

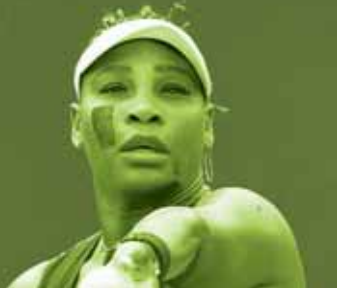
Public opinion on services

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) conducted a survey to measure the opinion of beneficiaries of government services. The questionnaire aimed to assess the level of satisfaction with response to beneficiaries' service requests and the time accomplishment of services. In particular, the questionnaire explores beneficiaries' level of satisfaction with government electronic services of relevance. **DETAILS ON P2**



P12

SERENA WILLIAMS ANNOUNCES SHE IS 'EVOLVING AWAY FROM TENNIS'



P13

NAJD OPENS UP TO SMALL AND LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT



P20

MAHOUT'S CHARMING LITTLE ISLAND IS BECOMING AN IDEAL LOCAL GETAWAY



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO ECUADOR PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Guillermo Lasso Mendoza of the Republic of Ecuador on the occasion of his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Mendoza and the people of the Ecuador further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HOTELS SEE HUGE RISE IN REVENUES

The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in Oman by the end of June 2022 recorded a surge by 121.4 per cent to reach RO 83.360 million compared to the same period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The number of guests in the 3-5 star hotels increased by 44.6 per cent till the end of June 2022 to reach 770,000 guests. Occupancy rate in those hotels reached 25.1 per cent. **DETAILS ON P13**



Tropical depression forming in Arabian Sea

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Sultanate of Oman will be bracing for another round of tropical depression which is likely to form in the Arabian Sea, though no direct impact is expected this week.

In a statement on Tuesday, Oman Meteorology said: "As per the latest weather analysis, there are initial indications of formation of a tropical depression in the eastern Arabian Sea by Thursday, with no direct effect on the atmosphere of the governorates of the country during the next few days."

Masoud bin Saeed al Kindi, a meteorologist, said, "The specialists are constantly following developments in the Arabian Sea, and in the event of any tropical depression forming, necessary reports and alerts will be issued by the centre."

He added, "In the event any tropical depression takes

shape, with probable impacts on Oman, then the CAA's centre will issue the necessary reports alerts."

Currently, skies are cloudy to partly cloudy along coastal areas and in Dhofar, with chances of sporadic rains over the next two days, said Al Kindi.

Al Kindi underscored the significance of CAA warning that legal action will be taken against anyone who sends or circulates weather-related alerts or warnings of weather impacts on Oman other than the statements issued by the CAA.

He advised all to take information about the weather from their official sources. This, he said, will help all receive accurate information instead of depending on rumours.

Areas around the Al Hajar Mountains have been getting maximum rainfall in the country, according to figures released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

TURN TO P2

Craft businesses can apply for support

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 9

To extend support for craft sector and to enhance its sustainability, the last date to apply for support to craft institutions and establishments (which have obtained a home production) business licence as a craft activity) has been extended, and the last date for registration now is August 20.

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority called on craftsmen and craft institutions to submit a request for support via the link posted on its Twitter account. The support will be based on the needs and requirements of craftsmen or the craft organisation in terms of machinery, equipment and supplies.

This came after the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion issued a Ministerial Decision No 473/2022 regulating the practice



of household businesses, which include 16 types including handicrafts. Statistics issued by the ministry showed that the number of those registered for home businesses stood at 9,092 in various activities.

Qais bin Rashid al Tobi of the authority said previously there were 19 training programmes in various handicraft industries, divided into technical educational programmes for craft and commercial marketing. He said that the number of craftspeople

registered in the Sultanate of Oman stood at 23,000.

The support aims to provide assistance including tools and equipment, raw materials, training, participation in exhibitions, setting up of a workshop, repair and maintenance, packaging and marketing.

The committee considers the applicant for support within a period of time not exceeding 30 days from the date of the application. And there is no fee for application.

CASCADING WATERFALLS OF JABAL AL AKHDHAR



Al Jabal Al Akhdhar is considered one of the most beautiful tourist destinations not only in Oman but in the world. The cascading waterfalls during rainy season adds more beauty to Jabal Akhdhar.

DETAILS ON P4

SQ Hospital in Dhofar to be ready by 2024

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUG 9

The work on the new Sultan Qaboos Hospital (SQH) project in the Dhofar Governorate is 33 per cent complete and is expected to be ready by the end of 2024. The structural work has reached 75 per cent and the project includes seven floors and 700 beds.

HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, on Tuesday paid a field visit to the new Sultan Qaboos Hospital project in Salalah, in the presence of Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, to follow up the progress of the construction work.

Jamal bin Salem al Shanfari, Director-General of the General Directorate of Projects and Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Health, gave a visual presentation in which he spoke of various components of the new project in Salalah, which is being built on an area of 222,000 sqm at a total cost of about RO 138 million.

He said the main building of the new hospital will include specialised units for accidents and emergencies, imaging, rehabilitation and chemotherapy, as well as a dialysis unit, burns, orthotics and day clinics.

Sleep deprivation may jeopardise development of children

MARYLAND: For children in elementary school, regularly getting less than nine hours of sleep per night may hinder their neurocognitive development, according to a study led by University of Maryland School of Medicine researchers and published in the journal Lancet Child and Adolescent Health, The Washington Post reported.

The study involved 8,323 children, ages 9 and 10, who were enrolled in a large, long-term study of brain development and children's health.



Comparing children who got the recommended amount of sleep for their age — nine to 12 hours a night — with those

who slept less, the new research found differences in brain regions responsible for memory, intelligence and well-being.

Greater mental health problems — such as depression, anxiety and impulsive behaviour — were linked to insufficient sleep, as were difficulties with memory, problem-solving and decision-making.

The effects on the children's academic and social lives lasted for at least two years, "suggesting long-lasting consequences of insufficient sleep," the researchers wrote.

Not getting enough sleep has been shown to be fairly common among children and teens. For

instance, a recently published study from the National Institutes of Health found that 9 to 13-year-olds average just 7 hours and 45 minutes of sleep a night, considerably less than recommended.

To help increase children's sleep time, paediatricians urge parents to make sufficient sleep a family priority and to encourage such things as daytime physical activity, a regular nighttime routine and no screen time for an hour before bedtime.

— Agencies



Work progressing on Oman Botanic Garden project

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUG 9

The work on the Oman Botanic Garden, between the mountains and wadis of the Al Khoudh area in the Wilayat of Al Seeb, is progressing well. The first of its kind development project, of the Diwan of Royal Court, will be completed by the end of 2023.

More than 700 multidisciplinary engineers and dedicated designers are involved in exploring and finding solutions that would suit such an ambitious and creative project. All materials used in the construction of the Oman Botanic Garden will be environmentally sustainable. The vision of this project is to inspire people to preserve biodiversity and enhance Omani plant heritage for a sustainable future.

The project is being built in an open space and in a very fertile area and away from residential houses so as not to disturb the residents with traffic inside and outside the site. It is located in Al Khoudh, 35 km from Muscat, and spreads over 423 hectares. The site was chosen because of the rock formations, natural hills and wadis.

The main components of the park will contain: Nursery, visitor



centre, research centre, field studies centre, outdoor environments, outdoor environment centre, northern mountains indoor environment, southern mountains indoor environment education park. Also, places for children to play, family gatherings and places of rest and relaxation inspired by the Omani environments. The garden will also contain a seed bank, which is considered the largest seed bank in the Sultanate

of Oman.

In the seed bank project, the work is supervised by a 100 per cent Omani team. Its mission is to preserve the seeds of endangered plants using modern scientific methods and with specific measurements to preserve them for decades to return to them when needed.

The website of the garden shows that its mission is to discover, cultivate, display and protect the

unique Omani plant diversity and botanical heritage through innovative research and different environments. So, it will provide a unique opportunity for visitors to see the botanical diversity of Oman and to attract more tourists.

It will also include an experiment to establish the first chairlifts in the Sultanate of Oman to enhance the experiences of visitors through its various components to revive the tourism sector in the implementation of the tourism strategy and its operational plans. Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, said in a tweet last year that “The construction works are progressing on the project and it will be unique and diversified.” The project is still under construction and will see the light by the end of 2023 according to the agreement.

Tourism experts said the parks are part of the Sultanate of Oman's plan to diversify its tourist attractions. At present, the Omani tourism sector relies heavily on Salalah in the south, which is famous during the khareef season for its lush green landscapes and seasonal waterfalls. So, the project will keep the tourism sector active the whole year.

Pact signed to provide Omani girls access to labour market



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Musallam al Busaidy, Under-Higher Education, Research and Innovation signed a cooperation programme (SHE STEMS) with the Ministry of Labour and Oman Cables Industry company for social development and facilitate women's access to the labour market.

The programme seeks to develop the skills of 20 Omani girls to qualify them to work in sectors of industry, science, technology, engineering and Maths in Oman.

The agreement was signed by Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Sayyid Salim bin

Tropical depression forming in Arabian Sea

FROM PAGE 1

According to recent reports by regional meteorology centres, there has been an increase in the frequency of cyclones forming over the North Indian Ocean. The Arabian Sea, which used to have on average 1-2 cyclones per season, has seen an increase of over 52 per cent in the cyclone frequency.

The 2019 season was classified as one of the most active cyclone seasons that broke several records. Of the eight cyclones that occurred, five alone formed over the Arabian Sea.

The 2021 season saw a relatively uncommon phenomenon where remnants of Cyclonic Storm ‘Gulab’ in the Bay of Bengal gave rise to severe cyclonic storm ‘Shaheen’ on the opposite coast in the Arabian Sea.

URGENTLY REQUIRED

- 1. GENERAL PRACTITIONER
- 2. CARDIOLOGIST

Job: General Practitioners to provide quality medical care to employees through the company polyclinics. The incumbent will have the responsibility of overseeing day to day clinic operations, ensuring quality medical care, clinical guidance, ensuring statutory compliances, providing medical/health awareness.

Cardiologist, in addition to above, shall be required to offer treatment for cardio vascular disorders, conduct patient examination & diagnostic testing, develop treatment and disease management plans, co-ordinate referrals, conduct early detection screenings etc.

Qualification:

General Practitioner - MBBS with PG Degree in Internal Medicine with valid MOH License.

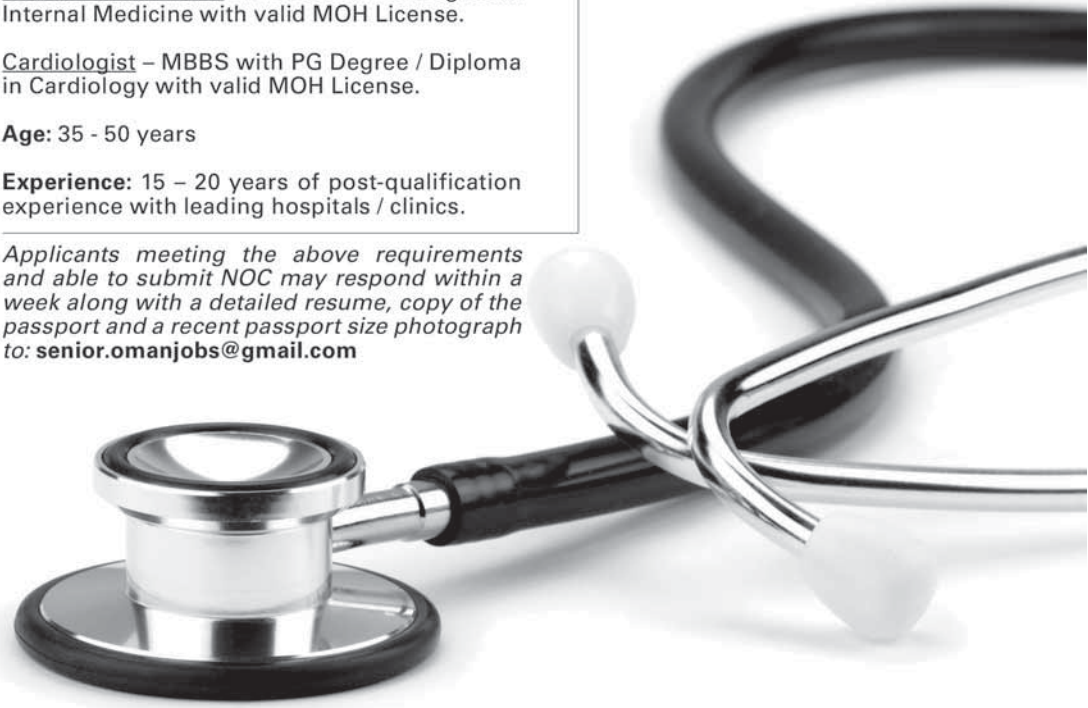
Cardiologist - MBBS with PG Degree / Diploma in Cardiology with valid MOH License.

Age: 35 - 50 years

Experience: 15 - 20 years of post-qualification experience with leading hospitals / clinics.

Applicants meeting the above requirements and able to submit NOC may respond within a week along with a detailed resume, copy of the passport and a recent passport size photograph to: senior.omanjobs@gmail.com

One of the largest and reputed business groups in Oman, with diversified business interests, is looking for Senior Medical Professionals to join immediately.



Survey to measure public service satisfaction



MUSCAT: The National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) conducted a survey to measure the opinions of beneficiaries of government services.

The questionnaire aimed to assess the level of satisfaction with response to beneficiaries' service requests and the time accomplishment of services.

In particular, the questionnaire explores beneficiaries' level of satisfaction with government electronic services of relevance. It comprises a set of basic criteria

The questionnaire aimed to assess the level of satisfaction with response to beneficiaries' service requests and the time accomplishment of services

like the preparedness of the service venue, the competence of the service's staff, ease of procedures,

speed of accomplishment, client treatment and the cost, quality and efficiency of the service.

The survey, carried out during the first half of this year, picked up a random sample of members of the public who frequent government departments in Oman. Information for this purpose is collected through the NCSI telephone system.

The move constitutes part of the NCSI's role to tap public opinion and provide data and necessary indices about issues of concern to the general public. — ONA

Supporting Oman's small businesses to dream big

We believe exceptional business ideas can come from anywhere. That's why we are here to help them come to life and thrive into the future.



تأسيس
Tasees



SCAN THIS
QR CODE TO
LAUNCH OUR
WEBSITE



Our Mission

Foster Entrepreneurial Mindset: We believe that the seeds for successful entrepreneurship should be sown young, and nurtured early. Thus, our aim is to offer the necessary education, scope and support to foster and imbibe an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth of our country.

Nurture Aspiring Entrepreneurs: We believe in dreams, and we choose to be the support and strength that propels our aspiring entrepreneurs to success. With our wide range of resources and knowledge of the market, we can give small businesses the much-needed opportunity to launch themselves into the industry and prosper.

Partner In Growth: Sometimes, all that a business needs is a push in the right direction. We offer existing businesses our expertise and know-how to help revive their business, build a stronger footing, or simply take their enterprise to the next level.

HOW DO WE DO IT?

• Startups

Business Incubation

Under the Tasees Incubator, businesses which are at a budding stage and need assistance in terms of business concept clarity, strategy formulation, operations management, funding guidance as well as vendor partnerships are offered a variety of business support resources and services, mainly through

- one to one coaching
- expert mentoring,
- business consulting,
- low cost shared space and utilities

Tasees's Incubator's main aim is to facilitate promising businesses to become long-standing contributors to Oman's economy.

• Mid cycle SMEs

Business Accelerator

Tasees Accelerator provides progressing SMEs with high growth potential, the support of training, coaching, mentorship for grow their business further to the next level by productivity enhancement interventions, strategy formation and implementation, business diversification strategy, marketing support, networking support, business diversification strategy, optimum utilization of resources, strategic alliances and partnerships consultancy as well as access to logistical and technical resources, apart from the access to a strong support network of investors.

Through Tasees Accelerator we aim to foster the selected SMEs and graduate them for the next level of growth.

• Established businesses

SMEs that are already on the growth path and require some support to accelerate their growth or diversify their business are supported with funding guidance, networking with local and international investors as well as business consultancy interventions to enable them to become more productive in their existing set ups, diversify their businesses into new arenas or expand their business into newer markets.



Our aim is to offer the necessary education, scope and support to foster and imbibe an entrepreneurial mindset among the youth of our country. We believe in dreams, and we choose to be the support and strength that propels our aspiring entrepreneurs to success. With our wide range of resources and knowledge of the market, we can give small businesses the much-needed opportunity to launch themselves into the industry and prosper.

Is there more to it?

Of course, as Tasees holds various programs with many organizations from both the public and private sectors. Here are some of them:

Mentorship Program:

Tasees partners with Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development - ASMED (Riyada) for their Annual Mentorship program to provide mentees (MSME owners) with constant guidance and advice in regards to the growth and development of their businesses and facilitate enhancing the capabilities and competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in accordance to Vision 2040, thus creating a pool of sustainable entrepreneurs that will be the backbone and catalysts of economic and social prosperity Oman.

Tasees also has its own mentorship program under which the existing MSME's are provided with the required mentorship once they are on the growth path.

Workshops and Training Programs

Tasees conducts regular workshops and developmental sessions open to SMEs to enable participating companies to identify opportunities, understand business processes and management concepts required to succeed in the market. Below are a few of the programs:

- Business Idea validation
- Understanding Business Processes
- Business Strategy formulation
- Understanding Financial Instruments
- Selling and Marketing for SMEs

THE PROCESS



- Pre-Incubation Program
- Ideation to Execution Program



Business Incubation

- Business plan
- Strategy development
- Market analysis support
- Budgeting and finance management
- Resource and operations management
- Strategy execution support



Business Accelerator

- Strategy formation & implementation
- Business diversification
- Collaboration & Partnership advisory
- Marketing Support
- Networking Support
- Hand holding and Mentoring



Funding guidance and Networking

- Networking with investors
- Giving entrepreneurs a global platform to pitch their ideas and receive international partners / investors



WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT US?

You can visit our website: www.tasees.eshraqa.om for more details. You may contact our offices using the below details:

- Email: tasees@kr.om
- Mobile number: 90168194

www.tasees.eshraqa.om

Tasees Success Stories

Tasees is proud to have reached out to thousands of students, aspiring entrepreneurs, and professionals to aid in the growth of the small and medium enterprises in Oman. Our programs have helped a number of bright minds start their own business, as well as new startups and rising businesses accelerate their growth. Here are a few of our success stories that we take immense pride in.



Moza Al Busaidi
Business Entity: Majaz Designs

Another feather in our cap is Majaz Designs, a successful and growing startup that came out of our Pre-Incubation Program. It is a specialized architectural and interior design consultancy company that offers its clients customized solutions for every space. Their speciality lies in optimizing the space to make the best use of every inch, for even the smallest properties, and creating fascinating designs that are sure to turn heads.

Sultan Al Busaidi
Business Entity: Moeen

Moeen is a first-of-its-kind company offering innovative digital solutions that has transformed the healthcare sector in Oman. Approved by the Ministry of Health (MOH), they have made use of the latest technology in the market to create a unified common platform for medical professionals, to give patients access to video consultations. Moeen offers a graphical and user-friendly interface so that even not so technologically advanced persons can access medical help. Their highly secure data storage space at the backend for the healthcare providers ensures that every bit of healthcare record is strictly confidential. They have made affordable quality medical services accessible for everyone, across the country, irrespective of their location.



Abdullah Ba Omar
Business Entity: Snacks 'N' More

Snacks 'N' More is a chain of Omani Fusion Restaurants. Based in Salalah, this business serves a wide variety of lip-smacking delicacies crafted by blending the unique flavours from around the world to create gastronomic treats for its patrons. They are extremely sought after and presently they boast of three running outlets, which are located in Al Saada, Oasis Mall and Awqad. With our continued help, we only hope that they will open more branches and take their cuisine to an international scale soon.





PICTURES BY SAMI AL HINAI

Cascading waterfalls further enhance Jabal Al Akhdhar’s attractiveness

AMAL AL RIYMAI

Al Jabal Al Akhdhar is considered one of the most beautiful tourist destinations not only in Oman but in the world. It is one of the most important destinations for summer tourism, recreation and relaxation due to its moderate weather, similar to the Mediterranean climate, outstanding natural components, integrated tourism facilities and distinctive resorts.

The mountain is characterised by the diversity of its rocks and geological



formations dating back nearly 500 million years. In the heights of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, west of Seih Qatanah lies a group of

“fossil waterfalls”. They are petrified waterfalls in which rocks are deposited due to the flowing water over

time. Due to the water flow on the rocky sediments, white calcifies accumulate to give an attractive shape.

The village of Al Ain, characterised by the splendor of the place overlooking the scenic beauty of nature, owns a waterfall called Wadi Al Ain Waterfall, which flows through its agricultural terraces. The agricultural terraces were built amazingly in the mountain, where various fruits and flowers grow, such as grapes, pomegranate and walnuts. It is famous for the presence of water springs and a water pool.

Also originates from this village aflaj Al Kabiri, Al Aawar and Al Qanti. This village is considered an important tourist and historic place because of its archaeological features, with its ancient villages and houses built of gravel and mud. Its residents are interested in scientific and cultural fields and take care of agriculture, livestock and the rose water distillation industry craft.



Health Ministry inks two pacts with Oman LNG

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health on Tuesday signed two agreements with Oman Liquefied Natural Gas (Oman LNG) company's Development Foundation. The first agreement deals with funding the purchase of an ultrasound system for the X-ray Department

of Sinaw Hospital and the second to finance a training programme for personnel tasked with infection control and sterilisation. The training programme will be conducted in accordance with international criteria.

The agreements were signed by

Dr Fatmabint Mohammed al Ajmi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs, and Al Ahnaf bin Ahmed al Zubaidi, Director-General of Corporate Development Affairs at Oman LNG. — ONA

ROYAL CAVALRY'S HORSE WINS AL WATHBA CUP IN FRANCE



PARIS: The Sultanate of Oman's Royal Cavalry's mare "Khalsa" won the top trophy of Al Wathba Cup's horse racing competitions held at Gramat racecourse here for Arabian thoroughbreds. "Khalsa" was jockeyed to victory in the 2,200 metre-run by Maxim Folon and coached by Charles Jordan. Second place went to "Alicia", owned by Lakjore de Sierra, jockeyed by Marlin Mayer and coached by Thomas de Millo. Third place was won by "Futoon", owned by Al Shaqab Races, jockeyed by Vincent and coached by Charles Jordan. — ONA

Dead stock of PPE worries traders

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Huge quantities of PPE (Personal protective Equipment) lying stagnant with no takers with the traders is causing a matter of concern with both high volume businessmen and small scale traders, after much of the restrictions has been lifted in the Sultanate of Oman, it is learnt.

A PPE kit usually includes, but not limited to, a gown or a coverall, face mask, and or face shield, hand gloves, head cover, shoe cover, and a bottle of sanitiser whose cost went as high as RO 10 whereas a simple gown was available at a price of RO 17 at the Muscat International Airport during the peak of Covid 19.

A random survey among scores of PPE manufacturers, suppliers and traders proved that mammoth quantities of PPE items to the tune of hundreds of thousands of Omani rials are remaining stuck in their premises occupying space with zero ROI (Return on Investment).

"We have a manufacturing unit as well as direct imports from Europe for quality sanitiser and PPE items and huge quantities of such materials are remaining a dead stock after most of the preventive measures have been removed," a leading player in PPE with production unit in Mizfa Industrial Area said.

Oman did not have a sound PPE manufacturing base locally since the beginning of the pandemic and was solely depending on direct imports from countries like China and reexports from neighbouring countries.

There were hardly any sanitiser manufacturer, a product which had a steady market mostly



A random survey among scores of PPE manufacturers, suppliers and traders proved that mammoth quantities of PPE items to the tune of hundreds of thousands of Omani rials are remaining stuck in their premises occupying space with zero ROI (Return on Investment)

among the healthcare institutions.

However, with the pandemic, many liquid soap makers turned into sanitiser manufacturers, cargo and couteir companies imported bulk quantities of masks while small scale tailors began to stitch both protective and surgical gowns, a trade which proved highly lucrative for these business-minded people.

New companies were formed while existing businesses turned

into this highly profitable businesses but it had the life of a firefly, as said by leading players in this sector.

"We, three partners, opened a new company in addition to our existing healthcare business and supplied to almost all hospitals for a few months beginning the pandemic. However, it was short-lived and now we have bulk quantities which we are ready to give for a song," managing director of a newly formed business told the Observer.

Sanitiser manufacturers, both fresh entries and established firms which augmented their production are complaining of thousands of bottles of sanitiser nearing expiry date and will only be able to dump into garbage.

"We turned our focal point from liquid soap into sanitiser manufacturing and had an ever increasing demand till early this year. We bought a new land, constructed a warehouse and employed new staff but now the same is awaiting closure as demand dipped exponentially," a manufacturer said.

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Numa Institute for Competency Development (NICD), a member of Nama Group, invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
NICD/2022/4	Providing Training Service	17-August-2022	30-August-2022	500/- Plus, VAT Amount (25 OMR) Total: 525 OMR (Non-Refundable)

- Interested party may purchase the tender through the company website (www.nama.om). Go to Tenders then NICD & Supplier user guide is available to be downloaded at the same page.
- Payment for the tender must be made online via the website's link. The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 12.00 am.
- Bids shall be submitted online through I-supplier portal before 1.00 pm, time of the Sultanate, on Tuesday 30-August-2022.
- Each bid should be accompanied with a temporary insurance, in the form of bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, total amount of 2000 OMR- and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers. Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered. The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at Nama Holding reception area.
- NICD is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



Nama Holding

In Beach One Building, 3rd Floor (Units 305 & 307), Shatti Al Qurum
P.O Box 850, Post Code 116, Sultanate of Oman.
Phone Number: +968 24559200 / 211
E-Mail: ibrahim.alhina@holding.nama.om

Treasury bills worth RO 55m issued

MUSCAT: A tender of government treasury bills, issue number 564, worth RO 55 million was issued this week.

The total value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO 55 million, for a maturity period of 91 days, from 10 August 2022 until 9 November 2022. The average accepted price reached RO 99.300 for every RO 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO 99.290 per RO 100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 2.80769 per cent and 2.82749 per cent, respectively.

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 3 per cent while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with CBO is 3.50 per cent.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds.

— ONA

TENDER NOTICE



Minerals Development Oman SAOC (MDO) would like to invite qualified local companies to participate in the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Closing Date of Selling	Submission Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee
(MDO-TD -2022-07)	Transportation of Limestone from Wadi Al Jizzi to Sohar Port	15-08-2022	06-09-2022	Local Registered Companies who are experienced in this Kind of Service	OMR 100/- (One Hundred Omani Rials Only) Non-refundable

- All participating Companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value and offer validity for (90) days. Bid Bond must be obtained from a Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman, and it should be addressed to the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee of Minerals Development Oman.
- SMEs with Riyada cards are exempted from payment of Bid Fee.
- Bid fee shall only be accepted through bank deposit in the following bank account:
Account Name : Minerals Development Oman SAOC
Bank : Sohar International Bank
Branch : Al Qurum
Account : 005020046853
Swift Code : BSHROMRUXXX

* Note: The original copy of the bank deposit receipt shall be handed over to Minerals Development Oman before collecting the tender documents or completing the payment electronically by submitting a clear deposit receipt via tenders email: tenders@mdo.om along with company registration documents providing company name, tender number, and contact details. Any payment received after the last date of tender document distribution will not be refunded.

** Tender documents can be obtained from the main office of Minerals Development Oman, Contracts & Procurement Department, located at the Airport Heights, Building No.53, Fourth Floor, Al Seeb, Sultanate of Oman starting from the date of publication of this announcement. (Office Hours: 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM, Sunday to Thursday).

For more information or clarification, please email: tenders@mdo.om



3 Palestinians killed, 69 shot in Israeli raid

NABLUS: Three people were killed and dozens wounded on Tuesday, the Palestinian health ministry said, as Israeli forces raided the occupied West Bank city of Nablus.

The Israeli military said a senior commander of the fighter group was among the dead.

The latest violence comes two days after deadly fighting between Israel and Islamic Jihad fighters in the coastal enclave of Gaza was halted by a truce.

In the old city of Nablus, an AFP correspondent reported Palestinians trading gunfire with Israeli security forces.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said its medics treated 69 people for gunshot wounds across the Nablus area, at least four of them in critical condition.

“Ibrahim al Nabulsi was killed in the city of Nablus,” the Israeli army said in a statement, adding that another fighter who was staying in the house also died.

Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid hailed the raid as a “highly successful, precise action without casualties” among the security forces.

Israeli forces said they launched a shoulder-fired missile at the



Mourners carry the body of Palestinian fighter of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade Hussein Taha, who was killed in an Israeli raid, during a funeral procession in the West Bank city of Nablus on Tuesday. – AFP

house and detained four suspects in the raid.

Nabulsi was a commander of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, one of the main fighter groups present in the West Bank operating under the ruling Fatah party.

Following the deadly raid, the fighter group said “the response will fit the crime”.

Hundreds of mourners gathered in Nablus for the funeral procession of the three dead, with some fighters firing in the air as

the bodies were carried through the crowd.

TEEN KILLED

The Palestinian health ministry named those killed as Nabulsi, Islam Sabbouh and Hussein Taha.

Jamal Taha said his 16-year-old son was killed while they were walking to work.

“The army was in the old city. My son went ahead of me to the market, he was carrying his food. There was shooting and four of us were injured,” he said.

Heavy gunfire was heard as dozens of Israeli military vehicles brought traffic in one of the West Bank's largest cities to a standstill.

Clashes with the Israeli army also broke out in other parts of the city, as Palestinians hurled stones at the troops.

“A violent clash developed with dozens of rioters who threw stones and threw explosives at the forces, who responded by means of crowd dispersal and shooting. Several injuries were confirmed,” the army said.

Security forces have conducted near-daily and often deadly operations in the West Bank in recent months, focusing on fighters from the Islamic Jihad group.

Israeli forces raided the occupied West Bank city of Nablus, the Israeli military said. A senior commander of the Islamic Jihad was among the dead

Gaza Strip, leading fighters in the coastal enclave to fire more than a thousand rockets in retaliation, according to the army.

An Egypt-brokered ceasefire reached on Sunday ended three days of intense fighting that killed 46 Palestinians, 16 of them children, and wounded 360, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Israel's Lapid spoke by telephone with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el Sisi on Monday, with the premier praising Cairo for its role in “preserving regional stability and security”.

But following the Nablus raid, a spokesman for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said Israel is “not interested in calm and stability”. — AFP



Pedestrians walk past debris outside shops at Namseong Market in the Gangnam district of Seoul on Tuesday, after record-breaking rains caused flooding. – AFP

Torrential rain, flooding in Seoul kills seven

SEOUL: Subway stations and major roads were underwater in the South Korean capital Seoul after record-breaking rains caused severe flooding, with at least seven people dead and seven more missing, officials said on Tuesday.

Dramatic images shared on social media late on Monday showed people wading through waist-deep water, metro stations overflowing, and cars half-submerged in Seoul's posh Gangnam district after torrential rain battered the city.

The downpour that began on Monday is the heaviest rainfall in South Korea in 80 years, according to Seoul's Yonhap

news agency.

“At least seven people died in the Seoul metropolitan area, while seven others are missing, due to heavy rain as of 7:30 this morning,” an official at Seoul's Interior ministry said.

Local reports said three people living in a banjiha — cramped basement flats of the kind made famous in Bong Joon-ho's Oscar-winning “Parasite” — including a teenager, died as their apartment was inundated by floodwaters.

Parts of Seoul, surrounding Gyeonggi province and port city Incheon recorded rains of more than 100 millimetres per hour on Monday night. — AFP

Hero's burial for Philippine ex-leader

MANILA: Former Philippine president Fidel Ramos, a soldier regarded as one of the country's most effective leaders ever, was interred at the National Heroes Cemetery on Tuesday in a sombre state burial.

A low-flying military helicopter dropped flowers as a wagon bearing the flag-draped coffin containing an urn with his ashes rolled through the leafy cemetery grounds, lined with white crosses marking the tombs of dead soldiers also buried at the site.

Incumbent President Ferdinand Marcos Jr joined the ex-leader's widow and relatives as the silver urn with the cremated remains was lowered into the ground after a military parade and a 21-gun salute.

A career soldier who oversaw a rare period of steady growth and peace in the turbulent years that followed the dictatorship of Marcos Jr's father and namesake, Ramos died late last month aged 94. The cause of death was not specified.

Known as “Steady Eddie” for his unflappable demeanour during the country's regular moments of upheaval, he was



Soldiers transport the casket carrying the urn of Ramos during the state funeral at the Heroes Cemetery in Taguig. – AFP

frequently pictured chewing unlit cigars as he guided the Philippines with a sure hand from 1992-1998.

His widow Amelita Ramos thanked Filipinos in a brief address at the end of the state burial, saying soldiers like him lived a “hard life”.

“It entailed difficult adjustments. He would be at home for two years and in the province two years after that,” she said, apart from overseas deployments in the Korean War

and the Vietnam War.

A graduate of the prestigious West Point military academy in the United States, Ramos also saw combat against communist guerrillas back at home.

He was later commander of the paramilitary Philippine Constabulary — the key institution that enforced the brutal repression of dissent after Marcos Sr declared martial law in 1972.

Ramos broke from Marcos Sr

in February 1986, throwing his support behind a group of young military officers who holed up in a Manila military camp after their plot to topple the leader in a coup was discovered.

Coming amid popular outrage over the 1983 murder of opposition leader Benigno Aquino and massive regime cheating in a snap election, the events led to a peaceful “People Power” revolt that sent the dictator into exile. —AFP

TOKYO

Japan's population shrinking at record pace

At the beginning of the year, the island nation had only 125.9 million inhabitants, 726,000 fewer than a year earlier - the sharpest decline since comparable data were recorded.

Announcing the figures in Tokyo on Tuesday, the Ministry of the Interior also said the number of Japanese fell by around 619,000 to 123.2 million, while the number of foreigners fell by 107,000 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

The population of the world's



third-largest economy has thus been shrinking for 13 years.

On top of the record 1.4 million deaths last year, there were only 810,000 births - fewer than ever before.

GENEVA

Escalating evidence of crimes in Myanmar

UN investigators said on Tuesday there was mounting evidence of crimes being committed in Myanmar, since a military coup last year.

The United Nations' Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM) said it had gathered lots of evidence of violations as well as elements indicating the most serious international crimes.

“The Mechanism has collected a significant amount of information items, including videos,



photographs and documents potentially indicative of crimes against humanity and war crimes committed across Myanmar by various individuals since February 2021,” a report said.

KARBALA

Believers throng shrine city to mark Ashura

Hundreds of thousands of believers on Tuesday marked the festival of Ashura in Iraq's holy city of Karbala, the burial place of Imam Hussein, grandson of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

This year's festivities, which began on Monday evening, come as Iraq's majority population is split between rival political camps.

Backers of the influential cleric Moqtada Sadr were continuing a sit-in outside parliament in Baghdad for a 10th day on



Tuesday.

They oppose the Coordination Framework, an alliance of factions that has tried to appoint a prime minister against Sadr's wishes.



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

WEDNESDAY | AUGUST 10 | 2022

7

In brief

■ BERLIN



GERMANY CONFIRMS FIRST CASE OF MONKEYPOX IN A CHILD

A 4-year-old girl in the south-western city of Pforzheim has become infected with monkeypox, Germany's Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for disease control said on Tuesday, confirming the country's first case of the virus in a child. The child, who lives in a household with two infected adults, currently has no symptoms. She was examined by a doctor as a precautionary measure and a swab was taken from her throat for the purpose of the diagnosis. The child was not in contact with anyone outside her household. The news comes after the RKI became aware of the first infections among teenagers aged 15 and 17 last week.

■ KINSHASA



BLINKEN ARRIVES IN DR CONGO ON 2ND LEG OF AFRICAN TOUR

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in DR Congo on Tuesday for a one-day visit expected to focus on a conflict in the east of the country that has sparked tensions with Rwanda. Blinken, on the second leg of an African tour, was met at Kinshasa's Ndjili Airport by Foreign Minister Christophe Lutundula, the president's office said. He and President Felix Tshisekedi will have a "one-on-one" meeting at the presidential palace in the evening, it said in a statement. The Democratic Republic of Congo is seeking international support as it tussles with neighbouring Rwanda over an armed group, the M23, in the country's deeply troubled east.

■ WASHINGTON



US POLICY REQUIRING ASYLUM SEEKERS TO WAIT IN MEXICO LIFTED

The US Department of Homeland Security announced on Monday night it will end a Trump-era policy requiring asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico while their applications play out in court. The DHS announcement comes hours after a judge lifted an injunction that had prevented US President Joe Biden's administration from ending the so-called "Remain in Mexico" policy. Under the policy, instituted in 2019 under former president Donald Trump, tens of thousands of asylum-seekers were sent across the border until required to appear in the United States for their immigration hearings.

Trump says Florida home 'raided' by FBI

PALM BEACH: Former US president Donald Trump said on Monday that his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida was being "raided" by FBI agents in what he called an act of "prosecutorial misconduct."

The FBI declined to comment on whether the search was happening or what it might be for, nor did Trump give any indication of why federal agents were at his home — a situation that adds to the legal pressures on the ex-president.

Multiple US media outlets cited sources close to the investigation as saying that agents were conducting a court-authorised search related to the potential mishandling of classified documents that had been sent to Mar-a-Lago.

In a statement posted on his Truth Social network, Trump said his "beautiful home, Mar-A-Lago in Palm Beach, Florida, is currently under siege, raided, and occupied by a large group of FBI agents."

Aerial footage of Mar-a-Lago showed police cars outside the property. Supporters of the ex-US leader also gathered outside, waving banners with Trump's name or American flags emblazoned with his face.

"It is prosecutorial misconduct, the weaponisation of the Justice System, and an attack by Radical Left Democrats who desperately don't want me to run for President in 2024," said Trump, who was not present during the raid, according to The New York Times.

"Such an assault could only



A police car is seen outside Donald Trump's residence in Mar-A-Lago, Palm Beach, Florida, on Monday. — AFP

take place in broken, Third-World Countries. Sadly, America has now become one of those Countries," he said, adding: "They even broke into my safe!"

Some senior Republicans also took to social media to criticise the raid and accuse the Justice Department of overreach.

The National Archives said in February it had recovered 15 boxes of documents from Trump's Florida estate, which The Washington Post reported included highly classified texts, taken with him when he left Washington following his re-election defeat.

The documents and mementos — which also included correspondence from ex-US president Barack Obama — should by law have been turned over at the end of Trump's presidency but instead ended up



It is prosecutorial misconduct, the weaponisation of the Justice System, and an attack by Radical Left Democrats who desperately don't want me to run for President in 2024

DONALD TRUMP
Former US president

at his Mar-a-Lago resort.

The recovery of the boxes raised questions about Trump's adherence to presidential records laws enacted after the 1970s Watergate scandal that require Oval Office occupants to preserve records related to administration activity.

The Archives had requested then that the Justice Department open a probe into Trump's practices.

'ACCOUNTABLE'

White House staff also regularly discovered wads of paper clogging toilets, leading them to believe Trump was trying to get rid of certain documents, according to a forthcoming book by New York Times reporter Maggie Haberman.

Since taking his last Air Force One flight from Washington

to Florida on January 20 last year, Trump has remained the country's most polarising figure, continuing his unprecedented campaign to sow falsehoods that he actually won the 2020 election.

For weeks, Washington has been riveted by hearings in Congress about the January 6 storming of the Capitol by a mob of Trump supporters and his attempts to overturn the election.

The US Department of Justice is also investigating the January 6 attack.

While Attorney General Merrick Garland has declined to comment on growing speculation that Trump could face criminal charges, he has insisted that "no person is above the law" and that he intends to "hold accountable every person who is criminally responsible for trying to overturn a legitimate election."

Trump is also being investigated for his efforts to alter the 2020 voting results in the state of Georgia, while his business practices are being probed in New York in separate cases, one civil and the other criminal.

The real estate mogul has not yet officially declared his candidacy for the 2024 presidential election, although he has dropped strong hints over the past few months.

With President Joe Biden's approval rating currently below 40 per cent and Democrats forecast to lose control of Congress in November's midterm elections, Trump is apparently bullish that he could ride the Republican wave to the White House in 2024. — AFP

Russia launches Iranian satellite amid concerns

ALMATY, Kazakhstan: An Iranian satellite launched by Russia blasted off from Kazakhstan on Tuesday and reached orbit amid controversy that Moscow might use it to boost its surveillance of military targets in Ukraine.

As Russia's international isolation grows following Western sanctions over its war of Ukraine, the Kremlin is seeking to pivot Russia towards the Middle East, Asia and Africa and find new clients for the country's embattled space programme.

Russian space chief Yuri Borisov hailed "an important milestone in Russian-Iranian bilateral cooperation, opening the way to the implementation of new and even larger projects", speaking at the Moscow-controlled Baikonur cosmodrome.

Iran's Telecommunications Minister Issa Zarepour, who also attended the launch, called the launch of the Khayyam satellite "historic" and "a turning point for the start of a new interaction in the field of space between our two countries".

Iran, which has maintained ties with Moscow and refrained from criticism of the Ukraine war, has sought to deflect suspicions that Moscow could use Khayyam to spy on Ukraine.

Last week, The Washington Post quoted anonymous Western intelligence officials as saying that Russia "plans to use the satellite



This handout video grab taken and released on Tuesday by the Russian Space Agency Roscosmos shows the Soyuz-2.1b rocket carrying the Khayyam satellite blasting off from a launchpad at the Baikonur Cosmodrome. — AFP

for several months or longer" to assist its war efforts before allowing Iran to take control. But the Iran Space Agency (ISA) said, less than two hours after the satellite was launched on a Soyuz-2.1b rocket, that "ground stations of the Iran Space Agency" had already received "first telemetric data".

The space agency stressed on Sunday that the Islamic republic would control the satellite "from day one" in an apparent reaction to the Post's report.

"No third country is able to access the information" sent by the satellite due to its "encrypted algorithm", it said.

The purpose of Khayyam is to "monitor the country's borders", enhance agricultural productivity and monitor water resources and natural disasters, according to the space agency.

Khayyam, apparently named after the 11th-century Persian polymath Omar Khayyam, will not be the first Iranian satellite that Russia has put into space.

In 2005, Iran's Sina-1 satellite was deployed from Russia's Plesetsk cosmodrome. Iran is currently negotiating with world powers, including Moscow, to salvage a 2015 deal aimed at reining in Tehran's nuclear ambitions. — AFP

Breathing gear sent to tackle Ukraine premature baby spike

GENEVA: War has caused an apparent rise in premature births in Ukraine, international health agency Unitaaid said on Tuesday, as it announced oxygen equipment deliveries to health centres in the country to help them cope.

Russia's February war "increases levels of stress in pregnant women, which leads to an increase in the number of premature births reported", Unitaaid spokesman Herve Verhoosel told reporters in Geneva.

"Babies born prematurely are more likely to develop respiratory, neurological or digestive complications — conditions that often require oxygen for treatment."

Unitaid, which works on ensuring equitable access to medical innovations, said it provided 220 bubble nasal continuous positive airway

pressure (CPAP) devices and 125 oxygen blender systems to supply infants with breathing support and oxygen therapy.

"The conflict in Ukraine has seen many hospitals damaged or destroyed, and supply chains have been severed," Verhoosel added. "This puts thousands of newborns at high risk of disability or death from a lack in access to oxygen, necessary equipment and essential treatments."

Premature babies are those born at least three weeks before a full 40-week pregnancy.

Verhoosel said that in some of the Ukrainian hospitals Unitaaid is working with, the premature baby rate had gone up from 12 per cent to 40 per cent since Russia attacked Ukraine.

Though a larger number of uncomplicated births are now taking place at home, the increase in premature births "is real", he said. — AFP



Russia's February war "increases levels of stress in pregnant women, which leads to an increase in the number of premature births reported", Unitaaid spokesman Herve Verhoosel told reporters in Geneva.

French island becomes unlikely walkers’paradise



BENJAMIN MASSOT

The writer is a journalist with AFP

Every year, thousands of day-trippers make the short boat journey from France’s northern coast to the island of Cezembre, marvelling at the spectacular maritime views and flourishing wildlife.

But they better tread carefully and stick to the path, as almost all the island remains perilous due to unexploded munitions from World War II. Cezembre opened to visits only in 2018, over seven decades after the end of World War II, after extensive demining efforts allowed the opening of a marked path for visitors.

However, the area safe for visitors makes up just three per cent of the island, which experts say was the most bombed area of all of World War II in terms of the number of hits per square metre.

“It’s magnificent!” enthused Maryse Wilmart, a 60-year-old visitor from the south-western town

of La Rochelle, contemplating the sandy beach with turquoise waters and looking out to the ramparts of the port city of Saint-Malo beyond.

“But when you see all that behind us... Can you even imagine what happened here?” she asked, pointing to the barbed wire and signs warning “Danger! Ground not cleared beyond the fences!”

A visitor needs to go back 80 years to understand what happened on this usually uninhabited rocky outcrop.

In 1942, the occupying Nazi German army seized the strategically important island and installed bunkers and artillery pieces.

On August 17, 1944, Saint-Malo was liberated by the Americans but the Nazi commander of Cezembre, leading some 400 men, refused to surrender.

There then followed a devastating bombardment from the air by the

THE PATH OF ABOUT 800 METRES LETS VISITORS WANDER BETWEEN RUSTY CANNONS AND BUNKERS, WITH BREATHTAKING VIEWS TOWARDS CAP FREHEL AND THE POINTE DE LA VARDE

Allies.

“It is said that per square metre it sustained the greatest number of bombardments of all the theatres of operation of World War II,” said Philippe Delacotte, author of the book “The Secrets of the Island of Cezembre”.

“There were between 4,000 and 5,000 bombs dropped”, some of which contained napalm, he said.

On September 2, 1944, the white flag was finally raised and some 350 exhausted men surrendered.

“Some survivors claimed it was

like Stalingrad,” Delacotte said. The island was completely devastated, to the extent that its altitude even dropped because of the bombs.

After the war, the island became the property of the French ministry of defence and access was totally closed, with the first demining efforts starting in the 1950s. It was handed over to a public coastal conservation body, the Conservatoire du Littoral, in 2017.

The path of about 800 metres lets visitors wander between rusty cannons and bunkers, with breathtaking views towards Cap Frehel and the Pointe de la Varde.

Since the opening of the path, “there has been no accident” even if “there are always people who want to go beyond the authorised section,” said Jean-Christophe Renais, a coast guard.

Over time, colonies of seabirds have reappeared, including

seagulls, cormorants, razorbills and guillemots.

“Biodiversity is doing wonderfully, everything has been recolonised and revegetated, birds have taken back possession of the site,” said Gwenaél Hervouet, who manages the site for Conservatoire du Littoral. “It’s just a joy.”

Because of the focus on restoring wildlife, the trail was partially closed in April “to maximise the chances of success and the flight of peregrine falcon chicks,” said local conservation activist Manon Simonneau.

Some walkers say they hope the trail will be lengthened to allow a complete tour of the island, but according to the Conservatoire there is little chance of this — the cost of further demining would be astronomical, so it is now birds and nature that are the masters of Cezembre. — AFP

Gaza parents mourn children killed in conflict

CLAIRE GOUNON

Palestinian mother Rasha Qadoom clutches tight the tiny pink rucksack belonging to her five-year-old daughter Alaa — which will never again be carried on her little back. Alaa was the first of 16 children killed in three days of intense conflict between Israel and activists in the densely populated Palestinian enclave of Gaza.

“It was a Friday like any other,” said Qadoom, 27, remembering how Alaa had been dressed in a pink T-shirt to match her pink bag with a pink ribbon tied in her hair. “She was happy, she wanted to go to the park with her aunt.”

But as she went to her aunt on Friday afternoon, Israel launched an intense “pre-emptive” bombardment of fighter positions.

Alaa was knocking on the door of her aunt’s home when a missile smashed down from the sky.

Later that day — hours after Alaa was killed — militants began firing barrages of rockets in retaliation, violence that raged until a tenuous truce came into force late on Sunday.

In her hands, Qadoom holds the blood-stained rags of Alaa’s T-shirt, unable to comprehend why her daughter died. “Nobody was armed in the neighbourhood. Instead of going to play in the park, she came back to me with clothes full of blood,” she said.

“What was the point of this war?” she asked. “We lost children... all her dreams were on a school bag and a notebook.”

The Israeli air and artillery strikes targeted positions of the fighter group.

The health ministry in the Palestinian territory run by the Hamas said 46 people were killed, including 16 children.

After the strike in which Alaa was killed, the Israeli army said it was targeting members of operating in the area.

Israel also said that some of the civilian deaths recorded in the Palestinian toll were the result of rockets that fell short or misfired. Elsewhere in Gaza City, a few blocks back from the Mediterranean Sea in a neighbourhood with houses crammed tight together, the home of the Shamalagh was blown up.

Only a gaping hole remains. Poking out of the slabs of smashed concrete are the remains of people’s lives; a new fridge, a sofa crushed by tons of concrete, a stuffed toy animal.

Dozens of paper scraps from what was an English textbook lie in the dirt. One page, a lesson focused on the British seaside town of St Ives, sets a task for schoolchildren in the blockaded enclave: “Think of your ideal location for a holiday.”—AFP

Did Democrats just save civilisation?



PAUL KRUGMAN

The writer an American economist and public intellectual

They really did it. The Inflation Reduction Act, which is mainly a climate change bill with a side helping of health reform, passed the Senate on Sunday; by all accounts it will easily pass the House, so it’s about to become law.

This is a very big deal. The act isn’t, by itself, enough to avert climate disaster. But it’s a huge step in the right direction, and sets the stage for more action in the years ahead. It will catalyse progress in green technology; its economic benefits will make passing additional legislation easier; it gives the United States the credibility it needs to lead a global effort to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

There are, of course, cynics eager to denigrate the achievement. Some on the left rushed to dismiss the bill as a giveaway to the fossil fuel industry posing as environmental action. More important, Republicans — who unanimously opposed the legislation — are shouting the usual things they shout: Big spending! Inflation!

But actual experts on energy and the environment are giddy over what has been accomplished, and serious economists aren’t worried about the effect on inflation.

Start with the environmental side.

Many people I talk to assume that President Joe Biden’s environmental agenda, as contained in his original Build Back Better proposal, must have been greatly watered down in the legislation we actually got. After all, didn’t Democrats have to make big concessions to win over Sen Joe Manchin? Aren’t there important giveaways to fossil fuel interests, like aid for a controversial natural gas pipeline?

However, energy analysts believe that any adverse climate effect from these concessions will be swamped by the gains from tax credits for clean energy.

The REPEAT Project, compiled by Princeton’s Zero Lab, has produced a side-by-side comparison of emissions cuts under the Inflation Reduction Act and the earlier House version of Build Back Better. By 2035 the IRA, they estimate, will have delivered more than 90 per cent of the emissions reductions

THE INFLATION REDUCTION ACT WILL CATALYSE PROGRESS IN GREEN TECHNOLOGY; IT’S ECONOMIC BENEFITS WILL MAKE PASSING ADDITIONAL LEGISLATION EASIER; IT GIVES THE UNITED STATES THE CREDIBILITY IT NEEDS TO LEAD A GLOBAL EFFORT TO LIMIT GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

that BBB would have achieved. After all that legislative drama, Biden’s climate policy has emerged essentially intact.

How was this possible? Right at the beginning, the Biden administration decided that its climate policy would be all carrots, no sticks — that it would provide incentives to do the right thing, not penalties for doing the wrong thing. This strategy, it was hoped, would prove politically feasible in a way that, say, a carbon tax wouldn’t. And this hope has been vindicated.

Furthermore, it’s a strategy that

seems likely to pay political dividends in the future.

One new study, by E Mark Curtis and Ioana Marinescu, finds that “the growth of renewable energy leads to the creation of relatively high paying jobs, which are more often than not located in areas that stand to lose from a decline in fossil fuel extraction jobs.”

So what did the Biden administration lose?

Unfortunately, much of the social spending BBB originally included — child tax credits, universal pre-K and more — was cut. That’s tragic, although enhanced health insurance subsidies — which have helped bring America’s uninsured rate to a record low — have been extended. But Democrats delivered on their climate promises, more or less in full.

What about the critique from the right? Aside from the pathetic attempt to portray the IRA as a big tax hike on the middle class, Republicans like Mitt Romney are trying to lump this legislation in with last year’s American Rescue Plan, which they claim caused inflation to spike.

Never mind whether this claim is true.

The key thing is to do the math. The Inflation Reduction Act calls for spending less than \$500 billion over a decade, compared with the American Rescue Plan’s \$1.9 trillion in a single year — and will actually reduce the deficit. That’s why independent analysts find that it will have little effect on inflation.—The New York Times



Rain, rain,
go away...



The writer is a journalist, author and columnist

downpours are on the rise around the planet.

Rain, of course, is a blessing and is an essential part of the world's weather system. It is the source of our drinking water and crop irrigation. But excessive rainfall, especially at fast rates, is catastrophic and can spell trouble and do more harm than good as in the present situation.

Flooding as a result of torrential rain risks human life, damages infrastructure including buildings, roads, and bridges, and devastates livestock and crops. Too much rain brings a negative impact on wildlife, the environment, and the economy.

The Sultanate of Oman is no longer a stranger to climate change-related threats. A study by scholars from Bonn University reveals that around 6,000 years ago the changing climate led to the disappearance of most of the mangrove trees on the Omani coasts. "This was due to a dramatic rise in soil salinity, resulting from a decline in winter rains", the study reveals.

Oman experienced 22 extreme weather events between 2007 and 2021, six of them cyclones. We have witnessed an increase in recent years in number, duration, and intensity. We are witnesses to how the rain waters transform the wadis into a raging sea of water in minutes, leading to dangerous flash floods. Reports indicate that rising groundwater salinity due to the torrential rains is a major concern. Tropical storms have caused Oman losses in the billions. North Al Batinah is considered the most exposed of the coastal governorates to the tropical storms. Muscat, Sur and Salalah are also highly vulnerable.

According to a study by the previous Ministry of Regional Municipal and Water Resources, Al Batinah's coast is the worst affected, with rising salinity of 40-45 per cent shown in water samples from 670 groundwater wells, but the situation is similar in Al Khabourah and elsewhere.

Farmers in these areas fear their land will become infertile if the situation continues.

As rains are becoming more frequent and more intense, many scientists in the world link it to climate change. They believe human-caused global warming is to blame because climate change is supercharging the water cycle's evaporation process and messing with rainfall patterns.

Research shows that heavy downpours have become more common since the middle of the last century, when global warming started to intensify.

While torrential rainfalls show no signs of abating despite the fact that climate change brings droughts in some parts of the world, researchers say they may intensify.

Some of the most sophisticated forecasts suggest that as the globe warms, more rains will fall in severe, intermittent storms rather than in the kind of gentle soaking showers that can sustain crops. Farmers depend on rain to nourish crops, but too much rain can actually harm crop production. Rain floods fields, washing away seeds and precious topsoil. Wet weather encourages bacteria and fungus growth, which can further damage crops. Unusual amounts of rain affect the total crop yield as well as the taste and quality of fruits and vegetables.

Globally, nearly 1.5 billion people, or 20 per cent of the world population have at least a moderate risk of flood exposure. While we may not be able to stop the warming-induced downpours that have already been set in motion, we can curb their impacts.

However, climate change is at the forefront of public and government consciousness due to the accelerated pace of changing climatic patterns being experienced in Oman. A national strategy for adaptation and mitigation to climate change 2020-2040 has already been developed to accelerate climate actions' pace and scale.

Rain, rain, go away, come again another day! This is the perfect traditional rhyme that suits the current situation as there is nothing possibly more mundane to talk about than the weather!

No wonder, the world is getting rainier. As the climate warms, the atmosphere can hold and release more moisture, meaning torrential



Hope for change, prayers for
peace as Kenya votes

NICK PERRY AND
SIMON VALMARY

From Nairobi slums to Rift Valley towns, Kenyans voiced cautious hope for change and a peaceful future, flocking to polling stations well before voting opened across the nation on Tuesday.

None were in any doubt about the high stakes involved in this year's presidential poll as the East African country of 50 million people struggles with inflation, corruption and an unemployment crisis.

In Kibera, one of the largest slums in Kenya's capital Nairobi, thousands lined up to cast their ballot, trying to shrug off memories of past disappointments in the hope that this vote would prove lucky for them and ease their hardship.

"All along we have been doing elections, getting promises but we see no change. I hope this time it will be better," George Otieno Henry, a 56-year-old artisan, said.

Around 270 km northwest, the mood in the lakeside city of Kisumu — the stronghold of presidential candidate Raila Odinga — was festive, with voters loudly proclaiming their support for the former prime minister and motorcyclists honking and blowing whistles.

Clara Otieno Opiyo, a 35-year-old vegetable seller, said she left home before dawn to vote, travelling with her five-year-old boy strapped to her back.

"I came here at 4am to vote, having a lot

THE ELECTION COMMISSION
EARLIER CANCELLED SEVERAL
LOCAL POLLS, INCLUDING IN
THE PORT CITY OF MOMBASA,
DUE TO ERRONEOUS BALLOT
PAPERS. BUT VOTING LARGELY
PASSED OFF PEACEFULLY
ELSEWHERE, WITH YOUNG AND
OLD ALIKE TURNING UP TO
MAKE THEIR VOICE HEARD

of hope and faith, but if my presidential candidate succeeds, my children's schooling will be free, I will find work, and my life will change."

Others even flew in from abroad, eager to ensure they have a say in choosing Kenya's next leader as well as governors, senators, MPs and other representatives.

Daniel Ouko, a 30-year-old sociology graduate who works in a restaurant in Qatar, flew to his hometown Kisumu from Doha, telling AFP: "It is worth the money. I couldn't miss the vote."

In the Rift Valley town of Eldoret — the stomping ground of Deputy President William Ruto, who is locked in a tight race with Odinga — voters patiently waited in line, swapping colourful "shuka" blankets for umbrellas as the sun emerged. Despite an ugly campaign rife

with mudslinging and rigging claims, calm has largely prevailed, including in Kisumu and Eldoret, which saw a horrific eruption of politically motivated inter-ethnic violence after the 2007 elections.

"This election is different from the others, it's way (more) calm and peaceful. This one is really good," Joyce Kosgei, a 52-year-old mother of five, said in the village of Kosachei, where Ruto cast his ballot.

Hussein Kassim, a 35-year-old businessman, shuddered as he recalled witnessing the 2007-2008 clashes in Eldoret as a young man. "It is high time Kenya should realise voting is just like any other exercise," he said.

"In every competition, there is a winner and a loser. If your candidate loses, fight another day."

Even as many sought to cast off the shadow of past violence, rigging fears made a troubling appearance in at least one constituency, where the MP vote was suspended because of incorrect ballot papers.

Around 500 demonstrators protested the suspension in western Kenya's Rongai constituency, blocking a road with burning tyres as police responded with tear gas. "There is mischief in all this," said tomato seller Peninah Tanui, criticising the "incompetent" election commission for the mix-up, in which the names of some candidates were missing from ballot papers.

The election commission earlier cancelled several local polls, including in the port city of Mombasa, due to erroneous ballot papers.

But voting largely passed off peacefully elsewhere, with young and old alike turning up to make their voice heard.

In the town of Kiambu, on the outskirts of Nairobi, a beaming Hellena Nyokabi said she wanted "to vote for leaders who will protect and support this generation and generations to come".

As onlookers helped the frail 88-year-old walk out of the polling station, she said:

"I feel good that I have voted. I have never missed (a) vote all my life."

And in a race that has struggled to attract interest from Kenyans aged under 35, some first-time voters said they were optimistic the process would conclude peacefully. — AFP



Kenyans queue to vote during general election at the M V Patel hall polling station in Eldoret on Tuesday. — AFP

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Salalah to host Arab Seniors Tennis Championship

MUSCAT: With more than 300 men and women players expected to descend down to Salalah next month, Oman is all set to host the tenth edition of the Arab Seniors Tennis Championship at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Al Saada in Salalah from September 4 to 9.

The ‘Tennis Festival’ featuring players from the age of 30-75 years is being held under the auspices of the Arab Seniors Sports Federation and jointly organised by Al Nasr Club, Salalah and the Oman Tennis Association (OTA). The championship is supported by the Directorate-General of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Oman Olympic Committee.

“It is a matter of great pride for Oman to host the tenth edition of the championship and hope that the championship will go a long way in showcasing the country’s potential to host big tournaments,” said Ahmed al Saeedi, the chairman of the local organising committee, who provided the details of the championship at a press conference held at the OOC headquarters in Muscat on Tuesday.

Salman al Balushi, the vice-chairman of the local organising committee, said, “We are delighted to host the championship for the second time, with Muscat hosting the seventh edition in January, 2020.”

Al Saeedi said, “There would be five disciplines in different age-group categories with gold medals at stake in men’s (singles and doubles), women’s (singles and doubles) and mixed doubles.

“The field is going to be strong as we have players from the age of 30 eligible to take part in the championship. We expect a

contingent of 20-25 players from Oman to participate in various age-group categories.”

Al Saeedi, who is also the vice-chairman of the Arab Seniors Sports Federation, was confident that the weather conditions in Salalah will be a major attraction for the competitors.

Among the players expected to take part in the tournament, that is expected to generate lot of benefits to the Sultanate, are former national champions and experienced veterans, who continue to pursue their interest in the game of tennis.

“Salalah during the Khareef season provides a perfect backdrop for seniors, who would like to also explore the natural beauty of the Dhofar Governorate,” said Al Saeedi.

With more than 300 players already registered, Al Saeedi is hopeful that more would confirm their participation with the last date of entry to be August 16.

Plans are also afoot to hold an exhibition games between former stars of the region that would include matches featuring Kuwait’s Mohammed Abdul-Ridha Ghareeb and Oman’s Fatima al Nabhani.

Al Balushi said the age categories for men will be for 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years, 60-64 years and above 65 years while for women it would be for age-group between 30-44 years, 44-54 years and above 55 years.

Al Balushi said that arrangements are being made to organise local tours for the participants and ensure smooth success of the championship. Salim al Habsi, managing director of Zawaya, an Omani events and marketing company, was also present at the press conference.

Spectacular opening for Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya

BARAKT AL HARTHY SHINES IN MEN’S 100M



WALEED AL JAHWARI
KONYA, AUGUST 9

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan inaugurated the fifth edition of the Islamic Solidarity Games which is underway in Konya, a city south of Ankara in Turkey’s Central Anatolia region.

The games conclude on August 18.

The Omani team delegation is taking part in the event comprising of 30 athletes among 5,000 athletes from 55 countries and competing in five games including athletics, cycling, swimming, shooting and weightlifting.

Oman national athletics team runner’s Barkat al Harthy won third place in the qualification race of 100m, while Mezon al Alawi participated in 800m race and won seventh place. Ali al Balushi was ranked sixth place for 100 metres race.

On the other hand, Oman shooting team (trap) begins their competitions today, Wednesday, with five shooters. There are 112 shooters from 21 countries taking part. They will also compete in five qualifications rounds including three rounds on Wednesday and two rounds on Thursday. Eight teams will advance to the final on Thursday.

The Oman shooting team is represented by men’s team including Salim al Nasiri, Abdullah al Mandhari and Hussein al Shahoumi, while women team includes Reem al Hosani, Fakhriya al Jahafi and the team coach Marco Conte.

The Oman national weightlifting and cycling teams arrived in Konya city on Tuesday to take part in the tournament.

Oman Cricket Season 2022-23 registrations begin

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket has announced the beginning of its annual multilayered season with its division leagues starting from October 2022 and team registrations for the Season 2022-23 is open from Tuesday, August 9, 2022.

“We are delighted to begin the preparations for the Array of Marquee Domestic Tournaments for all commencing on October 2022,” said Duleep Mendis, Chief Development Officer of Oman Cricket, on the commencement of the season registrations, adding, “On behalf of the Board of Directors of Oman Cricket, We gracefully invite all teams willing to play quality cricket to register for the Season 2022-23. We extend our sincere regards to all corporates, institutions and sponsors who form the backbone of

all teams participating in the domestic season.”

Registrations are open for the Premier Division and Senior Division Leagues now. The registrations for Junior Leagues and Women’s League are set to open in September 2022. The final groupings for the Divisional Leagues will be confirmed once the registrations have been closed. The last date of team registration confirmation (along with fee payment) is August 28, 2022 for all divisions.

The last date for player registration is September 4, 2022 upon team confirmation.

Teams can be registered by browsing on www.omancricket.org > registrations. Oman Cricket can also be reached out on +968 92204745 (Zeeshan Siddique) for any queries to registrations.





Sohar to host 2022 Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour Futures meet in October

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 9

The International Volleyball Federation FIVB, the world governing body of volleyball, announced recently that Sohar city will host the World Volleyball Beach Pro Tour (in Future class) next October.

FIVB represented by Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour organised in this year, the first edition of the global elite professional beach volleyball circuit in three tiers including: Future, Challenge and Elite 16. Sohar city will host this international tournament in future class category during October 27 to 29. The 2022 season ends with the finals featuring the 10 best teams in the world. As many as 18

events in Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour Future events have been completed. The upcoming event is scheduled to take place Budapest city, Hungary during August 11 to 14 and then in Cortegaça, Portugal in August. The following city which will host after Sohar event is Subic Bay, Philippines in December and then the circuit will conclude in Netherlands during the same month.

Sohar city is among 25 cities around the world which were awarded the right to host World Volleyball Beach Pro Tour in Future circuit. The selection of the Sultanate of Oman to host this major volleyball event came due to the capability and ability of Oman to host these kind of top-classes championships.



Oman represented by the Oman Volleyball Association (OVA) had hosted many series of FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour including one-star events in the previous years. FIVB established the Volleyball World Beach Pro Tour events as replacement of the former FIVB Beach Volleyball World Tour.

Oman national beach volleyball stars will represent Oman World Volleyball Beach Pro Tour Future in October through a squad comprised of Mazin al Hashmi and Haitham al Shuraiqi in team A while Ahmed al Hosni and Hood al Jalboubi in team B. It is expected the championship will feature participation of the top ranking teams and players from different part of the world.

Struggling Kohli returns for India at Asia Cup



NEW DELHI: India named out-of-form star batsman Virat Kohli in their T20 squad for an Asia Cup campaign which begins later this month with a showdown against arch-rivals Pakistan.

Vice-captain KL Rahul also returns for the tournament in the UAE from August 27 to September 11 after missing all of India's fixtures since the end of the Indian Premier League in May with Covid and injury.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah was however ruled out with injury, national selectors said, naming a strong 15-man squad. Bumrah, who is reported to be suffering from back spasms, is undergoing rehab at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore.

Three players — Shreyas Iyer, Axar Patel and Deepak Chahar — were named as standbys in the Asia Cup squad.

Kohli, 33, was rested for the recent tour of the West Indies and has not scored a century in any format since 2019. Last year he was replaced by Rohit Sharma as all-format skipper.

The last edition of the Asia Cup was a 50-over contest but this time the format will be Twenty20.

Defending champions India are the most successful team, having won the trophy on seven occasions. — **AFP**

German football to consider equal pay for international sides

Pay women footballers the same as men: German chancellor

FRANKFURT: Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday made a push for equal pay for men and women international footballers after Germany's successful run at the recent European Championships. "My position on this is clear," Scholz said after a meeting with the German Football Association (DFB) to discuss the issue.

"We talked about how we can continue to help more girls and women get excited about football. Of course, the wages at such tournaments play a major role in this," he said.

"That's why it makes sense to discuss equal pay. I made the suggestion and I'm very grateful that there is a willingness to discuss this issue."

Germany scored their biggest major tournament success since 2015 at this year's European Championships, losing to



England in the final at Wembley. Scholz attended the final and also supported the women's team by tweeting: "It's 2022, and women and men should be paid equally. This also applies to sport, especially for national teams."

Germany's women would have received 60,000 euros (\$61,400) each if they had triumphed at the tournament, while the men would have received 400,000 euros each had they prevailed at the Euros last year. — **AFP**

FRANKFURT: The German football federation will consider internally whether it will bring bonuses for the women's international team in line with their male counterparts, its president Bernd Neuendorf said on Tuesday.

"I am at least prepared to discuss with the representatives of the senior national teams in our committees whether our bonus system, which has grown over decades, is still up to date," he said after talks with visiting Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz, "and whether it can be adjusted if necessary."

Neuendorf cautioned, however, that it must also be "taken note" that "despite the same activity, the markets are still very different."

Following a tour of the new DFB campus in Frankfurt, Scholz said: "I think this is something political, so it does make sense to discuss equal bonuses."



Scholz had joined the discussion during the women's Euro 2022 in England last month, calling via Twitter for equal pay for men and women in the national teams.

Germany's women each received ?30,000 (\$30,700) for their second place finish after losing the Wembley final to England on July 31.

They would have received ?60,000 for the title in contrast to the men, who would each have pocketed ?400,000 for a Euro title in 2021. — **dpa**

Former South African umpire Koertzen dies in car accident



RUDI KOERTZEN
1949-2022

JOHANNESBURG: Former South African umpire Rudi Koertzen, labelled the 'slow finger of death' by the media, has died in a car accident, a family member said on Tuesday. He was 73.

"Rudi suffered fatal injuries after an accident near Stilbaai between Cape Town and Gqeberha," said the family spokesperson, who requested anonymity.

"My father went to a golf tournament with some friends and they were expected to come back on Monday, but it seems they decided to play another round of golf," his son Rudi told a

Gqeberha radio station.

The South African team will wear black armbands on Wednesday in honour of Koertzen when they face England at Lord's in London in a Test match.

Koertzen first umpired in 1981, handled his maiden international assignment 11 years later, and retired in 2010 after a Test between Australia and Pakistan in Leeds, England.

"Every umpire has their trademark and that was mine. The media labelled it the 'slow finger of death' and I found that pretty interesting. There is a story

behind it," Koertzen said in an interview.

"When my umpiring career first began, I used to hold my hands in front of me and every time there was an appeal, I would fold them against my ribs," said Koertzen.

"Someone told me 'Rudi, you cannot do that. Every time you raise your hands to fold them, the bowler thinks you are going to give him a wicket.'"

"So I started clasping my wrists at the back. The finger comes out slowly because it takes time for me to release my grasp at the back." — AFP

Serena announces she is 'evolving away from tennis'

LONDON: Serena Williams has announced her imminent retirement from tennis.

The 23-time grand-slam champion won her first singles match for more than a year at the National Bank Open in Toronto late on Monday but has revealed in a first-person piece for Vogue that she has decided to end her career.

"I'm here to tell you that I'm evolving away from tennis, toward other things that are important to me," she wrote.

Williams has committed to playing at the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati next week as well as the US Open later this month, and it appears that will be her final tournament.

"Unfortunately I wasn't ready to win Wimbledon this year," said the 40-year-old.

"And I don't know if I will be ready to win New York. But I'm going to try. And the lead-up tournaments will be fun."

"I know there's a fan fantasy that I might have tied Margaret (Courtney 24 a second child, and slam singles titles) that day in London, then maybe beat her record in New York, and then at the trophy ceremony say, 'See ya!'"

"I get that. It's a good fantasy. But I'm not looking for some ceremonial, final on-court moment. I'm terrible at goodbyes, the world's worst."

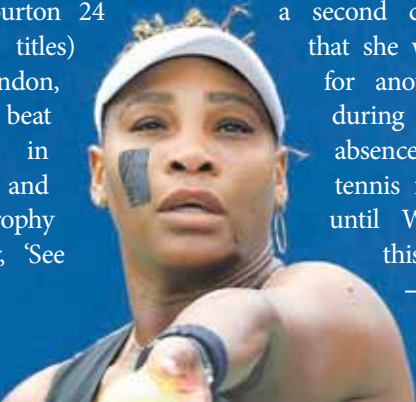
Williams ruled the sport for many years, winning her 23 slams between 1999 and 2017, plus 14 doubles titles with her sister Venus at the majors, plus two mixed doubles for a total haul of 39. The Australian Open 2017 title made her the oldest grand slam singles winner at 35 years, 4 months, 2 days.

She won 73 singles titles overall, include five at the WTA Finals, and has four Olympic golds in a career in which she earned \$94,588,910 in prize money.

Williams spent 319 weeks at the top of the world rankings, 186 of them in a row between February 2013 and September 2016 to equal Steffi Graf's record.

Williams revealed her motivation behind calling it quits is the desire to have a second child, and that she was trying for another baby during her absence from tennis for a year until Wimbledon this summer.

— dpa



Ennis-Hill coach Minichiello gets life ban for sexual misconduct



LONDON: Toni Minichiello, one of Britain's leading track and field coaches, has been given a life ban after an investigation found he had engaged in "sexually physical behaviour" with athletes.

Minichiello, who coached Jessica Ennis-Hill to Olympic heptathlon gold at the 2012 London Games, was also deemed to have made inappropriate sexual references and gestures to athletes and engaged in aggressive behaviour, bullying and emotional abuse.

UK Athletics said the findings, which amount to multiple breaches of its coach licence terms over a 15-year period, "constitute gross breaches of trust" and are of the "utmost seriousness".

Minichiello's coaching licence expired during the disciplinary process, which means he cannot be suspended or subject to a sanction by UK Athletics.

However, the national governing body has said it will not consider any future application made by Minichiello for a coach licence.

"UKA has considered the matter and decided that these findings are of the utmost seriousness," said a statement issued on Tuesday.

"They constitute gross breaches of trust by Mr Minichiello which have had severe consequences for the mental health and mental well-being of the athletes under his charge."

"The issuance of a UKA licence to a coach is essentially a representation on behalf of UKA that the coach in question can be trusted with the athletes under his charge."

"UKA is firmly of the view that there will never be a time in the future at which it would be appropriate to grant that assurance and issue such a licence," with the statement adding any future application by Minichiello would be refused "in perpetuity."

— AFP





We are Proud to be The First Bank in the World to Provide
Cardless ATM Services through BankDhofar ATMs using mobile number

Customers may conduct ATM transactions using their mobile number only.

The service is highly secured.

Cardless ATM Services is an extension of Cardless Cash service in BankDhofar's Mobile Banking App.

For more information
www.bankdhofar.com/en-GB/ATM_CDM.aspx

BankDhofar

the best bank for you

NAJD OPENS UP TO SMALL AND LARGE-SCALE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 9

Efforts are underway to open up the promising Najd Agriculture Area in Dhofar Governorate to small and large-scale agricultural investment, a key official of the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources told the *Observer*.

Dr Khalid al Mashaikhi (pictured), in-charge of the Najd Agricultural Development Office, said the investments are targeted at achieving a strategic national objective: Strengthening food security.

“The Najd Agriculture Development Area is open to everyone who can develop its potential to help strengthen food security in the Sultanate of Oman,” the official stated.

“The procedures are simple and easy for all categories of citizens, small and medium companies, or even large companies to participate in this initiative. All they have to do is submit a feasibility study report of their project plan and present it to our specialists for verification. Upon approval, the requested land will be allocated against an annual fee starting from RO 50 for the first 100 acres, with an added fee of RO 5 per every additional acre.”

Spanning of the wilayats of Thamrait, Al Mazayouna, Shaleem and Al Halaniyat Islands, and



Dr Khalid al Mashaikhi

Emphasis will be given to crops that can help ease Oman’s dependence on imported produce

Maqshan, the Najd Agriculture Area covers a total area of around 80,000 sq kilometres.

Significantly, water for irrigation is available in most places in the Najd and in “good quantities” too. This is largely aquifer water that is partially replenished through floods and annually underground springs flowing north from the Dhofar Mountain Chain, Dhofar Governorate.

“The Najd area depends on groundwater resource and must therefore be managed in a sustainable way. Besides conserving this resource, it also needs to be recharged through



the establishment of recharge dams north of the Dhofar mountain chain. These recharge dams store floodwater that feeds these aquifers,” Dr Al Mashaikhi explained.

Commenting on the types of crops that can be cultivated in the Najd, the official said emphasis will be given to crops that can help ease Oman’s dependence on imported produce.

“We realise that there is a deficit in the supply of some fruits and vegetables in the local market, which has to be met through imports. Examples are onion, potato and garlic – imports of which amount to around RO 65 million annually.”

Another area of interest is wheat cultivation, said Dr Al Mashaikhi. “The government is keen to partially support wheat farmers, notably by providing them with combine harvesters as well as part of the seeds and pesticide materials – all part of an effort to reduce their costs.”

Further, to help strengthen transportation and logistics in the area, the authorities plan to link the road network from Shisr to Saih Al Khayrat and thereby open up access to the Najd.

Additionally, a road network is planned to connect the individual farms and thereby facilitate the transport of fresh products to markets in Salalah and Muscat.

Hotel revenues surge 120 pc to RO 83m in H1

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 9

Revenues from 3-5-star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman increased significantly by 121.4 per cent as of the end of June 2022 to RO 83.360 million compared to the same period in 2021.

The monthly statistical bulletin of tourism indicators issued by the National Center for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicated that the number of guests of hotels rated (3-5) stars increased by 44.6 per cent until the end of last June to reach more than 770,000 guests, while the occupancy rate of these hotels recorded 25.1 per cent.

The number of GCC guests recorded the largest growth of 875.7 per cent to reach 61,863, up from 6,340 during the corresponding period of 2021. European guests saw their numbers surge 756 per cent to 185K this year, up from 21,648 inmates during the Jan – June



period of 2021. Omani guests rose 7.5 per cent to 348K this year, up from 377K last year.

Significantly, as many as 27K visitors from the Americas stayed at luxury hotels in Oman during the first six months of the year, representing a growth of around 200 per cent from last year’s levels.

Tourists from African countries totalled around 3,900, which was up 94.6 per cent from the previous year’s figure. Guests from Asian countries increased 21.4 per cent to 92K this year, up from 76K last year. — ONA

Stocks lower on eve of US inflation data

LONDON: Stock markets were lower and the dollar fell on Tuesday as investors nervously awaited the release of key US inflation data later this week, traders said.

If the data, scheduled for publication on Wednesday, came in above analysts’ forecasts, the markets could enter into a sharp sell-off, analysts warned.

With inflation already at the highest level in 40 years, expectations are growing that further monetary tightening by the world’s major central banks could go too far and tip the global economy into recession.

The inflation data “could effectively set the mood for the rest of the summer,” said OANDA analyst, Craig Erlam.

“That seems quite dramatic, but if we fail to see a drop in the headline rate... it could really take the wind out of the sails of stock markets as it would be very difficult for the (US Federal Reserve) to then hike by anything less than 75 basis points in September,” the expert said.

The US central bank has already



A man walks past an electronic board displaying graphs (top) of Nikkei index outside a brokerage in Tokyo. — Reuters

raised borrowing costs by three-quarters of a percentage point twice in recent months in a bid to tame runaway prices.

Swiss quote Bank analyst Ipek Ozkardeskaya said the recent drop in energy and commodity prices “should have a cooling effect... but higher labour costs could keep inflation sticky at undesirably high levels”.

Oil prices rose, but remain around six-month lows as recession fears mount and investors fret over the impact on demand.

The markets are also keeping an eye on Iran nuclear talks after the European Union submitted a “final text” at negotiations to salvage a 2015 deal.

An agreement could open the

way for Tehran to resume sales of crude on international markets, partly filling the gap left by the ban on Russian exports following the attack on Ukraine.

Edward Moya, analyst at OANDA trading group, said “it seems unlikely a breakthrough will happen anytime soon.”

“Tehran seems like they are willing to negotiate, but an imminent decision to agree to the EU’s proposal seems unlikely,” he said.

KEY FIGURES AT AROUND 13:35 GMT -
NEW YORK - Dow: Down 0.1 per cent at 32,810.74 points
LONDON - FTSE 100: FLAT at 7,489.00
FRANKFURT - DAX: Down 1.1 per cent at 13,543.98
PARIS - CAC 40: Down 0.4 per cent at 6,499.27
Euro STOXX 50: Down 0.9 per cent at 3,723.17
TOKYO - Nikkei 225: Down 0.9 per cent at 27,999.96 (close)
HONG KONG - Hang Seng Index: Down 0.2 per cent at 20,003.44 (close)
SHANGHAI - Composite: UP 0.3 per cent at 3,247.43 (close)
Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.0242 from \$1.0194 Monday
Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.2111 from \$1.2079
Euro/pound: UP at 84.57 pence from 84.35 pence
Dollar/yen: Down at 134.96 yen from 134.98 yen
Brent North Sea crude: UP 0.8 per cent at \$97.44 per barrel
West Texas Intermediate: UP 1.0 per cent at \$91.64 per barrel. — Reuters

NBO offers bulk cash, cheque deposits at FFM

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) has added important new features to its Full Function Machines (FFMs). For the first time in Oman, customers can now deposit bulk cash of up to 300 notes, and up to 15 cheques to themselves or any other NBO account-holder. Customers can also use a host of other functions like electricity, water and telephone bill payments, school fee payments, mobile top ups and card services, available 24/7 and at 37 different locations across Oman.

Tariq Atiq, Chief Retail Banking and Digital Banking Officer at NBO, said, "At NBO we want banking to be a simple and seamless experience. To cater to the increasing demand for digital, we continue to upgrade our services with the latest technologies and most useful functions. Our FFM's now offer bulk cash and cheque deposits, giving customers an easy and convenient way to carry out their transactions at a location and time that suits them, without having to visit a branch."



In addition to over 180 ATM/FFM/CCDMs across Oman and a multi-purpose kiosk, NBO encourages customers to take advantage of its internet banking platforms, mobile app, pay+ mobile wallet, and the Merchant app, all of which are constantly upgraded with the latest and most useful features like account opening, mobile-to-mobile payments, and payments by QR Code.

Meanwhile, NBO continues to build on its portfolio of user-friendly solutions and make the banking experience more accessible, seamless, and altogether convenient.

More information about NBO's accounts, products can be found on www.nbo.om, by contacting the NBO Call Centre, or by downloading the free NBO mobile app.

Alizz Bank offers 'Hiyya' banking card holders

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank has continues a suite of exclusive sharia compliant banking services for female customers that have the 'Hiyya' card that was designed exclusively for women. 'Hiyya' is designed to meet all the investment, health and financial needs of female customers and will provide customers with a tier based savings account to enhance their profits.

The Sharia compliant account is based on the principle of Mudaraba where you will be Rabb-ul mal, and the Bank will be the Mudarib. Your funds will be invested in the common pool along with the other Mudaraba-based accounts. The generated profit will be shared between you and the Bank according to a profit sharing ratio specified earlier.

Profits will be shared between customers and the bank according to the previously agreed distribution ratios. Instant debit cards will be offered with exclusive benefits to ensure an open platform for women to enjoy a host of discounts and special offers at spas, beauty salons and



beauty products, while availing deals from health clubs, fitness centres and perfume stores.

Exclusive stores and branded outlets for clothing and accessories, home décor, restaurants and flower shops are all pegged onto the account, which also includes priority express service at all Alizz Islamic Bank branches.

It will also cover insurance on hand luggage and travel, the Takaful insurance provision also assures compensation for the loss of hand luggage while travelling anywhere in the world. It will also provide compensation for the loss of personal documents or keys on account of the loss of handbag; the onus will be on the insurance company to reimburse the customer for the expense incurred in obtaining new personal documents/keys.

Sohar International bags 'Best Retail Banking — Oman 2022' Award

MUSCAT: With innovation, agility, and excellence governing all aspects of its operations, Sohar International has maintained an undisputed leadership stance in the retail banking segment in Oman.

The same, the bank was recently awarded the coveted title of "Best Retail Banking - Oman 2022" in the latest round of awards by World Economics Magazine.

Following stringent selection criteria, these awards acknowledge the efforts of institutions that have demonstrated utmost dynamism and pushed their boundaries to effectively engage with and serve prospective customers while demonstrating effective environmental, social, and governance strategies.

Sohar International's resilient growth strategy, unflinching efforts toward digital transformation, and keen focus on continuously enhancing its product and service portfolio have been critical factors in helping the bank increase its gross retail revenue. Despite the various hurdles posed by the pandemic, the bank was able to record phenomenal growth across different parameters such as overall customer base growth, increase in asset size, expansion in network and enhanced performance.

Khalil bin Salim al Hedaifi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at



Sohar International said, "To be recognised by the World Economics Magazine is an incredible validation of our endeavours. It also attests to the unflinching dedication of our team who have remained steadfast in their ambition to set new benchmarks in the sector. At Sohar International, we pride ourselves on being a customer-centric bank and will remain grateful to our retail banking customers for their unending loyalty and for inspiring us to scale new heights."

"Sohar International has built a robust infrastructure that focuses

on delivering premium banking services to its customers. The bank has remained at the forefront of continuously conceptualising transformational, unique, and industry-first solutions that not only compliment the various lifestyle needs of our customers but add value to society while also contributing to the socio-economic progress of the nation underpinned by environmental, social, and governance strategies," Hedaifi added.

Sohar International's retail banking is a fast-growing segment with a comprehensive portfolio of

world-class products and services that have gained much reverence in the country. Complementing the bank's extensive network of state-of-the-art branches and ATMs/CDMs is the bank's investment in the digital realm. Sohar International has been a pioneer in leveraging its digital banking channels to provide a seamless, secure, and convenient banking experience for customers. The bank has therefore been able to drive meaningful engagement with clients and fortify its bonds.

Taking a holistic approach to growth, the bank maintains the highest levels of operational efficiency, adheres to international best banking practices, and observes transparency in all its offerings. With a vision to become a world-leading Omani service company, Sohar International strongly believes in growing with the nation and the communities it serves.

Sohar International was recently ranked the 'Fastest Growing Bank' in the Large Banks Category and 'Excellence in Digital Transformation' by the highly coveted Best Banks Survey at the Oman Banking and Finance Awards. The Global Business Review Magazine Awards 2022 honoured Sohar International with the title of 'Best Corporate Banking – Oman 2022'.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds wins awards at IGJA 2021

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the largest jewellery retailers globally with a strong retail network of over 285 outlets across 10 countries, has won awards in two categories - Highest Employment on the Company Rolls and Global Retailer of the Year award at the 48th India Gem & Jewellery Awards (IGJA) 2021 organised by Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) in India. IGJA awards are known as one of the most prestigious awards in the gems and jewellery industry in the country.

GJEPC has been organising this prestigious annual awards for the gems and jewellery industry since 1973 to honour the exemplary achievements of leading exporters and for their outstanding export performance besides felicitating the top importers and banks that are



financing the trade, among others. Ernst & Young LLP, one of the world's leading multinational professional services providers, is the Knowledge Partner for IGJA.

Asher O, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds and K P Abdul Salam, Vice Chairman, Malabar Group received the awards at the awards night held in Mumbai. "It's a great honour to win the

prestigious awards at the 48th IGJA 2021. The awards recognise our robust global presence and our commitment to building an efficient workforce to serve our customers with a world-class shopping experience," said M P Ahammed, Chairman, Malabar Group.

A diversified conglomerate with operations in 10 countries, Malabar Group currently has

over 14,000 employees. The group offers a healthy work environment and its employees the opportunity to become investors.

It promotes diversity, equality, growth, entrepreneurial spirit, and work flexibility among its employees. Malabar Group has more than 285 showrooms across 10 countries and epitomises the vision of Make In India, Market To The World.

Bank Muscat extends strong support to Khareef visitors

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate, has strengthened its electronic banking services to benefit visitors to the khareef Dhofar 2022. To enable customers to have easy access to banking services 24/7, the bank maintains more than 50 ATMs/CDMs in addition to 13 branches in the Governorate of Dhofar.

It is also worthwhile to note that four Bank Muscat branches and ATMs/CDMs are located close to the main highway at Adam, Haima, Qarn Al Alam and Thamrait. These four branches provide banking services in the sparsely populated area between Adam and Thamrait.

On this occasion, Taya Eid Bait Sabaea, Deputy General Manager - Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, said: "The khareef season in Dhofar is one of the most important tourist seasons in the country and the governorate sees huge inflows of tourists both from within the Sultanate of Oman as well as from other countries. Visitors arrive in large numbers to enjoy the cooler climate, picturesque landscape and environment. As the leading financial institution in the country, Bank Muscat is committed to the success of khareef Dhofar and has taken a lot of effort to ensure the prompt availability of banking facilities and services through



branches, ATMs and CDMs in Dhofar as well as those situated on the highway between Adam and Thamrait so as to provide the best services possible for visitors during their journey."

Bank Muscat has invested heavily in cutting-edge technology to provide customers with



banking services through multiple channels. With the large number of visitors in the governorate, there is a higher demand for banking services and the bank is sparing no effort in ensuring that its ATMs and CDMs are available to customers 24/7. Also, the bank's continuously upgraded Internet

and mobile banking services and Call Centre offer customers a fast, comfortable and secure banking experience.

Today, over 1.3 million retail banking customers are using various features like real-time bill payments for utilities in Oman, fund transfers within the bank and in Oman, fund transfers across the world via the SWIFT network; speed transfers to a number of countries including Bangladesh, India, the Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka; Zakat calculator and charity payments. Bill payment facility is available for a variety of utility services such as electricity, water, telecom, mobile top ups,

instant credit card bill payments and school payments. Internet banking and the mBanking app also allow customers to disable or enable their debit card for international usage adding an extra layer of security for the benefit of customers. Bank Muscat also has online and contactless payment options for shopping through various Debit, Credit and Prepaid cards as well as contactless wearables. Its QR-enabled payment option through mBanking or the BM Wallet app is of great benefit to merchant partners and retail customers alike in making and receiving e-payments securely and promptly.



Ethis Group launches new Ethis Super Angel Syndicate

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, AUGUST 9

Ethical and Islamic investment, and social finance platform operator Ethis Group has announced the relaunch of the Ethis Super Angel (ESA), rebranding it as the ESA Syndicate this year.

Initially started as a network within the Ethis community in 2020, ESA is a private group of angel investors from across the globe that invests in Shariah-compliant startups with the potential for huge financial returns. So far, it has activated close to 50 angel investors to invest \$3 million in nine startups.

This year, under a new structure, the ESA Syndicate will be led by four well-known expert ESA Syndicate leads, who are also board members of the Ethis Group. These include Ethis Investment

Management Director Amran Mohd, Dinar Founder and CEO Khaled Fouad, BETA Foundation CEO and Founder Lilyana Abdul Latif, and Ethis Founder and Group Managing Director Umar Munshi.

The programme's reintroduction ties in with Ethis' recent foray into Venture Capital through its partnership with Gobi Partners, a top-tier early-stage VC in Asia with more than 300 companies in their portfolio and \$1.5 billion in AUM. Over time, ESA will explore and build synergies with the Gobi and other VCs that Ethis collaborates with.

"We understand that startup investing is exciting but not easy. As a Syndicate, ESA will address two challenges faced by many angel investors—the lack of time and the lack of experience investing in such



an asset class," said Umar.

The ESA Syndicate is by invitation only for angel investors who are looking for promising startups focused on the Muslim

world and halal sectors, with a special interest in fintech, finance, and investment products, agrotech, halal food distribution, and the economy as well as sustainable and

impactful social enterprises. ESA pays special focus on Camel Startups as a sub-category of startups that it will invest in. ESA members also get access to exclusive startup deals,

discounted valuations, and shared bonuses.

"We must step up and start investing more in Muslim founders and Shariah-compliant startups. Lack of access to funding for startups is a huge gap in the Islamic finance universe."

"The silver lining is that there's a surge in exciting startups and solutions that are both commercially viable and also #CirculateGood," Umar said.

Since 2014, Ethis has been providing investment access to SMEs and startups by tapping into its deep network of the halal and circular economy, fintech and capital markets, and the startup ecosystem. Last year alone, Ethis facilitated more than one hundred angel investments to invest in startups such as Accelerate Global, Baloy, and Octowill to name a few.

Raysut Cement CEO resigns over legal troubles

QASIM AL MAASHANI

MUSCAT, AUGUST 8

Raysut Cement, the largest cement producer in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the resignation of its CEO with immediate effect.

The resignation, submitted on Tuesday, was approved by the company's Board of Directors, it said in a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

The CMA filing comes in response to social media reports referring the recent arrest of the CEO in India. Raysut Cement however stressed that the legal issue had "nothing to do with Raysut Cement".

"(With) reference to the news spread on social media related to the custody of Raysut Cement Company SAOG Chief Executive Officer in India, we assure all the shareholders: The recent news circulating regarding the current CEO on social media has nothing to do with Raysut Cement Company SAOG or its subsidiaries and sister companies in any connection and does not affect the financial position of the company or its financial statements — as this case was before the joining of the present CEO in the company in December 2017," it noted.

The company added that a new Omani CEO would be appointed during the meeting of the Board of Directors scheduled on August 10, 2022.



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our
correspondent
based in the UK

Next prime minister needs to fix UK relations with EU

The City of London Corporation's policy chairman, Chris Hayward, who took over the position in May, has called for the winner of the race — between Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss — to become the UK's next Prime Minister, to try to improve relations with the European Union.

"We should not see the EU as an enemy, we need to work in partnership with it and not against it," he said.

"It was a challenge under (Boris Johnson) because, of course, he was seen as the architect of the final 'Get Brexit done' campaign. It has meant political discussions have been very, very difficult, not least, because of the Northern Ireland protocol issue, which has been hanging over our heads."

The government introduced a bill in June that would allow it to tear up parts of the Brexit deal it signed with the EU in 2019 by removing a customs barrier between the British mainland and Northern Ireland.

The EU has said the UK is reneging on the agreement and is breaking international law. Hayward said it was important that the UK was seen to respect international law and called for the two sides to reach a deal.

"The UK has to operate within

international law. We always have done and it is part of what our reputation and our integrity is based around," he said. "I would ask the government therefore to work with the EU to come to a considered solution on that as fast as possible."

He also called on whichever of the two becomes Prime Minister to back a proposed requirement for financial regulators to consider economic growth on top of consumer protection and financial stability in their remit. The clause is contained within the Financial Services and Markets Bill, which was unveiled by Chancellor Nadhim Zahawi last month. "I would urge any future prime minister to ensure that this is retained," Hayward said.

"Ensuring that Britain's financial and professional services sector remains competitive on the global stage is really important in a post-Brexit Britain. So, commitment to that from both candidates from the sector's point of view would be a really big, big plus."

Hayward is also bullish about the movement of jobs to London's financial district, noting "thousands" of new finance roles have come to London as a result of EU firms needing to launch UK operations post-Brexit. He said that although more UK finance jobs had flowed to the EU post-

Brexit, many roles had moved the other way as well.

What has been interesting is the number of new jobs that have been created in the City as a result of European Institutions wanting and needing to open up operations in London because of Brexit, Hayward said. "Many of us were terrified that there would be a massive loss of jobs in the UK (post Brexit). That hasn't happened."

According to EY, the number of new hires across Europe and the UK linked to Brexit, stands at around 5,400, with around 2,900 created on the continent and around 2,500 in the UK.

Financial Conduct Authority data shows 1,500 European Economic Area firms are using the FCA's temporary permissions regime, which allows EEA firms that were previously passporting into the UK under EU rules to continue to operate in the UK until December 2023.

Around 1,000 EEA firms could set up offices in the UK for the first time, including almost 230 firms currently domiciled in Ireland, 186 from France and 168 from Germany, the data suggests. "There has been a win/lose," said Hayward.

"We've lost some jobs. But we've also gained a whole load of new jobs out of Europe."

Why the inflation reduction act is a big deal



JOSEPH E STIGLITZ

The writer is a Nobel laureate in economics and University Professor at Columbia University

US Senate Democrats' compromise bill, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022, addresses not just inflation but also several key longstanding problems facing our economy and society.

There is a simmering debate about the causes of today's inflation; but regardless of what side one takes, this bill represents a step forward. For those worried about excessive demand, there is more than \$300 billion in deficit reduction. And on the supply side, the bill would mobilise \$369 billion of investments in energy security and decarbonisation. That will help bring down the cost of energy — one of the main drivers of current price growth — and put America back on track to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by some 40 per cent (from 2005 levels) by 2030.

These investments will yield far-reaching returns. The costs of climate-driven events (wildfires, hurricanes, tornados and floods) will reduce our standard of living even more than today's inflation will, and they are disproportionately borne by lower-income households, people of colour, and future generations. These costs are far larger and more difficult to rectify than the costs of deficits.

Moreover, enhancing energy security has become essential. For far too long, authoritarian leaders of petrostates have been able to hold the rest of the world hostage. Russian President Vladimir Putin has reminded us once again that energy interdependencies come with serious risks. Weather may be variable, but fossil-fuel dictators are unreliable and downright dangerous.

The IRA also would help address the rising health-care costs

IF IT PASSES, THE US INFLATION REDUCTION ACT WOULD BE A LANDMARK LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENT. WITH PROVISIONS TO ACCELERATE AMERICA'S CLEAN-ENERGY TRANSITION, CONTROL HEALTH-CARE COSTS, AND RESTORE SOME SANITY TO THE TAX CODE, IT WILL NOT ONLY CURTAIL INFLATION BUT ALSO BOLSTER AMERICA'S LONG-TERM COMPETITIVENESS

that have long plagued America, both by lowering Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) premiums for millions of Americans and by capping out-of-pocket drug costs for those on Medicare. The pharmaceutical industry

has received tens of billions of dollars more from Medicare payouts than it otherwise would, simply because the government is prohibited from negotiating for lower prices. This gift to the industry will finally be rescinded, yielding savings of almost \$300 billion over ten years.

The United States is one of the world's leading sources of pharmaceutical innovation, and much of the basic research behind these advances was paid for by American taxpayers. Yet, Americans pay much more for prescription drugs than people in other countries, partly because drug companies have been given an unbridled power to set prices. Many of us have been fighting for years to curb these firms' undue market power. If the IRA becomes law, this provision alone would be a signal achievement.

Furthermore, the bill would deliver sorely needed

improvements to US tax policy. Corporations and the wealthiest households are not paying their fair share of taxes. That not only erodes confidence in our democracy, but also is economically inefficient. Tax revenues are necessary to finance essential public expenditures without generating inflationary deficits.

Russia's attack on Ukraine has reminded us why defence expenditures are necessary. But to preserve America's competitiveness, we also must invest heavily in education, research, technology, and infrastructure. Here, the bill includes provisions that would raise more than \$450 billion (over a decade) through a 15 per cent minimum corporate tax, increased tax enforcement, and the introduction of a 1 per cent excise tax on stock buybacks.

© Project Syndicate, 2022

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

WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 10, 2022

MUHARRAM 12, 1444 AH

Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahdhi86@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

SIT. WANTED

SPONSOR is required for engineering and Green building consultancy office, and share a senior architect and client's representative. moharch2000@gmail.com Contact: 94860968 - 97164063.

INDIAN, Male, 48 years, M.Com, 15 years experience in managerial positions in Finance and Accounts in Oman. Looking to join managerial positions. Ready to move to any GCC countries. DL and NOC available. GSM 95392251

INDIAN, male, having 14+ years experience as Civil QAQC Engineer/ AutoCAD Draughtsman in Oman, looking for suitable job. Ready to join, NOC available Contact: 96945383

I am a fresh graduate with Bachelor degree in Environmental Engineering graduate from German University of Technology in Oman-GUtech. Passionate committed to applying unique and innovate solutions to environment problems. I currently looking for an opportunity to utilise my technical skills in a challenge working environment and become a valuable asset to the organisation that I work for. I believe that I can gain knowledge from your talented employees and acquire new skills to improve my ability and willing to learn more and see what I have learned in a real life situations. Contact: aalmaashari5@gmail.com

INDIAN male (Civil Engineering) having 14 years GCC experience as Quality Engineer/Inspector (OXY-PDO approved), looking for suitable position. Contact 71012899, 95491261. E-mail: Sovarghese@gmail.com

OMANI Bachelor Degree holder with +13 years experience in Business management and development 71176545.

Looking for job/ Engineering Coordinator (Female) graduated as an Architectural Engineer, Resident in Salalah, driver's license available. 97602926

SIT VACANT

SALES executive for building material items, male, with valid driving licence, sales experience of 1-2 years. Contact: 99358615/ 93559800, email: sangita@dhiyahilal.com

SALES Executive Graduate, Licence mandatory, Excellent Communication, Muscat Region. chemicals@ahlam-group.com 79929515

SIT. WANTED

Dynamic Accounting professional Indian, MCom, having 30+ years exposure (20 years in Oman) in Audit, Trading, Service & Manufacturing sector. Expertise in Budgeting, Accounting upto finalization, Financial reporting & analysis, cash flows & banking relations management, Internal control, ERP system implementations. Can join immediately. NOC & driving license available. Contact: 99475683

Indian Female, MCom, Good experience in VAT, payroll, Inventory, Book keeping until finalisation. Seeking suitable position and available for join immediately. Contact. 96974566

SALES, marketing & business development executive/ manager, MBA marketing 13 years experience, 8 years in Oman, e-mail: mirzatabrez830@gmail.com, phone: +968 97043494.

INDIAN female (Msc Micro biology). Looking for suitable position. Currently in Oman. Contact: 78084092, 95717269.

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.

Driving School
Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)
Contact No: 99074072

مجمع السلامة الطبيك الحديث
Modern Al Salama Polyclinic
DR. NORA BARAKAT MD, MS
DERMATOLOGY AND AESTHETICS
MEDICINE SPECIALIST
CONSULTATION AVAILABLE SAT TO WED 10AM TO 6PM THU 8AM TO 2PM
CONTACT US +968 24451726 - +968 79235354
EMERGENCY NO +968 94602100

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?
Advertise with us.
Contact us on: **99639264**

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

SIT. WANTED

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

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

Oman Chemical Industries Co. SAOG (Under Liquidation)

SALE OF COMPANY ASSETS

BDO LLC, the Official Liquidators, hereby makes the final announcement for the sale of the fixed assets (comprising of leased building, plant and machinery and furniture and fixtures) of Oman Chemical Industries Co. SAOG (Under Liquidation) located at Plot no. 119 and 120, Block No. Phase-1A, Sohar Industrial Area on "as is where is" basis. All interested parties should contact Mr. Mudather Al Hooti either on his direct office no. 24955121 or GSM no. 92990093 for further details. Arrangements will be made for the interested parties to visit the premises at Sohar for inspection of the fixed assets, after which the parties would be required to submit their offer in a sealed envelope to the Liquidator's office located in Suites 601 & 602, Pent House, Beach One Building, Way No. 2601, Shatti Al Qurum, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The last date for receiving offers is 31 August 2022.

BDO LLC
Official Liquidators



OMAN عُمَان DAILY
Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahdhi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadialmeeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com



@omanobserver
www.omanobserver.om

MODERN GATEWAY SOLUTIONS LLC
Location: Ruwi Bus Station
Tel.: +968 24706951, Mobile: +968 96210055
E-mail: moderngatewayolutions@gmail.com
• Laptop Repair • Desktop Repair • Printer Repair
• CCTV Installation • Annual Maintenance Contracts

AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLDWIDE
WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO
INDIA • BANGLADESH
NEPAL • SRILANKA • INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE
USA • ALL GCC
TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com
FREE PICK UP 24/7
Branches: Ruwi, Hamriya, Ghala, Sohar, Barka, Suwaid, Sohar

AYURVEDA AT ITS BEST!
Saham Ayurvedic Hospital
Al Kishda, Saham, Sohar
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

FOR RENT

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

LAMASAT BUSINESS CONSULTANCY SERVICES
Accounting Services, VAT and Consultancy Services
Contact: **24571454** GSM: **95392251**

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

SERVICES

AUTOCAD/REVIT ARCH MEP part/full-time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

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.

REQUIRED

APPROVED electrical company inviting individuals to run operations in Muscat, Nizwa, Sur and Salalah as partners. Interested individuals, please contact the below mentioned address. Contact number: +968 91924377. Email address: electrical3920@gmail.com

Mahout's charming little island is becoming an ideal local getaway

Mahout Island is located in the Wilayat of Mahout facing the coast of the Arabian Sea, about 25 kilometres south of the state centre. Located remotely, it has become home to different sea birds and its waters are teeming with different sea food. The island has become a sweet escape for locals because of its beautiful beach and soft sand... **P20**

Great Barrier Reef sees fragile coral comeback

PARTS OF AUSTRALIA'S beleaguered Great Barrier Reef now have the highest levels of coral cover seen in decades, a government report said on Thursday, suggesting the aquatic wonder could survive given the chance.

Portions of the vast Unesco heritage site showed a marked increase in coral cover in the last year, reaching levels not seen in 36 years of monitoring, the Australian Institute of Marine Science said.

Scientists surveying 87 sites said northern and central parts of the reef had bounced back from damage more quickly than some had expected, thanks mainly to fast-growing *Acropora* — a branching coral that supports thou-

sands of marine species.

"These latest results demonstrate the reef can still recover in periods free of intense disturbances," said the Australian Institute of Marine Science's CEO Paul Hardisty.

But far from declaring victory, Hardisty warned the gains could easily be reversed by cyclones, new bleaching events or crown-of-thorns outbreaks.

He pointed to a reversal in fortunes for the southern portion of the reef, which a year ago had appeared to be on the mend, but was now in decline again.

"This shows how vulnerable the reef is to the continued acute and severe disturbances that are occurring more often, and are longer-lasting," he said.



Coral coverage has increased by 36 per cent across sites monitored in the northern part of the reef, up from 27 per cent in 2021.

But the picture was less encouraging as the scientists moved south, with a smaller increase in cover in the reef's

central belt and a marked decrease in coral cover in the south.

The spread of coral-killing crown-of-thorns starfish has also taken a toll.

Only fierce lobbying by the Australian government stopped the reef from being labelled "in danger" by Unesco — a

potentially devastating blow to the country's multi-billion-dollar tourism industry.

Many fear that the speeding rate of damage could cause the reef to be destroyed entirely.

Marine scientist Terry Hughes said it was "good news" that coral was regrowing, but warned the species driving the recovery were very vulnerable to ocean heating.

He added that replacing large, old, slow-growing corals that had defined the reef was likely "no longer possible. Instead we're seeing partial reassembly of fast-growing, weedy corals before the next disturbance."

Zoe Richards a researcher at the Coral Conservation and Research Group at Curtin University also cautioned against over-optimism.

"This recovery trend is driven by a handful of *Acropora* species which often grow in a boom-and-bust pattern," she said. "This means that the next thermal stress event could easily decimate these coral communities once again."

"We are already finding evidence that each mass bleaching event leads to local extinctions of rarer species, so the short-term success of a handful of fast-growing coral species masks the full story about the largely hidden losses of biodiversity." — **AFP**

READ

GROUND ZERO BY ALAN GRATZ

Parallel storylines of Brandon and Reshmina take place on September 11th, in 2001 and 2019.



A DEADLY CRASH

A street racer featured on Discovery show "Street Outlaws: Fastest in America" has died in an accident, the network said on Monday, with US media reporting the car crash occurred while filming a race for the reality series. — **AFP**



A STAR'S DEATH

"Grease" star Olivia Newton-John has died at the age of 73, her husband has confirmed. The British-born singer died "peacefully" at her ranch in Southern California on Monday morning, surrounded by family and friends. — **dpa**





Issey Miyake: seamless innovator of avant-garde style

FASHION INNOVATOR Issey Miyake shook up Parisian style with his highly wearable avant-garde designs, saying he was driven to create clothes that “bring beauty and joy” after witnessing the horrors of Hiroshima.

Alongside Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto, Miyake was part of a wave of young Japanese designers who made their mark in the French capital from the mid-1970s, following the lead of fashion greats Kenzo Takada and Hanae Mori.

Throughout his global career spanning more than half a century, he pioneered high-tech, comfortable clothing — side-stepping the grandiosity of haute couture in favour of what he called simply “making things”.

Among his inventions were the “Pleats Please” line, permanently pleated items which do not crease, refreshing an old-fashioned concept to exude fluidity and comfort.

The much-copied futuristic triangles of Miyake’s geometric “Bao Bao” bag complemented countless chic outfits, and he made more than 100 black turtle-necks for Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

Miyake also wowed runway audiences with his “A-POC (A Piece Of Cloth)” concept, using computer programming to cut whole garments with no seams.

“When I grow weary with where I’m going, or when I stumble, I’ll return to the theme of ‘A Piece of Cloth,’” Miyake said in 2006 after winning the prestigious Kyoto Prize.

“From ancient times, in Greece or Africa, every culture has started (making clothes) from a single piece of cloth, or skin,” he explained.

HIROSHIMA SURVIVOR

Born in Hiroshima in 1938, Miyake was just seven years old when the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city in August 1945, obliterating everything he knew.

He survived the blast, which killed an estimated 140,000 people on impact and led to the end of World War II after

the bombing of Nagasaki three days later.

Although the bombing left him with a lifelong limp, he rarely spoke of his trauma, once breaking his silence in a 2009 *New York Times* article calling for nuclear disarmament.

“When I close my eyes, I still see

ised in 2016 when the then US president made a historic trip to the city.

“I have never chosen to share my memories or thoughts of that day. I have tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to put them behind me, preferring to think of things that can be created, not destroyed, and that bring beauty and

Guy Laroche and Givenchy, but his outlook was also influenced by the huge student-led uprising of May 1968.

Seeing protests engulf the French capital made him realise “the world was moving beyond the needs of haute couture for the few and towards simple more universal elements such as jeans and T-shirts,” Miyake told CNN in 2016.

He established the Miyake Design Studio in Tokyo in 1970, and soon afterwards opened his first Paris boutique.

By the 1980s, his career was in full swing as he experimented with materials from plastic to metal wire and even artisanal Japanese paper.

Teamwork was essential to Miyake, who preferred the anonymity of his research and development lab full of textile scientists and engineers to the bright lights of the catwalk.

“You always see things in a different way when you allow others to become part of a creative process,” he told the *New York Times*.

He pulled back from designing his Paris collections at the turn of the century and has since given a series of talented young designers their big break.

But he continued to oversee the brand, and his obsession with technology endured — with everything from fabrics to stitching explained in minute detail in the notes of every catwalk show.

Miyake is perhaps especially revered in France, whose former culture minister Jack Lang came to Tokyo in 2016 to award him the Legion of Honour at a major retrospective.

Lang, who

still wears Miyake pieces he bought many years ago, described the designer in October 2021 as a “man of a deep humanity, open to everything”.

“Issey Miyake is a researcher, a discoverer, a real inventor who conceived of and used new materials and textures the world had never seen,” he said. — AFP



things no one should ever experience: a bright red light, the black cloud soon after, people running in every direction trying desperately to escape,” he wrote.

“I remember it all. Within three years, my mother died from radiation exposure.”

In the article, he urged Barack Obama to visit Hiroshima, a wish real-

joy,” Miyake wrote.

- ‘OPEN TO EVERYTHING’ -

Having graduated from Tama Art University in Tokyo, Miyake moved to Paris in 1965, where he studied at the elite Ecole de la Chambre Syndicale de la Couture Parisienne.

As a cub designer he worked under

CHANGING WORLD

Kurdish Iraqi farmer sprouts online advice, green awareness



KURDISH IRAQI FARMER

Azad Muhamad has become a social media star by sharing tips on growing fresh fruit and vegetables in the sun-parched country that is highly vulnerable to climate change.

The moustachioed 50-year-old with almost half a million Facebook followers posts weekly videos on topics such as protecting fruit trees, dealing with insects and helping people get more from their farms and gardens.

“They should make you agriculture minister,” one of his fans, Ahmed Hassan, commented on a recent video.

heat.

“With desertification, and low rainfall, we must change how we plant trees,” he said.

“Look at these tomatoes,” he added, gesturing at a group of plants. “Because they are in the shade, they are juicy and perfect — whereas these that are in the direct sun have been burned.”

Iraq’s northern Kurdistan region has been spared the worst effects of desertification, water scarcity and drought that have ravaged other parts of the country.

“The region has high rainfall precipitation compared to



Muhamad also uses his popular online platform to raise awareness about protecting the environment and the need to support local farmers, in his native Kurdistan region and beyond.

“Developed-country farmers have government support and harvesting machines,” said Muhamad.

“Our farmers do everything themselves with their own sweat — and when they lose money at the end of the year, they start over with the same passion and energy.”

He also has a message for authorities in Iraq, which the UN classifies as the world’s fifth most vulnerable country to climate change and where many are mired in poverty despite Iraq’s oil wealth.

“Our land is fertile, and our earth is like gold,” Muhamad told.

Therefore, he said, the government should “focus on agriculture rather than oil, for a sustainable economy”.

PRESERVE ENVIRONMENT

From his farm near Halabja, Muhamad squats among grape vines and other plants, wearing traditional Kurdish clothing as a friend uses a mobile phone to film him. Many of his followers, he said, are not farmers but people who “have transformed their roof into gardens — and that’s a way to better preserve the environment”.

He invites his Facebook followers to post their questions, and says some farmers have sent him videos of their crops, thanking him for his help.

“That makes me very happy,” he said.

In one video, he advises farmers to space their trees out by just two metres (six feet) instead of four to keep the soil shady and damp, protecting it from the scorching summer

the rest of Iraq,” said a 2019 study involving United Nations agencies and the autonomous Kurdistan regional government. But the report warned that “local agricultural production is in severe competition with foreign goods with largely lower prices” ... “mainly from Turkey and Iran, whose products have flooded Iraqi markets”.

It urged “more investments” to improve irrigation, along with water management to promote sustainability, to ensure the efficient use of resources and “mitigate the effects of climate change”.

FRESH AND ORGANIC

Hamid Ismail Abdulrahman, a fellow farmer in Halabja, said low water levels in wells had impacted agricultural development.

Twice a week, the 47-year-old opens his farm to families who can buy “fresh and organic products”, from tomatoes to corn and eggplant. He said climate change had greatly affected agriculture all over Iraq, though “southern Iraq has the lion’s share of this impact, while in the north the effect is less”.

With Iraq already witnessing record low rainfall and high temperatures in recent years, Muhamad warned that “if the government doesn’t act now and present a concrete plan... the damage will be done”.

Muhamad has recently opened a small educational area on his farm, and now also receives visits from university students.

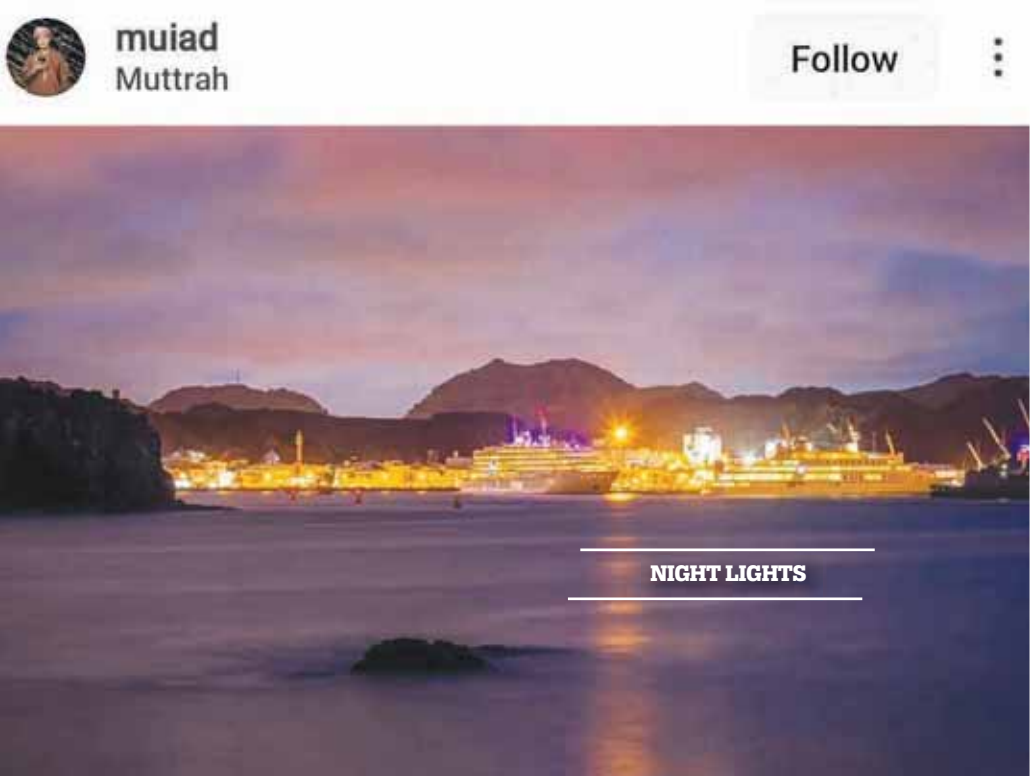
He says he hopes his initiatives will have a longer-term impact.

“Some people leave behind a mosque” when they die, he said, but “I want to leave behind my agricultural knowledge.” — 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

FASHION

‘Living Sculpture’ Daniel Lismore brings wearable art to London



BRITISH ARTIST Daniel Lismore’s monumental pieces of “wearable art” featuring everything from rubbish to elaborate headgear studded with jewels took centre stage at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum on Friday.

Guests were invited to closely inspect the nearly 2-metre (6-foot, 4-inch) tall pieces, one of which was worn by Lismore, who calls himself “a living sculpture”.

“I’m not a performance artist or a drag queen, I just live as art,” he said in an interview.

The pieces — featuring brightly coloured fabrics and metallic embellishments — took between two hours to eight months to put together and were inspired by people and objects from around the world, said Lismore.

“There’s hundreds of stories in each piece,” he said.

British multidisciplinary artist Daniel Lismore wears one of his sculptural artwork creations next to other mannequins which form part of the “Fashion in Motion: Daniel Lismore” exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Britain, August 5, 2022.

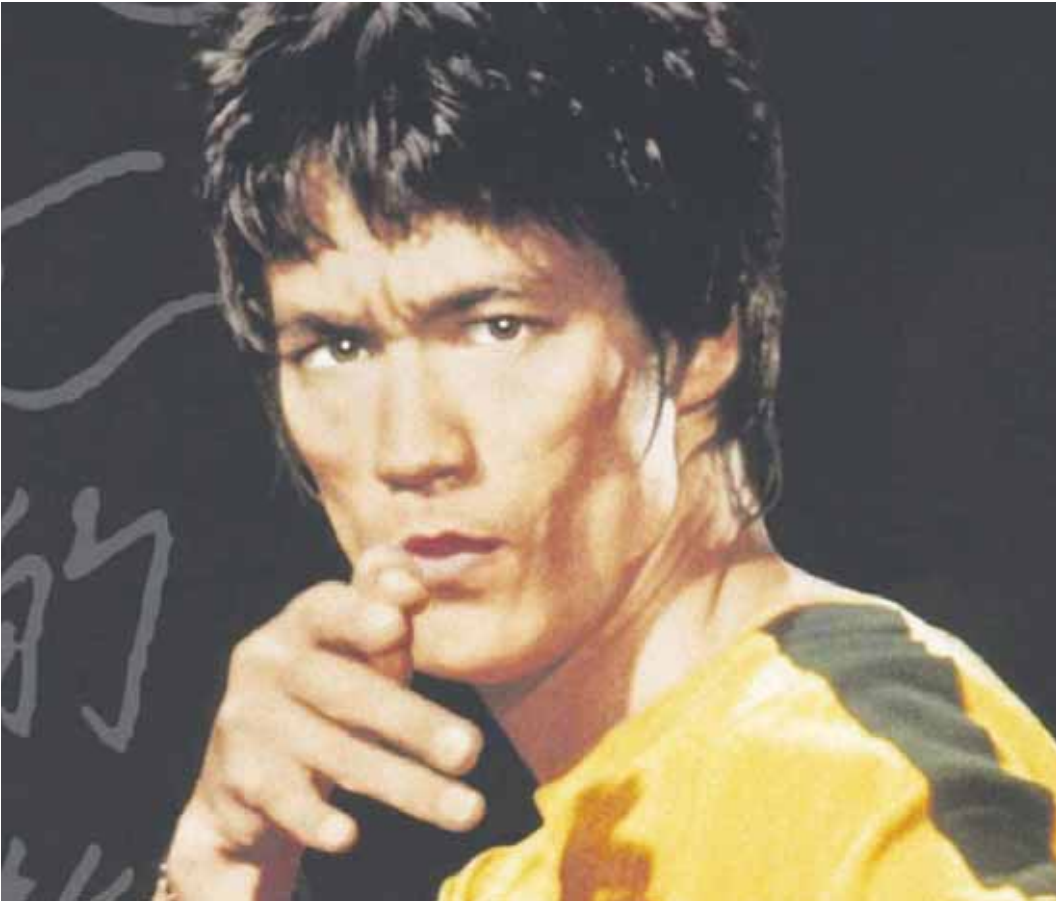
“There’s an honorary i-D magazine cover. There’s a piece that I wore to Buckingham Palace for the Queen’s Platinum Party. There’s pieces from everywhere you can imagine, things I find on the floor, rubbish, pieces from Bulgari, pieces from all over.”

The piece he wore on Friday was among his heaviest, he said, and featured items of personal significance.

“I wanted to put all my memories of over the years, from when I was a teen, when I was bullied and all these things that meant something to me throughout my life,” Lismore said. —Reuters

ENTERTAINMENT

Seattle exhibit focuses on the philosophy of Bruce Lee



AFTER A pandemic-induced delay, a permanent exhibition focused on Bruce Lee’s philosophy is opening at the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience in Seattle, with support of the Bruce Lee Foundation.

His daughter Shannon Lee, who oversees the foundation, said that the exhibit, “Be Water, My Friend,” was as an immersive extension of her research into her father’s life as a philosopher.

“I didn’t feel like everybody was getting the full picture of the human being. And it’s really part of my mission for people to understand actually what level of philosopher he really was,” Lee said of the project, which is housed in an unassuming historic building in the city’s Chinatown-International District.

She said she remembers little glimpses of life with her father before he died when she was 4: him holding her on his lap and playing, visiting him on set at

Golden Harvest Studios, and their home in Hong Kong.

“They’re very meaningful moments to me, but they’re just brief little touch points,” Lee recalls of those early memories.

will remain at the museum permanently, along with other keepsakes in a separate exhibit.

Seattle is rich with the legacy of Bruce Lee: Ruby Chow restaurant where he once worked, the University



of Washington, where he studied philosophy and met his wife, Linda Lee Cadwell, and ultimately where he was buried in 1973 at Lake View Cemetery in the Capitol Hill neighbourhood. For father and son Minh and Michael Nguyen, on vacation from the East Coast, the exhibit was a must-visit attraction. —Reuters

DISCOVERY

US Returns 30 Looted Antiquities to Cambodia



AMERICAN AND Cambodian officials urged museums and private collectors on Monday to investigate the origins of their Khmer art to determine whether it had been looted, and the officials demonstrated the pervasiveness of such thefts at an event that celebrated the return of 30 antiquities to Cambodia.

Lined up behind the officials were seven masterpieces of the country’s ancient heritage, including a 10th-century sandstone statue known as “Skanda on a Peacock” that investigators say was stolen from a temple by a Khmer Rouge conscript and self-described looter in 1997.

The Cambodian government will also welcome back a 5-foot-tall sculpture of a Hindu god, Ganesha, but the 4-tonne sculpture was represented only in a poster on Monday for fear that it would break elevators at the Manhattan offices of the US attorney for the Southern District of New York. Both objects were said to have been plundered from the archaeological site at Koh Ker, capital of the ancient Khmer empire. The antiquities that are being repatriated, the officials said, were all trafficked by an organised looting network and sold in the Western art market through Douglas A J Latchford, a British art dealer and collector of Cambodian antiquities. He died in 2020, less than a year after he had been charged with smuggling looted relics and concealing their tainted histories by falsifying documentation to help sell them.

“It’s like a returning of the souls of our culture back to our peoples,” Keo Chhea, Cambodia’s ambassador to the United States, said at Monday’s news conference. The relics were returned as part of an investigation into Latchford by federal prosecutors in New York and the Department of Homeland Security. They were seized from two individuals and a US museum that had owned the artefacts. All three cooperated with investigators.

“We commend individuals and institutions who decided to do the right thing,” said Damian Williams, US attorney for the Southern District, “and after learning about the origin of the antiquities in their possession decided to voluntarily return those pieces to their homeland.”

The owner of “Skanda on a Peacock,” which depicts the Hindu deity Skanda riding the bird, inherited the sculpture from a collector who had purchased it from Latchford in 2000 for \$1.5 million, according to court papers. The heir, who has not been publicly identified, agreed to relinquish possession of the artefact to federal authorities.

Twenty-five of the antiquities that are being returned to Cambodia were surrendered by James H Clark, the Internet pioneer and Netscape founder who said he had spent roughly \$35 million in purchasing dozens of Cambodian and Southeast Asian antiquities, many of which he used to furnish a Miami Beach penthouse. —NYT

art & life

Local Scene

f t i y l p @omanobserver

WEDNESDAY | AUGUST 10 | 2022

Mahout's charming little island is becoming an ideal local getaway

By Arwa Al Hashimi
Photos by Haitham Al Farsi

Oman has one of the world's most beautiful coastlines and travelling from Muscat to Salalah gives one an idea of how diverse the country's landscape is. Located in the Arabian Peninsula, it is also home to some of the most intriguing islands spread across the different governorates.

Mahout Island is located in the Wilayat of Mahout facing the coast of the Arabian Sea, about 25 kilometres south of the state centre. To reach the island, one would have to take a small boat in order to discover the treasures hidden within.

For its size, Mahout Island is filled with many different surprises that is ideal for tourism. It has bays, lagoons and soft beaches surrounding a stunning mangrove forest on three sides that has become home to many different local and migratory birds including flamingo, seagull, Socotra cormorant and large numbers of other various birds.

On the front of the island, there is a 6 km long white beach overlooking the nearby smaller islands of "Rak" and Heb. While remote, some locals spend hours enjoying this beautiful view lulled by the soft crash of the waves and the cool blow of the breeze.

The island is famous for its abundance of shrimp and many types of fish, and the people of the island preserve its old charm by not building any permanent structures in it. There are a few barasti — sheds made out of palm fronds where people usually go to shield them from the sun.

As of late, Mahout Island is witnessing an active and noticeable tourist movement. During holidays, droves of families can be found headed for the island to escape in its calming embrace.

Fishermen within the area maintained some of their traditional methods of fishing. If you're lucky, you will be able to witness them hunting for squid using their time-honoured tradition. Shellfishes also are abundant on the island and provide good alternative food for the villagers.

In Mahout island, the women and children collect different types of shells, called locally "Al Jafour", which they cook at a high temperature, extract the meat from it and dry it, and then use it with rice. Women also extract materials from these seashells and make special mixtures to produce different types of scents and perfumes. Not many people know that the island played an important role for sea trade for generations. The island was reportedly the starting point of some Omani ships to Yemen, Africa and many other countries. Additionally, salt was transported from Mahout to Sur and the eastern regions of Oman. Camels and dates were transported from Oman to Africa through different ships such as Al Badan and Al Sanbouk. With the beginning of the blessed renaissance and the availability of government services such as education, health and others, most of the island's residents moved to nearby cities for education and other amenities provided by the Sultanate of Oman's government. Despite that, the island is still rich in various natural components and is a site to attract large numbers of tourists and visitors from different countries.

