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PACT SIGNED TO SET UP HUB FOR AGRO-PRODUCE



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DREAM TO MAKE IT GLOBAL WITH HER ART



MUSCAT

HM GREET'S BRAZIL, PANAMA, DOMINICA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the Federative Republic of Brazil on being elected as his country's president. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to Lula da Silva in realising the Brazilian people's aspirations of further progress and prosperity. His Majesty has sent a cable of greetings to President Laurentino Cortizo of the Republic of Panama on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Cortizo and the people of his country. His Majesty has also sent a cable of greetings to President Charles Angelo Savarin of the Commonwealth of Dominica on his country's Independence Anniversary. — ONA

HM THANKED BY EGYPT PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Abdel Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable on the 6th of October Anniversary. In his cable, President El Sisi expressed his appreciation to His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments, praying to Allah the Almighty to grant His Majesty good health and continuous success. He also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity. — ONA



OMAN OBSERVER
FIRST DEDICATED ENGLISH NEWS APP IN OMAN

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Summit pledges support to Palestinians

ALGIERS: Arab leaders said on Wednesday that the Palestinian cause is still central for them after their first summit meeting in three years.

The final declaration after the meeting in Algiers pledged continued Arab support for the Palestinian cause, said Jerusalem must be protected, condemned Israel's use of violence against Palestinians and urged Israel to lift its blockade of Gaza.

The 31st ordinary session of the Arab Summit wrapped up on Wednesday at the International Conference Centre in Algiers after a plenary session chaired by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune.

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the



Leaders and heads of delegations attend a session of the Arab League Summit in Algiers on Wednesday. — Reuters

Sultan, headed Oman's delegation at the summit.

The Arab Summit covered a range of topics, including the political developments on the Palestinian cause, activating food security initiatives, developments in Libya and Yemen, Arab security cooperation and developing the

Arab League, among other topics.

In his speech, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el Sisi called for adopting a comprehensive approach aimed at strengthening the capabilities of Arab countries to confront crises and ensuring the strength and unity of the Arab nation,

stressing that Arab security is an indivisible whole and the difficulties facing the Arab world are common.

For his part, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas expressed his aspiration to form an Arab legal committee to follow up inhumane operations against the Palestinian people, calling for every effort to be made to support the Jerusalem conference to be held in Cairo.

Shaikh Mishaal Al Ahmad Al Jaber al Sabah, Crown Prince of Kuwait, stressed the global challenges imposed on Arab countries to advance the process of joint Arab action, including developments in Ukraine and their effects on the economic and humanitarian side.

Algeria's ambassador to Egypt and permanent delegate to the Arab League Abdelhamid Chebira underlined a convergence of views between the Arab leaders on all

political, social and economic issues affecting the Arab region.

In a statement on the sidelines of the summit, Chebira underlined that there is a total convergence between the Arab leaders on all the political issues affecting the region.

The economic decisions included in the "Declaration of Algiers" will have "very positive effects on all the Arab countries, and will open up prospects for partnership and investment in different fields," said the source.

Underscoring that the economic decisions will take the lion's share in the "Declaration of Algiers" crowning the works of the 31st Arab Summit, he said that "all the obstacles hindering development in the economic fields between the Arab states were evaluated, notably those related to the development of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA)." — Agencies

First commercial flight to Masirah from today

KABEER YOUSUF
[@kabeeryousef](#)

The first commercial passenger aircraft will touch Masirah Island on Thursday afternoon with passengers from Muscat International Airport.

Defence aircraft, rehabilitation flights, and other private jets used to operate at Masirah airport.

With a fixed fare of RO 10, the service is expected to attract tourists from mainland Muscat and international tourists who fly into the country.

Speaking to the *Observer*, Captain Mohammed Ahmed, the carrier's CEO, said that this service will be a great relief to both individuals and corporates who frequent Masirah, one of the most beautiful islands of the Sultanate of Oman.

"We are proud to add the first commercial flight from Muscat to Masirah and back twice a week. We have planned weekly flights connecting the island to boost domestic tourism," he said on the sidelines of an event.



RAFO ATTENDS TRAINING PROGRAMME IN UAE

A number of aircraft of the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo) are taking part in a training programme being carried out in the United Arab Emirates from October 26 to November 25. The participation is part of the training plans applied by the command of Rafo with a view of sustaining a high level of training and combat efficiency of its personnel.

Europe temperature rise more than twice global average

GENEVA: Temperatures in Europe have increased at more than twice the global average over the past three decades, showing the fastest rise of any continent on earth, the UN said on Wednesday.

The European region has on average seen temperatures rise 0.5 degrees Celsius each decade since 1991, the UN's World Meteorological Organization and the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service found in a joint report. As a result, Alpine glaciers lost 30 metres in ice thickness between 1997 and 2021, while the Greenland ice sheet is

swiftly melting and contributing to accelerating sea level rise.

Last year, Greenland experienced melting and the first-ever recorded rainfall at its highest point. And the report cautioned that regardless of future levels of global warming, temperatures would likely continue to rise across Europe at a rate exceeding global mean temperature changes.

"Europe presents a live picture of a warming world and reminds us that even well-prepared societies are not safe from impacts of extreme weather events," WMO chief Petteri Taalas said



People stand in Green Park during warm weather in London, Britain. — Reuters file photo

in a statement. WMO splits the world into six regions, with the European region covering 50

countries and including half of the swiftly warming Arctic, which is not a continent in its own right.

Within Antarctica — which is a continent but falls outside the six WMO-defined regions — only the West Antarctic Peninsula part is seeing rapid warming.

The new report, released ahead of the UN's 27th conference on climate set to open in Egypt on Sunday, examined the situation in Europe up to and including 2021.

It found that last year, high-impact weather and climate events — mainly floods and storms — led to hundreds of deaths, directly affected more than half a million people and caused economic damage across Europe. — AFP



■ MINISTER RECEIVES KUWAIT, SUDAN ENVOYS



Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, received Dr Nasser bin Mohammed al Hajri, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman, in Muscat on Tuesday. They reviewed means of enhancing cooperation to achieve joint interests. They also discussed several matters of mutual interest. Al Numani also received in his office Salah Al Din Al Haj Mohammed, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan to the Sultanate of Oman. During this meeting, Al Numani reviewed the march of relations between Oman and Sudan. They also touched on aspects of mutual cooperation. They also discussed several regional and international issues of common interest. — ONA

Projects worth RO 3.5m in N Al Sharqiyah

IBRA: The Office of Governor of North Al Sharqiyah on Tuesday signed 17 agreements to the tune of RO 3,533,000 to the implementation of service and development projects in the wilayats of the governorate.

The agreements include the preparation of designs and studies for road projects, illumination, consultancy, construction projects, supply and installation of service utilities, among others.

The agreements were signed by Shaikh Ali bin Ahmed al Shamsi, Governor of North Al Sharqiyah, and the CEOs, managers and representatives of the executing companies. — ONA



RNO marks annual day today

MUSCAT: The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) on Thursday marks its annual day which is celebrated on November 3 every year.

The ceremony will be held at the military parade square at the Said Bin Sultan Naval Base under the auspices of Dr Mohammed bin Nasser al Zaabi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence.

The event will include graduation of a new batch of army recruits beside a number of other events.

This day marks the handover by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said of the banner of RNO which is witnessing more progress and development under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, alongside the other units of the Sultan's Armed Forces.

SQU's 33rd batch graduation to be held on November 5 and 13

MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) will celebrate the graduation of its 33rd batch (2,912 graduates) on November 5 and 13 . The first ceremony — for graduation of SQU students from human sciences colleges — will be held under the auspices of Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour, on November 5. The batch comprises 1,691 graduates from the colleges of law, education, economics and political sciences, arts and social sciences.

On November 13, a second ceremony will see the graduation of students from science colleges. It will be held under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The batch comprises 1,221 graduates from the colleges of engineering, medicine and health sciences, science, nursing, agricultural and marine sciences.

■ WALK FOR CANCER PATIENTS



Oman Cancer Association organised its 18th walkathon to support of cancer patients at Qurum Natural Park on Tuesday. The Oman Cancer Association had since 2019 suspended its breast cancer awareness programme and annual walkathon due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Workshop on Musandam Nature Reserve organised

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Musandam Governorate has a rich nature reserve and is known for its geographical diversity, natural environment and attractive tourist attractions.

The Environment Authority on Wednesday organised a seminar on the management plan of the National Natural Park Reserve intending to preserve its nature and wildlife.

The seminar was held under the auspices of Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidy, Governor of Musandam.

The seminar included the presentation of several environmental working papers on the reserve, with the participation of government agencies, the private sector and the local community,

such as the Musandam Governor's Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

A survey conducted by the Environment Authority and the Office of the Governor of Musandam described the reserve which covers on an area of 1149.49 square km. It was declared a nature reserve by a Royal Decree issued in June 2020.

The major attraction is that the reserve comprises nine offshore islands, including shallow coasts and shoals. The Umm al Taier is one such island. Sea snakes have been sighted often at the same time, and bottlenose dolphins, common dolphins, spinner dolphins and humpback whale dolphins have been spotted in nearby waters.

The islands with sandy beaches have been a haven for nesting birds, green turtles and even porcupines. Another attraction has been the ancient coral reefs as well as the steep rocky cliffs making it a place with distinct geographical features. Attracting marine life to the area are also the algae and seaweeds in the surrounding waters of the islands.

On land, the wildlife recorded are lynx, mountain fox, red fox, hare, hedgehog and wildcat, in addition to lizards and snakes. Meanwhile, about 200 species of perennial, annual and seasonal plants have been recorded. Some of the species have been referred to as rare while others have been marked as threatened with extinction, making the nature reserve crucial to be protected with the application of the right management.



Job Vacancy

We are pleased to announce that Oman Investment Authority (OIA) is currently looking for a potential talent to fill the following position:

Position	General Counsel
Location	Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

How to Apply ?

- To apply and view the detailed job description, please visit the OIA's page on [LinkedIn](#)
- The Last date for receiving the applications will be: **13 Nov 2022**



Agreement to boost school sports

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 2

The Oman School Sports Association signed a partnership and cooperation agreement with Omantel. Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education and Chairman of the Association, signed the agreement with Talal bin Said al Maamari, CEO of Omantel.

This agreement will contribute to improving and activating the various activities and programmes of the Association during the current academic year 2022-2023, redoubling efforts in supporting the school sports scene, and providing an exceptional experience for school students in the Sultanate of Oman. This partnership will also enhance raising the standards of sports sponsorship experiences for the Association to achieve the aspirations of students and the school community.

The two parties seek, through this important national partnership, to contribute to the preparation of a healthy generation that participates in the development of its society through the implementation of programmes of a physical health nature. The agreement also aims towards refining students'

talents and skills and opening areas of cooperation with clubs and federations to strengthen national teams. This partnership will have a major role as well in promoting the concept of sport as a way of life and contributing to raising the quality of life for the community.

On this partnership, Dr Ambosaidi said: "This partnership with the Omantel is a necessary requirement to implement the agenda of the Omani School Sports Association as it will support activities carried out by the Association in relation to promoting school sports. The activities of the Omani School Sports Association are diverse and numerous, and in need of such support, and Omantel is one of the main supporters, and I call on the rest of the institutions to contribute to the promotion of school sports."

Al Maamari emphasised the importance of this partnership with the Ministry of Education as it comes as a part of a group of activities supported by Omantel. There is no doubt that the education sector is one of the most important capabilities of the company's social responsibility, and the school sports sector is a supportive sector for youth, and Omani sports in general, he said.

Pact to equip science lab at Al Amal School for the Deaf

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 2

The Ministry of Education signed a cooperation agreement with the OQ Group to equip the science laboratory at Al Amal School for the Deaf, in the Ministry's General Diwan. The agreement was signed by Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Under-Secretary for Education, and Najlaa bint Zuhair al Jamali, CEO of Alternative Energy and Head of the Social Investment Committee at OQ Group, on Wednesday. Dr Thuraiya bint Hamad al Rashidi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Special Education and Continuing Learning in the ministry, and Muna al Jabri, from Foreign Affairs and Societal Investment at OQ Group, were present.

The Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education expressed his gratitude to the OQ Group for its promotion of the education sector by its continuous support for its programmes and initiatives aimed at enabling the educational process and contributing to the establishment of scientific facilities that contribute to refining the skills of students with disabilities.

He also noted that this agreement will contribute to supplementing the theoretical aspects that students learn in the school scientific curricula by aligning it with the applied aspects to reach their maximum potential in their educational



path, and in a manner that opens wide scientific horizons for them to benefit from scientific experiences and practical applications.

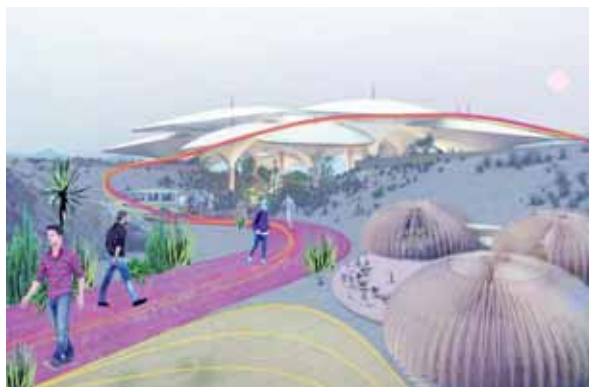
The CEO of Alternative Energy and Chairman of the Social Investment Committee said: "The signing of this agreement with the Ministry of Education stems from the social responsibility that the OQ Group

embodied in supporting educational programmes as part of the community partnership that it pursues within the framework of its social role in society, and we look forward to this agreement contributing in developing the abilities of students with disabilities and providing them with the skills that qualify them to master the theoretical aspects of the school curricula."

UTAS bags urban planning hackathon awards



MUSCAT: University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Muscat bagged the most number of awards of the Urban Planning Hackathon 2022 organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, which concluded at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, on Wednesday. The entries revolved around developing Bausher sand dunes and its surroundings as well as designing engineering projects that are sustainable and economically feasible.



ROHM presents Military Music: Oman and the World today

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) is set to present the annual Military Music Festival with special guest performers from France and Japan.

The annual Military Music concert is a popular event and a festival conceived to demonstrate the global arm of friendship extended by Oman and ROHM across the world. In recent years, the festival has invited countries from every continent to join the display, sharing their cultural vibrancy and glorious pageantry to delighted audiences.

Held on the Al Maidan in the forecourt of the Royal Opera House Muscat, this spectacular production nurtures an atmosphere of great fun, and sincere mutual appreciation, with presentations which inspire national pride and cultural curiosity. Bands from across Oman's military corps and police force, men and women, march in formation to familiar and popular musical arrangements. The marches are carefully



and precisely choreographed demonstrating practised discipline and musicianship.

For 2022, special guests from Japan and France join the programme: The Western Army Band of Japan, an ensemble from a nation whose reputation for flawless pageantry is admired around the world; and, The Band of the French Foreign Legion, a historic institution dating back

to the early 1800s, whose military marches are legendary.

"Military Music: Oman and the World" is a show which is suitable for family audiences to enjoy a soul stirring evening and a wonderful feast for the senses.

The performance will take place on Al Maidan at the Royal Opera House Muscat over three nights on November 3, 4 and 5 at 7 pm.

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FEEDING OF BIRDS IN PUBLIC PLACES A NUISANCE

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@AfrahAlBalushia

Feeding of birds in public places may not turn out to be an act of kindness. It spoils the area with droppings and attracts rodents. Experts say it is also harmful to birds as it expose them to a host of diseases including salmonella, trichomonosis (also known as trichomoniasis) and bird flu.

Now Muscat Municipality has flagged the practice in open spaces and sidewalks where people spread grains and other food residue mostly for pigeons and other birds, which poses risks to public health and spoils aesthetic appearance of open spaces.

“The risk is there where such practice is carried out randomly,” said the source.

The municipality is working on a mechanism to raise awareness in the Muscat city area.

The practice of feeding birds results in bad smell, bad spots due to bird droppings and possibility of breeding of insects and parasites that cause health issues.

The municipality has exhorted people

to stop the practice of feeding the birds in public places and sought cooperation from land lords and tenants.

It also urged owners of buildings to prevent breeding of birds on balconies and rooftops.

Feeding birds in some locations, near multi-storey buildings, has led to situations where birds take shelter in balconies, external units of air-conditioners causing damage.

Visitors and residents of buildings also complain of unpleasant smells of bird droppings or even interruption of some services due to damages to electrical and communication cables. This can also affect the owners of the buildings negatively due to a lack of interest from existing and new tenants to stay at the property.

Feeding birds in public squares also leads to accumulation of grain and food residues in open areas over time causing nuisance to passersby and others who go for walking or exercise. It also add to the burden of the municipality, which spends thousands of rials every year to clean public places.





Demonstrators take part in an anti-government protest rally demanding the release of the university students' leaders and against spiralling cost of living, in Colombo on Wednesday. — AFP

Hundreds march in crisis-hit Sri Lanka

COLOMBO: Hundreds of people marched in Sri Lanka's largest city Colombo on Wednesday protesting against higher taxes, inflation and alleged state-led repression as the country struggles to emerge from its worst financial crisis in seven decades.

The anti-government protest, jointly organised by opposition political parties, trade unions and civil society groups, was blocked by police as marchers attempted to reach a central part of the city where the president's house and other ministries are located.

"People can barely eat three meals a day and this government has done nothing to support people other than impose more and more taxes. We need solutions and we will keep fighting for them," Ceylon Teacher's Union Secretary Joseph Stalin said.

Sri Lanka has been gripped by

a deep financial crisis this year caused by record-low foreign exchange reserves that has left the island of 22 million people struggling to pay for essential imports including fuel, food, cooking gas and medicine.

Widespread protests in July resulted in former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa fleeing the country and resigning after protesters stormed his office and residence.

His successor President Ranil Wickremesinghe will be presenting his first budget on November 14 that is likely to include steep tax increases and other reforms to put the country's tattered economy back on track and get approval from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$2.9-billion bailout.

However, increased taxes, which will include corporate and

personal income taxes hiked to a high of 30 per cent, coming on top of soaring inflation that hit 66 per cent in October, is triggering public discontent.

Protesters carrying national and black flags shouted slogans of "Ranil go home," during the march and called for new elections. They also accused the government of using draconian anti-terrorism legislation to crack down on protest leaders and jail two of them.

"Everyone must be within the law. That is democracy. But this government has been using anti-terrorism laws to repress protest leaders and this must be stopped," said main opposition Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) senior member Eran Wickramaratne.

"Everyone must stand up against this government. We have to fight for our rights." — Reuters

Pope visit a dream come true for woman whose father helped build Bahrain church

MANAMA: When Pope Francis visits Bahrain this week, it will be a dream come true for many Christians in the Gulf Arab country, but especially for Najla Uchi, whose father helped build the first Roman Catholic church in the island state.

Lighting a candle at her home altar lined with religious icons, 78-year-old Najla Uchi said she had been saying a daily prayer for Pope Francis, who is due to arrive on Thursday.

"Many people didn't even dream that they could see the pope here," she said. "When I go to church, they don't believe it, they are all getting excited."

Uchi's father Salman was the main contractor for the Sacred Heart Church, built on a plot of land gifted by the ruling emir. Its bells first rang on Christmas eve in 1939, according to its website.

Her father came to Bahrain from Iraq and was later granted Bahraini citizenship. Uchi was born in Bahrain and is a citizen.

Bahrain allows the small Christian community — made up mostly of foreign workers — to practice their faith publicly in the



Our Lady of Arabia Cathedral in Awali, south of Manama, on Monday ahead of the Pope's visit to the kingdom. Pope Francis will become the first pontiff in history to visit Bahrain. — AFP

two churches there.

In the Sacred Heart Church yard, people pose for pictures in front of posters of Pope Francis.

"I am happy to be there (church) — not only because of my father, everything is wonderful there... we are all like one family," Uchi said.

During his four-day visit, the pontiff will attend the 'Bahrain Forum for Dialogue: East and West for Human Coexistence', and is expected to hold mass.

In 2019, Pope Francis visited Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, the first pontiff to visit the Arabian peninsula. — Reuters

Giant effigy of Truss to go up in smoke

EDENBRIDGE: A giant effigy of former UK prime minister Liz Truss, who quit after a disastrous 49 days in power, will be torched on Britain's Bonfire Night, organisers revealed on Wednesday.

The 33-foot (10-metre) tall caricature will be set ablaze on Saturday in the town of Edenbridge, Kent, southeast England, with more than 10,000 people expected to attend.

Truss became Britain's shortest-serving prime minister when she left Downing Street on October 25 after her maiden budget announcement sent markets spiralling.

Artist Andrea Deans depicts her alongside Larry the Cat, the Downing Street feline who has



An 11-metre effigy of former British Prime Minister Liz Truss is unveiled ahead of the Edenbridge Bonfire Celebrations in Edenbridge on Wednesday. — Reuters

now seen off four prime ministers, with a lettuce, which outlasted the leader in a tabloid newspaper stunt, perched on her shoulder.

The caricature is holding a box of possessions associated with Truss's short but eventful time in office.

Britain's Guy Fawkes or Bonfire Night marks the foiling of a plot by Catholic conspirators to blow up Protestant king James I and the Houses of Parliament with 36 barrels of gunpowder on November 5, 1605.

It is celebrated with bonfires and fireworks displays either on November 5 or the nearest weekend, with effigies or "guys" of the plotter Fawkes burned.

Edenbridge has poked fun at famous figures for more than 20 years, torching effigies of them alongside the traditional Guy Fawkes. — AFP



ROYAL OMAN POLICE

ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Oman Police, Public Relation and Security Information Directorate announces to companies transacting with the Directorate of Projects and Maintenance to necessarily settle their financial claims of the ongoing year no later than 15 Nov 2022. Be informed that post-date claims shall not be considered and stakeholders shall bear financial and legal responsibility for the delay.

Nearly 1,000 migrants stranded in Mediterranean

ROME: Three charity boats carrying almost 1,000 rescued migrants on Wednesday urged Italian or Maltese authorities to welcome them into one of their ports, saying those onboard needed urgent assistance.

The vessels operated by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), SOS Mediterranean and SOS Humanity have been at sea for more than a week. They said all their requests to dock have so far proved unsuccessful.

"572 men, women and children still waiting for a safe port," MSF wrote on Twitter, referring to its Geo Barents vessel.

In emailed comments to Reuters, SOS Humanity said it has 179 people onboard its Humanity 1 vessel, located off the eastern coast of Sicily.

— Reuters

Note

Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.O.A.C) announces to modify the last date of collecting tender document, extend the closing date for following Tender as below details:

Tender No.	Tender Description	Grade	Last Date of Tender Collection	Closing Date
Tanweer - 16/2022	Construction of New 33KV Feeder Line to Feed Ghafeen Area at Willayat Haima - Al Wusta Governorate	"B" and Above Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Tender Board, Tanweer, and Distribution Code Review Panel (valid certificate). Contractors Should be approved by PDO to execute the Project.	10/11/2022	24/11/2022

Interested and Specialized Companies which registered with Tender Board (valid certificate), Rural Areas Electricity Company and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) (valid certificate) may obtain the Tender documents from Procurement & Contracts Department, against non-refundable amount of RO (50/-). The fees for the tenders shall be deposited on Rural Areas Electricity Company account 0423010783090041 – Bank Muscat and for more information please contact via email address i.e. tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om, or call us on phone number: 24250824.

The Completed Tender should be upload Electronically before 12:00 P.M on the last date of submission.

For more information, please contact: 80077787



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North Korea fires 23 missiles, one close to South Korea

SEOUL: North Korea fired at least 23 missiles into the sea on Wednesday, including one that landed less than 60 km off South Korea's coast, which the South's President Yoon Suk-yeol described as "territorial encroachment."

It was the first time a ballistic missile had landed near the South's waters since the peninsula was divided in 1945, and the most missiles fired by the North in a single day. South Korea issued rare air raid warnings and launched its own missiles in response. The missile landed outside South Korea's territorial waters, but south of the Northern Limit Line (NLL), a disputed inter-Korean maritime border.

South Korean warplanes fired three air-to-ground missiles into the sea north across the NLL in response, the South's military said. An official said the weapons used included an AGM-84H/K SLAM-ER, which is a US-made "stand-off" precision attack weapon that can fly for up to 270 km with a 360-kg warhead.

The South's launches came after Yoon's office vowed a "swift and firm response."

"President Yoon Suk-yeol noted North Korea's provocation today was an effective act of territorial encroachment by a missile intruding the NLL for the first time since (the two Koreas' division)," his office said in a statement. When asked whether the missile was flying towards the South's territory and should



A South Korean Air Force's F-15K fires an air-to-surface missile towards north of its maritime border with North Korea. — Reuters

have been intercepted, a senior presidential official said, "Strictly speaking, it did not land in our territory but in the Exclusive Economic Zone under our jurisdiction, therefore it was not subject to interception."

The United States condemned the North's missile launches and "its reckless decision to fire a missile below the de facto maritime boundary with the Republic of Korea," a State Department spokesperson said on Wednesday, using the South's official name.

North Korea has continuously been launching missiles over the past year in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions, US Ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said. "It's unprecedented in the

South Korean president vowed North will 'pay the price' and called it an effective act of territorial encroachment

sense that there were so many," she said of Wednesday's launches.

The missile that crossed the NLL was one of three short-range ballistic missiles fired from the North Korean coastal area of Wonsan into the sea, South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said.

The JCS later said as many as 14 other missiles of various types had been fired from North Korea's east and west coasts.

The JCS said at least one of the

missiles landed 26 km south of the NLL, 57 km from the South Korean city of Sokcho, on the east coast, and 167 km from the island of Ulleung, where air raid warnings were sounded.

"We heard the siren at around 8:55 am and all of us in the building went down to the evacuation place in the basement," an Ulleung county official said. "We stayed there until we came upstairs at around 9:15 after hearing that the projectile fell into the high seas."

The North also fired more than 100 rounds of artillery from its east coast into a military buffer zone, South Korea's military said. The firing violated a 2018 military agreement banning hostile acts in border areas, the JCS said.

— Reuters

Prosecutors blame renovation firm for India bridge collapse

AHMEDABAD: Indian prosecutors have blamed a company that renovated a suspension bridge for its collapse at the weekend in which more than 130 people were killed. Contractors installed heavier flooring during work on the 150-year-old bridge in Morbi but did not replace a rusty main cable.

Police believe the structure snapped due to excess weight when it was crowded with visitors on Sunday, plunging 135 people to their deaths in a river below.

Nine people linked to the Oreva group, a watch and e-bike manufacturing firm that had a contract to manage the bridge, have been arrested on manslaughter charges.

Oreva "hired contractors who were not qualified enough", public prosecutor Harshendu Panchal told reporters after a remand hearing late on Tuesday. "The main cable of the

bridge was not changed during renovation," he said.

"The police also believe that the weight of the bridge increased due to the four-layer aluminium flooring done by the contractors, which may have resulted in the bridge collapse," he added.

The 230-metre-long structure, a major tourist attraction in the area, was only reopened last Wednesday after nearly seven months of renovations that are said to have cost Rs 20 million (\$240,000).

Authorities in the western state of Gujarat say the proper safety certificates were not obtained before visitors were allowed to return.

At least 47 of the victims were children. Oreva had been awarded a 15-year contract by local authorities to operate and maintain the bridge but investigations have since found it had no prior experience on such projects. — AFP



Rescue workers conduct search operations across the river Machchhu at Morbi in Gujarat state. — AFP

Seoul's Halloween crush 'predictable, preventable,' say experts

SEOUL: On what should have been a night of fun for tens of thousands of Halloween revellers, a bottleneck in a narrow alley of Seoul's entertainment district instead claimed 156 lives, with analysts and top officials blaming a crowd control failure.

The lack of prior safety planning — officials concede it was insufficient — quickly turned South Korea's first Halloween free of coronavirus restrictions into one of the country's worst disasters, with police reliant on passersby to help extract partygoers from the crush.

"In most cases of crowd crushes, it turns out the root cause is a lack of planning," said Eric Kant who runs the Netherlands-based Phase01 Crowd Management.



A mourner reacts near the site of a crowd crush that happened during Halloween festivities, in Seoul, South Korea, on Wednesday. — Reuters

With no single organiser, the government did not require any of the bars, clubs and restaurants holding events in Itaewon on Saturday to submit a safety management plan.

And even though police estimated beforehand that the boisterous festivities would swell to an estimated 100,000 people, they only deployed 137 officers -- compared to the 6,500 sent across town to police a protest a fraction of the size. As public scrutiny of the crowd policing has mounted, the police chief, interior minister and Seoul's mayor apologised on Tuesday for failing to prevent the fatal disaster.

South Korea's prime minister said on Wednesday that police must explain their slow response

to multiple emergency calls made in the hours before disaster struck.

But some experts suggested more policing alone may not have been enough to avert the tragedy.

"They either become part of the crowd themselves, and hence their lives will be in danger too, or they will be pure observers that do not even have enough information about what is happening within the crowd," crowd safety expert Milad Haghani of the University of New South Wales said.

According to Haghani, Itaewon's Halloween festivities ticked all the risk factor boxes for crowd surges.

The typically boisterous neighbourhood is criss-crossed with narrow alleyways that lack an obvious "potential escape route".

Then there were issues around the lack of event organisation itself, including "unrestricted entry" of people into a small space, "no ticket sales" which left no exact estimate of demand, and no active monitoring of the crowd density.

"This is a recipe for disaster in mass gatherings," Haghani said.

Such incidents are frequently caused by "mismanagement by event or venue organisers" rather than "panic" among the crowd, said John Drury, an expert on crowd psychology at the University of Sussex.

In Itaewon on Saturday, witnesses said that early on in the night partygoers along one particular chokepoint were sustaining injuries simply due to crowd density. — AFP

TOKYO

German president visits Japanese emperor

German President Frank Walter Steinmeier and his wife Elke Bndenbender were received by Japanese Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako on their visit to the Imperial Palace on Wednesday.

"It is a special honour that the emperor granted us one of his truly rare audiences since his accession to the throne. We are very, very grateful for this," Steinmeier said in Tokyo after the meeting, which lasted less than an hour.



Then-crown prince Naruhito visited Berlin 10 years ago to mark the 150th anniversary of German-Japanese relations. He planted a cherry tree in the park of Steinmeier's Bellevue Palace.

BEIJING

China will support Pakistan on financial situation

China will continue to support Pakistan as it tries to stabilise its financial situation, state media quoted President Xi Jinping as saying on Wednesday, during a visit by Pakistan's prime minister to Beijing.

Pakistan had been struggling with a balance of payments crisis even before devastating floods hit the country this summer, causing it an estimated \$30 billion or more in losses. Pakistan was expected to seek debt relief from China. China's



central bank and the State Bank of Pakistan have signed a memorandum of cooperation recently for the establishment of an RMB clearing arrangement in Pakistan.

JAKARTA

Use of tear gas blamed for soccer stampede

Indonesian police firing tear gas was the main trigger for a deadly soccer stampede at a stadium in East Java last month, the country's human rights commission found in a report on the incident released on Wednesday.

Officials from the human rights commission said 135 people had died, mostly from asphyxiation, in the stampede after the match at Kanjuruhan stadium in Malang regency on October 1. Authorities and the Indonesian football Association



have faced questions and criticism over why police fired 45 rounds of tear gas inside the stadium, a crowd control measure banned by world soccer body Fifa.



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In brief

■ TEL AVIV



NETANYAHU SAYS ON BRINK OF VICTORY

Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was set to return to power in one of the most right-wing coalitions in Israel's history, causing jitters among Palestinians and Arab neighbours who fear it could ratchet up tensions across the Middle East.

With roughly 85 per cent of votes counted, Netanyahu's conservative Likud and its likely religious and far-right allies were on pace to control a majority in parliament after Israel's fifth election in less than four years.

"We are on the brink of a very big victory," a smiling Netanyahu told cheering supporters at his Likud party election headquarters.

■ LONDON



UK'S SUNAK U-TURNS ON ATTENDING COP27

Britain's new Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday announced he will join the UN climate conference in Egypt after all, having provoked anger for refusing to attend the global event early into his tenure.

Sunak had argued that "pressing domestic commitments" would keep him away from COP27 in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh — after inheriting an economic crisis from predecessor Liz Truss. But that fuelled doubts about Sunak's interest in the planetary emergency, and critics said the inexperienced leader was passing up an opportunity to rub shoulders with the likes of US President Joe Biden.

■ TEHRAN



IRAN TO SEND N-TEAM TO VIENNA

An Iranian delegation will visit Vienna in the coming days to try to narrow differences with the UN nuclear watchdog, Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian said. "We will send a delegation from Iran to Vienna in the coming days to start talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and we hope to resolve remaining issues based on what we have agreed in the past days," he told a news conference.

Amirabdollahian also said he would speak to the EU's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, to discuss efforts to revive Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

■ BLOCKING THE ROADS IN BRAZIL



Supporters of Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro partially block the Castelo Branco highway, as they protest over Bolsonaro's defeat in the presidential run-off election, in Barueri, Brazil, on Wednesday. — Reuters

Russian defence chiefs discussed nuclear use: report

WASHINGTON: High-level Russian military leaders recently discussed when and how they might use tactical nuclear weapons on the battlefield in Ukraine, the New York Times reported on Wednesday citing unnamed US officials.

Russian President Vladimir Putin did not take part in the discussions, and there was no indication that the Russian military had decided to deploy the weapons, which would sharply escalate the war, the Times said.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said he did not have any comment on the details in the report.

But in a statement sent to AFP he said any comments on the use of nuclear weapons by Russia are "deeply concerning," and said the United States takes them seriously.

At the same time, he said, the US sees "no indications that Russia is making preparations for such use."

The United States has been warning Moscow for weeks over public comments from top

Moscow to hand 'evidence' of UK role in Crimea strike



Members of the Ukrainian army wave as they drive along a main road in the eastern Donbas region of Bakhmut, Ukraine, on Wednesday. — Reuters

Russian officials that they could use nuclear weapons in Ukraine in certain cases, particularly if they felt there was a threat to Russian territorial integrity.

The most recent threat came from former Russian president and senior security council official Dmitry Medvedev.

Medvedev said on Tuesday that Ukraine's objective to reclaim all its territories occupied by Russia,

which include the Donbas region and Crimea, would be a "threat to the existence of our state."

That, Medvedev said, would be "a direct reason" to invoke nuclear deterrence.

However, early on Wednesday Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Western media was "deliberately pumping up the topic of the use of nuclear weapons."

Moscow does "not have the

slightest intention to take part in this," he said, calling the NYT report "very irresponsible."

In September Jake Sullivan, President Joe Biden's national security adviser, said that the United States has warned Russia at "very high levels" of "catastrophic consequences" for using nuclear arms. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell warned on October 13 that Russian forces would be "annihilated" by the West if Putin uses nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

Moscow will "in the near future" summon the British ambassador to hand over "evidence" of its claim that the UK helped orchestrate an attack on the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea, the foreign ministry said on Wednesday. Russia has claimed UK "specialists" helped Kyiv launch a drone attack on the fleet in Moscow-annexed Crimea at the weekend. Russia has also accused London of being behind September explosions on the Nord Stream gas pipelines.

— Reuters

Egypt's farmers fear rising social tensions over scarce water

EL-SHAWASHNA, Egypt: For three decades, brothers Ramadan and Mamdouh Othman have grown summer crops of maize, olives and cucumbers on their Nile Delta land in Egypt's northern Governorate of Fayoum.

But over the past year, the amount of water in the canal that supplies their sandy 3-acre farm in the village of El-Shawashna has fallen 40 per cent. The brothers blame bigger farms upstream, which they say are taking more than their fair share of water to compensate for shortfalls caused both by recurring droughts and the filling of a new Ethiopian hydropower dam on the Nile River. "It is a complete disaster for us," said Ramadan, 44, noting half the summer harvest had been lost.

"It is really getting worse," added Mamdouh, 51, as he and his brother carefully watered their crops with that day's limited



In this file photo, an Egyptian farmer plants rice in a field of the Mit al-Ezz village, near Mit Ghamr town in the Nile Delta, some 80 km north of the Capital. — AFP

supply. "If we lose more water than that, we will not be able to live." Egypt is facing worsening water shortages as climate change brings

more extreme heat and drought — and now many Egyptian farmers and climate change experts fear the new dam upstream will only

exacerbate the threat.

More widely, across much of the Middle East and North Africa, freshwater supplies are dwindling,

Portugal likely to scrap 'golden visa' scheme: PM

LISBON: Portugal is likely to scrap its "golden visa" programme giving wealthy foreigners residence rights, Prime Minister Antonio Costa said on Wednesday, saying that the 10-year-old scheme had already fulfilled its role.

The Authorisation of Residence for Investment Activity for people from non-EU countries, commonly known as the golden visa programme, has been heavily criticised at home for sending house prices and rents up, and the European Commission has called for the end of such national schemes.

In Portugal, it has attracted 6.5 billion euros in investment by foreigners, mainly from China, Brazil and South Africa, with the bulk of the money going into real estate. Rules have changed this year to redirect investments from a red-hot property market in big cities to depopulated areas.

Speaking at Lisbon's Web Summit, Europe's largest tech event, Costa said several visa schemes offered by Portugal were currently being re-evaluated and the golden visa was one of them. "(It) probably has already fulfilled the role it had to fulfil and, at this moment, is no longer justified to keep it," Costa told reporters. An official decision would be announced when the evaluation is completed, he said. Costa said Portugal wanted to continue to be attractive, with one example being its recent law, enacted on Monday, that created the so-called digital nomads visa. It gives foreigners with high monthly income from remote work to live and work from Portugal for a year.

The European Commission has called on EU governments to end national programmes to sell citizenship to investors, which the bloc has long considered a security risk.

Britain scrapped golden visas for rich investors in February amid concerns about the inflow of illicit Russian money, just before Russia's war on Ukraine. — AFP

in part as climate change impacts strengthen, and analysts fear rising tensions over shortages.

With limited supplies of freshwater needed for many purposes — farming, household use, industry, power generation and nature — growing competition could push to the edge people already struggling with poverty, aging water infrastructure and poor water governance, said Iranian environmental scientist Kaveh Madani.

"Climate change... makes water scarcer, dries up wetlands, and makes farming more challenging," said Madani, recently appointed incoming director of the Institute for Water, Environment and Health at the United Nations University. "This will, in turn, lead to unemployment, tension, forced migration and, ultimately, more conflict," he predicted.

— Thomson Reuters Foundation

Wider participation in economic decision-making



Ali Al Matani
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It is extremely important to participate in decision-making and give opinions on frameworks and legislations regulating investments and commercial activities. It is an essential part of the method to consider the viewpoints of the society concerning economic affairs.

This is the approach adopted by the leadership of the Sultanate of Oman. It adheres to the idea of involvement of the private sector in all stages of the related work. The government of the country values it and gives utmost importance to take the private sector along at every stage, from policy making to planning, from its execution to achieve the developmental goal. Everything involved with attracting foreign investment, and establishing partnerships, the private sector is present everywhere.

At the ground level, it is the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion which is ensuring that there is a wide-range participation in the formulation of laws which regulate

economic affairs in the country.

A workshop is slated to be held at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry on November 6 to discuss the draft rules and regulations of offices endorsing foreign investor applications. This is one of the models of ensuring wider participation from the concerned quarters of the private sector. This is also evidence of the ministry's efforts to create an attractive environment for investments by making procedures easy for getting approvals, permits and licenses for investment projects.

This is a matter to be appreciated for all that there are accurate mechanisms to ascertain public opinion in everything concerning economic and commercial activities. There is no doubt that the participation of the society, with different orientations, in rules formulation, has become an important and necessary element of the process now. This helps in achieving consensus among the segment which ultimately benefits

THERE ARE ACCURATE MECHANISMS TO ASCERTAIN PUBLIC OPINION IN EVERYTHING CONCERNING ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES IN THE COUNTRY

from these laws and regulations.

Now, the trend is that there should be a wide scale participation in the formulation of laws of whom it concerns. The Sultanate of Oman is among the top of the country which ensures private sector participation in policy and rules formulation. It has emerged as a country which is integrated and inclusive in decision-making. This is how the interests of the citizens are served.

The approach of the government everywhere in the country is to

ascertain the viewpoints and suggestions from all quarters. It keeps doors open for ideas and encourages innovative thinking of common interests. This openness, inclusiveness and will to accommodate as many ideas as possible is the power behind the movement of the wheel of its development forward and attracting investments. It has earned accolades for its openness it shows to the private sector. It is at par with the public sector when it comes to taking decisions of far-reaching implications on the economic affairs of the country.

In this area, the government is represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. It follows the approach of inclusiveness and openness. This is the reason the ministry keeps holding discussions in the form of symposiums, seminars, conferences and more frequently workshops to ensure that it does not ignore this essential approach in its duties. The ministry

engages with the society on all the platforms used by it. This is how it accommodates one opinion with the other. This shows the accuracy of its approach in dealing with public opinion and managing economic affairs. It believes that everyone is concerned with the interest of the country and is responsible for what is happening around them.

Therefore the society, particularly the business community and the entire private sector, are required to engage in dialogue and discussion. This is essential for a better business and investment environment. Their participation in decision-making is a must to reach the goal of all round development of the country where people live with real peace and prosperity.

The initiative made by the government with an inclusive approach and participation of the society as a whole is always a success. It is in everybody's interest to not to lose the opportunity of sharing their views and ideas on matters involved in decision-making.

Land-based climate plans ‘unrealistic’: Report

KELLY MACNAMARA

The world needs to set aside an area bigger than the United States for tree planting and other measures to meet climate pledges, according to research published on Tuesday that warned against “unrealistic” carbon-cutting plans.

Almost 200 nations will begin high-stakes UN climate talks in Egypt from November 6, as increasing damage from floods, heat waves and droughts are being felt across the world.

Recent UN assessments conclude that current policies and plans are not nearly enough to limit global warming and avoid catastrophic climate impacts.

They may also be unattainable, new research showed on Tuesday on the planned use of land-based schemes such as tree planting to offset fossil fuel pollution.

An assessment of plans from 166 countries and the European Union, released by the University of Melbourne, estimated that the total area implied was almost 1.2 billion hectares (2.9 billion acres) — bigger than the United States, or four times the size of India.

“Servicing all of the land-based carbon removal pledges is unrealistic because it would require a land mass half the size of current global cropland, putting potential pressure on ecosystems, food security and indigenous peoples’ rights,” the report said.

The research looked at countries’ targets, particularly longer-term commitments, and if the land needed was not explicitly stated, they calculated using information about the types of activity as well as carbon removal data from UN climate experts. They found that while over 550 hectares were earmarked for restoring degraded land and protecting primary forests, some 630 million hectares were estimated for carbon capture schemes, like tree planting.

“Land-based carbon removals have to be considered together with deep cuts in fossil fuel emissions, not as a replacement,” said Anne Larson, of the Center for International Forestry Research and World Agroforestry, who was a co-author of the report. Larson said governments might see tree planting as “easy, compared to other options”, but cautioned that these projects can cause their own problems. — AFP

How the right became the left and the left became the right



Ross Gregory Douthat
American political analyst, blogger, author and *New York Times* columnist

One of the master keys to understanding our era is seeing all the ways in which conservatives and progressives have traded attitudes and impulses. The populist right's attitude towards American institutions has the flavour of the 1970s — sceptical, pessimistic, paranoid — while the mainstream, MSNBC-watching left has a strange new respect for the FBI and CIA.

The online right likes transgression for its own sake, while cultural progressivism dabbles in censorship and worries that the First Amendment goes too far. Trumpian conservatism flirts with postmodernism and channels Michel Foucault; its progressive rivals are institutionalist, moralistic, confident in official narratives and establishment credentials.

These reversals are especially evident in a pair of prominent headlines from the last week. If you had been told at any point from, say, 1970 to 2005 that a disturbed-seeming man living in the Bay Area had allegedly followed his paranoid political delusions into a plan to assault an important national politician, the reasonable assumption would have been that his delusions belonged to the farthest reaches of the left and therefore his target was probably some notable Republican.

By the same token, if you had been told in George W Bush's presidency that a trove of government documents would reveal the Department of Homeland Security essentially trying to collude with major corporations to regulate speech it considers dangerous or subversive, an effort extending from foreign threats to domestic ones, you would have assumed that this was all Republican overreach, a new McCarthyism — and that progressives would be up in arms against it.

In our world, though, things are otherwise. The man who allegedly attacked Paul Pelosi while hunting the

TRUMPIAN CONSERVATISM FLIRTS WITH POSTMODERNISM AND CHANNELS MICHEL FOUCAULT; ITS PROGRESSIVE RIVALS ARE INSTITUTIONALIST, MORALISTIC, CONFIDENT IN OFFICIAL NARRATIVES

speaker of the House did, seemingly, belong to left-wing culture, Left Coast culture in the not-so-distant past.

But at some point in his unhappy trajectory, he passed over to the paranoid of the extreme right — probably not in some semi-rational radicalisation process in which he watched too many attack ads against Nancy Pelosi but more likely in a dreamlike way, the nightmares of QAnon matching his mental state better than the paranoid of the left.

His journey's violent endpoint was singular and extreme, but this kind of left-to-right migration has more normal correlatives: the New Age-QAnon overlap, the COVID-era migration of formerly left-wing skeptics of Big Pharma onto right-wing shows and platforms, the way that all doubts about the medical establishment are now coded as right-wing, Trumpy, populist.

And the political right's response to the Pelosi attack reflects these shifts as well. The ethos of Fox Mulder in “The X-Files,” “Trust no one,” is a now dominant value on the right, which in this case encouraged a swift leap from reasonable questions about the details

of the assault, based on inaccurate initial reports. As of this writing, several public references to this theory from prominent conservatives have been deleted. But the cover-up narrative will probably survive indefinitely as a reference point, an underground “truth,” like the left-wing conspiracies of old.

One of those deleted tweets belonged to Elon Musk, the new impresario of Twitter, and it inevitably became an exhibit in the case for liberal panic over his takeover: What could be more indicative of the platform's imminent descent into a democracy-destroying hellscape than conspiracy theories spread by the Chief Twit himself?

But the alternative to Musk's reign was clarified by the second recent illustration of our left-right reversal: a story from The Intercept, by Lee Fang and Ken Klippenstein, detailing the Department of Homeland Security's migration into the social-media surveillance and the pressure the department has tried to exert on Internet companies to flag and censor content along lines favoured by the national security bureaucracy.

On the surface, this is not a partisan story: The Intercept is a left-wing publication, and the current version of the DHS anti-disinformation effort got started in the Trump administration.

But everyone understands those efforts' current ideological valence. The war on disinformation is a crucial Democratic cause, the key lawsuit filed against the Biden administration on these issues comes from Republican attorneys general (joined by doctors critical of the public-health establishment), and the most famous flashpoint remains the social-media censorship of the Hunter Biden laptop story, which Fang and Klippenstein suggest followed from what one could reasonably call a deep-state pressure campaign.

Lessons from Brazil: Not for the weak

The Brazilian presidential campaign has served as a laboratory for political scientists and media scholars. The richness of variants is even more important for a deep look during the 30 days leading up to the second round of voting after no clear winner clinched the country’s presidency. Politics, religion, lies, skewed narratives, racism, violence, and armed attacks were all part of the political campaign. People freely expressed their opinions, and some took their ideologies into their hands to do so. Enemies were constructed from heated debates among friends and relatives; they would have to be crushed. The election campaign provided us with a scenario that not even the best scriptwriter could have created.

Radio and television stations, as well as newspapers, were all heavily involved in presenting their preferred candidates, but social media platforms proved to be the mainstream media. Kwai and TikTok are credited with having influenced this year’s Brazilian presidential election. The two apps take into account engagement (share, like, or comment), instead of the number of followers. While Tik Tok is known for dancing, Kwai is known for humorous satires and soap operas.

The popularisation of apps has created several political niches. And, a large number of YouTube and Instagram creators migrated to TikTok to guide a political discussion. Celebrities and influencers urged young people to get politically engaged and to vote for the candidate endorsed by the account holder; a canine loyalty.

Fake platforms, partisan sites, and each one of the more than 156 million registered voters were having a say in the political discourse. During the campaign, both candidates, Jair Bolsonaro and Luiz Inacio da Silva (Lula), had their online strategies focused on engaging more ideological voters, influencing undecided voters, and to a certain extent, considering fighting ‘fake news’ against their candidacies.

The presidential campaign has also



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RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS, AS WELL AS NEWSPAPERS, WERE ALL HEAVILY INVOLVED IN PRESENTING THEIR PREFERRED CANDIDATES, BUT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS PROVED TO BE THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA

gone into the metaverse. Politics and games –with servers in the open search! Unlike the debate on open networks that maintain some sort of moderation tools, the environment on politics and games servers is more violent with misogyny, and racism. Supporters of both candidates have organised motorcades and online meetings to defend their candidates. Supporters of Jair Bolsonaro realised motorcades with game platforms – imitating the real world in digital, while supporters of Lula used the networks to try to convince the public that gaming has become more expensive under the current government.

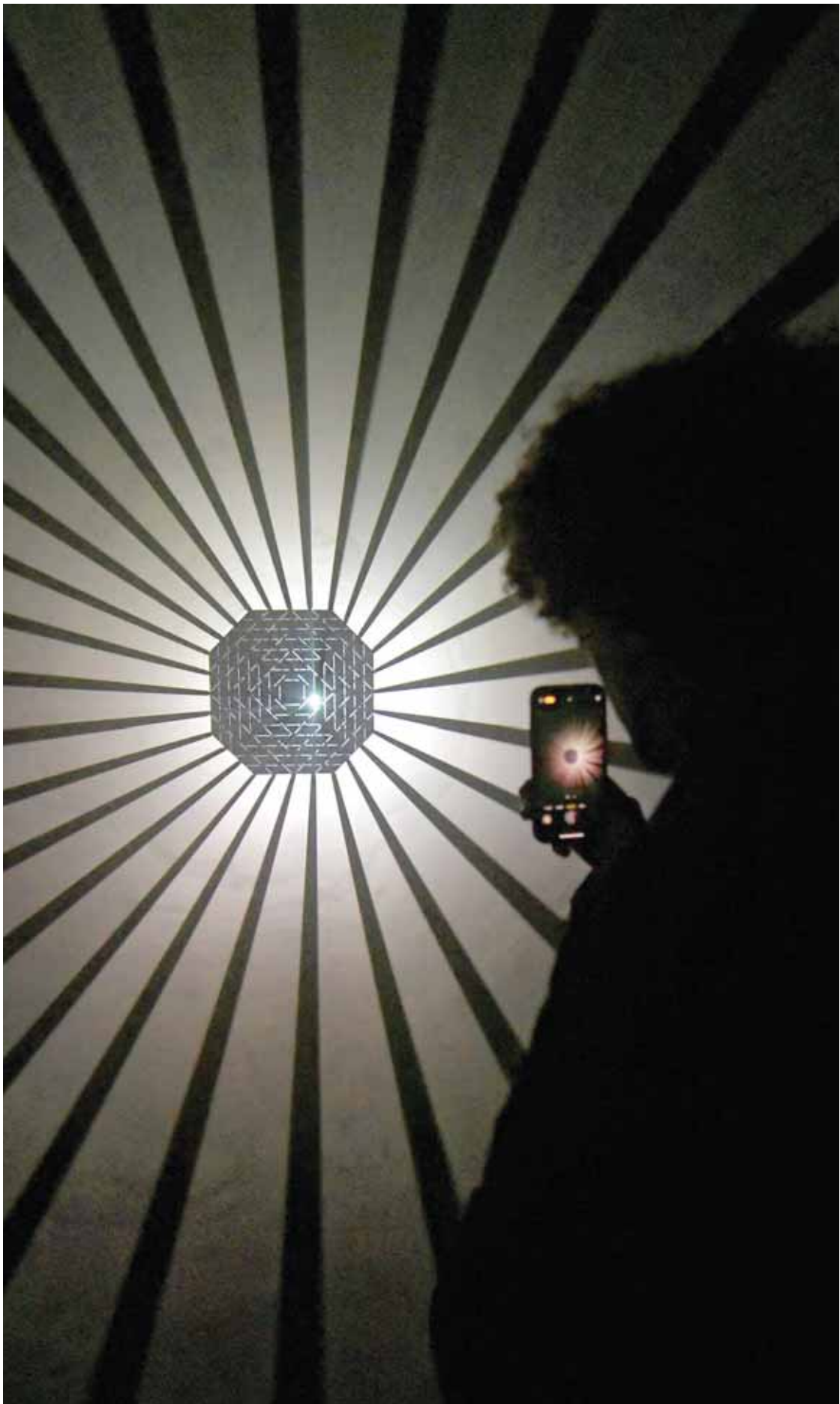
Certainly, it was not easy to identify the ‘official’ sites of information from those technical and sophisticated content creator sites. Fake profiles and message automation were widely sused strategies. The polarisation of information by groups with specific interests influenced the production of hate speech. Baby steps in media literacy were insufficient to navigate the ocean of false information and biased stories. It demanded a lot of time and effort to search, investigate, and match sites, language, design, content, photo, and video angles. A true lesson in political communication media literacy.

The visual material had a strong impact. Only a day before the election, cameras captured a congresswoman armed with a gun persecuting a man in Sao Paulo; days before, cameras recorded a political ally of the Bolsonaro clan shooting and using a hand grenade against federal policemen. In both cases, the discourse signs the normalisation of disrespect to the law.

On top of the chaotic and polarised campaign settings, those who would be the official sources of information, such as ministers, congressmen, congresswomen, armed forces officers, and associates, all actively participated in the creation of political discourses designed to appeal to cognitive psychology, in which belief and values were used as a rationalisation to justify the choice of candidate.

It has not been a political laboratory talk, but rather a preview of what is to come.

LIGHTS ON THE DOCK



A visitor experiments with a selection of immersive, interactive or contemplative artistic installations, in Toulouse, southwestern France, on Wednesday. For its 8th edition, the “Quai des Savoirs”, a centre for the dissemination and sharing of scientific culture, organises a “Lumières sur le Quai” (Lights on the Dock) festival. – AFP

Cyber criminals hold Asian tech workers captive in scam factories

ANURADHA NAGARAJ & NANCHANOK WONGSAMUTH

Indian engineer Stephen Wesley was puzzled when he was asked to take a typing test during an interview for a graphic design job in Thailand — but put it out of his mind when he got the role.

Hours after landing in Bangkok to start work in July, Wesley and seven other new recruits were instead ferried over the border into Myanmar where their phones and passports were taken, and they were put to work on online cryptocurrency scams.

“I spent up to 18 hours a day researching, typing messages, chatting with people on social media platforms, gaining their trust and encouraging them to invest in cryptocurrency,” said Wesley, 29, in a telephone interview.

Thousands of people, many with tech skills, have been lured by social media advertisements promising well-paid jobs in Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar, only to find themselves forced to defraud strangers worldwide via the internet.

Wesley spent 45 days held captive at a compound in Myanmar’s southeastern border town of Myawaddy, and given a list of about 3,500 names that he had to contact via Facebook, Instagram or dating apps.

CYBER CRIME HAS SURGED WITH THE RISE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS THAT BROUGHT EASY ACCESS TO PERSONAL DATA ONLINE AS WELL AS IMPROVED TRANSLATION SOFTWARE AND AI-GENERATED PHOTOS

“We were trained on how to flirt, chat about hobbies, everyday routine, likes and dislikes. In roughly 15 days, the trust would be built and the client would be willing to take our advice on investing in crypto,” he said.

The cybercrime rings first emerged in Cambodia, but have since moved into other countries in the region and are targeting more tech-savvy workers, including from India and Malaysia.

Authorities in these countries and United Nations officials have said they are run by Chinese gangsters who control gambling across southeast Asia and are making up for losses during the pandemic lockdowns.

The experts say the trafficked captives are held in large compounds in converted casinos in Cambodia, and in special economic zones in Myanmar and Laos. “The gangs targeted skilled, tech-savvy workers who had lost jobs during the pandemic and were desperate, and fell for these bogus recruitment ads,” said Phil Robertson, deputy director for Asia at Human Rights Watch.

“Authorities have been slow to respond, and in many cases

these people are not being treated as victims of trafficking, but as criminals because they were caught up in these scams.”

Cyber crime has surged with the rise of digital platforms that brought easy access to personal data online as well as improved translation software and artificial intelligence (AI)-generated photos that help scammers to create fake personas.

The scam that Wesley and others were forced into is known as pig butchering, where a scammer builds trust with their victims over social media, messaging and dating apps, then pressures them to invest in bogus



crypto or online trading schemes.

The term refers to the process by which scammers “feed their victims with promises of romance and riches” before cutting them off and taking their money, according to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, which traced its origins to China in 2019. “People don’t realise it, but they do share a lot of information on social media platforms,” said Dhanya Menon, director of Avanzo Cyber Security Solutions in India, which advises firms on cyber security.

“If you follow someone’s social media for just 15 days, you will glean a lot of information about them,” she said, adding

that cryptocurrency scams are on the rise because there is little awareness of how the virtual currency works.

India’s foreign ministry in September issued an advisory warning youth with technology skills of fake job offers in Thailand from “dubious IT firms involved in call-centre scam and cryptocurrency fraud”.

Authorities last month said they had rescued about 130 Indians from such schemes in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar — including Wesley and others. Myanmar’s military government - which took control of the country in a coup in February 2021 — did not respond to a request for comment.

Cambodian officials, who for months denied reports of abuses and trafficking, have taken a harder stance in recent months, and ordered a crackdown on cyber scam operators across the country.

Bell, a 23-year-old Thai woman, said she was lured by the offer of an administration job with a monthly salary of about \$1,000 and free food and housing at a casino in Cambodia.

— Thomson Reuters Foundation

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Tottenham Hotspur's Clement Lenglet celebrates scoring their first goal with Rodrigo Bentancur, Harry Kane and Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg in the Champions League - Group D match against Olympique de Marseille in Marseille, France. — Reuters

EINTRACHT EDGE SPORTING TO ADVANCE

Spurs fight back to reach CL last 16

PARIS: Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg scored a 95th-minute winner as Tottenham Hotspur came from behind to beat Marseille 2-1 and reach the Champions League knockout stage on Tuesday, where they were joined by Eintracht Frankfurt after their victory at Sporting Lisbon.

Liverpool ended Napoli's unbeaten start to the season with a 2-0 success at Anfield, but the Italian club did enough to finish top of Group A.

Atletico Madrid crashed out of Europe altogether with a loss to Porto, while Bayern Munich made it six wins from six matches by beating Inter Milan.

At a raucous Velodrome, Tottenham knew they would progress if they could avoid defeat by Marseille, although manager Antonio Conte had to watch from the stands after being red-carded in last week's dramatic draw with Sporting.

Spurs were camped inside their own half for the majority of the first period and fell behind just before the break when Chancel Mbemba headed in Jordan Veretout's cross after a quickly-taken corner.

The Premier League side were



Eintracht Frankfurt's Randal Kolo Muani scores against Sporting CP in Lisbon. — AFP

much improved after the restart and Clement Lenglet glanced in a 54th-minute equaliser.

Former Arsenal left-back Sead Kolasinac nodded a glorious late opportunity to send Marseille through wide.

He was made to pay as Hojbjerg struck on the counter as Spurs snatched top spot in the group and denied Marseille the consolation of a Europa League place.

"I just spoke with Antonio. He's

tired because to watch from the crowd is not normal," Tottenham assistant coach Cristian Stellini told BT Sport. "He wasted a lot of energy."

That Hojbjerg goal pushed Eintracht, who also won 2-1, down into second in Group D and kept Sporting in European competition.

Like Tottenham, Sporting only needed a point to qualify and they forged ahead six minutes before half-time as Arthur Gomes volleyed

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS ON TUESDAY			
GROUP A		GROUP C	
In Liverpool, England		In Munich, Germany	
Liverpool (ENG) 2 (Salah 85, Nunez 90+8) Napoli (ITA) 0		Bayern Munich (GER) 2 (Pavard 32, Choupo-Moting 72) Inter Milan (ITA) 0	
In Glasgow, Scotland		In Plzen, Czech Republic	
Rangers (SCO) 1 (Tavernier 86-pen) Ajax (NED) 3 (Berghuis 4, Kudus 29, Conceicao 89)		Viktoria Plzen (CZE) 2 (Chory 51-pen, 63) Barcelona (ESP) 4 (Alonso 6, Torres 44, 54, Torre 75)	
GROUP B		GROUP D	
In Leverkusen, Germany		In Lisbon	
Bayer Leverkusen (GE R) 0 Club Brugge (BEL) 0		Sporting Lisbon (POR) 1 (Gomes 39) Eintracht Frankfurt (GER) 2 (Kamada 62-pen, Kolo Muani 72)	
In Porto, Portugal		In Marseille, France	
Porto (POR) 2 (Taremi 5, Eustaquio 24) Atletico Madrid (ESP) 1 (Marcano 90+5-og)		Marseille (FRA) 1 (Mbemba 45+2) Tottenham (ENG) 2 (Lenglet 54, Hojbjerg 90+5)	

home at the back post.

But Frankfurt, playing in the competition for the first time since losing the 1960 European Cup final to Real Madrid, did not give up and Daichi Kamada scored a 62nd-minute penalty awarded for handball.

Randal Kolo Muani provided the winning moment, latching onto Ansgar Knauff's hooked pass and hammering the ball into the far corner.

The players celebrated wildly on the pitch after the Europa

League holders' latest European exploit, with Sporting coach Ruben Amorim left looking stunned on the touchline. "We didn't start well at the beginning of the game," said Frankfurt midfielder Sebastian Rode. "But we are a comeback team, we gave everything in the second half and deservedly make the next round."

Liverpool brought an end to Napoli's 21-game unbeaten run but could not win by four goals to take first place. Both teams were already assured of a last 16 berth. — AFP

SENEGAL

PIN HOPES ON VINTAGE MANE

BERLIN: When Bayern Munich signed Sadio Mane in June, the 32-time German champions knew they were getting a leader and a winner at both domestic and international level.

In addition to Premier League and Champions League triumphs with Liverpool, Mane led Senegal to the 2022 Africa Cup of Nations title, scoring the winning penalty in the shootout to help the Lions of Teranga secure their first major silverware.

That they did it against his then Liverpool team-mate Mohamed Salah's Egypt — the most successful team in the history of the tournament — must have made the victory sweeter.

The win saw Mane pick up his second consecutive African Player of the Year trophy and contributed to his second-place finish in this year's Ballon d'Or.

Mane also played a crucial role in carrying his team to the World Cup, converting the decisive penalty in the shootout — again against Egypt — just a month after the AFCON triumph.

MAIN MAN MANE

When Mane swaps the red of Bayern for Senegal green in Qatar, the focus of his side — and around 18 million Senegalese — will again turn to him. Switching from Bayern to Senegal is a major adjustment for the 30-year-old.

While in Senegal Mane is unquestionably the main man up front and the team's biggest name, at Bayern he is one of several attacking stars including Germans Jamal Musiala, Serge Gnabry, Thomas Mueller, Leroy Sane and Cameroonian striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting.

While Mane has at times struggled with his confidence at club level since making the switch



**Senegal**

> 18th FIFA ranking

> 3th World Cup



"Lions"

COACH
Aliou Cisse
Since 2015

BEST PERFORMANCE

Quarter-finals
2002

GROUP A

opponents

Qatar

Ecuador

Netherlands

Sources: FIFA, UEFA, federation

AFP

to the Bundesliga — he has been benched a handful of times this season by Bayern coach Julian Nagelsmann due to a lack of confidence — he will spearhead Senegal.

In late October, after scoring once and assisting twice in a 6-2 win over Mainz, Mane said he would play any role necessary to help the team. "I've played left wing my whole life," Mane told German television. "(But) if the team needs me as a striker or a right winger, I'll be there."

Despite his domestic and international success, Mane said he was still trying to get better as a player. "I'm someone who wants to learn every day. I think I can still improve a lot. Offensively, defensively. "I can still do more."

BAYERN CULTURE

Bayern have won the past 10 Bundesliga titles and Senegal fans will hope Mane brings Bayern's winning culture with him to Qatar as his side looks to break a cycle of underachievement at international level for African sides.

Despite providing some of the most talented players in football, no African team has ever reached the semifinals of the tournament.

Only three nations — Cameroon (1990), Senegal (2002) and Ghana (2010) — have reached the last eight before.

Senegal look well placed to break that record, particularly considering their World Cup group includes an unpredictable Netherlands alongside Ecuador and hosts Qatar. Mane however is making sure his side do not get ahead of themselves, saying in October Senegal were well behind the world's best footballing nations.

"I don't see Senegal as a favourite because there are other nations very far ahead of Senegal like France, Spain," Mane said.

"We will go there... and try to do what we are used to doing."

"Argentina, Brazil, Germany, France, England, I think there are few teams that can win the World Cup."

Senegal open their World Cup campaign against the Netherlands on November 21. — **AFP**

Swiatek dominates Kasatkina for a flying start

FORT WORTH, United States: Iga Swiatek showed why she is world number one and the hot favourite to win this year's WTA Finals in Fort Worth with a 6-2, 6-3 dismantling of Daria Kasatkina before Caroline Garcia beat Coco Gauff in straight sets on Tuesday.

The match felt all but over for Kasatkina when Swiatek saved two break points and pounded a forehand winner past the Russian's outstretched racket for a 3-0 first-set lead.

The 21-year-old Pole cruised from there on, dominating with her serve, including one on match point that Kasatkina could not handle, to improve her head-to-head record against Kasatkina to 5-0 this year.

"I think I started pretty well and that gave me a lot of confidence," Swiatek told Tennis Channel.

"But on the other hand you have to be really careful and patient against Dasha. I wanted to play in a really solid way but put pressure on my opponent.



Iga Swiatek

"I did that pretty well and I'm happy about it."

The win continues a phenomenal season for Swiatek, who rose to world number one in April and has won eight titles including two

Grand Slams at Roland Garros and Flushing Meadows this year. WTA Finals debutante Kasatkina has also raised her level this season, making the semifinals of the French Open and returning to the

top 10 for the first time since 2019.

The WTA Finals features eight women split into two groups, with the top two finishers moving into the semifinals of the indoor tournament played on purple hard

GARCIA BEATS GAUFF AT WTA FINALS



Caroline Garcia

courts in Texas.

In the other Tracy Austin group match of the day, France's Garcia beat American teenager Gauff 6-4, 6-3 to get off to a flying start.

The veteran Frenchwoman,

who also triumphed over Gauff in the quarterfinals of this year's US Open, was the better player on the match's biggest points, breaking an error-prone Gauff four times.

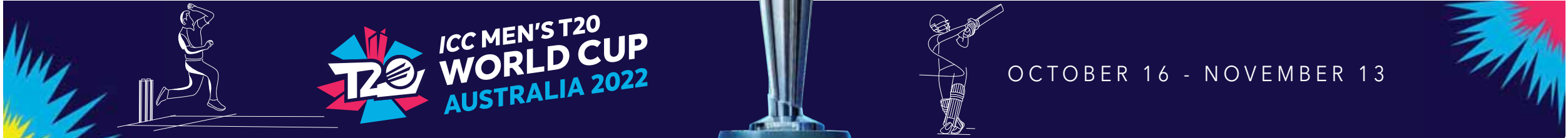
"The most important thing today is I stayed really positive, really focused on the present moment," Garcia, who faces Swiatek on Thursday, told Tennis Channel.

"We always know how important the beginning of the match is and I had an opportunity to win the first game but got broken, and I said like, that's not good. But I stayed positive and was able to stay calm."

American Jessica Pegula faces Tunisia's Ons Jabeur and Aryna Sabalenka battles Maria Sakkari in group stage action on Wednesday. The WTA Finals conclude on November 7. — **Reuters**

WTA Finals results

Group A: Iga Swiatek (POL x1) bt Daria Kasatkina (RUS x8) 6-2, 6-3; Caroline Garcia (FRA x6) bt Coco Gauff (USA x4) 6-4, 6-3



KOHLI TOPS CHARTS AS INDIA ON BRINK OF SEMIFINALS



BANGLADESH FALL SHORT BY 5 RUNS IN RAIN-HIT THRILLER

ADELAIDE: Virat Kohli became the highest run-scorer in Twenty20 World Cup history on Wednesday as India edged Bangladesh by five runs in a crunch rain-hit Twenty20 World Cup clash in Adelaide that went to the last ball.

India go top of Group 2 and can clinch a semifinal spot with a win against Zimbabwe in their final Group 2 match on Sunday after Bangladesh faltered in their revised chase of 151 in 16 overs.

Kohli's unbeaten 64 had steered India to 184-6 but Bangladesh had looked on course for victory after racing to 66-0 in seven overs when rain stopped play causing four overs to be lost.

Opener Liton Das hit a 27-ball 60 but his run out after the 50-minute interruption heralded a Bangladesh collapse and ended on 145-6.

"It was another good day with the bat I guess," said Kohli.

"I was trying to play myself into the innings. I'm just in a happy space, I don't want to compare anything. What's in the past is in the past," he said.

Needing 20 off the final over,

Nurul Hasan gave them hope with a six and a four but left-arm quick Arshdeep Singh held his nerve on the last ball to hand India their third win in four matches.

It leaves Bangladesh all but out of the semifinals picture.

"It's been the story when we play India," lamented captain Shakib Al Hasan.

"We're almost there but don't cross the line. It was a great game, the crowd enjoyed, both teams enjoyed, in the end someone has to win and someone has to lose."

Das gave the team a blazing start, reaching his fifty in 21 balls, but once he fell to KL Rahul's direct hit India came roaring back.

Arshdeep struck twice in one over including the prize of captain Shakib Al Hasan for 13 to turn the tables.

Hardik Pandya took two wickets in the 13th over as Bangladesh slumped from 98-2 to 108-6 and despite Hasan's 14-ball 25, fell short.

"Liton is batting really well, probably he's our best batsman going around," said Shakib. "We thought we could chase this down after that start."

GROUP 2

POS	TEAM	NET RR	POINTS
1	INDIA	+0.730	6
2	SOUTH AFRICA	+2.772	5
3	BANGLADESH	-1.276	4
4	ZIMBABWE	-0.313	3
5	PAKISTAN	+0.765	2
6	NETHERLANDS	-1.233	2

‘GRINNING FROM EAR TO EAR’

It was Kohli, who hit an unbeaten 64, and KL Rahul with a blazing 50 that set up India's victory with a stand of 67.

In the process, Kohli overtook former Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene's total of 1,016 runs to become the highest scorer in T20 World Cup history. Jayawardene set his mark from 31 innings but

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

KL Rahul c Mustafizur b Shakib -----50
R Sharma c Yasir b Mahmud -----2
V Kohli not out -----64
S Yadav b Shakib -----30
H Pandya c Yasir b Mahmud -----5
D Karthik run out -----7
A Patel c Shakib b Mahmud -----7
R Ashwin not out -----13
Extras (lb1, nb3, w2) -----6
Total (6 wickets 20 overs) ----- 184
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-78, 3-116, 4-130, 5-150, 6-157
Bowling: Taskin 4-0-15-0, Shoriful 4-0-57-0, Mahmud 4-0-47-3, Mustafizur 4-0-31-0, Shakib 4-0-33-2

BANGLADESH (DLS target 151 in 16 overs)

N Shanto c Yadav b Shami -----21
L Das run out -----60
S Al Hasan c sub b Arshdeep -----13
A Hossain c Yadav b Arshdeep -----3
Y Ali c Arshdeep b Pandya -----1
N Hasan not out -----25
M Hossain b Pandya -----6
T Ahmed not out -----12
Extras (lb2, w2) -----4
Total (6 wickets, 16 overs) ----- 145
Fall of wickets: 1-68, 2-84, 3-99, 4-100, 5-102, 6-108
Bowling: Kumar 3-0-27-0, Arshdeep 4-0-38-2, Shami 3-0-25-1, Patel 1-0-6-0, Ashwin 2-0-19-0, Pandya 3-0-28-2

Kohli took only 23 to pass him.

"As soon as I knew the World Cup was in Australia, I was grinning from ear to ear," said Kohli, who clearly loves batting on the faster wickets.

"I knew good cricketing shots would be the key. I knew the kind of experience and game awareness of having played in Australia will come in handy for the team."

Kohli, who had already hit two match-winning half-centuries at this World Cup, reached his third fifty in 37 balls to bring alive the Indian-dominated crowd at the Adelaide Oval.

"I absolutely love playing in this ground," said Kohli. "It's like I'm meant to come to Adelaide and enjoy my batting."

Rohit Sharma went cheaply for two after Bangladesh elected to field but Rahul went on the counter-attack to regain his batting touch with a flurry of boundaries.

Rahul, who had scored just 22 runs in the previous three matches, smashed two sixes and a four in a 24-run ninth over. He reached 50 off Shakib but fell on the next ball from the left-arm spinner after hitting three fours and four sixes.

Suryakumar Yadav joined Kohli to keep up the attack before Shakib struck again when he had made 30 off 16 balls. — AFP

Netherlands upstage Zimbabwe for first ever victory

ADELAIDE: Paul van Meekeren's three wickets helped the Netherlands claim their first victory of the T20 World Cup Super 12 stage on Wednesday as their five-wicket win all but eliminated Zimbabwe.

The Dutch, who are already out of the semifinal race, bowled out Zimbabwe for 117 in 19.2 overs at the Adelaide Oval and, led by Max O'Dowd's 52, achieved their target by reaching 120-5 with 12 balls to spare.

"It's awesome," said captain Scott Edwards.

"We came here to win some games at the Super 12. Good to get the ball rolling after a rocking start."

Zimbabwe, who just have a one win from their four matches, need a mathematical miracle to make the semifinals as one of the top two teams in Group 2, currently led by South Africa who next play Pakistan on Thursday.

O'Dowd and Tom Cooper, who made 32, put on a second-wicket



stand of 73 to guide the team home as the fans poured in for the evening match of the Adelaide double-header between India and Bangladesh. "I was quite scrappy at the start. It was important to adapt to the wicket," said player of the match O'Dowd.

"Zimbabwe have some tall boys, so they have extra bounce. I took time to adapt but eventually adapted well to bat as long as I could."

Stephan Myburgh fell to Blessing Muzarabani for eight in the fourth over before O'Dowd and Cooper began to score freely chasing a modest 118-run target.

Luke Jongwe had Cooper caught out to end a 29-ball knock, which included two fours and a six.

O'Dowd reached his second fifty of the tournament with two straight boundaries but soon got out to Muzarabani and Richard

SCOREBOARD

ZIMBABWE

W Madhevere b Van Meekeren -----1
C Ervine c Edwards b Glover -----3
R Chakabva lbw Glover -----5
S Williams c O'Dowd b Van Meekeren -----28
S Raza c Klaassen b De Leede -----40
M Shumba c Myburgh b Van Beek -----2
R Burl b van Meekeren -----2
L Jongwe c Van Beek b De Leede -----6
R Ngarava c Myburgh b Klaassen -----9
T Chatara not out -----6
B Muzarabani c Glover b Van Beek -----1
Extras (lb3, w11) -----14
Total (all out, 19.2 overs) ----- 117
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-14, 3-20, 4-68, 5-77, 6-92, 7-98, 8-100, 9-111, 10-117
Bowling: Klaassen 4-0-17-1, Van Meekeren 4-0-29-3, Glover 4-1-29-2, Van Beek 2-2-0-17-2, De Leede 4-0-14-2, Van der Merwe 1-0-8-0

NETHERLANDS

S Myburgh c Burl b Muzarabani -----8
M O'Dowd c Shumba b Muzarabani -----52
T Cooper c Madhevere b Jongwe -----32
C Ackermann c Jongwe b Ngarava -----1
B de Leede not out -----12
S Edwards c Chakabva b Ngarava -----5
R van der Merwe not out -----0
Extras (lb5, nb1, w4) -----10
Total (5 wickets, 18 overs) ----- 120
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-90, 3-91, 4-109, 5-116
Bowling: Chatara 4-0-22-0, Ngarava 4-0-18-2, Muzarabani 4-0-23-2, Williams 3-0-21-0, Raza 1-0-6-0, Jongwe 2-0-25-1

Ngarava sent back skipper Scott Edwards but Bas de Leede stood firm to hit the winning four.

‘SENSATIONAL’ O'DOWD

"Our bowlers were sensational, the top four got us pretty close to the total too," said Edwards.

"Max has been sensational for the past four to five years. He rocks up at big occasions."

The Netherlands bowled out Zimbabwe, who elected to bat

first, in 19.2 overs despite a 24-ball 40 by the in-form Sikandar Raza.

Van Meekeren bowled Wesley Madhevere for one with the batsman playing all over a fast and straight delivery.

The quicks kept up the pressure with disciplined bowling and Brandon Glover got Zimbabwe skipper Craig Ervine caught for three. Zimbabwe soon slipped to 20-3 in six overs.

Raza hit back with a six and

a four in a 14-run ninth over from Glover and put on 48 runs with Sean Williams, before Van Meekeren broke through.

The left-handed Williams made 28 off 23 balls but got out to Van Meekeren, caught in his attempt to ramp up the scoring.

Raza, an all-rounder who starred with the ball in his team's shock win over Pakistan in Perth, revived Zimbabwe and smashed Glover for a huge six over midwicket.

De Leede, who bowled with a bandaged cheek bone after he was hit by a nasty bouncer from Pakistan's Haris Rauf in the team's previous loss, got Raza's prized wicket in the 15th over.

Zimbabwe laboured past 100 as none of their batsmen failed to make double figures apart from Williams and Raza.

Glover, de Leede and Logan van Beek took two wickets each while pace spearhead Fred Klaassen returned figures of 1-17 from his four overs. — AFP



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Pact signed to set up hub for agro-produce at Khazaen

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 2

The Agricultural Production and Marketing Company (Basateen), a subsidiary of the Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj), signed an agreement to establish a centre for the collection, storage and distribution of agricultural produce in Khazaen Economic City. The agreement was signed by Eng Salim bin Suleiman al Thuhli, CEO of Khazaen Economic City, and Dr Tariq al Zadjali, Chairman of the Board of Directors in Basateen.

The signing of the agreement is in line with the company's goal to set up operations within the Food City hub being established at Khazaen. It also affirms Basateen's commitment to supporting Oman's food security objectives.

As part of its investments in Khazaen, Basateen plans to develop a comprehensive and effective system for the collection, storage and marketing of agricultural produce covering all



parts of the Sultanate of Oman. Its goal is to operate modern and efficient supply chains to ensure fresh produce from farms around the country reaches consumers

through its marketing outlets, thereby enhancing food availability and food security.

In addition, the company plans to establish partnerships

BASATEEN PLANS TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE AND EFFECTIVE SYSTEM FOR THE COLLECTION, STORAGE AND MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE COVERING ALL PARTS OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN.

with small and medium enterprises that are working directly with agricultural farms and orchards to enable them to open marketing outlets for their produce.

These SMEs will be aided in collection, processing, distribution and marketing of their agricultural produce.

Basateen's vision and

operations are in line with the Omani government's strategy to modernise the country's agricultural sector primarily with the goal of enabling local Omani farmers to obtain attractive returns for their produce in the marketplace. This can be ensured only through the development of elaborate and efficient supply chain infrastructure complete with refrigeration and warehousing support.

Khazaen Economic City is the largest public-private partnership project in the Sultanate and is the latest integrated economic city to be developed in the Wilayat of Barka in the South Al Batinah Governorate.

An anchor initiative is the Khazaen Food City, supplemented by the Khazaen Central Market for vegetables and fruits.

Consultant named for Oman's Waste-to-Energy project

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 2

State-owned Oman Environmental Service Holding Company SAOC (be'ah), which oversees the management of the country's solid waste sector, has selected ILF Consulting Engineers, a leading international energy and environmental consultant, to provide consultancy services for the waste-to-energy plant to be built in cooperation with Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP).

To ensure compliance with best international practices, be'ah engaged ILF Consulting Engineers to assist in developing the tendering and planning mechanism for the project and leverage the company's global expertise in the field of green energy infrastructure.

The waste-to-energy (WTE) plant is expected to dramatically reduce the carbon footprint and promote circular economy in the Sultanate with a far-reaching positive impact across the national economy.

Under the agreement, ILF Consulting Engineers is expected to provide technical, financial and legal consultancy support during the project's preparation, pre-qualification, RFQ development and tender stages, in addition to providing be'ah with inputs in the selection stage.

The purpose of the



With such capacity and production, the project will undoubtedly have cross-sectoral benefits and contribute to the diversification of renewable energy sources while supporting be'ah to divert around 75 per cent of MSW away from landfills.

consultancy is to ensure that the highest standards of quality, transparency and financial and legal integrity are adopted and the right implementing, and operating entity is chosen to deliver the expected impact and environmental transformation.

OPWP, Oman's public energy procurement company, will float the main tender to select the entity that will build and operate the WTE plant and join the Sultanate's energy market as an independent power producer (IPP).

However, be'ah remains an important stakeholder in the

project given its position as the sole supplier of feedstock (waste). Both companies are finalising preparations for floating the pre-qualification tender by the end of 2022.

The WTE plant is designed to process 4,500 tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW) per day, and it will generate 140 MW of electricity. With such capacity and production, the project will undoubtedly have cross-sectoral benefits and contribute to the diversification of renewable energy sources while supporting be'ah to divert around 75 per cent of MSW away from landfills.

This endeavour is a vital component of be'ah's plans to develop a safer and sustainable waste management sector in Oman through close cooperation with other public entities such as OPWP. This partnership signals a new era of collaboration between national institutions to achieve the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

البنك الوطني العماني
لدول مجلس التعاون الخليجي
National Bank of Oman GCC Fund

ملادوقا

National Bank of Oman GCC Fund

Investment Manager Report
For the quarter ending
30th September 2022

INTERIM FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD
ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	30 Sept 2022	30 Sept 2021	31 Dec 2021
	RO	RO	RO
ASSETS			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	10,653,758	10,992,553	12,001,496
Cash and cash equivalents	1,120,860	350,865	134,577
Dividends receivable	2,768	2,520	306
Total assets	11,777,386	11,345,938	12,136,379
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	633,640	41,427	247,959
Total liabilities	633,640	41,427	247,959
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	11,143,746	11,304,511	11,888,420
Net asset value per unit	0.944	0.882	0.928
	30 Sept 2022	30 Sept 2021	31 Dec 2021
	RO	RO	RO
	(9 months)	(9 months)	(12 months)
INCOME			
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	328,431	1,644,682	2,241,695
Net realised (loss) / gain on investments at fair value through profit or loss	(104,824)	209,296	408,787
Dividend income	308,788	241,030	264,173
Interest income	1,192	6,971	6,030
Other income	--	--	1,079
	533,587	2,101,979	2,921,764
EXPENSES			
Management fees	106,472	84,754	117,592
Fund Management Body fees	32,890	28,000	35,000
Brokerage expenses	35,243	32,402	34,068
Foreign exchange loss	38,306	2,350	2,169
General and administration	15,522	11,180	17,373
Administrator fees	14,519	11,695	16,173
Custodian fees	7,306	7,180	9,600
Performance fees	--	--	181,462
	250,258	177,561	413,437
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the period / year	283,330	1,924,418	2,508,327
Net profit per unit	0.023	0.150	0.196

Bank Muscat launches Sayyarati auto loan offer

MUSCAT: In line with its customer-centric vision ‘To serve you better, everyday’, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has launched an attractive Sayyarati vehicle loan offer with only 3.99 per cent.

The offer is available for Omanis and expatriates working in government and quasi-government institutions as well as Tier 1 companies. Customers will be pleased to know that this unique offer is available for a maximum

loan tenure of 10 years for both new and pre-owned cars and can be availed till December 31, 2022.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah bin Tamman al Maashani, **(pictured)** General Manager - Products, Bank Muscat, said: “In line with our commitment to provide the best services possible to our valued customers and meet their aspirations and needs, Bank Muscat is constantly developing products and services that can further enhance the customer experience at their trusted banking



partner.

The current offer was developed taking into consideration customer feedback and needs, and it is our privilege to launch it on the occasion of National

Day celebrations. We thank all our customers for their constant feedback and confidence in bank.

He added: “I would also like to mention that Sayyarati is one of the most popular products from Bank Muscat and we hope that it will help make people’s dreams of owning their very own cars come true. The bank reiterates its commitment to making vehicle purchases easy and affordable through financing facilities, which are tailored according to each customer’s unique needs.”

With a fast turnaround time and absolutely no need for post-dated cheques, the feature-rich auto finance can be obtained within the shortest possible time from Sayyarati Centres in Salalah and Wattayah as well as Bank Muscat branches located across Oman.

Loans will be offered for both new vehicles and pre-owned vehicles. The documents needed to process the loan facility are minimal and include the buyer’s ID card, salary assignment letter, quotation / car valuation from the

approved valuator, driving license, Mulkiya (for pre-owned cars only) and seller’s ID card (for pre-owned cars only).

The monthly loan instalments for Sayyarati are automatically deducted from the customer’s account once the mandate to do so is provided to the bank by the customer. Bank Muscat aims to making attractive auto finance easily available for people in Oman so that they can have access to some of the world’s best and safest vehicles.

NBO hosts NCFI workshop to combat financial crimes

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) welcomed the National Centre for Financial Information (NCFI) to share the latest concepts in financial security with employees to ensure the safety of all customer transactions.

The workshop covered Transaction Monitoring (TM), Suspicious Transaction Reporting, Sanctions Screening, Red Flag Indicators and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) legislation, and introduced to Financial Crime Compliance Shadowing Programme to share best practices and enhance financial controls throughout all of the bank’s operations.

NBO is one of the first banks in Oman to partner with the NCFI to identify and mitigate the risks of money-laundering and other areas of financial crime. In partnership with the NCFI, NBO has adopted a transaction monitoring system to alert the bank of unusual transaction patterns and account activity based on each customer’s profile



and assist customers to resolve the issue.

Hassan Abdul Amir Shaban, Chief Government and Alliance Officer at NBO, said, “At NBO, we go beyond banking to make the lives of our customers easier and safer. Partnering with the NCFI allows NBO employees to protect customer accounts by identifying potential fraud, work with customers to understand changes in their circumstances, and work with the authorities if required. Staying current in a rapidly-

changing financial landscape is vital to remaining at the forefront of seamless, reliable banking and ensuring NBO customers can trust that we care.”

Together with NCFI, NBO goes further to create value and build relationships and utilise its experience to deliver hands-on support at every step. More details about NBO’s range of products and services are available in-branch, online at www.nbo.om or by contacting the Call Centre on 24770000.

Registrations open for Sohar International’s 11th Viewpoints

MUSCAT: As a pioneer institution that has taken several initiatives to promote a knowledge-based economy, Sohar International invites all to participate and attend its 11th virtual session of Viewpoints - a dedicated platform where inspirational global leaders from different industries share their experiences, knowledge, and ideas with a cross-section of Omani society.

The virtual seminar scheduled to take place on 7 November 2022 will be live-streamed via Zoom at 7:30 pm and can be registered for through visiting the bank’s official pages on social media platforms. Being a voice for change and highlighting industry-relevant topics through conversations with prominent international figures, this Viewpoints session titled ‘What kind of research and research institutions does the future demand?’ will be hosted by Mohamed bin Mahfoudh al Ardhi, Chairman of Sohar International with guest speaker Professor David Nirenberg, Director and Leon Levy Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ.

On hosting the knowledge based platform, Mohamed bin Mahfoudh al Ardhi, Chairman of Sohar International said, “The thought-provoking, insightful, and inspirational discussions we have had in the previous sessions of Viewpoints have earned the platform immense appreciation locally with the audience and internationally with the various prominent guests we have had. Most importantly, it has contributed to invoking a sense of continued curiosity amongst the youth which is an inherent



trait that will help one keep pace with an ever-evolving market. For our upcoming session, we are delighted to welcome our esteemed guest speaker, Prof David Nirenberg. A veteran in his field, he will highlight the various aspects of research and its relevance in modern society.”

Mohamed al Ardhi added, “Over the past century, universities, national labs, and private corporations have produced ground breaking research that has transformed the world. Needless to say, research is a way of better understanding various elements around us and how our actions can affect them.

To stay at par with emerging demands and better prepare for transformational world events, it is quintessential to enrich ourselves with knowledge and familiarise ourselves with the latest trends. And this makes our topic even more relevant - What kinds of research do we need now, in this vastly more complex world, and are our research institutions equipped to provide it? The upcoming session of Viewpoints will delve into this very intriguing subject.”

Bollywood Sensation Sanjivani to brighten Silver Jubilee of Hindi Wing of Indian Social Club in Oman

Convenor of Hindi wing of Indian Social Club Oman Gajesh Dhariwal is excited and very pleased to announce that the wing is bringing yet another healthy family entertainment event for its members and guests on Friday 4th November to celebrate its Silver Jubilee and Diwali at Le Grand Hall of hotel Al Falaj.

The stress and silence of pandemic is slowly fading out. This musical evening by renowned Bollywood singer Ms. Sanjivani Behlende and her talented troupe will certainly bring smiles, joy, and rejuvenation to the audience.

Playback singer Sanjivani Bhelende has to her credit several original Hindi film songs like ChoriChori Nazrein Mili (Kareeb), Nikamma kiya, Yara rub russ jane de (Socha na tha), Makhmali yeh badan (Road), Uljhanoko de diya (Rules), Chidiya tu hoti (Nayak), Churalo na dil mera sanam, Haan judaise, Tum juda hokar to name a few.

She won the Best Playback Singer Ashirwad award in 1999 for ‘Chori Chori Jab Nazrein Mili’ and was a Filmfare and Screen nominee for ‘Churalo Na Dil Mera Sanam’.

Sanjivani is winner of the first ever Zee TV’s Sa-Re-Ga-Ma and

This group brings together a large diversified Indian Community in Oman celebrating Indian festivals, organizing cultural events, competitions and actively participating inter-wing activities of Indian Social Club- giving a taste of India to Indians away from India.

Hindi wing also actively organizes social, cultural, and literary events under the Patronage and in association with Indian Embassy.

The event calendar includes Vishwa Hindi Diwas, Kavi Sammelan Family Picnic, Holi, Antakshari, Teej, Diwali, Poetry Recitation Competition for children, Quiz, Women’s Day, Dance Workshop/ Competition, Painting Competition for children, Cookery Competition, New Year eve celebrations, Yog Workshops and talks on subjects of interest and importance.

The members of the executive committee of Hindi Wing CM Sardar, Mridula Choudhary, Anand Bhorkar, Abhilash Saxena, Aasit Naik, Divya Tewari, Rajesh Malhotra and Paresh Sahay are putting all efforts to make the event memorable.

The audience is set to have a great musical evening and joyous Diwali celebrations.

Siemens, OTE Group to support roll out of eMobility solutions in Oman

MUSCAT: Global technology powerhouse Siemens is partnering with OTE Group, one of Oman’s biggest business houses, in the delivery of its industry-leading electric vehicle (EV) chargers to help accelerate the Sultanate of Oman’s adoption of EVs and its transition to a sustainable future.

An agreement to this effect was signed by Franco Atassi, CEO of Siemens Smart Infrastructure in the Middle East, with Salim Saad Bahwan, Director OTE Group. The signing took place recently at OTE’s headquarters in Muscat. Smart infrastructure technologies from Siemens are currently revolutionising the way how a number of countries, cities and towns across the world are becoming more energy efficient, resilient and sustainable.

Siemens’ smart solutions enable buildings, transportation systems and industries to be integrated into an ecosystem that connects the real world with the digital world. The digitalisation of infrastructure creates smart buildings, smart grids, smart power distribution and better eMobility charging solutions — and this technology will power the growth of Electric Vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman.

By leveraging OTE

Group’s nationwide footprint, characterised by the presence of networks of automotive showrooms, workshops and parts outlets, Siemens can deliver EV charging infrastructure to customers around Oman.

Over the past year alone, Siemens signed agreements with local partners in a number of countries around the world to support the deployment of its cutting-edge eMobility solutions.

It includes the Sicharge UC Family — a flexible solution for future urban mobility targeted primarily at the world of eBuses and utility vehicles.

Similarly, Siemens’ VersiCharge Wallbox solution is designed to fulfil the requirements of individual eCar users and operators, whether in private,

semi-public, or public parking lots. ELFA, another innovative drive system from Siemens, helps keep customers on the move no matter where they are.

Exemplifying its appeal in the eMobility space, just last month Siemens signed an agreement with a leading international automaker to jointly develop smart EV charging infrastructure technologies for the Middle East. This includes creating packaged solutions for customers, and electrification of Last Mile delivery services in Middle East markets.

The agreement will capitalise on technology developed by Siemens that will accelerate the adoption of EVs by speeding up charging times and creating smarter, more efficient power grids.

Marafiq, GUtech ink MoU to cooperate in renewable energy field



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 2

Marafiq, a subsidiary of OQ Group, signed on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech) to explore possible cooperation in the fields of research & development, training and innovation in renewable energy projects and water technology.

The MoU was signed by Eng Abdullah al Hashimi, Managing Director of Marafiq with Dr Hussain al Salmi, Deputy Rector for Administration and Finance of GUtech.

The MoU provides for the parties to cooperate in areas related to supporting innovation, research and development projects involving GUtech students, enhancing their skills and providing them with training in projects managed by Marafiq in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

It also supports cooperation between Marafiq and GUtech in renewable energy projects, including water technology, which contributes to strengthening the Sultanate of Oman's efforts to invest in clean energy and reduce carbon emissions.

Commenting on the agreement, Eng Abdullah al Hashimi, Managing Director of Marafiq, stated that the Memorandum of Understanding

reflects the two parties' interest in achieving the Sultanate of Oman's goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.

He underlined the Company's interest in strengthening the efforts of higher education institutions aimed at developing the skills of students and providing an encouraging environment for scientific research and innovation.

In this regard, Marafiq is sponsoring five students in different disciplines with practical hands-on experience in Marafiq projects in Duqm.

"Signing this MoU with GUtech aims to encourage students to research in the fields of energy, especially renewable energy. The projects managed by Marafiq in the energy and water sectors in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm will serve to inspire students, hone their skills and encourage them for further research and exploration in this important sector," he added.

Dr Hussain al Salmi of GUtech noted: "GUtech is committed to developing and promoting innovation and scientific research projects in the Sultanate of Oman, and is exerting all its capabilities to encourage its students to do so.

Hence, we are proud of partnering with Marafiq, as we are looking forward to the MoU's contribution to achieving the objectives of both parties, whether in the scientific research and innovation, or in the areas of clean and renewable energy."

Omani water project to begin receiving green power in 2023

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 2

Sharqiyah Desalination Company, which operates a major Independent Water Project (IWP) at Sur in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate, says a solar photovoltaic (PV) project currently under development at the project site, will begin providing green electricity for the plant effective from early next year. Sebastien Chauvin, Chairman of publicly-listed Sharqiyah Desalination, said in the company's third-quarter financial report, that the solar PV scheme would meet a third of the plant's energy needs.

"The company has signed an agreement with TotalEnergies, to start the construction of a 17 megawatt-peak (MWp) solar project to be installed at the Plant which will be the first of its kind to be installed in the Sultanate of Oman and one of the largest solar photovoltaic (PV) systems providing power for a desalination plant in the region," said Chauvin.

"Starting from the beginning of 2023, the plant will produce annually over 30,000 megawatt-hours (MWh) of green electricity, which is enough to cover more



than 33 per cent of the plant's daily consumption and will avoid some 280 000 tonnes of CO2 emissions. It also contributes to Oman's National Energy Strategy to convert 30 per cent of its electricity use to renewable sources by 2030."

The comments follow an announcement made recently by French-based international water and environmental services giant Veolia (which has a 35.75 per cent stake in Sharqiyah Desalination through its regional subsidiary) that it is partnering

with energy major TotalEnergies in the construction of the solar PV scheme to support the water plant's energy needs.

Covering an area of 130,000 sq metres, the solar PV plant will feature over 32,000 high-efficiency panels that will also harness the capabilities of an innovative East-West tracker system to increase energy output.

The Sur IWP, launched in 2007 with a desalination capacity of 115,000 cubic metres per day, currently meets the potable water

needs of an estimated half a million inhabitants of North and South Sharqiyah governorates.

Raw seawater as feedstock for the plant is sourced from a cluster of beach wells, which together constitute the largest of its kind in the world. By reducing its dependence on fossil fuel-based electricity for its power needs, the IWP is not only set to slash its carbon footprint, but also enhance its value proposition as an environment-friendly desalination plant, say officials.

PDO wins prestigious award at ADIPEC 2022

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 2

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has been named Operational Excellence Company of the Year (Excellence In Remote Operations) at this year's Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) Awards, which recognise excellence across the global oil and gas industry.

The winning project was 'PDO leading nodal acquisition and processing: from whitespace to exploration leads in record time.'

Driven by the continual need to improve seismic data quality for Oman's challenging geology, the project involved deploying a new PDO Smart Crew equipped with smart hardware to ensure a safer, faster, and more



cost-effective seismic acquisition process. This enabled PDO to maintain productivity with 50 per cent less equipment and 13 per cent lower cost per square kilometre in comparison to

manual handling.

PDO Exploration Director Dr Hisham al Siyabi said: "We are honoured to have received this award which is testament to PDO's technical expertise honed over the past decades. This is indeed a game changer for the future of the oil and gas industry in the region and we are looking forward to lead more technological advancements".

PDO Head of Geophysical Operations Taimur al Wadhahi, who accepted the award on behalf of PDO at the ADIPEC event and other management members, said: "The Smart Crew provides an additional layer of operational flexibility that allows resources to be rearranged in short times to improve further productivity and quality that lead to cost efficiency."

Saudi investment to strengthen economic ties



HAIDER AL LAWATI
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The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF) recently announced that it intends to establish regional investment companies in five Arab countries, including the Sultanate of Oman, in various economic sectors. Investment companies will also be established in Jordan, Bahrain, Sudan and Iraq.

This decision comes within the framework of the expansion witnessed by the Saudi sovereign wealth fund and its investments in various economic sectors with the aim of strengthening economic relations between Arab countries on the one hand, and supporting economic integration, on the other.

There is no doubt that such investments will generate job opportunities for Arab citizens, while output from agricultural investments will strengthen food security in the region at a time when world markets are witnessing

inflationary pressures impacting the prices of imported foodstuff and other goods.

Omani-Saudi relations have witnessed many positive developments at various levels over the past years, following the official visits of the leaders of the two countries and representatives of government agencies and the private sector.

Such steps support joint cooperation in various fields, especially since both sides are working to strengthen economic cooperation in line with the visions of the Kingdom 2030 and Oman 2040. These visits have resulted in positive and fruitful decisions between the two countries, as a number of bilateral memoranda and agreements were signed that support political, economic and technical goals.

This will raise the pace of joint economic cooperation and stimulate the public and private

sectors to achieve the visions of the two countries.

Undoubtedly, the opening of the 725-kilometre Saudi-Omani land road is contributing to the movement of citizens, enhancing economic integration and foreign trade. It also opens up new investment opportunities for citizens of the two countries and other GCC nations.

Additionally, the new overland route is helping reduce the cost of goods traded between the two countries, while also bringing down transportation costs, and facilitating the movement of tourists and pilgrims. Booming relations will unlock opportunities in various fields, including the oil and gas sector, petrochemicals, energy, technology and others.

The new PIF company will provide the necessary funding for proposed projects, whether in the fields of renewable energy, electricity and other projects, that

will enhance the exchange of intra-regional trade, transportation and mobility in the future. It will also strengthen cooperation in the field of food security, manufacturing industries, logistics, technology and finance, and other areas.

Besides contributing to GDP growth, this latest initiative will enhance the diversification of income sources, both at the level of the two countries or the among the GCC countries.

Indeed, the establishment of a Saudi investment company in the Sultanate of Oman will work to strengthen the economic partnership and achieve the ambitions set forth in their respective national visions.

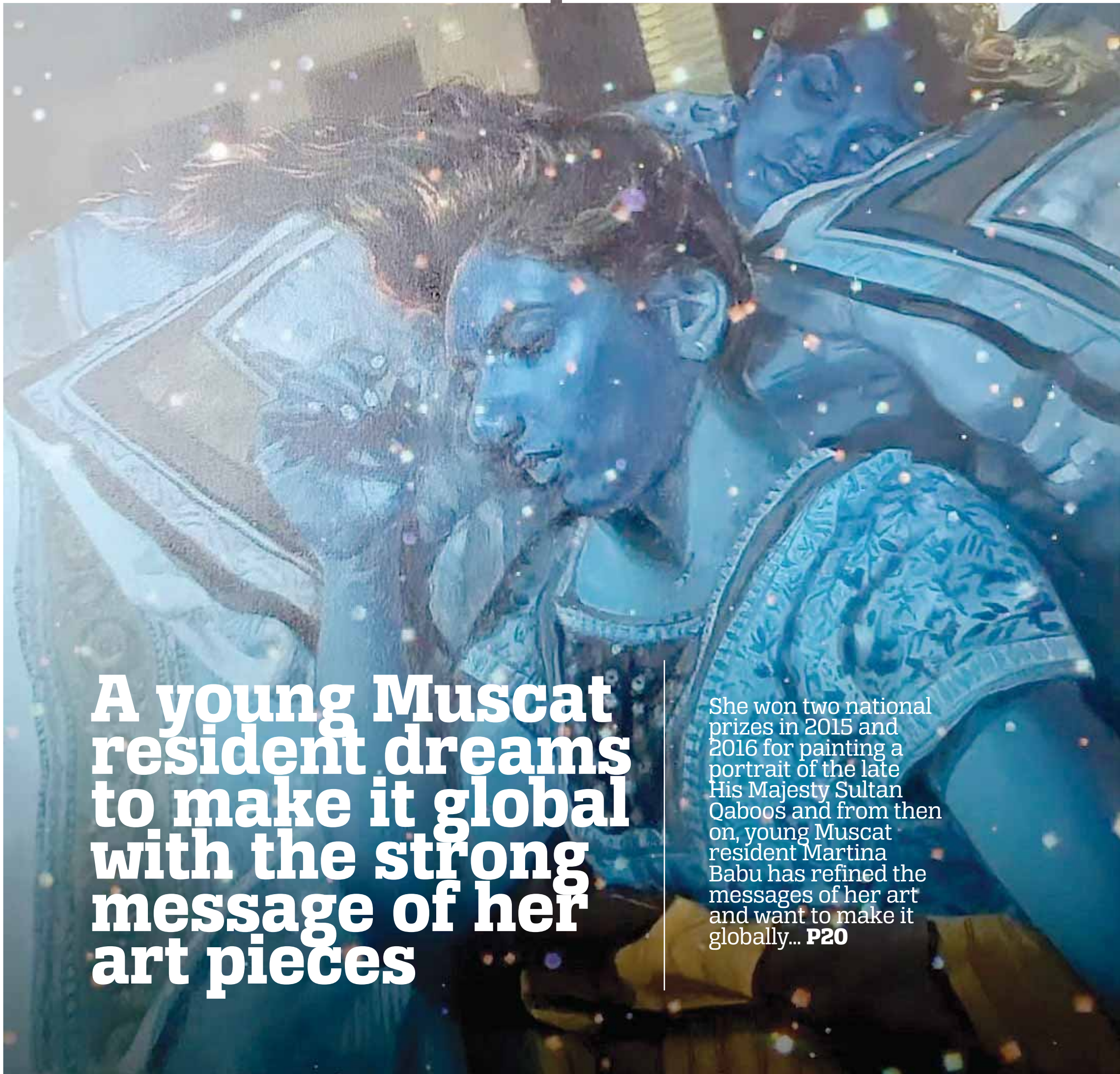
Today, Oman and Saudi Arabia, with their diverse natural resources, have become a key driver of economic growth in the region and internationally as well, supported by key infrastructure and logistical projects.

SOHAR launches new route planner platform to improve supply chain efficiency



SUJAR: SOHAR Port and Freezone has launched its new 'Routescanner' platform, an integrated global shipping route planner that will allow shippers and forwarders to view all available shipping routes in a single easy-to-use platform.

Designed to making supply chains more efficient, transparent and sustainable, Routescanner allows users to display all routes via SOHAR using the Sohar Direct Connection feature, build custom routes, show the fastest routes via seaports, inland locations, road and rail and choose options with the lowest CO2 emissions.



A young Muscat resident dreams to make it global with the strong message of her art pieces

She won two national prizes in 2015 and 2016 for painting a portrait of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and from then on, young Muscat resident Martina Babu has refined the messages of her art and want to make it globally... **P20**

Imelda Staunton picks up royal baton as new queen in 'The Crown'

IMELDA STAUNTON picks up the royal baton as the latest actor to play Queen Elizabeth in hit Netflix drama "The Crown", whose new season has faced criticism as it addresses a difficult era for the British royal family so soon after the late monarch's death.

The award-winning stage and screen actress, whose past credits include "Vera Drake" and the "Downton Abbey" and

"Harry Potter" films, leads a new cast for season five, set in the 1990s, of the royal drama focused on Elizabeth's reign.

Elizabeth herself called 1992, the late monarch's 40th year on the throne, her "annus horribilis" following family marital upsets, public dissent and a fire at Windsor Castle.

"This time in the royal family's life was very tumultuous and the writers didn't



shy away from any difficult issues," Staunton said in an interview.

Season five is released on November 9, two months after Elizabeth died and her son Charles became king.

One of its main storylines is the divorce of then-Prince Charles and Princess Diana. Some royal commentators have voiced concern about the impact the show could have at the start of Charles' reign.

Others, including actress Judi Dench, have called on Netflix to add a disclaimer, criticising fictionalised scenes and dialogues.

In a letter to London's Times newspaper last month, the 87-year-old Dench said that as the award-winning show approached present times, "the more freely it seems willing to blur the lines between historical accuracy and crude sensationalism".

Netflix says "The Crown" is "fictional dramatisation", inspired by real events.

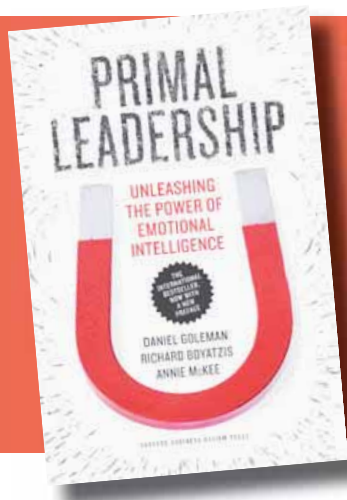
"I think the idea that there is a need for a disclaimer is a little bit patronising. After four seasons, I think people around the world are well aware that this is a drama based on real events," actor Jonathan Pryce, who plays Prince Philip, said. — **Reuters**

READ

PRIMAL LEADERSHIP

BY DANIEL GOLEMAN

We argue that a leader's primal task is an emotional one—to articulate a message that resonates with their followers' emotional reality, with their sense of purpose—and so to move people in a positive direction



CELEBRITIES

Australian musician Warren Ellis shows a molding of a chewing gum chewed by late US musician and singer Nina Simone, during a photo session, in Paris.



TRADITIONS

Revellers take part in "La Calabiuza" parade during the Day of the Dead in Tonacatepeque, El Salvador on November 1, 2022.





Totoro time: Japan's Ghibli theme park opens to visitors



A HUGE GRINNING Totoro and other whimsical exhibits welcomed visitors to Japan's new Ghibli theme park as three of its five sections opened to the public on Tuesday.

The attraction in central Japan has been long awaited by fans of Studio Ghibli's beloved animations, from "Howl's Moving Castle" to the Oscar-winning "Spirited Away".

Now a fluffy Cat Bus, a life-sized No-Face and recreations of buildings from the films are ready for visitors less than a month after the country fully reopened its borders to foreign tourists.

Tickets are reservation only, and are already sold out until the end of the year.

One middle-aged visitor, who described himself as "a huge fan", told broadcaster TV Asahi he had been queuing to enter the park since the previous day.

"Congratulations!" said a hand-drawn note posted on Twitter by Studio Ghibli, illustrated with a row of figures resembling the spirit creature Totoro and signed by the company's co-founder Hayao Miyazaki.

Ghibli producer Toshio Suzuki also spoke of his excitement at a ceremony on Monday ahead of



the opening.

"I didn't sleep very well last night. It's a bit different from a film release," he said.

Spread over 7.1 hectares (17.5 acres) of a 194-hectare (480-acre) park in Aichi region where the 2005 International Expo was held, the site features large open-air areas in keeping with the importance of nature in

Ghibli films.

Among the three sections now open is the "Hill of Youth", the gateway to the park that features an elevator tower inspired by Ghibli films including "Castle in the Sky".

Elsewhere, "Dondoko Forest" evokes the retro peace of the 1988 classic "My Neighbour Totoro", with bucolic walking

paths and an enormous Totoro figure.

A major draw will be Ghibli's Grand Warehouse, a hangar-like indoor portion of the park with various attractions, including 14 sets from 13 of the studio's film classics.

Visitors can stroll along an alley designed to look like the opening scene of "Spirited Away," or perch on the red velvet-covered train seat in a carriage next to the movie's instantly recognisable "No-Face" character.

Aichi region is predicting an influx of 1.8 million visitors a year once all five areas of the park are open from next year, with an estimated annual economic impact of 48 billion yen (\$324 million).

Studio Ghibli, founded in 1985 by Miyazaki and fellow animator Isao Takahata, has captivated fans around the world with works blending nostalgia, courage, greed and interaction with the natural world.

The studio already operates the hugely popular Ghibli Museum on the outskirts of Tokyo, which offers tickets only at the beginning of each month and regularly sells out within hours. — AFP

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Dunya Kabab House Stands Up for Afghan Culture



SOME RESTAURANT OWNERS go into the business with an implicit idea of giving their neighbours a deeper view of where they're from. This was a major inspiration for Basir Ghiasi, who came to New York from Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, and his son Mohamed, who began plans to open an Afghan restaurant in Brooklyn last year after the Taliban retook control of Kabul.

"There's no country right now, it's ruled by a bunch of terrorists, so how can I help keep the culture alive?" Mohamed Ghiasi said to a reporter for *Brooklyn Magazine* after Dunya Kabab House opened in March. "And the best way I know is through food."

Most reasons for getting into the restaurant business are, on some level, personal. Ghiasi's is understandable: If your family was from Afghanistan, would you really want the world to believe that the Taliban represents the best your culture has

can be eaten on its own or, as part of a classic Afghan trio, it can be ordered with extremely long-grained sela rice and a green heap of spinach seasoned with fresh herbs and cardamom.

But this is a kebab house. Though I'm captivated by many dishes at Dunya, I always want a kebab or two at some point — usually as soon as I look through the kitchen window and see skewer after skewer of chicken and lamb being patiently turned over a shallow grill.

Dunya's skewers would stand out almost anywhere. I've never been served one that was dry or tough. There are tender, juicy koftas of ground chicken and lamb. There are cubes of lamb or beef, or whole chicken thighs, which are tinted yellow from a long tenderizing soak in saffron and yogurt. And there are chapli kebabs, herb-seasoned beef patties that are not grilled on skewers at all but fried, and delicious.



to offer?

Of course, culture is most persuasive when it's good. Dunya Kabab House is. The elder Ghiasi contributed recipes he remembers from Afghanistan, and does much of the cooking. Gentle much of the time, forceful when it needs to be, the menu can guide you on an exploration of the pleasures of Afghanistan's golden fritters, thin-skinned dumplings and aromatic stews, or it can come to your rescue when you are simply hungry for grilled meat.

If you are in the mood for delicacy, there is no better place to start than with a plate of the excellent bolani. These flat triangles of crispy fried dough can be stuffed with potatoes and cilantro, or with a sweet spread of pumpkin, but the most interesting bolani of all contain a layer of scallions and leeks. They are something like Chinese scallion pancakes, although they're not made the same way at all. Sharing a basket with the bolani will be a portion of yogurt-mint sauce with garlic. It would probably be good on anything in the restaurant, but it has an especially transformative effect on bolani.

with good reason: The Ghiasis have been making and distributing the stuff for years. Essentially thinned mayonnaise seasoned with garlic and dried mint, it is especially good in



To make the eggplant dish called borani banjan, thick rounds of eggplant are fried and then buried under tomato sauce that has a whisper of heat and an understated dose of spices. This is topped with a spoonful of the same yogurt-mint sauce and extra dried mint. (If you've never understood why a recipe would call for dried mint over fresh, a meal at Dunya will show you the light.)

When Afghans dream of dumplings, some see mantu and others have visions of aushak. I had always been in the mantu camp, preferring their plump core of spiced meat to the leeks and scallions hidden inside aushak. Dunya's aushak won me over, though; the flavour of the filling was more lasting and seemed to have more to say to the dark red gravy poured over them.

combination with one or both of Dunya's house chutneys. One is a thick red paste of sweet and hot chiles and garlic; the other is a green cilantro sauce that is milder but not quite harmless.

One of the Ghiasis is likely to show up at your table sooner or later; usually sooner. They are quick to steer



customers toward what they consider the best dishes — there's none of that "everything chef makes is excellent" drivel here. If you listen to their advice, dessert will be firnee, the cardamom-scented heavy-cream pudding with a green dusting of pistachios on the surface. — **NYT**



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AROUND THE WORLD

TRAVEL TALES

Ghana's historic slave forts are being swallowed by rising seas



FOR 21 YEARS, Fort Prinzenstein's caretaker James Ocloo Akorli has watched the Gulf of Guinea's tempestuous waters eat away at both his livelihood and his heritage.

The 18th century Danish citadel, set along Ghana's palm-fringed coastline, was once the last stop for captured Africans before they were forced onto slave ships bound for the Americas.

Today, three-quarters of the Unesco World Heritage site has been swallowed by the sea.

"There have been mornings after a storm when I have come to find large parts of the fort have just disappeared," Akorli lamented as he stood by the monument's crumbling walls a few metres from the shore in Keta town, 180 km (110 miles) east of Ghana's capital, Accra.

"Whole structures, including the main dungeons, are now in the sea."

Accelerated by climate change, rising sea levels and increased storm surges and floods are washing away Ghana's famed slave forts and castles - jeopardising coastal jobs, homes, as well as the country's thriving tourism industry, say experts.

Between 2005 and 2017, 37 per cent of the coastal land around the town of Keta was lost erosion and floods, according to research conducted by Ghana University's Institute of Environment and Sanitation Studies (IESS).

Currently, the coastline is eroding at an average annual rate of about two metres (6.6 feet) - but some areas have recorded up to 17 metres (56 feet) of erosion in a single year.

Global warming is responsible, said Kwasi Appeaning Addo, IEES's director and associate professor in coastal processes and delta studies.

"As well as sea level rise, climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of storm surges and floods, leading to increased erosion in coastal areas," he said.

"We've already seen fishing villages in low-lying areas such as Keta being washed away, so naturally, historic monuments are also at risk. Within 20 to 30 years, we will face serious problems if we continue with the business-as-usual approach."

Addo's warning comes days before world leaders gather at the COP27 UN climate summit in Egypt, where they are expected to battle over how much financial support rich countries should provide to developing nations to help them cope with the consequences of rising temperatures.

PILGRIMAGE FOR DESCENDANTS

The transatlantic slave trade, active between the 16th and 19th centuries, forcibly removed 12.5 million people mainly from Central and West Africa, and sent them to work across the Americas, Europe and the Caribbean.

—Thomson Reuters Foundation

BOOK REVIEW

This book explores historical ties of Oman with Sri Lanka



By Samuel Kutty

A key truism in the discipline of history is that the past finds its way to sneak into the present. To this end is the relevance of books that contain "all-you-need-to-know" information about what happened in the past while taking the readers on a journey through time.

A book of this kind is Sri Lanka - Oman Relations: Past, Present, and Future authored by Omar Lebba Ameer Ajwad. It is a treasure trove of facts, figures, and stories of the ancient yet modern and dynamic relations between Oman and Sri Lanka.

"The objective behind this book is to reinvigorate the past, highlight the present, and chart pathways for the future by providing relevant information with a view to fostering deeper economic engagement between the two countries", says Ajwad.

The book, which was launched as a commemoration of the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Sri Lanka, provides a comprehensive glimpse of this strong and well-preserved association between the two countries while sketching its past, illustrating its present, and forecasting its future. This has been aptly pointed out by Oman's Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi in his forward note, "The book demonstrates that every step of our countries' journey together has been underpinned by a deep-rooted connection between our peoples".

The book with historical references, expert opinions, and commercial endeavours was penned by Ameer Ajwad during his stint as Sri Lanka's ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

Sri Lanka and Oman's diplomatic journey spans just over four decades. However, the tales in this book show that the bonds

go back centuries, if not millennia, into the mists of time.

"It brought a smile to my face to revisit the story of the Jewel of Muscat, and to hear that Omani Halwa is known as 'Halwa Muscat' in Sri Lankan households.

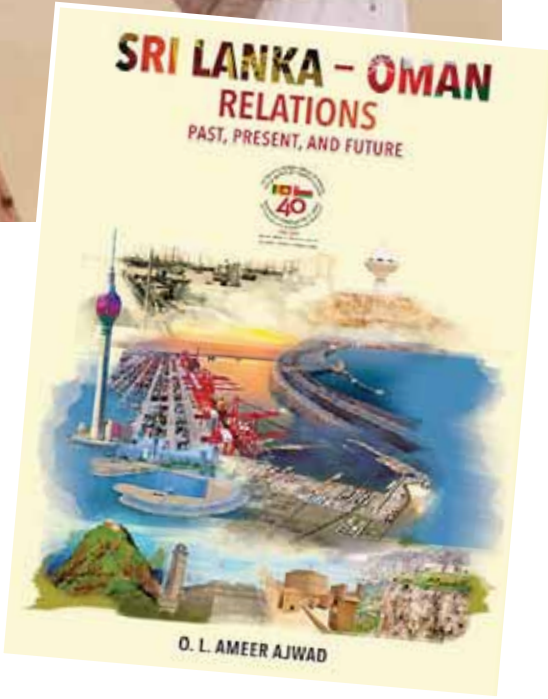
Ameer Ajwad is a great authority on the Sri Lanka-Oman relationship and this overview of successful bilateral initiatives ensures that every reader will find it informative, accessible, and engaging", comments Al Busaidi.

As neighbours in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka and Oman trace their links to the mist of history. Geographically located at the centre of the maritime trade route between the Persian Gulf and the Far East in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka had naturally attracted a number of Arab seafarers and seafaring vessels from ancient times. As such, Sri Lanka's contact with the Arab world dates back to the pre-Christian era, primarily driven by trading.

Thanks to its location on the eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula to the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean, Oman played a major role in the ancient maritime trading and cultural exchanges.

Early documented history records the passage of merchant seafarers from Oman to Sri Lanka and vice versa across the Indian Ocean as well as their service to the world as entrepôts of trade in the ancient Silk Road and Spice Route.

People-to-people connectivity has been the bedrock of modern Sri Lanka and Oman relations. The Sri Lankan Community in



the Sultanate of Oman has been an important component in forging relations between the two countries.

"Having had the privilege as the first Sri Lankan ambassador to present credentials to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, who leads the renewed Renaissance of the Sultanate of Oman with a clear roadmap of Oman's Vision 2040 and its Tanfeedh initiative, I thought to document the enormous prospects that are unfolding under this new era for the future cooperation between Sri Lanka and the Sultanate of Oman to become strategic, bilateral, regional and multilateral partners in the years ahead", affirms Ajwad in his forward note.

As Sri Lanka's Envoy to the Sultanate of Oman from the year 2019 to 2022, Ameer Ajwad says he had the distinct honour to serve Sri Lanka in Muscat at the interface of two epochal moments in the history of the Sultanate of Oman. This involved the reigns of both their Majesties, late Sultan Qaboos and his successor Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

"I cherish the memories of these two legendary leaders and their great qualities of leadership. I also cherish the memories of Omani hospitality, helpfulness, and warmth of the people of Oman".



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

Technology and our relationships!

WE ALL SEE the rise of technology today and in every minute of it, we get to see and hear developments and witness new frontiers being broken. The wide usage of the Internet, I noticed, has contributed greatly to the decrease in face-to-face communications among family members and this is also extended to the size of our social circles.

Unfortunately and dangerously so, it led to an increase in depression and loneliness!

Are you not with me that this technology, which crowds out our interaction in real life with others, will reduce our happiness and therefore must be managed with great care? Therefore, to reap the full benefits, we must use digital tools in ways that enhance our relationships.

Perhaps the real question to think about in-depth: How did our sudden collective shift (especially during the Coronavirus pandemic) to digital communication - away from face-to-face communication - affect social cohesion in general?

Perhaps the problem here lies in the techniques, which we lose those dimensions. Text messages cannot convey emotions well, because we cannot hear or see the person on the opposite end of our communication. The same applies to direct messages on social media. Not to notice too often, that social media is used not to communicate with one individual but to broadcast to a larger audience.

Furthermore, face-to-face conversations tend to be more inclusive than those conducted over text. Especially since with the spread of texting and social media, many people worry that

reaching through old connections will be stressful for others. So can we abandon the Internet and eliminate virtual communications from our lives, I realise here is not the answer. Doing so will isolate you and undermine your ability to earn a living. However, you can learn to use techniques to complement your relationships rather than replace them.

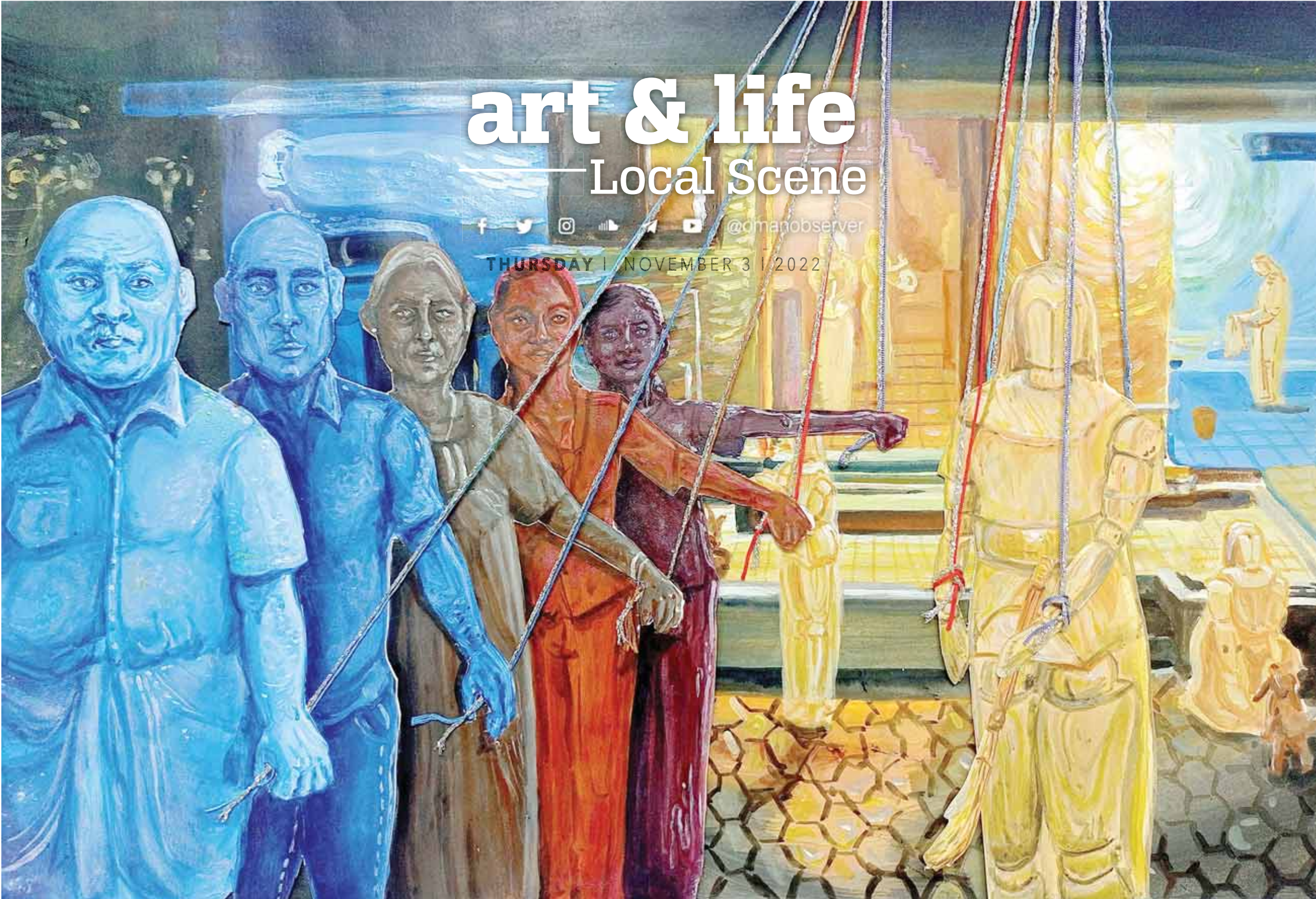
Especially since it's unreasonable to expect anyone to stop texting, but you can resort to it less if you have—if you can say—arrangements to talk to your friends, co-workers and loved ones!

Hence, according to today's standards - our life may seem old-fashioned - but I find the encouragement of those around me that when we knock on the neighbours' doors to visit her and then the family sits down to dinner - for example - and chats among themselves and with passers-by.

Thus, when that individual writes and sends messages, he uses technology as a complement to his relationships, not a substitute for them!

In the end, for most of us—especially people who have grown up with that technology—the Internet is an indisputable part of world life seeping into every crevice and crevice independent of any conscious decision on the part of that human being. We won't come back to life before this kind of technology, of course. However, we can and must use them carefully in the service of our relationships and our family and societal bonds.

Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla is a physician, medical innovator and writer.



A young Muscat resident dreams to make it global with the strong message of her art pieces

By Kabeer Yousuf

For every piece of art, there's a purpose and every piece of art is inspired by a cause without which art goes superfluous, and fails to reach out to the people.

Martina Babu, a young Muscat resident, has always wanted to send out a message to society and in

number of 1,700 participants have also drawn for anti-smoking, anti-alcohol and anti-drugs campaigns in Doha before she painted her thoughts on women empowerment and women safety. She is an advocate of women's rights across the world.

Martina's world pivots around three things: academics, art for social causes and health and hygiene.

few girls who conducted a solo exhibition well before they reached 18. Martina got an opportunity to learn murals, cultural art, creativity, acrylic, water paint, etc as part of her studies which, according to her family, is an additional benefit to her studies.

"We could see the God-given talent in her which we wanted her to nourish and we are not bothered or



the journey, she experimented with more than one form of art eventually realising that she is a sculptor and a painter.

As a schoolgirl, she learned the art from her teachers in Qatar and Muscat without any external influence but she had by then realised what her medium to communicate with the world was.

"For me, art is nothing but the medium that I always wanted to communicate with society and while talking with the world through the form of art, I realised myself," said Martina, who's in the final preparations of her BFA exams.

Martina who had won two times national prizes for painting late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos in 2015 and 2016 consecutively from a whopping

She attributed high regard to women's safety and humanity.

This young girl after her formal education in Indian School Muscat (ISM) and Doha joined Global Public School in Ernakulam, with a rare speciality of the commercial art-oriented scheme before she joined Chithra Kala Parishad in Bangaluru but had to discontinue due to the pandemic and had to return home.

Some of her paintings that won critical acclaim are Lost Identity, Home, Direction, LOVE and the like.

After Covid, she joined BFA at SSUS (Sri Shankaracharya College, Kaladi) and passed out with the first rank. Painting, for sure, is her Forte and will be graduating next year. Probably, she is one of the

worried of the returns of choosing what she wanted to do in her life," Babu Joseph, her father, said.

Recently, she has hit the headlines yet again with her series of 130 paintings that described a poem continuously in 24 hours.

"I see myself as an absolute novice who simply hopes to learn and sustain my creative journey, sharing with the world my artistic findings regarding people, the essence of contemporary lives and course channelling it in a storytelling manner."

She was never a slow learner at school. Martina was reasonably good in her academics 10th Std A+ for all subjects and she secured all A+ in her class 12 as well with 96.5 per cent marks.

"I and my soul always love art," she summarised.

