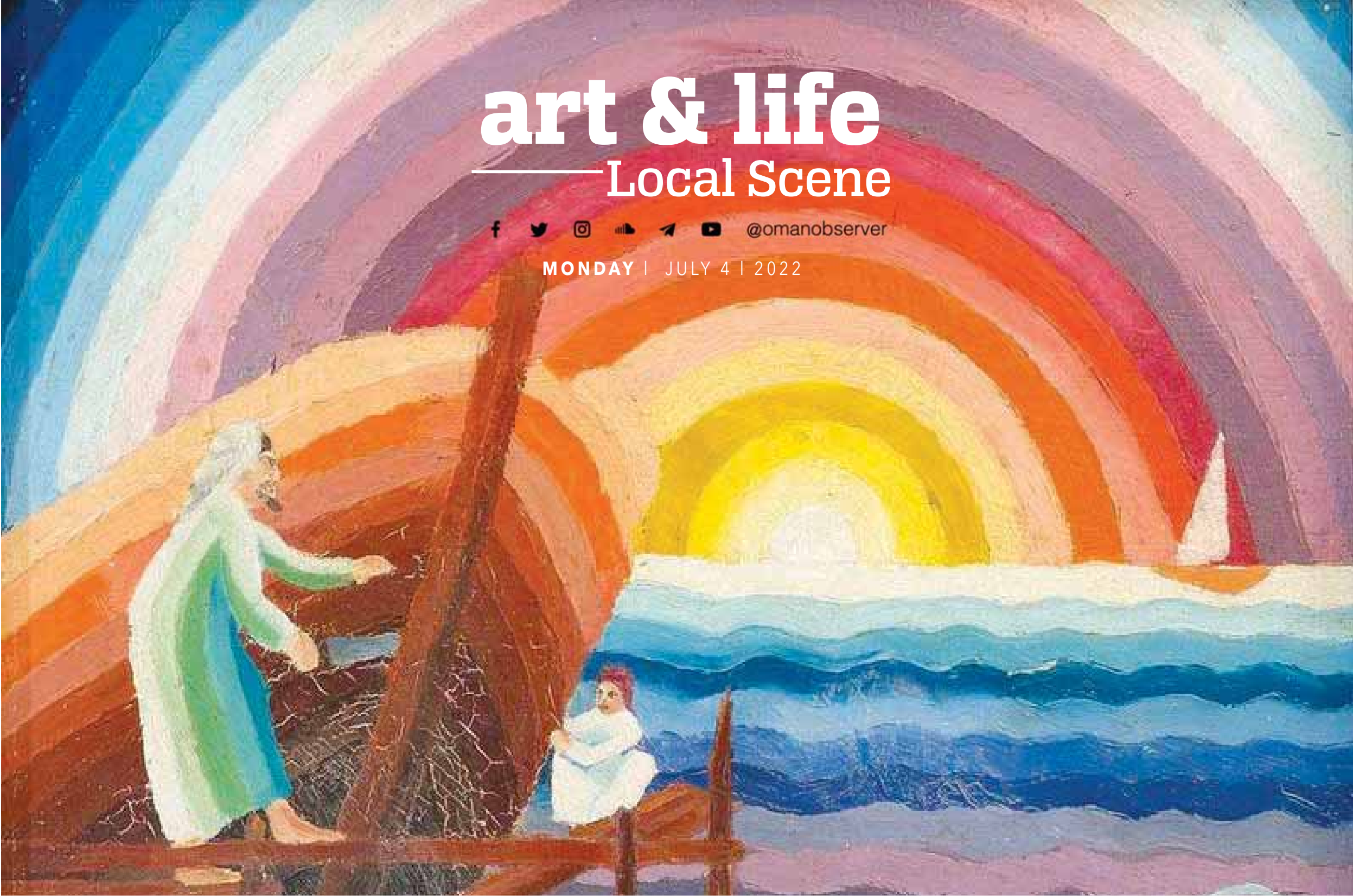
It was around 3 pm when two ships left and one ship decided to approach them. Unfortunately, there was no common language between the fishermen but the wooden ship owners understood at once that these were merely fishermen - just like them - who were lost in the sea.

Ali and Salim learned that the fishermen were Pakistanis who were heading to Karachi. Once they boarded the ship, both men prostrated to God in gratitude for saving them and asked the captain for a phone to call their families.

Within hours, Ali and Salim were picked up by the Maritime Security ship that travelled faster to Karachi, where they were welcomed by the Omani consul and Pakistani authorities who got them medically checked before issuing them passports to travel back home.

Ali and Salim's pictures and their survival story were instantly shared on social media. A brave story of perseverance and hope.

Rasha al Raisi is a certified skills trainer and the author of: The World According to Bahja. rasha-books@yahoo.com



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Omani artists take part in Khaleej exhibition tracing the evolution of visual art in GCC

By Samuel Kutty

Prominent Omani artists will present their works at the landmark autumn exhibition by NYU Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, which will have participation from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. The exhibition titled Khaleej Modern: Pioneers and Collectives in the Arabian Peninsula, 1941-2008, seeks to document the 20th-century modern art movements in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, collectively known in Arabic as the "Khaleej."

Curated by art historian Dr Aisha Stoby, artists from Oman such as Anwar Sonya, Rabha Mahmoud and The Circle group, led by Hassan Meer will participate in the show, which will run

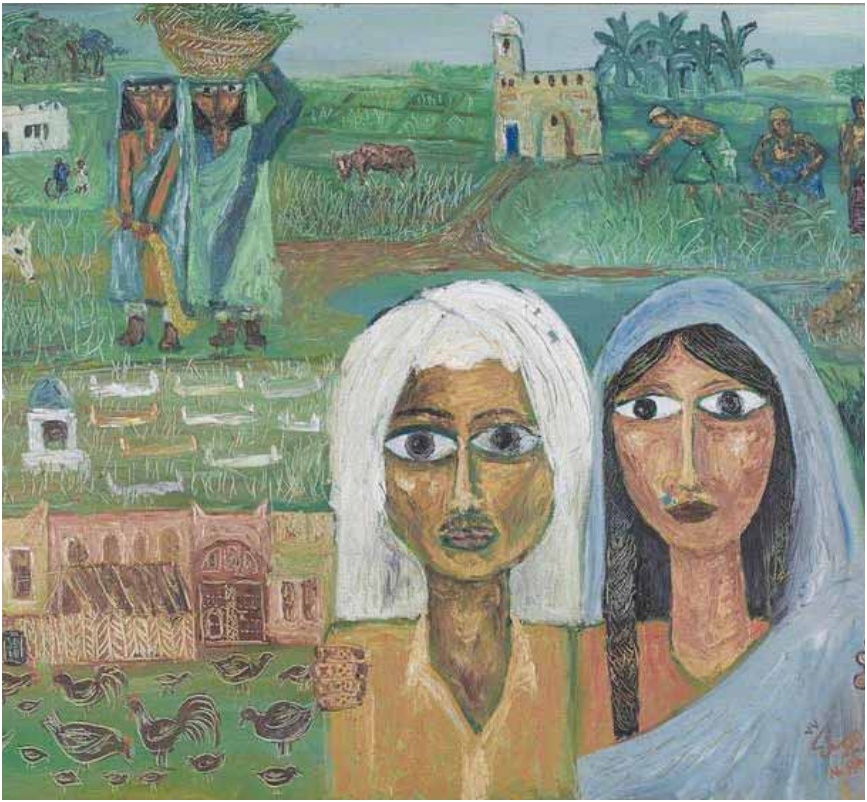
from September 6 to December 11, 2022.

The first-of-its-kind exhibition is based on Stoby's PhD research tracing the region's 'pre-boom era' of the twentieth century through 2008 and examining the evolution of visual art movements as the discovery of oil began to transform the region.

Dr Stoby is an art historian and curator who has published and lectured widely on modernism in the Global South, with a particular interest in modern art movements in the Arabian Peninsula.

Stoby aims to highlight the younger generation of Omani artists who are leading the country's lively contemporary art scene in line with the Sultanate of Oman's Vision 2040.

She most recently taught global art theory at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. She has curated exhibitions of Omani art



both locally and globally. She is the curator of the inaugural Oman Pavilion to the Venice Biennale.

It delves into the shifting understanding of public and private spaces and their relationship to national identity as expressed through art practices.

The line-up of events at the show includes an eclectic mix of live musical, cinematic and dance performances, as well as art exhibitions that defy traditional categorisation.

According to Stoby, many of the works in this exhibition will be on view for the first time in decades, and it is a genuine privilege and honour to have been invited to bring this work to a wider audience.

"Enhanced by the presence of rare and archival material, Khaleej Modern creates a space and offers resources for learning and re-understanding our own histories. More broadly, we hope

the exhibition will contribute to wider regional and global understandings of modern visual art", she said.

This project responds to emerging debates around recent art narratives, towards a more nuanced and inclusive appreciation of global art histories.

"It has been incredible to be a part of this project and to see the artworks of these pioneering artists brought together for the first time", she added.

For Khaleej Modern, Dr Stoby traces local art histories contextualised by deeply rooted traditions, the ongoing modernisation process and evolving national identities.

Foregrounding the importance of community and early art institutions, the exhibition brings to life the curator's research on the artistic pioneers and collectives that sprang up in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, begin-

ning with the first exhibition of Kuwait's Al Mubarakiya School in 1941.

While Oman's participation takes a considerable step in bringing Omani art to international audiences, Stoby's curatorial approach focuses on the historical presence of conceptual art in Oman, particularly the work of the local artist collective The Circle.

Saudi Arabia's modern art community began as early as 1938 with Mohammed Racim (1911-1974) in Jeddah, and some of the artists in the exhibition include Mounirah Mosly, Safeya Binzagr, Abdulhalim al Radwi and Abdullah al Shaikh.

The Saudi House of Fine Arts in Riyadh, meanwhile, included to works by Mohammed al Saleem and Abdulrahman Alsoliman.

By the 1950s, Bahrain's Manama Group had formed (Abdulkarim al Orrayed, Nasser al Yousif and Ahmed Qassim al Sunni).

In a recent interview with Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, referring to Oman's participation in Venice Biennale, she said as a researcher for the region, she has always felt that the Gulf has suffered from marginalisation.

"I felt that the Middle East is often overlooked, and the Gulf is often overlooked within the Middle East. Even more so than that, I was really happy that Oman was given some attention".

Commenting on the exhibition, Executive Director of The NYUAD Art Gallery and University Chief Curator Maya Allison said, "An exhibition like this is quite rare, a kind of opening salvo and call to action, offering new vistas on art history and art practice in this region".

Rather than a definitive survey, this project sets us on a journey to explore the under-studied — and, for some people, unknown — the emergence of modern art in the Arabian Peninsula over the last century.

"It is a profound honour that Dr Stoby will present her original research with us, in this exhibition that was many years in the making. I thank her for partnering with us for this crucial, path-breaking project", he added.

For the first time in the 128-year history of the International Biennale of Arts in Venice, the Sultanate of Oman presented a national pavilion, "Destined Imaginaries." The debut show featured five artists representing three decades of the country's modern and contemporary art scene.

Concerning the artists, Stoby said, "these artists who have been so prolific and have long-standing careers and really deserve to have the attention that they have gotten from Venice, including from the international art world".