

Oman, Algeria sign 8 MoUs

The Sultanate of Oman and the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on Tuesday signed eight memoranda of understanding (MoUs) as part of the Algerian President's state visit to Oman. The MoUs deal with cooperation in higher education, research, education, financial services, employment, training, the media, the environment, sustainable development, investment and the organisation of exhibitions, events and conferences. **DETAILS ON P3**

SUNRISE - 06:12 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR - 04:55 AM
DHUHR - 11:56 PM
ASR - 03:10 PM
MAGHRIB - 05:35 PM
ISHA - 06:46 PM



HM, Algerian President hold official talks

P R E S I D E N T T E B B O U N E A C C O R D E D O F F I C I A L W E L C O M E

ALGERIAN
PRESIDENT
GIVEN
WELCOME
WITH 21-GUN
SALUTE

HM, ALGERIAN
PRESIDENT
REVIEW
VARIOUS
FIELDS OF
COOPERATION

TALKS TO
OPEN UP NEW
VISTAS OF
PARTNERSHIP
AND
INVESTMENT



TWO LEADERS
DISCUSS
CURRENT
SITUATION IN
THE REGION

RELATIONS
ENTER A
STAGE OF
FURTHER
GROWTH
AND
PROSPERITY

MOUS TO
HELP IN
EXCHANGE OF
KNOWLEDGE
AND
EXPERTISE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, held an official session of talks at Al Alam Palace on Tuesday.

At the outset of the session, His Majesty the Sultan reiterated his welcome to President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and his accompanying delegation, wishing this visit a success for the welfare of the two countries and their peoples.

On his turn, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune expressed his utmost thanks and

appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for the warm welcome and hospitality.

The session reviewed the fields of cooperation between the two countries in a manner that contributes in opening up new vistas of partnership and investment.

The two leaders discussed the current situations and exchanged opinion on them with the prime aim of achieving security and peace in the region.

The official session of talks was attended from the Omani side by HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy

Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister,

Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Dr Hamad bin Said al Oufi, Head of the Private Office, Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat (Head of the Mission of Honour), and Saif bin Nasser al Bada'ei, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Meanwhile, it was attended from the Algerian side by Ahmed Attaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad, Laaziz Faïd, Minister of Finance, Mohammed Arkab, Minister

of Energy and Mines, Kamal Badri, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Mohamed Tarek Belaribi, Minister of Housing, Urban Planning and the City, Tayeb Zitouni, Minister of Trade and Exports Promotion, Fazia Dahleb, Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy, and Dr Mohammed Ali Boughazi, Ambassador of Algeria to Oman.

Earlier, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune was accorded an official welcome on the occasion of his state visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

Upon the arrival of the motorcade of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and President Tebboune at Al Alam Palace courtyard, His Majesty the Sultan accompanied the Algerian President to the Dais of Honour where the national Anthem of Algeria was played, while the artillery fired a 21-gun salute for the guest President.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying President Tebboune, wishing them a successful visit and a pleasant stay. **SEE ALSO PAGES 2 and 3**

His Majesty hosts dinner in honour of Algerian President



HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK hosted an official dinner at Al Alam Palace guesthouse on Tuesday evening in honour of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Prior to the dinner, His Majesty the Sultan and President Tebboune exchanged commemorative gifts on the occasion of the Algerian President's visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty the Sultan conferred 'Al Said Order', Oman's most lofty accolade, on President Tebboune, in commendation for the President and in manifestation of the deep-rooted fraternal relations binding the two countries and their peoples.

On his turn, President Tebboune awarded His Majesty the Sultan the National Order of Merit 'Athir' Algeria's most magnificent decoration.

His Majesty the Sultan also presented the Algerian President with a commemorative gift, which was an Omani dagger.

Meanwhile, President Tebboune presented an Algerian Sword as a gift for His Majesty.

The dinner was attended by some members of the Royal Family, ministers, chairmen of the State Council and Majlis Ash'shura, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces and the Royal Oman Police, under-secretaries, ambassadors at the Foreign Ministry and some CEOs. — ONA



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HM, Algerian President hold official talks



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ALGERIAN PRESIDENT ACCORDED OFFICIAL WELCOME



MUSCAT President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria was accorded an official welcome on Tuesday on the occasion of his state visit to the Sultanate of Oman. Upon the arrival of the motorcade

of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and President Tebboune at Al Alam Palace courtyard, His Majesty the Sultan accompanied the Algerian President to the Dais of Honour where the national anthem of Algeria was played, while the artillery fired a 21-gun salute for the guest President.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan shook hands with members of the official delegation accompanying President Tebboune, wishing them a successful visit and a pleasant stay. On his turn, the guest shook hands with some members of the Royal Family,

Chairmen of the State Council and Majlis Ash'shura, ministers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and the Royal Oman Police (ROP). After that, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and President Abdelmadjid Tebboune proceeded to the hall where they took coffee. — ONA



Oman, Algeria sign 8 memoranda of understanding

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The memoranda were signed on behalf of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister; Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance; Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion; and Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals



Promotion; and Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals. On behalf of Algeria, the MoUs were signed by Ahmed Attaf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad; Kamel Baddari, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research;

Laaziz Faid, Minister of Finance; Tayeb Zitouni, Minister of Trade and Exports Promotion; Fazia Dahleb, Minister of Environment and Renewable Energy; and Omar Rekkache, Director General of the Algerian Investment Promotion Agency. Sayyid Badr told Oman News

Agency (ONA) that the memoranda of understanding constitute part of a strategy to exchange knowledge and expertise. The MoUs focus on priorities between the two countries and help stimulate partnership and rapprochement, both at the level of government institutions and

private sector establishments, he added. Sayyid Badr pointed out that Omani-Algerian relations are set to enter a stage of further growth and prosperity, with follow-up mechanisms in place to ensure that both sides gain benefits. He stressed the importance of supporting this approach to help realise further rapprochement, notably in economic and investment fields. For his part, Ahmed Attaf told ONA that the signing of the MoUs aims at generating mutual benefits. He pointed out that the pacts pave the way for expanding many areas of bilateral cooperation, with emphasis on priorities. — ONA

OMAN

PROGRESSREVIEW



The Office members underscored the importance of understanding the nature of the social structure to improve quality of life

SHURA REVIEWS
GOV'T RESPONSES
TO QUESTIONS

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 29

The Office of Majlis Ash'shura held its fifteenth regular meeting of the first annual session of the tenth term under the chairmanship of Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura, on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the Office of Majlis Ash'shura discussed the possibility of expanding the benefits provided by the social protection system to include other segments such as job-seekers.

The Office members underscored the importance of understanding the nature of the social structure in the Sultanate of Oman in terms of income level and the extent of eligibility for assistance and benefits to improve the quality of life and to raise the standard of living for low-income segments.

The meeting reviewed the work plans of the standing committees of Majlis Ash'shura and their executive programmes for the second annual session (2024-2025) of the tenth term of the Majlis (2023-2027).

In addition, the Office discussed a number of governmental responses to a number of follow-up tools submitted by the members of Majlis Ash'shura.

These included reviewing the response provided by the minister of education to a parliamentary question about the appointment of non-Omani teachers.

The response stated that the ministry is working hard in coordination with the relevant authorities to appoint all Omani graduates who meet the conditions in accordance with the needs of the ministry.

The meeting also reviewed the response of the minister of commerce, industry and investment promotion to the request for a briefing regarding foreign investment in the Sultanate of Oman.

The response stated that the government endeavouring to create an appropriate environment to attract investments by improving the economic environment, providing incentives and amending the laws and legislation.

Also reviewed at the meeting was the response of the CEO of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) to a request for a briefing on the fees imposed by the Central Bank of Oman on commercial stores for the use of the electronic payment service.

In its response, the CBO said that it is making efforts to develop the banking and financial sector in the Sultanate of Oman and spread the electronic payment services in commercial activities in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), to enhance digital transformation and e-services.

Honourable Lady’s letter
given to National Museum

DR MADEEHA BINT Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education, formally presented the original letter of Her Highness the Honourable Lady, Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, to Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum.

The meeting took place at the Ministry's General Diwan and was attended by key education officials, including Dr Said al Amri, Head of the Minister's Office; Dr Ali al Shukaili, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education in Muscat Governorate; Dr Sheikha al Shaabi, Assistant Director-General for Educational Affairs; and Thuraya al Habsi, Headmaster of Jawharat Muscat Basic Education School.

Dr Ali Al Shukaili in his speech highlighted the honour brought by Her Highness's visit, describing it as a motivational and inspiring message to the entire educational sector. He expressed confidence that this visit would encourage educational departments across Oman to strive harder towards achieving ambitious educational objectives.

The letter was composed during Her Highness's visit to Jawharat Muscat Basic Education School (Grades 5-6) on October 17, coinciding with Omani Women's Day. Her Highness praised the school's efforts in enhancing the educational process and developing students' skills and abilities. She also emphasised the school's significant societal role in promoting values and positive behaviour for the benefit of all segments of society. Her Highness stressed the importance of improving the quality of education in Oman and extended her best wishes to the school in achieving its noble goals aligned with the vision of His Majesty the Sultan.

Thuraya al Habsi, the school's headmaster, reflected on the significance of the visit, which coincided with Omani Women's Day. She noted Her Highness's keen interest in education and her awareness of the reality of education in Oman. Al Habsi further emphasised Her Highness's focus on instilling values, traditions, and Omani identity in the younger generation through education.



Dr Madeeha presenting the original letter of Honourable Lady, the Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, to Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi

ONA at Kuwait FANA General Assembly Conference

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Information (MoI), represented by the Oman News Agency (ONA), took part in the 51st General Assembly of the Federation of Arab News Agencies (FANA), held in Kuwait.

The conference addressed key issues, focusing on strengthening media cooperation among member states, exchanging expertise in electronic news, and advancing media work methods amidst evolving modern technologies.

Abdulrahman Badah Al Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs of Kuwait, received the conference participants.



Discussions highlighted the crucial role of Arab news agencies in delivering accurate and reliable information to audiences in the region amid global events.

The dialogue also emphasised the need to adapt to modern media technologies and foster greater media collaboration among member agencies.

— ONA

Oman, Algeria can boost ties with exchange of medical, academic know-how

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The existing bilateral relations between Oman and Algeria can be further enhanced with the exchange of academic and medical expertise and know-how, according to the Algerian academics and medical practitioners in the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr Ahmed Hamid Wodjana, Specialist, Cardiac Surgery at the Royal Hospital, who spent nearly 26 years in the country, feels Oman is his professional home and wants to serve the country throughout while sharing knowledge.

“Oman is a beautiful country with most beautiful people who make you feel at home. Working with Omani nationals is really a cherishable experience. We can



Dr Ahmed Wodjana, Royal Hospital

initiate ways to inculcate medical knowledge as well as best practices to benefit both nations,” Dr Ahmed, who has met with the visiting Algerian president, told the Observer.

For him, what gave Oman's



Dr Mohammed Farfur, SQU

healthcare a shot in the arm is the digitisation of all services in line with the Oman Vision 2040.

“I would say digitisation has given Oman's healthcare sector an upper hand and the journey is continuing with Oman Vision

2040. Any country in the Middle East region or elsewhere has a lot to learn from Oman's people-oriented programmes,” Dr Ahmed said.

He added that other countries can learn how tradition and culture are grossly incorporated in any national development plans.

“Oman is a model country for many other countries to emulate and the people-based developments are noteworthy.”

Dr Mohammed Farfur, Associate Professor, Geophysics, SQU, feels that working in the Sultanate of Oman is a great experience and he is glad that he could take part in developing the future generation of graduates.

“I'm very close to my Omani colleagues, friends and students because they are very hospitable and accommodating. Oman's

higher education system is very clear and more of a life-skill oriented that will certainly help students achieve greater heights,” Dr Mohammed said.

He feels that living and working in Oman for over 8 years has made him one among his colleagues and he feels no more a stranger with his Omani well-wishers around. He likes everything about the country, be it the landscape, the people or the quality of life.

“We help Omani students carry out their research and studies and we, teachers, are striving to give back to the country in whichever way we could and remain loyal to the country of our choice,” Dr Mohammed said.

There has been an increasing number of visitors from Algeria and vice versa.

Oman hosts meet on dengue vector control

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY, in collaboration with key public authorities such as the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the Royal Oman Police (ROP), is demonstrating its unwavering commitment to public health through numerous initiatives aimed at combating disease vectors, according to Dr Jean Jabbour, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Representative in Oman.

Speaking at the 1st International Conference on Vector Control Intervention for Dengue Fever, held under the patronage of Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health, and organised by Muscat Municipality in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and WHO at the JW Marriott, Dr Jabbour highlighted Muscat Municipality's relentless efforts in controlling the spread of



Conference on dengue fever vector control kicks off in Muscat

dengue fever through effective strategies.

“We, at WHO, look forward to strengthening cooperation with local and international partners to develop sustainable solutions to these pressing health challenges. This conference in Oman demonstrates our commitment to advancing scientific research and innovation in public health. Guided by the vision of our wise leadership, Oman aspires to play an active and leading role in global efforts to control disease vectors and develop innovative solutions that enhance public health both region-

ally and internationally,” Dr Jabbour remarked.

The conference, aimed at creating a comprehensive knowledge pool for tackling vector-borne diseases, particularly Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, has attracted researchers, experts, practitioners, and stakeholders in pest control, environmental health, and public health. The three-day event includes international speakers from WHO and brings together representatives from public health agencies, academic institutions, and private sector players focusing on vector management.

Government agencies focused on public health, epidemic control, and infectious diseases, alongside academic institutions specialising in entomology and disease prevention, are participating. Pest control companies, developers of biological and technological solutions, public health professionals, environmental advocacy groups, and community members are also actively engaged in the two-day event.

In addition to the Muscat Municipality, the conference is supported by the Ministry of Health, Royal Oman Police, OPAZ — Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR), the Ministry of Labour (MoL), Knowledge Oasis Muscat, Nama Group, Be’ah, and other contributing entities.

8-day Oman Science Festival from Nov 4

MUSCAT: The Oman Science Festival will be held from November 4 and will continue for 8 days at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC). The festival will see the participation of institutions, government, military, and private agencies besides the Ministry of Education (MoE). Activities included will be interactive scientific lectures, innovations exhibitions, dialogue sessions, competitions, and a scientific theatre.

The Ministry of Education will hold a media conference for the fourth version of Oman Science Festival 2024, in the presence of Dr Abdullah bin



Logo of Oman Science Festival

Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, Chairman of main committee of the festival, members of the organising commit-

tees, and media institutes today at Crowne Plaza hotel.

The media conference will include a film of the festival, visual display of the vision, goals, activities, and pillars of the Oman Science Festival 2024.

Oman Science Festival aims to extend science to students and society at ease, in a way that encourages stimulation of interactive creative participation, strengthening the scientific thinking for students, finding positive outcomes to keep up with changes, plus future development according to the disseminations of science and technology.



Sultanate of Oman The Supreme Judicial Council

Biddings Announcement

The Supreme Judicial Council announces its desire to submit the following Biddings:

Bidding No.	Bidding Title	Bidding Document Sales End Date	Bid Submission Closing	Bidding Document Fee (Non-refundable)
01/2024 Recall-1	Management & Operation of Cafes in: (General Secretariat of the Supreme Judicial Council in Madinat Al-Irfan, Supreme Court, Court Complexes: Nizwa, Rustaq, Sohar).	20/11/2024	02/12/2024	RO 25/-
03/2024	Management & Operation of a Transaction Clearance Office in Court Complexes: (Muscat, Ibra).	20/11/2024	02/12/2024	RO 25/-

Companies and institutions wishing to obtain bidding documents may visit the Financial Affairs Department on the first floor of the General Secretariat building of the Supreme Judicial Council in Madinat Al-Irfan during official working hours. To receive the bidding conditions brochure against the specified financial fee.

The envelopes must be kept closed and sealed with red wax, with the phrase (café rental bid and the name of the bidder) written on them, provided that the name of the bidder or anything referring to him is not written on the envelope. Bids are submitted to the Tenders and Contracts Department in the same building and on the first floor during official working hours, before the hour. 10 a.m. on Thursday, 02/12/2024

- Any bid received after the specified date or that does not meet the conditions will not be considered.



Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
456/2024	Supply and installation of an electric generator at the General Directorate of Persons with Disabilities at Al Khoudh	Companies specialized in the field of supplying electrical, mechanical and industrial machinery and equipment and spare parts and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent or first degree	Thursday 14-11-2024 02:00 PM	Thursday 28-11-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
458/2024	Providing cleaning services for the Ministry's General Diwan building and its affiliated buildings in Muscat Governorate	Companies specialized in the field of cleaning, laundry and pest control services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Sunday 17-11-2024 02:00 PM	Wednesday 04-12-2024 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) . On **Wednesday 30/10/2024**.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (**24402200**).

“ The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry”

www.mosd.gov.om

TENDER NOTICE

Mazoon Mining LLC, a subsidiary of Minerals Development Oman (MDO), is developing the Yanqul Copper Project in Al Dhahirah Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman. The project comprises five open-pit mines that will feed copper ore to a new processing plant to produce copper concentrate.

Mazoon Mining would like to invite qualified Experienced Local Companies to participate in the following tender:

Tender No.	5185-1100
Tender Title	Bulk Earthworks
Closing Date of Selling	4 November 2024
Eligibility (Mandatory)	Bidders must have proven experience in providing bulk earthworks on major process plants or similar major infrastructure projects. Must demonstrate on a minimum of two (2) projects: • A minimum contract value of OMR 5,000,000 • Placement of 600,000 m3 of fill • Excavation of 300,000 m3 At least one (1) of the projects must have been undertaken on a major industrial process plant.
Tender Fee	OMR 1,000 (Non-Refundable)

- SMEs with Riyada cards are exempted from payment of tender fees.
- Tender fees shall only be accepted through bank deposit in the following bank account:

Account Name : Mazoon Mining LLC.

Bank Name : Sohar International Bank SAOG

Branch : Qurum Branch

Account : 005020042486

IBAN : OM720300000005020042486
- Copy of the original bank deposit receipt confirming the deposit and identifying the bidders name and the tender number must be forwarded via email, to tenders@mazoonmining.om to request the release of the tender documents. Payments received after the closing date of selling will not be refunded. MMC retains the right to correspond solely with companies satisfying the mandatory tender requirements before the release of the tender documents. Responses received that do not comply with the eligibility (mandatory) requirements will be removed from evaluation and will not be eligible for shortlisting.
- For any inquiries, clarifications, or submissions, please email: tenders@mazoonmining.om

www.mdo.om

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Japan's Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba bows to LDP lawmakers onstage, at the party's headquarters in Tokyo. — AFP

Japan prime minister scrambles for support

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's ruling party was reportedly locked in talks to form new alliances on Tuesday after losing its parliamentary majority in an election debacle. The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed Japan almost non-stop since 1955, and coalition partner Komeito fell short of a majority in Sunday's election, official results confirmed on Tuesday. Ishiba said he would not quit despite his party's worst election result in 15 years, indicating he would head a minority government as he was not considering a broader coalition "at this point". But media reports on Tuesday said the LDP was talking to opposition parties about arrangements to ensure Ishiba can get legislation through -- and also remain prime minister. Together with the Komeito party, the LDP won 215 of parliament's 465 lower house seats. According to the Yomiuri newspaper, Ishiba has decided to seek a "partial" coalition with the centrist DPP, whose manifesto included subsidies for reducing energy bills. — AFP



People displaced from eastern areas of Sudan's al-Jazira state arrive to Gedaref city. — AFP

Over 14 million people displaced in Sudan

GENEVA: The head of the International Organization for Migration said on Tuesday that over 14 million people had fled their homes in Sudan, either inside the country or over its borders, with some 200,000 people fleeing since last month. "The 11 million are internally displaced within the country, the 3.1 million are those who have crossed borders. So that's actually over 14 million people who are on the move right now," IOM Director-General Amy Pope told reporters. She later added that the total figure included some people who were displaced before the civil war began in April 2023. Meanwhile, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have committed "staggering" levels of abuse, assaulting civilians as troops advance and abducting some women during the more than 18-month war, a UN mission said on Tuesday. Victims have ranged between eight and 75 years with most physical violence committed in an attempt to punish people for perceived links to enemies. — Reuters

RUSSIA ADVANCES AS CONCERN RISES OVER N KOREAN TROOPS

KYIV: Moscow said on Tuesday it had seized the war-battered mining town of Selydove in eastern Ukraine where Kyiv's forces are buckling and as concern grows in Kyiv and abroad over North Korea's expanding military ties with Russia. The Kremlin's forces have been advancing rapidly across the sprawling eastern front where exhausted and outgunned Ukrainian troops are having to

cede ground, appealing for more Western aid. Russia's claims that its troops had captured four new settlements in the industrial Donetsk region came as Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky and South Korean's president agreed deeper security cooperation after allies said thousands of North Korean troops were transferred to Russia to aid its offensive.

The Russian defence ministry said its forces had "fully liberated" Selydove, a town of Soviet-era buildings whose estimated population of around 21,000 people have fled from Moscow's drone and rocket attacks. The gains announced by Moscow are just the latest in a string of Russian advances that have gained momentum since February. — AFP



Georgian opposition supporters rally to protest election results, outside the parliament building in central Tbilisi. — AFP

GEORGIA TO RECOUNT VOTES IN DISPUTED POLL

TBILISI: Georgia's central election commission said it was set to partially recount ballots after opposition parties denounced the weekend parliamentary election as "stolen". Defying the EU's concerns over the vote, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban -- current holder of the bloc's rotating presidency and the Kremlin's closest EU associate -- arrived in Tbilisi on Monday and hailed the vote as democratic. Pro-Western opposition parties have refused to recognise the results of Saturday's vote,

which they claim was falsified in favour of the ruling Georgian Dream party. Georgia's electoral commission said in a statement that "district election commissions will conduct recounts of ballots from five polling stations randomly selected in each election district," making up about 14 per cent of the vote. President Salome Zurbishvili has declared the election results "illegitimate", alleging election interference by a "Russian special operation", a claim that was rejected by the Kremlin. — AFP

UNRWA ban could kill more children in Gaza

GENEVA: Israel's decision to ban the UN relief agency UNRWA could result in the deaths of more children and represent a form of collective punishment for Gazans if fully implemented, UN agencies said on Tuesday. A law passed by Israel on Monday to ban the UN Palestinian refugee agency from operating inside Israel has raised concerns about its ability to provide relief in Gaza after over a year of war. The agency, which employs thousands of people in Gaza, provides nearly the entire population of the coastal enclave with basic supplies and needs access through Israel. "If UNRWA is unable to operate, it'll likely see the collapse of the humanitarian system in Gaza," said Unicef spokesperson James Elder, who has worked extensively in Gaza since the October 7 war began. "So a decision such as this suddenly means that a new way has been found to kill children." Palestinian health authorities' data show that over 13,300 children whose identities have been confirmed have been killed in the Gaza war. Many more are believed to have died from diseases due to a collapsing medical system and food and water shortages. Other UN agencies described UNRWA's work as indispensable. The World Health Organization's Tarik Jasarevic said that about a third of the healthcare workers helping with the ongoing polio vaccination campaign for children in Gaza work with UNRWA. UNRWA has about 1,000 health workers in Gaza, he added. In response to a question about whether the ban represented a form of collective punishment against Gazans, UN humanitarian office spokesperson Jens Laerke said: "I think it is a fair description of what they have decided here, if implemented, that this would add to the acts of collective punishment that



Palestinians wait to receive bread outside a bakery in Khan Yunis on the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

we have seen imposed on Gaza." Collective punishment, which amounts to a war crime, is a term referring to sanctions or harassment against a group taken in retaliation for acts by individual members of that group. Israel says it makes all possible efforts to avoid civilian casualties and accuses Palestinian group Hamas of deliberately basing its fighters in residential areas. Explaining the ban, Israeli officials cited

the involvement of UNRWA staffers in the October 7, 2023 attack on southern Israel which triggered the Gaza war. The UN said in August that nine UNRWA staff may have been involved in the attacks and fired them. The head of the International Organization for Migration, Amy Pope, said IOM could not replace UNRWA in Gaza but that it could provide more relief to those in crisis. — Reuters

SECURITY DEAL

Nato and EU chiefs agree on task force



Nato Secretary-General Mark Rutte and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that they had agreed to set up a new high-level task force to strengthen the ties between the military alliance and the European Union. Rutte and von der Leyen met to discuss the Nato-EU partnership. In a statement, they warned that the deployment of North Korean soldiers in Russia "represented a significant escalation of the war against Ukraine." — Reuters

AGAINST THE LAW

Judge summons Spain PM's wife in probe



A judge investigating Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez's wife Begona Gomez has opened a fresh probe on Tuesday for alleged misappropriation and summoned her to testify. The latest complaint widens Juan Carlos Peinado's ongoing investigation against Gomez for alleged corruption and influence-peddling that has piled pressure on the country's top man Sanchez's minority left-wing government. — AFP

VIOLENCE VICTIMS

11 killed in Mozambique vote protests



In the latest unrest, police in Mozambique killed at least 11 people and injured more than 50 others in violence after a disputed presidential election this month, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Tuesday. Hundreds of opposition supporters took to the streets last week, leading to clashes with riot police. "Mozambique security forces killed at least 11 people," HRW said, adding that "over 50 people suffered serious gunshot wounds" on October 24 and 25. — AFP

US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2024



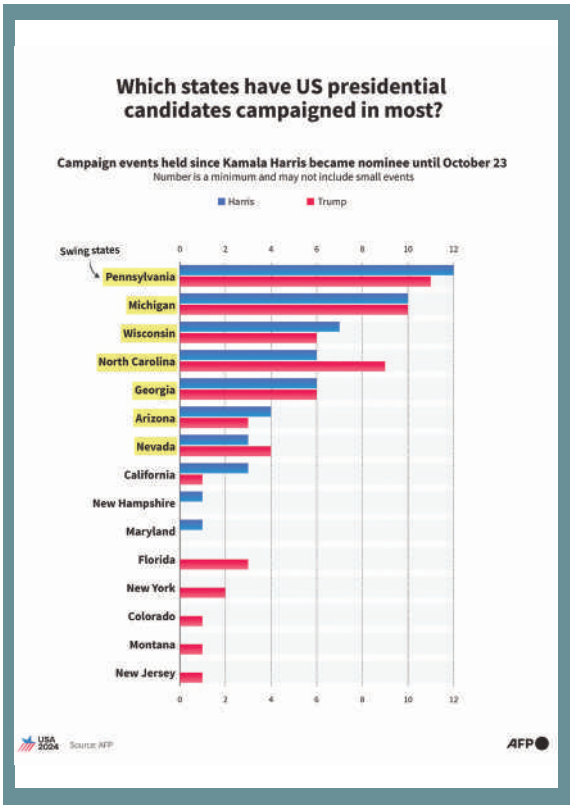
INFOCUS



Melania Trump waves on stage during a Republican presidential nominee and former US president Donald Trump rally at Madison Square Garden, in New York. — Reuters



Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate Tim Walz gestures onstage as he attends a campaign rally for Democratic presidential nominee US Vice-President Kamala Harris and concert in Ann Arbor, Michigan. — Reuters



Supporters react as former US president Barack Obama attends a campaign rally for Democratic presidential nominee US Vice-President Kamala Harris in Philadelphia. — Reuters



Supporters of former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gather to show their support near his residence at Mar-a-Lago in West Palm Beach, Florida. — AFP

HARRIS DIVES INTO A FRENETIC FINAL WEEK

NICHOLAS NEHAMAS
AND REID J. EPSTEIN

VICE-PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS raced across Michigan on October 28, 2024, making three stops in the battleground state to begin a furious final week of her presidential campaign. She and her running mate, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota, capped the day with a joint appearance in Ann Arbor, where they addressed an outdoor crowd on a brisk evening. Both delivered what has evolved into their standard stump speeches and avoided bringing up the racist remarks delivered by speakers at former president Donald Trump’s rally at Madison Square Garden on October 27.

After weeks of explicit appeals to Republicans, Harris sprinkled her speech near the University of Michigan’s campus with outreach to progressive Democrats. She said health care “should be a right, and not just a privilege for those who can afford it.”

When she was interrupted by protesters shouting about American policy toward Israel and the Gaza Strip, she told them,



Vice-President Kamala Harris, the Democratic presidential nominee, delivers remarks at the Hemlock Semiconductor factory in Thomas Township. — NYT

“I hear you.” “We all want this war to end as soon as possible and to get the hostages out,” Harris said. “I will do everything in my power to make it so.”

Walz addressed gun violence, a topic that polls show resonates deeply with

young voters who have grown up participating in active-shooter drills in their schools. He first said that freedom includes being “free to send your kids to school without them being shot dead in the halls,” then took a rhetorical jab at Trump.

“I’ll take no crap on this,” Walz said. “Both members of the Democratic ticket are gun owners. The Republican nominee can’t pass a background check.”

The rally in Ann Arbor, with a crowd that campaign officials estimated at 21,000 people, was the campaign’s first there since Harris replaced President Joe Biden as the Democratic nominee. Though the city is a Democratic stronghold that is home to Michigan’s flagship state university, it has also been a hub of resistance to American support for the Israel-Hamas war.

Just over a week before Election Day, Harris is increasingly speaking to Americans who are the least likely to vote or engage in politics. Her Michigan tour came as more than 1.8 million Michiganders — about a quarter of all registered voters — have already cast their ballots, according to data from the state secretary of state’s office. — NYT

Michelle decries ‘double standard’ treatment of Trump and Harris

REBECCA DAVIS O’BRIEN

At a rally on Saturday night in Michigan, the former first lady reflected, with palpable disbelief and outrage, on the double standard she believes Harris faces.

“When you lay out the options, this choice isn’t even close,” Obama told the crowd. “But whether it’s online or in the media or in our social circles, there are folks who say they’re not sure about Kamala.”

“They accuse her of not providing enough policy detail. Some wonder: Do



Former first lady Michelle Obama speaks during a campaign rally for Vice-President Kamala Harris in Kalamazoo. — NYT

we really know her? Is she too aggressive? Is she not aggressive enough? There are folks sowing seeds of doubt about whether she’s

who she appears to be.

“Voters have every right to ask hard questions of any candidate seeking office,” she continued, “but can someone tell me why we are once again holding Kamala to a higher standard than her opponent?”

The question suggested an impatience not just with this campaign, but with the entire political career of Donald Trump, and the perception that he has now twice competed against accomplished female politicians who faced scrutiny and doubts that Trump, time and again, is allowed to escape. — NYT



Elon Musk at a rally for former president Donald Trump at Madison Square Garden in New York. — NYT

PHILADELPHIA SUES MUSK OVER \$1M VOTER GIVEAWAYS

KATE CHRISTOBEK

District Attorney Larry Krasner of Philadelphia filed a lawsuit on Monday to stop Elon Musk and his Trump-supporting organisation, America PAC, from continuing their \$1 million daily giveaway in Pennsylvania, calling it an illegal lottery scheme to influence voters in the presidential election. Musk’s giveaway, which had already prompted the Justice Department to warn that it might violate federal law, purports to “randomly” reward registered voters in seven battleground states who signed a conservative petition by America PAC, which is mobilising voters to support former president Donald Trump.

“America PAC and Musk are lulling Philadelphia citizens — and others in the Commonwealth (and other swing states in the upcoming election) — to give up their personal identifying information and make a political pledge in exchange for the chance to win \$1 million,” the lawsuit said. “That is a lottery. And it is indisputably an unlawful lottery.”

The civil suit, which names Musk and America PAC as defendants, requests that a state court halt further operation of the sweepstakes in Pennsylvania. The suit also accuses Musk and America PAC of violating state consumer protection laws by deploying deceptive or misleading statements. As one example, Krasner argues that winners are not, in fact, random because “multiple winners that have been selected are individuals who have shown up at Trump rallies in Pennsylvania.”

America PAC responded to a request for comment on Monday by sending a post on the social media platform X about a recent \$1 million winner of the sweepstakes in Michigan. — NYT



Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Last Date for Collection of Tender Document	Closing Time/Day/Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non Refundable)
4150/2024	Maintenance work at Ibra Health Center affiliated to the General Directorate of Health Services in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate	Before 10 am on Thursday 14/November/2024	Before 10 am on Thursday 19/December/2024	Specialized companies registered with the Tender Board at the fourth level	R.O 25/- Per set

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

Any Clarification, you may contact via

Telephone: 24402200

Email id: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

OPINION

Tebboune visit opens new chapter in Oman-Algeria ties



DR MUSALLAM
AL MAANI

The writer is Dean,
Al Zahra College for
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Sultanate of Oman

During a historic visit, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik greeted President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria with courtesy and cordiality.

The visit is the first by an Algerian President to Oman since His Majesty Sultan Haitham ascended to the throne and an important milestone in the relationship between Oman and Algeria. It also comes amidst emotionally significant events and radical changes taking place in the Middle East.

The sincere affection and kindness with which President Abdelmadjid was welcomed reveals the genuine, high, and special regard that Omanis hold for the leader and people of Algeria.

The people of both countries expect with confidence the visit shall undoubtedly achieve the best interests and prosperity of both countries. There is no marvel that the implications of this visit shall have a wide-ranging effect not only on Oman and Algeria but on the wider Arab world.

Characterised by elegance and refinement, Algerians have always stood by the side of their fellow Arab countries.

With strong leaders devoted to the Algerian and Arab cause and ideals, Algeria has become a leading force and

influence within the Arab world. It has supported and promoted at all times the interests of Arab matters, never turning its back on Arabs, nor has it avoided deliberately or habitually its role as a great nation.

Algeria is held dear and highly valued by Omanis as well as other Arabs for their courageous, noble, and self-sacrificing actions.

The armed struggle led with determined effort especially in the face of foreign colonial forces by our brothers and sisters in Algeria has been a source of honour and respect and shall be written, engraved, and printed as a lasting record in the Arab pages, deserving the highest esteem possible.

Their courageous move shows the skill, cleverness, and resourcefulness that Algerians have in handling the situation as well as their mental and moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, and difficulty. Algerians should be addressed with expressions of kind wishes, courtesy, and honour.

A country with a strong and diverse economy, Algeria has been characterised by careful management of resources, while development in the country covers every aspect, promoting the growth

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actions

of nationwide practical and industrial significance.

In education, Algeria’s educational system constitutes the foundation and most substantial and sturdiest part of its development. It emphasises the development of students mentally, morally, and aesthetically at all levels, from basic education to the highest postgraduate degrees.

Another equally important prominent characteristic Algeria has is that it is protected by an army that is not only superior of its kind in the Arab world but also possesses a large organised body of armed personnel highly trained for armed conflicts.

Equipped with the latest armament and sophisticated weapons, the Algerian army is the backbone of Algeria which counts on its servicemen to foil and defeat enemies, preventing outsiders from stepping foot on Algerian soil.

The Algerians’ motto is that if someone is audacious or bold enough to consider doing something, the army shall act in a way free of all ambiguity, uncertainty, and obscurity, forcing any enemy who dares to approach the Algerian land to move with nothing but by despair and utter loss of hope.

WORLD’S FIRST GREEN
ENERGY ISLAND SAILS
INTO COST STORM

UMBERTO BACCHI

At a shipyard on the North Sea, workers in luminescent vests are building dozens of massive, hollow concrete boulders, each the size of an apartment block. These are to be floated out to sea and sunk to become the foundations of a giant Belgian green energy development — a world first — which is itself, however, in choppy waters amid surging costs.

Named after Belgium’s Princess Elisabeth, the “energy island” was launched in 2021 to support a huge expansion in wind energy production that would drastically reduce the country’s dependence on planet-warming fossil fuels.

But supply chain snags have made costs more than triple to over \$7.56 billion, according to some estimates, sparking calls for construction to be stopped at a time of growing political pushback against ambitious green targets across Europe.

“This cost increase is a huge worry,” Belgium’s energy minister Tinne Van der Straeten said. Just over 10 per cent of Belgium’s energy supply comes from renewable sources, the government says. Nuclear, gas and oil provide the bulk of its needs, according to the International Energy Agency.

But Belgium will have to lower its dependence on fossil fuels, as a European Union target requires 42.5 per cent of the bloc’s energy to be renewable by 2030. “That’s why we need transformative projects, huge projects like this,” said Van der Straeten, sporting a yellow construction helmet during a visit to the shipyard in Vlissingen, a Dutch port near the Belgian coast.

Belgium plans to install 3.5 gigawatts of offshore wind capacity in coming years — enough to cover 30 per cent of the country’s needs, according to the government. Building an artificial island is what Belgian grid operator Elia believes is the most efficient way of bringing that energy to shore.

Located 45 kilometres off the coast, the island will host transformers and bundle together undersea cables to bring electricity to land. It will also connect the Belgian grid with wind-power-producing North Sea neighbours, such as Britain and Denmark, allowing for a more stable energy supply.

The island is like “an extension cord with multiple sockets,” said Joannes Laveyne, a researcher at Ghent University. — AFP

The legacy of boycotts in
Oman and Arab world



DR NAJMA AL
ZIDJALY

The writer is
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College of Arts &
Social Sciences, SQU



Demonstrators carry placards calling for the boycott of pro-Israel products and companies during a protest to show their solidarity with the Palestinian people in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. — AFP File

THE practice of food boycotts holds a unique place within Arab society, particularly in Oman, as a longstanding cultural tool for expressing dissent and community solidarity. Historically, food boycotts in Oman and the broader Arab region have served as a way for people to voice disapproval, impose collective resistance and foster unity against perceived injustices. These boycotts, as academic research explains, aim to disrupt the trade flow and economic stability of the targeted party, often as a form of protest against larger sociopolitical issues.

Today, Omani and Arab consumers’ renewed call to boycott American and European brands like Starbucks, due to their perceived support for Israel following the October 7, 2023, events, brings this cultural practice into contemporary focus. Such boycotts resonate deeply with regional history and demonstrate food’s power to serve as a tool for political agency, illustrated by both modern and ancient precedents.

The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s research on food consumption in France

posits that food can be a lens through which we understand broader sociopolitical conflicts, suggesting that food-related practices, from consumption choices to boycotts, serve as expressions of social and political positions.

In the Middle East, the role of food in political resistance dates back to the early days of Islam, when Muslims conducted raids on Meccan food caravans as a means to resist economic oppression and assert independence. This act of disrupting food supplies was an early form of protest that held symbolic and practical value, undermining Meccan wealth while demonstrating the economic power held by those considered marginalised.

This approach has evolved into contemporary food boycotts practiced across the Arab world, underscoring the idea that food can function as an instrument of sociopolitical agency. The 2006 Arab boycotts of Danish food products serve as one of the more recent high-profile examples of collective action through food boycotts.

By boycotting these products, Arabs col-

lectively expressed their discontent and disapproval, leveraging economic pressure to demand respect for their cultural and religious sensitivities.

This boycott demonstrated the ability of food practices to galvanise public sentiment and channel it into a tangible form of resistance, affecting international trade and compelling Danish businesses and officials to take notice. The ability of such boycotts to achieve this level of impact stems from a shared cultural practice rooted in political dissent. These actions can manifest as micro boycotts, where individuals refuse products from offending companies, or as macro boycotts, targeting an entire industry or nation to hold it accountable for broader political grievances.

The current food boycotts of American and European brands in Oman and the Arab world are both a continuation and transformation of this cultural practice. These boycotts aim to voice condemnation against perceived support for Israel’s actions, using companies as surrogates for the state’s political decisions. The Starbucks boycott, in particular, can be seen as both micro-political, where individual consumers reject the brand’s products, and macro-political, where the company becomes a stand-in for the US government and its allies. The choice to avoid specific brands aligns with a deeply ingrained cultural tradition of utilising food as a medium for political protest, reinforcing solidarity among Arabs and Omanis, who see themselves as standing in unity with Palestinian civilians.

In sum, food boycotts remain a significant cultural practice in Oman and the broader Arab region, reflecting both historical continuity and evolving political landscapes. This ongoing resistance, whether directed toward local entities or multinational companies, demonstrates how food can function as a medium for sociopolitical contention. Through such boycotts, Omanis and Arabs exercise agency, channelling historical forms of protest into modern contexts and reaffirming food’s potent role in the region’s sociopolitical life.

Ensure the air we breathe is clean



SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a freelance journalist and author who has worked in India and Gulf countries

IN A RECENT media essay on city life, a 12th grade student wrote, “I’m a city kid, but I don’t like my city any more. It’s no more inspiring. It’s dusty, foggy, dirty, and smelly. I am tired of the noise and bustling.”

The essay appeared in an Indian vernacular daily continued, “My city has lakes, mountains, trees, star-spangled night skies, stirring sunrises and glorious sunsets. But dear God, it’s difficult to live here now. I am losing my affection with the surroundings here.”

Though cities are magnets for migrants thanks to great-paying jobs, a diverse community of many types of people, multiple restaurants, and access to high-quality healthcare, the fact is that people are becoming more and more frustrated and disappointed with city life due to high levels of pollution.

It is indisputable that air pollution is continuing to escalate with several major cities around the world grappling with severe air quality issues. This is a growing concern.

The primary contributors to urban air pollution include industrial activities, vehicle emissions, construction dust and decomposition of organic waste.

Reports show that cities account for 70 per cent of global waste and consume almost 80 per cent of the world’s energy. Building construction consumes 40 per cent of the world’s energy and is responsible for around one-third of all greenhouse gas emissions.

According to the World Health Organization, air pollution is one of the world’s biggest killers, accounting for one in ten deaths each year. About half of these deaths are due to outdoor pollution in towns and cities. In contrast, the urban population is witnessing an ever-ending growth. It is expected that the future will be urban, with 70 per cent of the global population moving to cities by 2050.

“Our cities are growing rapidly in terms of inhabitants and the space they occupy. Every minute, we add 10,000 square metres of city space. Every five days, we build a new Paris,” points out a recent report by the World Economic Forum.

URBAN POPULATION

According to UN Habitat report on world cities, between 2.5 and 3 billion people will be added to the urban population worldwide, with the highest growth projected to be in less developed regions like East Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

Toxic air can cut life expectancy by more than five years. There is now a greater incidence of illness and death among the elderly and vulnerable, including young children.

So comes a call from the UN Habitat on the occasion of World Cities Day tomorrow (October 31) to the youth and local governments urging them to work hand-in-hand to address the climate crisis. The Day aligns with the UN’s Sustainable

Though cities are magnets for migrants, the fact is that people are becoming frustrated and disappointed with city life due to the high level of pollution

Development Goal that calls for “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.”

“As cities around the world continue to grow, they are increasingly home to a new wave of young leaders committed to addressing the pressing issues of climate change. Youth are at the forefront of local action and innovation, playing a catalytic role in shaping sustainable urban futures,” the global agency stresses.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The day dedicated to cities, which is commemorated just one week after the UN’s own day on October 24, stresses that urbanisation enables new forms of social inclusion such as access to services and new opportunities, as well as the commitment and mobilisation reflected in diversity.

International days or weeks marking different occasions will come and go. But we should not forget our commitment to shifting to a pollution-free world so that we can safeguard our health and well-being and ensure economic prosperity.

We should focus on solutions and innovation because the various forms of pollution, including climate change, nature and biodiversity, and pollution and waste, are outpacing development progress.

To ensure that the air we breathe today is cleaner than the time of our parents and grandparents, we all need to come forward disregarding our jurisdiction!

BIG GUNS IN CALI FOR FINAL PUSH IN UN BIODIVERSITY TALKS

MARIËTTE LE ROUX

Heads of state, ministers and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres arrive in Cali on Tuesday hoping to add impetus to grinding talks on ways to save nature from human destruction.

The 16th so-called Conference of Parties (COP16) to the UN’s Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has the urgent task of coming up with monitoring and funding mechanisms to achieve 23 nature protection goals agreed in Canada two years ago.

Themed “Peace with Nature,” the summit has been bogged down in disagreement about modalities of funding, as well as sharing the profits of digitally sequenced plant and animal genetic data – used in medicines and cosmetics – with the communities they come from. Delegates have no time to waste.

There are only five years left to achieve the 23 UN targets, which include placing 30 per cent of land, water and ocean under protection by 2030.

A report issued by nature watchdogs said on Monday that only 17.6 per cent of land and inland waters, and 8.4 per cent of the ocean and coastal areas, are within documented protected and conserved areas. “This leaves a land area roughly the

size of Brazil and Australia combined, and at sea an area larger than the Indian Ocean, to be designated by 2030 in order to meet the global target,” said the Protected Planet Report.

Also on Monday, an update of the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List of threatened animals and plants found more than one in three species of tree are at risk of extinction worldwide.

These include many that provide humans with timber, medicine, food and fuel.

More than 46,000 plant and animal species out of more than 166,000 assessed for the Red List were found to be threatened with extinction.

The COP16 has attracted a record 23,000 registered delegates and some 1,200 journalists to Cali, according to organisers, making it the biggest yet. Thousands of activists and residents have flocked to its so-called “green zone” set up for cultural activities, demonstrations and celebrations.

COP President Susana Muhamad, Colombia’s environment minister, said on Monday the summit had placed biodiversity loss “on an equal footing” with the climate change crisis.

But she lamented that a Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) created to help bring about the targets set out two years ago “needs more money.” So far, countries have made about \$400 million in commitments to the fund set up to give effect to the targets under the so-called Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework agreed in 2022. — AFP

Prosperity requires a healthy planet

PROGRESS on poverty reduction has slowed almost to a standstill in recent years. With nearly 700 million people still living on less than \$2.15 per day, the world is far from the goal of eradicating extreme poverty by 2030. At the current pace, it will take at least three decades to reach this target, and more than a century to lift everyone above the poverty line of \$6.85 per day used for upper-middle-income countries. Today, 44 per cent of the global population falls below this threshold.

Tepid economic growth, the Covid-19 pandemic, ongoing conflicts and the escalating climate crisis have disrupted – and even reversed – a quarter-century of extraordinary progress, during which the share of the world’s population living in extreme poverty plunged from around one-third to one-tenth. While high-income countries have largely recovered from these setbacks, extreme poverty in the poorest countries is still higher than in 2019, and their growth is expected to be weaker than in the decade before the pandemic. And as global warming accelerates, nearly one in five people will likely experience an extreme weather event from which they will struggle to recover, exacerbating poverty. According to the World Bank’s new Poverty, Prosperity and Planet Report, altering this trajectory requires recognising that poverty, shared prosperity and climate risks are interconnected. In response, countries must foster faster and more inclusive growth while also shielding people from the effects of climate change.

Addressing inequality can play an important role in achieving these interconnected goals. In the world’s most unequal countries, economic growth leads to a smaller reduction in poverty. If every country experienced annual per capita income growth of 2 per cent, it would take another 60 years to eliminate extreme poverty. But if the Gini index – a measure of income inequality – in every country were to decrease by 2 per cent annually, that target would be reached



If every country experienced annual per capita income growth of 2 per cent, it would take another 60 years to eliminate extreme poverty.



AXEL VAN TROTSENBURG

The writer is Senior Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships at the World Bank

in 20 years.

High levels of inequality also prevent the less well-off from climbing the socioeconomic ladder, depriving them of opportunities to improve their lives. Delivering better-functioning labour markets, investing in education and health and strengthening social safety nets would enable poor people to benefit from economic growth.

Each country’s path forward should be tailored to its specific circumstances in order to deliver the best possible outcomes across these dimensions while managing tradeoffs. For low-income countries supported by the World Bank’s International Development Association (IDA), that means promoting faster and more inclusive growth and increasing investment in public services and infrastructure to improve access to education and create jobs. Because these countries are home to 70% of all people living in extreme poverty and produce minimal greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions, their anti-poverty efforts do not come at a high environmental cost.

The focus in lower-middle-income countries should be on delivering sustained growth and shared prosperity, and improving the efficiency of policies to boost income, build climate resilience and keep GHG emissions in check. Scaling

up investment in climate mitigation is especially important because the emissions of many middle-income countries are projected to rise over the coming decades. Such investments could also lead to better health outcomes – for example, by reducing air pollution.

Lastly, upper-middle-income and high-income countries, which account for four-fifths of global carbon dioxide emissions, must rapidly phase out their dependence on fossil fuels and lead the green transition. Although GHG emissions are projected to decline under current policies, the pace is not nearly fast enough to limit global warming.

Ending poverty and boosting shared prosperity on a livable planet requires bold policy choices, coordinated global action and a significant increase in financing for sustainable development, which would allow low-income countries to invest in improving the lives and livelihoods of their people.

Today, the world has a historic opportunity to overcome the injustices and mitigate the dangers of entrenched poverty, systemic inequality and climate change. We must not squander this chance to make meaningful, lasting progress towards broad-based prosperity.

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SPORTS

JUNIORTALENTS



Electrifying start to WTT Contender Muscat

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

WTT Contender Muscat 2024 is underway at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex as the competitions of the preliminary rounds heats up. In the men's singles preliminary rounds, Hong Kong's Yu Kwan managed to earn his first victory by defeating Iranian Hamid Shams Shahreabaki 3-1 while Hong Kong's Lee Hong Ming advanced to the second round after a decisive 3-0 win against Iranian Amir Hossein.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong's Ho Kaun Kit won over his opponent Kwan Man Ho with a 3-1 score and Chinese paddler Yuan Lixin claimed an impressive 3-1 victory over Indian player Baez Jain.

Korean Jang Seung-il achieved a 3-0 win over Oman's Ghassan al Ghassani, while the national paddler Badr al Jassasi suffered a 3-0 loss against South Korean Hyung Koo. Iranian Amir Mahdi defeated Singapore's Chiu Zhi 3-0, while Oman's Muhannad al Balushi lost 3-0 to Iran's Bani Amin Faraji. Singapore's Choi Chen took a 3-0 win by default against Egypt's Omar Ali, who withdrew from the match. In the women's singles preliminaries, Oman's talented paddler Talya al Rawahi began her debut at WTT Contender but lost her opening match 3-0 to Iranian Mahshid Eshtari.

The six-day event is under organisation of Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) in collaboration with the World Table Tennis (WTT). The event sees 120 participants from 22 countries including China, Croatia, France, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Poland, Romania, Singapore, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Taiwan, Yemen, Bahrain, Palestine, Egypt, Czech and the hosts Oman.

Iranian player Amir Mahdi said following his win, "I am thrilled with this opening victory and look forward to the next round. I aim to reach the main round where all the ranked players are competing, which offers a great opportunity for ranking advancement."

Hong Kong's Yu Kwan too shared his excitement over his first win. "It is always great to begin your campaign on a successful note. It is really important to secure victory in the early match of the competition," he said.

Al Nahda defeat Sohar to extend lead

Al Nasr, Bahla draw in OL

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

AL NAHDA SECURED a well-deserved 3-1 victory over its host Sohar in a match held on Monday at Sohar Sports Complex, as part of the ninth round of the Omani Football League.

Al Nahda started strong and took the lead in the fourth minute with a header by Hussein al Shahri following a perfect cross from Mohammed al Ghafri. The team dominated the first half, displaying excellent field control and creating several dangerous opportunities against Sohar's goalkeeper, Faiz al Rushaidi. On the other hand, Sohar struggled to find its rhythm and posed no real threat until the 28th minute, when Saud al Muqbali's shot went wide of Al Nahda's goal.

Al Nahda continued its dominance in the second half, skillfully capitalising on set-pieces.

The team doubled its lead in the 68th minute through Thani al Rushaidi, who finished smartly following a clever pass from Bilal Bin Saha off a free kick. Although Sohar attempted a comeback, the team only managed to reduce the deficit in the 82nd minute with a goal by Abdullah al Shibli, who tapped in a rebound after Al Nahda goalkeeper Ibrahim al Mukhaini saved a shot from Mohsin Jowhar. In extra time, Brazilian forward Alexander sealed the win for Al Nahda with a goal in the 94th minute, securing a valuable victory.

With this triumph, Al Nahda extended its unbeaten streak, reaching 28 points from eight matches, maintaining a perfect record and claiming the top spot in the league temporarily.

Sohar, on the other hand, remains with six points in eighth place, continuing to struggle this season. Meanwhile, Al Seeb's match in this round was postponed due to the team's participation in the Asian Challenge Cup.

The match between Al Nasr and Bahla ended in an exciting 1-1 draw at Al Saada Sports Complex.

Both teams began the game cautiously, but Al Nasr took the lead in the eighth minute through a goal by Mohammed al Sim. Bahla made several attempts to respond, but they failed to create signifi-



cant danger against goalkeeper Ibrahim al Rajhi.

In the 16th minute, Hosni al Hinai unleashed a powerful shot from the edge of the penalty area, but Al Rajhi made an excellent save. Despite Bahla's pressure, they could not find the equaliser in the first half, which ended with Al Nasr leading 1-0.

Bahla found the breakthrough early in the second half, with substitute Abdul-

salam al Shukaili levelling the score in the 48th minute. He capitalised on a quick counterattack and struck a powerful shot into al Rajhi's net. Both teams continued to search for a winner, but their efforts lacked precision and organisation, leaving the match to conclude in a 1-1 draw.

Following this result, Al Nasr now has 11 points, placing them fourth in the league standings, while Bahla reached eight points, sitting in fifth place.

Muscat to host 3 intl tournaments during FIH Congress

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

The Oman Hockey Association (OHA) unveiled details of hosting three tournaments which takes place as sidelines to FIH Congress to be held in Muscat during November 7-9. The three events will be represented by Oman International Women's Hockey Tournament, the Gulf Men's Hockey Tournament and the School Hockey Tournament.

All the three events will be scheduled at the Oman Hockey Stadium in Al Amerat. The delegates from 500 international sports hockey representing 141 countries will attend the events.

The press conference led by Dr Marwan bin Jumaa al Jumaa, Chairman of OHA, along with representatives of United Thalassery Sports Club and local media.

The second edition of Women's International tournament features participation from eight teams distributed into two groups.



The press conference led by Dr Marwan bin Jumaa al Jumaa, Chairman of OHA, along with representatives of United Thalassery Sports Club.

Group A comprised from the Gymkhana Club from India, Sea Pearls from Oman, FAB from Oman and Smouha Club from Egypt. Group B included Hostel Hawks and Don Bosco Academy from India, Shahi

Foods from Oman and the Eastern Club from Egypt.

The Gulf Men's Hockey Tournament will feature eight teams, divided into two groups.

Group A will comprise from Accelerator from India, Muscat Hiking from Oman, Dadabhai from the UAE and Coorg from Oman.

Group B includes Republican from India, FAB from Oman, Aman wa Salam from Oman and Port Fouad from Egypt.

The third event will be School Hockey Tournament which includes male and female categories. In both male and female categories, many private and international schools will take part in the event.

At the press conference, Dr Marwan al Jumaa affirmed the significance of these tournaments as part of Oman's continuous efforts to promote hockey sports in the country.

"Our target is to continue in our efforts of developing players' skills and expand the sport's base

in Oman.

The tournaments' alignment with the country's sports development plans, enhancing Oman's presence in regional and international sports," he said

"The tournaments aim to elevate the technical levels of national players, provide competitive experience, foster sportsmanship among youth through the school tournament and promote Oman's tourism as visitors explore the country's natural and cultural sites. We anticipate tangible benefits, such as strengthened team performance, increased youth engagement in hockey and heightened awareness of community partnerships in supporting sports," OHA chief added.

"The technical and logistical preparations for the tournaments are ensuring facilities meet the international standards, employing qualified administrative staff, organising workshops and utilising digital systems for fair match management," he ended.

SHORT TAKES



AL QUDRA CROWNED
KARATE PIONEERS
CHAMPIONS

MUSCAT: The 8th edition of the Karate Pioneers Championship concluded on October 25, Friday. It was organised by the Karate Pioneers Academy at the main hall of the Bausher Sports Club in Bausher.

Al Qudra Karate Club won the championship title after intense competition among a selection of participating clubs. The Champ Club came in second, while both Emperor Karate Club and Rakan Sport Club secured the third place.

The championship featured the participation of 31 clubs from various Gulf, Arab, and Asian countries, with a total of 370 male and female participants across different age groups, starting from 4 years and above. The events included both kata (demonstration) and kumite (sparring) competitions, with weight divisions aligned with the International Karate Federation's standards, appropriate for the kata and kumite categories.



TIME RUNNING OUT
FOR STRUGGLING
INDIA STALWARTS

NEW DELHI: The inglorious end of India's proud home record has left the cricket-mad nation grappling with the reality it has long been dreading — Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma might be approaching the end of the road. Through three World Cup titles, two World Test Championship (WTC) finals, and a 12-year test series winning streak on home soil, Kohli and Sharma, often together, have been integral to every major Indian success of the last 17 years.

Both quit T20 internationals after winning the World Cup in West Indies earlier this year and their diminishing returns in test cricket is a huge concern ahead of India's trip to Australia.

India will be hoping to avert a rare whitewash in the third test against New Zealand starting on Friday with fans hoping skipper Rohit and batting mainstay Kohli will produce some runs before they fly off to Australia. — **Reuters**

Sinner out of Paris
Masters with ‘virus’



Jannik Sinner reacts after a point against Djokovic. — **AFP**

WORLD number one Jannik Sinner has withdrawn from the Paris Masters indoor event due to an “intestinal virus”, the tournament organisers announced on Tuesday.

Sinner, assured since mid-October of finishing the year top of the rankings for the first time in his career at the age of 23, has been replaced in the draw by Frenchman Arthur Cazaux, who was drafted in from qualifying.

Cazaux will face either his compatriot Corentin Moutet or American Ben Shelton

in his second round opener on Tuesday.

Organisers said Sinner was “suffering from an intestinal virus contracted before he arrived in Paris”.

The major objective at the end of his season, the Masters in Turin, which brings together the eight best players of the year, is scheduled for November 10-17.

He is then expected to take part in the Davis Cup finals the following week in Malaga, Spain. Italy are the defending champions. Sinner enjoyed a sparkling 2024 season, winning his first two Grand

Slam titles, at the Australian Open and the US Open.

In all, he has won seven tournaments since the start of the season, including three Masters 1000 titles, in Miami, Cincinnati and Shanghai.

However he is under the threat of suspension in a doping case that came to light several weeks ago, following an appeal by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). Sinner has a chequered history with the Paris indoor tournament — a year ago, he withdrew before his second match. — **AFP**

De Zorzi, Stubbs tonnes steer South Africa to 307-2 against Bangladesh

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh: Tony de Zorzi and Tristan Stubbs put South Africa in command on 307-2 and left Bangladesh floundering after day one of the second and final Test in Chattogram on Tuesday.

Both men made their maiden Test hundreds in a second-wicket partnership of 201 after the visitors won the toss and chose to take first use of a good batting pitch as they eye a series sweep.

De Zorzi was unbeaten at stumps on 141, with 10 fours and three sixes, and will resume alongside David Bedingham on 18.

Stubbs played a more conservative innings and hit the mark on his 194th ball by cutting Mominul Haque to the covers for a single.

“To get to the three figures was a big relief, more than anything”, Stubbs said, adding it “definitely ranks as my favourite hundred”.

Taijul Islam was the only bowler to make a dent, first in the morning session by removing Aiden Markram when the stand-in skip-

Stubbs played a more conservative innings and hit the mark on his

194TH

ball by cutting Mominul Haque to the covers for a single



South Africa's Tony de Zorzi (R) and Tristan Stubbs run between the wickets during the first day of the second Test cricket match between Bangladesh and South Africa at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong on Tuesday. — **AFP**

per went for a big shot and holed out to Mominul Haque at mid-on for 33. He bowled Stubbs after tea for 106 when the batsman tried a back-foot punch to the leg side but missed the lowering delivery, which crashed into his stumps.

Bangladesh, desperate to take a wicket, have lost two of their three reviews for the innings.

They unsuccessfully appealed for lbw against De Zorzi off a delivery pitched outside leg and again for a caught behind when Stubbs tried to cut Taijul away but missed.

“We need to come tomorrow morning and try to get early wickets to put ourselves in a position to bowl them out,” said Bangladesh coach Phil Simmons, who took up the post just before the series.

South Africa made two changes to the side that won in Mirpur as they look to seal the series.

In came Senuran Muthusamy, an all-rounder who can bowl left-arm spin, and fast bowler Dane Paterson in place of Matthew Breetzke and Dane Piedt. — **AFP**



RUBEN AMORIM
Portuguese football manager

PREMIER
LEAGUE
MANAGERS
SYMPATHISE
WITH
TEN HAG
AFTER
SACKING BY
MAN UTD

ERIK TEN HAG had the sympathy of managers around the Premier League a day after the Dutchman was sacked by struggling Manchester United, with most saying they could face the same fate any day in the results-driven business.

United have appointed their assistant manager and former striker Ruud van Nistelrooy to take over on an interim basis with the club languishing 14th in the Premier League standings after nine games and 21st in the Europa League table.

“I feel very sorry for him, it’s one of the best jobs in football,” Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said. “There’s only us, it’s not teachers or architects or something like that.

“I wish him all the best and he will come back stronger. If the results aren’t good enough, you get sacked. No-one is different, myself included.”

Liverpool boss Arne Slot said as a fellow Dutchman, Ten Hag’s dismissal hit harder but believes the unemployed coach will land on his feet.

“Always your first thoughts are with the person,” Slot said on Tuesday. “We are all in this job so we know that it can happen, but if it happens - especially because I know him a little bit and I know how much work he puts into it – to get this news for him is a pity.

“We also know, especially us from Holland how well he did at Ajax (Amsterdam) and he won two trophies over here so we will see him in the near future again at a big club,” Slot added.

Tottenham manager Ange Postecoglou said he was not shocked by the news.

“I guess disappointed as it was inevitable with the scrutiny he’d had. It’s the nature of football these days,” Postecoglou said.

The Spurs boss said the intense scrutiny has made it increasingly difficult to do the job in any sort of processed way.

“It seems like if you look at Erik, (he was) there for two-and-a-bit years and in those two years (he won) trophies – one in each year. If he was here with that record, would he have lost his job? I don’t know. Everyone tells me all I have to do is win a trophy.

“As a manager, you’ve got to hit a sweet spot of success, playing football everyone likes and getting every signing right.”

United host Leicester City in a League Cup fourth-round tie on Wednesday at Old Trafford.
— Reuters



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Five new economic clusters planned

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

THE OMANI government is rolling out a new category of industrial and investment zones as part of an accelerated drive to advance the country’s economic diversification programme. Dubbed ‘Integrated Economic Clusters’, they will complement existing investment vehicles, such as Special Economic Zones, Free Zones, and Industrial Cities, that are currently at the heart of Oman’s expanding non-oil economy.

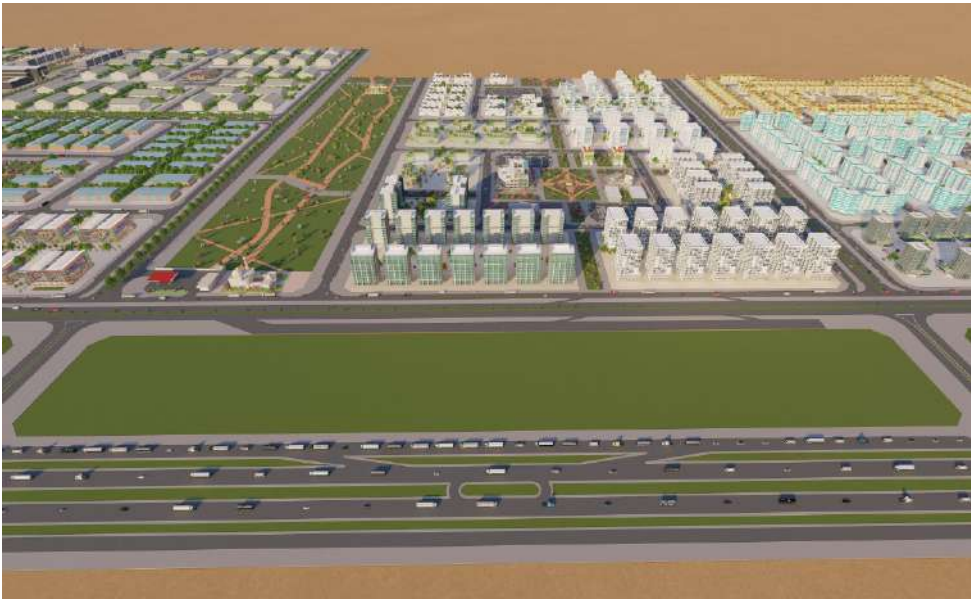
At least five such Integrated Economic Clusters are planned for implementation at key locations across Oman, aimed at harnessing synergies linked to their advantageous geographical position, local natural resources, proximity to overseas export markets, and access to transport and logistics infrastructure.

According to the latest report of the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, these new hubs are planned at Shaleem and Najd (Dhofar), Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Al Duqm and Suhar.

“Integrated economic clusters represent a strategic approach adopted globally to accelerate growth and diversify economies. These clusters comprise interconnected industries and sectors within a specific geographic area, sharing value chains, services, and products.

They provide a structured framework that optimises resource allocation, fostering collaboration and competitiveness among various entities,” the Implementation Follow-up Unit stated in its report.

At minerals-rich Shaleem in the south of the country, a new Integrated Economic Cluster is



Integrated Economic Clusters are planned at Shaleem, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, Al Duqm, Najd and Suhar.

envisioned as part of the ambitious Shaleem Industrial Minerals Block development, an initiative backed by subsidiaries of Oman Investment Authority in collaboration with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn).

Endowed with abundant deposits of gypsum, limestone and dolomite, among other minerals, the new cluster aims to not only attract investments in downstream value-add industries, but also leverage its proximity to the Arabian Sea to develop opportunities for fisheries, tourism and logistics.

A similar Integrated Economic Cluster planned in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate will centre on the development of four key sectors – agriculture, tourism, industry and logistics.

One of the outcomes of

the National Programme for Economic Diversification (Tanweea), this new hub will serve as a benchmark model for stimulating cross-sectoral growth in other governorates of Oman as well.

At Duqm, where one of Oman’s biggest SEZs is taking shape, a first-of-its-kind Cold Chain Economic Cluster is envisioned.

“This cluster aims to develop and enhance the cold chain system within the SEZ at Duqm. The initiative focuses on improving the quality and efficiency of cold chain management, encompassing both the backstream (such as fish, agricultural products, and other food industries) and the frontstream (services related to the cold chain),” the report said.

Also in Dhofar Governorate, a

new Integrated Economic Cluster is planned in the agriculture-rich Najd part of the governorate in collaboration with the Najd Development Oman.

The goal is to establish and develop an integrated economic system encompassing all agricultural, industrial, and logistics facilities, forming a comprehensive and efficient economic system.

Finally, at the Wilayat of Suhar, the report has highlighted the potential for an Integrated Economic Cluster for Aluminium Industries.

“This cluster aims to achieve integration among the various aspects of the aluminium industry by linking the upstream (primary aluminium production) with the downstream (higher value-added industries),” it noted.

Oman, Somalia discuss ways to boost investment in livestock sector

MUSCAT: Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, received in his office yesterday Hassan Hussein Mohammed, Minister of Animal Wealth, Forests and Pastures of the Federal Republic of Somalia, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting aims to enhance areas of cooperation between the two friendly countries in the livestock and meat sectors.

The two sides discussed supporting joint investment in the livestock and meat sector, and discussed a number of topics of common interest, where it was agreed to hold a joint trade and investment forum between the two friendly countries in the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting was attended from



The meeting aims to enhance areas of cooperation in the livestock and meat sectors.

the Omani side by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, Bashir Hassan Haji, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Somalia to the Sultanate of Oman, and a number of officials from both sides. — ONA



Co. S.A.O.G

Board of Directors’ Report for the period ended 30 September 2024



Dear Shareholders,
On behalf of the Board of Directors of Taageer Finance Company SAOG, I am pleased to present the un-audited financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2024.
Performance Summary
The Company achieved profit before tax of RO 4.07 million for the nine-month period, an increase of 40% from the same period last year (Sep. 2023: RO 2.91 million). Profit after tax at RO 3.46 million for the period was 40% higher than the profit of RO 2.47 million for the same period last year.
The higher profitability was attributable to higher finance income RO 22.05 million (Sep. 2023: RO 18.76 million). The steady growth in the loan book has resulted in the increase in finance income. Interest expense for the period at RO 10.50 million was also higher by 18.3% as compared to corresponding period (Sep. 2023: RO 8.88 million). Operating expenses for the period were RO 4.64 million as against RO 4.40 million for the same period last year, up by 5.5%.
As the Company continued to build higher provision against expected credit losses (ECL), the provision charge of RO 4.79 million was recorded for the period as compared to RO 4.23 million for the same period last year. The cumulative provision against ECL as of September 30, 2024 was RO 37.22 million, an increase of 23.8% from the cumulative provision of RO 30.06 million as of September 30, 2023.
The gross loan book of the Company reached RO 424.71 million as of September 30, 2024, 17% higher than the loan book of RO 362.81 million as on September 30, 2023. Total borrowings as of September 30, 2024 were RO 218.65 million (Sep. 2023: RO 191.26 million). The Company’s borrowings included bank loans, corporate deposits and unsecured non-convertible bonds.
Market Outlook
As per the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Oman’s economy is forecast to grow by 1.2% in 2024 and 3.1% in 2025. Non-hydrocarbon sectors are expected to remain robust in response to the continued reforms and investment projects. The credit rating agency, Standard & Poor’s raised the Country’s rating from BB+ to BBB- with the stable outlook. Earlier, Moody’s ratings had maintained the Country’s rating at Ba1 while upgrading the outlook to positive.
The overall positive economic outlook in medium to long term will provide impetus to the SME and retail sectors growth. The Company will continue to support these sectors and focus on balance sheet growth with a cautious approach.
Acknowledgement
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to express sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik bin Taimour for his vision and wise leadership.
I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and acknowledgement for the guidance and support from the Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority and Muscat Securities Market. We are also grateful to our shareholders, bankers, dealers and customers for their continued trust, confidence and support. Finally, the Board would like to appreciate and thank the management and the staff for all their hard work and efforts.
On Behalf of the Board of Directors
Khalil Ahmed Al Harthy
Chairman
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.

UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	Sep-2024 RO'000	Sep-2023 RO'000	Dec-2023 RO'000
ASSETS			
Cash and bank balances	19,112	15,564	12,023
Net investment in finance leases, working capital finance and factoring receivables	255,244	225,101	228,603
Other receivables and prepayments	689	514	586
Vehicles, equipment and right-of-use assets	817	683	937
Intangible assets	52	-	48
Deferred tax asset – net	79	79	79
Statutory deposit	250	250	250
Total assets	276,243	242,191	242,526
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
LIABILITIES			
Creditors, accruals and other liabilities	4,514	2,072	3,041
Short-term loans	57,028	56,281	52,071
Tax payable	620	451	866
Provision for employees’ end of service benefits	348	265	309
Unsecured non-convertible bonds	30,341	28,579	29,800
Corporate and security deposits	51,886	32,594	32,472
Long-term loans	79,400	73,805	73,470
Total liabilities	224,137	194,047	192,029
EQUITY			
Share capital	27,109	26,384	26,384
Legal reserve	6,215	5,733	6,215
Impairment reserve	2,222	2,222	2,222
Fair value reserve	(441)	(441)	(441)
General reserve	478	152	478
Retained earnings	16,523	14,094	15,639
Total equity	52,106	48,144	50,497
Total equity and liabilities	276,243	242,191	242,526
Net assets per share (baizas)	192	182	191

UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME
FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	Sep-2024 RO'000	Sep-2023 RO'000
Income		
Finance income	22,046	18,757
Interest expense	(10,502)	(8,879)
Net finance income	11,544	9,878
Other operating income	2,226	1,985
	13,770	11,863
Expenses		
Operating expenses	(4,641)	(4,401)
Depreciation and amortization	(276)	(322)
Impairment on net investment in finance leases, working capital finance and factoring receivables	(4,787)	(4,233)
	(9,704)	(8,956)
Profit before taxation	4,066	2,907
Taxation	(610)	(436)
Profit for the year	3,456	2,471

ADVERTORIALS



Khedmah enhances e-learning with easy access to TutorComp course vouchers

MUSCAT: With the new academic year well underway, Khedmah OIFC continues to lead the Sultanate of Oman's digital transformation journey, offering a unique digital experience through its innovative services.

With the Khedmah app, users can easily register for a variety of e-learning courses on the TutorComp platform, which provides a wide range of educational content, including subjects in science, technology, mathematics, nine educational curricula, language learning, exam preparation, and accredited courses. This offers users an enriching e-learning experience, boosting their educational journey and empowering them to achieve success.

TutorComp provides tailored options designed to meet diverse educational needs. This diversity reflects the leading efforts of the Khedmah team in adopting the latest technologies and pushing the boundaries of innovation to deliver a comprehensive and advanced digital experience.

Commenting on the offering, Mohammed al Jabri, Customer Experience Manager at Oman Investment and Finance Company, said: "At Khedmah, we strive to provide the latest technological advancements to ensure that our customers enjoy a seamless and comprehensive digital experience that meets their evolving needs.

TutorComp aligns with our vision to diversify our digital services portfolio, offering an e-learning experience that enhances intellectual capabilities while ensuring convenience and ease.

It is also part of our broader digital transformation strategy, as we continuously aim to keep pace with technological developments to better serve our customers."

Users can easily access vouchers for a variety of e-learning courses on TutorComp through the Khedmah app.

Once the voucher is purchased, an email will be sent within one to two business days, containing all the necessary details to begin the online tutoring sessions.

Parents have been especially choosing TutorComp for school-going children, and have reported positive feedback. The range of courses includes syllabi for CBSE, IGCSE Cambridge & Edexcel, SABIS, IB and American curricula.

Ford Taurus now with exclusive benefits

THE Ford Taurus isn't just a car – it's a statement of style, comfort and power. With its sleek design, spacious interior and performance-driven features, every trip in the Taurus becomes an enjoyable experience. Over the years, it has earned its reputation as a family-friendly sedan that offers one of the finest rides on the road.

Ford enthusiasts can now own a Ford Taurus and get 5 years peace of mind with exclusive benefits including 5 years/100,000 km of free service, a 5-year/100,000 km manufacturer's warranty, 5 years/100,000 km of roadside assistance, and 1-year free registration.

This limited-time offer is valid until November 7, 2024.

The Ford Taurus combines elegant design, powerful performance and advanced technology to provide an exceptional driving experience.

Whether you're navigating city streets or embarking on a road trip, the Taurus ensures comfort, safety and excitement every mile of the way.

Safety is a top priority in the Ford Taurus. The Blind Spot Information System (BLIS), collision mitigation, adaptive cruise control and lane departure warning all work together to make driving easier and safer.

The car is also equipped with a forward-looking camera, rear-view camera and rear parking sensors to simplify parking.

In case of an accident, the



Ford enthusiasts can now own a Ford Taurus and get 5 years peace of mind with exclusive benefits including 5 years/100,000 km of free service, a 5-year/100,000 km manufacturer's warranty, 5 years/100,000 km of roadside assistance, and 1-year free registration.

Taurus features an SOS post-crash alert system, flashing lights and sounding the horn to attract attention. Additionally, six airbags and a tyre pressure monitoring system ensure all-around safety for every journey.

Under the hood, the Ford Taurus is equipped with a 2.0-litre EcoBoost engine, delivering 232 horsepower and 388 Nm of torque. Paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission, this engine ensures a smooth and responsive drive.

The Taurus offers front-wheel drive and three driving modes – Normal, Sport and Eco – giving drivers the flexibility to adapt to different road conditions.

With an impressive fuel economy of up to 15.3 km/l, it's designed

to go the distance efficiently.

The exterior of the Taurus combines style and functionality. It features 19-inch, 10-spoke polished alloy wheels, a sleek, streamlined hood and a power-deployable door handle.

The dynamic front grille with chrome accents hints at the power within, while the dual exhaust system adds a sporty edge.

LED auto high beams and a two-piece headlamp design ensure the Taurus is always seen in the best light, making night drives safer.

Step inside and you'll find premium touches everywhere. The Taurus offers 10-way power-adjustable driver seats, 6-way power passenger seats and seven ambient lighting options to set the mood for your journey.

RAYMOND WEIL PARTNERS WITH MISTAL TO EXPAND PRESENCE IN OMAN

MUSCAT: Raymond Weil, the esteemed Swiss luxury watchmaker, is proud to announce its new strategic partnership with Mistal, one of Oman's premier luxury retailers.

This partnership marks an exciting chapter for Raymond Weil as it continues to expand its presence in the region and offer exquisite timepieces to discerning customers in Oman.

As a family-owned independent Swiss watchmaker with a heritage dating back to 1976, Raymond Weil is renowned for its dedication to craftsmanship, precision, and timeless elegance.

The brand is synonymous with luxury and innovation, offering a diverse range of timepieces that cater to both men and women with a passion for exceptional watchmaking.

By partnering with Mistal, Raymond Weil will benefit from Mistal's deep



David Gely, Commercial Director of Raymond Weil and Dharmesh Ajit Khimji, Managing Director of Mistal.

knowledge of the luxury market in Oman and its reputation for curating the finest brands for its clientele.

This collaboration will allow Raymond Weil to enhance its brand visibility in the region and offer its customers in Oman a more personalised and immersive shopping experience.

The partnership will see Raymond Weil's latest collections, including its signature Millesime, Freelancer, and Tango and Toccata lines, available at Mistal stores in Oman.

These collections exemplify the brand's commitment to technical innovation, aesthetic design, and respect for the art of traditional watchmaking.

With the support of Mistal's luxury retail expertise, Raymond Weil will continue to inspire watch enthusiasts in Oman, delivering Swiss precision and artistry to new audiences in the Middle East.

Sohar Aluminium holds workshop on scrap aluminium recycling

MUSCAT: Sohar Aluminium (SA) held a two-day workshop on scrap aluminium recycling in cooperation with the Environment Authority. This event was a direct outcome of the Aluminium Recycling Forum that was organised by the company earlier this year.

Further, it comes in line with Sohar Aluminium's Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Strategy and its continues efforts towards achieving Net Zero in the Sultanate of Oman.

Continuing the momentum from the Forum, the workshop underscored Sohar Aluminium's commitment to optimise and improve the aluminium recycling sector in

The workshop highlighted the current state of aluminium scrap in the Sultanate of Oman and identified opportunities for potential improvements to in-country recycling.



Oman.

It served as a platform for key players in the Omani aluminium industry, including recyclers, processors, waste management professionals, government regulators, and

policymakers to get a better understanding of the industry and to discuss how it could be improved.

The workshop highlighted the current state of aluminium scrap in the Sultanate of Oman and identified

opportunities for potential improvements to in-country recycling.

Participants benchmarked current scrap rates against regional and global standards and best practices.

As a leader in aluminium recycling initiatives, Sohar Aluminium organised this workshop to emphasise the significant environmental and economic advantages of effective scrap recycling.

With participation from subject matter experts across the aluminium industry, the workshop aimed to educate local stakeholders on the benefits of domestic aluminium scrap recycling, fostering a circular economy that conserves resources and strengthens local industries.

OMAN-ALGERIA
TRADE INDICATORS
HIGHLIGHT GROWTH
POTENTIAL

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

FOLLOWING the visit of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Sultanate of Oman, both nations have reaffirmed their dedication to enhancing bilateral cooperation across a range of fields.

During the three-day state visit, the leaderships of Oman and Algeria are set to consult on deepening joint Arab initiatives, addressing regional and global developments, and identifying opportunities for mutual growth and prosperity.

The discussions align with both countries’ aspirations for closer collaboration and development, and reflect a shared commitment to advancing the interests of their peoples and supporting broader Arab and Islamic solidarity.

Dr Khalid bin Said al Amri, Chairman of the Oman Economic Association, shared exclusive insights with the Observer regarding the long-standing and multifaceted relationship between Oman and Algeria.

These ties, strengthened over the years, began with the establishment of a joint committee in the early 1990s.

In 2000, Oman and Algeria signed a mutual investment promotion and protection agreement, as well as an agreement to prevent double taxation. The Oman-Algeria Business Council was then established in 2006 to facilitate cooperation in trade and investment across multiple fields.

Today, both nations aim to advance these bonds, fostering sustainable development in line with their shared objectives.

Dr Al Amri referenced data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information, noting that the value of trade between Oman and Algeria reached approximately RO 41.4 million by the end of 2023, a remarkable increase from around RO 9 million in 2014 – an impressive growth rate of over 355 per cent.

This substantial rise, according to Dr Al Amri, reflects the positive impact of joint initiatives to strengthen trade ties.

Algerian exports to Oman, while more modest, reached around RO 135,000 in 2023, up from RO 11,000 in 2014, with a significant peak in 2022, when Algerian exports to Oman topped RO 12 million.

According to Dr Al Amri, mineral products dominated Omani exports to Algeria, constituting 52 per cent of the total as of August 2024.



DR KHALID BIN SAID AL AMRI
Chairman, Oman Economic Association

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

A NUMBER OF investment opportunities within Oman’s cybersecurity sector have been identified during the 12th Regional Cybersecurity Conference currently underway in Muscat.

Outlining some of these opportunities, Eng Badar al Salehi, Director-General of the Oman National Computer Emergency Readiness Team (OCERT), said: “Regarding investment opportunities in the field of cybersecurity, we firmly believe in the importance of partnering with the private sector to grow this market.

“Accordingly, there are several initiatives that the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has launched. Some examples... include the establishment of a data recovery lab for lost and damaged data, safe handling of digital devices, the establishment and design of a national firewall to protect the digital economy infrastructure, and addressing cyber insurance.”

The Director-General noted that the increasing volume of cybersecurity threats has re-



Eng Badar al Salehi, Director-General of the Oman National Computer Emergency Readiness Team, speaking at the Regional Cybersecurity Conference.

sulted in an increased demand for cyber insurance services. “According to a study by Cybersecurity Ventures, global spending on cybersecurity is expected to surpass \$1 trillion, reflecting the impact of cyber threats on the global economy.

Research indicates that 60% of companies affected by cyber breaches may shut down within six months.... Therefore, regions like the European Union have enacted data privacy and protection laws to safeguard against cyber risks and breaches.

This has led to a rise in the cybersecurity insurance

market, which has grown to over \$8 billion and is projected to reach \$20 billion, allowing institutions and companies to hedge against cybersecurity risks. In Oman, a financial sustainability team has partnered with related entities to explore cybersecurity insurance,” he shared.

Additionally, he identified several key sectors that are expected to experience significant growth in cybersecurity investment, “Furthermore, cybersecurity is essential in sensitive sectors. For instance, the cybersecurity market in the healthcare sector is ex-

MINISTER OF ECONOMY RECEIVES CAMBODIAN OFFICIAL

MUSCAT: Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, received in his office Dr Osman Hassan, Prime Minister in Charge of Islamic Affairs in the Kingdom of Cambodia, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

The Minister of Economy stressed the depth of friendly relations between the two friendly countries and the existence of multiple prospects for economic cooperation



between the two countries. For his part, Dr Osman

Hassan, Prime Minister in Charge of Islamic Affairs in the

Kingdom of Cambodia, expressed his country’s interest in cooperating with the Sultanate of Oman and benefiting from its experiences in various fields of investment and transferring practical, scientific and technical expertise.

The meeting was attended by Ok Saron, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Sultanate of Oman, and a number of officials from both sides. — **ONA**

New ore plant to advance Oman’s position in sustainable steel production

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, OCT 29

VALE Oman is embarking on a major new chapter with a \$600-million iron ore concentration plant at SOHAR Port and Freezone, developed in partnership with China’s Jinnan Iron & Steel Group.

In an exclusive interview with the Observer, Vale Oman CEO Nasser bin Sulaiman al Azri outlined the motivations behind this ambitious project, emphasising Oman’s unique advantages as a regional hub for the iron and steel industry.

Al Azri cited Oman’s stability, strategic location and skilled workforce as decisive factors in Vale’s continued investments in the country. “After 12 years of successful operation here, we felt it was the right time to grow,” he said.

This new facility will leverage Vale’s global expertise, drawing on similar operations in Brazil and China, to strengthen Vale Oman’s capacity to handle a diverse range of iron ore grades.

The state-of-the-art plant is set to process 18 million tonnes of iron ore annually, producing 12.6 million tonnes of high-grade concentrate by



NASSER BIN SULAIMAN AL AZRI
CEO, Vale Oman



Vale aims to position Oman as a steady supplier of DR-grade iron ore products worldwide.

mid-2027.

Discussing the potential impact of the new concentration plant, Al Azri explained that this project will allow Vale Oman to produce iron ore pellets consistently, even with varying grades of ore.

“This will make the Suhar plant more competitive in both local and

global markets, ensuring we meet our production target of 10 million tonnes of pellets each year,” he noted. With this increased stability, the company aims to position Oman as a steady supplier of DR-grade iron ore products worldwide.

Al Azri acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges would be en-

suring the project does not disrupt Vale Oman’s existing operations.

“It’s a project with some interlinks between our plant and Jinnan’s operation, but we’re committed to keeping operational interruptions minimal,” he said.

Coordinating closely with Jinnan, Vale is working to avoid significant production delays, aiming for a seamless integration of the new facility within its current setup.

Looking ahead, Al Azri highlighted the strategic importance of Oman in Vale’s regional expansion plans. “It’s not just Vale Oman’s strategy; it’s part of Vale’s global vision,” he explained, adding that the Middle East, and particularly Oman, are central to the company’s long-term goals.

“Vale feels very comfortable investing in Oman, which has proven to be an excellent partner,” Al Azri said, underscoring Vale’s confidence in the country’s business environment.

With this new concentration plant, Vale Oman is not only expanding its production capabilities, but also reinforcing its commitment to Oman as a key player in the global iron and steel supply chain.

OPINION

‘London is a great place to invest,’ says pension fund boss



ANDY JALIL

The author is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

In a vote of confidence for London as a global financial centre, one of Canada's major pension plans is set to boost its business in the UK. The Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan (HOOPP) will add to its UK staff as it makes a fresh push into private markets, according to its chief investment officer. “All the Maple 8 plans are here,” Michael Wissell said, referring to the group of Canada's largest pension schemes that has a presence in London's financial district (known as the ‘City’) already. “There's a great talent of pool here (with which) we can augment our Canada-based team, and a great number of our partners are here. It conspires to make London a natural place for us.” HOOPP, which oversees \$113 bn on behalf of members, has opened a temporary office which will soon move to a permanent location (near Piccadilly) and is staffed by senior employees who have relocated from Ontario. Wissell said the office will be staffed with 12 people initially, with hires being sourced in the UK rather than relocations from Canada. Nic Aaviku, who heads real estate investment at HOOPP, as well as Christopher Mazza, who leads on private equity, are among those to move to London. Wissell said it is looking to appoint someone in the UK to oversee infrastructure

investments. HOOPP'S arrival follows an increased appetite for private market exposure from the 65,000-member pension scheme. “We still have a heavy focus on public assets but we have long-term liquidity so we can afford to put a portion of our assets in different deals that offer a lot of diversification,” Wissell said. “We have a predisposition to invest in Canada. More than anything else, I need to diversify. That's why we are here now.” He added: “It's about boots on the ground and trying to spot more opportunities. It's already starting to develop, “We're not the biggest plan compared to others but we're here to be a great partner where outside capital is needed.” HOOPP's move comes as the UK tries to attract more investment to the country. Last year's Mansion House Compact was signed by a group of pension providers who pledged to invest a proportion of their assets in unlisted securities by 2030. Over the past 25 years UK pension funds have slashed their exposure to domestic equities and several listed companies have left London for other financial centres including New York. Wissell dismissed any concern about London's status as an investment hub, adding that the City will remain a “world-class financial centre” over the

Last year British Columbia Investment Management Corporation, a Canadian pension plan which oversees

\$250 BILLION, opened a London office, its first outside North America.

long term. “The talent pool here is fantastic,” he said. “The UK is going to be a great place to invest over the next 5 or 10 years, and London will be a great place to be over that time.” Last year British Columbia Investment Management Corporation, a Canadian pension plan which oversees \$250 bn, opened a London office, its first outside North America. The confidence shown in London as a “great place to invest” is not surprising. London is closing in on New York for the title of the world's top financial centre and has pulled away from its European rivals, according to research by an influential think tank. The Z/Yen Global Financial Centres index, which ranks 121 locations, showed London remained in second place with a rating of 750 points, up three points from its previous report in March and closing the trans-Atlantic gap. New York scored 764 points to retain the top spot. However, its rating fell by one point over the six months since March. The Big Apple has topped the biannual ranking ever since it overtook London in September 2018. However, the gap between the two financial hubs has narrowed by 15 points over the last 18 months.

NORWAY’S WEALTH FUND FALLS SHORT ON CLIMATE AMBITIONS

The world's largest sovereign wealth fund is falling short on its own climate expectations by failing to vote in support of key shareholder resolutions during this year's AGM season. The \$1.8 trillion fund pools the Nordic state's revenue from oil and gas production. Since 2022 it aims for the 9,000 companies it invests in to reach Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement.

As part of its strategy, the fund's management, Norges Bank Investment Management (NBIM), sets expectations for corporate boards on climate change and votes at annual general meetings on the issue. It says it engages with companies in multiple ways, including via voting on shareholder proposals, and in severe cases can divest from companies if they fail to respond. The fund is failing short, however, on that ambition, according to a new report by Norwegian NGO Framtiden i våre hender (Future in our Hands). The report analysed the fund's voting record on 21 climate resolutions at 17 companies during this year's annual general meetings' season, including at Shell, BP and TotalEnergies.

It found the fund voted against 17 out of 21 climate resolutions deemed important to support by three climate lobby groups, instead aligning with recommendation from the management of the companies concerned. The fund supported the remaining four. Lucy Brooks, an advisor on sustainable finance at an NGO, said the fund had been fairly consistent in voting against company management on some issues, such as excessive executive pay, but not when it comes to climate change. “They are far less consistent when it comes to voting on the limited number of climate resolutions put forward at the most critical companies that can influence the energy transition away from fossil fuels,” she said. “They do not ensure that their votes align with the expectations laid out in their own climate action plan.” NBIM said it engaged with top emitters via company meetings and via voting at AGMs and that it often considered these tools in combination. When deciding whether to back a shareholder proposal, NBIM said it analyses three factors: materiality, prescriptiveness and its scope. “This detailed analysis often results in us withholding support for proposals that at first glance raise important topics and contain language that is aligned with our own expectations,” Eivind Fliflet, of NBIM's active ownership department, said. “We recognise that there are different views on what it means for individual companies in various sectors to be aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement and follow developments and standards in this area closely.” — Reuters



ANA SWANSON

The author covers trade and international economics for The Times and is based in Washington

Trump said, “Tariff is the most beautiful word in the dictionary. More beautiful than love, more beautiful than respect.”



A supporter of former president Donald Trump, the Republican nominee for president, at a campaign rally in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. — The New York Times

At a rally in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, this month, former president Donald Trump paused in front of a crowd holding signs that read “Save Our Steel” to pay homage to one of his favourite concepts. Tariff, he said, “is the most beautiful word in the dictionary. More beautiful than love, more beautiful than respect.” Trump demonstrated a deep affinity for tariffs during his presidency, using them as a cudgel to punish both allies and rivals as he tried to force companies to make their products in the United States. If he wins again in November, he is promising a much more aggressive approach, a full-scale upending of the trading system in which the United States would no longer be a partner in the global flow of goods, but a mercantilist nation intent on walling itself off from the world. The former president, who has described himself as a “Tariff Man,” has talked about tariffs as the solution to an array of problems, from making the country rich to funding tax cuts and paying for child care. But most central to his vision is the ability of tariffs to reverse decades of

globalisation and force factories to move back to the United States. Trump has threatened to slap steep tariffs on every country to raise the cost of foreign products and try to reorder global supply chains. His tariffs would hit almost all US imports, more than \$3 trillion of goods. His approach could help some companies that are making their products in the United States since they would make the cost of entry higher for overseas competitors. But those benefits could be outweighed by the costs. Economists say the kind of broad-based tariffs Trump is envisioning would significantly raise prices for US manufacturers and businesses that must buy materials and parts from abroad. Higher prices would be passed on to US consumers, with the burden falling particularly on poorer people. Trump's plan would also most likely incite multiple trade wars as other countries retaliate with tariffs on American goods. Those trade spats would reduce US exports, disrupt global supply chains and shake the system of alliances that the United States has worked to construct

since World War II. “It's very simple: It's a really bad idea,” said Mark Zandi. “You're going to push this exceptionally good economy into a ditch, and it'll stay there until the tariffs are normalised,” he said. “If we go down the tariff war path, we're going down a very dark path for the economy.” Still, Trump's pitch is resonating with voters, many of whom voted for him in 2016 because of his promises to punish China and rip up existing free trade deals like North American Free Trade Agreement. In the ensuing years, Democrats and Republicans have embraced tariffs, particularly on products from China, as a way to reverse decades of unfettered trade that they say hollowed out US factory towns. After initially criticising Trump's tariffs on more than \$300 billion of products from China, President Joe Biden chose to keep most of them and added a few of his own. Vice-President Kamala Harris' campaign has said she plans to use tariffs in a “targeted” fashion, though she has criticised Trump's plan for broad tariffs as a tax on consumers. But the scale of what Trump is proposing is larger than any tariff increases that have been seen in nearly a century. He has floated a “universal tariff” of 10% to 20% on most foreign products and tariffs of 60% or more on China. To ban Chinese cars from coming into the United States via Mexico, he has said he would impose “whatever tariffs are required — 100%, 200%, 1,000%.” Trump said this month that the higher the tariffs, the better they would be at forcing factories to return to the United States. “There's another theory is that the tariff, you make it so high, so horrible, so obnoxious, that they'll come right away,” he said during an event in Chicago. Trump has glowingly talked of an earlier episode in American history when the government earned its revenue through tariffs rather than through income taxes. He claimed the United States “was the richest” in the 1880s and 1890s, and praised President William McKinley, whose tariffs, Trump said, earned so much money that “we didn't know what to do.” But historians say political opinion began turning against high tariffs in the early 20th century partly because they exacerbated cronyism and burdened American consumers. — The New York Times

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ANNOUNCEMENT

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

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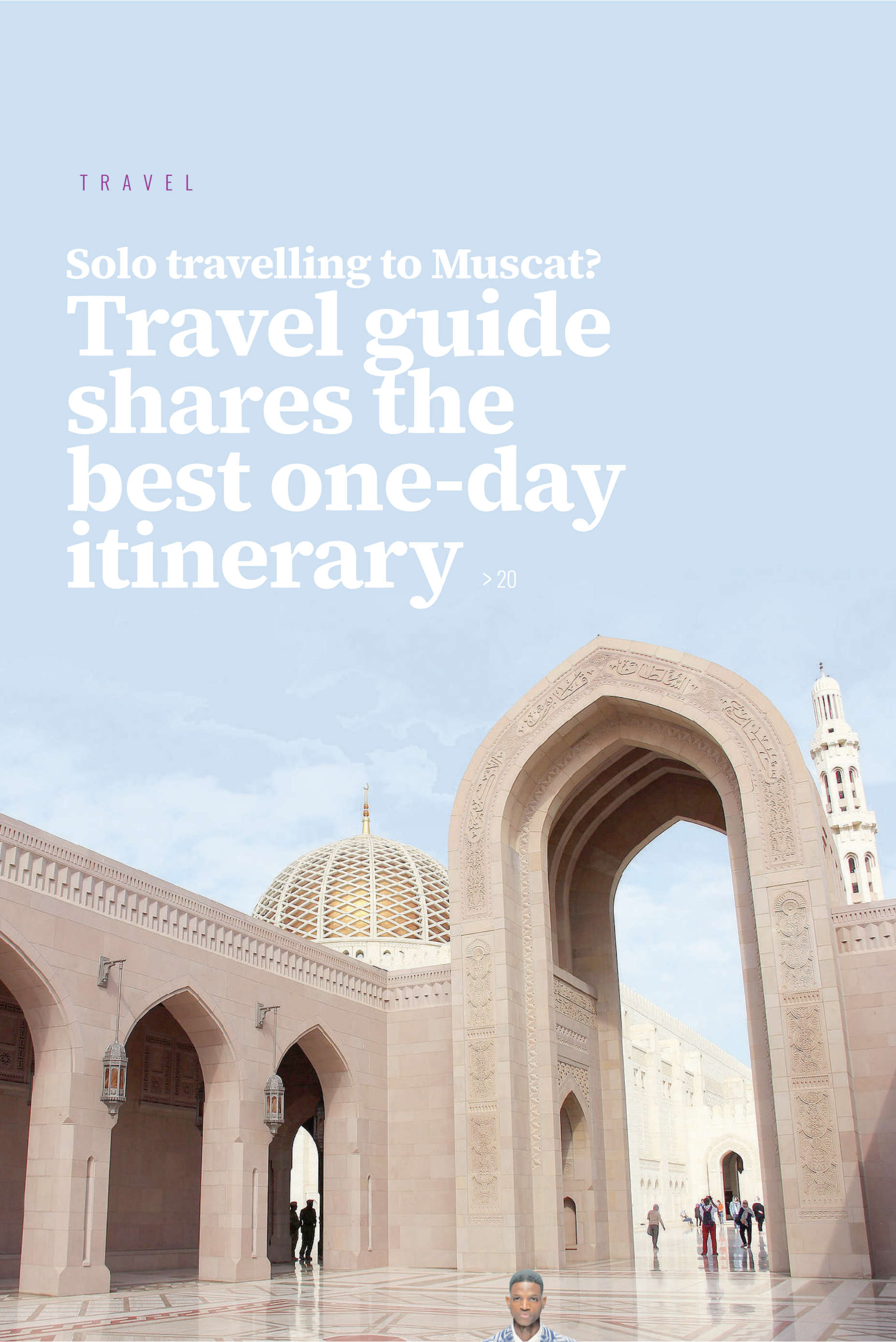
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ART/LIFE



TRAVEL

Solo travelling to Muscat? Travel guide shares the best one-day itinerary > 20

RARE FINDS

Rare Tintin albums go under the hammer in Paris



A collection of rare Tintin comic albums is up for auction in Paris on Wednesday, many signed by cartoonist Herge, who wrote “Tintin is just another version of me” on one flyleaf.

Among the 75 graphic novels is a one-of-a-kind copy of “Tintin in America”, first published in 1932, which has an estimated value of 200,000 euros (\$217,000). Herge dedicated the book in 1933 to the chaplain of his Brussels scout troop, Charles Helsen, who became a friend and mentor.

“To Mr Abbot Helsen, in memory of the good years spent under his supervision, discovering Adventure... Tintin is just another version of me, who would have continued on that path, all the way,” he wrote.

Helsen’s copy of “Tintin in America” appears to have been a one-off printing.

“We believe Herge requested a copy be specially printed” for his friend, said Daniel Perez, the auction house expert covering the sale.

The sale of 75 graphic novels at the Tajan auction house will break up a collection built over generations by the family of Felipe Ortiz-Patino, whose Bolivian great-grandfather started the mania.

Perez said he put together the lots for sale from the collection after Ortiz-Patino “switched interests for various reasons”.

Many of the books on offer are in near-new or very good condition, displaying the original colours of their cover illustrations.

One first-edition copy of 1931’s “Tintin in the Congo” — of which only a few thousand were printed — is estimated at 100,000 euros. Herge signed the book “Tintin” while his fiancée, Germaine, signed as “Milou” — the French name for the intrepid reporter’s faithful terrier known as “Snowy” in English translations.

An unsigned but very rare pop-up version of “Red Rackham’s Treasure” is also on sale with an estimate of 60,000 euros.

In November, Tajan plans to offer one of Herge’s original 1941 illustrations for “The Shooting Star”, another Tintin adventure, estimated at up to 500,000 euros. — AFP

QUICK

FEATURES



ENTERTAINMENT

US actor and director Johnny Depp attends the red carpet of the movie “Modi - Three Days on the Wing of Madness” during the 19th International Rome Film Festival (Festa del Cinema di Roma) in Rome. — AFP



FASHION

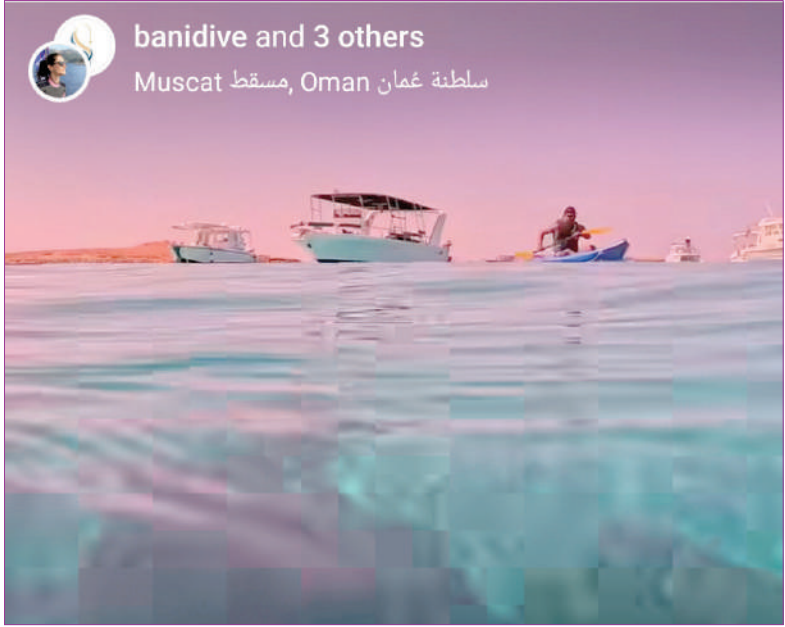
A model presents a creation by designer Emmy Kasbit during Lagos Fashion Week in Lagos, Nigeria. — AFP



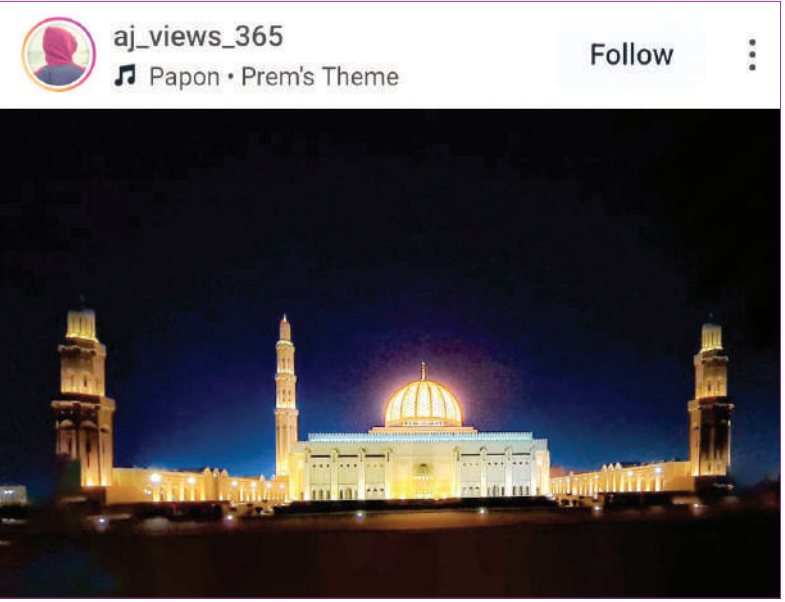
CULTURE

People disguised as phantoms pose for a picture during the pumpkin festival at the Parque Fundidora ahead of the Halloween celebration in Monterrey, Mexico. — AFP

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Artwork of banana duct-taped to wall estimated to sell for \$1m



The controversial artwork “Comedian” by Maurizio Cattelan, which features a banana duct-taped to a wall, has ignited intense discussions about its value, with auction estimates exceeding \$1 million. Art experts emphasise that the ultimate decision regarding its worth rests with the public. Since its debut at the Art Basel Miami Beach show in 2019, “Comedian” has polarised the art community, drawing both fascination and criticism. The piece has gained notoriety for being consumed twice: first, during a performance art event called “Hungry Artist,” where it was deliberately eaten, and later by a student who taped the peeled banana back onto the wall.

“Comedian” is scheduled to go under the hammer at Sotheby’s Now and Contemporary Evening Auction in New York on November 20, with expected bids

ranging from \$1 million to \$1.5 million. Before the auction, the artwork will embark on a world tour, starting with a unique exhibition in New York on October 28, before travelling to major cities such as London, Paris, Milan, Hong Kong, Dubai, Taipei, Tokyo, and Los Angeles. David Galperin, Sotheby’s head of contemporary art for the Americas, lauds the piece as a profound commentary that challenges traditional perceptions of art. He notes that “Comedian” stands as a defining work for both Cattelan and contemporary art, likening it to historic pieces that have redefined art’s essence, such as Marcel Duchamp’s “Fountain.” This thought-provoking artwork not only questions the concept of artistic value but also invites viewers to engage with the evolving nature of culture and commerce in the art world.—PA Media/dpa



Amsterdam’s ‘best neighbourhood’ to star in 750th celebrations

AMSTERDAM kicks off year-long celebrations this weekend to mark its 750th anniversary with one ancient and formerly down-at-heel neighbourhood playing a starring role in the festivities.

Sitting cheek by jowl with the city’s Canal Belt, the once working class Jordaan neighbourhood is the setting for a new musical which its producers said captured the essence of the Dutch capital and its residents. “We specifically designed a musical to celebrate Amsterdam’s 750th anniversary,” said Marc Muller, producer at the DeLaMar Theatre where the musical “Onze Jordaan” (Our Jordaan) hit the planks to a full house on Wednesday evening. “From October 27 the city will enter its year-long celebration and we thought a musical is an ideal way to contribute to the festivities,” Muller said, a few hours before the show opened to the public.

Any mention of the Jordaan in the Netherlands will immediately be greeted by a knowing smile. For many Dutch citizens, Amsterdam is best exemplified not by its gritty and notorious red light district, but by the Jordaan. “This is the best neighbourhood in the Netherlands,” Evert Jansen said during a visit. “The best actors, the best singers, the best footballers are all from here — (Ruud) Gullit and (Johan) Cruyff. The best comes from here,” said Jordaan born-and-bred Jansen, 82, sporting a typical Amsterdam flat cap.

MOST FAMOUS NEIGHBOURHOOD Built in parallel to the Canal Belt during the so-called Dutch Golden Age in the 17th century, many of its streets and canals today still carry the names of plants and flowers. Historians say one of the possible origins of the neighbourhood’s name, the Jordaan, comes from the French word “jardin”, meaning garden. Back in the 17th century many of its residents were migrants from all over Europe, working in the city’s factory and harbour “all attracted by the wealth of Amsterdam,” said Annemarie de Wildt, historian and former curator of the Amsterdam Museum.



The Jordaan’s population grew exponentially for the next two centuries and living conditions plummeted. But even back then, the neighbourhood became famous for its music and singing -- especially when Italian labourers brought their love of opera to the Jordaan’s tiny streets. Bel canto, a smooth operatic style of singing, was soon incorporated into the Jordaan’s music tradition. This continued into the 20th century, said De Wildt. “Somehow... the Jordaan had a sort-of notorious culture of its own, characterised by a lot of music, theatre,” she said. “People started writing novels about the Jordaan, making films about the Jordaan, a whole genre of songs started.” “In that sense, I think it’s one of the most famous neighbourhoods of the



whole of the Netherlands,” she said. For the producers of the musical “Onze Jordaan” it was the ideal mix. “You need several ingredients to make a musical: a good story to start with, and the Jordaan on many levels has a good story to tell,” said Muller. “You need a culture that’s easy to explain to the whole of the Netherlands and very importantly, fitting music, music that people know.” “And because of this combination, we’ve chosen the Jordaan,” he said. — AFP

If you're planning a trip to Muscat, here's a great guide to making the most of your time while you're in Oman's beautiful capital.



Solo travelling to Muscat? Travel guide shares the best one-day itinerary



BY ALI MOHAMMADI

I HAVE never imagined calling myself a solo traveller, but over the past 10 years or so I found that most of my travels have been done as a 'solo traveller', definitely more often than any group trips I would have done, making me think that perhaps the phrase would be an apt one to describe me. I got my first experience travelling solo probably back in 2006 when I travelled to Japan alone and gained an experience that I probably did not fully appreciate or realise until years later: that you don't actually need to wait on or rely on anyone but yourself to make a trip or a long-held dream of a travel destination happen — and visiting Japan had been a dream of mine ever since I was a kid.

This was a very liberating feeling, and ever since then I have not thought twice about not travelling due to not having a group or friends to join me — and have used this experience to travel to destinations ranging from the Great Ocean Road in Australia to the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone and Pripyat in Ukraine, and the stunningly gorgeous Caucasus mountains of Tusheti in Georgia. Despite all of this, I do not consider myself a 'loner', on the contrary, I believe I am a sociable person who enjoys meeting people. To me, solo travelling allows me to have the freedom to make (as well as adjust, and readjust) plans and destinations, while also being able to meet some wonderfully fascinating people whether they are locals or fellow travellers in the destinations I visit.

For those who are considering a trip, my advice is 'have a plan' — a good plan doesn't have to be detailed and should be flexible to adjust or fill details as you travel — but have a big goal or thing you want to do (i.e. to visit a certain national park or visit a monument or museum) and fill the details around that. Plan a portion of your solo travel trip in a group activity — this could be visiting family/friends or booking a group activity such as a hike or group tour, for a first timer this will help make you more at ease and hey you combined a great experience with meeting your family or friends. Buy a local SIM with data wherever you go. Have an open mind and don't stress if you don't make a plan or target! If you're planning a trip to Muscat, here's a great guide to making the most of your time while you're in Oman's beautiful capital.

Muscat in a Day

Omani Breakfast (1 hour)

Forget about your hotel buffet, if you have the time, you need to try a traditional Omani breakfast at many of the different cafes and restaurants that offer it. Depending on where you are staying, good options include Rozna, which has an epic building worthy of a visit just to see, Dukanah Cafe, and Nana's. If the restaurant offers a breakfast platter, just go for it and come back to our website afterwards to thank us. All the options mentioned here open at 8 am.

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque (1 to 2 hours)

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque is the number one most visited tourist attraction in Muscat, and that is not surprising. This timeless masterpiece is one of the most magnificent and extravagant mosques in the whole world and beautifully showcases contemporary royal Omani architecture while giving homage to a variety of Islamic architectural styles. Non-Muslims can only visit this mosque from Saturday to Thursday between 8 am and 11 am, so you need to plan for this as an early activity for the day.

Royal Opera House Muscat (1 to 2 hours)

The Royal Opera House Muscat is another one of

Muscat's architectural masterpieces and offers a completely different experience. You can come here for a very quick stop to take photographs outside the building and walk through the Galleria, or you can go on a guided tour of the Opera House. We are no longer sure of what the current timings are, but it is likely that tours are available from 8.30 am to 5.30 pm.



National Museum (1 to 2 hours)

If you do not want to visit the Royal Opera House Muscat, your alternative must-see attraction is the National Museum. It is located in the heart of Old Muscat directly facing Al Alam Palace. This state-of-the-art museum is perfectly curated to give you a glimpse into the ancient civilisation of Oman and showcases clothes, weapons and artefacts from all over Oman.

Contemporary Omani Lunch (1 to 2 hours)

Depending on whether you end up going to the Royal Opera House Muscat or the National Museum, you have several options for unique Omani contemporary lunch places, namely, Ubhar, Bait Al Luban, and Majlis Al Luban. You can't go wrong with any of these places. Do not trust anyone who recommends that you go anywhere else.

Souq Muttrah and the Corniche (1 to 2 hours)

Souq Muttrah is the most traditional attraction that you can see in the heart of the capital without having to travel to the interior. Be ready to be engulfed in fragrances and spices, haggle with no shame, and come back with fun Omani trinkets and souvenirs. Most of the shops in the souq close between 2 pm and 4 pm, so make sure that you time your trip so that you do not arrive too late or too early after your lunch.

Al Alam Palace (30 minutes to 1 hour)

His Majesty the Sultan hosts heads of state and monarchs to Al Alam Palace. Even though you can't go inside, it is still one of the most iconic buildings in the country and a favourite to all Instagrammers. You can come here during the day or at night for a walk on foot from around the front of the palace all the way to the back to see the two castles, Jalali and Mirani, overseeing the coastline.

Stroll by the beach (1 to 2 hours)

Depending on the time of sunset, you can go to Al Qurum Beach or Athaiba Beach to stroll by the beach and watch the locals play football and exercise.

Dinner

If you did not get to try Ubhar or Bait Al Luban, this is your final chance to do so. If you would like to go somewhere with a variety of stylish eating options, not necessarily Omani, you can go to Al Mouj Muscat and try one of the many restaurants by the marina.

Ali Mohammadi is a writer with a passion for travel. He is recognized as a leading travel guide, expertly detailing various destinations and attractions throughout the Sultanate of Oman. To read about his travels, visit [Omantripper.com](#)