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RAMPANT AUSTRALIA CLINCH FIRST EVER T20 WORLD CUP TITLE



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UN CLIMATE SUMMIT REACHES CARBON MARKETS DEAL



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MORE THAN \$200 MILLION SOLD ON FIRST NIGHT OF NEW YORK FALL AUCTIONS



■ MUSCAT

HM THANKED BY SAUDI KING

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in reply to His Majesty's condolences cable to him on the death of Prince Saud Abdulrahman Abdulaziz al Saud. In his cable, King Salman expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty's heartfelt sympathies and sincere prayers, praying to Allah the Almighty to protect His Majesty against all harm. — ONA

■ MANAMA

GCC MINISTERS CALL FOR JOINT ACTION

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Interior, took part in the 38th meeting of GCC Ministers of Interior. The Sultanate of Oman's delegation was headed by Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior. Dr Naif Falah al Hajraf, GCC Secretary-General, said that the 38th meeting laid emphasis on the importance of the joint GCC action in sustaining security and facing challenges. SEE P5

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OBSERVER MARKS 40TH ANNIVERSARY

We couldn't have come this far without you

WE are turning 40 today. And it's indeed a major milestone to celebrate, especially at a time when newspapers are under pressure from the onslaught of a plethora of digital devices, social media and changing media consumption.

But here we are, standing and welcoming this tough challenge. The *Oman Daily Observer* is prepared to pick up the gauntlet, thanks to the enduring support from the Sultanate of Oman's

government.

Started on November 15, 1981, the prime aim of the *Observer* right from its inception, was to disseminate information on the development process kick-started in the Sultanate of Oman.

During the country's development march, the role of the media was vital in helping people get easy access to information and the *Observer* was a robust link between people and the government.

Oman (Arabic daily) and the *Oman Daily Observer* served as a bridge between the



government and the people to update them with the current events in the country, in addition to bringing the news of the world to them.

Today, the Sultanate of Oman stands on the world stage as a nation that has gone significantly farther – politically, economically

and socially – than many of its resource-rich peers. This recognition is a testament to the wisdom and acumen of its wise leadership.

The *Observer*, which had a humble beginning, has grown into one of the leading English dailies in the region.

When we look back at the last four decades with the *Observer*, it has grown so much beyond what it was in the beginning. We are diversified today in both print and digital editions. Through different social media platforms, we continue to give our audience different storytelling

experiences.

Our mission in the path of growth has always been reinventing and adapting. Whatever state-of-the-art technologies may emerge, certain fundamentals will always remain the same. As a tangible document, a printed newspaper fits quite snugly into our daily routines.

Even as we cater to the needs of those who want to enjoy reading the hard copy, we also update readers through our online channels the news as it happens in our country and across the world.

TURN TO P5

MARKING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF UN MEMBERSHIP

The Foreign Ministry and in association with Oman Post, launched a commemorative stamp to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Sultanate of Oman's membership of the United Nations. The Sultanate of Oman's flag was raised at the United Nations headquarters in New York on October 8, 1971, as the 131st member state. The new stamp was unveiled during a ceremony held at the Foreign Ministry under the auspices of HH Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd al Said, and attended by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister and Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

SEE P2



No Covid-19 deaths in three days

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnassri

The Sultanate of Oman recorded 19 cases of Covid-19 and no deaths during the past three days. A total of 10 patients have been hospitalised, while three are still in ICUs. The total number of individuals infected with the coronavirus reached 304,429, of which 98.5 per cent recovered. The number of deaths recorded stand at 4,113.

Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health, expressed anguish over lax approach towards the precautionary measures, which are crucial to combat the disease.

While attending a conference on organ implants last week, he announced that a press conference would be held by the Supreme Committee on Monday to discuss the epidemiological situation in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Supreme Committee on Covid-19 had agreed earlier to vaccinate children in the age group of 5 to 12, and provide the third dose of the vaccine for some groups.

At the beginning of November, it had called upon the target groups who completed 8 months of the last dose of the vaccine to speed up taking the booster dose. The target groups for the booster dose include elderly people, 65 and above; healthcare workers from the age of 50 and above, and patients suffering from chronic diseases from 18 years and above.

Economy to grow 5.8% in 2022

RISE IN OIL PRICES HAS POSITIVE IMPACT ON STATE'S BUDGET

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The policies and measures implemented by the Sultanate of Oman recently have begun to show results and the economy is expected to grow by around 5.8 per cent in 2022, the government said on Sunday.

Dr Said bin Mohammad al Saqri, Minister of Economy, said the country will continue to record growth rates during the years of the Tenth Five-Year Plan, along with gradual improvement in the overall investment climate.

In an interview to *Observer's* sister publication, *Oman*, he said the rise in oil prices led to a significant improvement in the state's general budget and had a positive and direct impact on



NEW MASTERPLAN OF YITI

With a vision to transform the tourism and real estate sector in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with Oman Vision 2040, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) has revealed the masterplan and brand identity of 'Yiti' – one of the largest integrated tourism developments in the country. The development sets a new model for urbanisation, as it connects and extends the city of Muscat, enriching its offerings and possibilities, through a multi-phased expansion approach.

DETAILS ON P13

growth in the national economy, whether on the added value of the oil activities sector, or non-oil activities through increased demand.

The minister stressed that generating jobs for citizens is one of the government's priorities under the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

He said that the partnership with the private sector is a strategic option, and the state will continue its efforts to support the sector through a policy of privatisation and the gradual sale of productive assets to the private sector, as well as developing legislation regulating the business and investment environment.

TURN TO P5

Oman marks 50th anniversary of United Nations membership



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Foreign Ministry, in collaboration with Oman Post, launched a commemorative stamp to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Sultanate of

Oman's membership of the United Nations. The Sultanate of Oman's flag was raised at the United Nations headquarters in New York, on October 8, 1971 as the 131st member state. The new stamp was unveiled during a ceremony held at the

Foreign Ministry under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, in the presence of Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister and Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and

Information Technology. The stamp features a photograph of the late His Highness Sayyid Tarik bin Taimour al Said, delivering the Sultanate of Oman's first speech on the occasion of its membership of the United Nations.

Outstanding credit extended by ODCs grows 4.9 per cent

MUSCAT: The nominal GDP, as per the preliminary data released by National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), showed an increase of 10.1 per cent over the first half of 2021 over the same period of 2020. The expansion was driven by increase in output of the hydrocarbon sector by 8.7 per cent and non-hydrocarbon sector by 11.1 per cent. The Omani oil average price during January-September 2021 at \$60.9 per barrel was higher by 45.1 per cent than that in January-September 2020. The average daily oil production at 961,3000 barrels during January-September 2021 increased by 0.9 per cent. Oman's average Consumer Price Index (CPI) showed a Y-o-Y inflation of 0.9 per cent during the period January-September 2021. The other depository corporations (ODCs) consist of conventional and Islamic banks in Oman. The total outstanding credit extended by ODCs grew by 4.9 per cent to RO 27.7 billion at the

end of September 2021, while credit to the private sector demonstrated moderate increase of 2.6 per cent (Y-o-Y) to reach RO 23.4 billion. The non-financial corporate sector received the highest share of the total private sector credit, over 46.4 per cent, followed by household sector accounted for 45.2, at end-September 2021. The share of financial corporations was 4.9 per cent and other sectors received the remaining 3.5 per cent of the total private sector credit as at end- September 2021. Total deposits held with ODCs registered a Y-o-Y growth of 2.7 per cent to reach RO 25.0 billion at the end of September 2021. Total private sector deposits increased by 5.2 per cent to RO 17.2 billion. In terms of sector-wise composition of private sector deposits, the biggest share goes to household deposits at 51.5 per cent, followed by non-financial corporations at 32.4 per cent, financial corporations at 13.7 per cent and the other sectors at 2.4 per cent. — ONA

Sultanate and US review investment opportunities



SOHAR: Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), North Al Batinah branch, has organised a meeting between representatives of the US Embassy in the Sultanate of Oman and business people in the governorate. The meeting aimed at reviewing investment

opportunities as per the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) signed between the two countries. Held at the Crown Plaza Hotel Suhar, the event was attended by Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, OCCI Chairman and some officials from the government and private sectors in the governorate. During the meeting, Chief of

the Political/Economic Section at the US Embassy gave a presentation on the incentives offered by the FTA between the Sultanate of Oman and the US. On his turn, Chief Commercial Officer at the US Embassy touched on horizons of the economic cooperation between the two countries. — ONA

New batch of citizens joins ROP

MUSCAT: A new batch of general education diploma holders has joined the Institute of Police Recruits at the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences after passing evaluation tests, interviews and medical fitness examinations, to join the ROP. The fundamental training programme includes military training as well as knowledge and sciences, law and police sciences in addition to mental and physical training. — ONA



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Tax Authority would like to remind taxpayers that they must submit the VAT returns for the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2021 by the stipulated deadlines. The Tax Authority has started summoning non-compliant taxpayers and imposing any applicable penalties. Kindly submit the required returns on time to avoid any fines and penalties that may reach (5,000) five thousand Omani rials.

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The Sultanate of Oman's pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai sheds light on diverse stories of sustainability starting from connecting minds to creating opportunities for the future, which are identical to the key themes of the expo



OMAN PAVILION AT DUBAI EXPO HIGHLIGHTS RICH HERITAGE, FUTURE VISION

DUBAI: The Sultanate of Oman's civilisation is embodied in portraits highlighting its visions and realities. This civilisation advances from the interaction that has shaped the vision of Omanis throughout history represented in preserving their cultural and social identity. An observer of this civilisation will find that it is the product of collective thinking of a society that has established solid foundations from which it presses ahead in all directions, to be actively present and astonishing to the tracker of its path.

Within the framework of partnership, understanding and exchange at all spheres, the Sultanate of Oman pavilion continues to participate in Expo 2020 Dubai. It sheds light on diverse stories of sustainability starting from connecting minds to creating opportunities for the future, which are identical to the key themes of the Expo 2020 Dubai.

The striking design of the Omani pavilion, inspired by the frankincense tree (*Boswellia sacra* tree), was designed by two Omani young women — Rehab al Zakwani and Alyaa al Batashi. The external spaces surrounding the pavilion host 10 Omani frankincense trees, which were protected by the

Oman Botanic Garden in 2013 after being threatened by one of the road extensions in Hasik, in the southern part of Sultanate of Oman. These natural trees are planted in a panoramic landscape view, and they will be returned to the garden after the expo.

The Omani pavilion begins with narrating to the visitors the life of frankincense tree. The pavilion seeks to highlight four key themes, namely sustainability, fostering talents, communication and knowledge. It consists of two floors: the ground floor (the mother tree), where the visitor is at a real-life meeting with the electromechanical design of the tree, which is centred in the middle of the hall, mimicking the exact details of the natural tree and symbolising many physical, emotional and spiritual meanings as well as its various practical uses.

On the perimeter wall, a panoramic screen shows the story of Omani frankincense from Wadi Douka and its journey via the world's various civilisations through times (trade in the Arabian Peninsula, mummification in ancient Egypt, Christian prayers in the Old Testament and traditional Chinese medicine), in line with the key theme of Expo 2020 Dubai,

Connecting Minds.

On the first floor, the Growth Hall "The Forest of Sustainability", visitors walk through a virtual forest of frankincense trees made from transparent display screens used to showcase eight different sustainability stories in the Sultanate of Oman. The stories are about projects of sustainable dimension namely the Million Date Palm Plantation Project, the use of drone techniques for pollination and fish farming, the use of Internet of Things (IoT) technology to feed fish, renewable energy and wind energy project in Dhofar, sustainable cities, environmental conservation, waste management, the Oman Botanic Garden, and the marvellous and unique diversity of terrains in the Sultanate of Oman.

The first floor themed the Harvest Hall, displays the methods adopted by Sultanate of Oman in fostering talents and resources, the transfer of skills and knowledge between generations and disciplines. It also highlights new ideas and opportunities to create a vibrant society.

The first floor of the pavilion is a modern and active area with a focus laid on people through the

use of display screens that resemble frankincense crystals telling stories about Oman's knowledge-based economy, such as An Omani scholar specialising in antiquity who talks about frankincense, music, creative industries, women in the higher fields, nascent Omani companies and Sultan Qaboos academic chairs.

The first floor also hosts the Hall

of Trade, which is about a journey through time and space, starting from a display on the wall of an ancient port (Al Baleed site) for the export of frankincense till reaching the Sultanate of Oman's future vision. The hall shows activities of transporting humans, goods and information and highlighting land, sea, air transport initiatives and the ambitious large-scale

infrastructure in the country.

The second and final floor hosts the Use Hall (The Future). It houses a future interactive library of expertise and represents a spiritual and futuristic space, where visitors are treated with multi-sensory experiences starting with the future garden and conducting a live experiment on frankincense seedlings during the expo. — ONA



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WHAT DO TOURISTS WANT?

WHILE TOURIST EXPERIENCES AND EXPECTATIONS ARE LIKELY TO DIFFER FROM CITY TO CITY, THE OBSERVER TRIED TO FIND WHAT INDIVIDUAL TOURISTS GENERALLY LOOK FOR AT PLACES THEY VISIT

VINOD NAIR

[@vinot_nair](#)

International tourists are coming back to the Gulf region, which will be hosting a series of high-profile events in the current period.

Coming out of months of lockdown imposed during summer to contain the spread of Covid-19, Muscat got a boost when the Sultanate of Oman hosted the opening matches of the 2021 T20 World Cup, which were watched by over three billion television viewers in Africa, Europe and Asia.

While the neighbouring Dubai (UAE) is currently hosting the Dubai Expo, Doha (Qatar) will host the Fifa World Cup next year. With a friendly tourist regime, the Sultanate of Oman is expected to host a large chunk of visitors to these countries, apart from tourists who will be specifically coming to the Sultanate of Oman.

It may be noted that Lonely Planet figured the Sultanate of Oman among the best destinations for 2022.

While tourist experiences and expectations are likely to differ from city to city, the *Observer* tried to find what individual tourists generally look for at places they visit.

"We should always take special care of individual tourists coming alone or with families. This category needs budget hotels with decent facilities, affordable public transportation, eating joints and local guides", said Hassan, who was a tour guide licensed by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in the pre-Covid days.

According to travel search engines, the cheapest hotel rates in the Sultanate of Oman are in the range of \$15 per night.

"Taxi fares were a major concern those days, but I hope things have turned better with mobile app-based operators such as Otaxi coming of age and expanding their reach. I assume the government is working

on street food that will help visitors have quick bites at affordable prices", he said.

Small scale businesses in the tourism sector will be a good opportunity for young Omani entrepreneurs to become successful in a short period.

"We are already seeing the changes, but the authorities should be giving more licences for activities such 'bicycle for rents', paragliding on beaches, boat rides, light and sound shows at multiple tourist attractions. Places such as the Muttrah Waterfront and the Qurum beachfront in the city limits should be exploited for tourism as per the international standards", said Evan, who has invited a friend and his family for a leisure trip during Christmas.

The office of the Governorate of Muscat is working on various tourism projects to raise the level of the visitor experience.

More importantly, the office has been interacting with the youth for suggestions as it seeks to focus on sustainable projects.

While Omran has been working on plans to launch recreational activities at Muttrah Waterfront, the other authorities are launching the cable car services and improving facilities at Muttrah Fort.





■ CALL FOR JOINT GCC ACTION IN SUSTAINING SECURITY



MANAMA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Interior, took part here on Sunday in the 38th meeting of GCC ministers of interior.

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation was headed by Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior.

Dr Naif Falah al Hajraf, GCC

Secretary-General, said that the 38th meeting laid emphasis on the importance of the joint GCC action in sustaining security and facing challenges. The meeting also stressed the importance of enhancing mechanisms of cooperation in the field of cybersecurity and developing joint projects in combating crime and

bolstering collective security, said Dr Naif.

The meeting discussed a spectrum of topics, including the reports submitted from specialised security committees to the ministers of interior. It also covered the recommendations of the interior ministries' under-secretaries.

Moreover, the meeting reviewed the efforts of GCC security offices and the vital role they play, such as the GCC Criminal Information Centre to Combat Drugs in Doha, the GCC Emergency Management Centre in Kuwait, the GCC POL in Abu Dhabi and the GCC Permanent Mission to Vienna.

— ONA

We couldn't have come this far without you

FROM PAGE 1

The *Observer* is made up of a team of passionate and creative individuals who are always ready to switch tactics. The editorial and reporting teams comprise dedicated scribes who put everything into their chosen profession.

So, while we chart our future in this new world of technology, we are proud of retaining the basics of what made us journalists in the first place, the same tenets from 40 years ago when the *Observer* started.

We work round the year

on the print edition, and of course, there's no break at all when it comes to our online. Although the newspaper is our flagship product, credit for that cannot go solely to the editorial team. This is where we salute our colleagues from administrative, technical and data, production, printing, circulation, and the marketing teams.

Last, but not least, we'd like to thank our audience and supporters for making the *Observer* what it is today. We couldn't have come this far without you!

Pact to train job-seekers from Social Security families



MUSCAT: An agreement of cooperation was signed to train job-seekers from Social Security and Limited-income Families between the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Social Development, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) and Oman Education and Training Investments (OETI).

The target group will be trained and prepared to start productive industrial projects as small and medium enterprises.

The agreement aims to increase the growth of industrial indices and to promote the contribution of the industrial sector in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It also aims to prioritise future skills in the industrial sector in accordance

with Oman Vision 2040.

The agreement was signed by Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidi, the Ministry of Labour's Under-Secretary for Human Resources Development, Shaikh Rashid bin Ahmed al Shamsi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development, Qais bin Rashid al Tobi, Acting Vice-President of ASMED and Hassan

Ehssan Nassib, Chairman of OETI's Board of Directors.

The role of ASMED in this agreement involves following-up the establishment and implementation of those projects and assuring their sustainability. It will also contribute in promoting and marketing them, as well as providing guidance and technical support. — ONA

Economy to grow 5.8%

FROM PAGE 1

GRADUAL RETURN

The decline of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a gradual return to global economic activity and to an increase in total oil demand by about 6 million barrels per day during the current year compared to 2020. Demand for oil is set to rise with an estimated demand for around 4.2 million barrels per day, bringing the total global demand to 100.8 million barrels per day.

"Of course, the increase in demand led to a significant increase in oil prices from their low levels at the beginning of 2020 as a result of the pandemic and its repercussions on global economic and trade movement."

This rise in oil prices constitutes a good development for oil-exporting countries, as it reflects positively on government revenues and economic growth, especially in sectors of oil activities, but the significant rise in oil prices may also lead to higher production

costs, especially in oil-importing countries and affecting the ability of the countries to restore growth rates in general.

The rise in oil prices led to a significant improvement in the general budget, as the deficit decreased during the period from January to August 2021 by 46.3 per cent from its level during the corresponding period of 2020.

This came mainly because of an increase in total government revenues by about 13.9 per cent at the end of August of this year compared to the same period in 2020, as net oil revenues rose during that period by about 17.8 per cent, constituting around 64.3 per cent of the increase in total government revenues.

The impact of high oil prices on growth in the economy is positive and direct on the added value of the oil activities sector, and indirectly on non-oil activities through an increase in aggregate demand in other economic activities.

Oman theatre needs more audience

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

Omani Actors' Festival, a 45-minute mono-drama, has been showcasing promising talents. The event is being held at Gulf College Theatre.

Each day there are two plays staged in the evenings. Each actor has the whole stage to portray the character they want to.

It is a challenge for the performers because they have lights and props to support them. The directors and writers have already done their part.

"All the plays that have been staged so far were good. We are coming across a strong young generation of actors. You are either a good actor or you stay at home," said Aliyah al Balushi, who is preparing to present her play, 'A Lonely Woman' on Monday.

The theatre groups need a good audience, says the artist.

Aliyah and her team have been rehearsing nonstop for the festival.

For her, one actor who plays the script is written by the well-established poet and writer of the Sultanate of Oman, Abdulrazak al Rubaiee and the director is Khalifa al Harrasi.



"I have performed this play before at a different festival and I cried a lot. The script is strong. The play is about a lonely woman and her conversation with her husband, who has been killed. She continues to talk, laugh and cry. I have been living the character, and it is tough," reflected Aliyah.

The pandemic had brought theatre activities to a standstill, but theatre enthusiasts still managed to conduct workshops on Zoom. But online is not for everyone.

Aliyah pointed out, "When you are on stage, there is magic the minute you set your foot on it. With a live audience, you can feel the emotions of the audience and

even their heartbeat. The message in theatre is direct to the audience.

Unfortunately, there are not enough audience. The people who come are the ones who have a keen interest in theatre and culture. We must focus on the young school students to develop this taste for theatre. It has to be inculcated at a young age. We hope one day it will be a subject in school, and when students go on field trips, they are taken to theatres so the young generation will take it up," suggested Aliyah. Theatre can reflect at the same time convey messages on history, scientific, social and cultural subjects.

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وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة
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28/2021/ MTCIT/HQ	NDFL RENEWAL OF INFRASTRUCTURE BACKUP AND SERVERS LICENSES	14/11/2021	23/11/2021	02/12/2021	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE TENDER BOARD IN SERVICE (EXCELLENT CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

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Protesters face tear gas and bullets to oppose Sudan coup

KHARTOUM: Five protesters were killed on Saturday as huge crowds defied gunfire and tear gas in Sudan's capital Khartoum and other cities to demonstrate against a military takeover, witnesses and medics said.

The protests came two days after army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan announced a new ruling council that excludes the civilian coalition the military had been sharing power with since 2019, hardening opposition among pro-democracy groups to the October 25 coup.

In a sign authorities may be stepping up efforts to quash a campaign of planned protests and civil disobedience, security forces moved to disperse protesters as soon as they began to gather in the early afternoon.

They fired tear gas and chased demonstrators down side streets to prevent them reaching central meeting points, witnesses said.

Previously, security forces had waited until later in the day before moving in.

"People were surprised that they fired the tear gas so early," said one protester in Omdurman across the Nile from central Khartoum, adding that demonstrators



People protesting against the military coup in Sudan march during a demonstration in 'Street 60' in the east of capital Khartoum. — AFP

retreated, barricaded streets, and then reassembled.

Most protesters dispersed of their own accord around sunset, though tear gas and gunfire continued until around 8 pm in Khartoum North as security forces arrested protesters and removed their barricades, witnesses said.

Witnesses estimated the

numbers around Khartoum to be in the tens of thousands, with large crowds in other cities bringing the total nationwide to hundreds of thousands.

"The revolutionaries have nothing but peacefulness and are calling for democracy and bringing back civilian rule which was taken away by Burhan," said Mohamed Hamed, a protester in

Khartoum who held up the cases of two of the bullets he said were being used against protesters.

In Wad Madani, south-east of Khartoum, protesters chanted "Down, down with military rule," a witness said.

Protesters in other cities, including Al Gadarif and Kosti, were also met with tear gas, witnesses said. — Reuters

Tunisians protest against presidential 'coup'

TUNIS: More than 1,000 Tunisians gathered on Sunday near the country's parliament to protest a presidential power grab they have deemed a "coup"

It was the latest rally opposing President Kais Saied's July 25 decision to sack the government, suspend parliament and seize an array of powers, citing an "imminent threat" to the country.

Protesters shouted, "The people want to bring down the coup d'etat" and branded the president an "agent of colonialism", AFP correspondents reported.

Some carried signs reading "No to the intimidation of the media" and demanding "an independent judicial authority".

On September 22, Saied suspended parts of the constitution and installed rule by decree, maintaining full control of the judiciary as well as powers to sack ministers and issue laws.

He appointed a new government in October, with Najla Bouden as the North African country's first female prime minister. But he has significantly pared back the

powers of her office and will technically head the administration himself.

Saied, who was elected in late 2019, made his shock move amid a socio-economic crisis aggravated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Some of his opponents have accused him of seeking a new dictatorship, a decade after Tunisia's 2011 revolt that overthrew Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. But the president's supporters say his moves were needed after years of deadlock among political parties seen as corrupt and self-serving.

Meanwhile, protesters briefly clashed with police as they tried to remove barriers near the chamber and demanded that Saied restore parliament and normal democratic rule.

"We will not accept a new dictator... we will not back down," said Foued Ben Salem, a protester, raising Tunisia's red-and-white national flag.

Increasingly vocal opposition, along with a looming crisis in public finances, may pose a new test of how Saied and the new government he has appointed will tackle threats to their authority.

— Reuters

SPECTACULAR SHOW



Russian Knights perform during the Dubai Airshow in Dubai, UAE. — Reuters

Airbus takes off with big order on first day of Dubai Airshow

DUBAI: Airbus came out strongly at the Dubai Airshow on Sunday with a group order for 255 single-aisle A321 aircraft, marking the first major deal of its kind since the pandemic began.

The European plane-maker's announcement came shortly after its American rival Boeing said it would fulfil an order to convert 11 single-aisle 737s into cargo aircraft, and as the aviation industry slowly recovers from a Covid-induced downturn.

Airbus said the order came from Wizz Air, Frontier, Volaris and JetSMART — all from US company Indigo Partners — for a total value of more than \$33 billion, according to the latest list price published by Airbus in 2018.

The total cost of the order was not disclosed, but list rates are rarely applied to large deliveries.

Hungarian low-cost carrier



A view of the lounge interior of an Airbus ACJ320 aircraft at the 2021 Dubai Airshow. — AFP

Wizz Air will receive 102 aircraft, American Frontier Airlines will receive 91, while 39 will go to Mexico's Volaris and 23 to Chilean JetSMART.

Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury said that because the four companies fall under the same aviation-focused equity firm, it allowed for a large order and for

an attractive price, adding: "It's a give and take situation."

Deliveries are set to begin in 2025. Representatives of the embattled aviation industry flocked to the Dubai Airshow on Sunday as the sector emerges from coronavirus pandemic travel restrictions and faces pressure to reduce its impact on climate

change.

The five-day event in the United Arab Emirates is the industry's first large gathering since Covid-19 clipped its wings last year, as border closures left airports deserted and hundreds of aircraft idle.

Air traffic has since bounced back, though it was still 53 per cent lower in September compared to pre-pandemic levels.

Commenting on Sunday's deal, Indigo Partners chief Bill Franke said the company wanted "to be early in the (recovery) process".

Christian Scherer, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer and head of Airbus International, said the Indigo Partners airlines had "acted fast and decisively over the last few months to position themselves for this landmark order as the effect of the pandemic recedes and the world wants more sustainable flying". — AFP

SHORT TAKES

DAMASCUS

China donates 500,000 more vaccine doses to Syria

China donated 500,000 doses of Covid-19 vaccine to war-torn Syria, which has one of the world's lowest inoculation rates and what the UN called an alarming rise in cases. The latest shipment raises to almost two million the number of such deliveries to Syria in a week.

Less than two per cent of Syria's population have been vaccinated and cases of infection are spiking, UN under secretary-general Martin Griffiths warned last month. Damascus last week



received more than 1.3 million doses of Chinese-made vaccine Sinovac under the global Covax programme set up to try to ensure an equitable delivery of jabs. — AFP

CAIRO

Sudan bureau chief arrested after protests

Sudanese security forces raided the home of Al Jazeera's Khartoum bureau chief, El Musalmi El Kabbashi, and arrested him, the Qatar-based news channel said, a day after street protests across Sudan against a military takeover. Security forces tried to disperse the protests in the capital Khartoum and other cities using tear gas and gunfire.

The Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors, which is aligned with the protest movement, said the death toll for demonstrators



killed had risen to six.

Pro-democracy groups led by neighbourhood resistance committees are organising a campaign of civil disobedience and protests against the October 25 coup. — Reuters

DUBAI

Quakes strike southern Iran, killing at least 1

Two strong earthquakes struck southern Iran near the port of Bandar Abbas, prompting residents to flee their homes and killing at least one person, state TV reported. The quakes measured 6.3 and 6.4 magnitude, jolting the province of Hormozgan, state TV said, and the tremors were felt across Dubai.

"One person died after an electricity pole fell on him," Iranian state TV said, citing local officials. Iran is crisscrossed by major geological fault lines and



has suffered several devastating earthquakes in recent years. The European Mediterranean Seismological Centre put the magnitude of one of the quakes at 6.5 at a relatively shallow depth of 10 km. — Reuters

In brief

■ TOKYO



JAPAN'S EX-PRINCESS MAKO, NEW HUSBAND DEPART FOR LIFE IN US

Japan's ex-princess Mako, the emperor's niece, departed the country with her new husband to start a new life in the United States.

Known as Mako Komuro after giving up her royal title to marry college sweetheart Kei Komuro last month, the former royal and her husband, both 30, walked past waiting journalists at Tokyo's Haneda International Airport before boarding an ANA flight for New York.

Well-wishers waved from the terminal as the plane left the gate. Their marriage captivated Japan and ignited a public dialogue about gender roles and media coverage of the royal family. — **Reuters**

■ LONDON



MALALA FEARS TALIBAN WILL KEEP GIRLS OUT OF SCHOOL

Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai said she was concerned that the Taliban's block on girls' education in Afghanistan will not be temporary, as claimed. Yousafzai, who was shot by the Pakistani Taliban in 2012 for campaigning for girls' education, told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that "I'm afraid that this ban that they have announced right now that they're calling temporary might not actually be temporary."

A similar ban in 1996 "lasted for five years", she pointed out. After seizing power in August, the Taliban in September excluded girls from returning to secondary school while ordering boys back to class. — **AFP**

■ MELBOURNE



AUSTRALIA AIMS TO VACCINATE KIDS UNDER 12 AGAINST COVID-19

Australia, quickly becoming one of most-vaccinated nations against Covid-19, will likely start administering the shots for children under the age of 12 in January, officials said. Health Minister Greg Hunt said medical regulators are still reviewing the health and safety data for the vaccinations to be administered for children between the ages of five and 11 and are unlikely to decide this year.

"The expectation that they have set is the first part of January, hopefully early January," Hunt told the Australian Broadcast Corp's Insiders programme. — **Reuters**

Philippine voters brace for more drama

MANILA: Philippine voters were bracing on Sunday for more drama in a presidential race that already features a "Bong" vs "Bong-bong" match-up and a potential 11th-hour challenge by President Rodrigo Duterte against his own daughter for the No. 2 post.

The jockeying before Monday's registration deadline bolsters the view that the 2022 election will be dominated by powerful family dynasties rather than reforms.

Senator Christopher "Bong" Go, a Duterte loyalist, registered on Saturday to run for president after withdrawing from the vice presidential race, pitting himself against rivals including Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr, son of the late dictator.

Sara Duterte-Carpio, who had been expected to run to succeed her father - who is barred by the constitution from seeking re-election - instead registered for vice president.

Boxing hero Manny Pacquiao, a senator and the only man to hold world titles in eight different divisions, is running for president in what may be his toughest fight yet, promising to battle poverty and corruption.

Duterte's communication secretary, Martin Andanar, said on Saturday the 76-year old leader, who only last month promised to



Christopher 'Bong' Go



Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr

retire from politics, would throw his hat in the vice presidential ring and run against his daughter.

Duterte said on Sunday he would make known his plans for the 2022 election "in a matter of hours" and that he was fully behind long-time aide Go - who for his part said he did not want to run against the president's daughter.

Go, widely seen as the gatekeeper to the president, could benefit from the president's pop-



Demonstrators hold placards during a protest following the vice presidential bid of Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte, daughter of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, for the 2022 national elections, in Quezon City, Metro Manila. — **Reuters**

PRESIDENTIAL RACE

ularity. Marcos said he wanted Duterte-Carpio, the popular mayor of Davao, to run on his ticket. She has yet to respond.

A Marcos and Duterte-Carpio ticket is a team to watch out for as both have performed relatively well in opinion surveys, political analysts say.

"Marcos is a very strong candidate from all indications," Anto-

nio La Vina, professor of law and politics at the Ateneo de Manila University, said.

Duterte-Carpio said on Facebook her decision to seek the No. 2 post, instead of the presidency, was her way to meet her supporters half-way.

If the president does run for vice president with Go, they could take votes away from his

daughter's ticket, having some impact on Marcos's bid, La Vina said.

Marcos, whose presidential candidacy has stirred anger among victims of his father's brutal era of martial law, is facing a disqualification case.

President Duterte, in an interview with a YouTube vlogger, said he had been surprised by his daughter's election plans, as she had been leading in the polls for president. — **Reuters**

Thai protesters call for reforms after court ruling

BANGKOK: Hundreds of protesters rallied in Bangkok on Sunday against a decision by a top court that ruled calling for royal reforms amounted to a bid to overthrow Thailand's ultra-powerful monarchy.

The Constitutional Court — which critics have long said is politicised — announced on Wednesday that three prominent protest leaders had made speeches that "aim to overthrow the constitutional monarchy".

While the court's decision does not result in criminal penalties for the protest leaders, observers say the ruling could shrink an already-narrow space for activists campaigning for reform of the monarchy.

Defying a ban on gatherings,



Police block demonstrators during a protest against the amendment of the lese majeste law, in Bangkok. — **Reuters**

hundreds of protesters amassed in Bangkok's main shopping district to rail against the decision, holding signs that said they do not want an absolute monarchy. "We are not overthrowing

this country. The reform is to make it better," shouted protest leader Thatchapong Kaedam, as demonstrators waved placards that said "reform does not equal overthrow". — **AFP**

CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATED



Congress party workers shower petals over a portrait of first India's Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the occasion of his 132nd birth anniversary in Amritsar, India. — **AFP**

Trash-tackling brothers win children's prize

THE HAGUE: Two teenage brothers from India urged world leaders to act against climate change after winning a prestigious global children's award on Saturday for tackling pollution from household waste in New Delhi.

Vihaan and Nav Agarwal, aged 17 and 14, received the 2021 KidsRights International Children's Peace Prize for developing an initiative to segregate recyclables and organise pickups for trash from thousands of homes.

The award cited their "courage and commitment to tackling pollution in their home city", ranked recently as the worst in the world for air quality due to a toxic mix caused partly by the burning of rubbish.

New Delhi authorities on Saturday announced a one-week closure of schools and said they would consider a "pollution lockdown" to protect citizens from toxic smog.

The siblings follow in the footsteps of previous winners including environmental activist Greta Thunberg and Nobel laureate and Pakistani education campaigner Malala Yousafzai.

"Our message would be you guys need to act. So many children all around the world are acting," Vihaan said in a remote interview when asked what he would say to leaders at the COP26 climate talks reaching their climax in Glasgow this weekend.

"Another message would be: don't get in our way."

Nav added: "To all the young people... you should never fear

"To all the young people... you should never fear climate change. You just have to take that one step, and when you do it's just amazing the amount of change you as a one person can actually create"

NAV AGARWAL

Winner of global children's award

climate change. You just have to take that one step, and when you do it's just amazing the amount of change you as a one person can actually create."

Indian Nobel Peace laureate Kailash Satyarthi, a children's rights activist who won the 2014 Nobel jointly with Malala, presented the brothers with the prize run by the Dutch-based KidsRights foundation at a ceremony in The Hague on Saturday.

The brothers said that growing up in Delhi affected the asthmatic Vihaan's health, and curtailed the boys' ability to play outdoors and indulge their love of nature.

The spark of inspiration for their "One Step Greener" initiative came after the collapse of the Ghazipur landfill site in 2017, which killed two people and led to a spike in pollution.

One third of Delhi's air pollution is caused by burning waste in landfill sites. — **AFP**

UN climate agreement clinched after late drama over coal

GLASGOW: UN climate talks ended on Saturday with a deal that for the first time targeted fossil fuels as the key driver of global warming, even as coal-reliant countries lobbied last-minute objections.

While the agreement won applause for keeping alive the hope of capping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius, many of the nearly 200 national delegations wished they'd come away with more.

"If it's a good negotiation, all the parties are uncomfortable", US climate envoy John Kerry said in the final meeting to approve the Glasgow Climate Pact. "And this has been, I think, a good negotiation."

The two-week conference in Scotland delivered a major win in resolving the rules around carbon markets, but it did little to assuage vulnerable countries' concerns about long-promised climate financing from rich nations.

The British COP26 President, Alok Sharma, was visibly emotional before banging down his gavel to signal there were no vetoes to the pact, after the talks had extended overtime — and overnight — into Saturday.

There was last-minute drama as India, backed by China and other coal-dependent developing nations, rejected a clause calling for the "phase out" of coal-fired power. After a huddle between the envoys from China, India, the United States and European Union, the clause was hurriedly



Britain's President for COP26 Alok Sharma during the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow. — AFP

New draft retains call for reduced fossil fuel subsidies as nations at odds over how to keep 1.5°C goal alive

amended to ask countries to "phase down" their coal use.

India's Environment and Climate Minister, Bhupender Yadav, said the revision reflected the "national circumstances of emerging economies."

"We are becoming the voice of the developing countries", he said, saying the pact had "singled out" coal but kept quiet about oil and natural gas.

"We made our effort to make a consensus that is reasonable for developing countries and reasonable for climate justice", he said, alluding to the fact that rich nations historically have emitted the

largest share of greenhouse gases.

The single-word change was met with dismay by both rich countries in Europe and small island nations along with others still developing.

"We believe we have been sidelined in a non-transparent and non-inclusive process", Mexico's envoy Camila Isabel Zepeda Lizama said.

"We all have remaining concerns but were told we could not reopen the text... while others can still ask to water down their promises."

But Mexico and others said they would let the revised agreement stand.

"The approved texts are a compromise", said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. "They reflect the interests, the conditions, the contradictions and the state of political will in the world today."

— Reuters

Thunberg denounces COP26 deal



PARIS: UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned of an impending "climate catastrophe", while environmental campaigner Greta Thunberg dismissed Saturday's COP26 climate conference deal as "blah, blah, blah". And even those who welcomed the deal in Glasgow said a huge amount of work remained to be done.

Thunberg, arguably the world's best known environmental campaigner, was more blunt in her assessment.

"The #COP26 is over," she tweeted. "Here's a brief summary: Blah, blah, blah. "But the real work continues outside these halls. And we will never give up, ever." During the conference, Thunberg and other activists had denounced the way it was playing out, arguing that world leaders had failed to match their words with real action.

— AFP



A military vehicle enters the Guayas 1 prison in Guayaquil, Ecuador. — AFP

New prison riot in Ecuador leaves 68 dead

GUAYAQUIL, Ecuador: Prison inmates from rival gangs in Ecuador fought each other with guns, explosives and blades in a blood-bath that left at least 68 dead in the same prison where a riot in September claimed 119 lives, officials said on Saturday.

Authorities said late on Saturday they had regained control of the prison in Guayaquil for a second time in as many days after President Guillermo Lasso's spokesman said fighting had again broken out earlier in the day between inmates from rival gangs tied to drug trafficking rings.

In the initial riot that began on Friday night prisoners fought with "savagery", said Pablo Arosemena, Governor of the province of Guayas where the prison is located.

The riot began around 7:00 pm on Friday when

prisoners tried to enter Block 2 of the jail where their rivals were held, firing gunshots, detonating explosives and swinging machetes and prompting police to move in.

At least 68 prisoners were killed and another 25 were wounded, according to a statement which the Ecuador Prosecutor's Office posted on Twitter.

In the second outbreak of fighting on Saturday, inmates from two other blocks attacked each other, said presidential spokesman Carlos Jijon.

He confirmed a little while later that police had pushed through to the prison's interior and that the situation was "under control." Officials said the violence started when one of the gangs inside the prison, the Tiguerones, was left without its leader because he was released after serving part of his sentence for stealing auto parts. — AFP

Austria orders lockdown for those not vaccinated against Covid

VIENNA: Austria is placing millions of people not fully vaccinated against the coronavirus in lockdown as of Monday to deal with a surge in infections to record levels, Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg said on Sunday.

Europe has become the epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic again, prompting some governments to consider re-imposing unpopular lockdowns.

Roughly 65 per cent of Austria's population is fully vaccinated against Covid-19, which is one of the lowest rates in western Europe. Many Austrians are sceptical about vaccines, a view encouraged by the far-right Freedom Party, the third biggest in parliament.

While the Netherlands is dealing with its surge in infections by imposing a partial lockdown



A demonstrator during an anti-vaccination protest at the Ballhausplatz in Vienna. — AFP

that applies to all, Austria's conservative-led government says it wants to avoid imposing further restrictions on those who are fully vaccinated.

"We must raise the vaccination rate. It is shamefully low", Schallenberg told a news conference announcing the new measure after a video call with the governors of Austria's nine provinces.

Those aged 12 and under will be exempt from the lockdown, under which the unvaccinated can only leave their homes for a limited number of reasons like going to work or shopping for essentials, Health Minister Wolfgang Mueckstein told the news conference, adding that it would initially last 10 days.

Many officials, including within

Schallenberg's conservative party and the police, have expressed doubts such a lockdown can be properly enforced since it applies to only part of the population. Schallenberg and Interior Minister Karl Nehammer said, however, that there will be thorough checks by the police.

The Chancellor said the decision to impose a lockdown for the unvaccinated from Monday was "not taken light-heartedly."

"With the vaccination rates as they are, we will stay stuck in a vicious cycle" of coronavirus infections, he said. The "shamefully low" uptake in vaccination had to be forced upwards, he said.

The lockdown measures will be in force for an initial period of 10 days, and would affect some 2 million people. — AFP/dpa

SHORT TAKES

BUENOS AIRES

Argentines vote in crunch midterms

Argentines headed out to vote on Sunday in midterm elections that will establish the power balance in Congress, with the ruling Peronist party battling to avoid damaging losses that could erase its majority in the Senate held for almost 40 years. The vote sees half the seats in the lower Chamber of Deputies up for grabs and a third in the Senate, with voters focused on rampant inflation running above 50 per cent and high poverty levels.

"I'm here to vote with the



hope that everything will change. We are tired", said Mirta Laria, 62, a housewife in Buenos Aires. "Everyday we are a bit worse off and the sad thing is that our children only see a way out for their life abroad."

WARSAW

Belarus, EU discuss migrant crisis on Polish border

A group of about 50 migrants caught up in the border stand-off between Poland and Belarus managed to push through a barrier and were in Poland several hours before being apprehended, according to Polish police.

The incident happened late on Saturday near the village of Dubicze Cerkiewne. Police initially said on Sunday that they had rounded up 22 Iraqi nationals, but now say they have recaptured all remaining



migrants who crossed the border. The group was taken straight back to the Belarus border.

Critics say immediate pushbacks of asylum seekers violate European human rights law.

BERLIN

German coronavirus case count passes 5m mark

The cumulative case count of coronavirus infections in Germany has now passed the 5 million mark, according to official figures. The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) for infectious diseases reported 33,498 new cases on Sunday, bringing the national total to 5,021,469 since the pandemic first arrived in Germany.

Additionally, the seven-day incidence rate per 100,000 people hit 289.0, marking yet another record.



So far, 97,672 have died after catching the virus in Germany. Political and health officials are warning Germans that they could be facing harsh weeks ahead in light of the explosion of new cases.

Sisi looks to new desert capital to cement legacy

MONA SALEM

An opulent presidential palace, a brand new parliament, a regal opera house and spacious parks are all part of the vision for an ambitious new administrative capital rising up out of the Egyptian desert.

As far as the eye can see, building sites dot the horizon heralding the arrival of this crown jewel of President Abdel Fattah al Sisi's grand urban plans. About 50 km east of the north African country's 1,000-year-old capital, Cairo, construction workers are racing to finish the project.

It had been set to be unveiled on June 30 — the date marking the anniversary of 2013 mass protests. But the launch was postponed because of the Covid pandemic that led to a downturn in the market.

After a series of false starts, Sisi this month issued a directive for civil servants to relocate to the new capital in December for a "six-month trial period".

The city is forecast to cost around \$45 billion, is roughly the size of Singapore, and has been touted as a solution to overpopulation in the sprawling metropolis of Cairo, home to more than 20 million people.

After being first elected in 2014, Sisi anointed the new capital as "the birth of a new state... and republic".

Some believe, however, the new city, just known officially as the New Administrative capital, will not compete with Cairo in the same way as Brazil's new capital Brasilia and even risks eventually being swallowed up by its huge neighbour.

"The new capital for me is a mystery," said Galila El-Kadi, an urban planning professor and director of the Marseille-based Research Institute for Development.

Sisi has staked his legacy on massive infrastructure projects, and ground has also been broken in other new cities including on the Mediterranean Sea at El Alamein, in the fertile Delta near Mansoura and in the south near Aswan. — AFP

The new capital for me is a mystery. It's already on the edge of Cairo without anyone moving there yet and within a few years it will expand and fuse into Cairo. This will only increase problems of managing human density of such magnitude

GALILA EL KADI
Urban planning professor



MAKING A LIVING!

A Syrian displaced from the city of Maarat al Numan in the southern countryside of the Idlib province, recycles used tyres to be transformed into baskets, in the northwestern city of Idlib, on Sunday. — AFP

A personal car or public transport?



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
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With the ongoing increase of population all over the world, transportation is becoming a real troubling issue in many countries indeed. As it is one of the key necessities in everybody's daily life, transportation requires a constant attention of improvement from the authorities concerned in every nation. Everybody is in need of transportation, regardless of its kind. Nowadays, owning a car is becoming an urgent necessity more than just being a complement to other life necessities. Most people cannot bear their life without having a car of their own.

On the local front, many start owning a car immediately after completing secondary school. The car will be the first thing they think about as they join a college, a university or a job. Can you imagine yourself without having your own car at least for a day? Undoubtedly, you would feel that your life is unbalanced as there is something important missing. Even if you are living with your family, you need to have a personal car to manage daily tasks. Today, a car is regarded a way of reaching all other things in life; a fact that is undeniable indeed!

As a country with no widely covered public transport system, we have no

choice, but to have has his own car. Hence, in a family of 10 people, you might need to have at least five to seven cars if not one for each! Other than that, in some families, you can see people having more than one car, so they end up having more cars than the number of family members. This is in worst-case scenario, which is very obvious unfortunately. Just imagine if this happens in three houses within a neighbourhood of twenty to thirty houses.

If it happens, the place will end up full of cars parked in every corner of the road and front yards of the houses. It is really unbelievable and intolerable scene! However, it is really happening in some parts of the country! In fact, having a car is being more important than anything else in people's life. Due to the unreliability of the public transport system in the country, people are forced to use their own cars wherever they want to go. They cannot rely on the irregular public buses, and taxis, which are not reliable most of the time.

For all these reasons, having a personal car is a most appropriate option for everyone here. Public transport should always be very convenient and consistent. We need a reliable daily transportation

system that could serve citizens, residents and tourists alike. Accordingly, people prefer to use their own cars. All they need an integrated network of bus services for instance.

In a bid to improve the public transport, a proper system shall be introduced with a bus service for example. A dedicated road for such service needs to be designated for city buses perhaps to serve mainly those commuting to office from different parts of the city. This new service can certainly make commuting easier for people instead of using their personal cars.

Further, similar service could be launched to serve commuters and people in other parts of the country. Thousands of people travel daily from the interiors to the capital and they need such service to make their daily commuting safe and comfortable.

Having a reliable public transport system like in other developed countries is undoubtedly everyone's dream. If this dream comes true in future, a lot of public and social issues would be solved. The increasing number of car accidents and frustrating traffic jams are among the main issues that people face every day on their way to office and back home.

A Casablanca for academic conservatives...



James K Galbraith

THE AUTHOR IS A TRUSTEE OF ECONOMISTS FOR PEACE AND SECURITY, HOLDS THE LLOYD M BENTSEN, JR CHAIR AT THE LBJ SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

Pity the academic conservative. Having enjoyed tenure at Harvard University, the London School of Economics, and New York University, and now a steady gig at Stanford's Hoover Institution, the historian Niall Ferguson now plays the victim. He will soon decamp, he lets us imagine, to "a new kind of university — the University of Austin."

What is the very first thing that Ferguson highlights about UATX? That its founders are "diverse." To ensure that there is no mistake about the meaning of this word, he follows up: "In 1975, universities everywhere were still predominantly white, male, and middle-class. The process whereby a college education became more widely available — to women, to the working class, to racial minorities — has been

slow and remains incomplete."

So that is the big problem that mainstream, liberal, conservative-oppressing American universities have been ignoring! It's great that Ferguson plans to help us out. How will UATX achieve diversity? According to Ferguson, admissions will be strictly by competitive examination, to avoid the "corrupt racket" of college admissions in other places nowadays. But what will the competitive examination examine? He does not say.

Driving the good conservative from the halls are the malign forces of wokeness and cancel culture. Citing a study by the Center for the Study of Partisanship and Ideology, Ferguson writes that "40 per cent of American social sciences and humanities professors under the

age of 40 (support) at least one of four hypothetical dismissal campaigns," and for PhD students under 40, it's even worse (55 per cent). As the nonpartisan CSPI states in its mission statement, "In the last decade, white liberals in America have shifted far to the left on issues of race and gender."

That sounds pretty bad. But read the actual study and you will find that just one of the four (actually, five, but who's counting?) hypothetical campaigns produces the result that Ferguson cites. The other four — dealing with "traditional parenthood," immigration, diversity, and empire — generated very minor adverse reactions. The one that provoked 43 per cent of the 124 young PhDs sampled in the US and Canada was a hypothetical about

a researcher finding that "having a higher share of women and ethnic minorities in organisations correlates with reduced organisational performance." The long history of studies trying to show the innate superiority of white men over other groups.

Another terrible problem with top-ranked US liberal arts colleges, Ferguson tells us, is that the professors "with known political affiliations" are "overwhelmingly Democratic." Apart from the military academies, Republicans are to be found in greater numbers only in lower-ranked institutions.

Now, Ferguson does not suggest that there is anything wrong with the rankings. Instead, he takes this as evidence that better institutions discriminate against conservatives. But if the

rankings are accurate, couldn't that correlation reflect an actual relationship between relatively liberal politics and good liberal arts teaching? Just a thought.

The next great thing about UATX is that it will pay very close attention to its donors. According to Ferguson, regular universities do not do this. As a result, "the capitalist class appears strangely unaware of the anti-capitalist uses to which its money is often put."

A great virtue of many American capitalists, to judge by the ones I've dealt with, is that they make donations in good faith and then stay politely informed without complaining. What UATX is signalling is that it will be for active donors who want to run the place.

Copy right: Project Syndicate 2021

sport



OMAN NATIONAL SPORTING TEAMS TO PARTICIPATE IN THREE MAJOR EVENTS IN 2022

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Sultanate of Oman national sporting teams will attend three major sporting championship in 2022. The number of the domestic sporting teams which will represent the Sultanate of Oman in these external championships will be after gaining an approval from the planning and follow up committee at the Oman Olympic Committee (OOC).

The committee will receive the preparatory plans of the national

teams ahead of the event. Then, the committee will review the warm up plans to ensure the attendance of the teams should meet the minimum criteria for an effective presence in the major abroad events.

The first participation will be at the GCC Sports Games in Kuwait which will take place during January 9 to 19 in Kuwait city. The championship will feature the following sports including football, handball, volleyball, basketball, swimming, athletics, karate, judo, fencing, shooting,

The committee will receive the preparatory plans of the national teams ahead of the event. Then, the committee will review the warm up plans to ensure the attendance of the teams should meet the minimum criteria for an effective presence in the major abroad events

tennis, cycling, ice hockey, table tennis, and e-Sports.

The following event will be the 5th edition of 2022 Islamic Solidarity Games which is scheduled to be held from 9 to 18 August 2022 at Konya city in Turkey under the aegis of Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF).

It will be the first time in history that the event will be organised by the Turkish Olympic Committee. The Islamic Solidarity Games will witness many sporting including: Diving, Swimming, Archery,

Athletics, Cycling, Gymnastics, Shooting, Fencing, Judo, Karate, Kickboxing, Taekwondo, Wrestling, Basketball, Field hockey, Football, Handball, Volleyball, Table tennis, Tennis and Weightlifting.

The 19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022 is the next major event for the sporting national teams. The 2022 Asian Games will take place during September 10 to 25.

The fourth event is Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games (AIMAG) in Thailand which will

be postponed to 2023 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The previous duration of the championship is supposed to take place during from 10th to 19th March 2022 but the newly dates are pushed to November 17 and 26 in 2023.

The Sultanate of Oman national sporting teams will look for a good show in the above mentioned championships. All the national athletes who will attend in the events will eye for raising the flag of the Sultanate of Oman high and being in the podium.

Badosa beats Sakkari to move into WTA Finals semis

MUSCAT: Spain's Paula Badosa ground out a 7-6(7-4), 6-4 victory over Maria Sakkari at the WTA Finals in Guadalajara, Mexico on Saturday and advanced to the semi-finals with two wins from two matches in Group Chichen Itza after Aryna Sabalenka beat Iga Swiatek.

Facing one of the WTA Tour's great battlers, the seventh-seeded Badosa showed she can also play with grit during a two-hour, four-minute slugfest in the Mexican heat, stretching her winning streak to eight matches.

Badosa blasted 10 aces past her Greek opponent and kept her under pressure, converting three of 12 break points. Sakkari could not consistently find the mark,

committing 49 unforced errors compared to just 22 from Badosa.

"I suffered but I knew I was going to suffer against a player like Maria, she is an amazing fighter," said Badosa, who will celebrate her 24th birthday on Monday.

"I think the key was to fight as well, I'm the same as her I am a competitor, I like to compete.

"I had to stay very aggressive but here it is tough because of the altitude. I stayed aggressive and focused and fighting a lot and I think that was the game plan."

Sakkari underlined her warrior reputation, clawing her way back from 5-2 down in the first set to force it to a tiebreak.

But the fourth seed quickly lost the momentum when Badosa



Spain's Paula Badosa celebrates after winning a set. – AFP

roared in front 4-0 on her way to claiming the breaker 7-4.

Badosa kept up the pressure in the second, securing the early break to jump in front 2-1.

A reeling Sakkari had to dig deep to keep from falling into an



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka reacts as she wins a set against Poland's Iga Swiatek. – AFP

even bigger hole, fighting off six break points before holding serve at 3-2.

Sakkari finally got the break she needed to level at 4-4 but Badosa immediately broke back, then served out the match, clinching

the victory on her third match point with a backhand winner.

SABALENKA PUSHED BY SWIATEK

Badosa's victory did not guarantee a semi-final spot but she advanced as the group winner after top seed Sabalenka fought back from a set down to beat Swiatek 2-6 6-2 7-5 later on Saturday.

Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, started well and broke twice in the opening set as the Belarusian struggled with her first serve.

But Sabalenka stormed back into the contest in the second set and was spurred on by a raucous crowd as she found her range on

serve and won five straight games, saving three break points in the final game to take it to a decider.

The two were locked at 5-5 in the third when Sabalenka broke Swiatek and then served out to eliminate the Polish 20-year-old.

"Guys, you're just amazing, I have never felt that good on court, I've never felt this support from the crowd," Sabalenka said in a post-match interview as the crowd cheered her on.

"I honestly think that this win is because of you. You gave me this energy, the motivation to keep fighting and I love you guys."

The final group match between Sabalenka and Sakkari on Monday will decide the second semi-finalist from the group. — Reuters

RAMPANT AUSTRALIA CLINCH FIRST EVER T20 WORLD CUP TITLE

MARSH (77, 50B, 6X4, 4X6) AND WARNER (53, 38B, 4X4, 3X6)

CAME UP WITH CRUCIAL KNOCKS FOR THE AUSTRALIANS IN A
HIGH-PRESSURE WORLD CUP FINAL AFTER NEW ZEALAND
HAD PILED UP A COMPETITIVE 172/4 IN 20 OVERS

HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, NOV 14

Scintillating batting performances from Mitchell Marsh and David Warner helped Australia outplay New Zealand by eight wickets and clinch their first ever ICC T20 World Cup title, in Dubai on Sunday.

Marsh (77, 50b, 6x4, 4x6) and Warner (53, 38b, 4x4, 3x6) came up with crucial knocks for the Australians in a high-pressure World Cup final after New Zealand had piled up a competitive 172/4 in 20 overs.

Kane Williamson's 85 was the highlight of the New Zealand batting but otherwise it was an Australian show all the way.

AUSSIIES DOMINATE

Australia lost the wicket of skipper Aaron Finch pretty early in their chase as Trent Boult snuffed him out through a catch by Daryl Mitchell.

But David Warner and Mitchell Marsh kept the momentum going and the latter was aggressive with his intent. Marsh was going at a strike rate of 200 plus as he smashed two sixes and two boundaries with a score of 27 in the eighth over.

Warner also got a move on and went after Ish Sodhi in the ninth over as he carted him for two boundaries and a six. At 82/1 after 10 overs, Australia were going at a 8 plus run rate and with nine wickets in hand were certainly oncourse. Marsh took on Neesham in the 11th over as he smashed a six in the 11th over.

New Zealand had a glimmer of hope in the 13th over when Boult sent Warner packing getting him clean bowled for a well-made 53.

But Marsh was unstoppable as he brought up the fastest ever fifty in T20 World Cup finals and was rampaging the Aussies.

To add salt to their wounds, Marsh's heave to the mid-wicket fence fell just short of Daryl Mitchell in the 15th



Australia's Mitchell Marsh plays a shot during the ICC T20 World Cup final match against New Zealand at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai. — AFP

over but Australia were well and truly on their way.

KANE RESCUES NZ

New Zealand really struggled to get the momentum going in the powerplay overs as the Australians controlled proceedings tightly. Josh Hazlewood was really on the ball as he got the wicket of Daryl Mitchell early when the batsman was caught behind by wicket-keeper Matthew Wade.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson looked to rebuild the innings in the company of Martin Guptill but the going was slow as Hazlewood, Zampa and Co had dried up the runs.

However, after the 10th over, Williamson got the scoreboard ticking at a fast clip as he cracked three boundaries in the 11th over off Mitchell Starc.

Zampa struck soon after as he got the back of Martin Guptill who was caught at deep mid-wicket by Marcus Stoinis. Williamson was the saving grace as he kept New Zealand in the hunt for a competitive score as he slammed two consecutive sixes off Glenn Maxwell in the 13th over.

Glenn Phillips took Zampa to the cleaners in the 15th over as he blasted a six and a four to give added momentum and direction to the innings.

Williamson then cut loose in the 16th over when he absolutely went berserk with a six and four boundaries that fetched New Zealand an invaluable 22 runs in the over.

It was goldddust for the Kiwis as they looked to finish off with a bang and give Australia a stiff chase.

Phillips was out to Hazlewood in the 18th over when he went for a heave on the leg side and was caught by Maxwell. Williamson departed in the same over when he holed out to long off after a crucial 85-run knock.

New Zealand eventually reached a healthy and competitive 172/4 in 20 overs.



All set for 49er, 49erFX and Nacra 17 World Championships in Mussanah

MUSCAT: Oman Sail is preparing to welcome a 148-strong fleet representing 29 countries when the 2021 49er, 49erFX and Nacra the World Championships gets under way in Mussanah on November 16. Being held in Asia for the first time in event history, the regatta is the first global sailing event after the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and the start of the campaign to qualify for the Paris 2024 Games.

The championship will run from 16–21 November 2021 at the Barcelo Mussanah Resort, adding to Oman's reputation as a world-class host and premier sailing nation. The fleet includes Olympians, promising young sailors, high-performance doubles sailors and members of Oman's national team, all looking to start their 2024 Olympic campaign in

good form.

Amongst the Nacra 17 fleet are 2019 World Champions, Maelle Frascari and Vittorio Bissaro (ITA) and 2021 silver medallists John Gimson and Anna Burnet (GBR). The 49erFX class will see gold medallists Martine Grael and Kahena Kunze (BRA) and European champions Emma Siewers and Odile van Aanholt (NED) taking part, whereas in 49er class, Olympians Łukasz Przybytek and Paweł Kolodźinski (POL), Benjamin Bildstein and David Hussl (AUT), and former world number 1 James Peters and Fynn Sterritt (GBR) will be competing.

Ben Remocker, 49er Class Manager, said, "In this shortened cycle ahead of the Paris 2024 Games, every regatta is important. With such a strong and varied

fleet, the competition should be fierce throughout the 49er week. Oman is an ideal host venue, and a great choice for the first 49er, 49erFX and Nacra the World Championships to be held within Asia. On behalf of the Class, I wish all of the competitors the very best of luck as they take the first steps on the road to Paris 2024."

Dr Khamis al Jabri, Oman Sail CEO, said, "Hosting the 2021 49er, 49erFX, and Nacra 17 World Championships is a great honour for Oman Sail and the Sultanate of Oman. We look forward to welcoming the sailors, coaches and supporters to Mussanah for what promises to be an excellent display of competitive sailing across all classes. The Sultanate of Oman has become the focus of sailing during the winter season and the competitors can

look forward to ideal conditions, gentle breezes and the world-class facilities that have become synonymous with sport in this country."

He added, "Hosting high profile events such as this improves our standing within international sailing and provides an opportunity for local businesses to offer an authentic experience to visiting sailors while also delivering positive economic benefits to the community. It is our hope that the visiting sailors take this opportunity to explore the Sultanate of Oman and get to know this wonderful country."

As with past championships, Oman Sail and the 49er and Nacra 17 Class will focus on the environment by minimising waste, promoting recycling and aiming to leave the sea in a better

condition than before the regatta. The Championship also offers an immersive fan experience, which includes live broadcast of the event and in-depth social media coverage and analysis. An event village on site will offer local and international cuisine and full cultural activities for families in line with the latest social distancing and health guidance from the Ministry of Health.

The event is supported by national carrier Oman Air, OQ and the Barcelo Mussanah Resort as official partners, and Be'ah as environmental supporter. The National Mineral Water Company Salsabeel Water provided all essential water supplies for the event while the Royal Navy of Oman provided medical support throughout.

Alongside the 2021 49er, 49er FX

& Nacra 17 World Championships, Oman Sail is also holding the Oman Sail Festival in cities across the Sultanate of Oman. The next events kick off at the Silver Jubilee Garden in Suhar from November 12-13, 2021 before heading to Musandam from November 16-20, 2021. At each location there will be opportunities to try sailing and windsurfing for free and take part in a beach clean-up to care for the local environment. The festival will also hold events at Kalbuh in Muscat from November 26-27, 2021, Sur from December 3-4, 2021, Hawana Salalah from January 6-8, 2022 and Duqm from January 11-15, 2022. For more information and to pre-register for festival events, please visit www.omansail.com/sailing-festival-activities or search #SailWithUs on social media.

OC announces squad for CWC League 2 Series in Namibia

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket today announced that it is geared for the 9th Round of the Cricket World Cup (CWC) League 2 Championships to be hosted in Namibia from November 26 to December 6, 2021.

Oman Cricket has announced the Squad for the Namibia tour, with Zeeshan Maqsood leading the team. The Oman Cricket Team left for the tour on November 14, 2021. The League is the qualification pathway tournament towards 2023 ICC Cricket World Cup in India.

Sultanate of Oman, UAE and Namibia will play a 50-over tri-series — in a round-robin group stage format, each pitted against the other twice. Oman is currently at the top of the points table, having played 18 games already in the League 2 competition.

The Oman squad for the CWC League 2 series includes: Zeeshan



Oman Cricket – Namibia tour of Oman

Maqsood (Captain), Jatinder Singh, Khawar Ali, Aqib Ilyas, Mohammad Nadeem, Ayaan Khan, Suraj Kumar, Sandeep Goud, Nester Dhamba, Kaleemullah, Bilal Khan, Naseem Khushi, Fayyaz Butt and Kashyap Prajapati; Support Staff — Duleep Mendis, Head Coach; Mazhar Khan, Assistant Coach; Zeeshan, Analyst; Evert, Trainer; Sean, Physio; Avishkar Salvi, Expert Coach and Venkatpathy Raju, Expert Coach.

SCHEDULE OF MATCHES FOR OMAN IN NAMIBIA:
Oman vs Namibia - November 26, 2021
Oman vs Namibia - November 27, 2021
Oman vs UAE - November 29, 2021
Oman vs UAE - December 2, 2021
Oman vs Namibia - December 4, 2021
Oman vs UAE - December 6, 2021
The schedule includes two pending matches of Oman against Namibia and UAE which were postponed in the last series due to the demise of Late Kanaksi Khimji, former President of Oman Cricket.

MoCSY to hold the secretaries general forum today

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by Leadership Preparation Center, will organise Secretaries General workshop on Monday.

As many as 35 participants will take part in the event which will last for two days. Different topics and sessions will be featured during the forum including the best practices in the relationship of clubs with society, the future roles and initiatives for the clubs in civil society life in accordance with Oman Vision 2040 and appropriate suggestions.

The inauguration ceremony of the forum will be held under the auspices of Khalifa bin Saif al Esaai, Adviser of sporting bodies in the Office



Khalifa al Esaai

of the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth in presence of officials in the ministry and clubs representatives.

The two days event will highlight the main challenges and obstacles that was faced by the domestic clubs and the sporting directorates in different governorates in the Sultanate of Oman with the local community and find

the possible solutions and recommendations for the development.

It is noteworthy that the forum aims to exchange experiences and pioneering experiences among the participants. Also, the event will aim for achieving more harmony, acquaintance and rapprochement between the secretaries and provide the appropriate environment for direct coordination and continuous communication between the various sports associations regarding the development of sports in the Sultanate of Oman.

Furthermore, developing appropriate strategies to serve the public interest and to enhance the work of the associations, clubs and sports committees.

The fund launches with commitments from the country's largest investors, including Oman Information and Communications Technology Group (part of the sovereign fund of Oman), Ominvest and several prominent family offices.

LuLu expands further in Oman

MUSCAT: LuLu Hypermarket Oman announced the opening of its latest store in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali in the South Al Sharqiyah Governorate yesterday. The new store was inaugurated by Shaikh Nayef bin Hamoud bin Hamad al Maamari, Deputy Wali of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, in the presence of Faisal bin Mohammed al Said, Yusuff Ali MA, Chairman and Managing Director, LuLu Group International and the Senior Management of LuLu Oman.

The new store will further strengthen the group's presence in the country and will offer customers a new level of standard in price, convenience, comfort, quality in-store service levels and above all, a new shopping experience. The new branch features state-of-the-art facilities, elegant interiors, well-planned retail floor layout, ample aisle space, extensively laid out counters and liberal parking space.

Yusuff Ali MA said, "We are happy to launch our 28th store in the Sultanate of Oman in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. The opening of the new hypermarket is in line with our ambitious plans to rapidly expand our footprint in the country and a reflection of our commitment towards the local community.

Currently we have 3,200 Omanis employed across various departments including IT, Accounts, Admin and front office. We are one of the largest employer of Omani nationals in the private sector. As part of our expansion plan, we are planning to launch more stores across the Sultanate in the coming months.



The country's robust economy and investor-friendly policies have always been conducive for us to firmly establish our presence here. The government has been readily supporting us in all our ventures to date and helping us contribute to the economic and social development of the country."

The hypermarket has 130,000 square feet of retail space and is positioned as an ideal spot for essential and lifestyle shopping. It has dedicated in-store sections for fresh and frozen food, fruits and vegetables, groceries, electronics, home products and more, offering an extensive choice of premium and locally sourced products.

New features have been put in place throughout the store to

make a better overall experience for shoppers. There are special counters for meat and butchery, bakery products as well as an instore kitchen for freshly made meals. There is a mix of 23 other outlets in this store, including restaurants and cafes and a family entertainment centre.

Ananth A V, Director of LuLu Hypermarkets Oman & India, shared: "The opening of the new store in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali reflects an emerging need to stay in pace with the evolving consumer needs in this area. It will help generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for the local community here. As the community here continues to grow and develop, we believe

our hypermarket will be a great addition to the existing clientele base."

Shabeer KA, Regional Director – in the Sultanate of Oman, stated: "Despite the challenging times, we have been able to bring back a more "normalised shopping pattern" for our customers. We have also adapted online modes of shopping to enable for a more comfortable shopping experience during the current situation.

Customers can also avail doorstep delivery option using the LuLu shopping app. We are glad to innovate our strategies and ideas on a regular basis and stay updated to meet and exceed customer expectations at all times."

Photo: Khalfan al Ruzaqi



Alizz Islamic Bank, Al Jenaibi International Automobiles sign cooperation agreement

MUSCAT: In commemoration of the Sultanate's celebrations of Omani Women's Day and as part of the launch of Hiyya Female Banking, Alizz Islamic Bank and Al Jenaibi International Automobiles announced the signing of a cooperation agreement.

The agreement was signed by Mohammed al Ghassani, AGM- Chief Consumer Banking Officer of Alizz Islamic Bank and Rashid al Zamani the GM of Al Jenaibi International Automobiles, in the presence of a number of executives from the management sides. As part of the agreement Al Jenaibi International Automobiles will have a selection of BMW cars for three consecutive months for women who want to test drive BMW before buying it.

A raffle at the ceremony was also conducted by Alizz Islamic Bank at Shangri La Barr Jissah Resort, on the occasion of the celebration of Omani Women's Day. The two winners of the raffle will be able to enjoy test driving a BMW for the weekend.

Commenting on this signing, Mohammed al Ghassani said: "We have committed ourselves to expanding our banking services and products to suit what Omani women need and deserve. We always strive to honour the spirit of Omani woman in all kinds of ways possible.

This agreement is part of a variety of discounts and offers from various stores

and merchants. Omani women are and will remain a partner alongside men in the development process and the Blessed Renaissance of our beloved country."

Al Ghassani added: "We thank the partners at Al Jenaibi International Automobiles for giving us this opportunity to sign this agreement. It will give women at Alizz Islamic Bank the flexibility and ease to try and buy any model of BMW. We believe that such offers are the least we can offer to Omani women."

Alizz Islamic Bank is proud of making the life of its customers easy and flexible through the products and financing offers it provides, as the bank has been focusing heavily on improving its services and products through coordination, continuous meetings, and knowledge of the permanent needs that customers desire.

In a move to honour female entrepreneurs and business executives, Alizz Islamic Bank unveiled its special and exclusive 'Hiyya' awards for women, recently.

Designed to recognise and felicitate women, the 'Hiyya' awards came as an expression of appreciation and gratitude for the pioneering role played by women in building the nation; it is a formal acknowledgement of their contribution in various fields as they continue to demonstrate their expertise and experience in the social and economic arena.

New hospitality academy opens in Muscat

MUSCAT: Muscat Hospitality Academy (MHA), launched by Heart of Hospitality, opens its first Vocational Education and Training/VET by EHL licenced training institute in the Sultanate of Oman. MHA, in partnership with EHL Group, Switzerland, sets the standards in excellence for vocational education and training in hospitality, offering the next generation an exciting opportunity to build their career in the hospitality industry, both within the Sultanate of Oman and globally. The academy will initially focus on various level programmes in four key specialisations — culinary,



service, rooms and hotel administration. The programmes are designed to cover almost 80 per cent of the job skill demand of the industry. All curriculum and course materials are developed in

Switzerland by the EHL Group and delivered by VET by EHL approved industry experts.

"We are very proud of the fact that MHA has already been very well received by the

hospitality sector in the Sultanate of Oman, with commitment from many 4 to 5-Star brands, which includes more than 370 employment opportunities for Omani nationals upon successful completion of our VET by EHL programmes. We are presenting a fantastic opportunity for Omanis who will receive unique world-class vocational educational training by hospitality industry experts, incorporating rigorous practical Internships to ensure that they are equipped to be ready for the job market from Day 1 of graduation" explained Xia Cai, Managing Partner for Heart of Hospitality.

Lexus introduces exclusive benefits across the range

MUSCAT: Lexus is encouraging customers to get closer to owning their favourite Lexus vehicle with exclusive benefits. As part of the campaign, Lexus is offering free service 3 years / 30,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and 1 year free registration. The campaign is valid up to December 30, 2021. (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

The Lexus range includes inspiring SUVs like the NX300 with an advanced turbocharged 238hp, 2.0-litre engine which combines fuel efficiency with outstanding power output. This generates exhilarating acceleration for sporty driving, together with exceptional fuel economy.

The Lexus UX has a front-

wheel drive configuration and is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT).

The five-seat Lexus RX350 is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 that is mated to an eight speed automatic transmission. The RX is also available in a 3-row 7-seater option. Also available is the Lexus RX450h, a hybrid version featuring a 3.5-litre Atkinson-cycle engine.

The Lexus GX460 is perfect for families who seek no-holds-barred adventure on their days off, yet also desire an easy-driving, comfortable and versatile luxury SUV for the work week. The Lexus GX460 features a 4.6L engine that



provides outstanding power and responsive performance.

The LX570 possesses a 5.7-litre engine that delivers the punch and towing power befitting this vehicle. The 8-Speed automatic transmission with a wide gear range contributes to achieving

excellent start-off and acceleration performance and fuel efficiency during high speed driving.

The Lexus range of sedans include the IS350. This sleek and stylish powerful sedan is equipped with a 3.5-litre engine that's paired to an 8-speed automatic

transmission. The turbocharged IS300 features a 2.0-litre twin-scroll turbocharged in-line four-cylinder engine with intercooler that generates 241 Hp.

One of the most popular luxury sedans in the segment, the ES is available in options of 2.5L, 16 Valve, engine with a fuel efficiency of 17.2 km /L and a class 3.5 Litre, engine paired to a 8-speed automatic transmission with a fuel efficiency of 13.6 km/L.

The ES is also available in Hybrid version with a 2.5-litre DOHC direct injection Atkinson cycle 4-cylinder with intake VVT-i E and exhaust VVT-i with a total system output of 215 hp, offering 24.1 km/L mileage.

The flagship LS which is an

inspiring luxury sedan, is available in 3.5-litre V6 Multi Stage Hybrid System producing 354 hp, a 3.5-litre V6 naturally aspirated Atkinson-cycle producing 311 hp and 38.7 Kg.M Torque, and a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine producing 415 hp and 61.2 Kg.M of Torque. In the Sultanate of Oman, every Lexus vehicle comes with special benefits and privileges such as Manufacturer's Warranty of 4 years/100,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and 24 hours on-road assistance from AAA. For more information, please visit www.lexusoman.com or subscribe to YouTube channel "Lexus Oman", or like Lexus Oman on Facebook or Follow Oman. Lexus on Instagram.



Industrial waste to be prioritised for local recycling

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) is taking steps to ensure that the large amounts of commercially valuable industrial waste being generated in the country are being channelled towards value-adding recycling activities that help support job creation and GDP growth.

This was reiterated at a workshop organised by the Ministry at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Sunday. The forum was convened to resolve challenges faced by businesses engaged in the export, import and recycling of industrial waste. It was also attended by representatives of the Royal Oman Police, be'ah and



the Environment Authority.

Following opening remarks by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-

Secretary for Commerce and Industry, the discussions focused on the importance of localising

waste recycling industries with a view to maximising value addition. The goal is to regulate exports of

The demand for recycled materials was expected to rise globally as new resources are on the decline. SMEs have the opportunities to invest in recycling projects

ENG SAMI BIN SALEM AL SAHIB

Director General, MoCIIP

commercially useful waste that can be reprocessed in useful materials and thereby create opportunities for the local economy.

Eng Sami bin Salem al Sahib, Director General of Industry, said the demand for recycled materials was expected to rise globally as new resources are on the decline.

SMEs have the opportunities to invest in recycling projects, he noted. He outlined the potential for investments in recycling activities involving metal scrap, plastics and waste oil, adding that a thriving recycling sector is a key objective of the Industrial Strategy 2040.

An estimated 230,000 tonnes of waste were exported in 2020 led by waste paper (59 per cent), copper scrap (24 per cent) iron scrap (9 per cent). Imports of waste reached 680,000 tonnes during the same period, comprising iron scrap (57 per cent), copper scrap (34 per cent), plastic waste (6 per cent). **(With inputs from ONA)**

India's Future discloses new documents to bolster case against Amazon deal



A woman shops inside a retail store in Mumbai. — Reuters

NEW DELHI: Independent directors at India's Future Retail have disclosed new documents in a letter to the country's antitrust watchdog aiming to bolster their case against Amazon.com Inc as they seek to revoke a 2019 deal between the two companies.

A 160-page stock exchange filing on Sunday showed the directors reviewed records related to the 2019 deal between a group unit, Future Coupons, and Amazon, and argued that disclosures by the US company before the Competition Commission of India (CCI) when it sought approval of the deal contradicted Amazon's own internal communications at the time.

Amazon and the CCI did not respond to a request for comment on the disclosure.

The two companies' legal dispute, centred around Amazon's deal to invest \$200 million in Future Coupons, has become a high-stakes battle which could determine the dominant player in India's retail market in the years ahead.

— Reuters

UN climate summit reaches carbon markets deal

THE FINAL DEAL ADOPTED BY NEARLY 200 COUNTRIES WILL IMPLEMENT ARTICLE 6 OF THE 2015 PARIS AGREEMENT

GLASGOW: Negotiators closed a deal setting rules for carbon markets at the United Nations COP26 climate talks on Saturday, potentially unlocking trillions of dollars for protecting forests, building renewable energy facilities and other projects to combat climate change.

The final deal adopted by nearly 200 countries will implement Article 6 of the 2015 Paris Agreement, allowing countries to partially meet their climate targets by buying offset credits representing emission cuts by others.

Companies, as well as countries with vast forest cover, had pushed for a robust deal on government-led carbon markets in Glasgow, in the hope of also legitimising the fast-growing global voluntary offset markets. Critics worry that offsetting could go too far in allowing countries to continue emitting climate-warming gases, making some wary of a hasty deal. The deal was "a Brazilian victory" and the country is gearing up to become a "big exporter" of carbon credits, its environment ministry said on social media. The country is home to much of the Amazon forest, and has huge potential to build wind and solar plants.

"It should spur investment and the development of projects that could deliver significant emissions reductions", Brazil's chief negotiator Leonardo Cleaver de Athayde said.

But nations most vulnerable



Smoke billows from a chimney at a coking factory in Hefei, Anhui province, China. — Reuters

to the effects of climate signalled concern over offsets possibly opening up for abuses allowing bad actors to avoid cutting emissions.

"On Article 6, we will need to remain vigilant against greenwashing", the Marshall Islands' Climate Envoy Tina Stege said in a statement.

The accord managed to overcome a series of sticking points that contributed to the failure of the previous two major climate meetings.

Previously, there was disagreement over a tax on certain carbon trades intended to fund climate adaptation in poorer nations. The deal addressed this with a compromise that had a two-track

approach.

Bilateral trades of offsets between countries will not face the tax. The deal suggests developing nations capitulated to rich nations demands, including the United States, which had objected the levy. In a separate centralised system for issuing offsets, 5% of proceeds from offsets will be collected to go toward an adaptation fund for developing countries.

Also in that system, 2% of the offset credits will be cancelled. That aims to increase overall emissions cuts by stopping other countries using those credits as offsets to reach their climate targets. Another provision resolved how to carry forward carbon credits

created under the old Kyoto Protocol, the Paris Agreement's predecessor, into the new offset market system.

Negotiators reached a compromise that sets a cut-off date, with credits issued before that date not being carried forward.

The final accord carries over any offsets registered since 2013. That will allow 320 million offsets, each representing a tonne of CO₂, to enter the new market, according to an analysis by the NewClimate Institute and Oko-Institut non-profit organisations.

Campaigners had warned against flooding the new market with old credits, and raised doubts about the climate benefits of some.

THE DEAL WAS "A BRAZILIAN VICTORY" AND THE COUNTRY IS GEARING UP TO BECOME A "BIG EXPORTER" OF CARBON CREDITS

The 2013 date "is not good. So now it will be buyer countries' jobs to just say 'no' to them", said carbon markets expert Brad Schallert, with the World Wildlife Fund.

One of the most contentious points had been on the question of whether credits could be claimed by both the country selling them and the country buying. A proposal by Japan resolved the issue and gained backing from both Brazil and the United States.

Brazil's past insistence on allowing double counting had torpedoed an Article 6 deal in the past. Under the deal, the country that generates a credit will decide whether to authorise it for sale to other nations or to count towards their climate targets.

If authorised and sold, the seller country will add an emission unit to its national tally and the buyer country will deduct one, to ensure the emissions cut is counted only once between countries.

The same rules apply to credits used more broadly toward "other international mitigation purposes" — wording that some experts said could include a global scheme for offsetting aviation emissions, ensuring double counting does not happen there too. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

BEIJING

China proposes review for Hong Kong IPOs

China's cyberspace regulator on Sunday proposed requiring companies pursuing share listings in Hong Kong to apply for cybersecurity inspections if they handle data that concerns national security.

Large Internet platforms planning to set up headquarters, operating or research centres abroad should also submit a report to regulators, the Cyberspace Administration of China said in the draft rules.

The document, published on



the regulator's WeChat account website, calls for requiring public comment on internet platforms formulating privacy policies or making amending rules that could significantly affect user rights and interests. — Reuters

WASHINGTON

US states file antitrust complaint against Google

A group of US states led by Texas have filed an amended complaint against Alphabet Inc's Google accusing the tech giant of using coercive tactics and breaking antitrust laws in its efforts to boost its already dominant advertising business.

The updated allegations are the latest in an onslaught of regulatory scrutiny of Google over its practices. The tech company faces several lawsuits, including one by the Justice Department for monopolistic



practices.

The amended US lawsuit accuses Google of using monopolistic and coercive tactics with advertisers in its efforts to dominate and drive out competition in online advertising. — Reuters

SEOUL

GM to launch 10 EVs in South Korea by 2025

General Motors Co will launch 10 electric vehicles (EVs) in South Korea by 2025, but has no plans yet to manufacture EVs in the country, Steven Kiefer, the head of GM's international operations said.

The number 1 US automaker, which warned last year that persistent industrial action was preventing further investment in South Korea, builds electric vehicles in the United States and China.

It also has plans to build



them in Mexico and Canada. Kiefer's visit after a Korean labour union delegation went to Detroit in June had led to speculation in local media that he could announce new EV production plans. — Reuters

J&J breakup about more than financial engineering

Alex Gorsky is handing investors a parting gift. The outgoing Johnson & Johnson chief is hiving off the part of the healthcare conglomerate that makes baby shampoo from the one producing cancer treatments and medical devices. It's an easy valuation win as investors accord nearly double the multiple to consumer-derived earnings as they do pharma. Beyond that, it's a way to give both businesses a new lease on life, and a currency to do deals.

Pharmaceutical giants are refocusing on what they do best. GlaxoSmithKline is separating the unit that makes Advil painkillers from its pharma arm. Pfizer has done something similar twice.

Pharmaceutical giants are refocusing on what they do best

The potential for J&J to follow suit was discounted by investors: Friday's announcement led to a mere 3 per cent share lift.

Still, the financial logic is unmistakable. J&J's shampoo arm should have revenue of about \$15 billion over the next 12 months, while the rest should have more than \$82 billion, according to Refinitiv estimates. Assume a 20 per cent margin for consumer goods, and a 35 per cent margin at the rest, roughly what it has earned recently, and that's over \$2 billion and \$30 billion respectively after taxes.

On Procter & Gamble's earnings multiple of 24, and the 14 times that Merck and Zimmer Biomet fetch, the whole of J&J is worth \$470 billion, some 10 per cent above its current value.

A separate life also unlocks other potential benefits. In the past, drugmakers defended unwieldy conglomerates by arguing they needed cash-generative consumer operations to fund research and development.

The success of Pfizer and AstraZeneca debunks that logic. Developing vaccines and cancer treatments is a very different skillset to marketing baby lotion. That can lead to long-term profit and valuation gains. Consider the split of Abbott Laboratories and AbbVie. The combined market cap has risen fivefold since separation in 2011, outperforming the S&P 500 Index.

One potential hangover is talc litigation. J&J's recent spinoff of the unit and associated liabilities may have insulated the company from further harm, but the courts might decide otherwise.

Assuming these kinks can be ironed out, there's scope for M&A. GSK's consumer business may be an attractive merger candidate. P&G, which makes diapers, may also see the benefits in hawking baby products. The pharma business would also be free to scoop up smaller players and try and deliver more blockbuster drugs. This is a breakup with more than financial logic. — Reuters



ICONIC TOWER

A view of the 'Iconic Tower' skyscraper under construction (expected to reach an elevation of 1,000 metres) is pictured at Egypt's 'New Administrative Capital' megaproject, some 45 kilometres east of Cairo. This crowning jewel of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's grand urban plans was set to be unveiled on June 30 this year, but the launch was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic that led to a downturn in the market. — AFP

Inflation and US oil intervention risk take centre stage



OLE S HANSEN
The writer is Head of Strategy, Saxo Bank

WHILE THE SHORT-TERM GLOBAL OUTLOOK STILL POINTS TO PRICE SUPPORTIVE MARKET TIGHTNESS, THE MARKET HAS BEEN LOSING MOMENTUM

Crude oil was heading for a third weekly decline after once again failing to find a bid strong enough to force prices above the Brent double top at \$86.70.

While the short-term global outlook still points to price supportive market tightness, the market has been losing momentum due to the risk of US action to curb prices, a resurgence of Covid-19 cases in Europe and Asia, lower gas and coal prices reducing switching demand as well as Opec in their monthly oil market report hinting current price levels are starting to hurt demand, especially in countries like India and China.

Following the recent decision by Opec+ to maintain the current pace of monthly production increases, the US administration has become increasingly vocal in blaming the group for high prices.

Very elevated domestic gasoline prices, in some states near record levels, has increased the potential for US action to curb prices, either through a one-off release of Strategic Reserves or more controversially a temporary ban on US crude oil exports.

The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) in its monthly Short-term Energy Outlook (STEO) maintained

their forecast of an oversupplied market by early next year, a view that was not shared by Russell Hardy, the head of Vitol Group, the world's biggest independent oil trader.

Speaking online at the Reuters Commodity Trading Conference on Tuesday he said that global oil demand is back to 2019 levels and will exceed those during the first quarter of 2022. Not ruling out \$100 per barrel Brent in 2022, he said oil market tightness will continue for the next 12 months with Opec spare capacity down to between 2 and 3 million barrels per day.

Against these mostly short-term developments the oil market will still be facing years of potential under investment with oil majors losing their appetite for big projects, partly due to an uncertain long-term outlook for oil demand but increasingly also due to lending restrictions being put on banks and investors due to ESG and the green transformation focus.

Whether the short-term trading range in Brent will be \$80 to \$85 or potentially a deeper correction towards \$75.50 will to a high degree be determined by whether the Biden administration pushes through measures to curb prices.

A 50-million-barrel release from SPR could trigger a temporary drop in prices,

perhaps by as much as five dollars, but overall, we see a limited chance of it having a long-term negative impact on prices.

Global wheat prices continued higher with Paris Milling wheat futures hitting a fresh record high just below €300 per tons while prices in Chicago trade near the most expensive since 2012.

A poor harvest in North America together with a decline in exports from Russia, the world's largest shipper, has triggered increased demand for European sourced wheat, and with the prospect for another potentially challenging crop year in 2022 caused by a returning La Niña weather phenomenon and high fertiliser costs, some of the major importers have recently been stepping up their pace of purchases.

The latest rally has been driven by the mentioned surge in inflation, the US Department of Agriculture making a further downgrade to global stock levels, and not least worries over a possible further slowdown in exports from Russia.

Expectations for a strong harvest season in Australia and Argentina only providing a small amount of relief should Russia, due to continued high prices, decide to keep more of its crop at home to help contain domestic prices.

The rise of intangible capitalism



ERIC HAZAN

The author is a managing partner at McKinsey & Company and a member of the McKinsey Global Institute Council.

In a 2014 book, the Nobel laureate economist Joseph E Stiglitz and Bruce C Greenwald argued that the most important societal endowment is the ability to learn. Today, it is increasingly evident that the "learning society" has not only been created, but is starting to drive our economies.

From the nineteenth century until about 25 years ago, businesses largely invested in physical infrastructure and machinery, from railroads to vehicles. But in the past quarter-century, investment in so-called intangible assets — such as intellectual property, research, software and managerial and organisational skills — has soared. Recent McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) research found that,

by 2019, intangibles accounted for 40 per cent of all investment in the United States and ten European economies, up 29 per cent from 1995. And intangibles investment appears to have surged again in 2020 as digitalisation accelerated in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We believe that this trend strongly hints at the emergence of a new model of capitalism, in which companies' success will be measured more by their people and their capabilities than by their machines, products or services.

Moreover, we think there is no going back. Firms such as Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft are clearly scaling up dramatically and achieving hypergrowth.

Intangibles may well be driving

this phenomenon. After all, there is certainly a correlation between investment in intangibles and higher productivity and growth. MGI's research found that companies in the top quartile for growth invest 2.6 times more in intangible assets than the bottom 50 per cent of firms.

Similarly, economic sectors that have invested more than 12 per cent of their gross value added (GVA) in intangible assets grew 28 per cent faster than other sectors. Economies in which intangible investment is increasing are also posting growth in total-factor productivity. Notably, the only companies that were able to maintain 2019 rates of growth after the pandemic hit in early 2020 were those that had invested significantly in the full range of intangibles:

Innovation, data and analytics and human and brand capital.

In a dematerialised, digitised, knowledge-driven world, corporate returns, productivity, and economic growth will increasingly be tied to such assets. But unlocking their true value requires not only investing in them, but also developing the skills and managerial know-how, or human capital, needed to make effective use of them. An MGI survey of more than 860 executives indicates that the major difference between fast-growing and slow-growing firms is that the former not only invest more in intangibles and appreciate their importance for boosting competitive advantage, but also focus on deploying them effectively.

The growing salience of intangibles

thus makes the imperative of raising skills and capabilities even more acute. This emerging new form of capitalism is potentially marvellous for qualified people with highly portable skills, but somewhat scarier for the less skilled and less digitally savvy. Companies that lack the resources to make necessary investments in intangibles also could fall further behind.

The dematerialised economy, if not managed well, thus risks being a recipe for inequality. Previous MGI research found that a key distinguishing feature of "superstar" companies is their investment in intangibles, including large-scale spending to raise the skills and capabilities of their people.

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features



The smell of ink on paper

Snapshot of a journalist's life

Hundreds of people are working behind the scene in order to deliver the daily edition of the newspaper you read everyday. Today, as *Oman Daily Observer* celebrates its 40th anniversary, we're letting them share how they got started and what they love about this profession... **P20**

ENTERTAINMENT

READ

THE LYRICS: 1956 TO THE PRESENT

BY PAUL MCCARTNEY

A two-volume celebration of 154 songs, with handwritten texts, paintings and photographs from the songwriter's archives.

‘Super Trouper’: ABBA storm UK charts with comeback album

Swedish supergroup ABBA made a triumphant return to the UK music charts on Friday, going straight to no. 1 with their first album in 40 years, “Voyage”.

The record is the fastest-selling album of the year so far, the UK’s Official Charts Company said, with 204,000 chart sales in its first week.

Only three other music acts have passed the 200,000 sales

figure in the last decade: Adele with “25”, Ed Sheeran with “Divide” and One Direction’s “Midnight Memories”.

“We are so happy that our fans seem to have enjoyed our new album as much as we enjoyed making it,” ABBA said in a statement. “We are absolutely over the moon to have an album at the top of the charts again!”

“Voyage”, which received mixed reviews from critics, is the band’s first album since 1981’s “The Visitors”. It is ABBA’s 10th no. 1 album in Britain.

“This also marks ABBA’s 58th total week as UK Number 1 on the Official Albums Chart – only two other acts in history have spent more weeks at the top, The Beatles and Elvis,” the Official Charts Company said.

It added that “Voyage”’s total was made up of 90 per cent physical copies, including 29,900 on vinyl, making it “the fastest-selling vinyl release of the century”.

In the summer, ABBA’s greatest hits compilation album “Gold” surpassed its 1,000th week on the UK albums chart.

Formed in 1972, ABBA have won over legions of fans around the world with hits like



“Waterloo” and “Dancing Queen” and sold an estimated 385 million records.

They split in the early 1980s, with rumours swirling for years they would reunite on stage.

In an interview with Reuters last week, member Bjorn Ulvaeus said “Voyage” might be

the last new venture by one of the biggest-selling bands of all time. However fellow member Anni-Frid Lyngstad left the door open in an interview with BBC Radio 2 on Thursday, saying: “I have learned to say never to say never ... you never know. So don’t be too sure.” — **Reuters**



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Ole! Bullfights return in Peru after lengthy pandemic pause

Peru's bullfights, which are about as popular as soccer in the South American nation, made their much-anticipated return this weekend to the rings of Lima after a lengthy pandemic-induced hiatus.

Spanish bullfighter Juan Ortega and his Peruvian colleague Joaquin Galdos took to the ring at the Plaza La Esperanza in Lurin, a coastal district on the capital's south side, where the first bullfights since the Covid-19 outbreak in March 2020 were held on Saturday.

"Ole, Ole!" the nearly 3,000 spectators shouted at various

points throughout the fight.

All major public events were brought to a screeching halt last year in Peru, dealing a bitter blow not only to lovers of the ancient but controversial bullfighting tradition, but to the matadors at the centre of the spectacle and the associated showmen and cattle breeders.

Bullfighters' assistants, costume seamstresses, cattle wranglers and transporters and food vendors were also affected by the lockdown.

COLONIAL TRADITION

Bullfighting in Peru is not for the faint of heart, as the contest

ends with the death of the animal.

"What you feel in a (bullfighting) plaza is equivalent to the gladiators in the Roman Colosseum," 26-year-old matador Galdos told AFP before heading into the ring.

The practice arrived in the Americas with Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century, and to this day the spectacles attract thousands of Peruvians of all social classes. The country has more bull rings than football stadiums.

At Lurin Plaza, with space for 2,900 spectators, tickets for this event — which will go through next weekend — sell for between \$208 and \$445. Another series of fights is scheduled here for December 12.

That's more than the cost to get into a football game — but still, these tickets are in high demand.

"For me, the festival of the bulls is a great passion," 26-year-old Claudia Crispi, who came to the plaza in Lurin with friends, told AFP.

Over the past year, the pandemic has achieved what animal rights activists have never been able to: bullfighting has been cancelled nation-wide, including at Peru's biggest festival, the Senor de los Milagros.

That particular display has been held in late October at Lima's Plaza de Acho for the last 255 years, since the Spanish ruled the area. It can accommodate 14,000 people.

Located in the populous Rimac district, near historic central Lima, the Acho is one of the oldest bullfighting arenas in the world. It was built in 1766 and has been the home of the Senor de los Milagros festival since 1946.

During the most difficult periods of the pandemic, the arena served as a homeless shelter for the elderly. It is still closed to bull fights, but its administrator Juan Manuel Roca Rey hopes to reopen in 2022.

"I'm really happy, because (bullfighting) activity is starting up

again" in Lurin's plaza, Roca Rey told AFP, explaining that the Acho needs some renovations: "It's not in ruins, but it's not pretty."

Peru has 199 bull rings, according to official data, much more than its 80 football stadiums.

And ticket-sellers point out that about double the number of Peruvians who pay to watch professional football will attend bull fights.

A 'HARD PANDEMIC'

In addition to the festival at the Acho, there were some 700 fights per year throughout Peru, pre-pandemic.

Some 2,500 bulls were killed in the course of those fights, according to rancher and retired bullfighter Rafael Puga, winner of the 1973 Escapulario de Oro, the Acho's highest prize.

"Happily, La Esperanza is coming back to fill the void left by the Feria del Senor de los Milagros," Puga said. "For bullfighters, these two years of pandemic have been very hard."

The coronavirus hit Peru severely, with some two million cases and 200,000 deaths out of 33 million inhabitants.

'UNFORTUNATE'

But there are other Peruvians who are saddened by the return of the bulls and matadors to the ring: animal rights activists.

"It's unfortunate that we're permanently continuing with these traditional practices that are violent, anachronistic, outdated and don't support anything positive in society," Rota Oyague, an activist with the collective Anti-Bullfighting Peru, told AFP.

In February 2020, Peru's Constitutional Court shot down a class-action lawsuit brought by more than 5,000 citizens seeking to outlaw bullfighting and cockfighting, which is also very popular in the country, in an effort to eliminate animal mistreatment. In its ruling, the court said "There is no 'Universal Declaration of Animal Rights.'" — AFP

ART AUCTION

More than \$200 million sold on first night of New York fall auctions



CHRISTIE'S FIRST in-person auction in New York since the pandemic began netted more than \$200 million on Tuesday night, with paintings by Basquiat and Banksy going under the hammer.

In a sign of the vitality of the current art market, all forty lots found a buyer in the '21st Century' sale at the Christie's auction room in the Rockefeller Center, which was open to the public for the first time since March 2020.

Vodou and leader of the Gede" and was "created at the peak of the artist's career," the auction house said.

"Flash in Naples", another piece by the New York artist who died aged 27 in 1988, sold for over \$19.8 million, exceeding its high estimate.

Scotsman Peter Doig's 1990 painting "Swamped" sold for more than \$39.8 million, a record for the artist.

Two paintings by British



But it took place in a hybrid format, where it was possible to bid physically from New York or connected real-time bidding rooms in London and Hong Kong, as well as online.

The auction's total sales were \$219 million, with bidders registered from 27 countries, Christie's said.

The most anticipated piece was "Guilt of Gold Teeth" by Jean-Michel Basquiat, a 1982 painting on a large-scale canvas that went for \$40 million.

The piece "depicts Baron Samedi, a spirit of Haitian

street artist Banksy, "Sunflowers from Petrol Station" and "Monkey Detonator", sold for \$14.5 million and \$2.19 million respectively.

"HUMAN ONE", the first hybrid physical and digital work by American artist Bieple, the holder of the record sale of an NFT (non-fungible token), sold for over \$28.9 million.

Ten artists set new records for their top auction bids on Tuesday, while the sale of lots from 20th-century artists is slated for Thursday. — AFP



The smell of ink on paper

Snapshot of a journalist's life

The newspaper you read everyday is the cumulative work of dozens of people. From the story submitted by a reporter to the editor curating and shaping the submitted stories, to the designers who put them to the pages and proofreaders who

make sure that they are error-free — everyone is part of a whole to deliver a single edition everyday. But aside from those that we see, there are also hundreds of others working behind the scene — the print department, the ads department including the couriers that make sure you receive the copies in

your home everyday. As *Oman Daily Observer* celebrates its 40th anniversary, some of our colleagues share how they get started and why they love this profession. To be working in the media can be a thankless job. But to see the paper everyday, to any journalist, the smell on paper is priceless.



Mai Al Abri
Features Editor

Waking up every morning to start another day with non-routine tasks could be overwhelming but helps the journalist to grow up fast. At first, I wasn't so sure whether I would enjoy working in the media or not, but I realised that the work atmosphere plays a big role. One of the key things about working in the media is to be curious, accurate and have good research skills. In a few years, I will complete my 10 years in *Oman Daily Observer* and with every learning, I feel like there is so much more for me to do and accomplish.

As *Oman Daily Observer* celebrates 40 years, I am incredibly excited because I started my career in the Sultanate of Oman as a broadcaster at the Sultanate of Oman Radio and Television and all those years *Observer* had accompanied me to the National Day celebrations at the stadium to studio programmes. It was a great educational and research tool. Never did I think I would be at *Oman Daily Observer* one day. It has been an exciting journey because writing for broadcast and print is totally different. And multimedia is in full swing. *Observer* has moved swiftly to the new media and it has been a tremendous experience to adapt, learn and perform. Podcasts, videos, social media — it is a whole different world out there, but print and the feel of the paper still continue in its importance. Today, *Oman Daily Observer* reaches out to the world and applies the principle of immediacy which used to be the terrain of radio and TV, thanks to social media and technology. In other words, we can keep you posted wherever you are!



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Kabeer Yousuf
Senior Reporter

My career with the *Oman Observer Daily* began in the year 2008 after a nearly 12 years stint with national and private radios, TV and print media in India and the Middle East since 1996. What makes working with *Observer* different is undoubtedly the freedom of expression and the support extended by the editorial headed by the Editor-in-Chief. I'm among the few who are lucky to have worked under three editors-in-chief which helped me fine-tune my skills as a passionate journalist who always wanted to bring the local lives in focus. All through my 13 years of working with the national daily, I've found the chiefs and the different desks very proactive, encouraging and letting me go that extra mile in covering events in and around the country. I find myself to be lucky to have worked under widely experienced editors that helped me look into my stories from a different perspective and touch upon varied subjects and meet with people of fame till today. I'm pretty sure, with the same support and cooperation, I'd be able to bring out more of me for the readers.

The sword and the lemon! As a sports journalist, it was always special to link with the Sultanate of Oman's traditional sport of equestrian. Incidentally, my first story for *Oman Daily Observer* was the golden performance of the country at the inaugural Tent Pegging World Cup at the Al Rahba race track in Barka. The Sultanate of Oman riders made a memorable performance by finishing runner-up behind champions South Africa. The first World Cup was organised by the Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF) in association with the International Tent Pegging Federation (ITPF) from March 31 to April 4, 2014. The participating countries were Pakistan, the Sultanate of Oman, Qatar, Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, South Africa, Britain and Australia. It was a historic occasion for Muscat as well which later became the headquarters of the world tent pegging body under the mercurial leadership of Mohammed Eisa al Fairuz.



Anuroop
Athiparambath
Sports Editor



Samuel Kutty
Senior Reporter

To be honest, I'm not sure whether I am fully fulfilling my duties as a journalist by telling the stories as they ought to be. Even though I could not bring smiles to the faces of many people, I could hear their stories and tell them to the public. This is what I have done from my first assignment as a reporter to cover the world's worst industrial gas tragedy in the central Indian city of Bhopal in 1984 to my current duties in *Oman Daily Observer*. Yes, I take pride in my profession because it gives me ample opportunities to make me a platform for people who have stories to tell and need an outlet to narrate them! This is what I wanted to do since my schooling. To be trusted by someone to respectfully represent them!



Liju Cherian
Senior Editor

#BEANOBSERVER sums up the tagline of this vibrant daily, an institution in its own right, as it steps into the semi-century era. The daily stands for good news and national development. It constantly keeps the readers informed of the changing events, issues, and characters of the world outside. The foremost value of 'news' as a utility to empower the informed has been foremost throughout. The strength of ties that bound the multicultural staff could be seen during the catastrophic 2007

Cyclone Gonu. Several staff members from various departments, editorial, production and others, stood in unity and produced the daily skeletal edition much against heavy odds. The daily was printed when the readers wanted them the most to deliver timely news. *Observer* has made a noteworthy and remarkable contribution to the nation's development in a big way. Its impact and prominence make it a pride and I am truly honoured to be part of the daily as it completes 40 eventful years.



Observer

MONDAY | NOVEMBER 15, 2021 | RABEE ALTHANI 10

Our journalism reflects Oman's emphasis on peace and mediation

ABDULLAH AL SHUEILI

As the clock struck 12 midnight on Sunday, November 15, 1981, a black-and-white press was about to start printing the eight pages of the first English language newspaper in the Sultanate of Oman named the Oman Daily Observer, the sister publication of the Arabic language Oman newspaper which was established 10 years earlier exactly on November 18, 1972.

All the staff were present at the printing press of the Oman newspaper media house situated at the heart of the bustling business district Ruwi, which was the centre of trade and finance at the outset of the Renaissance that was initiated by the late Sultan Qaboos in July 1970.

Ruwi was the focal point for investors and businessmen in pursuit of trade opportunities which was the reason behind the selection of a suitable location for the Oman newspaper and the Observer as well as the first printing press in the Sultanate of Oman. The building contained a photojournalism section and offices for reporters, correspondents and technicians besides the administration and technical departments which help the journalists carry out their task.

SMALL STEPS

The editorial staff of the Observer was established as a small unit headed by Reed Anderson, a Briton with a journalism background and experience in the British press. He was chosen to be in charge of the first issue of the Observer which contained local, news, business, sports and features, community sections in addition to two pages for the Arab, regional and international news.

After some time, John Burrows took over as the Editor-in-Chief of the Observer from Reed Anderson. He was succeeded



We promise you to complete our march together with our readers to deliver news impartially and honestly we would like to extend our thanks to the audience for standing by us and for their continued feedback

ABDULLAH AL SHUEILI

Editor-in-chief, Observer

by Ian Cumins who in turn was succeeded by Said al Harthy, the first Omani Editor-in-Chief of the Observer. Suhail al Maashari, Ibrahim al Hamdani, Fahmi al Harthy followed, until I took charge as its Editor-in-Chief.

At the end of the 1980s, the pages of the Observer increased from eight to 10 pages and then 12 pages. Separate supplements were added to the newspaper and business became a separate 4-page daily section for which the salmon pink colour was chosen to give it the international business press appearance. In the latest development, the number of pages of the Observer reached 32 pages divided into five main sections: locals, business, sports, features and politics. The

newspaper also has magazines and supplements for various occasions.

I came to the Observer in 2013 carrying an accumulated experience in the audio and visual media as well as being a writer in several Arab and local publications. I am here to complement the march of the old newspaper and to follow the same media and political approach embraced by the Sultanate of Oman in dealing with the world. This approach provides for non-intervention in others' affairs, and respecting the will of the nations and peoples, encouraging international peace and security, abandoning violence and extremism, helping others and meditating thorny issues as well as other media and political principles that the Sultanate of Oman had adopted for decades.

Today, the Observer completes forty years of continued giving since its first black-and-white issue came out of the press. Today, the Observer has an interactive website and digital platforms. The newly-launched website is enhanced by technologies. The Observer social media sites provide enhanced interaction with the audience.

The Observer has established itself as a significant and credible reference of local and international news and stories thanks to a network of editors, reporters and technicians working around-the-clock to deliver a message from the Sultanate of Oman to the whole world.

We congratulate ourselves and our esteemed audience on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Oman Daily Observer and we would like to extend our thanks to the audience for standing by us and for their continued feedback and support without which we could not have achieved this success. We promise you to complete our march together with our readers to deliver news impartially and honestly.



First edition of Observer with eight pages for five days

Observer launches business page in pink

GCC leaders first summit in Oman held in Al Bustan Hotel, Muscat

Millennium edition launched in all colour glossy pages

Cyclone Gonu stops print edition for one day. Next day it resumes.

Oman Rally in race for world status

Oman, Russia set up ties

Fill gap between media and people

KABEER YOUSUF

Being passionate about something is worth chasing and making it a career is what Fahmy bin Khalid al Harthy, Editor-in-Chief of Oman of Observer Daily between 2009 and 2013, tells the world. And he doesn't just say that; instead, he lived what he preached after letting go a cushy position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the 70s and chased a career in media against the wish of his family.

"I was supposed to join MoFA when I got the offer of a good position at the Ministry in the 1980s as we, being educated, had a buffet to choose from those days. I opted for media. I wanted to chase my passion for journalism", Fahmy, who leads a peaceful retired life, avers.

And most of his friends today are working as diplomats of the Sultanate Oman across the world. Ask Fahmy if he regrets the choice that he made four decades ago.

"Not at all. Had I not been pursuing what was offered to me, I'd not have been so contended for having been a media person for four decades", an ever smiling Fahmy said. Fahmy is probably the only Omani journalist who headed both Arabic



I believe in professionalism and it's the staff that makes the difference. Let the people talk to us, argue with us, give their positive and negative feedback. Build up more relations with people, go to the people and talk to them

FAHMY AL HARTHY*Editor-in-Chief, Observer (2009-2013)*

and English newspapers in his career.

Schooled in Dubai Naif area in 60s when there was no school or hospital in the Sultanate of Oman, Fahmy and family moved to Dhammam in Saudi Arabia to pursue his studies but having found no proper school there, his father sent him to Bagdad, capital of Iraq to continue his education till secondary school. This was followed by his further studies in Qatar and Egyptian capital Cairo before he returned to the Sultanate of Oman. He holds masters in

Economic and Political Science and a Degree in Middle East History from Alexandria University.

"Having lived in many countries in the Middle East and elsewhere helped me to face life at an early age and to be self-reliant. I became self-dependent at a very young age", says Fahmy.

His first job was of a reporter with Oman Arabic newspaper in 1983 and from there, he took the baby steps in journalism and grew to be the head of editorial dept followed by being the acting Editor-in-Chief and then the

Editor-in-chief for Four Seasons magazine, which was published from the erstwhile Oman Establishment for Press, Publication and Advertising' (OEPPA).

A man who always sought changes in life, Fahmy was appointed in 2009 as the acting Editor-in-Chief of Observer for a year and became the Editor-in-Chief in 2010 for next 4 years.

"It was a golden era. We brought out supplements, magazines, special editions from time to time and mark my words, nothing would have been possible if we didn't have a team that was so dedicated to work."

He took retirement in 2014 but his services were still sought as the Adviser to the Minister of Information. At that time, he was informed that he had 500 days of leave pending and should finish them off. "That's not to my credit. My staff and I are one family as I spent more time in the office than I do in my family.

"I believe in professionalism and it's the staff that makes the difference. Let the people talk to us, argue with us, give their positive and negative feedback. Build up more relations with people, go to the people and talk to them. There's a gap between the media and people here. That needs to be bridged", Fahmy sums up his idea of journalism.

OBSERVER HONED MY SKILLS AS A TRANSLATOR

AB BISHARA

After working in Oman for more than 30 years, I feel obliged to share my experience as a translator of news and opinion articles for official media establishments under the Ministry of Information.

Actually, I first worked as an English language teacher, Ministry of Education in the 1980s and 1990s, the period during which I also worked on a part-time basis for Oman Daily Observer. In 1999, I joined the Oman Daily Observer, the nation's then only English daily, as a full-time translator. That time, Oman News Agency (ONA)'s late English bulletin did not exist and there were no websites, so Oman Observer was the only medium of written official news in English.

In its earliest stages, the Observer was a vibrant multinational English daily run by an excellent team of British, Australian and Indian editors, reporters and proofreaders, who all laid solid foundations for news publishing.

I missed the first Editor-in-Chief, but I worked with the second one, the late John Burrows and then Ian Cummins. Later, we had our first Omani Editor-in-Chief, Said bin Khalfan al Harthy, who joined as a confident news man, following his career at the Ministry of Information.

I liked my job at the Observer. Being a graduate of English language and literature (Mohammed V University, Morocco)—which included translation studies, I was sure that, after a successful tenure as a teacher in Morocco and Oman, I would find it easy. However, working for an English daily turned out to be a big challenge. It was not enough to master the target language (rendering Arabic stories into English), but the challenge was how to make the translation meaningful as English news, irrespective of source language.

In a newspaper environment, a translator has to maintain speed

**PRECIOUS**

In the past, hard copies of newspapers were so precious that they were put in files and archived for years to serve as reference materials that were highly sought after, even by lawyers and litigants in courts. Hard copies were also the daily mediums of communication between advertisers and the public. Space was very valuable in newspapers. It was sold in inches and centimetres

and accuracy. Though my English texts did not include mistakes of grammar or spelling, I felt that something was missing—judging by the reaction of the paper's reporters and editors. Although my speed improved over the first few months, there was still a gap in maintaining accuracy.

The magic solution came as a surprise when I started my postgraduate studies in translation. I suddenly paid attention to the theory of translation that I was applying—the Formal Equivalence Theory, rather than the Dynamic Equivalence Theory, the brainchild of the American linguist Eugene Nida (1914-2011).

Nida coined this highly practical style of 'dynamic' rendering as a measure to troubleshoot the alienation (crudeness and vagueness) that often engulfed 'formal' rendering, notably the need to focus on the 'message' or meaning (to align with the target reader), rather than the words of the original text. The text moderation job was being done by the Observer reporters, from whom I learned the style of journalist adaptation. I used to read the published reports based on my translation the next day.

When I started applying the Dynamic Equivalence Theory in translating news for the Observer, the response was great and encouraging. That coincided with the release of ONA's English news translated from the agency's Arabic stream in the 1990s. Due to the shortage of staff and, thanks to the follow-up of editors-in-chief and the support of reporters and editors, I was promoted to the post of Local News Editor responsible for editing ONA news, managing local pages and writing synopsis for the front page.

We used to work in challenging conditions. We got international news from teleprinters connected to telephone lines that published news from Reuters, AFP, AP, DPA, etc. If the machines run out of ink or paper or get obstructed by any

means, the news lines tick away in the void and you end up losing important events.

We got local news by using cassette recorders to record Arabic news, and later English news, from Oman Radio and TV. Of course, the reporters played a significant role in providing the paper with local news by interviewing English speaking individuals. When they had to get news from non-English speaking officials or executives, they used to bring Arabic printed matter for translation.

In the past, hard copies of newspapers were so precious that they were put in files and archived for years to serve as reference materials that were highly sought after, even by lawyers and litigants in courts. Hard copies were also the daily mediums of communication between advertisers and the public. Space was very valuable in newspapers. It was sold in inches and centimetres.

In today's digital age, the print media industry faces great challenges. Apart from losing advertising space, newspapers face tough competition from social media networks, which also compete with other official sources of news like news agencies and state radio and television channels. I think that to compete with social media, newspapers have to develop very active websites, applications and user-friendly digital copies accessible at any time. I think that Oman Observer is faring well and it can do better.

I acknowledge the valuable coaching of the early reporters, sub-editors and all veteran and contemporary staff who made my tenure at the Oman Observer an enjoyable one. Of course, it was not all sweet and honey. There were bitter moments with scornful individuals who exposed their own human weaknesses, but I had to put up with that, knowing that any escalation would spoil my future growth. I took pride in sharing the experience of making the paper a reliable medium of information in Oman.

Even cyclone couldn't stop Observer in its tracks

LIJU CHERIAN

Indian Airlines flight IC 977 HYD-BLR-MCT flight had departed from Bengaluru International Airport on way to Muscat in an April summer. This was my first visit to the Sultanate of Oman to join the Observer upon a telephonic interview call with Said bin Khalfan al Harthy, the then Chairman and Editor-in-Chief who hired me. I along with another new colleague who boarded from Hyderabad were in the same evening flight the same day and landed at the Muscat International Airport. The best part was we were unaware of this until we had lined up at the immigration counter to collect our original visa safely deposited by my employer. My earlier idea of the Observer was its role in charting the course of the Sultanate's Renaissance since its early days, which endured this to many. The daily had built itself a reputation for accurate and in-depth reporting and extensive features (earlier as a 16-page tabloid for Observer Features). Former senior Observer reporters had initially guided me about the rules and procedures to be followed in my role as a journalist in a foreign land.

I was led to room number 91 at the vast Madinat Al Ilham campus. Before being led to the chamber of the Editor-in-Chief, myself and Durga Prasad, my colleague from Hyderabad, India, were introduced to Mini John, the then co-ordinator who gave a briefing of the establishment. Later we both met Al Harthy who was patient enough to hear about our tryst with journalism and the nature of work back in India. He assured of all help to acclimatize to the new situation and work styles. We were offered the traditional Kahwa and dates by the Editor during our meeting and this was the first time I was to taste the brew, which later became a part of my life. Years have rolled by and when I look back, it has been a long journey with many of my Indian friends and colleagues being part of the Observer family. I recall with pride working along with some of the senior editors who worked for Indian and British newspapers. I was privileged to work with able Omani editors-in-chief namely Said bin Khalfan al Harthy,

GOING OVER GONU

When the powerful tropical Super Cyclonic storm Gonu struck the Sultanate of Oman, the staff found it very difficult for days to reach the office with road blocks and water seeping all over. We still managed to bring out pictorial editions highlighting the tragedy and horror around the country for almost a week

Fatma bint Tahir Mohammed, Observer's first woman acting Managing Editor in 2004, (late) Suhail bin Ahmed al al Mashani, Ibrahim bin Saif al Hamdani, Fahmy al Harthy and presently under Abdullah al Shueili. Mention must also be made of the late Maurice Gent, former Managing Editor, who helped fine tune our writing and editing skills until he was at the helm till 2003. I recall two most happening days at the Observer news desk. The first was 9/11 or the September 11 attacks. As a team we brought out a four-page early morning edition for the readers which was lapped up as the online edition was still in its infancy. The second occurred in June 2007 when the powerful tropical Super Cyclonic storm Gonu struck the Sultanate of Oman hindering daily editorial work. The staff found it very difficult for days to reach the office with road blocks and water seeping all over. We still managed to bring out pictorial editions highlighting

the tragedy and horror around the country for almost a week. I remember with the pride Observer's 25th anniversary in 2006 which was marked with renewed pledge as the daily celebrated with a commemorative birthday cake with Ibrahim bin Saif al Hamdani as the Editor-in-Chief. However, the biggest moment for staffers came in 2009 when the Observer scored a double in the national and regional media competition, winning the No 1 slot in the Oman media awards and the fifth position in the GCC as a whole. 'All the news, every morning', the signature logo of the Oman Observer when it was launched 40 years back in 1981 still continues with the same gusto. From a mere 8-page broadsheet in November 1981 to the present day 20-page edition, the Observer has come a long way and despite the onslaught of the digital media it still is a 'brand' which enjoys an enviable position in the Arabian Gulf.

In the last four decades, Observer has echoed the spirit of the Sultanate of Oman within its portrayal of the world through its journey of the country's achievements, its rich and varied cultural heritage and its breathtaking natural beauty. The editorial team has always given importance to the readers' views and has demonstrated insightful journalism by striking the right balance between national and international affairs ranging from politics to social issues, education, science, technology and sports.

The Observer, was the only English language newspaper available these days and was our source of news. There was no social media and the information highway was in its nascent stage. Responsibly reporting standards of content and quality over the last 4 decades have made this paper steadfast and comprehensive in providing the people of the Sultanate of Oman news from the world over.

DR SATISH NAMBIAR
Chairman of Indian Social Club

DR KIRAN CR DEAN
Middle East College

The Observer remained true to the original values of media which is reporting facts. The fact that the Observer remains a trusted media outlet in Oman is by itself an achievement and testimony to its exceptional quality. In a time when sensationalism and opinionated propaganda are being presented in many air while it continues remains a breath of fresh air while it continues enriching its diverse and relevant content to local community.

BURAIR AL LAWATI
Country Manager, Shell Oman

I congratulate Observer on the completion of 40 years of its publication. Observer has been a great story of determination, hard work and accurate information on local and global affairs with honesty and integrity. For 40 years, Observer has taken a worthy place in the information space of the country. Observer is the legacy of late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said. I wish the whole family of Observer continued success in the future.

AMEER HAMZA

Whoever wants to keep up with what is going on would want to rely on reliable sources and that would be the national newspaper and the Observer is our national newspaper. What distinguishes Observer is its reliable news. Reporting is well balanced. Since the early 80s I have been following Oman Observer now I read news on digital media, but the good thing is the newspaper continues its quality of reliability online as well. Wishing the best on the 40th anniversary and many more to come.

COL (RETD)
ABDULWAHAB AL BALUSHI

I think the first time I read the Oman Daily Observer as a young adult was in 1998 when I was a PR officer at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Muscat. I would like to say then and now one word that has come to mind when I think of the Observer is trust. I also want to thank ODO which gives good coverage of environmental issues in Oman and across the world. Happy 40th birthday to the ODO family.

DANA SARHAN

SUCCESS

As a woman, journalistic work may not be ideal for a female because many sacrifices have to be made for fulfilling both professional responsibilities and family commitments. Achieving success in this kind of a job is not quite simple as it looks anyway; hardship increases two-fold if the journalist is a female

A PROFESSION STRESSFUL YET ENJOYABLE

ZAINAB AL NASSRI

Becoming a journalist wasn't exactly my plan in life. While searching for a suitable job, I came across an advertisement put out by an establishment looking for journalists. "Why not this profession?," I asked myself and applied for it. That time I couldn't foresee what was in store for me and I had no clues as to what the job would be like. I started off my journalism career in 2009 as a reporter for the Oman Arabic newspaper, where I was immediately exposed to the profession of challenges. Three years later, I sought a transfer to the Oman Daily Observer. Despite the long hours you spend in office every day working from morning till evening, I must admit that the job gives overwhelming joy and satisfaction as your job is done and as you see the paper in print!

As a woman living in a conservative community, journalistic work may not be ideal for a female because many sacrifices have to be made for fulfilling both professional responsibilities and family commitments. Achieving success in this kind of a job is not quite simple as it looks anyway; hardship increases two-fold if the journalist is a female.

Many lessons can be learned from the "career of trouble", some of which are: It helps you see different views on a topic; gives the insight to analyse a topic and form an opinion of your own; exposes you to various environments depending on the situation; enables you to speak confidently in front of a

crowd; and contributes to building your personality. Another outstanding feature of journalism is that it brings out your potentials that you never thought ever existed.

Journalism is a critical process exactly like a surgery because any mistake could get the paper shut down. News and stories you write, however, may determine what your future as a journalist would be. That is, the authenticity of the stories you carry is a crucial factor in the stability and growth of your career as well as the reputation of the institution you represent. Moreover, journalists and reporters who publish unauthentic stories from unreliable sources may have to face legal proceedings. So, it is imperative on the part of journalists to ensure that their stories do not violate others' liberty or contain false information. Otherwise, it will not only endanger the reporter's job, it will also put the institution in trouble.

A journalist's job is as strenuous as that of medical workers and military personnel.

Their silent efforts bear fruit in the form of the newspaper that you enjoy reading every day morning. Some call mediapersons "anonymous soldiers" because they are engaged in a fight every day, a fight full of stress and anxiety, yet enjoyable and fun.

I have known the Observer for the past 25 years. I rely on their balanced reporting. They cover wide areas. Besides important political international events decisions and policy changes reported first hand. The part of this newspaper are their sensitive response to the requirements and expectations of their readers. I wish all the best.

BARKA AL BAKRY

ABDALLAH AL RUBAIEY
Anchor and reporter
Oman TV and Radio
Sultanate of Oman

The Observer has become an integral part of this dynamic country and thus it has established itself as a major landmark for the development of journalism. We are very proud of the people who have contributed to it and even more importantly, pose questions for all people in Oman to think about future goals and Vision 2040 as a nation.

KHALEAN AL TOQI

FAUZIA AL KINDY

NADIA ASADY

DR DILIP SINGHY

ADAM COLE
Oman FM

YUTTAR AL RIMAHY
Founder of OCA

I like to celebrate Observer's 40th Anniversary because I am part of it in my own way as I used to read Observer. Observer uses vocabulary which is easy to understand. It covers informative subjects and open to all ideas. If they have been here for all these decades it is because they have earned credibility amongst readers.

Newspapers to me is like food. I cannot stay without reading newspapers. I studied economics and was lucky to work in the same field. To read local news I read the Observer. When I am on holiday I access it online. Observer is the first source of information. Working at Observer has also meant reading the newspaper on the radio. Congratulations to the team as the Observer has been my friend since 80s.

Congratulations Oman Daily Observer on your 40th anniversary. Thank you for sharing with us great information and knowledge of Oman and the world. I have always enjoyed the balance of information in different areas in the Oman Daily Observer, as well as the advances made over the years with the inclusion of podcasts and info graphics. I enjoy the quick updates on key issues, which is great for today's busy lifestyle. I love the feature stories especially on biodiversity. Keep up the great work.

Many congratulations on completing 40 years. Oman Daily Observer is the leading national daily newspaper, providing citizens and residents with first hand authentic information right there at the doorstep and also digitally now, reaching everywhere. It's like the day is not complete unless we read the newspaper. So congratulations once again to the whole team of Oman Daily Observer, continue to shine and grow yet more.

In these digital times and all that makes the world 'newspaper' sounds quite obsolete, not every morning following my twenty drive to the Oman FM studios Observer is the first thing I reach for. It's a ritual, it kicks starts my brain, fires up my thoughts and fills the gaps in my Good Morning Oman, radio show preparation. As we move towards the glorious 51st National Day we also celebrate your 40 years of publications starting us all off on a good foot each morning, thank you.

The Observer has set the standard in English news and journalism over the past 4 decades.

OBSERVER LIVES UP TO ITS MISSION

ALEX P KURIEN

My joy is unbounded as I join the Observer family in celebrating the 40th anniversary of the paper on November 15. In broadsheet format, the Observer was the first English daily newspaper in the Sultanate of Oman.

When I joined the Observer in September, 1987, there was only a minuscule number of publications in the Sultanate of Oman. The transformation of Oman's print medium to a flourishing industry was swift with advancements in state-of-the-art technology in the field of printing. The paper was being printed using a phototypesetting method that uses a photographic process to generate columns of type on a scroll of photographic paper.

This method was rendered obsolete with the swift introduction of computers. While the younger generation with experience on computer page layout was making inroads, the older ones were wrestling with the machine even on how to move the mouse.

The 25 years of my career bear testimony to the enviable and emulative growth of the paper from a modest 8-page to a 28-page publication, absolutely professional in look, content and layout and global



news coverage with special emphasis on neutrality - attributes that stood the Observer in good stead among other regional newspapers.

It was a pleasure to have been associated with a newspaper that strived to embrace high standards and live up to its mission as a local newspaper. Guided by dynamic Omani editors, the Observer sought to put its accent first and foremost on local content that differentiates the Observer from its competitors.

I left the paper and the country with a sigh and a heavy heart. I looked back, in case I am recalled. No, it dawned on me that yesterday is gone and tomorrow is not mine.

The author was the first news editor of Observer from 1987 to 2012.

MEDIA SHOULD STRIKE A BALANCE

KABEER YOUSUF

Amid a deluge of information, the media should try to be impartial and unbiased according to Ibrahim al Hamdani, who was the Editor-in-Chief of Oman Observer Daily between 2004 and 2010.

“As the Chief Editor, I had always maintained to avoid conflicts and biased opinions and instead, never turned any stone unturned in conveying peace and worked to improve image of the Sultanate of Oman as a peaceful and friendly country”, Ibrahim, who had occupied various



posts in administration, media and legal affairs, says. Before his retirement in 2020, he was the head of Research and Studies Administration followed by adviser to the minister. He has also written for the press and online media.

Born in 1964, Al Hamdani holds BA in Law and Political Sciences from Mohammed V University, Rabat, Morocco, and MA in Security and International Relations from Reading University, UK. Ibrahim has also attended a number of courses in Britain, France and India to quench his thirst for knowledge.

He was appointed as Editor-in-

Chief of the Observer in 2004. The Observer won the prize of “Best English Daily in Oman” in 2009 during his term, which also saw the newspaper being ranked among the best five English newspapers in the Gulf in 2008. Ibrahim has covered a number of national and international events for the paper, including the GCC summits, Nato summits and conferences in Brussels and other European capitals.

A highly positive-spirited media man, he continues to write for the local press and is the recipient of the 2009 Media Innovation Prize.

During the Cyclone Gonu which hit the Sultanate of Oman in 2007, he wrote an article on Oman Arabic daily titled “Give me a land and throw me to the cyclone” which indicates the overall support of the people and government at times of disasters.

“I don’t care anything happens to me as long as the state and the people are with me. During the cyclones Gonu in 2007 and Shaheen in 2021, what astonished me more than the damages is the unity of people that challenged their fathomless courage and confidence. They proved that together we can face any calamity.”

News as it happens without fear or favour

SAMUEL KUTTY

Since its roll-out on November 17, 1981, the Observer has kept its goal of keeping readers abreast with the news of the day. Started through a Royal Order, as an eight-page newspaper telling the stories in black and white, it has grown, diversified and matured with time.

The only English-language newspaper to be published on all seven days in the Sultanate of Oman, the Observer has become bolder and more inquisitive. No doubt, this iconic brand, with its uninterrupted journey has developed a unique style, making it an inseparable part of life in the Sultanate of Oman.

Even as the Covid-19 put extra strain on publications in an already tough, competitive industry, the Observer continued to provide important services, without interruption, thanks to the support of a committed government led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The Sultanate pays great attention to media legislation. The Print and Publishing Law was issued in 1984, in a framework of a State of institutions and laws under construction. Amendments were also performed later to some articles of the law in line with the upcoming era requirements.

The Sultanate was also one of the first Arab countries to regulate the visual and audio media sector and allow the establishment of private Radio and TV stations, especially following the issuance of the Law on Private Radio and TV facilities in 2004.

There was also a need to develop the Media legislation system, while updating the existing media laws for consolidation under one law entitled “Oman Media Law”.

A new law upgraded and developed to meet the new developments of the era. Oman’s basic statute especially articles 29 and 31, respectively state: “The freedom of opinion and expression thereof through speech, writing and other means of expression is guaranteed within the limits of the Law” ; “The



Photo by Nasser Al Harrassi

freedom of the press, printing, and publishing is guaranteed according to the terms and conditions prescribed by the Law. Anything that leads to discord, affects the security of the State, or prejudices human dignity or rights, is prohibited”.

In the Sultanate of Oman, newspapers enjoy freedom of expression as granted by the constitution to access information, analyse it and make it public knowledge. So, in that regard, the responsibilities of newspapers

are immense. The Editor-in-Chief, Abdullah al Shueili, said, “We firmly believe in the traditional role of newspapers that they stand and advocate for the good of the public. Newspapers that continue to stand for what is right in the social, environmental and cultural realms will be fulfilling their obligation and satisfying their purpose.”

This is what makes the Observer distinct. It gives the readers different storytelling experiences. It gives them what they want.

It’s an educator, a monitor, a consultant and a household guide and vade mecum, too!

No doubt, it has been a growth par excellence for the Observer. What sets off the newspaper today from its nascent years is its ability to take on all topics, including social and economic changes in the Sultanate of Oman in particular and the region and the world in general.

Known for its objective reporting, Observer does not take sides in its opinions, columns or reportage. While it focuses on the rights and welfare of the Omani population, it does not forget to acknowledge its responsibility towards the well-being of the large number of expatriate population present in the country.

In an era where even conventional newspapers resort to sensationalism and activism for readership and social media followers, the Observer believes in the fact that the media’s primary role is to report news as it happens, without being judgmental.

“Amid online competition and deluge of social media posts, newspapers are nothing short of miracle when you consider how much happens in a day and turn it into a finished product for readers. Of course the newspaper is still a force to reckon with”, says Al Shueili.

Although millions of readers still stick to the traditional news-reading experience, more and more, even the old-school readers, are shifting online as news is delivered in real-time through a dizzying variety of sources.

At the Observer, says Abdullah al Shueili, “We treat our print edition at par with that of online. While we use the online for breaking news, we ensure that all the news of the day whether international, national or regional are printed so as to reach them to our traditional readers”.

Social media are leading, supplementing and complementing what professional news organisations offer, providing fresh source material for reporters, but also competing with them for public attention. But print media is not obsolete yet, and may well never be so! A reader’s time spent flipping through pages could never be replaced by a digital screen!

1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Oman Newspaper House launches Oman Observer from Ruwi premises with 8 pages priced 50 baisa on November 15		Al Omaneya Advertising and Public Relations, a wing of the Observer, was established in 1983 to handle advertising and marketing	Late HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said issues Royal Decree No. 49/84 promulgating the Publications and Publishing Law which governs media, journalism and journalists						Oman Observer launches colour edition with 16 pages in January

‘Hear everyone and listen with interest and empathy’

SAMUEL KUTTY

When you think of the publishing process at a newspaper, what comes into our mind is the picture of a room bustling with activities by editors, reporters, designers, Proof-readers and other personnel associated with them.

But there is another person who is responsible for determining the tone and scope of the publication --the Editor-in-chief. He is the one who ensures the topics to be published are appropriate and that the voice of the publication is consistent.

In an interview, Said bin Khalfan al Harthy, the first Omani to become the editor-in -chief of Oman Daily Observer, shared his experience and also how he brought in changes during a period that started witnessing massive digital transition in the newspaper industry.

Prior to joining print media in 1990, Al Harthy served Oman TV as



assistant director and director from 1986. During his tenure as Editor-in-chief of Observer, he was honoured to become the Chairman of board of directors of Oman Establishment for News, Press, Publications and Advertising with the rank of under-secretary and later as adviser in the Ministry of Information.

A graduate in mass communication from Cairo

University, Al Harthy received practical newsroom knowledge and skills during his training programmes in the US and Germany.

Perhaps, says Al Harthy, what sets off Oman Daily Observer today from its nascent childhood years was mainly thanks to initiative to take on all topics, exploring the frontiers of social and economic changes in the Sultanate of Oman in particular and the region and the world in general.

“It is gratifying to see the progress that I, along with a team of dedicated journalists, was able to achieve during my period as editor-in-chief. I do not forget the fact that the Ministry of Information, which owns the newspaper, extended its full support for the expansion of the newspaper”, he remembers.

It was during the period of Said al Harthy, that the newspaper became a seven-day week publication ending its Thursday and Friday holidays. In addition, his period witnessed the

launch of a number of prestigious magazines like the MoneyWorks and Digital Oman.

To enhance its coverage, the newspaper started subscribing to more news agencies, feature syndicates and tied up with leading international newspapers like Financial Times of London, Times of India etc.

He placed greater stress than ever on full reporting of the news of the day, maintained and emphasised existing good coverage of international news, and added a tabloid section for features with stress on national heritage sites.

The newspaper expansion comprised the roll-out of an eight-page Observer Business, for which he recruited specialised journalists, including this author, for this purpose. The Business Observer, which was initially printed in pink colour, was widely welcomed for its authoritative analysis of national,

regional and global business, finance and industry.

The reason for using pink newsprint, Al Harthy says, “In order to differentiate the Business Observer from other sections of the paper.” Even though the business section is no longer printed in the pink due to changes that have happened in the print media landscape, the Observer website still features a pink background for its business section.

Ours is a country that makes a moral demand on its people, and it's the media that speak up on behalf of the authorities and the people. The job of the media is to hear everyone and, that too, listen with interest and empathy. And give them insights.

“Never overestimate the readers’ knowledge and never underestimate their intelligence. They are more intelligent than us. Adhere to the code of ethics. This human quality is important for journalists,” Al Harthy advises.

Embracing digital first for readers

YERU EBUEN

The newsroom was in chaos. After weeks of preparation, of long meetings and brainstorming, it was finally happening. In October of 2015, Oman Daily Observer, the printed newspaper, was finally putting on a new face. Templates were made. Every department — from Local to Business, to Features and Sports embraced a new playbook. It was quite a challenging journey for everyone involved. For a moment, tensions ran high while editors and designers figured out how to work with the new format.

Observer Editor-in-Chief Abdullah al Shueili, has been part of every discussion. As the final pieces of the puzzle were put into place, he was in the office resolving inquiries coming from all fronts. It has been his dream for a while to give birth to something new, to transform the government-run newspaper into a newspaper that everyone can be proud of not only in content but especially in format taking the best practices of different news agencies from around the world.

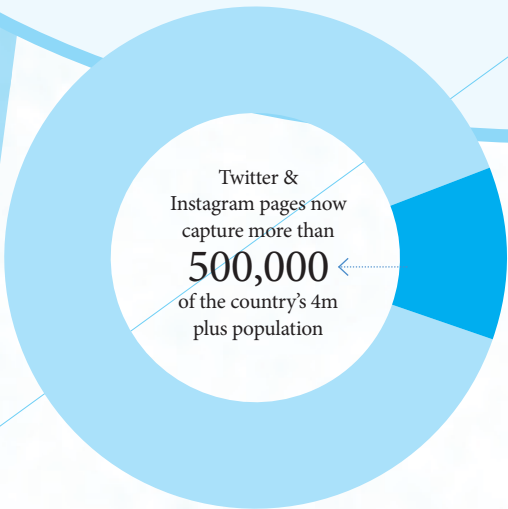
The design of the Observer before 2015 has almost been forgotten now. Today, the newspaper has perfectly refined its style and it's just getting better and better.

Every section has taken its own shape, but it's the kind of style that works well with today's readers. When you open the Observer newspaper today, you will not only have big, captivating visuals but with it comes well-developed stories with evolved branding.

All elements that you see, from the fonts to the paginations, to the blank spaces, had been well thought out taking inspiration from some of the world's best newspapers and making it Observer.

The newspaper you read every day is a combination of 40 years of experience and with it comes Oman Daily Observer's commitment to refining storytelling in this part of the world. This development and evolution had not gone unnoticed and in the last two years alone, some of the designs had been awarded global recognition but something that the newspaper doesn't brag blatantly about. If there's one thing about the Observer, it works in silence and takes pride in doing a good job while not necessarily

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



REFINED

The design of the Observer before 2015 has almost been forgotten now. Today, the newspaper has perfectly refined its style and it's just getting better and better

demanding recognition. As of 2021, as Oman Daily Observer celebrates its 40th Anniversary, it remains to be the only English newspaper that prints 7 days a week. Even amid the pandemic, it forged on, committed to its mandate to bring the latest news and updates to its wanting public.

TRANSFORMING THE DIGITAL NEWSROOM

Oman Daily Observer is a constantly evolving entity that has gone through a massive transformation within the last 40 years.

As the printed newspaper finally made its drastic appearance change, the digital presence also soon followed. When we conducted an informal survey in 2015, nearly 4 out of 10 people usually had no idea what Oman Daily Observer is. With this realization, the campaign for recognition in the digital space became aggressive.

So began the Observer's campaign to also upgrade its website, develop its social media pages, develop its own app and strive to dominate the digital sphere of the country. Al Shueili soon restructured the Digital Team, realigned people and tasked them to study some of the best strategies from other digital newspapers.

This restructuring will then open better opportunities to look at engagement and numbers which will become the driving force for the digital team to experiment not only on content delivery but also production.

As of today, Oman Daily Observer is where you go to verify whether news published by other content producers are accurate or not. It also sets the style of news delivery that has become prevalent in the country today.

In the last three years alone, the newspaper's following also grew massively that the combined organic following of its Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages now capture more than 500,000 of the country's 4 million-plus population.

The Digital Team has been busy studying different platforms as well as experimenting on short-form videos on Snapchat and TikTok, aligning with the business look of LinkedIn as well as studying what connects viewers from the Sultanate of Oman to YouTube. By 2020, the Observer finally launched its new and

improved website that at the beginning of its launching boasts more than a million visits monthly. The website now is not only easy to use but it's more structured, with more focus on visuals to capture the reader's attention. It is also easy to navigate with stories aligned to specific sections.

The goal now is to grow Observer's number by 100% in two years as well as double the following of every social media accounts year on year making it one of the strongest news providers in the country if not the Number 1.

THE FUTURE OF OBSERVER

Despite all these drastic changes happening in just the last five years, Oman Daily Observer is not finished yet.

Al Shueili envisions Observer to be number one when it comes to content which means not only the written format but also the audio and visual presentations.

In the next five years, expect Observer to not only launch one of the best news apps available today but also comprehensive content that ranges different interests. Putting its best members to work and inspiring them to innovate, Observer will definitely be producing not only high-quality podcasts and short-form videos but also documentaries — a full transformation and a realization of its mandate to be a well-rounded news organisation.

While the printed newspaper will also continue to evolve as our legion of designers work to update the pages regularly supported by the most experienced desk editors, journalists and proofreaders, it also looks to capture a large margin of the digital space not only in the Sultanate of Oman but also the neighbouring country and even the world.

Looking at what Oman Daily Observer has accomplished in the last 40 years from the very foundation of what it will be in the future. Just as usual, it will work in silence, improving each segment of the publication but always ushering a new age of better and improved storytelling.

We hope you will continue to accompany us on that journey. See you on our next printed edition and a happy anniversary to the Sultanate of Oman's most reliable news hub.

Internet edition of Oman Observer launched on November 18

Observer launches Friday edition on 28 November

1991

1992

1993

1994

1995

1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

Oman Newspaper House becomes Oman Establishment for Press, News, Publication and Advertising (OEPNPA) after a Royal Decree in 1996. Oman New Agency launched as part of OEPNPA.

Oman Establishment for Press, Publication and Advertising set up by a Royal Decree on 25 June 1997 and all the wings of the organisation were brought under one roof at the Al Ilam Street. ONA separated.

Dedicated business page in pink colour launched in November

The newspaper moved to its new premises from Ruwi to the sprawling campus at Al Ilam street on March 6

Oman joins World Trade Organisation on November 9

Observer launches millennium edition in glossy colour pages

OBSERVER

Over the past Forty years, the Observer has become a part of society's events, by following up with all local and international news. Forty years of brilliance, development and deep communication with the various authorities in the community. It's a trusted source of news for the foreign readers as well. Wish you more progress.

FATMA AL ISMAILY
Ministry of Health

It's with great pleasure to express my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to Oman Daily Observer on its special 40th Anniversary. Throughout these years, you proved to be one of the leading English-language media outlets in the country with high-quality and reliable news, including my national project activities of late HIM Sultan Qaboos. I deeply thank the Observer team for the great support, and wish it a lot of success and prosperity for many years ahead!

HAMOOD AL AZRI

When I lived in the Sultanate of Oman I enjoyed the high quality and great variety of articles in your columns and continue to follow news and views online. May you continue to serve the community with openness and integrity, the quest for truth, appreciation of culture and the youth, and with regard for the views and opinions of the nation's diverse population. Mabrook and greetings to all your readers!

HELEN SAYERS

Forty years, still standing strong. A feat of endurance, persistence, rich culture, fine journalism and unmatched teamwork. Raising awareness of issues that matter to the nation and supporting its people their aim for quality and inclusion. I've loved the paper for decades now, and it just keeps getting better and better! Wishing you all the success as your journey continues."

ALENA DIQUE

On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Oman observer newspaper, I would like to congratulate all its journalists and employees, wishing them continued success. This newspaper, who we all love to get a copy of it every morning while having a cup of coffee, gives all the news and information we need.

HABIB AL ZAWAWI

The Observer has local and international news with in-depth coverage on business. It has a very interesting features section that looks into the society and travel destinations in Oman. Over the years it has evolved to make its presence in the digital world through epaper and social media platforms.

LYUTHA AL MUGHAIRY
Former Ambassador

After graduation in 1983, I worked in the Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral at that time we used to receive the Observer and enjoyed reading. The Observer has also joined us in our conferences as well as symposiums to conserve water and preserve Aflaj. Congratulations on your 40th anniversary and may you continue to carry out important messages on environment.

ZAHIR AL SULAIMANI
Chairman, Oman Water Society

The 40th Anniversary of the Observer is a special occasion that brings back good memories when I was just 3 years of age. I grew up seeing my dad reading this newspaper and encouraging us to read. He wanted us to have a good command of English and also be familiar with whatever is going on in the world. We learned how to respect newspaper

HATIM AL ABDISSALAAM

During the National Days when we were covering the events in the Stadium, we always had the Observer to help us in our broadcast presentation as it was covering many latest news of the day that we needed. Even today after I am retired, I depend on Observer every morning to give me latest news. Observer Happy 40th year, & keep up the wonderful work of Information.

FATHIYA AL HINAI
Former Director, Radio Oman

THE MOST TRUSTED DIGITAL NEWS SOURCE IN OMAN

MIDHUN RAJ

Oman Daily Observer rolled out its website on November 18, 1997, the same year the Sultanate of Oman launched the Internet. In the preceding years, the website was updated everyday at 12.30 pm! Now Observer is present across platforms and apps to provide reliable news real time 24x7. Whether it is pandemic or cyclone, digital Observer has updated news when it happened and pushed back the onslaught of fake reports.

The digital space in the Sultanate of Oman and the rest of the world is teeming with websites, apps and plethora of social media platforms, which spews zillions of posts, news updates, photos and videos.

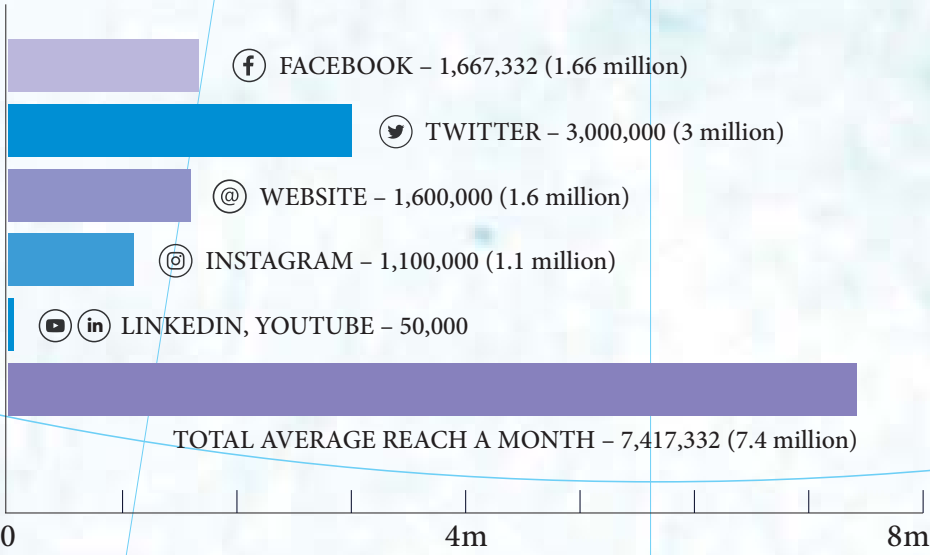
In the past 25 years, the journalistic sphere has gone through radical changes and transformations across the globe, progressively adapting to the contemporary global trends in news-making. For the media industry, 2021 was a year of profound and rapid digital changes following the shock delivered by Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has accelerated the shift to digital from print. Ever since newsrooms across the globe started shifting focus to digital from traditional print, Oman Daily Observer also has embraced the digital under the guidance of Editor-in- Chief Abdullah al Shueili.

Today, the Oman Daily Observer website and digital portfolios across social media platforms are well recognised in the Sultanate of Oman and in the region for its objective, accurate and unbiased reporting.

Oman Daily Observer website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have thousands of unique followers, making it the country's number one English newspaper in the digital front.

AVERAGE MONTHLY REACH OBSERVER WEB AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS 2021 average till October



ONLINE TEAM

Despite being a small team, Observer Digital has proven its worthiness by bringing out the latest updates and news with unmatched speed and accuracy in the Sultanate of Oman, earning 'the most trusted news source in Oman' tag. Ever since the coronavirus pandemic started ravaging across the country, the online team swung into action by providing all necessary updates on the virus outbreak in text, video and graphics format to the

readers. The Observer online team was at the forefront of the crisis, keeping the readers well-informed on the directives from the Ministry of Health and other government establishments.

Today, Observer online is popular among the citizens and expatriates for objective and trustworthy news.

WEBSITE

Our recently relaunched website with state-of-the-art features has already

earned praise among readers and industry experts. The website has a futuristic user interface and experience design. With dedicated pages and subpages for Oman, Business, Features, Sports, World, Opinion, Videos, Podcast, E-paper and Classifieds, the website gives readers freedom to customise and explore content seamlessly. The online team handles news flow independently with reporters to file breaking news and updates for the website exclusively. Oman Daily Observer online is working on a new mobile app for Android and iOS platforms, expected to be released this year. Once released, this will be the first dedicated news app in the country.

VIDEOS

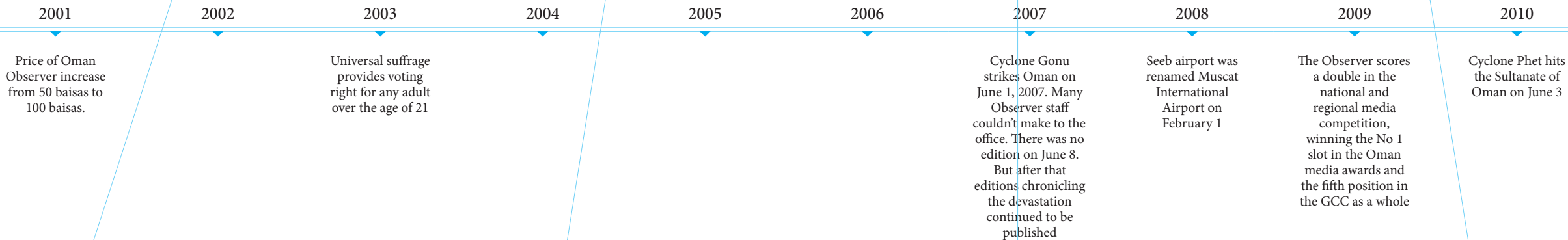
The video team produces daily news videos based on local and international issues in a mobile-friendly format. With help of the online team, the Video Editor produces in-depth documentaries, shedding light on the rich cultural and traditional heritage of the Sultanate of Oman. Videos on tourist attractions and unexplored places are well received among Observer's social media followers.

GRAPHICS

Observer online has a dedicated graphics wing to feed social media platforms and the website with illustrations and graphics. These graphics adds value to the stories, making them visually stunning and informative. News cards are well-received among our social media followers which often go viral across platforms.

PODCASTS

Observer online team has forayed into podcasts territory with regular analysis and talk shows based on the front-page stories.



Assignments off the beaten track

CONRAD PRABHU

Before the advent of dial-up Internet access, when data about the Sultanate of Oman could be gleaned only from yellowing print archives or the limited collection of books in the handful of libraries in operation then, before high-speed wireless and mobile connectivity enabled access to the limitless troves of information stored on servers around the world, before remote-working made it possible for many of us to be productive far removed from our conventional workplaces, there was the humble typewriter!

Around half a dozen of them – bearing the legendary Remington label – were arrayed on simple wooden desks crammed into a tiny room on the upper floor of the Oman Newspaper House (ONH) building (behind the old Ruwi Police Station on Ruwi High Street). This was the pre-Y2K era when newspaper production was essentially a rudimentary affair, characterised by manual typewriters for report-writing, bromides for page-making, darkrooms and light tables for photography, and other low-tech trappings of that period.

The Remingtons were the workhorses of the reporting desk. Heavy and rugged, they were designed not only to help commit thoughts to paper, but also somewhat miraculously, to continue to stay in one piece, as colleagues back from a reporting assignment, seemed to vent their frustrations on the poor, mute machine. There was enough of a din in the tiny room when multiple typewriters went clickety-clack, punctuated periodically by the loud thud of returning carriages.

The transformation to modernity was swift at around the start of the new millennium, when Oman Observer and its sister Arabic daily ‘Oman’ moved to comparatively upscale and custom-designed premises at Madinat Al Ilam. Oman Newspaper House, in the wake of a major restructuring and corporatization exercise, was rebranded as ‘Oman Establishment for Press, Publishing and Advertising (OEPPA). The Remingtons remained behind at the old premises in Ruwi, consigned to history (and hopefully a place in some local museum).

But these icons of that bygone time had a distinct resonance with an era associated with old-school reporting. For want of computers and digital

CLICKETY-CLACK
There was enough of a din in the tiny room when multiple typewriters went clickety-clack, punctuated periodically by the loud thud of returning carriages

resources that were essentially non-existent at the time, journalists functioned the old-fashioned way: personal one-on-one interviews, first-hand accounts of fire accidents or serious vehicle mishaps or flood events, or overnight visits to events and developments occurring outside the capital city. Despite the inconvenience and even drudgery that seemed an inevitable part of these assignments, most times they proved professionally stimulating and satisfying.

But it’s the assignments off-the-beaten-track that proved most memorable and fruitful. Back then, twenty-odd years ago, much of the country’s vast countryside, outside of its key cities and historical towns, was virtually the back of beyond for some of us in the English-language media. Further, with the Omani government preparing to open up the country to foreign tourists for the first time, it became imperative for a national newspaper like the Observer to shine a light on the stunning and diverse attractions – natural, historical and cultural - hidden away in the interior parts of the country.

Assignments off-the-beaten-track were essentially multi-day jaunts to little-known, yet breathtakingly striking parts of the country. The task of organizing the trips, often lasting up to a week, arrangements for our lodgings, coordinating with the local Wali’s Office, and ensuring a safe and productive trip overall fell to Abdullah al Shuhi, well-known Omani photographer, who was on the rolls of the Observer at the time.

Resourceful, enterprising and charming, Abdullah was the Observer’s photographer-of-choice for these trips. Under his auspices, the assignments were transformed into journeys of discovery, exploration and even adventure for the accompanying journalist. While his camera captured the singularly distinctive features of little-visited destinations,

Abdullah also provided instant interpretation support when the interviews were in Arabic – which invariably they were. Local walis, shaikhs and those familiar with the traditional heritage of the area were only too eager to share all they knew about the neighbourhood.

The assignments off-the-beaten-track often generated copious material – much of it being revealed for the first time to the English-language media – to fill an entire series of illustrated features on the wilayat or governorate in question. For expat journalists, they afforded a unique opportunity for a close encounter with the cultural soul of this country, embodied by the warmth of its people, humility and hospitality, and generosity of spirit.

One such memory is that of an elderly Omani whom we met on a dusty road during a visit to enchanting Wajmah in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq. Calling out to him, we asked for directions to the scenic cliffside village. He only let us go after we agreed to join him for kahwa in his bare mud-and-brick home, as he lavished upon us a selection of fresh fruits harvested from his tiny rooftop garden.

Then, Wajmah was indeed off the beaten track. Today, modern roads lead to many of these far-flung but incredibly pretty neighbourhoods, typically featuring a rundown or renovated fortress, date palm oases, bountiful aflaj, and earthen homes. These assignments took us to the far corners of the Sultanate of Oman, including Rakhyyout and Dhalkout in Dhofar Governorate, Bidiya and Al Mintrib in Sharqiya South, and Khasab in Musandam Governorate, among other locations – visits that captured the amazing diversity of the Sultanate of Oman.

TEAMWORK STRENGTH OF OBSERVER

MARYAM KHALFAN

I joined the Observer as the first Omani English language proofreader, where my tasks and scope of work was to read newspaper articles, correct spellings and grammatical mistakes before reports go for pasting in the art department. This was before the introduction of computers.

Although the tasks sound simple, it was not that effortless as our work also involved contact with chemicals and fumes that were used in the process to fill in the bromide rolls in the machine. Prior to our official task, we were also mandated to stand by to cut, sort, and attach the prints with respective hardcopies. The routine task also included cleansing and printing of the bromide copies. We also had to ensure that the final print does not have either a stain or a mistake of any sort before submission to other respective departments.

Generally, the other significant challenge we encountered for several years was the exposure to smoke and vapours from the paints and solvents used



during the printing process of the newspapers, books, and other materials. But when we shifted to an eco-friendly building housing an advanced King press, we were relieved of the exposure to harmful pollutants.

However, we enjoyed and valued our work with integrity. We worked with confidence and commitment to an extent that even with the absence of the administrators, the quality of the newspaper’s workflow and authenticity was never compromised.

Looking back, I am certainly privileged to have been associated with the incredible evolution witnessed by this prestigious newspaper. I remember with immense pride and happiness the day I was transferred to work as a reporter with a highly

experienced team in 1999 after I completed a ‘golden opportunity’ of a six-month intensive training programme in journalism sponsored by the government of India.

I recall, in the first of many major changes, it was in the 1990s that the Observer paved the way for several Omanis to take up job opportunities in this newspaper starting with the appointment of Said bin Khalfan Al Harthy as the first Omani Editor-in-Chief of the ODO.

It was during the preceding few years that other Omani men joined the Observer’s core team. In fact, it was during Al Harthy’s administrative leadership, determination, and motivation skills that significantly contributed to the transformation and success of the Observer and its staff. Today, I still cherish the commitment and spirit of teamwork that the legends of the Observer have instilled in the organisation that has truly transformed this paper to success even as it continues to hold on to its position as the preferred official English language newspaper in Oman.

Observer crosses a significant milestone after completing a tremendous journey of growth and serving the community with responsible journalism for 40 years. I consider myself fortunate to have witnessed the progress of the publication as the country moves into the 51st National Day of the Renaissance. The Observer has proven itself to be one of the most reliable sources of information. As a reader, I have always commended the professional quality that it brings to its readership in this age of media.

JOSE CHACKO
Partner, Crowe Oman

We cannot hold a torch to light another’s path without brightening our own. For four decades, Observer has been a beacon of light, brightening the paths of stories of both people and places alike. Thank you for sharing my adventures of my daring to step out of my comfort zone and learn from these humbling experiences, in the hope to inspire people in all walks of life to reach beyond what they think they are capable of. Congratulations to 40 years of signing up to a life of adventure!

ANISA AL RAISI

This is a proud moment for Observer on completion of 40 significant years. Observer has filled our lives with the latest updates on politics, sports, fashion, gourmet, adventure and much more. The team of dedicated, passionate journalists are responsible for this success. I could not be prouder being associated with you through following your news reported by your passionate and dedicated journalists. My good wishes and blessings are with you all in Oman Daily Observer for endless future years of success.

DR MARY ANN ROBERT

2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

Newspaper undergoes major makeover in January
Observer Features, Observer Business in a pull out.

Observer wins Society for News Design Award for excellence for coverage of 2019 Gulf Cup in February.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said departs for the heavenly abode after 49 years in Power on January 11. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik sworn in as new Sultan on the same day

2021
For the first time since Gona, the Observer stops print edition in the wake of severe Covid-19 outbreak on March 23 following orders of the Supreme Committee to control the pandemic. Printing resumes on August 17 after 148 days or four months and 26 days. The Observer unveils a new website in June

OEPPA scrapped. Oman Observer and Oman Arabic come under the Ministry of Information after a Royal Decree on August 18