

Meeting backs Yemen solution

The quinquennial meeting on Yemen that brought together the Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the USA and the special envoy for Yemen, has agreed to support the peace efforts and reach a diplomatic solution to the conflict in Yemen. **SEE ALSO P5**



P10

LEWANDOWSKI PROMISES TO HELP BARCELONA 'RETURN TO THE TOP'



P15

ME SOVEREIGNS TURN TO PVT MARKETS AS INFLATION POSES CHALLENGES



P20

ART FROM THE HEART FOR JOY AND HOPE



MUSCAT

AL MUGHSAYL BEACH REOPENS FOR VISITORS

Ban on visitors to Al Mughsayl beach in Dhofar Governorate was lifted on Monday after the authorities closed it due to search and rescue operations for the missing. Due to heavy rains and and non-adherence to instructions, directives and warnings, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority had decided to close all tourist destinations in Oman until the weather situation improves. Wadi crossings, even though it is a punishable offence, have also been a major hassle for the authorities during the week that had seen the influence of the trough from low pressure area.

DETAILS ON P2

CRUDE PRODUCTION UP BY 9.4 PER CENT

The Sultanate of Oman's production of crude oil and condensates recorded an increase by 9.4 per cent by the end of May 2022 to reach 157,462,200 barrels compared to May 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Separately, crude oil production saw a rise by 12.9 per cent by the end of May 2022, while condensates production declined by 2.4 per cent. The total average price for crude Oman oil recorded a surge by 46 per cent to reach \$80 per barrel compared to \$54.8 per barrel in 2021.

DETAILS ON P13



INSIDE



WAR MUST NOT STOP CLIMATE FIGHT: GERMAN SUMMIT

P7



PALESTINIANS REJECT PRESIDENT BIDEN TRIP

P9



'SHABAB OMAN II' DOCKS AT PORT OF AMSTERDAM

The Royal Navy of Oman's vessel 'Shabab Oman II' on Monday docked at the Port of Amsterdam in the Kingdom of the Netherlands as part of her sixth international voyage themed "Oman, Land of Peace". It left the Port of Harlingen in the Netherlands. **DETAILS ON P2**

Depression fizzles into low pressure

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

The tropical depression has weakened to a low pressure area on Monday with continuous flow of clouds over most of the governorates of Oman, with rainfall of varying intensity over the governorates of South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta and parts of Dhofar Governorate.

By 2 am on Monday, rain of varying intensity accompanied with active winds were experienced over parts of the Governorate of Muscat.

The Met office said: "It is not a tropical system now and it is a low pressure with focus on South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta."

Meanwhile, the National Committee for Emergency Management denied one of the viral videos which have been circulating in the social media. It said that there is no truth in the video clip circulating on social media about the impact of the tropical situation.

Meanwhile, along the coastal

Police step up Dhofar patrols

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has set up checkpoints along the road leading to Dhofar Governorate and deployed patrols to lend support to road users during monsoon season. The ROP also offers airborne ambulance service for emergency cases, a timely measure during accidents when the victims require to be airlifted to hospital. The ROP advises all visitors to Dhofar



Governorate to abide by laws and traffic systems regulating speed and safety procedures.

DETAILS ON P2

areas of the Arabian Sea winds are expected to be southwesterly moderate to northeasterly light to moderate during the day along the coastal areas of Sea of Oman becoming light at night, while over rest of the country it will be southerly to southeasterly light to moderate.

On Tuesday the weather forecast stated that partly cloudy to cloudy skies are expected over

all governorates with chances of rain in South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and south of Muscat. Chance of cloud development and isolated rain over Al Hajar Mountains and adjoining areas towards afternoon. Partly cloudy skies along the coastal areas of Dhofar Governorate and adjoining mountains with intermittent drizzle in some places.

33% OF INDIVIDUALS SUFFER FROM HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

Ban on partially hydrogenated oils from July 24

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The ban on partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) will come into force from July 24, according to the Food Safety and Quality Centre (FSQC).

The Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources issued a decision on April 28, banning production, import or marketing of partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), and food products in which these oils are used.

According to FSQC, hydrogenated oils are a type of fat used by food manufacturers to keep the shelf life longer. Hydrogenation is a process in which manufacturers add hydrogen to liquid fats, such as vegetable oil, to convert them into solid fats at room temperature.

Partially hydrogenated oil contains trans fat that can raise cholesterol and result in health complications.

In 2015, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said that partially hydrogenated oil is not safe and that removing it from food could prevent thousands of heart attacks each year.

Partially hydrogenated oil is a solid form of vegetable oil that has undergone hydrogenation. This process adds hydrogen molecules to the liquid vegetable oil and transforms it into a solid at room temperature. During this process, trans fat forms.

According to experts, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) represent a major public health issue and have been responsible for untimely deaths in the



country.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has launched the National Monitoring Framework for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in 2021.

According to MoH, more than half of the population in the Sultanate of Oman suffers from obesity and 33 per cent of individuals suffer from high blood pressure. More than 2,000 people are diagnosed with cancer each year.

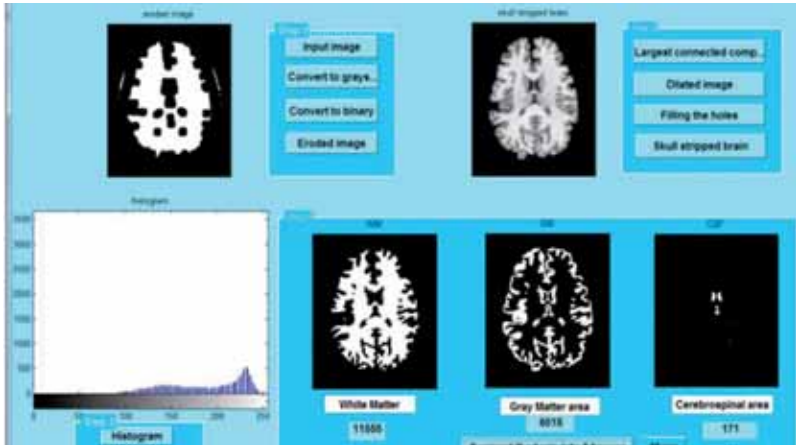
The first step to control NCDs and reduce their burden is to integrate methods of prevention into development policies by strengthening laws, developing capacities, and supporting efforts to develop effective prevention mechanisms, which include strengthening monitoring systems to provide key data to develop appropriate interventions.

This national framework has been prepared to reinforce the accountability and commitment of different sectors in implementing the various recommended interventions for the prevention and control of NCDs in the country.

Team develops smart programme to diagnose Alzheimer's

MUSCAT: Using artificial intelligence, an Omani research team has developed a programme to diagnose Alzheimer and determine its degree of severity.

Researcher Salma bint Sulaiman al Hinaiyah said: "The team applied 4IR techniques to help patients who suffer from the disease, which leads to exacerbated nervous disorder and a waste-away (atrophy) and death of brain cells-the most common



manifestations of dementia."

The research project has been funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation to help provide practical solutions for the health sector, limit the scope of the disease and ameliorate patient conditions, said Salma. Through up-to-date resonance imaging, the research team has determined the extent to which brain tissues are affected. The application

reveals cells' neuronal death and saves the time and effort of the radiologist.

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive neurologic disorder that causes the brain to shrink (atrophy) and brain cells to die. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia — a continuous decline in thinking, behavioural and social skills that affects a person's ability to function independently. — ONA



SHIHAB INSPECTS SAF TRAINING REGIMENT



MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs toured the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Training Regiment. HH Sayyid Shihab was greeted upon his arrival at the regiment's headquarters by Maj Gen Matar bin Salim al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and Brigadier Said bin Zaid al Habsi, Commandant of the RAO Academy. HH Sayyid Shihab was briefed on the march of modernisation witnessed by the regiment and its equipment, as well as the military training system and plans. The Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs also toured the shooting range in Ghala. – ONA

SHABAB OMAN II REACHES AMSTERDAM



The Royal Navy of Oman's vessel Shabab Oman II on Monday docked at the Port of Amsterdam in the Kingdom of the Netherlands as part of her sixth international voyage themed "Oman, Land of Peace". The ship will be anchored at the Port of Amsterdam for two days during which the visitors will be introduced to the objectives of her international voyage and the role of the Sultanate of Oman in extending bridges of peace, love and brotherhood among the peoples. – ONA



ROP steps up patrol in Dhofar

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

In view of the heavy khareef traffic from all over the region, authorities have started imposing tougher measures to regulate the movement of tourists in the Dhofar Governorate. It may be noted that the Dhofar Governorate did not receive tourists during the khareef season in 2020 and 2021 due to the travel restrictions imposed by the authorities to limit the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"As a result, the governorate has been witnessing a heavy rush of tourists who wish to take a break from hot temperatures prevailing in other places in the region." Akhtar, a Pakistani resident, who recently visited the governorate during Eid holidays, said, "The police patrol should be intensified not just inside the governorate, but all along the Adam-Thamrait road to give visitors the feeling of security in case they need any help on this long stretch, which has been often prone to fatal accidents due to over speeding and collisions between vehicles." Several regional airlines such as Gulf Air, Kuwait



Airways, Flynas, Wizz Air, and Al Jazeera are operating from Salalah this khareef, apart from the national airlines Oman Air and SalamAir that have added more seats to Salalah this season.

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) deployed special checkpoints and patrol teams on the roads leading to Dhofar Governorate.

The Directorate General of Police Aviation will also support the ROP efforts by providing flying ambulances in case of emergency such as accidents.

ROP has advised all visitors to the Governorate of Dhofar to abide by the

traffic laws and regulations and the speed limit to ensure their safety and that of the others and to pay attention to the presence of stray animals, especially at night, and sands that may accumulate on roads near desert areas.

The authorities have requested travellers to carry a first aid box and to ensure that the vehicle has been regularly maintained.

Citizens and tourists heading to Dhofar Governorate can request service and assistance by calling the emergency phone (9999) or directly contacting the police personnel at checkpoints.

Al Mughsayl beach reopens for visitors

AFRAH AL BLAUSHI
Muscat, July 18

Ban on visitors to Al Mughsayl beach in the Dhofar Governorate was lifted on Monday after the authorities closed it due to search and rescue operations.

Due to the heavy rains and non-adherence to instructions, directives, and warnings, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority had decided to close all tourist destinations in Oman until the weather situation improved.

Wadi crossings, even though it is a punishable offence, have also been a major hassle for the authorities during the week that had seen the influence of the trough from low pressure area that was located north of India. The rescue operations also saw bringing to safety individuals and families who were stranded in their homes as their areas experienced heavy rainfall and strong flow of wadis.



The Royal Oman Police (ROP) called on visitors to adhere to public safety guidelines and not to go beyond the safety barrier, pay attention to children, not leave them alone and stay away from dangerous places and rocky edges.

Major Saud al Maamari of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDA) said the concerned authorities have been evaluating the accident site at Al Mughsayl.

He said safety barriers at the location will be changed to prevent visitors from crossing them at any point time.

The site was closed after the tragic accident that occurred last week, when eight people were washed away after they jumped over the protective barrier at the site. Three of them were rescued at that time and while bodies of four people, including a child were found later.

Al Mughsayl beach in Salalah is considered one of the most preferred tourist destinations in Salalah. People flock to Al Mughsayl beach to enjoy the heights near the beach with its blow hole and the massive waves of the Arabian Sea.

The Arabian Sea is characterised by high waves these days and authorities warn against swimming.

Visitors from the Sultanate of Oman and

abroad are travelling to the Governorate of Dhofar to enjoy the khareef season, which is characterised by tropical weather and moderate temperatures.

All tourist sites except Al Mughsayl beach in Dhofar were reopened last week after 16 people lost their lives and 40 were rescued in different governorates during the rains that resulted from low pressure over the Arabian Sea since July 7.

Hayat **ديام** **م**

الشركة العمانية لخدمات المياه والصرف الصحي
Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company
Member of Nama Group

Tender Notice

Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Musandam Governorate) invites the following Tender:

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Date of Submission	Tender Fee (RO)
T/003/OWWSC/2022	Automation & Civil Works in Al Rawdah Well Fields at Khasab Wilayat in Musandam Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	28/7/2022	11/8/2022	25 Rials (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable

- The tender documents can be obtained from Financial Control Section Support Services Department in Musandam Governorate from the date of publication of this announcement (from 8.00 am to 12.00 pm, Sunday to Thursday) up to the last date of distribution of tender documents stated above.
- Tenders should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Chairman of the Sub Tender Committee in Musandam Governorate and marked with Tender Number and the subject. No other marks or any reference thereto should be printed outside the envelopes.
- All participating companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of bid value along with their offer. Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman and it should be addressed in favour of The Chairman of the Tender Committee in Musandam.
- Sealed bid along with all required documents shall be delivered to the Tender Box, in the Support Service Building in Musandam Governorate, located at Wilayat of Khasab not later than 10:00 am on the date specified above.
- For more information, please contact: 26830810.

[www.owwsc.nama.om](#)

[@owwsc_om](#)



In brief

MUSCAT

SMES SECTOR STRATEGY IN THE PIPELINE

The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (ASMED) is preparing a strategy for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Sector in line with Oman Vision 2040. The strategy seeks to furnish a supportive environment for SMEs through the development of mechanisms and programmes that strengthen the integration of all entities related to entrepreneurship. The strategy is being prepared with a view to augmenting the contribution of SMEs to the gross domestic product, raising the Sultanate of Oman's indicators in the field of entrepreneurship, and generating new employment opportunities.

'OMAN IN TIME OF CORONA' PUBLISHED

MUSCAT: A recently published book titled 'Oman in 'Time of Corona' outlines the major changes that the global pandemic brought about in everyday life. Published in Jordan, the book was the outcome of a project undertaken by Oman Association of Writers and Literati. It was aimed at exploring the situation in the Sultanate of Oman in the backdrop of Covid-19.

The team of science researchers who compiled the book archived a pivotal moment in the history of humanity as a whole.

They provide the readers with the gist of their experience while tackling Covid-19. They share their vision and specialisation with counterparts and the general public.

OMAN TAKES PART IN MEET ON CONSUMER PROTECTION

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Consumer Protection Authority, took part in the 6th session of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Consumer Protection Law and Policy.

The session comes within the framework of the United Nations (UN) Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

The session included several working papers on various topics, namely on continuous modifications to consumer protection laws all over the world and the experiences and challenges faced by some countries in utilising modern technology to serve consumers.

OMAN PARTICIPATES IN WIPO GENERAL ASSEMBLY

GENEVA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, is taking part in the 63rd General Assembly meetings of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which will continue till July 22.

The meetings discuss a spectrum of topics, namely the intellectual property law, the commercial brands law, industrial designs and geographical indicators, among other topics.

Covid-19 is lurking around, watch yourself

ZAINAB AL NASSRI

@zainabnassri

If you think Covid-19 is gone for good and lower the guard against the coronavirus, you are mistaken. Super contagious BA.5 variant is fuelling fresh Surge in infections in Europe raising fears of a new wave.

Dr Reda al Lawati, Internal Medicine specialist, said that there was a noticeable increase in the number of people infected with Covid-19 around the world and expected a new wave of the pandemic.

In the Sultanate of Oman, health authorities are taking measures to keep Covid-19 at bay. The Ministry of Health recently called upon citizens and residents to get the third or booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine free of cost at the nearest health institution.

The MoH also made masks mandatory in the premises of health institutions and closed public places. They continued to warn about the necessity of adherence to preventive measures especially covering face when sneezing and coughing. They continue to advise those who suffer from acute respiratory symptoms to stay at home and avoid gatherings and public contacts. People must avoid greetings with hugging, kissing and shaking hands. They should also regularly maintain hygiene with sanitisers and soap and eat healthy diet.

The Royal Hospital restricted the visitors to its premises. The visit is limited to two members of the patient's family and they must wear masks.

Covid-19 cases across the world have increased by 30 per cent in the past two weeks largely due to BA.4 and BA.5 sub-Omicron mutants and other sub-strains



In the Sultanate of Oman, health authorities are taking measures to keep Covid-19 at bay. The Ministry of Health recently called upon citizens and residents to get the third or booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine free of cost at the nearest health institution.

SUPER CONTAGIOUS BA.5 VARIANT IS FUELLING FRESH SURGE IN INFECTIONS IN EUROPE RAISING FEARS OF A NEW WAVE

following the lifting of travel and public health restrictions. "This increase in cases has put pressure on health systems in a number of WHO regions", WHO said.

The Emergency Committee on the International Health Regulations on the coronavirus disease at WHO indicated, at its meeting held at the beginning of this month, that the course of the evolution of the virus and the characteristics of its emerging mutants are still uncertain and unpredictable in the absence of public health and social measures aimed at reducing transmission. It increases the likelihood of new,

more capable mutants emerging, with varying degrees of virulence, transmissibility and potential for immune escape.

Therefore, WHO stressed the need to reduce the transmission of the coronavirus, through "responsible, consistent and continuous use of protection measures at the individual level, for the benefit of local communities as a whole; as well as continuing

to harmonise public health and social measures at the community level, to go beyond binary "all or nothing" approaches."

Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 were first identified in South Africa in January and February 2022, respectively.

BA.5 accounted for nearly 54 per cent of the country's Covid cases as of the beginning of July, according to the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention. A similar subvariant, BA.4, makes up 17 per cent more. The two sub variants also appear to evade protection from vaccines and previous infections more easily than most of their predecessors. The most common symptoms of the sub variants are runny nose, sore throat, headache, persistent cough and fatigue.

According to studies, it strategically evades the body's accumulated defences against previous versions of the virus. This means that cases of re-infection — even in newly vaccinated and infected people — are on the rise.

MSC holds meeting on low pressure



The Maritime Security Centre (MSC) held its daily meetings to review the latest developments regarding the tropical depression in the Arabian Sea and its effects on navigation and traffic in commercial and fishing ports. The meetings also address means of activating different military, security and civil units during the tropical depression. The MSC activated its Operations Chamber since the tropical depression's preliminary indicators. The MSC follows up on developments and coordinates with other departments concerned with maritime security. — ONA



Nine dancers to represent Oman at global contest

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

Efforts are under way for nine dancers from Oman to represent the country in the World Hip Hop Dance Championship — Varsity Division also known as "the Olympics of Dance" to be held in Phoenix in the US state of Arizona from August 6 to 13.

The team, the only one from the Gulf to be at this prestigious event is called 'The Arab Teens' and comprises five girls and four boys; Rishab Gupta, Shrika Shaji, Divit Kashyap, Sneha Buddhia, Rezwin Geordi, Leandro Rayner, Anaïda Shokrekhodha, Vaidehi Rastogi, Renissa Walder and Nia Bailwad.

The team will competing with over 4,000 of the world's best dancers.

"We rehearse for over 12-14 hours a day and sometimes overnight in order to help our dancers brush up with the best dancers of the world", Tejas Udani Gupta, team leader of Arab Teens told the 'Observer'.

"Ours is the first qualifying team from the Sultanate of Oman and has residents of UAE too to represent Oman", she added.

The event is organised annually by Hip Hop International (HHI) headquartered in Los Angeles, US, which was founded in 2002 and crews from 50-plus countries will compete for the world title while hip hop icons, artistes and celebrities will make appearances and perform.

The team of 15, including managers, coaches and dress designers, will leave for the US on August 1.



NOT GOOD FOR HEART

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JULY 18

To ensure a healthy society, the Sultanate of Oman banned the import and use of partially hydrogenated oils from July 24. So, what are partially hydrogenated oils? While scientists are split over saturated fats, they fully agree that partially hydrogenated oils or trans fats are harmful. It raises bad cholesterol (LDL) while lowering good cholesterol (HDL), making it a leading cause of heart diseases and obesity, according to some studies.

The US FDA now requires all food companies to eliminate artificial trans fats. Hydrogenation is the chemical process by which liquid vegetable oil is converted into a semi-solid fat in an effort to change its physical properties for cost-effective food production. But, breaking down the natural properties of food renders them unrecognised by the body, eventually causing harm. This is the case with partially hydrogenated oils, which contain unsaturated fatty acids. These trans fats not only alter cholesterol levels in the body, but are also linked to a myriad of diseases including stroke and diabetes.

One must avoid foods, which do not specify whether it is partially or fully hydrogenated. Sometimes hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated are used interchangeably or incorrectly, resulting in you buying a food item that you think is fat-free, but it is not. Only if the label clearly states that the food contains fully hydrogenated oil, you are good to go. However, the healthy option is fat-free.

According to the recommendations of the World Health Organization, the consumption of trans fats per person in general should be less than 4.5 grams per day or 2 per cent of the total energy (2000 calories per day).

Hydrogenated oils are made by cooking vegetable oils at high temperatures and adding hydrogen and a catalytic metal such as nickel. This process allows the oil to cool as a solid. Unlike saturated animal fats such as butter or lard, which already contain hydrogen molecules, hydrogenated fats are artificially saturated. Your body doesn't recognise this process and has a hard time digesting the molecules, which causes them to stay in your body longer, raising cholesterol levels, and reducing the ability to produce prostaglandins that may cause heart problems.

Care must be taken to avoid eating white bread, coffee whiteners, donuts, peanut butter, fried items and other processed fast food that often contain trans fats and go for whole grain foods, vegetables and fruits.

The Director of Nutrition at the WHO, Dr Francesco Branca, stated that it was important for governments to take decisive action in this regard. He said, "If we really want to eliminate the dangers of excess saturated fat, there needs to be strong and vital action from governments to ensure that manufactured products do not use hydrogenated vegetable oils. Saturated fat removal is done in many countries without consumers noticing any difference in taste. The producer can use another type of fat with the same specifications, so that the consumer can enjoy baked goods that do not contain saturated fat."



Trans Fats Free

TRANS FATS NOT ONLY ALTER
CHOLESTEROL LEVELS IN THE
BODY, BUT ARE ALSO LINKED
TO A MYRIAD OF DISEASES
INCLUDING STROKE
AND DIABETES



Pakistan currency plumbs new low

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The weakening of Pakistan and Indian national currencies against dollar is benefiting the expatriates as they are getting a higher value in exchange for Omani rial.

According to estimates, the Pakistani Rupee dropped to over 560 against a rial on Monday.

The Pakistani rupee dropped to a record low against the US dollar with the exchange rate sliding to PKR 212, local media said on Monday.

The Pakistani rupee witnessed a 1.05 decline at the opening of the interbank market.

The political uncertainty in the country and the import payment pressure took the currency to its new low, Pakistan-Kuwait Investment Company said.

Owing to quarter-end payments and delay in the revival of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme, the Pakistani rupee on June 21 breached 211-a-US dollar, losing PKR 2 during intra-day trading.

Meanwhile, the Indian expatriates are also taking advantage of the weakening national currency both against the dollar and the rial.

On Monday, One Omani rial fetched over Rs 207, according to the local money exchanges and banks.

Indian Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Monday said that global



The Pakistani Rupee dropped to over 560 against a rial on Monday. It fell to a record low against the US dollar with the exchange rate sliding to PKR 212.

factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, soaring crude oil prices and tightening of the global financial conditions, were the major reasons for the weakening of the Indian rupee against the US dollar.

She added that another reason was that the foreign portfolio investors have withdrawn about \$14 billion from the Indian equity.

Sitharaman said that currencies such as the British pound, the Japanese yen and the Euro have weakened more than the Indian rupee

against the US dollar and therefore, the Indian rupee has strengthened against these currencies in 2022.

The Indian rupee has declined by about 25 per cent since December 31, 2014, and is nearing 80 against the dollar, according to the government.

The value of the rupee declined from 63.33 against a dollar on December 31, 2014, to 79.41 on July 11, 2022, the government said in a statement.

Bison reintroduced to roam freely in Britain

HERNE BAY: As the sun rose on Monday over southeast England, three bison emerged from a corral into a new woodland home as part of an ambitious project to transform the natural environment.

The trio immediately began munching birch tree leaves in the ancient woods near Canterbury, to restore and manage the area with their behaviour — and minimal human interference.

It marks the first time in millennia that European bison — the continent's largest land mammal and the closest living relative to ancient steppe bison that once roamed Britain — will live in wild conditions once again.

“(It’s a) really momentous occasion today,” Mark Habben, of the Wildwood Trust which is leading the five-year conservation project, said.

“It couldn’t have gone any better... they took a glance back, looked at us and then disappeared into the woodlands,” he added, moments after the release.

The female bison — one matriarch and two younger cows — will now graze, eat bark, fell trees and take so-called dust baths, churning up the ground in the woods.

This creates a multitude of benefits, helping other species forge habitats as the bison become the perfect “ecosystem engineers”.

“We’re doing this to restore the environment and restore a native English woodland and everything that thrives in and around that kind of habitat,” explained Habben, saying it was “critically important”.

“We don’t want to be using machinery... using native resources, ecosystem engineers as we like to call them — in the form in this case of the European bison — is exactly the right thing



Bison are released from a corral at the Wildwood Trust nature reserve in Kent on Monday, the first time the animals have roamed freely in the UK in thousands of years. — AFP

to do.”

The female bison, which arrived after living on smaller enclosures in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, will be joined by a bull at the site, owned by the Kent Wildlife Trust charity, in the coming months.

The bull’s arrival from Germany was delayed due to Britain’s post-Brexit bureaucracy for importing animals.

The herd will initially have 55 hectares (136 acres) of fenced woodland to roam within, before their habitable space is eventually increased to 200 hectares.

It is hoped the bull will breed with the females to increase the size of the herd, with the Kent site licensed to hold up to 20.

The bison will also soon be joined by other grazing animals including ponies from

Exmoor, southwest England, Iron Age pigs and Longhorn cattle, which will aid the bid to create a variety of natural habitats.

“This is a model for what we would hope could be rolled out much (more) broadly across the UK, to similar landscapes, utilising bison,” said Habben.

“I like to think bison that we bred on this project by the time they reach maturity... there’ll be other projects looking to do the same kind of thing.

“And we can move bison around to continue this really amazing work that these animals are going to do.”

After roaming the continent for millennia, the last wild European bison became extinct on the continent in 1927, due to hunting and habitat loss. — AFP

Estonia’s new cabinet sworn in after weeks of deadlock

TALLINN: Estonia’s president on Monday appointed the Baltic state’s new three-party coalition government, bringing an end to weeks of political deadlock.

“Security crisis. Energy crisis. Inflation crisis. Covid crisis. Refugee crisis. These are Estonia’s concerns — all of Europe’s concerns,” President Alar Karis told the new cabinet.

“Solving these is your responsibility,” he added.

Last month, Prime Minister Kaja Kallas’s ruling coalition fell apart following disputes between her liberal Reform party and the left-leaning Centre party over spending and an education bill.

The Centre and Reform parties have alternated in government over the nearly three decades since Estonia broke free from the crumbling Soviet Union.

After removing the Centre party from government, Kallas sought talks to assemble a new administration, urging unity because of security concerns over neighbouring Russia.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has spooked Estonia and its fellow Baltic states Latvia and Lithuania, triggering some concern they could be next.

Kallas ultimately struck a coalition deal with the right-wing Isamaa conservatives and the Social Democrats.

The Nato and EU member of 1.3 million people has its next general election scheduled for March 2023.

Political analyst Rein Toomla said “the most important change in Estonia’s internal policies will be an increase in various family allowances” in response to high inflation.

While he does not foresee any significant changes to the country’s security or foreign policy, Toomla said the government could become even more pro-Ukrainian.

“As the government no longer includes the Centre Party — a significant portion of their electorate are Russian speakers and there is considerable sympathy towards Russia among them — the new government’s stance on Russia might be even more radical,” he said.

Estonia, along with fellow Baltic states Latvia and Estonia, all members of Nato and the European Union, stopped importing Russian gas in May over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which the three say warrant the toughest possible EU sanctions on Moscow. To cushion the blow from the loss of Russian gas, Estonia is now developing a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal to secure gas supplies from non-Russian suppliers during winter. — Agencies



Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of the new Estonian government, addresses an extraordinary parliamentary session in Tallinn on Monday. — Reuters

UN presses Yemen parties for truce extension

RIYADH: The United Nations is pushing Yemen’s warring parties to agree a six-month truce extension, two sources familiar with the talks said, which would be the longest in the seven-year-old conflict as international pressure grows on both sides to end the war.

Peace efforts gained a boost after US President Joe Biden visited Saudi Arabia last week, where he announced agreement with the Saudi leadership to “deepen and extend” the ceasefire expiring on

August 2. The war has pitted a coalition led by Riyadh against Yemen’s Ansar Allah since 2015.

However UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg has to address strong grievances from both sides before they accept a further renewal of the existing two-month truce deal that first took hold in April, the sources said.

If agreed, the six-month extension would be the biggest step so far in the UN process towards resolving a conflict that has killed

tens of thousands of people and left millions facing famine in a severe humanitarian crisis. “The proposal (for a six-month extension) has been with the parties for some time now,” one of the sources said.

Ismi Palla, spokesperson of Grundberg’s office, said the UN envoy has been discussing with the parties the renewal of the current truce, including the possibility of extending it for a longer period but “cannot discuss details at this time”.

— Agencies



Tender Announcement

Tender Number	T-26-2022
Tender Name	Rental of Workshop in Salalah
Project Summary	To rent a workshop in Salalah with land area not less than 2400m2 that includes offices, a meeting room, a store and all required facilities.
Tender Fee	NIL
Grade & Specialty	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field
Start date for tender document distribution	Tuesday, 19 July 2022
Last date for tender document distribution	Tuesday, 26 July 2022
Last date for submission	Tuesday, 09 August 2022

The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M.

Tenderers are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Document shall be shared by email.

The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.

Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head- quarter Oman National Transport Company SAOC (MWASALAT) at Ghala, Muscat (Jabal Shams Building 5th floor). Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

"Mwasalat"
Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: 1551
P.O.Box: 911, Al Khuwair, PC: 133, Sultanate of Oman

"Mwasalat" invites professional firms for the following tenders:

Tender Number	T-32-2022
Tender Name	Re-Supply, Install and Maintain of Fleet Management System
Project Summary	A Fleet Management System is required to look after all types of vehicles in MWASALAT. Where it will enhance the productivity of them with a wide range of system dependency. The fleet management solution must utilize state of the art technologies such as biometrics, machine learning, and AI (Artificial Intelligence) to make vehicle management operations smooth, efficient, and cost-effective.
Tender Fee	OMR 50/-
Grade & Specialty	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field
Start date for tender document distribution	Tuesday, 19 July 2022
Last date for tender document distribution	Monday, 01 August 2022
Last date for submission	Thursday, 18 August 2022

For more information please send to: tenders@mwasalat.om



■ PLANE FLIPS OVER ON RUNWAY



A passenger plane crash-landed at an airport in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on Monday, with no deaths reported and all those on board – more than 30 passengers – rescued. Video from the scene showed the plane upside down after having apparently flipped over on landing. Black smoke and flames rose into the air as fire trucks approached on the runway and firefighters started hosing down the crashed plane. – Reuters

India set to get first tribal president



NEW DELHI: India's parliament began voting on Monday for a new president, with a female politician from the country's marginalised tribal community the favourite for the post.Droupadi Murmu, from the Santhal tribe, has been nominated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party for the largely ceremonial position.

If elected, she would be India's first tribal president and second female president. The incumbent, Ram Nath Kovind, is the country's second president from the Dalit community.

Murmu, 64, began her career as a schoolteacher in the eastern state of Odisha before going into politics. She has held ministerial positions in the state government, and been governor of Jharkhand.

Murmu "has devoted her life to serving society and empowering the poor, downtrodden as well as the marginalised", Modi tweeted after her candidacy was announced.

Her main opponent for the presidency is veteran politician Yashwant Sinha, an ex-BJP member and former finance and external affairs minister, who has been backed by opposition parties including Congress.

India's president is chosen by nearly 5,000 elected members of both houses of parliament and regional legislatures across the country.

— AFP

Lanka renews emergency

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's acting president renewed the country's state of emergency on Monday ahead of a parliamentary vote to pick a new head of state — a poll in which he is a leading candidate.

Ranil Wickremesinghe automatically became acting president when Gotabaya Rajapaksa resigned last week after fleeing to Singapore.

A state of emergency allows troops to arrest and detain suspects and the president to make regulations overriding existing laws to deal with any unrest.

One was already in place but parliament had not met to ratify the declaration as required and Wickremesinghe extended it from Monday "in the interests of public security", he said.

Police and the military, armed with emergency powers, stepped up security in the capital ahead of Wednesday's election of a new president.

Wickremesinghe, a six-time former prime minister, is being backed for the position by Rajapaksa's party, which remains the largest in the legislature.

In what was seen as a possible appeal to 14 Catholic legislators for their support, Wickremesinghe said he had asked Britain's help to complete investigations into the 2019 Easter Sunday bombings that killed 279 people.

Sri Lanka's small but influential Catholic minority believes the coordinated suicide attack against three churches and three hotels was a "political plot" to bring Rajapaksa to power, and

has long sought an independent investigation.

Wickremesinghe was "requesting the assistance of the UK government and their intelligence services", his office said. The bombings were blamed on local militants and 25 men were indicted in October over alleged involvement.

But the Church and opposition parties claim state intelligence officers loyal to Rajapaksa directly or indirectly supported the bombers.

Rajapaksa was forced to flee last week when tens of thousands of protesters stormed his official residence after months of demonstrations across the country demanding his resignation over Sri Lanka's economic crisis.

— AFP

Iconic mosque damaged during restoration

TEHRAN: A 400-year-old iconic mosque in Iran's central city of Isfahan listed as a UN World Heritage Site has been damaged during restoration work, officials said on Monday.

The 17th century Shah Mosque, also known as the Royal Mosque, was built during the "golden age" of Isfahan, the capital during Safavid dynasty.

"Supervisors and restorers realised there was damage, especially in the upper part of the dome", said Alireza Izadi, head of the heritage for the city, according to state media.

The mosque forms one of four dramatic buildings in the vast Naghsh-e Jahan Square in the heart of the city, also known as Meidan Imam. The square complex was listed by the UN cultural organisation Unesco as a World Heritage Site in 1979.

Unesco says the mosque is of "particular interest", and "remains the most celebrated example of the colourful architecture which reached its high point in Iran under the Safavid dynasty".

Experts quoted in Iranian

media said the designs of flowers on the restored tiles do not match each other and the patterns on the dome are not aligned.

"We are going to replace the dome tiles, because the weight of the scaffolding has damaged their edge", Izadi told the official IRNA news agency.

The restorer of the project, Mehdi Pakdel, told state television he had acknowledged "mistakes" had been made, while noting that his "work was not yet finished".

Pakdel said problems with the scaffolding used during restoration work, as well as the challenges of working high on the dome up to a height of 54 metres were "among the causes" of the mistakes.

"The contractor of the project, who is one of the veterans of restoration in Isfahan, has said he is ready to take the necessary measures to repair the defects as soon as possible", Izadi added.

Isfahan, the third biggest city in Iran, is one of the key tourist destinations in the country.

— AFP



Sudan's Hawsa people block roads after clashes

KHARTOUM: Thousands of Sudan's Hawsa people set up barricades and attacked government buildings in several cities on Monday, witnesses said, after a week of deadly tribal clashes in the country's south.

Violence in Blue Nile state, bordering Ethiopia, has killed 60 people and wounded 163 others, including 13 in serious condition, according to health officials.

The clashes first erupted a week ago on Monday between the Berti and Hawsa tribes, after the Bertis rejected a Hawsa request to create a "civil authority to supervise access to land", a prominent Hawsa member said.

But a senior member of the Bertis had said the tribe was



Smoke billows as Sudanese protesters take part in an anti-coup demonstration on a barricaded street in the Daym-Bashdar station area in central Khartoum. — AFP

responding to a "violation" of its lands by the Hawsas. Troops were deployed in Blue Nile on Saturday, and since then an uneasy calm has prevailed there although tensions have escalated elsewhere.

In the eastern city of Kassala, the government banned public gatherings after several thousand Hawsa people "set government buildings and shops on fire", according to eyewitness Hussein Saleh. He said protesters were "blocking roads and waving sticks".

In the city of Wad Madani, some 200 kilometres south of Khartoum, "hundreds of Hawsa people put up stone barricades and burned tires on the main bridge to block traffic", resident Adel Ahmed said.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

PORT KLANG

Animal parts worth \$18 million seized

Malaysian customs officials said on Monday they seized a stash of rare animal parts worth \$18 million thought to have come from Africa, including elephant tusks, rhino horns and pangolin scales. The Southeast Asian nation is a hub for wildlife trafficking, with animal parts shipped through the country to lucrative regional markets. Authorities foiled a smuggling attempt on July 10 when they uncovered the illicit cargo in Port Klang, on Malay-



sia's west coast, hidden in a container along with timber. The shipment included an estimated 6,000 kilograms of elephant tusks — Malaysia's biggest single seizure of elephant ivory.

JERUSALEM

Top general to explore defence deals in Morocco

The chief of Israel's armed forces will visit Morocco on Monday in the highest-profile military engagement between the countries, which upgraded ties in 2020 under a US diplomatic drive. While Lieutenant-General Aviv Kochavi's trip has been showcased by Israel as part of emerging defence cooperation with the North African country, Rabat has also been trying to broker improved conditions for the Palestinians. "One of the subjects that will be discussed (in Morocco) this



week will be knowledge-sharing, training weapons development, the transfer of know-how and perhaps also of weaponry", Israeli military spokesman Brigadier-General Ran Kochav told Ynet TV.

SYDNEY

Australian teenager feared dead in Syrian jail

An Australian teenager is believed to have died in a Syrian jail after being held for three years, his family said on Monday as they pleaded for the return of other detained women and children. Yusuf Zahab, 17, died from "uncertain causes" in northeast Syria at the Al-Sinaa prison, Human Rights Watch said. Kurdish-led forces have held IS suspects at the prison, which was the site of intense fighting. "We are heartbroken and angry", Zahab's family said in



a statement released by HRW. "Yusuf didn't need to die. The previous Australian Government knew about Yusuf's predicament for more than three years", they added.



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

TUESDAY | JULY 19 | 2022

7

In brief

WASHINGTON



EX-TRUMP ADVISER ON TRIAL FOR DEFYING SUBPOENA

Jury selection begins on Monday in the criminal trial of Steve Bannon, a former presidential aide to Donald Trump, who faces charges that he defied a congressional subpoena from the committee investigating the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol. Bannon is facing two misdemeanor counts of contempt of Congress after he declined to provide testimony or documents to the House of Representatives committee. Bannon has unsuccessfully tried to persuade US District Judge Carl Nichols to delay his trial, arguing that the committee's high-profile televised hearings could make it harder for him to have a fair and impartial jury.

JOHANNESBURG



LIONS 'TERRORISING' COMMUNITY EUTHANISED

Six lions were put down after escaping from a South African game reserve and terrorising people living nearby, wildlife authorities said on Monday. Rangers in the eastern province of KwaZulu-Natal killed the lions on Friday after residents protested they could no longer walk safely at night, authorities said. "Anger was mounting as it was feared that the lions had lost the fear of human beings", Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife spokesman Musa Mntambo said in a statement. The lions had killed at least six cows and no longer ran away when coming into contact with humans and instead walked towards them, he said.

MIAMI



SCHOOL SHOOTER FACES DEATH PENALTY

A young man who gunned down 17 people at his former high school in Parkland, Florida goes on trial on Monday, with jurors set to hand down either the death penalty or a life sentence. Nikolas Cruz took an AR-15 assault rifle into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Valentine's Day in 2018 and killed 17 students and staff members. Cruz — who was 19 at the time — has already pleaded guilty to 17 counts of first-degree murder and 17 counts of attempted murder for those wounded during the massacre. The trial is being held to determine his sentence.

UK, France brace for hottest days



A forest fire near Louchats in Gironde, southwestern France. Scientists say extreme weather is becoming more frequent and more intense due to climate change. — AFP

LONDON: Britain and France went on heatwave alert on Monday bracing for record temperatures as southwest Europe wilted under a scorching sun and ferocious wildfires devoured more forests.

Britain could hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) for the first time, forecasters said, causing havoc in a country unprepared for the onslaught of extreme heat that authorities said was putting lives at risk.

Britain's current record temperature stands at 38.7°C. Scientists blame climate change and predict more frequent and intense episodes of extreme weather.

Across the Channel firefighters failed to contain two massive fires in France's southwest that have created apocalyptic scenes of destruction. For six days, armies of firefighters and a fleet of waterbombing aircraft have struggled against blazes that have mobilised much of France's entire firefighting capacity.

Forecasters have put 15 French departments on the highest state of alert for extreme temperatures, including in the western Brittany region where the Atlantic coastal city of Brest was expected to hit 40°C on Monday, nearly twice its usual July temperature average.

The European heatwave,

spreading north, is the second to engulf parts of the southwest of the continent within only weeks.

HEAT APOCALYPSE

Blazes burning in France, Greece, Portugal and Spain have destroyed thousands of hectares of land and forced thousands of residents and holidaymakers to flee.

In France's Landes forest, in the southwest Aquitaine region, temperatures "will be above 42 degrees Celsius" on Monday, forecaster Olivier Proust said.

In the Gironde region, further north, firefighters on Monday continued their battle against

forest blazes that have devoured nearly 14,000 hectares (35,000 acres) since Tuesday.

An area of nine kilometres (5.5 miles) long and eight kilometres wide was still ablaze near the Dune de Pilat, Europe's highest sand dune, turning picturesque landscapes, popular campsites and pristine beaches into a scorching mess. Firefighters said on Monday was shaping up to be one of the most challenging days since the fires started because of the relentless heat, as another 3,500 people were being told to leave their homes as a precaution.

The wildfires in France have forced more than 16,000 people,

residents or tourists, to decamp. Seven emergency shelters have been set up for evacuees.

France's interior ministry announced it would send an extra three firefighting planes, 200 firefighters and more trucks.

"In some southwestern areas, it will be a heat apocalypse", meteorologist Francois Gourand said.

TEMPERATURES HIT 47°C

The chapel of a historic hospital in the southeast city of Lyon, Grand Hotel Dieu, offered refuge to tourists on Sunday including Jean-Marc, 51, who was visiting from Alsace. — Reuters

Half of EU territory 'at risk' of drought

BRUSSELS: Researchers at the European Commission warned on Monday that nearly half of the EU's territory is currently at risk of drought, as southwest Europe wilted under a punishing heatwave.

In a report for July, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre said that 46 per cent of the EU's territory was exposed to warning-level drought, with 11 per cent at an alert level, with crops already

suffering from the lack of water.

Italy was the hardest hit, with the Po River basin in the north of the country facing the highest level possible of drought severity, the EU said.

In Spain, water reservoir volumes are currently 31 per cent lower than the 10-year average, the report said, while in Portugal, water to produce hydroelectric energy is at half the average of the previous seven years.

— AFP

SWAN CENSUS



A swan reacts as Swan Uppers record details of cygnets during the annual census of the swan population along sections of the River Thames, Shepperton near Windsor, Britain, on Monday. — Reuters



Leaders pose for a group photo during the 13th Petersburg Climate Dialogue on Monday at the Foreign Ministry in Berlin. — AFP

War must not stop climate fight: Berlin summit

BERLIN: German and Egyptian leaders on Monday urged industrialised nations not to let Russia's war on Ukraine derail the fight against climate change as they met ahead of the COP27 summit in November.

Speaking at the annual informal Petersburg Climate Dialogue in Berlin, German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said leaders were working hard to stay "on track for a successful COP27" in Egypt. "Global circumstances are not making this an easy task", she said, blaming Russia's invasion

of Ukraine for exacerbating "a global energy and food crisis that is pushing millions into poverty, hunger and starvation".

The international community has agreed that climate change poses an existential threat to human systems and the natural world. But action to cut carbon pollution and prepare for the accelerating impacts is lagging, as is support for vulnerable countries confronting the ravages of a changing climate. Maintaining international momentum has been made even harder with Russia's

invasion of Ukraine and spiralling food, energy and economic crises. At a meeting in Bonn in June to lay the groundwork for the Egyptian conference, Egyptian Ambassador Mohamed Nasr said climate change was being "pushed back" due to these new challenges.

STICKING POINTS

The main sticking points are around issues of finance, such as money for adaptation and the idea of a specific funding stream for controversial "loss and damage".

— AFP

Through adversity we grow



Hyesha Barrett
@coach_hyesha

The writer is a certified Master Life Coach and NLP Practitioner based in Muscat.

There is a inner strength and resilience built in those who overcome adversity with flair. A strength residing so deep that its' outcome and worth can only bring value to ones' life.

Through making the conscious choice to overcome your challenges with the mindset of resilience and advocacy, the outcome can only render you with healthier relationships, financial abundance, greater confidence and a heightened level of personal fulfilment and joy.

Undoubtedly, it is extremely difficult to see the light at the end of the tunnel during the tough and testing times but adversity really is a blessing in disguise. Hardships present themselves as opportunities to prove how sturdy we really are.

In order to grow and gain wisdom, lifes' toughest obstacles are necessary to push us to not shy away from facing our troubles, subsequently providing us with knowledge from our past experiences.

It is always in hindsight and reflection that we gain the necessary insights into understanding ourselves. Hence, overcoming adversities with the right mindset of level-headedness and focus can only bring about cognizance and clarity of self within the scope of distinct deliberation and discernment.

It's not the events of life that matter but rather the meaning that we associate to them. Whether or not you create an empowering or disempowering denotation is your

CHALLENGES ARE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH WHICH PRODUCE RESISTANCE AND DEVELOP INNER FORTITUDE. THEY WILL TEST YOUR RESOLVE AND COMMITMENT TO YOUR GOALS

choice. It's the significance you choose to instill on that negative experience that counts.

Resilient-minded people pay attention to and embrace the actions that they took in order to get through the difficult times. They consciously choose growth no matter what preceded their choices and solely focus on what they can

control.

Robustness evinces perpetual growth and a continual detection of new ways to learn from life's happenings. When we respond to a negative event in a positive way, undeniable equivalent results are bound to unfold.

When you shift your perception to believing that negative incidents are designed to serve your greater good and when you pro-actively take ownership of your problems, eventually, you will observe that those adversities are merely experiences for you to learn from. For your growth and benefit, attempt to always search for the inspiring meanings of every occurrence that you face, both good and bad.

There is always a message to

be learned. If you believe that life happens for you, not to you, you will feel encouraged to get through anything that tests your tenacity.

Challenges are excellent opportunities for growth which produce resistance and develop inner fortitude. They will test your resolve and commitment to your goals and from this place, the insights you will gain are so valuable they will enable you to move from merely surviving to thoroughly thriving.

I hope you are taking the time to understand yourself, to give grace during the times of need and most importantly contribute compassion and patience in order to gain the strength needed to move through any adversity life throws at you.

As 1.5°C warming limit nears, interest in sun-dimming tech heats up

BY LAURIE GOERING

As fossil fuel use continues apace and a hotter planet edges close to passing safety limits, some scientists are exploring a controversial technological stopgap: spraying chemicals into the atmosphere to reflect away some of the sun's warmth.

Deploying the technology, using special planes, would be relatively cheap and simple, costing a few billion dollars a year, its backers say.

And it could - if maintained - hold down global average temperatures, potentially staving off increasingly deadly climate-change impacts such as heatwaves, they argue.

"I do see it as a likely option" if plans to cut emissions fall short and dangers grow, said Emmi Yonekura, a researcher on the risks of climate "geoengineering" at RAND Corporation, a military-focused policy think-tank, during an online event.

But the technology, which mimics the sky-darkening effect of volcanic eruptions, also carries serious and unpredictable risks, critics say - with some scientists so worried that they believe research should stop and outdoor tests be banned.

Threats range from potential shifts in rainfall patterns that could spur worsening hunger to rapid, uncontrollable temperature rise if the technology's use is suddenly stopped.

The availability of such a planet-cooling option could also give climate polluters an unwarranted green-light to carry on - even though "stratospheric aerosol injection" (SAI) would only mask the problem, not solve it.

Early efforts to create rules to govern its use show signs of stalling, critics warn, making it more likely that one powerful state or even individual could go it alone, potentially to the detriment of others, sparking conflict.

"The more we see extreme events like hurricanes, wildfires, also just heatwaves that have acute impacts - those may motivate key actors to try to protect themselves," said Jonathan Wiener, co-director of the Duke Center on Risk.

Unilateral use of the technology "might be very difficult to deal with geopolitically", said Wiener, a law and environmental policy professor at Duke University in the United States.

Where scientists and policy experts agree is that, as the world speeds towards the lower 1.5 degrees Celsius warming limit set in the Paris Agreement, serious thinking about what happens if the Earth's climate breaks down must happen - fast.

—Thomson Reuters Foundation

Reunited in Bucha, a Ukrainian family comes to terms with war's traumas



Michael Schwirtz

The writer is an investigative reporter with NYT

For the first time since the war began, the Stanislavchuk family was together again.

Yehor was leading his parents, Natasha and Sasha, his sister, Tasya, and his grandmother, Lyudmila, on a tour of Bucha, the quaint suburb of Kyiv that has become synonymous with Russian savagery.

Here was the school where Yehor had hid for two weeks as Russian troops bombed and murdered their way through the town. There, at the entrance to the school basement, was where a Russian soldier had shot a woman in the head just because he could. And over there, on top of the yellow crane, was where the sniper sat, picking off civilians as they scrounged for food and water.

Yehor, 28, spoke calmly, and no one expressed surprise. These stories are well known now in Ukraine.

The last time I saw the Stanislavchuks was on March 11. At the time, Yehor was trapped in Bucha, listening to the footsteps of Russian soldiers on the floor above the basement where he was hiding. He was plotting his escape, but no one knew if it was safe for him to leave.

A couple Yehor knew had tried to get out of Bucha a few days earlier. Only the wife came back, shot through the leg. Her husband had been killed.

I was with the rest of the

THE STANISLAVCHUKS ARE LIKE MANY UKRAINIANS THESE DAYS, DECENT PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO ENDURE THE UNFATHOMABLE WITH NO MAP TO GUIDE THEM

Stanislavchuks in Mykolaiv, the southern Ukrainian port city where the family is from. We spent that March day awaiting news of Yehor's progress. Natasha prepared a meal of mashed potatoes and stewed beef that we washed down with shots of vodka. She had an Orthodox icon of the Virgin Mary with her, along with a holy book opened to a prayer about children. Occasionally we rushed to the basement to hide from incoming artillery.

When the war began, they had been in Bucha, less than an hour from Kyiv, putting the finishing touches on a new showroom for their interior design business. Their main store in Mykolaiv had been doing well, and the family hoped to expand. Yehor had moved

to Bucha shortly after college and the family fell in love with the town's pine forests and colourful modern buildings that made it look as if it could be a suburb of Oslo, Norway.

The first rockets hit the Hostomel airport near Bucha about 5 am on February 24, shaking the family awake. Sasha and Natasha's first thought was to get home to Mykolaiv, where Tasya, 11, was staying with her grandmother. Only when they were stuck in traffic along with everyone else trying to flee Kyiv and its environs, did they wonder whether they should have taken Yehor with them.

"To be honest, for a long time I could not come to terms with the fact that on the 24th we were here, and we did not bring him with us," Natasha told me. "I thought about consulting a psychologist. How could I do that? I had the feeling that we just abandoned him."

Their business shut down and their son trapped by Russian forces nearly 400 miles away, Sasha and Natasha threw themselves into volunteer work in Mykolaiv, driving around the city in their white SUV delivering food and medicine to neighbours too infirm or scared to leave their homes. Although Bucha and the towns around Kyiv were bearing the brunt of the Russian onslaught at the time, life in Mykolaiv was not easy. - *New York Times*



Ukrainian soldiers salvage parts from a destroyed Russian military vehicle in Bucha, Ukraine.

Life is not a game... live it



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

Gamification today is used from corporate to learning environment. It is considered as one of the best ways to enhance team building and pass on knowledge. However, gamification is also about competing a task and receiving a reward for achievement. The gratification is comforting obviously but it has now gone onto other level especially in the virtual world.

The ‘challenges’ on the social media has reached such a level that it has been devastating for many families.

The recent one is the ‘Blackout Challenge’ on one of the social media platforms.

This particular challenge has individuals choking themselves until they blackout.

What has been devastating is that at least seven children have died trying this challenge so far and all of them are under 15 years of age.

The families must be going through shocks till now and some of the parents are taking up the incident to the next level by suing the digital platform.

So who is actually responsible?

The victims are younger than 15 with some of them being 9 and 10 years.

Children as young as these ages are present in the social media.

Many of them may not even be able to differentiate between virtual world and reality.

They may not even realise that some of the videos they see could be fabricated.

Some experts also suggest that gamifying can make risks look not dangerous at all.

This young age already has school life that can be overwhelming, but here they are living in the virtual world too.

It is not just a classroom and classmates they are handling but a unique space that can bring them followers from the whole world.

It is so easy to fall into being the prey for

likes and comments and so the challenges could be inspiring too.

Could it be this very gamification that attracts people to cross a running wadi or take risks with nature?

Why are we losing touch with reality?

A few decades ago we did not have platforms to post our pictures or our drone videos.

We would have taken pictures and placed them in our family albums.

If anyone else were to have taken our pictures we would have talked about privacy.

Now images are just floating around and to top it all there are the challenges.

To think we do not know what children are watching, videoing and posting makes it one of the biggest challenges for parents of this generation.

It is time to think loud on what is healthy for children.

It seems it is similar to the issue of journalism, journalists and social media influencers.

What is responsible journalism will continue to prevail while people might be attracted to online news and viral videos.

But the safety of children online might be the responsibility of parents but shouldn't the virtual world also be responsible?

After all life is not a game, the children were thriving in their secured environment and parents must have had numerous dreams.

Dreams that will never be fulfilled now.

AFTER ALL
LIFE IS NOT A
GAME,
THE CHILDREN
WERE THRIVING IN
THEIR
SECURED
ENVIRONMENT
AND
PARENTS MUST
HAVE HAD
NUMEROUS
DREAMS.
DREAMS THAT
WILL NEVER
BE FULFILLED NOW

PALESTINIANS HAD
HOPED
THE US PRESIDENT
WOULD FINALLY
MAKE GOOD ON A
PROMISE TO RE-OPEN
A CONSULATE FOR
PALESTINIANS IN
JERUSALEM



Palestinians reject Biden trip as ‘Trump years with a smile’

GARETH BROWNE

After hearing Joe Biden identify Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and concede a two-state solution seemed “far away”, one Palestinian official gave a blunt assessment of the US president’s visit to the region.

“It’s like the Trump years with a smile,” said the official, who requested anonymity.

Biden’s predecessor Donald Trump was loathed among Palestinians over his unequivocal pro-Israeli policies.

With Israeli politics gridlocked, few thought that 79-year-old Biden could jumpstart peace talks which have been moribund since 2014. But there was tempered optimism that Biden’s meeting last Friday with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem could deliver modest results.

Palestinians had hoped the US president would finally make good on a promise to re-open a consulate for Palestinians in Jerusalem. The mission was shuttered by Trump in 2019 and its revival is staunchly opposed by Israel, which considers the city its “undivided” capital.

Reopening the mission could serve as a “shot in the arm” for the peace process, said another Palestinian official speaking anonymously. But the US leader offered no substantive plan to redress Israel’s occupation, even side-stepping Jewish settlement expansion in the West Bank, an issue highlighted by former president Barack Obama’s administration, in which Biden served as vice president.

The US delegation, however, did announce plans for 4G Internet access in the West Bank and the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip, addressing a longstanding demand by Palestinians which has repeatedly been blocked by Israel.

The president’s visit got off to a bad start for Palestinians, when Biden declared at an Israeli welcome ceremony: “You need not be a Jew to be a Zionist.”

While every US president since Israel’s creation in 1948 has arguably met a technical definition of Zionism by actively supporting the Jewish state’s existence, Biden’s comment last Wednesday was rare, if not unprecedented for a US leader -- and Palestinians took note.

“He came to Israel and declared he was a ‘Zionist’, then he came to Palestine and refused to talk about the fundamentals of the conflict,” the first official said.

A protester attending a rally during the president’s visit to Bethlehem hoisted a sign saying: “Biden, Jerusalem is Palestine -- no matter your Zionism.”

Palestinians claim the Israeli-annexed eastern part of the city as their capital.

Biden has for decades publicly supported recognising west Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and has said he will not reverse Trump’s controversial decision to move the US embassy there back to Tel Aviv.

On the peace process, Biden reaffirmed his support for Palestinian statehood while urging perseverance even as conditions appear bleak. “I know that the goal of the two states seems so far away,” he said in Bethlehem.

“But we never give up on the work

of peace,” he added. “There must be a political horizon that the Palestinian people can actually see or at least feel. We cannot allow the hopelessness to steal away the future.”

Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh on Sunday said a difficult terrain for peace talks does not excuse American inaction.

“If, as the US president said, the (two-state) solution is currently out of reach, then there must immediately be a (Jewish) settlement freeze, in accordance with international law and resolutions to preserve the right of the Palestinian people to their independent state,” Shtayyeh said.

For Tahani Mustafa, West Bank analyst at the International Crisis Group think-tank, Biden’s visit left “no indication that the situation of the Palestinian people has any place in his administration’s agenda”.

According to sources close to the Palestinian leadership, initial plans to issue a joint Biden-Abbas statement on Friday were scrapped because the sides could not agree on wording.

For Palestinians seeking US leadership capable of forcing Israeli concessions, seeing Biden’s delegation jet off from Tel Aviv to Saudi Arabia last Friday after a short, unremarkable meeting with Abbas brought familiar feelings of disappointment.

“As usual, we are left with the crumbs,” Issa Abu Ayash said, as he watched television in a Bethlehem cafe broadcasting images of Biden’s motorcade heading to Israel’s airport.

“We are so weak here,” he said. — AFP



US President Joe Biden descends from Air Force One at Ben Gurion International Airport in Lod, near Tel Aviv, Israel, last Wednesday. – Reuters

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



LEWANDOWSKI PROMISES TO HELP BARCELONA ‘RETURN TO THE TOP’

MADRID: Polish striker Robert Lewandowski said on Monday he was raring to go at new club Barcelona and determined to help them “return to the top and win as many titles as possible”.
“I’m finally here. I’m delighted to be at Barça”, the former Bayern Munich star told Barca TV after joining his new team-mates in Miami where Barcelona are starting a four-match US tour this week. “The last few days have been long, but

finally an agreement has been reached. I’m ready to take on this new challenge”, continued the 33-year-old.
“I’ve always wanted to play in La Liga and in the big teams, so Barca is a great opportunity for me.
“I’m here to help Barca get back to the top and win as many titles as possible.”
Barcelona’s last domestic title was in 2019 and their last Champions League trophy in



2015. On Saturday, Bayern Munich announced that they had reached an agreement with Barcelona for Lewandowski after two months of endless negotiations between the clubs.
The two-time Fifa men’s player of the year has reportedly agreed a four-year deal worth 50 million euros (\$50.4m), including five million in potential add-ons.
He is the club’s fourth summer transfer after Ivory Coast midfielder Franck Kessie

from AC Milan and Chelsea defender Andreas Christensen on a free transfer, and Brazil winger Raphinha, recruited for 70 million euro from Leeds. The club has also extended the contract of French winger Ousmane Dembele, who is committed until 2024.
A very generous transfer window for a club which suffered from an abysmal debt, exceeding one billion euros in the long term, a few months ago. — AFP

Messi, Mbappe and other PSG stars draw thousands at Tokyo training



PSG players (L-R) Lionel Messi, Neymar Jr, Kylian Mbappe and Marquinhos enter the pitch to attend a soccer clinic at a stadium in Tokyo. — AFP

TOKYO: Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe drew gasps from a crowd of thousands in Tokyo on Monday as Paris Saint-Germain held the first training session of their Japanese tour.
About 13,000 fans turned up at Tokyo’s Chichibunomiya rugby ground to watch an open session and were treated to an hour and a half of tricks and flicks from PSG’s star attacking trio.
The crowd erupted in cheers as the team trotted out to jog around the pitch and the players’ every touch was greeted with loud squeals.
Security guards were even

called into action when several fans invaded the pitch once the session was over.
Masayuki Yoshizawa, a 38-year-old office worker who arrived at the stadium wearing a 1990s-era PSG shirt, told AFP he was looking forward to watching star striker Mbappe.
“Ligue 1 teams don’t usually come to Japan — they usually go to China”, he said, adding that he had been a fan of PSG since Brazilian Leonardo joined them from Japanese club Kashima Antlers in 1996.
“It’s great that they have come here after the pandemic — I

think it might be the first and last time”, he said.
Nine-year-old Aoma Oura said he could not decide whether Messi or Mbappe was his favourite player.
“My son plays football and we’ve been fans for a while”, said his 36-year-old father Kazuya.
PSG will play three local teams during their 10-day visit to Japan, starting with Wednesday’s game against J-League champions Kawasaki Frontale at Tokyo’s National Stadium.
They will also play Urawa Reds in Saitama on July 23 and Gamba Osaka in Osaka on July 25.

PSG held a football clinic for children in Tokyo on Monday morning, with Sergio Ramos and Marquinhos joining Mbappe, Neymar and Messi on the pitch.
Some of the children asked the players questions after the session had finished, with one asking Messi what skills it was important to learn as a child.
“First of all, the most important thing at that age is to enjoy yourself”, said the Argentine.
“Of course, it’s good to practise and work hard to improve your skills, but it’s important to have fun.” — AFP



Australia's Cameron Smith celebrates with the Claret Jug after winning The Open Championship. – Reuters

SMITH SEES OFF MCILROY TO WIN BRITISH OPEN AFTER STUNNING SURGE

ST ANDREWS, UK: Australia's Cameron Smith won the 150th British Open at St Andrews on Sunday after a stunning final round of 64 saw him overtake favourite Rory McIlroy on a dramatic day at the Old Course and claim his first major title with a 20-under-par total.

Smith began the day four shots off the lead but his eight-under-par fourth round allowed him to finish a shot clear of Cameron Young of the United States, with a frustrated McIlroy ending another stroke back in third after a 70.

The world number six would have known something special was needed on Sunday for him to win the Claret Jug and he duly delivered with eight birdies — including five in a row from the 10th — and not a single dropped shot.

McIlroy had been the favourite coming into the week and was two shots clear and in control at the

The world number six would have known something special was needed on Sunday for him to win the Claret Jug and he duly delivered with eight birdies – including five in a row from the 10th – and not a single dropped shot.

turn in his final round, but then just in front Smith set off on his birdie surge and the pendulum swung definitively his way.

At the age of 28, Smith is the first Australian in almost three decades to win the British Open since Greg Norman claimed his second Claret Jug at Royal St George's in 1993.

The Brisbane native with the trademark mullet is also the third Australian to win the Open at the home of golf, after Peter Thomson in 1955 and Kel Nagle, who won the Open in 1960.

"To win an Open Championship in itself is going to be a golfer's

highlight but to do it around St Andrews is unbelievable," he said.

"This place is so cool. I love the golf course and the town."

Smith's 20-under-par total of 268 is the lowest winning score in an Open at St Andrews, bettering the performance of Tiger Woods, who won on 19-under in 2000.

In stark contrast to Smith, McIlroy was left to rue a series of missed birdie putts, while Viktor Hovland — who had shared the overnight lead on 16-under — faded badly to shoot a 74.

That left the door open for one of the chasing pack and Smith

took full advantage thanks to his incredible performance on the back nine.

As well as the birdies he showed nerves of steel to save par at the 17th, the legendary Road Hole.

Yet he needed his final birdie on 18 as his playing partner Young produced an eagle to finish with a 65 and end on 19-under.

A play-off was avoided and Smith could celebrate his first major after he finished tied third at this year's Masters, a tournament in which he also came second in 2020.

Before this week his biggest win had come at the Players Championship in March.

McIlroy rues missed putts
If Young, the 25-year-old New Yorker who had been the leader after the first round, can be satisfied with his showing this week, the same ultimately cannot be said for McIlroy.

— AFP

Stokes announces shock retirement from ODI cricket

LONDON: England's Ben Stokes has announced he will retire from one-day international cricket after Tuesday's series opener against South Africa on his Durham home ground, citing an "unsustainable" schedule.

The powerful all-rounder, who captains the England Test team, famously inspired his side to victory in the 2019 World Cup final against New Zealand at Lord's.

But in the three years since that triumphant moment, the 31-year-old has played just nine more times in the 50-over format due to injuries, a mental health break and workload management.

He will turn out once more for a farewell appearance at Chester-le-Street against South Africa on Tuesday before focusing on his Test captaincy and Twenty20 career.

Stokes, who has scored 2,919 runs and taken 74 wickets in the ODI format, said in a social media post on Monday that it had been an "incredibly tough decision to make".

"As hard as a decision as this was to come to, it's not as hard dealing with the fact I can't give my team-mates 100 per cent of myself in this format anymore," he said.

"The England shirt deserves nothing less from anyone who wears it. Three formats are just unsustainable for me now.

"Not only do I feel that my body is letting me down because of the schedule and what is



England's Ben Stokes in action. – Reuters

expected of us, but I also feel that I am taking the place of another player who can give (captain) Jos (Buttler) and the rest of the team their all."

Rob Key, managing director of men's cricket at the England and Wales Cricket Board, paid tribute to Stokes, saying: "Ben has had an incredible international career in ODI cricket, culminating in his match-winning performance at the 2019 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup final".

Stokes's decision comes after England's 2-1 series defeat against India, in which he scored 48 runs in three innings, but only bowled three overs.

He has been rested from the three T20 games against South Africa that will follow the ODI series. — AFP

UGANDAN CHEPTEGEI WON 10,000M WORLD TITLE



Ugandan sprinter Joshua Cheptegei won the world championship gold in the 10,000 metres at the World Athletics Championships, Oregon 2022 on Sunday. While Cheptegei, the Olympic title holder, finished the race distance with a time of 27:27.43 minutes which is considered the best time in his season, while the silver medal went to Kenyan Stanley Waithaka Mboro with a time of 27:27:90, and compatriot Jacob Kiplimo won the bronze with a time of 27:27:97.

Al Rawahi claims third place at Lebanon Rally Championship 2022

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, JULY 18

The second stage of the Jezzine Rally "Lebanon Rally Championship 2022" in its 37th edition, was organised by the Lebanese Automobile and Tourism Club under the auspices of "O. Mother. T".

With the participation of 21 cars, the coronation ceremony was held in the presence of former MP Amal Abu Zaid, head of the Union of Municipalities of Jezzine District, and Mayor of Jezzine Khalil Harfouche.

Omani Abdullah al Rawahi and his Jordanian navigator, Atta al Hamoud, took the Skoda Fabia to third place, while the driver Roger

Feghali added a new title with the Volkswagen Polo in history full of local and foreign titles, by winning the tenth Jezzine Rally title.

While the total distance of the rally was 215.22 km, including seven special speed stages, with a length of 85.83 km. It was held under hot summer weather and in the presence of a large audience of sports enthusiasts.

Since the beginning of the race, Feghali and his navigator Fouad Feghali imposed their control and tightened their grip on the top spot from the first stage until the seventh and final stage.

It left the competition for the remaining positions, after the completion of the first and second stages, Roger took first place,



followed by Al Wahaibi and then Ghandour.

Ghandour snatched second place, then Al Rawahi came third, so that the trio continued to lead and in the same order until the end, when Al Wahaibi (former world champion of Group N) suffered many mechanical problems.

Roger Feghali and his navigator Fouad Feghali on the Volkswagen Polo, they completed the race distance in a time of 46.06 minutes.

Then Tamer Ghandour and his navigator Salim Jalilati on a Skoda Fabia finished the race on 47.41M.

Thirdly, Abdullah al Rawahi and his Jordanian navigator Atta al Hamoud on the Skoda Fabia with a time of 48.24 minutes.

Pant, Pandya fire as India beat England to win series

MANCHESTER, England: Rishabh Pant's unbeaten 125 and Hardik Pandya's superb all-round display helped India seal a five wicket victory over England in the third and final one-day international at Old Trafford on Sunday and complete a 2-1 series victory.

Chasing 260 for victory, India lost skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli for 17 runs each after both experienced batsmen fell to Reece Topley, before Pandya took charge with a fluent 71 off 55 balls in the company of Pant.

The pair stitched together 133 runs for the fifth wicket to set up a comfortable win, with Pant going on to score his maiden ton in the format after Pandya fell to a spectacular catch by Ben Stokes off the bowling of Brydon Carse.

India's explosive wicketkeeper batsman Pant took them home with 47 balls to spare by reverse-sweeping Joe Root for four, after he smashed David Willey for five boundaries in the previous over.

"Hopefully I'll remember my first ODI century for the rest of my life", Pant said.

"But when I was in there, I was just focusing on one ball at a time. When a team is under pressure and you bat like that, that's what you aspire to do."

Earlier, England were dismissed for 259 in 45.5 overs after Pandya picked up four wickets. India won the toss and chose to bowl first and fast bowler Mohammed Siraj gave the tourists the perfect start, dismissing Jonny Bairstow and Root for ducks in the second over to leave England at 12-2.

Jason Roy (41) and Stokes (27) steadied the ship but Pandya (4-24) struck in his first over to



India's Rishabh Pant celebrates reaching his century. – Reuters

remove Roy and later dismissed Stokes to put the brakes on.

Moeen Ali then combined with Jos Buttler for a 75-run fifth-wicket stand before he was caught behind off Ravindra Jadeja.

India's bowlers used the short

ball to good effect and Buttler looked shaken up when he was hit twice on the helmet by two bouncers in one over from Siraj, but the skipper settled down and looked to push England to a competitive total.

“Hopefully I’ll remember my first ODI century for the rest of my life. But when I was in there, I was just focusing on one ball at a time. When a team is under pressure and you bat like that, that’s what you aspire to do

RISHABH PANT
Indian wicketkeeper batsman

But Pandya struck twice in the 36th over, dismissing Liam Livingstone (27) before getting rid of Buttler (60), with both batsmen holing out to Jadeja in the deep.

England failed to get going in the death overs and although Craig Overton made 32, they were bowled out as Yuzvendra Chahal (3-60) cleaned up the tail.

"We were short on runs", said Buttler. "We needed a good start with the ball so that was fantastic. We created chances, but two guys took the game away from us, that's where we lost the game."

Indian paceman Jasprit Bumrah, whose 6-19 had laid the foundation for a 10-wicket victory in the first ODI, missed the decider due to a back spasm. — Reuters

BRIEF SCORES:
England 259, 45.5 overs (J Buttler 60; Hardik Pandya 4-24, Yuzvendra Chahal 3-60) It to India 261-5, 42.1 overs (Rishabh Pant 125 no, Hardik Pandya 71; R Topley 3-35)



Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce celebrates winning the women's 100m final during the World Athletics Championships in Eugene, Oregon. – AFP

Fraser-Pryce leads Jamaican sweep in 100M

EUGENE, Oregon: Shelley-Ann Fraser-Pryce led a Jamaican clean sweep in the women's 100m final at the World Championships while American athletes continued to clean up on home soil by clinching four golds on Sunday.

Fraser-Pryce claimed her fifth world title after clocking 10.67 to edge Shericka Jackson and Elaine Thompson-Herah, the same three athletes who swept the Olympic podium in Tokyo.

"I can't even imagine the amount of times I've had setbacks and I've bounced back and I'm here again", Fraser-Pryce said.

"I feel blessed to have this talent and to continue to do it at 35, having a baby, still going, and hopefully inspiring women that they can make their own journey."

Oregon native Ryan Crouser, a double Olympic champion and world record holder, led a US clean sweep in the men's shot put and finally got his elusive world gold after his throw of 22.94m set a championship record.

Defending champion Joe Kovacs took silver with Josh Awotunde capturing bronze.

Olympic champion Katie

Nageotte cleared 4.85m to win the women's pole vault with compatriot Sandi Morris taking a third consecutive silver.

It was a third straight gold in the field events for US women after Brooke Andersen's triumph in the hammer throw earlier in the day and Chase Ealey's shot put success on Saturday.

American Grant Holloway retained his 110m hurdles title in a chaotic final that saw Jamaica's Olympic champion Hansle Parchment injured in the warmup and Devon Allen disqualified for a false start.

Allen, who produced the third-fastest time in the event in June and was one of the favourites in Eugene, moved 0.01 seconds too soon.

"It feels good to win in front of the home crowd", said Holloway, who came home in 13.03 seconds, ahead of compatriot Trey Cunningham and Spain's Asier Martinez.

In the morning session, hammer thrower Andersen threw 77.56m to win gold and compatriot Janee Kassanavoid took bronze. Camryn Rogers finished second to win Canada's first world hammer medal.

— Reuters

EVERY MOMENT
EXTRAORDINARY.

LEXUS
EXPERIENCE AMAZING

INDULGE IN A LEXUS
OWNERSHIP EXPERIENCE.

FREE SERVICE*

3 YEARS / 30,000 KMS
(WHICHEVER IS EARLIER)

FREE REGISTRATION*

1 YEAR

Welcome to a unique experience in automotive luxury. At Lexus Oman, every detail is an outcome of our undivided focus on you and your satisfaction. One that is perfectly customized to reflect the highest levels of Omotenashi, the Japanese spirit of hospitality. Come over and enjoy a fulfilling experience unlike any other.

Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC (Lexus Division)
(SBC 9091, 2018 Certified) | C. R. No. 1703412
Muscat: 24578913, 92844016, 93320817, Al Mawaleh: 99375422,
Barka: 99471397, Buraimi: 25660261, Sohar: 99374199,
Ibri: 99898249, Nizwa: 92858001, Salalah: 99103579

Campaign Period: 17th July Up to 14th September 2022. The above benefits are applicable for all purchases except RAC, Taxi, Government Organisations & Ministries. *3 Years / 30,000 kms (whichever is earlier) covering 3 services at 1 Year / 10,000 kms service interval (whichever is earlier) for all models except LX600. For LX600 5Years / 50,000 kms (whichever is earlier). #Free one year registration on all models. Vehicle specifications are subject to change without notice. Pictures & colours are indicative. For further details, please visit your nearest Lexus showroom.

Lexus Oman

Oman.Lexus

Lexus Oman

www.lexusoman.com



#MAISARAHWORLD

DRIVE THE CAR OF YOUR DREAMS with Maisarah Auto Finance

Offer is valid till 31 December 2022 and is applicable for new, additional finances. Not valid for takeover of auto finance from other banks.

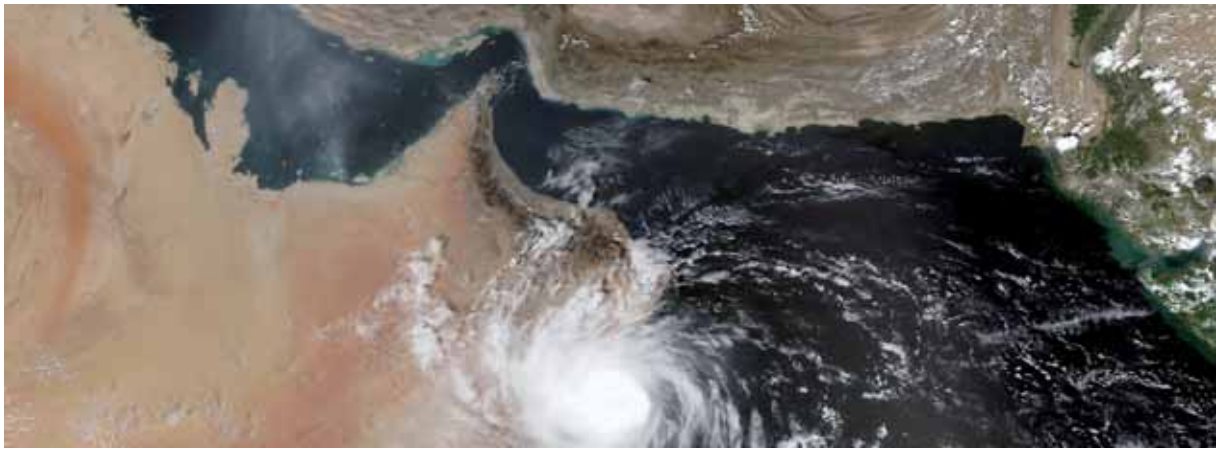
For more information, please scan the QR code

Competitive profit rates starting from 4.95%

Climate change poses new risk to Oman’s financial stability: CBO

EMERGENT CONCERN: ‘A large part of Oman’s GDP relies on the production and export of hydrocarbons that are a major source of greenhouse gases’, says report

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu



The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has warned that climate change could pose a threat to Oman’s financial system, potentially in the form of direct physical shocks as well as inherent risks during the country’s transition to a low-carbon economy.

The apex bank listed climate change, alongside cybersecurity, as emergent risks to the country’s financial stability. The caution came in the banking sector regulator’s Financial Stability Report 2022 published here on Sunday.

“Climate change risks present severe concerns to the financial system posing micro and macroprudential risks,” said the Central Bank report. “There is a growing awareness and concerns about the implications of climate change on the financial stability as it poses two major types of risks, the first is its direct physical impact leading to infrastructure and property damages and the second is the transition risks such as changes in climate policy, technology and consumer and

market sentiments.”

Compounding this risk for hydrocarbon-dependent countries like the Sultanate of Oman is the exposure to challenges in its efforts to reduce its carbon footprint, the report noted.

The Central Bank explained: “A large part of Oman’s GDP relies on the production and export of hydrocarbons that are a major source of greenhouse gases. Therefore, besides the climate risks faced by all other countries, phasing out carbon emissions would entail a need for massive changes in the structure of the economy.”

Assessing climate risks, the financial sector watchdog further acknowledged, represents a challenge in itself because of “difficult-to-predict shocks and significantly long time horizon spanning over decades for modelling and analysis of transition risks”.

The Central Bank nevertheless pledged to “keep a close eye” on climate change risks, as well as

build its capabilities to formally incorporate these risks in its assessment of financial stability.

Experts have warned that the Sultanate of Oman is vulnerable to severe climate change impacts if rising global temperatures are not reined in. These threats will manifest in the form of extreme hot weather, destruction cyclones and flash flooding, rising aridity and other impacts to water availability, agriculture and health.

For its part, Oman has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in line with its pledges under the Paris Agreement. It has also announced a landmark pivot away from fossil fuels and towards green energies, notably renewables and green hydrogen, to power its future economy.

In its report, the Central Bank also singled out cybersecurity as an issue of priority concern particularly as the economy embraces financial technology (fintech) and potentially digital

assets as well.

“The financial sector is a prime target for cybercriminals to attack due to the potential for large gains,” the report warned.

“Besides cyberattacks, operational issues that may disrupt the provision of financial services also remain an important challenge because such disruptions from either cyberattacks or operational breakdowns may not only cause financial losses but may also shake the trust of the customers in the digital financial services or even the entire financial sector.”

To this end, the apex bank has pledged to continue to invest in operational redundancies, cybersecurity technologies and competent staff. It is also preparing to collaborate with domestic and international partners to “strengthen the resilience of the financial system and reinforce the capacity of the financial sector to mitigate and recover from cyberattacks”, it added.

— *Picture for illustration only*

Omani oil, condensate output grows 9.4pc

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 18

Production of Omani crude oil and condensates increased 9.4 per cent to 157.462 million barrels by end-May 2022 versus figures for 2021, the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) said.

Crude production alone climbed 12.9 per cent, while condensates production declined 2.4 per cent during the same period.

The total average price of Omani crude surged 46 per cent to reach \$80 per barrel compared to \$54.8 per barrel in 2021.

Total exports of Omani crude oil and condensates went up by 16.3 per cent by the end of May 2022 compared to the same period of the previous year.

Oman’s oil exports to Japan soared nearly 400 per cent to reach 5,008,400 barrels this year, compared to 1,001,900 barrels during the same period in 2021.

Exports to India recorded a rise by 65 per cent during the same period.

Natural gas production (including imports) increased by 1.5 per cent by the end of May 2022 to reach 20.401 million cubic metres compared to 20.106 million cubic metres by the end of May 2021.

Consumption of gas recorded a rise in industrial areas by 14.6 per cent, industrial projects by 6.3 per cent and electricity power plants by 0.7 per cent. Meanwhile, consumption of gas in oilfields declined 9.8 per cent compared to the same period in 2021.

— *With inputs from ONA*



New guidelines issued for health insurance claims management

KEY SIGNIFICANCE: Regulations will reduce potential for discrepancies and disputes between insurance companies and private health institutions

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 18

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has issued a decision for the management of the health insurance claims revenue cycle.

Decision 107/ 2022 organises the documentary cycle and provides the service of filing, following up and processing of insurance claims on behalf of the health service provider. The regulation includes the necessary rules to licence health insurance claims revenue cycle management companies in the Sultanate of Oman.

Ahmed bin Ali al Maamari,

Vice President - Insurance Sector, said the regulation is part of preparations for the implementation of the compulsory health insurance scheme (Dhamani) for the employees of the private sector and visitors to the Sultanate of Oman.

With this new regulation, the legislative requirements of the all parties that are stakeholders in the health insurance process are now complete.

“This initiative will also contribute to improving the quality of health insurance claims sent to insurance companies, verifying their compatibility with the medical coding system, reducing differences and disputes between insurance companies and private health institutions as a result of rejected claims and nonpayment.

He said that the introduction of this type of activities in the insurance market will contribute



to expanding the role of the insurance sector to accommodate the graduate of educational institutions, as well as providing technical and administrative job opportunities, whether in the disciplines related to health sciences or accounting, finance and administration and information systems,” the Vice President said.

According to the regulation, the activity will provide many services to private health institutions, related to managing the documentary cycle, providing medical coding services, billing, revenue development, technical, financial and advisory services, as the company will be concerned with verifying the identity of the insured and eligibility for

treatment services further to transferring treatment services to billable fees, processing rejected claims, knowing the source of the problems of rejected claims and working to correct them, in addition to sending health insurance claims electronically to insurance companies or health insurance claims administrators, and ensuring that they receive those claims according to the specified timeframes.

The company will also be responsible for following up the collection of funds for treatment services provided to health insurance policyholders, as well as training and qualifying the employees of private health institutions to use the approved medical coding systems or the systems that may be introduced in the future.

The importance of private health institutions contracting with health insurance claims revenue cycle management

companies is to raise the quality of health insurance claims that will be sent to insurance companies or health insurance claims administrators, reduce administrative and operational costs for private health institutions, and reduce health insurance claims rejected by Insurance companies or health insurance claims administrators, in addition to improving and simplifying the operational procedures of private health institutions, and ensuring the financial stability of the private health institution.

According to the audited financial statements of the insurance sector, health insurance premiums rose 5.6 per cent to RO 164 million in 2021, and the value of compensation related to health insurance activity dipped 0.5 per cent to RO 120 million. The data also showed an increase in the health insurance policies by 88 per cent to 23,000 policies.

CMA launches e-encyclopedia of capital market statutes

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 18

In line with its keenness to improve the services rendered to users and accelerate the pace of digital transformation, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) has launched an electronic encyclopedia of its legislations, which contain all the legislations it issued incorporating the latest amendments. The system includes 52 legislations.

The e-encyclopedia is part of efforts to provide an integrated electronic search system that serves as a comprehensive reference for all the legislation issued by the CMA. It also enables the accurate search of information



The e-encyclopedia serves as a reference for all the legislation issued by the CMA

with the use of modern.

The system has several features in the search process, which allows search using several methods, namely (searching the titles of legislation, issuing method and articles of legislations), it also allows search according to the classification of legislation (general, insurance and capital market) as well as matching words. The work team is in the process of issuing an English version.

Alizz Islamic Bank Sharia board holds second meeting

MUSCAT: The Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB) of Alizz Islamic Bank held its second meeting for 2022 at the bank's headquarters in the Central Business District of Ruwi.

The meeting was held in the presence of the Chairman of the Sharia Supervisory Board and the other members of the SBB as well as Sulaiman bin Hamad al Harthi, the bank's CEO, some directors, the Internal Sharia Auditors and the bank's Internal Auditors.

During the meeting, the CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank presented and discussed the bank's performance during the second quarter of this year, highlighting the key indicators of the bank's growth and the enhanced services and products offered by the bank to its customers after obtaining SSB's approval.

Moreover, the meeting discussed the Sharia Audit Report for the second quarter of the year and the Sharia Compliance and Risks Report, as well as a number of issues of interest, including the new products approved or



rejected by the SSB.

The meeting also discussed some of the requests to reschedule corporate finance and issued the appropriate decisions in this respect. The meeting witnessed the introduction of a training programme to the bank staff on drafting Sharia contracts, a key component of Islamic Banking practices.

The programme was delivered by Shaikh Dr Ahmed Subhi Ayadi, member of the SSB. The head and members of the SSB also previously attended a training programme on Anti Money-Laundering and the applicable laws.

The Sharia Compliance and Audit Department performs various key roles in order to achieve its overarching goal of ensuring compliance with Sharia Principles in all aspects related to customer service, products and services.

To that end, it regularly reviews documents relating to the bank's products, operations and procedures to check their compliance with Sharia principles. It presents reports on its findings to the SSB and bank's management which in turn take the required actions to offer support to ensure compliance of the bank's products and services

with sharia principles.

The Sharia Compliance and Audit Department had other significant contributions, such as proposing Sharia-compliant solutions that meet the requirements of the corporate customers who usually benefit from more sophisticated solutions.

Guided by the SSB, the Department took part in the development of several products that were launched last year, as well as the products to be launched in 2022. It also performed a Sharia audit on consumer and wholesale banking services.

It is worth nothing that in 2021, the Sharia Supervisory Board held 7 meetings, with a full quorum; reviewed a number of products and documents; and issued 162 decisions on several inquiries, in addition to reviewing monthly reports, policies, investment proposals and Sharia Audit reports.

It also offered appropriate guidance in accordance with Sharia Principles.

Lincoln Corsair — the luxury that impresses

MUSCAT: The Lincoln Corsair makes a fine mark with its impressive luxury, features and technology. The Corsair with its comfort and space makes it an ideal choice for those in search of luxury that makes every journey outstanding.

The two-row Lincoln Corsair SUV combines refined power and a wealth of purposeful technologies. Staying true to its Quiet Flight DNA, Corsair is engineered to deliver an effortless drive experience and sensation of gliding over the road.

Turbocharged four-cylinder engine options are available — a standard 2.0-litre with a targeted 250 horsepower and 275 lb.-ft. of torque. Each is paired to a new 8-speed automatic transmission for agile performance. The Corsair is designed to give luxury customers technology to make their drive effortless, such as Lincoln Co-Pilot360 driver-assist features.

The horizontal interior design lends a visual calmness to the



space, which is crafted with supple, hand-selected materials. Breaking up the elements, particularly the cantilevered console, emphasises volume and enhances practicality with additional front-row storage. A specially tuned 14-speaker Revel premium audio system is available for the Corsair.

Placement, tuning, calibration and the number of Revel speakers are all unique to each Lincoln vehicle, designed to ensure audio quality and accuracy for each cabin size and acoustics. Multiple power outlets are located throughout.

Additional technologies are seamlessly integrated through SYNC 3 with AppLink; users simply plug their mobile phone into their SYNC 3-equipped Corsair to access apps directly from an available 8-inch touch screen.

Corsair, like all Lincoln vehicles, comes standard with a suite of driver-assist features. It provides Pre-Collision Assist with automatic emergency braking and Pedestrian Detection, Blind Spot Information System, a Lane-Keeping System, rear backup camera and auto high-beam

lighting. Active Park Assist 2.0, 360-degree Camera, Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control & Head-up Display.

Those interested in experiencing the Lincoln Corsair can visit a Lincoln showroom.

In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co. LLC. Log on to www.lincolnoman.com, or www.facebook.com/lincolnoman or www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.

Excellent response for Bank Muscat's special offer for Fifa World Cup

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been greatly encouraged by the excellent customer feedback regarding the special promotion wherein the bank will give away 51 match packages to Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa.

All Bank Muscat Visa Credit and Prepaid cardholders will be automatically entered into raffle draws to select winners once they use their cards to make a minimum cumulative spend of RO 50. It must also be noted that customers will get multiple chances to participate in the draws till 31 August 2022 for every additional RO 50 spent using their card.

Customers of the recently launched Bank Muscat Limited Edition Fifa World Cup Visa Prepaid Card are also eligible to participate in the draws. These cards feature contactless payment technology and customers can load funds and top them up instantly.

In addition, the cards can be used for secure online payments apart from PoS payments and ATM withdrawals. Customers can easily apply for 3 Prepaid Cards for their family via Mobile Banking and Internet Banking and can customise the names on two of their cards for their relevant family members.

For more details on the Limited-Edition Fifa World Cup Visa Prepaid card, please go to <https://bm.click/2022football>.

It is important to note that customers can enter the draws even when they are on holiday by using their cards for transactions



during their travels. Each winner will receive a Hospitality package for two to Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa.

The package includes airline tickets, hotel accommodation and tickets to exciting matches between some of the top football teams in the world. As many as 10 packages (1 Opening Match, 1 Final and 8 Quarterfinal matches) have been reserved for Bank Muscat Private Banking Visa Infinite and Asalah Priority Banking Visa Signature credit cardholders.

Nine packages featuring Quarterfinal matches have been reserved for Al Jawhar Visa Platinum credit cardholders, while Visa Prepaid cardholders can win one of the 8 Group Stage match packages reserved for them. Holders of Bank Muscat-Co-branded Visa Platinum credit cards, Visa Gold credit cards and Visa Classic credit cards are eligible to be entered into draws for one of the 24 Group Stage match packages reserved especially for them.

bp Oman signs five social investment initiatives



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 18

bp Oman signed on Monday five agreements kicking off its new cycle of social investment programmes for 2022/2023. The event was under the auspices of Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy. The new programmes aim to deliver on Oman's 2040 objectives and bp's sustainability aims of improving people's lives.

Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, the Minister of Economy commented: "The sustainable development of Oman is crucial in ensuring our society and local economy continues to flourish. These programmes are great examples of how we can help serve local capabilities in a way that drives our economy forward."

The programmes will focus on energy sustainability, enterprise development and education. One programme will provide renewable energy sources to 50 farms in effected areas by cyclone Shaheen, in partnership with Nafath. This delivers on bp's aim 11 of providing cleaner

energy and aligns with Oman's 2040 vision of protecting the environment.

The second programme focuses on enhancing the wellbeing of the communities affected by the cyclone Shaheen in line with bp's aim of enhancing wellbeing. This agreement is in partnership with bp's existing partner Outward Bound Oman.

Yousuf al Ojaili, bp Oman president said: "Through our five new programmes, we are committed to delivering bp's sustainability aims to help create a safe and sustainable environment for people and our planet as well as Oman's 2040 vision. We are excited to collaborate with our new social investment partners and we would like to thank OQ, PTTEP and Petronas; our joint venture partners at Block 61 for their continuous support."

To further advance bp's diversity and inclusion agenda, the third programme will focus on delivering educational workshops for people with hearing disabilities, in collaboration with the Al Tawasul institute.



ME sovereigns turn to pvt markets as inflation poses challenges

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 18

Surging inflation has prompted sovereign investors to re-examine their asset allocation, with private markets the main beneficiary, according to the latest Invesco Global Sovereign Asset Management Study.

Now in its tenth year, the study details the views of 139 chief investment officers, heads of asset classes and senior portfolio strategists at 81 sovereign wealth funds and 58 central banks around the globe, who together manage \$23 trillion in assets.

Inflation shock

After a long period of low interest rates and low inflation, sovereign investors have been forced to reconsider their macroeconomic assumptions and adjust their investments accordingly. The majority of sovereigns in the Middle East (55 per cent) have repositioned their portfolios in anticipation of further rate rises, though the sharp correction in equities and failure of bonds to shelter portfolios have presented difficult choices.

Zainab Faisal Kufaishi, Head of the Middle East and Africa, and Senior Executive at Invesco said, “While most markets ended 2021 with a cautiously optimistic outlook for 2022, the start of the year presented a perfect storm of challenges for investors. Inflation is surging, global growth is slowing and geopolitical tensions are rising. Where the macro environment had once been relatively predictable, it is now more uncertain, sending sovereigns to rethink how to position their portfolios as they look ahead.”

Invesco’s study affirms that while global sovereigns’ fixed income allocations have declined steadily in recent years, they



KEY TREND: USD remains key world reserve currency for now, but RMB allocations are increasing

are no longer being redirected to listed equities. Instead, they are going to private market alternatives, notably real estate, private equity and infrastructure. In the Middle East, most (82 per cent) respondents agree that real assets are effective hedges against inflation and higher yields.

Zainab Kufaishi commented, “While there are some concerns about deal flow and supply driving valuations higher, private markets remain attractive to long-term investors in the region because they provide a long-duration play and shelter from volatility.”

Interest in private assets looks set to continue, with 50 per cent of sovereign wealth funds in the Middle East citing an intention to increase allocations to private equity, 20 per cent to real estate and 20 per cent to infrastructure over the next 12 months. Globally,

private assets now constitute, on average, 22 per cent of sovereigns’ portfolios, the highest proportion on record. In total, sovereign investors now own \$719 billion in private assets, up from \$205 billion in 2011.

Although the increased interest in private markets has come at the expense of reduced allocations in fixed income for sovereign funds globally, some respondents, including those in the Middle East, are looking to take advantage of opportunities arising from the

equity market correction, as well as right entry-points for fixed income as rates begin to rise.

Rod Ringrow, Head of Official Institutions at Invesco, commented: “‘Uncertainty’ has been the word dominating investors’ conversations so far this year. After a relatively predictable few years, consensus over the direction of the global economy has broken down. This, paired with the potential end of a multi-decade bull run in fixed income markets, is creating a new backdrop for sovereigns.

“While many are looking to private markets for solutions, we should not overstate the pace of this shift. As long-term investors, sovereigns are treading very carefully and many are making only incremental changes to their portfolios, adopting a ‘wait and see’ approach.”

Stocks climb, euro inches higher in big week for markets

LONDON: World equity markets got off to a solid start on Monday and the euro pulled away from parity as market participants scaled back bets on the Federal Reserve interest rate hike next week and on optimism spurred by central bank pledges to support China’s economy.

US stock futures were up more than 1 per cent while European stock indices were a sea of green in a big week for the region.

The European Central Bank is set to raise rates for the first time in more than a decade on Thursday, the same day the bloc will be hoping Russia resumes gas supplies. Italy, meanwhile, is again in the grip of a political crisis.

The pan-European STOXX 600 index was up 1.3 per cent by 1030 GMT after posting a 0.8 per cent drop last week. Gains on Monday were broad-based and led by miners, energy stocks and banks.

“It is a wild week this week, there is so much going on”, said James Rossiter, senior global strategist at TD Securities.

“The ECB is a huge focus, there is not a lot of scope for the ECB to surprise, 25 bps is locked in I think... and then there is Italy and Nord Stream too.”

Italy’s borrowing costs surged on Monday and the premium investors demand for holding Italian debt over safer German

paper was at its widest in a month as political turmoil in Europe’s fourth largest economy rumbled on.

Prime Minister Mario Draghi attempted to resign from his post on Thursday after the 5-Star Movement, a coalition partner, failed to back him in a confidence vote. Draghi’s resignation was rejected by the Italian president.

Draghi is expected to address parliament on Wednesday but Italy’s 10-year bond yield rose 10 basis points (bps) on Monday to as high as 3.48 per cent, pushing the closely watched spread over German Bund yields to its widest level in over a month at around 235 bps.

“We expect volatility to remain high until then in response to various rumours concerning whether he will remain firm on his resignation or whether he is willing to remain in place”, UniCredit analysts said in a note.

“Any indication that could increase the likelihood of early elections will ultimately be negative for BTPs and drive the spread wider.”

Overnight, a gauge of Asian shares rose more than 1 per cent, its biggest daily rise in nearly two months, boosted by a jump in Chinese shares as regulators encouraged lenders to extend loans to qualified real estate projects.

— Reuters



ESG is more than a compliance requirement: ICAEW

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 18

As environmental, social and governance (ESG) reporting moves into the mainstream, organisations should move away from viewing it as simply a compliance requirement and embrace it as a business growth driver. That was the view of speakers at a recent ESG expert discussion jointly led by ICAEW and PwC Middle East.

According to PwC, 55 per cent of publicly listed companies worldwide are committing to voluntary ESG disclosures, with 78 per cent of Middle East businesses indicating that they would welcome increased ESG regulation, believing it will strengthen and accelerate their organisation’s ESG strategy.

As consumers and investors become more environmentally and socially conscious, ESG reporting presents an opportunity to reframe internal sustainability agendas into growth engines.

ESG is the evaluation of risks to the enterprise value of an organisation with specific focus on environmental, social and governance factors such as having a circular approach to waste, localising your supply chains, pledging a commitment to



ENVIRONMENTAL



SOCIAL



GOVERNANCE

transparent reporting and a focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Its importance among key business stakeholders is growing, as ESG becomes an essential means of safeguarding businesses against future risks. The speakers highlighted the climate crisis, investor interest in non-financial performance and new business opportunities as the key drivers behind its growing popularity.

The experts leading the ESG discussion were: Richard Spencer, Sustainability Director, ICAEW; Azzah Fawzi, Partner — Assurance, Risk, ESG Reporting Leader, PwC Middle East; Rashid Khursheed, Partner — Assurance,

Dubai, PwC Middle East and Alaisha Dossa, Director — Assurance, PwC Middle East.

They emphasised that most companies are still in the compliance stage of the ESG framework, due in part to the complexity and ongoing development of ESG reporting standards. Yet for the true benefits of ESG to be realised, organisations need to incorporate the practice into their business strategies.

Amid heightening climate and social challenges, governments are acting to instigate change through regulation, consumers are becoming more environmentally and socially conscious and investors are responding to a

shifting market landscape. The short-term cost required to adopt an ESG-friendly strategy will be mitigated by the medium and long-term opportunities.

In the Middle East, the UAE, Jordan and Egypt are the only three countries to mandate ESG reporting for listed companies. While the true impact lies in the type of information required to be disclosed, it is expected that policies will become more stringent as the region plays catch-up to the rest of the world. However, the experts maintained there is still work to be done — both around the world and in the region.

Governments in the region are steadily developing ESG agendas

and with the UAE set to host COP28 next year, attention will be drawn to the nation’s growing environmental policies, which include a \$50 billion investment by the UAE government to support its net-zero transition.

Richard Spencer, Sustainability Director, ICAEW, said: “ESG is becoming an increasingly popular topic, although it is still mistakenly conflated with sustainability. While the two share similar outcomes, the contexts are different; ESG is used by businesses to identify risk, whereas sustainability looks at the impact a business has on the environment and society.”

“Understanding the risks posed through environmental, social

and governance challenges will potentially reframe the necessity of transformation, in turn driving sustainable business practice.”

Azzah Fawzi, Partner — Assurance, Business, Controls, Risk, PwC Middle East, said: “Accounting and assurance has a key role to play in the successful implementation of ESG, especially in the region. Accurate reporting and transparency underpin ESG and it is chartered accountants who will be at the heart of this. Expert guidance will become especially important as climate challenges and social issues worsen, causing uncertainty and increased government intervention. Adapting business policy and procedure, as well as identifying future challenges will be critical for safeguarding business in the medium-to-long-term.”

The speakers all agreed that a healthy business is a steward of the planet and society, and it is the new generation of leaders, investors and consumers that are driving this expectation.

ICAEW was the first major professional organisation to become carbon neutral, understanding the value this has not only for the planet but also for business.

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

• Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
• Choose from a wide range of brands & models
• PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
• Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

Ask For Free Demo

Cloud Computing Services

For Tally Sales, Services or Customization

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
ASIA SOLUTIONS

https://www.asiasolutions.net

Tally FOR VAT
TallyPrime

OMAN DAILY Observer Classified Section

TUESDAY JULY 19, 2022 DHUL HIJJA 20, 1443 AH

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahd186@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

WORLDWIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO
PACKING & SHIFTING SERVICE
WAREHOUSE FACILITY

www.pcsinternational.co.in

PCS CARGO
Prompt Cargo Services LLC

TOLL FREE 800 22822

Head Office
AL GHUBRA
Near Makkah Hypermarket
91 787 812
91 787 814

VAT REGISTRATION, RETURN FILING, TAX CONSULTANCY
Contact: 97239696 / 95355638

FOR SALE

A 60 square metre Paint Shop, with an additional space of 160 sqm (Unutilized) for SALE in Mabellah, Suitable for Building Materials, Hardware and allied business.
Serious buyers may contact 92525406

SIT. WANTED SIT VACANT

SUDANESE female available in Muscat, 26 years old fluent in Arabic & English, has BSC with honour from University of Khartoum in medical laboratory science with 3 years of experience as a lab technician. Dataflow, prometric succeeded. Tel: 94155906

WANTED for Sohar Production Industries. **Planners** 5-8 years experience maintenance planner in Oil & Gas industry **Project Engineer with Mechanical Background** 8-10 years project engineering experience in Oil & Gas industry **Electrical Engineer** 8-10 years project engineering experience in Oil & Gas industry **Mechanical/Static Engineers** Minimum 5-8 years experience in mechanical maintenance of Static equipment in Oil & Gas industry Send CV to Vap1oman@gmail.com

INDIAN female, M.Com having 4 years of experience in accounts/ audit, seeking job as accounts/ audit assistant. Currently in Oman. Contact: 79560740.

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary/ Stenography/ Oman DL and Muscat experience available. Contact: 79256679.

GENERAL manager with 16+ years experience in Oman, MBA - BE, seeks suitable placement. Contact: 94008034.

PLANNING engineer, PMP. Indian male Civil Eng. Around 10 years experience in construction projects. Softwares: Primavera P6, MS Office, ERP, having Oman driving licence. Ready to join, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com Call: 78002582.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement of Capital Reduction

IN accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **Wahat Dimashq Trad. Co. LLC**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **7064918**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from RO **250,000.000** to **3,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Anila Varghese (holder of Indian Passport No. N1192686) daughter of M P James having permanent residence in Edatharayil House, Ramamangalam P O, Vettithara, Ernakulam, Kerala, India, Pin 686663 and presently residing in Muladha, Oman, P O Box No. 418, Postal Code 314, intend to change my name from Anila Varghese to Anila James for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P Box No. 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

مجمع السلامة الطبيك حديث
Modern Al Saloma Polyclinic
Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Dhakira, Ras Al Khaima, Ajman, U.A.E.

د. نورا بركات
الخصائية في الأمراض الجلدية والعلاجات التجميلية
DR. NORA BARAKAT MD, MS
DERMATOLOGY AND AESTHETICS MEDICINE SPECIALIST

CONSULTATION AVAILABLE SAT TO WED 10AM TO 6PM THU 9AM TO 2PM

CONTACT US
+968 24451726 - +968 79235354
AL MAHJAL (NEAR TRAFFIC SIGNAL) - SUQUAT OF OMAN
E: ALSALAMAMAN@GMAIL.COM

EMERGENCY NO +968 94502100

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

SKT سماء الخضراء للتجارة
SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

Tel: 24501568, 24502479 • Fax: 24503566
Email: sales@samaalkhadra.com
Website: www.samaalkhadratradingco.com

we shall cover

Saham Ayurvedic Hospital
Al Kishda, Saham, Sohar

AYURVEDA AT ITS BEST!

Saham Ayurvedic Clinic
Bait Al Reem, Al Khuwair, Muscat

GCC'S FIRST IN-PATIENT AYURVEDIC HOSPITAL
AYURVEDA | REHABILITATION | PHYSIOTHERAPY | SPEECH THERAPY | YOGA

26721707 (HOSPITAL) 97000533 (HOSPITAL)
24403783 (CLINIC) 99230005 (CLINIC)

WWW.SAHAMAYURHOSPITAL.COM
INFO@SAHAMAYURHOSPITAL.COM

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocoraches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment (Pre & Post Construction)

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

النماني للشحن
AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

INDIA • BANGLADESH
NEPAL • SRILANKA • INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE
USA • ALL GCC

TOLL FREE NUMBER 80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com

95587410, 9988 1554, 99638698, 94940231, 98523831
Branches: Ruwi, Hamriya, Ghala, Seet, Barka, Suwaili, Sohar

FREE PICK UP 24/7

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS

○ Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.

○ Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts.
972494490.

LUXURIOUS

Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/monthly/ annually, Muscat.
Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

FOR RENT

FLATS, 2BHK and 1 BHK in Mumtaz
99341138/ 90991079.

FLATS, 2BHK in Ghubra near Indian School. 99341138/ 90991079.

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

www.omandailyserver.com @omandailyserver

Quality Comes First

Tower Cranes & Passenger Lifts:

- Sales and Rental Services
- Installation
- Maintenance Service
- Breakdown Service
- Spare Parts Supply
- Hoist & Lowering
- Support Fixation
- Dismantling

Steel Fabrication Works

NEW MANARA TECHNICAL SERVICES LLC
Mobile: +968 9853 1975, 9853 1970
E-mail: info@newmanara.com / newmanaratechnical@gmail.com
Website: www.newmanara.com

OMAN DAILY Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahd186@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakht Al Shihri
92998577
bakht.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suham Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Anila Varghese (holder of Indian Passport No. N1192686) daughter of M P James having permanent residence in Edatharayil House, Ramamangalam P O, Vettithara, Ernakulam, Kerala, India, Pin 686663 and presently residing in Muladha, Oman, P O Box No. 418, Postal Code 314, intend to change my name from Anila Varghese to Anila James for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P Box No. 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

#Living_with_COVID19



Art from the heart for joy and hope

In the middle of the pandemic, art served as a compass to a lot of people. It helped many find direction. Also suffering from burnout, Dr Benny Panakkal, renowned cardiologist in Muscat, turned to art and realised that he has it in home to transform challenges into paintings that inspire... **P20**

Social life helps orphaned elephants overcome loss: study

ORPHANED ELEPHANTS manage to overcome the loss of their mother by living in a herd, highlighting the importance of a social life for the species, according to a study.

Scientists investigated the consequences of a mother elephant's death on her child by examining the level of stress hormones in the excrement of 37 young elephants in Kenya between 2015 and 2016.

Among the young elephants, 25 had lost their mother between one and 19 years before from poaching or drought.

Of the 25 orphans, 20 stayed within the same family unit after the mother's death, while five joined an unre-

lated group.

The researchers found that stress hormones were at similar levels in the long term among orphans and the other elephants, even though the former were expected to show more stress symptoms in the absence of maternal care.

Any stress among the orphans did not last long, showing their "resilience" and the effect of social support from the other elephants, said Jenna Parker, the main author of the study published this week in the journal *Communications Biology*.

The importance of family links was obvious when observing elephant herds, Parker told AFP.



The young rarely stray more than 10 metres (33 feet) away from their mother and "incredible" reunions involving the entire group were seen after a few hours of separation, said the researcher at Colorado State University in the United States.

When poachers or hunters kill an elephant, that social cohesion disintegrates and threatens the group's well-being, particularly the young ones left orphaned, she said.

The bond between a baby elephant and its mother is believed to be strong

even after weaning.

PLAYMATES

Parker and her colleagues investigated how orphaned elephants felt by measuring the quantity of hormones they release when faced with stress.

The hormones can be found in blood, saliva, urine and faeces. The last option was chosen as the most reliable and widespread way to measure stress in wild animals because it is non-invasive, Parker said.

Only the excrement of young females aged between two and 20 in the Samburu and Buffalo Springs reserves in northern Kenya was used, with males less easy to track because they are less attached to their original herd.

Scientists also found lower stress levels among young elephants growing up in groups with more animals of a similar age, suggesting that "playmates" are essential for them.

The results could guide orphanages to provide companions of the same age to help orphaned elephants.

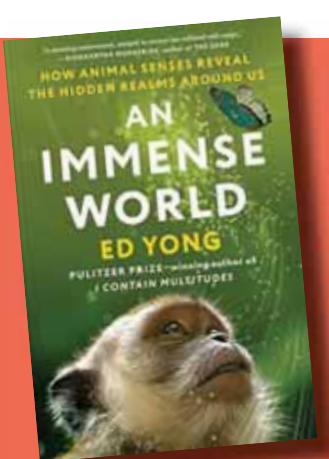
The study also concluded that releasing groups of orphaned elephants together after they were linked during captivity could facilitate their transition to living in the wild. — AFP

READ

AN IMMENSE WORLD

BY ED YONG

The Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer explains the sensory perceptions and ways of communication used by a variety of animals.



NIBELUNG FESTIVAL

The Nibelung Festival has opened with a striking premiere of the play "Hildensaga, ein königinnendrama" (Hildensaga, a Drama of Queens) in front of the historic imperial cathedral in the German city Worms. On a large expanse of water as a stage set, the ensemble led by Genja Rykova in the role of Brünhild and Gina Haller as Kriemhild approached the medieval heroic epic from a new angle in almost three hours of performance on Friday evening. —dpa



SUSPENDED IN MID-AIR

Marietou Thiam's slender figure twists and twirls, suspended in mid-air by a hoop, under the spellbound gaze of onlookers at Dakar's first-ever circus festival. Thiam is the artistic director — and one of only two women members — of Sencirk, Senegal's premier circus troupe, which organised the festival. —AFP





No bed of roses for Ecuador's flower industry



THE PANDEMIC, THE WAR on Ukraine, and more than two weeks of ruinous protests over soaring living costs -- Ecuador's flower industry has recently had to surmount one obstacle after another.

The country's fourth-largest income-generator in terms of sales, roses alone earned nearly a billion US dollars in 2021 -- a record haul of \$927 million to be exact.

With hundreds of companies growing 450 rose varieties, Ecuador is the world's third-biggest flower exporter after the Netherlands and Colombia.



But this year's prognosis is unclear after 18 days of sometimes-violent mass protests against rising fuel prices that included burning roadblocks and arson, and resulted in six deaths.

"The protests meant much larger losses than all that was lost during two years of pandemic," said Marcelo Echeverria, Ecuador commercial representative for the Dummer Orange international flower firm.

"That has slowed down a lot of things that were planned, a lot of projects that were planned for the second half of the year."

The protests, led by a powerful Indigenous people's group, saw cut flowers among the export products targeted by arsonists.

"They are BURNING our flowers," the Expoflores association of producers and exporters exclaimed on Twitter as the contents of delivery trucks were being set on fire last month.

"They are burning our income and that of our families."

Expoflores said other flowers rotted as they could not be harvested and moved for export, and ended up



in "the garbage."

The government estimated the cost of the uprising at about \$1 billion -- some two-thirds of it borne by the private sector, including the flower industry.

"There were innumerable losses in terms of flowers that could not be exported (and) damage to private property," said Socorro Martinez, Ecuador's Dummer Orange boss.

"It was a very sad issue because... it widened the gap between some producers and ordinary people who were part of the community, people who we considered very close to us."

NECESSITY

But those who are part of it say the industry is a resilient one, with flowers never going out of fashion, whether it be for happy events or sad ones.

"We have experienced many local and international crises. We live in crisis, but we know how to manage them," said Eduardo Letort, manager of the firm Hoja Verde, which produces about 35 million stems of 120 rose varieties each year.

"It's been a tough few years, but... we have managed to adapt" by looking for new markets or making better use

of dwindling fertiliser stocks as shortages bit during the pandemic and more recently with the war in Ukraine, he told AFP on his farm in the Andean town of Cayambe.

In 2020, Ecuador's flower industry recorded sales of \$827 million -- a smaller decline than had been expected from pre-pandemic 2019 when it was \$880 million.

"We saw that flowers... became a product of necessity. People wanted to have colours, scents in their homes" during lockdown, said Letort.

There was also a sharp rise in demand for flowers for pandemic



funeral wreaths.

MORE COMPLICATED

Between January and May this year, flower exports brought in \$432 million, compared to \$417 million in the same period of 2021.

The rest of the year "had looked very good despite Russia (and its war on Ukraine) with forecasts for a dip followed by a recovery by year end," said Expoflores president Alejandro Martinez.

"But with the protests, things now seem more complicated," he added.

Russia was Ecuador's second-biggest country client for flowers in 2021, behind the United States.

Since the start of the war, Russia's share of the market fell from 20 per cent to 10 per cent, said Letort, who is also president of Expoflores in Cayambe.

"The flower business is already complicated, it does not need protests, pandemics or wars to make it complicated," said Marco Penaherrera, who sends about 120,000 roses to the United States every week.

"It is good business, but it is complicated." — AFP

CULTURE

Students embrace new rhythms at Saudi music schools



SAUDI BUSINESSMAN Ahmed Abdullah watches intently as his seven-year-old daughter Yasmine practises keyboard scales at a Riyadh music school, an opportunity he could only dream about when he was young.

Saudi Arabia has relaxed some restrictions that placed limits on social activities including group music lessons.

"Now we are thinking about the next generation and investing in it", Abdullah said.

Previously those who could afford it hired music tutors to come to their homes, while the rest struggled to find any instruction at all.

But as Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman seeks to expand entertainment options for citizens, music has become a bigger part of daily life, and music schools are popping up in major cities.

At least five such schools have opened over the past few years in the capital Riyadh and Jeddah, the kingdom's second city on the Red Sea coast, serving an enthusiastic clientele of children and some adults.

Yasmine's class, at the Yamaha Music Centre, meets every Saturday for half an hour, with their Egyptian instructor running students through keyboard drills under a sign reading "Music for All".

The session is bittersweet for her father, Abdullah, who thrills at his daughter's enthusiasm even as it reminds him of "things I had no chance of achieving in my childhood".

NOTES OF CHANGE

Music has been a feature of the dramatic social reforms ushered in by Prince Mohammed.

Last December more than 700,000 revellers flocked to the MDLBeast Soundstorm music festival in Riyadh, officials said, for four days of performances including a set by superstar French DJ David Guetta.

Daily life, too, has become more melodious, with restaurants and cafes staging live acts or blasting recordings through speakers.

Several Saudis who are now trying to develop their own musical chops described the transformation as a boon to their mental health.

Wejdan Hajji, a 28-year-old employee at a firm selling medical supplies, said she once struggled to teach herself guitar by watching YouTube videos, lamenting that "if I made a mistake, there was no one to correct me".

Now she pays 940 Saudi riyals (around \$250) each month for classes with a Ukrainian teacher at the Yamaha Music Centre.

"I didn't know anything, but now I've learned the basics", she said.

"The one-hour session clears my mind... My personality has changed, and I'm calmer."

A GROWING MARKET

Such benefits could soon extend to many more young Saudis.

In 2020 the kingdom established a "Music Authority" under its culture ministry which grants licenses to music schools and provides backing to young talents eager to pursue careers in the music industry.

Some 100 private schools nationwide have included a music component in their curricula during the current academic year, according to an official tally.

In May, the authority launched a "Music Culture Programme" to develop the skills of public school students as well.

As those initiatives get off the ground, the specialised music schools continue to do brisk business.

One recent afternoon at the "House of Music" school in northern Riyadh, an instructor supervised five toddlers as they swayed to the sound of lullabies playing on a speaker.

The school opened in 2019 and has 300 students of all ages who come for lessons in rooms adorned with posters of performers like Bob Marley and Lebanese singer Fairuz.

"There is a good acceptance of the services we provide so far", said the school's Venezuelan Director, Cesar Mora, adding that the school has a second branch in the works.

"There is a growing music-loving community and market." Walid Mahmoud, a 37-year-old Sudanese resident of Riyadh, began coming to the school so his young daughters could take lessons on the oud, a stringed instrument popular in the region.

Before long, he signed up for lessons himself.

"The country has changed a lot", he said with a laugh as his daughters, aged five and three, looked on. "Maybe we will form a band one day. Why not?" — AFP



find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Are you kidding? Baby goat wows fans with 22-inch ears



SOME SOCIAL media stars win their fame through their looks, others through their jokes. Simba the baby goat has won over the web with his astonishingly long ears - 22 inches and growing.

The tawny-coated kid goat has attracted thousands of followers on YouTube and other channels since he was born in Karachi, Pakistan on June 4.

His breeder, Mohammad Hassan Narejo, has sent Simba's details to the Guinness Book of Records, though he is not sure it keeps track of such measurements. He is still waiting for an answer.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

When Simba was born, his ears were 19 inches (48cm) long. They have grown another three inches in just over a month and are showing no signs of stopping.

Mohammad Hassan Narejo, 30, displays Simba, a one month and four days old kid goat with 22-inch long ears, at his house in Karachi, Pakistan July 8, 2022. REUTERS/Akhtar Soomro

"I got a special velvet harness or pouch to keep his ears, so he can run and play with ease without entangling his ears," Narejo told Reuters.

Narejo works in the air traffic control department of Karachi airport, but his passion is goat breeding, and he has great plans for Simba.

Advertisement · Scroll to continue

"I plan to preserve Simba's semen for artificial insemination so if, God forbid, he is no more his breed can continue," Narejo said.

He feeds Simba milk three times a day and has taken other steps to ensure his well-being - a black thread around the animal's throat to ward off the evil eye.

"Evil eye can destroy a mountain. He is just a kid goat with celebrity status," Narejo said. -- Reuters

FASHION

Throwing Fits for Men's Fashion



IT IS DIFFICULT not to be distracted by James Harris' pants.

Generously proportioned, they are of the lounge variety, made of shiny cupro — a cousin of rayon — and decorated in a gasoline spill of green, gold and mauve, which has somehow found its way into a leopard print.

Harris was wearing this garment when he greeted me on a humid day last month at his apartment in Greenpoint, Brooklyn. This is where he and his podcasting partner, Lawrence Schlossman, record "Throwing Fits," a weekly show that is about menswear but always manages to veer off into a thousand different directions.

On Friday, Harris, 36, and Schlossman, 35, will unveil a "Throwing Fits" collection to be sold by online retailer Mr Porter. The two podcasters put together 74 items from 13 of their favourite menswear brands, including a \$198 button-down shirt from Wythe New York and a \$2,960 flight jacket from Stoffa. The collection also includes "Throwing Fits"-branded mesh shorts, caps, T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts.

"It's actually a long con to fill in the holes in our personal wardrobes," Harris said.

"Throwing Fits" describes itself with the tag line "two grown dirtbags just tryna navigate the male zeitgeist." The podcast has had millions of downloads since it appeared on major platforms in 2020. The tone is buoyant, bro-y and often profane. Its listeners are 93% men, with most falling in the 18-to-27 age range, according to Spotify.

Die-hard fans, referred to as the "Throw Gang" by the hosts, pay via the donation platform Patreon for exclusive mini-episodes and access to private sales from menswear brands. The perks are enough for Harris and

Schlossman to make nearly \$21,000 a month from their supporters, they said.

Each episode begins with a "fit check," where a guest's outfit is evaluated by the hosts. Levis with an orange tab on the back pocket are "fire." Converse sneakers from Japan are "a pull." What comes next is an hour or two of frenetic discourse in which friends are "homeys" and clothes are "rocked" rather than worn.

"They're seen as comedians," said Jeremy Kirkland, who hosts the menswear podcast "Blamo!"

"They will say, 'No, we're into fashion,'" he added. "In my opinion, that is not true. They're entertainers."

Daniel Todd, the buying manager at Mr Porter, said the "Throwing Fits" hosts have created a community of fashion fans that reminds him of the menswear message boards and forums of the Internet's early years. "They're not shy in their opinions," he added, "but they're also great at trumpeting brands that maybe their listenership hasn't heard of."

Schlossman and Harris met in 2011 when they were working at BPMW, a fashion public relations company. Schlossman wrote a menswear blog, Sartorially Inclined, and the two started a video series, "Fashion Bros," at Complex Media in 2014. Two years later, they debuted the podcast "Failing Upwards," which got scooped up by digital media company Barstool Sports. They started "Throwing Fits" soon after making their exit from Barstool.

Harris, who grew up in New York City, and Schlossman, who grew up in suburban New Jersey, arguably came into their own as podcasters in 2018, when the actor (and occasional menswear arbiter) Jonah Hill was a guest on "Failing Upwards." He appeared on the new

show in 2020, taking part in a long conversation that touched on self-acceptance, golf clothes and his admiration for the 1993 comedy "Surf Ninjas."

The podcast is now at the centre of a social-media constellation that includes a Reddit page and Instagram and TikTok accounts. On Discord, a platform popular with crypto enthusiasts and gamers, fans engage in discussions — spurred on by the duo — on topics that lurch from designer Mike Amiri to whether a listener would stay loyal to the pod if Harris slept with their ex.

Ben Lankford, who became a "Throwing Fits" listener while living in Nashville, Tennessee, described the "Throw Gang" as "a cool community of like-minded people who have at least a tangential interest in fashion." Last summer he bought a ticket (\$69) to attend a "Throwing Fits" gathering in New York that he had heard about on Discord. "That's where I met so many of the good friends I have in the city now," said Lankford, who ended up moving to Bushwick, Brooklyn.

Harris said the show's fans tended to be young men seeking advice. "Maybe they've moved out of their hometown and they're looking for an older-brother-type figure to tell them what to wear, what to listen to, what to watch, what to do, where to drink, where to eat," he said.

The podcasters rail against what they call "Capital F" fashion industry. At the same time, with the new collection, they are working with a large luxury men's retailer, Mr Porter, to sell clothes to their fans.

"If we've lost our bad-boy, rebel, outsider veneer, then I'm fine with that," Harris said, "because we're still doing what we're doing." -- NYT

A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



Dr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi
khalidalbalushi@hotmail.com

The Incident That Became Something of a Legend

THE FOLLOWING is my English translation of an excerpt from "A Soldier from Oman: Memory's Nectar" by (ret.) Inspector-General Said bin Rashid al Kalbani

could hear him.

The whole village came out, men carrying their guns and women carrying water and dates men needed when they went out. They blocked the valley road, and redirected the convoy to the archway. There was a tussle between the two parties. Equipped with rifles and knives, we took away their Kanad guns, with all their bullets, which we stored under a big sadar tree.

One of us noticed that the type of weapons we stored under the tree belonged to none other than the government. Indeed, it turned out that they were soldiers in civilian dresses. Our people subsequently took them with their camels to a safe place and gave them back their guns and bullets.

This got us into big trouble. All the elders, including the Shaikh(s) of the Bani Kalban, went to Muscat to see Sayyed Ahmad bin Ibrahim al Busaidi and explained to him the circumstances, saying that no offence was meant to the government, and that it was just an instance of misunderstanding. We later knew that the whole affair was referred to Sultan Said bin Taimour, who then issued a pardon for all those involved in the tussle. The whole case was closed, and the road works resumed.

This incident became something of a legend that people narrate even today.

art & life

Local Scene

f t i y n @omanobserver

TUESDAY | JULY 19 | 2022



Art from the heart for joy and hope

By Samuel Kutty

Since March of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought immense challenges to frontline healthcare workers. They faced burnout and anxiety. The normal day-to-day pressures impacted their mental well-being.

Patients and their families also faced unease and uncertainty during diagnosis, appointments and procedures. As creative as Covid-19 has been in its contagion, so has everyone fought back by demonstrating the value of creative life.

In these exceptional circumstances of bewilderment and uncertainty, art serves as a compass. It helps us find direction and reminds us that there is still solid ground beneath our feet and a steady horizon ahead of us.

Creative practices in art and humanities offer a fantastic, non-medical, but medically relevant way to improve the health and well-being of individuals, families and communities.

"Art is something which channelises your mind and soul and tunes them to rejuvenate your body", says Dr Benny Panakkal, renowned cardiologist in Muscat, who has an exciting artistic level as seen in his Paintings of inspiration.

As a highly-respected medical practitioner who is fully dedicated to the promotion of heart health, the doctor measuring the heart rhythm says. "I've always loved drawing, and have an eye for colour, picking up the paintbrush feels natural to me."

In addition to translating the stunning picturesque beauty of Oman — from the scenic cityscapes to the iconic mountains, the beautiful natural wadis in Wadi Bani Khalid or Wadi Darbat onto the canvas, his paintings in acrylic and are done in both brush and pallet convey the defenceless human beings' confrontations with the pandemic.

The paintings will be on display at Hotel City Seasons from July 20-30 under the auspices of Bhavalaya, a global platform for promoting and propagating arts.

Indian Ambassador, Amit Narang, will launch the art event. The guests of honour include the well-known Omani artist, Maryam al Zadjali and Tahira al Mawali,

Director of the Omani Society for Fine Arts.

Currently working as a senior consultant interventional cardiologist and head of cardiology at Badr Al Samaa Hospital Ruwi, his doodling exercises began much earlier during his childhood days.

"I've always enjoyed painting. From a young age, I found drawing and painting immersive and satisfying", Dr Benny told the 'Observer'.

His passion for painting made him receive several prizes for his paintings at youth festivals both at district and state level competitions held during youth festivals.

"I think because I've always loved drawing and have an eye for colour, picking up the paintbrush feels natural to me", he says.

Although nature and its beauty were his favourites, he translated the dramatic destruction that the coronavirus played in human lives onto the canvas.

A physician-artist collaboration offers a visual representation of the clinical and ethical magnitude of the pandemic and humanity's fight for survival.

One of his Covid-19 paintings done during the uncertain period of lockdown in Oman portrays the impending threat of the virus from outside the door where it is dark depicting gloom and doom.

The bright colour inside the room represents a warm atmosphere that represents hope in life.

"The unprecedented changes which developed quickly due to the pandemic, have disrupted and affected everyone's daily life. There was fear, uncertainty and depression everywhere. But still, there was hope at the end of the tunnel", says Dr Benny.

Another painting, "Two Faces" represents the two sides of life — death and resurrection.

"Even as thousands were dying and millions were under the clutches of the

virus, medical science came with the hope of a vaccine that changed the course of life. I wanted to create artwork to communicate what I was experiencing", he said pointing to the painting.

During his undergraduate level at the Government Medical College in Kozhikode, in the South Indian state of Kerala, Dr Benny was very active in arts and conducted several exhibitions.

After entering the post-graduate resident training and subsequently clinical and hospital practice, his passion for

painting took a backseat and was almost forgotten till the pandemic era.

"All these paintings are the products of coronavirus impact", he said adding, "I've learned there is so much more to making great art, and it's something I'll never tire of pursuing".

While he prefers the weekend eve for putting colours, he said art helps him in so many different ways, both personally and professionally.

"My paintings allow me to grow personally from my experiences by distilling what I have experienced into an understandable format", Dr Benny said.

In advice, he said that, if possible, everyone should find extra time to channel their other abilities so that they can get away from the extra toxin in their bodies during their jobs.

"If you have a hobby, do pursue it", he adds.

