

Schools to close early today

The Ministry of Education represented by the Directorate General of Education in Muscat has ordered schools to close early on Tuesday in the wilayats of Al Seeb, Bausher, Muscat, Al Amerat and Muttrah. Evening schools will be closed only in Al Amerat and Al Seeb on Tuesday. The new timings should be taken into consideration by school transport operators so that students are not inconvenienced. Pickup should be done by 11.30 pm for students whose parents transport them in their own cars.



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VERSTAPPEN MADE TO WAIT FOR TITLE PEREZ WINS IN SINGAPORE RAIN



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INTEGRATED POWER AND WATER PROJECT LAUNCHED IN DUQM SEZ



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ZOOMING IN TO SEE THE BEAUTY OF SMALL CREATURES



MUSCAT

TAKE SEASONAL FLU VACCINATION

The Ministry of Health announced the start of administering the seasonal flu vaccine for target segments. The target segments include people over the age of 50, people with chronic diseases such as respiratory, heart, renal, liver, neurological, blood, and metabolic disorders, including uncontrolled diabetes and obesity among adults and children, as well as pilgrims, workers in the health sector and pregnant women. **DETAILS ON P4**

SQU’S SUCCESS IN AQUAPONICS SYSTEM

Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) succeeded in farming and producing Asian seabass (barramundi) and cherry tomatoes through an aquaponics system. Dr Wenresti Gallardo, Associate Professor at the Department of Marine Sciences and Fisheries in the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences, tested more expensive fish and plants in the aquaponics system in a greenhouse at the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES). The tests aimed to identify suitable fish and plant species that can grow in an aquaponics system in Oman’s climatic conditions. **DETAILS ON P4**

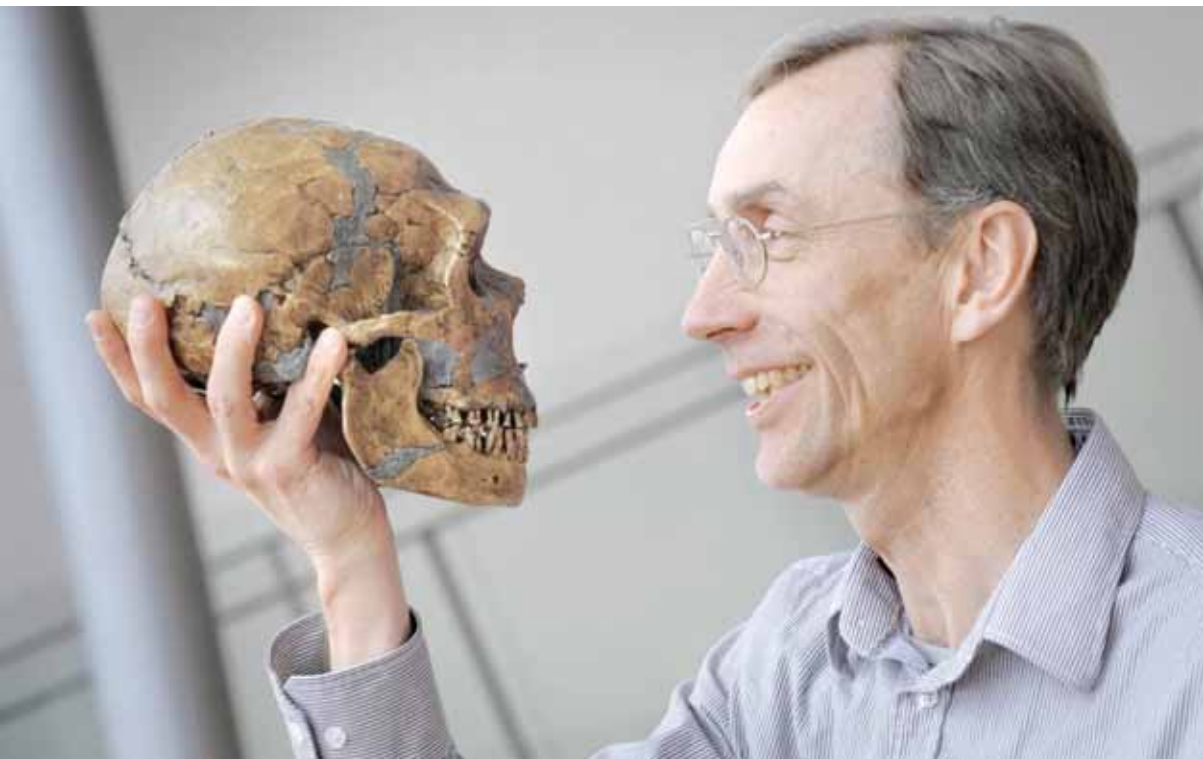
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YEMEN TRUCE EXPIRES AS UN PUSHES FOR BROADER DEAL

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■ NOBEL MEDICINE FOR DECODING ANCIENT DNA



Swedish geneticist Svante Paabo, who won the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for discoveries that underpin our understanding of how modern day humans evolved from extinct ancestors, poses with a Neanderthal skull at the Max-Planck Institute for evolutionary anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, on Monday. **DETAILS ON P7**

Jordan King’s visit to open greater vistas

MUSCAT: Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, expressed his hope that the visit of King Abdallah II of the Kingdom of Jordan, to the Sultanate of Oman, starting today will contribute to commercial exchange, investment and cooperation in different fields. In a statement to Oman News Agency, Al Yousef said that Oman-Jordan relations are accorded special attention by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Abdallah II. These relations, he said, are undergoing constant growth in all areas.

The minister added that Oman-Jordan Joint Committee is discussing mechanisms for upgrading cooperation in economic, commercial and investment fields to meet the aspirations of their peoples.

Al Yousef pointed out that the volume of



commercial exchange between Oman and Jordan grew by 33.8 per cent to RO 61.855 million in 2021, compared to RO 46.236 million in 2020. In Oman, the number of Jordanian business reached a total of 621



operating in various sectors like trade, services, industry and constructions.

Meanwhile, Eng Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry

(OCCI), said that the visit of King Abdallah II of the Kingdom of Jordan, will boost the establishment of joint projects, enhance relation-building between the Omani and Jordanian businessmen and activate agreements and memoranda of understanding signed by the Sultanate of Oman and Jordan.

In comments to ONA, he noted that the Sultanate of Oman and Jordan have many advantages that are supportive and conducive to prosperous investment and partnership. He noted that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries stood at \$160.6 million in 2021 compared to \$120.1 million registered in 2020. The number of Jordanian companies registered with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion reached 465, in which Jordan contributed more than \$1 billion. — ONA

Oman Science Festival from October 10-15

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
Muscat, Oct 3

The third edition of Oman Science Festival will be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) from October 10 to 15 under the theme ‘With Science We Meet Again’. More than 100 government, private and civil institutions will participate in the event, which is happening after a gap of two years due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education and Chairman of the Main Committee of the festival, said the event aims to create scientific temperament among students of different age groups and encourage them to think in

right direction when it comes to learning of science.

“It is a mirror that reflects the ambitions of the Oman Vision 2040 and the national strategy for innovation so that the Sultanate of Oman emerges as a model destination among the 20 countries in the innovation index by 2040,” said the under-secretary during a press conference on Monday.

“The festival also witnesses the participation of the military authorities in the Sultanate of Oman. It is a meeting point of science and scientists, which will be held over a period of six days from October 10 to 15 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. It will also combine more than 32 scientific pillars with 436 activities,” he said. **DETAILS ON P4**



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Ties of warmth and goodwill based on mutual respect

SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS IN 1972, THE TWO COUNTRIES' STANDS HAVE BEEN IDENTICAL IN TACKLING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. THEY ENDORSED DIALOGUE AS A SUCCESSFUL MEANS OF ENSURING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY



LIKE THE SULTANATE OF OMAN, JORDAN ALWAYS HAS THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE AS A TOP PRIORITY, HIGHLIGHTING ITS ONGOING SUPPORT FOR THE STEADFASTNESS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE FACE OF ISRAELI VIOLATIONS

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkuttyvp

The distinguished historic relations between the two brotherly countries of the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have always been characterised by warmth and goodwill based on mutual respect.

The continuous meetings and contacts between leaders of both countries reflect the progressing relations between the two countries. These relations are set to witness new milestones in bilateral cooperation and coordination on issues of common concern during

Tuesday's discussions between His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1972, the two countries' stands have been identical in tackling regional and international issues. They endorsed dialogue as a successful means of ensuring international peace and security.

The first Omani embassy in Jordan was opened in 1975, but Omani students began studying in the Kingdom years earlier. Omani higher education institutions also host a number of educationists from Jordanian universities.

Jordan Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman Amjad al Qahwi pointed out the Oman-Jordan relations are not new today. Their foundations were laid on goodness, love and peace more than fifty years ago during the reign of late Sultan Qaboos and King Hussein bin Talal.

According to him, prosperity and strength have become today a model in the region in all fields, and the two countries supported each other in all the calamities and challenges.

"The Sultanate of Oman has supported Jordan in the face of all the challenges and entitlements it faced, and it has spared no

effort in supporting its causes and directions during the fifty years of close relations between them", he said in an interview.

On the other hand, Jordan stood by the Sultanate of Oman since the early days of the Renaissance and hastened to meet its needs for qualified human cadres. The common denominators between the two countries are great and are of high value.

The two leaders, during their discussions, are expected to exchange views and discuss bilateral ties and matters on enhancing joint Arab action on the Middle East peace process, besides touching on regional and

international developments.

Oman has underlined the fairness of the Palestinian cause and the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's demands for independence. It always stresses its support for efforts to secure peace in the Middle East and other areas of the world.

Like the Sultanate of Oman, Jordan always has the Palestinian cause as a top priority, highlighting its ongoing support for the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the face of Israeli violations.

In a recent speech, King Abdullah reaffirmed Jordan's firm position in support of the

Palestinians as they seek to gain their just and legitimate rights, stressing that the region will not enjoy security and stability without reaching a just and comprehensive solution that guarantees the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on June 4, 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The King emphasised the need for intensive efforts and continuous communication with various active international stakeholders to safeguard Palestinian lives and property, with a call for Arab cooperation and coordination on various levels and with the United States and European countries.

Economic relations on track of continuous growth

MUSCAT/AMMAN: Several Jordanian officials and businesspersons expressed their optimism about the upcoming official visit of King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman and his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq.

They said the visit would contribute to forming cooperation in various fields, especially in the private sector. They told reporters that trade and investment relations between the two countries is witnessing remarkable growth.

Yanal al Barmawi, spokesperson for the Jordanian Ministry of Industry and Trade said that the two countries' leaderships bolstered the relations between both countries. He underscored the importance of holding the meetings of the Omani-Jordanian Joint

Committee to sign new agreements that would augment the economic relations between the two sides.

On his turn, Nael al Kabariti, Chairman of Jordan Chamber of Commerce, described the trade and economic relations between Oman and Jordan as distinguished and that those relations are based on the interests of the two countries within the framework of joint Arab action.

Al Kabariti stressed the importance of boosting cooperation relations between the two countries, especially in the private sector, through coordination between chambers of commerce to organise visits of economic and commercial delegations from Oman to Jordan.

For his part, Eng Haitham al Rawajba, Jordanian businessman, said that the Omani market is an attractive one for foreign investment. He pointed out that



investors need a business milieu which encourages success, such as the one in Oman.

Al Rawajba said that Oman enjoys a strategic location,

political and economic stability, diversification of income sources, infrastructure, logistics, customs exemptions, international agreements, freedom of capital

and ownership ratio, taxes and more, which make it suitable for investment.

OMANI BUSINESSES UPBEAT
Several Omani officials and

business people confirmed that the official visit of King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to the Sultanate of Oman will open vistas of development for the private sector in the two countries in many economic fields.

The visit, they affirmed, boosts the possibility of striking commercial partnerships and investments, which contribute to raising the volume of trade exchange.

Shaikh Mansour bin Harith al Amri, Head of the Omani-Jordanian Parliamentary Friendship Group said that the visit will enhance prospects of cooperation in various fields. He added that meetings of the Omani-Jordanian Friendship Group are ongoing with the aim of enhancing the exchange of information and expertise in areas related to education, health and food security. — ONA



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Oman, Jordan to explore trade vistas, sign several MoUs

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The Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in the fields of trade, commerce, tourism, and higher education, among others, during the Royal visit starting on Tuesday, October 4, according to the Embassy of Jordan in the Sultanate of Oman.

“We are expecting to sign several understandings in various fields, including trade and commerce,” said Deputy Ambassador of Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman.

“Our trade relations with the country are strong and are developing from year to year, as it reached at the

end of 2021 to \$152 million, which makes it imperative for businessmen and the various economic sectors and companies in both the countries to take advantage of the opportunities in both countries,” he said.

“The balance of trade is in favour of Sultanate of Oman, and we need to improve the existing bilateral relations in the areas of medical, educational, logistics and special economic zones such as Duqm, which is an economic model in the region In light of the Oman Vision 2040,” the source added.

According to the statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the volume of trade exchange between Oman and Jordan increased 33.8 per cent in

2021 to RO 61.85mn, compared to RO 46.23mn in 2020.

Omani imports from Jordan in 2021 stood at RO 72.6million, compared to RO 24.6 million in 2020, comprising a 43.8 per cent increase. Omani imports from Jordan for the first six months of 2022 stand at RO 6.7 million.

The Sultanate of Oman imports from Jordan mostly vehicles, edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers, edible fruits, nuts, peel of citrus fruit, melons, pharmaceutical products, fertilisers, soaps, lubricants, waxes, candles, modelling pastes, miscellaneous manufactured articles, plastics, machinery, boilers, dairy products, eggs, honey, and other edible products.

Jordan’s major imports comprise

dairy products, eggs, honey, edible products, fertilisers, mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, plastics, miscellaneous edible preparations, stone, plaster, cement, asbestos, mica or similar materials, glass and glassware, cereal, flour, starch, milk preparations and products, and cotton.

NCSI statistics further suggest that the volume of Jordanian investments in the Sultanate of Oman stood at RO 230.4m by the end of 2021.

“We will mostly seek to strengthen our bilateral relations, besides the diplomatic arena, mutual investment opportunities in the economic and free zones scattered throughout the Kingdom, and in the information technology, educational, tourism and health sectors,” the source added.

Trade exchange at RO 211.3 m

NOAH AL MAAMARI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The volume of trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan registered RO 211.3 million over the past five years. Trade exchange between the two countries registered RO 61.8 million in 2021, with Jordanian exports to Oman recording an increase of RO 35.5 million while its imports from Oman amounted to RO 26.4 million including RO 22.6 million from non-oil products and RO 3.7 million from re-exportation.

Over the past five years, the volume of Omani exports to Jordan recorded RO 102.3 million with non-oil exports accounting for RO 80.6 million and re-export RO 14.6 million.

Marble, organic chemicals, fish and crustaceans are among the most important non-oil exports from Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman.

The total value of goods imported to Oman from Jordan registered RO 108.9 million over the past five year. They include fruits and vegetables, medicines, carpets, chemical fertilisers, stone products, cement, plastics, equipment and machinery.

Trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and Jordan is growing steadily as both countries are opening channels for investments and commercial projects. The volume of trade exchange has registered RO 22.3 million at the first half of 2022 with Oman’s imports from Jordan recording RO 15.5 million while its exports to Jordan amounted to RO 6.7 per cent.

The Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan have a keenness on boosting investments and economic cooperation not only between them but also with neighbouring countries. Over the past number of years, both countries sought to allocate vast areas within the industrial and commercial zones to foreign investments. As a result, fruits and vegetables were placed among the most important imports to the Sultanate of Oman. Likewise, Omani fish and marble products are considered the most important exports of the Sultanate of Oman to Jordan.

The number of Jordanian firms registered in the Sultanate of Oman by end-2021 was 621 firms including 271 commercial companies with a total investor capital of \$150.6 million. Service companies came second registering 129 companies with a total investor capital of \$121.9 million.

Oman and Jordan have much more to offer to tourists

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

While the Sultanate of Oman dominates the tourism landscape on the Arabian Sea and Sea of Oman with its unique mountain terrains, pristine beaches, and historical forts and castles, Jordan has similar dominance, led by the ancient and one of the old cities of the world, Petra, and the waters of the Dead Sea.

For any foreign visitor, the ancient Nabataean city of Petra is the first impression of Jordan.

Petra is half-built, half-carved into the rock, and is surrounded by mountains riddled with passages and gorges. It is one of the world’s most famous archaeological sites, where ancient Eastern traditions blend with Hellenistic architecture.

According to the local tourism authority of Petra, there has been increasing of 153 per cent in the number of tourists visiting Petra in August 2022, compared to the



The ancient city of Petra in Jordan

same period last year.

The statistics said that 56,182 tourists in Petra arrived during this period, of which 14,714 were Jordanian and Arab visitors.

In 2019, Petra witnessed the highest monthly number of visitors in the history of tourism to the site, recording 66,437 visitors of all nationalities in July.

Apart from Petra, Jordan offers other attractions, including taking

a bath in the waters of the Red Sea and horse riding.

According to historians, Jordan was founded by King Abdullah I after World War I. It was ruled by his grandson, the late King Hussein, for 46 years until his death in 1999, when his son King Abdullah II assumed the throne. Jordan today enjoys a remarkable measure of peace, stability, and economic growth.



Musandam popular tourist attractions of Oman.

The natural wonder of the Dead Sea is perfect for tourism and fun in the sun with the family. With its mix of beach living and religious history, you can soak up the sun while Biblical scholars can get their daily dose of religious history.

The leading attraction at the Dead Sea is the warm, soothing, super salty water itself – some ten times saltier than seawater and rich in chloride salts of magnesium,

sodium, potassium, bromine, and several others.

Among others, this summer street market in Jabal Amman is open on Fridays and includes stalls selling local wares, pop-up cafes, street food, and live performances from local bands and musicians.

Jordan Heritage Revival Company (JHRC) was established in 2010 with the objective of developing the tourism sector

in Jordan by creating authentic, engaging, and entertaining experiences to enrich the experience of tourists and to bring the ancient civilisations that once populated Jordanian soil to life.

JHRC was founded by King Abdullah II Fund for Development, in line with the Royal vision of reviving Jordanian history and empowering local communities and veterans through providing opportunities for active participation in development projects.

The Jordan Trail is a long-distance hiking trail in Jordan connecting the length of Jordan from Um Qais in the north to Aqaba in the south. Offering 40 days of hiking over more than 675 kilometres of trail and travelling through 75 villages and towns on its way.

With regular flights by Oman Air and Jordan Aviation, Amman, the capital of Jordan, has regularly been visited by citizens and residents of the Sultanate of Oman.



SQU produces Asian seabass, tomatoes using aquaponics system



MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) succeeded in farming and producing Asian seabass (barramundi) and cherry tomatoes through an aquaponics system.

Dr Wenresti Gallardo, Associate Professor at the Department of Marine Sciences and Fisheries in the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences, tested more expensive fish and plants in the aquaponics system in a greenhouse at the Agricultural Experiment Station (AES). The tests aimed to identify

suitable fish and plant species that can grow in an aquaponics system in Oman's climatic conditions.

Aquaponics is an environment-friendly way of growing both fish and plants in one system because water is recirculated and wastewater is not discharged to the environment. The wastewater is utilised for the growth of plants after the naturally occurring nitrifying bacteria have converted the ammonia to nitrite then to nitrate which serves as fertiliser for the plants. — ONA

Over 50s urged to take seasonal flu shot

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health announced the start of administering the seasonal flu vaccine for target segments. The target segments include people over the age of 50, people with chronic diseases such as respiratory, heart, renal, liver, neurological, blood, and metabolic disorders, including uncontrolled diabetes and obesity among adults and children, as well as pilgrims, workers in the health sector and pregnant women. The Ministry of Health calls on the target segments to head to the nearest health institution to receive



the seasonal flu vaccine to avoid influenza infection, which affects the respiratory system and may lead to serious complications.

The Ministry pointed out that the vaccine is also available in the private health sector for non-targeted citizens and residents. — ONA



Oman Science Festival from October 10-15, with 70 corners and wide array of activities

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The third edition of Oman Science Festival will take place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) from October 10 to 15 under the theme titled 'With science we meet again'.

More than 100 government, private and civil institutions will participate in the august event, which is happening after a gap of two years due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education and Chairman of the Main Committee of the festival, said the event aims to create scientific temperament among students of different age groups and encourage them to think in right direction when it comes to learning of science.

"It is a mirror that reflects the ambitions of the Oman Vision 2040 and the national strategy for innovation so that the Sultanate of Oman emerges as a model destination among the 20 countries in the innovation index

It is a mirror that reflects the ambitions of the Oman Vision 2040 and the national strategy for innovation so that the Sultanate of Oman emerges as a model destination among the 20 countries in the innovation index by 2040

DR ABDULLAH BIN KHAMIS AMBUSAIIDI
Education Under-Secretary

by 2040," said the Education Under-Secretary during a press conference on Monday.

"The festival also witnesses the participation of the military authorities in the Sultanate of Oman. It is a meeting point of science and scientists, which will be held over a period of six days from October 10 to 15 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. It will also combine more than 32 scientific pillars with 436 activities," he said.

Dr Mai bint Said al Azriyah, Head of the Scientific Committee of the Festival, gave a presentation on the vision, goals, activities and pillars of the festival.

"This year's festival will be distinct from others in terms of space, number of events, participating institutions, national and international delegations. Institutions and individuals are eager to attend events and the third edition of the science festival will see participation from various institutions, including educational, military and private sector," she said.

The festival's discussion sessions will include 12 international and seven national speakers. It will have 70 corners and many activities in order to demonstrate science in an innovative way.

"Seven scholars and experts

from reputable international institutions will participate in the festival with their experiences and various workshops, and the festival will witness 436 events suitable for specific age groups divided into 6 days," said Dr Sulaiman bin Abdullah al Jamudi, General Director of the General Directorate of Educational Supervision. He is also head of Media Committee of the festival.

The festival is targeting school students, students of higher education institutions, educators, parents, government, private and military institutions, civil society institutions, scientists, researchers, specialists and academics, and those interested in science, from different countries.

In addition, in order to give chance to students from other governorates that are far from Muscat, transportation will be arranged to bring them to the festival.

It will also include events including scientific exhibitions, interactive scientific workshops, lectures & scientific dialogues, scientific competitions, and scientific theatre.

Oman-India people-to-people bond getting stronger

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India's Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan is currently on a two-day official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. In an interview with Oman Observer he expressed happiness over his visit to the country, which is not only beautiful but also people here are kind. The bond between the country and its people is historical.

"This is my second visit to the Sultanate of Oman. I last visited in December 2020 in the middle of the global pandemic. It is a pleasure to see the country being fully vast yet fully organised. Credit goes to the excellent leadership and management of the Government and the resilience of the Omani people in having successfully put the pandemic behind," he said.

The minister's visit witnessed an agreement between Oman News Agency (ONA) and Indian news agency ANI, to which the minister said, "This agreement will definitely help in the free flow of information and news between the two countries. Both countries have historical relationship,

but sometimes we feel that real happenings are not reported. The positive side of the news should be uncoloured and unbiased, so these two agencies taking up this cause will help in understanding the other country. This will help people understand each other and enhance people to people ties."

He added that India and the Sultanate of Oman share a friendship that can only be called 'special'. Our relationship is rooted in centuries-old historical links and based on mutual trust and respect.

On Monday morning, the minister officially unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, in the Indian Embassy premises. Sculptor Naresh Kumawat is the man behind the statue. The minister also inaugurated the painting exhibition by the Indian artist Sedunath Prabakaran on 'India and Oman, a Political Journey' and the newly designed Library of the Embassy. The paintings depict the important State visits between the leaders of both countries.

India considers the Sultanate of Oman as its key West-Asia partner and according to the



minister, strong people-to-people connections form the cornerstone of India-Oman relations.

"Oman is India's oldest strategic partner in the region and today our relationship straddles a multitude of areas to our peoples' collective benefit," he said.

Economic and commercial relations between India and Oman have been robust, and both countries accord high priority to further strengthening this relationship.

The Indian minister said that the bilateral trade between India

and Oman has shown strong growth, touching almost \$10 billion in 2021-2022, a jump of almost 90 per cent from 2020-2021.

"There are over 6,000 India-Oman joint ventures in Oman with an estimated investment of over

\$7.5 billion. Indian companies have emerged as leading investors in Oman, particularly in Free Zones in Suhar, Salalah and Duqm, generating value for local industry, creating local jobs and contributing meaningfully to the strengthening of the economy of Oman."

"India and Oman also align closely when it comes to deployment of new & renewable energy. Oman's push to position itself as a leading hub of green hydrogen and green ammonia intertwines with India's National Green Hydrogen Mission. Indian companies are already active in Oman in this area and the potential to scale up this cooperation is huge."

He further explained, "As Oman seeks to realise the Oman Vision 2040, Government of Oman can count on India to be a trusted partner in all priority areas. There are significant opportunities for enhancing our cooperation in several sectors including renewable energy, defence, maritime security, minerals and mining, manufacturing, space and logistics."



Guidelines for pet owners

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The Muscat Municipality has issued a set of guidelines for pet owners on how to take their pets in public places, as there have been concerns over their presence at some places frequented by people without pets.

The set of guidelines have been issued due to inconvenience for the public place visitors, mostly families, athletes and those who come for fresh air outdoors.

It is difficult to clean the areas where the pets drop waste on pathways, green grass or sand. In some cases, some of the pets are un-vaccinated and could carry harmful germs that transmit pathogens to children or adults when exposed to them.

Accordingly, the Civic Authority decided to implement local order No 1/2011 that specifies the need for the animal owners or escorts to take necessary precautions to prevent the

disposal of animal waste from their waste in these places.

Article No 2 of the order makes it clear that pet owners are obliged to remove the animal droplets while roaming in public places, besides taking the necessary precautions to prevent the animals from disposal of their waste in these places.

The Article no 3 indicated that pets taken to public places must wear a collar, and must be licensed by the competent veterinary authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Muscat Municipality will carry out field inspections and awareness campaigns to monitor all activities in accordance with the requirements stipulated by law.

The civic body also called on all citizens and residents to report any observations by calling the Muscat Call Centre (1111) or through the municipality's platforms on social media.



OMAN, IRAN MILITARY COMMITTEE MEETS



MUSCAT: The Omani-Iranian Military Friendship Joint Committee held its 17th annual meeting here on Monday. The Omani side in the three-day meeting is headed by Brigadier Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Manthari, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) for Operations and Planning, and the Head of the Omani side in the joint committee, while the Iranian side was headed by Brigadier Mohammed Ahadi, Head of the Iranian delegation. The meeting touched on several matters on the agenda which aim to enhance cooperation in military fields and boost the committee's activities. – ONA

Intl maths event in Suhar from today

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Renowned mathematicians from ten countries with a high scientific caliber are gathering in a two-day international event 'Constitute a Network of Women Mathematicians in South Asian and Middle Eastern Region' on October 4 and 5 in Suhar.

The University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Suhar is hosting the event in association with Community of Women in Mathematics, International Mathematical Union.

The event follows the winning of the university faculty member the CWM-2022 (International Mathematics Union) funding call by Dr Deepti Thakur (pictured), Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the UTAS, Suhar.

The first day event will a hybrid event, while the second day will continue in virtual mode.

The aim of this hybrid event is to provide an opportunity to constitute a network of women mathematicians in the South Asian



and Middle Eastern regions to collaborate in their future research work and career opportunities available in Mathematics.

Renowned mathematicians from ten countries with a high scientific caliber are participating in this prestigious event. Six countries CWM ambassadors, Dr Neena Gupta Ramanujan prize winner (2021) and Dr Magda Talib al Hina, Chair of Oman Mathematics Committee are part of this initiative.

The result of CWM-IMU 2022 annual funding call was declared

and is now available in the IMU website. In 2022, CWM received 31 applications worldwide of which CWM decided to support 10 projects.

The project proposal submitted by Dr Deepti to CWM 2022 Funding was accepted unanimously by CWM-IMU. This is the first time that any faculty from the Universities of Oman received funding from CWM-an International Mathematical Union entity.

The project that was proposed by Dr Deepti is to Constitute a Network of Women Mathematicians in South Asian and Middle Eastern Region.

"I felt inspired, motivated, satisfied and looking forward to explore further in the field of Mathematics," Dr Deepti said.

The CWM is the committee of the International Mathematical Union whose main objectives are to propose, encourage and facilitate activities of the IMU or other bodies, which would tend to increase the visibility of women in mathematics and lead to an

increase in their representation in the community at all levels and in all parts of the world.

When asked about the status of women in Mathematics, she said, "Women are doing well in mathematics, Maryam Mirzakhani, a field medalist and most recently, Dr Neena Gupta was awarded Ramanujan prize in Mathematics and Maryna Viazovska, who works on the geometry of spheres, is one of the four winners of the prestigious fields medal this year. There is a good percentage of female students in higher education institutions in the Sultanate of Oman," she noted.

CWM promotes international contacts between national and regional organisations for women in mathematics, facilitating the building of networks at the regional or continental level. It also provides a website which is a repository of information for and about women in mathematics worldwide and to enable efficient communication among the international community of women mathematicians.

No transmission of Aids in children through mothers in 3 years

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The Sultanate of Oman has not recorded, for more than three years, the transmission of Aids to children through their mothers. This was revealed at a special event in Al Bustan Palace Hotel.

Speaking to the Observer, Dr Badr bin Saif al Rawahi, director General of Disease Control at the Ministry of Health, said, "This achievement was a result of an integrated and continuous work for years and is considered the first at the level of the Eastern Mediterranean Region."

Meanwhile, Saif al Abri of the MoH said the efficiency of the Omani health sector was achieved as a result of institutional and individual work.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director General, in a recorded statement, praised the Sultanate of Oman for becoming the first WHO-EMR to be validated for EMTC of HIV and syphilis.

"By this, Oman is considered the 16th

country to eliminate vertical transmission of HIV and syphilis. The work doesn't stop there, maintaining the status will require sustaining broad efforts to prevent new HIV and syphilis infections throughout the entire population."

He further stated that Oman could build on the success to work on the EMTC of the hepatitis virus."

The international recognition certificate for the eradication of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV and syphilis in the Sultanate of Oman was handed over to Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health.

The certificate was handed over by Dr Ahmed bin Salem al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Speaking to the Observer, Al Sabti said, "This is a proud moment, and with the cooperation of all our employees, we will continue to move forward." Al Mandhari said, "This significant achievement is evidence of Oman's commitment to implement data-driven public health interventions and to

ensure that all women living with HIV and their children have access to services, without any discrimination." He said that the Sultanate of Oman is the 16th country to achieve this goal and the first in the region.

"Most importantly, we now have new generations that are born without the stigma of having been infected with HIV. With this elimination of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) including HIV by 2030 is possible. The Sultanate of Oman has to be praised for its commitment to WHO suggestions." Health expert Dr Shereen al Feki, UNAIDS regional director, said that Oman achieved this cooperation with the private sector."

Oman has been making steady progress in preparing the groundwork for the successful implementation of PMTCT since 1990, when screening for syphilis became part of antenatal care. HIV testing was added to ANC screening in 2009, and over the past three decades, these tests have become an integral part of a comprehensive package of care for all pregnant women in both the public and private sectors.

Announcement for Sales of Various Scrap Materials

A Real Estate Development Company in the Sultanate of Oman would like to invite all specialized companies in the field of scrap procurement to send their Expression of Interest by email, together with the company and contact details by Monday, 10th October 2022 at info@gbc.om. Consequently, details of items to be scrapped will be shared. The site visit for the visual inspection is set to be scheduled for the 17th & 18th of October 2022. The materials are located at our facility in Al Sawadi Village – Barka, Oman.

Scrap items will be sold on an 'As is where is' basis and it consists of building scraps, tools, accessories, used equipment, used furniture, sockets, rods, cables, etc. The bid submission and award process will be shared with the parties coming for the visual inspection at the site.



Yemen truce expires as UN keeps pushing for broader agreement

ADEN: Yemen's warring parties failed to renew a UN-brokered truce deal that expired on Sunday, dashing the hopes of some Yemenis for a broader pact that would ease economic woes and prolong relative calm after more than seven years of fighting. United Nations special envoy Hans Grundberg said late on Sunday he would continue to push for an extended and expanded deal between a coalition and the Ansar Allah group, both under intense international pressure to come to an agreement.

"It is a sad day for the Yemeni people," said Abdullah Ali, a 58-year-old teacher in the capital Sanaa, where people rushed to stock up on fuel and food on Sunday evening.

"We hoped to start receiving our salaries and to move towards a ceasefire. We are shocked," Ali said by phone.

Grundberg's proposal is for a six-month truce extension, a mechanism to pay civil service wages, and greater movement of goods and people in the country where 80 per cent of the population of some 30 million rely on aid.

The initial two-month truce was agreed in April and renewed twice despite grievances by both sides over its implementation. It allowed some fuel ships into Hodeidah port and some commercial flights from Sanaa, both held by Ansar Allah.

"I will continue my relentless



A Yemeni soldier from the Yemeni Coast Guard stands guard during an awareness campaign to educate local fishermen on dealing with mines and foreign objects in the water in the Al Khokha area of Al Hodeidah Governorate.— AFP

The UN proposal is for a six-month truce extension, a mechanism to pay civil service wages, and greater movement of goods

efforts to engage with the parties to quickly reach an agreement on a way forward," the envoy said in a statement, urging the parties to maintain calm.

His proposal included paying civil servants' salaries, opening routes into the blockaded city of Taez, expanding commercial flights from the fighter-held capital Sanaa and allowing more fuel ships into the port of Hodeida,

also controlled by the Ansar Allah. It also contained commitments to release detainees, resume an "inclusive" political process and tackle economic issues including public services.

But the northern-based Ansar Allah, who seized the capital Sanaa in 2014 and control large swathes of the Arabian peninsula's poorest country, said the proposal "does not live up to the demands

of the Yemeni people and does not establish the peace process".

"The Yemeni people will not be deceived by false promises," the Supreme Political Council said, demanding revenues from Yemen's oil and gas resources, according to the Ansar Allah, Yemen News Agency.

The conflict has killed tens of thousands, devastated the economy and left millions hungry.

The parties on Sunday accused each other of hampering peace efforts. The government blamed the Ansar Allah, de facto authorities in the north, for refusing the deal. — Reuters

Tunisian labour union warns of strikes as IMF talks loom

TUNIS: Tunisia's powerful UGTT labour union has no deal with the government on reforming subsidies and publicly owned companies and will lead street protests over any "painful" changes, it said on Monday, potentially complicating foreign bailout talks.

The government is in talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a rescue package that could unlock further bilateral aid for Tunisia to help it avert a looming crisis in public finances.

The IMF wants the UGTT on board with economic reforms needed to secure the deal, but so far the union has only struck a formal agreement with the government on public sector wage increases, but not on subsidies or state companies.

"When there are painful choices, we will be with our people in the front lines of the struggle and in the streets," UGTT leader Nouredine Taboubi said in a speech.

He confirmed the recent wages deal did not cover any agreement on subsidies or restructuring state companies - the two other main areas of fiscal consolidation sought by lenders.

Tunisia's central bank governor and its finance and economy ministers are scheduled



Nouredine Taboubi, UGTT leader

to meet the IMF in Washington next week for talks on a loan programme that the government hopes to secure this month.

Price increases and food shortages have already spurred some protests in recent weeks against the government, coming after years of low growth and perceived declines in public services that have infuriated many Tunisians.

The UGTT, which says it has more than a million members and has carried out major strikes, has consistently opposed big state spending cuts in recent years, arguing the government should instead tackle corruption and tax evasion.

Tunisia is meanwhile also dealing with political turmoil as major parties reject President Kais Saied's introduction of a new constitution, approved in July in a referendum with low turnout, that expands his own powers. — Reuters

PINK DAY FOR HEALTH AWARENESS



Palestinians participate in pink day organised by the Gazan Ministry of Health to raise public awareness about the impact of breast cancer in Gaza City. — AFP

Police chief fired, officers suspended

JAKARTA: An Indonesian police chief has been fired and nine other officers suspended after a weekend stampede at a football stadium that left 125 people dead, in one of the world's worst sports disasters.

The police chief of Malang city, Ferli Hidayat, has been replaced as part of an investigation into the tragedy on Saturday at the Kanjuruhan Stadium, national police spokesman Dedi Prasetyo said on Monday.

Chaos erupted after thousands of fans invaded the pitch as hosts Arema FC lost 3-2 to rival East Java club Persebaya Surabaya. Police fired tear gas to try to quell the pitch invaders, sending spectators scrambling to exit gates.

At least 28 officers are also



Football supporters praying for victims of a stampede during a candlelight vigil in Jakarta. — AFP

being investigated for suspected ethical violations in connection with the incident, Prasetyo said.

"We are working fast, but with

prudence," Prasetyo told a news conference. The announcement came after the government formed a joint independent

32 children died in Indonesia stadium disaster

fact-finding team consisting of government officials, football association officials, experts, academics and journalists.

"The team is expected to finish its work in two or three weeks,"political, legal and security affairs minister Mohammad Mahfud said after a meeting of senior ministers and security officials to discuss the tragedy.

He said the government had also ordered the national police to investigate people deemed responsible for the incident "in the next few days" and evaluate security measures. — dpa

SHORT TAKES

TEHRAN

Iran says nuclear deal still possible

It is still possible to revive Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, the foreign ministry said despite long-stalled talks over the 2015 accord. "There is still a possibility and a chance to resume the implementation of the nuclear deal," ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said.

"Efforts are underway with the European coordinator and other mediators, including the foreign ministries of neighbouring countries to reach an agreement," he added. Kanani's remarks



come amid on-off talks that have been underway since April 2021 to revive the deal that gave Iran much-needed sanctions relief in return for curbs on its nuclear programme. — AFP

JODHPUR

India unveils high-altitude helicopters

India unveiled its first batch of locally-made attack helicopters, designed primarily for use in high-altitude areas like the Himalayas where its troops clashed with China in 2020.

The Light Combat Helicopters are seen as another milestone in Indian efforts to reduce dependence on Russia, its main source of arms, and other suppliers. The choppers made by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) "will be a big boost to the Indian Air Force's combat



pro prowess", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at Jodhpur air base. "It is a matter of great pride, and a result of decades of diligent research and development," Singh said. — AFP

MANILA

Philippines and US kick off naval exercises

The armed forces of the United States and Philippines launched two weeks of joint naval exercises on Monday, reinforcing a close military alliance at a time of regional uncertainty over tensions between Washington and Beijing.

KAMANDAG, an acronym in Filipino for "Cooperation of the warriors of the sea", runs until October 14, will involve 2,550 American and 530 Filipino troops and include island-based exercises in



amphibious landings, live fire and humanitarian assistance.

US allies Japan and South Korea are joining the exercises as observers.

— Reuters



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In brief

■ BIRMINGHAM



TORY GOVT IN MAJOR U-TURN OVER TAX CUT FOR WEALTHY

Britain's under-fire Conservative government announced a dramatic U-turn on a controversial tax cut for high-earners, part of a debt-driven economic package that has bombed with the markets, electorate and much of the ruling party. The abrupt reversal by Prime Minister Liz Truss and Finance Minister Kwasi Kwarteng raised questions about their right-wing policy agenda less than a month after taking power and a day after both vowed to stay the course. "We get it, and we have listened," the pair tweeted almost simultaneously, as they revealed the 45 per cent top rate of income tax would remain. — **AFP**

■ DAR ES SALAAM



TANZANIA'S PRESIDENT ISSUES WARNING TO HER RIVALS

Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan cautioned critics inside her government against overstepping their authority, after shuffling her cabinet again and unexpectedly firing a respected foreign minister. Hassan, who has battled division within the ruling party since taking office, sounded the warning while swearing in three ministers after a surprise shake-up to her cabinet late on Sunday. "Once we agree on something, you are part of it. You can't go out and claim that the decision was just a directive, not your will," said Hassan, who became president after the death of John Magufuli in March 2021. — **AFP**

■ LOME



OUSTED BURKINA FASO LEADER IN TOGO AFTER COUP

Togo's government confirmed that ousted Burkina Faso leader Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba had fled to Togo after a military coup. West African bloc ECOWAS plans to send envoys to Burkina Faso after troops toppled Damiba in the country's second putsch in nine months. Togo's Minister of Communication and government spokesman Akodah Ayewouadan said Damiba was in Togo as part of the country's commitment to "peace in the sub-region." "Togo, like ECOWAS, welcomes the fact that the spirit of peace has prevailed," the official said in a response to questions. — **AFP**

Ukrainian military forces burst through Russian lines in major advance in south

KYIV: Ukrainian forces achieved their biggest breakthrough in the south of the country since the war began, bursting through the front and advancing rapidly along the Dnipro River on Monday, threatening supply lines for thousands of Russian troops.

Kyiv gave no official confirmation of the gains, but Russian sources acknowledged that a Ukrainian tank offensive had advanced dozens of kilometers along the river's west bank, recapturing a number of villages along the way.

The breakthrough mirrors recent Ukrainian successes in the east that have turned the tide in the war against Russia, even as Moscow has tried to raise the stakes by annexing territory, ordering mobilisation and threatening nuclear retaliation.

"The information is tense, let's put it that way, because, yes there were indeed breakthroughs," Vladimir Saldo, the Russian-installed leader in occupied parts of Ukraine's Kherson province told Russian state television.

"There's a settlement called Dudchany, right along the Dnipro River, and right there, in that region, there was a breakthrough. There are settlements that are occupied by Ukrainian forces," he said.

Dudchany is around 30 km south of where the front stood before the breakthrough,



A Ukrainian serviceman sits atop a BMP infantry fighting vehicle in Kramatorsk, eastern Ukraine, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine — **AFP**

indicating the fastest advance of the war so far in the south, where Russian forces had been dug into heavily reinforced positions along a mainly static front line since the early weeks of the invasion.

While Kyiv maintained almost complete silence, as it has in the past during major offensives, some officials did describe what they referred to as unconfirmed reports of big gains.

Anton Gerashchenko, an adviser to Ukraine's interior ministry, posted a photo of

Ukrainian soldiers posing with their flag draping a golden statue of an angel. He said it was the village of Mikhailivka, around 20 km beyond the previous front.

By Monday afternoon, Ukraine's defence ministry had confirmed only the recapture of Myrolyubivka, a village close to the previous front line.

Serhiy Khlán, a Kherson regional council member, also listed Osokorivka, Mykhailivka, Khreschenivka and Zoloto Balka as villages recaptured or

where Ukrainian troops had been photographed. "It means that our armed forces are moving powerfully along the banks of the Dnipro nearer to Beryslav," he said.

"Officially, there is no such information yet, but the (Russian) social media pages which are panicking... absolutely confirm these photos." The advance in the south mirrors the tactics that have brought Kyiv major gains since the start of September in eastern Ukraine, where its forces

Russian military bloggers say troops fall back dozens of km as Ukraine buoyed by weekend capture of Lyman in east

swiftly seized territory to gain control of Russian supply lines, cutting off larger Russian forces and forcing them to retreat.

Just hours after a concert on Moscow's Red Square on Friday where Russian President Vladimir Putin proclaimed the provinces of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia to be Russian territory forever, Ukraine recaptured Lyman, the main Russian bastion in the north of Donetsk province.

That has opened the way for it to advance deep into Luhansk province, threatening the main supply routes to territory Moscow captured in some of the war's bloodiest battles in June and July.

In the south, Ukraine's advance targets supply lines for thousands of Russian troops - perhaps as many as 25,000 - on the west bank of the Dnipro. Ukraine has already destroyed the main bridges, forcing Russian forces to use makeshift crossings. A substantial advance down river could cut them off entirely. — **Reuters**

Sweden's Paabo wins 2022 Nobel Prize in medicine

STOCKHOLM: Swedish paleogeneticist Svante Paabo, who sequenced the genome of the Neanderthal and discovered the previously unknown hominin Denisova, on Monday won the Nobel Medicine Prize.

Paabo's research gave rise to an entirely new scientific discipline called paleogenomics, and has "generated new understanding of our evolutionary history", the Nobel committee said.

"By revealing genetic differences that distinguish all living humans from extinct hominins, his discoveries provide the basis for exploring what makes us uniquely human," it said in a statement.

Paabo — the founder and director of the department of genetics at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig — found that gene transfer had occurred from these now extinct hominins to Homo sapiens following the migration out of Africa around 70,000 years ago.

"This ancient flow of genes to present-day humans has physiological relevance today, for example affecting how our immune system reacts to infections," the jury said.

One such example is that Covid-19 patients with a snippet of Neanderthal DNA run a higher risk of severe complications from the disease, Paabo found in a 2020 study.

Paabo told prize organisers on Monday that he was "gulping down his last cup of tea" before



Swedish geneticist Svante Paabo wins the 2022 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine attends a news conference at the Max-Planck Institute for evolutionary anthropology in Leipzig. — **Reuters**

Paabo is one of only a handful of Nobel science laureates to win the prize alone

picking up his young daughter when the committee called him on Monday to tell him his research was being honoured.

He was surprised, he said. "I somehow did not think that this would really qualify for a Nobel Prize".

Paabo, 67, takes home the award sum of \$901,500. He is one of only a handful of Nobel science laureates to win the prize alone. Major scientific discoveries are usually awarded to two or three people to reflect large team collaborations.

Paabo is the son of Sune Bergstrom, a Swede who won the 1982 Nobel Medicine Prize

for discovering prostaglandins — biochemical compounds that influence blood pressure, body temperature, allergic reactions and other physiological phenomena. In his 2014 memoir "Neanderthal Man: In Search of Lost Genomes", Paabo wrote that he was conceived as a result of a secret extra-marital affair.

He later told The Guardian outlet that Bergstrom's "official" family knew nothing of his or his mother's existence, the Estonian chemist Karin Paabo, until after Bergstrom's death in 2005.

Paabo also wrote in his memoir that he "had always thought of myself as gay" until he met the woman who would become his wife, primatologist Linda Vigilant, who also works at the Max Planck Institute.

Homo sapiens are known to have first appeared in Africa around 300,000 years ago. — **AFP**



Libyan Foreign Minister Najla al Mangoush and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu attend a press conference in Tripoli. — **AFP**

Turkey, Libya sign maritime hydrocarbons agreement

TRIPOLI: Turkey's foreign minister signed a deal in Libya's capital on Monday allowing for oil and gas exploration in Libya's Mediterranean waters, three years after a maritime border deal that angered European nations.

"We've signed a memorandum of understanding on exploration for hydrocarbons in Libya's territorial waters and on Libyan soil, by mixed Turkish-Libyan companies," Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a press conference in Tripoli.

The deal follows an agreement Turkey signed with authorities in Tripoli in 2019, which demarcated the countries' shared maritime borders but sparked anger in Greece and Cyprus.

Cavusoglu however stressed on Monday that the new accord was between "two sovereign countries — it's win-win for both, and other countries have no right to interfere". Najla al Mangoush, Foreign Minister in Libya's Government of National Unity, said the new deal was

"important", especially in light of "the Ukrainian crisis and its repercussions" for energy markets.

The deal was rejected by a rival administration in the war-torn country's east. Turkey had signed a controversial security agreement in November 2019 with Libya's UN-recognised government at the time, laying claim to extensive, potentially gas-rich areas of the Mediterranean.

The deal came at the height of a year-long battle between rival governments vying for control of Libya's capital.

The arrival of Turkish drones shortly afterwards was seen as crucial in the victory of Tripoli-based forces against those of eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar.

Turkey continues to play a major role in Libya's west, where rival governments are again struggling for control two years after the end of the last major conflict. — **AFP**

Choose your health on social media wisely



Dr Nisma Haris

The writer is a general physician and content creator

Not unconventional these days when anyone is afflicted with an illness before everything else one makes his research on the web or social media to get the basic information about the disease. Thankfully we do have uncountable resources available on social media when it comes to healthcare. From doctors, nurses, dieticians, nutritionists, and pharmacists to care providers we have plenty of healthcare professionals who are providing interesting and useful information about health and well-being across various social media platforms. Social media has completely transformed the health sector. Getting an important piece of

advice regarding any particular drug from your doctor has just been a click away from the comfort of your home. You are a frequent traveller; you can be in touch with your physician through social media without getting into the hassle of making appointments at new places; thus, saving time and energy. There are social media posts, blogs, pages, as well as video content covering the most frequently queried health topics clarifying the doubts as well as elaborating on what a common man needs to know. No doubt people are being able to enrich their knowledge concerning health through the efforts of various healthcare platforms on social

WITH THE COMPREHENSIVE AND VALUABLE CONTENT, IT IS EASIER TO REPLICATE THIS KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE AND TRANSFORMING LIFESTYLES HAS CERTAINLY COME A LONG WAY

media. With the comprehensive and valuable content, it's easier to replicate this knowledge in everyday life hence transforming lifestyles has certainly come a long way. But the elephant in the room is the 'credibility and authenticity of the source of information. Apart from registered healthcare

professionals and institutes, there is overflowing misinformation too which can be misleading and detrimental to health. No smoothie or potion can shrink or boost you overnight as claimed prevalent in the social media world. One should be following trusted sources only when it comes to health. Moreover, when the situation is grave it is imperative that one makes a walk-in appointment with a healthcare professional rather than relying on social media alone. Besides, parents and guardians particularly must be watchful of what their teens are watching or following on social media trends regarding their health choices. Teens are quick to get influenced by any charming or instant ways to

get into a particular shape or follow a certain diet without consulting their doc or guardian. Now and then we get to know of the cases when kids fall into the trap of following any misleading health or dietary advice. Likewise, people panic themselves by simulating their symptoms with others and when they discover some deadly self-diagnosis of their own on social media, they are doomed. However, discussing with your healthcare provider had been a saviour to your unnecessary worries. One should be wise enough about who and what to follow across social media pertaining to health and lifestyle as rightfully investing in your health brings splendid returns!

‘Surreal’: Greek university police makes dud debut

VASSILIS KYRIAKOULIS AND JOHN HADOULIS

Over a year after it was conceived as a ground-breaking response to Greece’s notoriously unruly universities, a special campus police force has officially deployed -- to underwhelming results. The squad of 1,000 officers deployed in September to four out of Greece’s more than 20 university campuses. In Athens and second city Thessaloniki, all were chosen for having the highest instances of trading and petty crime. “We haven’t seen them,” deadpanned one professor at Athens Polytechnic. Armed only with batons, the freshly trained university protection squads (OPPI) have been deployed sparingly -- and under the protection of seasoned riot police -- following protests from outraged student groups. “The campus police turned up once, there was uproar and they pulled back,” said Sabina Kurrizi, a history student at Thessaloniki’s Aristotelio University, also part of the initiative. “Riot police are protecting the OPPI, who are supposed to be protecting us. It’s absurd,” she added. Greek universities are chronically underfunded and notoriously disrupted by strikes, sit-ins and violence against students and staff. Based on the most recent figures, Greece spent just under \$4,100 per student in tertiary education in 2015, according to the Organisation for the Economic Co-operation and Development, compared to an OECD average of more than \$15,600. “Having a police squad guarding another police squad is surreal,” says Theodoros Tsairidis, the head of the Thessaloniki police officers union. “Must be a world first,” he quipped as inadequate state spending on education is a long-running concern in Greece. In 2009, the year before the Greek economic crisis, the education ministry’s annual budget was more than \$6.9 billion. This year, it’s less than five billion. In 2020, the rector of Athens University of Economics and Business was assaulted in his office by a group of hooded youths, who put a sign around his neck that read “Solidarity to sit-ins”. Upon coming to power in 2019, the conservative government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis made law and order a top priority. “Our government is determined to make the sense of safety in (universities) a reality,” Citizen’s Protection Minister Takis Theodorikakos said this week after the police raided Athens Polytechnic in an anti-gang crackdown. More than 30 people were arrested in the swoop in connection with three gangs who turned part of a dilapidated student dormitory into a hideout, police said. — AFP

Brazil girds for tense runoff vote after Bolsonaro’s strong showing



Jack Nicas

The writer is Brazil Bureau Chief for NYT

For months, pollsters and analysts had said that President Jair Bolsonaro was doomed. He faced a wide and unwavering deficit in Brazil’s high-stakes presidential race, and in recent weeks, the polls had suggested he could even lose in the first round, ending his presidency after just one term. Instead, it was Bolsonaro who was celebrating. While the challenger, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a former leftist president, finished the night ahead, Bolsonaro far outperformed forecasts and sent the race to a runoff. Da Silva received 48.4 per cent of the votes, and Bolsonaro 43.23 per cent, with 99.87 per cent of the ballots counted, according to Brazil’s elections agency. Da Silva needed to exceed 50 per cent to be elected president in the first round. They will face off October 30 in what is widely regarded as the most important vote in decades for Latin America’s largest nation. That is partly because of the starkly different visions the two men set forth for this country of 217 million people, and partly because Brazil faces a host of challenges, including environmental threats, rising hunger, a sputtering economy and a deeply polarized population. But the election will also be widely watched in Brazil and abroad because it is seen as a major test for one of the world’s largest democracies. For months, Bolsonaro has criticised the nation’s electronic voting machines as rife with fraud — without any evidence — and has suggested that the only way he would lose is if the election is rigged. Bolsonaro told reporters late Sunday that he “overcame the lies” in the polls and that he felt he now had an advantage in the second round. Even with the positive results, he also suggested there could have been fraud, saying he would wait for the military to check the results. “Our system is not 100% ironclad,” he said. “There’s always the possibility of something abnormal happening in a fully computerised system.” Bolsonaro had claimed for months that the polls were underestimating



Supporters of Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro gather outside his home, in Rio de Janeiro. – Reuters

BOLSONARO AND LULA WILL FACE OFF OCTOBER 30 IN WHAT IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT VOTE IN DECADES FOR LATIN AMERICA’S LARGEST NATION

his support, using his enormous rallies as evidence. Yet, virtually every poll showed him behind. On Sunday, it was clear that he was right. He performed better in all of Brazil’s 27 states than what Ipec, one of Brazil’s biggest polling firms, had predicted a day before the election, exceeding the projections by at least 8 percentage points in 10 states. Pollsters appeared to misjudge the strength of conservative candidates across the country. Governors and lawmakers supported by Bolsonaro also outperformed polls, winning many of their races Sunday. Cláudio Castro, the right-wing governor of Rio de Janeiro state, was

reelected in a landslide, with 58 per cent of votes, 11 percentage points more than Ipec’s projection. At least seven of Bolsonaro’s former ministers were also elected to Congress, including his former environment minister, who oversaw skyrocketing deforestation in the Amazon, and his former health minister, who was widely criticised for Brazil’s delay in buying vaccines during the pandemic. Outside Bolsonaro’s home in a rich, beachside neighbourhood in Rio de Janeiro, his supporters gathered to celebrate, dancing and drinking out of plastic cups of beer. Many were wearing the bright-yellow jerseys of Brazil’s national soccer team, which has become a sort of uniform for many of Bolsonaro’s supporters. “We expected he would have an advantage of 70 per cent” of the votes, said Silvana Maria Lenzir, 65, a retiree with stickers of Bolsonaro’s face covering her chest. “Polls do not reflect reality.” Still, over the next four weeks, Bolsonaro will have to make up ground on da Silva, who held the top spot on Sunday. The right-wing president is trying to avoid becoming the first incumbent to lose his reelection bid since the start of Brazil’s modern democracy in 1988. — *New York Times*

What is your message?

‘My Life My Message’: Mahatma Gandhi — is engraved on the metal plate at the foot of the statue of Gandhi that was unveiled at the Indian Embassy premises on October 3, 2022 by V Muraleedharan, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs.

The sculpture has all the details and is in rich brown colour - interestingly it is made out of bronze.

The 7-feet statue is the work of Naresh Kumawat, sculpture artist who designed and sculpted this statue — the work of which took three to four months to complete.

Looked at the feet and they were adorned with the same type of sandals that have been seen in thousands of pictures. Took me back to a photo frame I used to look at as a child. The picture was of Gandhiji and it had already gained a bluish tinge.

He was holding the walking stick and wearing similar sandals. He was walking and I did not know about ‘Dandi March’ then.

However I grew up knowing that he was a doer and was someone who stood for values.

There were no special walking shoes or protective ones to prevent blisters. The sandals must have served the purpose and probably was hand made.

The peaceful 24-day walk covering 385 km to the town called Dandi on the coast of the Arabian Sea to make salt from seawater became a historical cause. He made a statement even out of walks.

But he also believed in being the change. So he had convinced himself enough to say, ‘My Life is My Message.’

Everyone has an opportunity to hold onto that statement and try to lead a life with purpose.

Is it enough just to exist and try to have a peaceful life or should everyone find their bigger purpose in life.



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

THE PEACEFUL 24-DAY WALK COVERING 385 KM TO THE TOWN CALLED DANDI ON THE COAST OF THE ARABIAN SEA TO MAKE SALT FROM SEAWATER BECAME A HISTORICAL CAUSE

As someone said Mohandas was born in Gujarat but Mahatma Gandhi was born in Africa. It was the challenges that brought out the qualities in him to the surface and eventually for the society.

He went on to become an international personality so much that his birthday, October 2, is celebrated as the International Day for Non-violence. It seems difficulties in life bring out not only the survival instincts but often techniques to overcome and excel.

No two challenges can be same because the capacity and capability vary from person to person. And that is why probably this quote of Gandhi makes it even more meaningful — “The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.”

And it goes on to prove why it is not the muscle power that often wins, rather it is the power of the mind — the will power that wins.

We can find many winners in this regard in our lives, when we find them we ought to celebrate them.

We can all become successful but a few more extra steps and then we can become exceptional. It takes a bit of sacrifice and discipline but for sure your story will be an inspiration.

As in the case of Naresh Kumawat so far he has designed and sculpted more than 200 statues of all different national hero’s for 65 countries and he has been in the field for 24 years.

All the numbers are more than the number of years he has been in the profession. But that is not all, he is the third generation in the field of sculpting.

His father Shri Matu Ram Verma is his Guru, teacher, who taught him sculpting. Sculpting might run in the genes, but it requires determination and patience to reach the stage of excellence.

TIME FOR SELFIE



Folk dancers perform Garba during the festival of Navratri in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India, on Monday. – AFP

US East Coast faces ‘competing catastrophes’ as fire risk grows

DAVID SHERFINSKI

Nags Head, a quiet beachfront community of colourful wooden homes in North Carolina’s Outer Banks, faces no shortage of climate change-fuelled threats, from wilder storms to sea level rise and flooding.

A survey of some of the coastal resort town’s residents, for a state resilience report released in May, found nearly 80 per cent had been impacted by flooding or hurricanes.

But as global temperatures approach a key 1.5 degrees Celsius level of warming that scientists fear could herald a transition to far costlier and deadlier climate change impacts, a new threat is rising in normally water-threatened Nags Head: wildfire.

Western US states, including California, have grown accustomed to dealing with catastrophic-scale wildfires in the face of a relentless increase in “fire weather” — conditions of record temperatures, low humidity and high winds.

But now similar threats are quietly spreading across the nation, including into states not up to now thought of as at significant risk.

North Carolina saw 5,151 wildland fires in 2021, the third most in the country after California and Texas. In March, a thousand acres burned just a short drive from Nags Head, after a fire prevention blaze went wrong. The eastern seaboard state still ranks 23rd nationally in the area affected by wildfires, with 26,000 acres burned in 2021, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

WESTERN US STATES, INCLUDING CALIFORNIA, HAVE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO DEALING WITH CATASTROPHIC-SCALE WILDFIRES IN THE FACE OF A RELENTLESS INCREASE IN ‘FIRE WEATHER’ — CONDITIONS

But North and South Carolina have some of the largest numbers of properties threatened by wildfire after California and New Mexico, according to a May report by First Street Foundation, a non-profit that maps climate risks.

“Wildfire risk is increasing so much faster than even flood risk is across the US,” said Ed Kearns, the group’s chief data officer. “And it’s likely to affect areas that aren’t thought of as wildfire-prone areas right now, but will be soon.”

Global temperatures have risen more than 1.2 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times, and oil, gas and coal use — the major driver of that increase — are still rising, despite pledges to slash

emissions. Top climate scientists say 1.5C of warming - the more ambitious warming limit set in the 2015 Paris Agreement - could be passed within a decade.

They fear that could trigger irreversible ecological tipping points, from surging sea levels as polar ice melts to spiking temperatures as methane — a potent driver of warming — escapes thawing permafrost.

A hotter planet is also expected to spark more extreme weather, crop failures, species extinctions, migration and soaring personal and financial losses for many people around the planet.

The landscape near south Nags Head is idyllic — blue skies, dried grass and sand dunes that shield

the Atlantic Ocean — but David Hallac’s concern is palpable as he plucks a stalk of dried reed from the soil and crumbles it in his hand.

“Once the stalk dies like this... this is extremely flammable,” warned the superintendent of the National Parks of Eastern North Carolina. Miles-long stretches of the reeds, invasive wetlands plants that only grow back thicker after being cut or burned, have proved a management challenge around Nags Head, and threaten to increase the fire risk to nearby homes.

“You put a match to this, and it’s going to burn very, very quickly,” Hallac said. Management efforts, from mowing to herbicides, are

difficult given the sheer volume of the vegetation, he added.

In a community facing a wide range of climate change-fuelled risks, residents and local leaders are most concerned about worsening storms, floods and sea level rise. That has left officials sometimes struggling to ramp up efforts to cut wildfire risks too.

Riva Duncan, a former fire management officer for North Carolina’s national forests, said focusing on all the threats was a challenge in a region with “competing catastrophes”.

“It’s the hurricanes and the rising water - they’re right in (residents’) face all the time, and wildfire may not be,” said Duncan, now the executive secretary for Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, an advocacy group.

“Which one do you put your time and energy into the most?” she asked. “What’s the biggest bang for the buck?”

On the Dare County mainland, less than an hour’s drive from Nags Head, a huge wildfire torched more than 1,000 acres of land in March.

The “Jackson Road Wildfire” originated from a prescribed burn — commonly used to reduce the risk of fire — which spiralled out of control amid a combination of lower-than-expected humidity, persistent drought, and unforeseen winds. — Thomson Reuters Foundation



sport

VERSTAPPEN
MADE
TO WAIT FOR
TITLE

PEREZ WINS IN SINGAPORE RAIN



Winner Red Bull Racing's Mexican driver Sergio Perez celebrates on the podium after the Formula One Singapore Grand Prix night race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit in Singapore. – AFP

SINGAPORE: Sergio Perez won a rain-affected Singapore Grand Prix on Sunday leaving his Red Bull teammate Max Verstappen to wait at least another week to retain his Formula One world championship.

The Mexican took the chequered flag 7.5sec ahead of the Ferrari of Charles Leclerc.

However, he had to endure a nervy few hours before his victory was confirmed when he was penalised five seconds for a safety car infringement.

Carlos Sainz was third to make it a double podium for Ferrari in the night race that started more than an hour late because of a storm.

It was the first grand prix to be held under lights at the Marina Bay Street Circuit since 2019 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Verstappen had a mathematical chance to clinch a second world title, but needed to win and have other results go his way. He finished seventh after a rollercoaster race.

The Dutchman was always

going to struggle after starting eighth on the grid and his task was made trickier by an early evening deluge that delayed the start till 9:05 pm (1305 GMT).

When the field eventually tore away from the grid in a shower of spray, Verstappen almost stalled and dropped back from eighth to 13th.

The 25-year-old cut through the field before flat-spotting his tyres trying to pass Lando Norris for fourth after a safety car restart.

“I was up with Lando and as soon as I braked, the front wheels jumped in the air and I went straight on,” said Verstappen who was forced to pit for fresh rubber and dropped to last place.

“It’s not what I’m here for. Not with a car like that. It was incredibly messy.”

It means his world championship lead over Leclerc has been cut to 104 points ahead of next week’s Japanese Grand Prix. Perez is two points behind Leclerc.

Verstappen will need to be 112 points ahead at the end of next

FORMULA 1

17. Singapore Grand Prix

Marina Bay circuit

F122

October 2

1 Sergio Perez (MEX)	2:02:15.238	25
2 Charles Leclerc (MON)	at 7.595	18
3 Carlos Sainz (ESP)	at 15.305	15
4 Lando Norris (GBR)	at 26.133	12
5 Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	at 58.282	10

Driver standings

Verstappen (NED)	341
Leclerc (MON)	237
Perez (MEX)	235
Russell (GBR)	203
Sainz Jr. (ESP)	202

Teams

Red Bull	576
Ferrari	439
Mercedes	373
McLaren	129

Source: Formula1.com

AFP

Sunday’s race in Suzuka to retain his title and can do so if he wins and Leclerc fails to finish second.

Leclerc started on pole but Perez slipped past before the first turn and drove a perfect race to hold off

the Monegasque for his second GP win of the season.

“It was certainly my best performance,” Perez said. “I controlled the race. The last three laps were so intense. When I got out of the car, I felt it. I gave everything today.”

‘VERY TOUGH OUT THERE’

Leclerc started on pole but had a sluggish getaway on intermediate tyres in the slippery conditions allowing Perez to reach the first corner in the lead.

“I pushed all the way,” said Leclerc. “The bad start put us on the back foot and it was a really difficult race after that.”

Sainz started fourth and managed to force his way past Lewis Hamilton on turn one, but he felt he could never threaten the front two and crossed the line 7.7sec behind Leclerc.

“It was very tough out there,” Sainz said. “I never really got into a rhythm in the wet and then couldn’t challenge the top two guys.

“I had to settle for P3, but the good thing is I didn’t do any mistakes and could bring the car home and be quick towards the end of the race.”

The McLaren pair of Norris and Daniel Ricciardo were fourth and fifth, Lance Stroll sixth in the Aston Martin ahead of Verstappen.

Sebastian Vettel, the winner in Singapore the last time the race was run in 2019, was eighth, with Hamilton and the AlphaTauri of Pierre Gasly rounding out the top 10.

Hamilton had been in the battle for pole but had a torrid time, complaining early about his tyres and later slithering into a barrier necessitating a new nose before coming home ninth.

“I think we started off with a really decent weekend, it was really unfortunate at the end,” said Hamilton.

“I was trying, obviously difficult to overtake, that lock up into turn seven, ugh, when those things happen your heart sinks a little bit.” — **AFP**

Oman Sailing Festival 2022 to set sail this week

MUSCAT: The Oman Sailing Festival kicks off this week as Oman Sail brings sailing activities to communities along the whole length of the nation’s coastline. Starting in Suhar from October 6-8, visitors will be able to enjoy free ‘try sailing’, windsurfing and kitesurfing sessions under the supervision of professional instructors from Oman Sail.

The next stop will be Musannah from October 12-14 as part of the Arab Sailing Championships taking place at the same time at the Barcelo Musannah Resort with sessions in the RS Venture adaptable dinghy on offer. From there, the festival moves to Sur Al Hadeed in Seeb from October 20-22.

Duqm hosts the next leg of the Oman Sailing Festival from November 2-5 and Salalah from November 8-12 before the festival heads to Musannah from November 24-26, during the RS Venture Connect World Championships, the first exclusive Para Sailing championship to be staged in Oman, where visitors

FULL SCHEDULE
Suhar - Oct 06-08
Musannah - Oct 12-14
Al Mouj Muscat - Oct 17
Sur Al Hadeed, Seeb, Muscat - Oct 20-22
Duqm - Nov 02-05
Salalah - Nov 08-12
Musannah - Nov 24-26
Sur - Nov 28-Dec 03
Al Mouj Muscat - Dec 07-11
Musandam - Dec 20-24



can experience the RS Venture for themselves.

The festival then moves on to Sur from November 28 to December 3, taking place alongside the Oman Maritime Heritage Festival, where there will also be the latest Ranking Race where sailors will compete for a place in the Oman national sailing squads and representatives from

SeaOman will be available to share the variety of charter excursions on offer. The penultimate event will be held at Al Mouj Muscat from December 7-11 while nine teams from across Europe compete for the RC44 Cup at the final event of the season, before concluding in Musandam from December 20-24.

There will also be beach clean-up events to help conserve the local



environment and keep the seas clear of litter and a special exhibition of local SMEs in each location.

Musab al Balushi, Oman Sailing Festival Project Manager, said, “Oman is blessed with a wonderful coastline, and as Omanis we have a rich heritage of sailing and maritime activities. Our aim at Oman Sail is to reintroduce the community to sailing, windsurfing and kite surfing

while also providing opportunities for people with disabilities to discover a new hobby that could become a lifelong passion.”

“The Oman Sailing Festival is also raising awareness of environmental issues and reminding communities that it is all of our responsibilities to keep our beautiful beaches and oceans clean for the marine life and the future generations to enjoy as we do,” he added.

In Suhar from October 6-8, visitors to the Oman Sailing Festival can try sailing using a versatile Bahia dinghy, ideal for beginners, as well as trying windsurfing and kite surfing. There will also be an SME activation featuring local businesses and craftspeople. The beach clean-up will take place everyday of the event and from 4 pm to 5 pm.

The festival will be supported by Oman Air, National Mineral Water Company (Tanuf), Environment society of Oman (ESO) National University Science and Technology (International Maritime College).

HOSTS SURVIVE MILLER CENTURY IN 16-RUN WIN

Suryakumar helps India clinch T20 series

GUWAHATI, India: India survived an unbeaten 106 by David Miller to clinch their first ever Twenty20 series against South Africa at home with a 16-run victory in the second match on Sunday.

Suryakumar Yadav smashed 61 off 22 balls and put on a key 102-run stand with Virat Kohli, who made 49 not out, to drive India to 237-3 after being invited to bat first in Guwahati.

In reply, South Africa finished on 221-3 after a threatening 174-run unbeaten stand between Miller and Quinton De Kock (69) as the hosts took an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

The third T20 in Indore on Tuesday remains the final match for both teams ahead of the T20 World Cup in Australia starting October 22.

KL Rahul (57) and skipper Rohit Sharma (43) put on 96 runs to lay the foundations of the mammoth total — India's fourth highest in T20 matches.

Suryakumar took over after the openers departed as he raced to his fifty in 18 balls to bring the packed home crowd to their feet.

"Just thinking not to play him anymore; just play him on the 23rd (of October, when India open their World Cup campaign against arch-rivals Pakistan)," Rohit said of the in-form batsman, who hit his third successive half-century.

"He is somebody who wants to play the game, wants to keep going



out there and keep doing well. That is what keeps him happy and we want to keep him happy."

He and Kohli, who also took on the bowlers in his 28-ball knock, tore into the opposition attack before the partnership ended with

a mix up and Suryakumar's run out at the non-striker's end.

Dinesh Karthik smashed an unbeaten 17 off seven balls as he finished with a flourish, hitting a four and two sixes in an 18-run final over.

Earlier Rahul survived a lucky inside edge that missed his stumps for four and he kept up the attack with shots all around the ground.

The openers got stuck into Anrich Nortje in a 21-run ninth

over before Keshav Maharaj broke the stand with the wicket of Rohit, caught at deep mid-wicket.

Rahul, who was named man of the match but said Surya "should have gotten" the award, reached his fifty in 24 balls with a big six off

Aiden Markram, an off-spinner.

But he soon departed lbw with Maharaj getting his second wicket.

MILLER, 'ONE OF THE BEST'

South Africa suffered early setbacks after skipper Temba Bavuma got out for a seventh-ball duck off Arshdeep Singh who struck twice in his first over including Rilee Rossouw, also out for nought.

A brief interruption in play due a floodlight failure did little to change the tourists' fortunes as Axar Patel sent back Aiden Markram for 33.

But Miller then attempted to do something out of the ordinary as he became the leading run-getter for South Africa in the T20 format. He has 2,050 runs in 106 T20 internationals. "It shows why David Miller is one of the best T20 batters going around," Bavuma said of the big-hitter.

"He is looking good, feeling good and we can draw a lot of confidence from his performance today."

The left-handed duo of Miller, who hit his second T20 century in 46 balls, and De Kock played valiantly but the asking rate proved too much in the end. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES
India 237-3 in 20 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 61, KL Rahul 57, Virat Kohli 49 not out, Rohit Sharma 43; Keshav Maharaj 2-23) v **South Africa 221-3** (David Miller 106 not out, Quinton de Kock 69 not out; Arshdeep Singh 2-62)

Djokovic finds 'extra motivation' from post-Wimbledon absence

TEL AVIV: Novak Djokovic claimed his third title of 2022 and 89th of his career with an impressive straight-set victory over Marin Cilic in the Tel Aviv final on Sunday, insisting his lengthy absence since winning a seventh Wimbledon crown in July provided "extra motivation".

The 35-year-old Djokovic triumphed 6-3, 6-4 to add the Israeli hard court trophy to victories on the Rome clay and Wimbledon grass this season.

It was his 19th win over Cilic in 21 meetings in a rivalry stretching back to 2008.

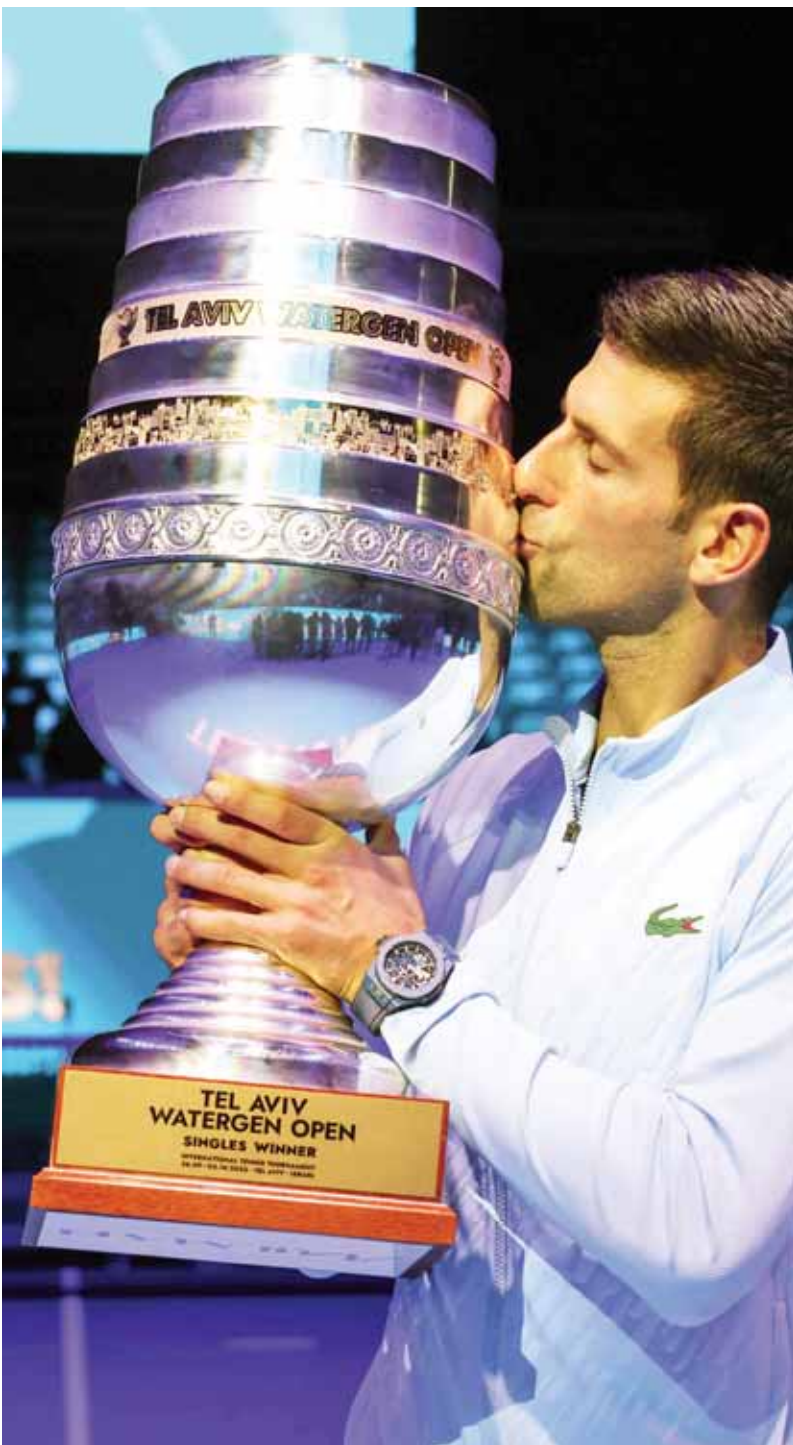
Djokovic was playing his first singles tournament since wrapping up a seventh Wimbledon crown and 21st Grand Slam title in July.

He was banned from the US Open and the entire North American hard court swing over his refusal to be vaccinated before returning for Roger Federer's farewell in the Laver Cup team event in London last month.

"I played some very good tennis. I didn't drop a set the entire week," said former world number one Djokovic.

"I hadn't played a tournament in three months, so it was really extra motivation for me to really do well, particularly because people have been so friendly and so supportive of me throughout the week. I'm taking some great confidence into next week as well."

Djokovic's win on Sunday came in his 127th career final. It also allowed him to become the first man this year to claim titles on the



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates with the trophy after winning the men's singles final match at the Tel Aviv Watergen Open 2022 in Israel. Djokovic beat Croatia's Marin Cilic 6-3, 6-4. — AFP

sport's three different surfaces.

"My approach is to win tournaments wherever I am and I'm glad that I have a team of people around me that makes sure that I am in the best shape in order to be a contender to win titles," Djokovic told atptour.com.

"That's why I came to Israel, was to try to win the title. First time playing here since a Davis Cup tie more than 15 years ago, so it was a really amazing experience."

On Sunday, Djokovic broke 34-year-old Cilic in the second game of the final and pocketed the first set with a fourth ace after 47 minutes on court.

Former US Open winner Cilic, chasing a 21st career title but first of 2022, was broken in the first game of the second set and never recovered.

The Serb only faced one break point in the match which was clinched in 94 minutes.

"Just everything really that we experienced this week was positive," added Djokovic.

Djokovic now heads to the Astana ATP tournament where world number one and US Open champion Carlos Alcaraz takes the top seeding.

Ranked at seven in the world, Djokovic — having won a Grand Slam title this season — just needs to finish in the top 20 to book a place at the ATP Finals.

That would give him the opportunity to end 2022 with a flourish having started the year being deported from Australia over his controversial vaccination stance. — AFP

Asian Amateur chess competitions reach final stages

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The excitement continues in Asian Amateur Chess Championship organised by the Oman Chess Committee in cooperation with the Asian Chess Federation and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, at the Sultan Qaboos Indoor Hall, with participants of 204 men and women players from 23 countries.

The championship will conclude on October 5.

In the fifth round results, Saeed Ahmed Fadil tied with Kyrgyzstan Daniel, Amin al Ansi tied with Murad Ba'amer from Yemen, Muslim al Amiri beat Salem Mohsin from UAE, Salem al Omari won over Mohammad al Nawfal, Muhad al Omari tied with Iran's Milad and Abdulrahman al Zadjali tied with Othman from Palestine.

In the women's section, Maryam al Balushi defeated Ohoud Issa from UAE, and Anaat al Eisa lost against Kyrgyzstan Layashkrov. Al Anoud al Ghafri lost to Moza al Mansoori from UAE.

Abdulrahim, Chairman of the Rules Committee of the International Chess Federation, Chairman of the Asian Referees Committee and Technical Supervisor from the ACF, said: "The tournament witnessed a wide participation, 23 Arab, Gulf and foreign countries, with Swiss system of nine rounds. We reached the seventh round,



all participants are approved by the International and Asian Chess Federations, with the international classification less than 2,000. The tournament awards international titles to the top three winners, whether men or women."

"We have an arbitration team of ten rulers, including eight rulers from Oman, and we have the head of the referees committee from Iran and the deputy rulers Muslim al Wadahi from Oman, and we have a Saudi referee and we have three women referees from Oman," he added.

Mohammed Tariq, the only participant from Iraq, said: "We thank the Omani people for the kind hospitality and reception. I am a representative of Iraq in the tournament, and I hope to achieve a positive result, and currently I have five points from six rounds. This is my second tournament outside Iraq, as previously participated in the Sharjah International Championship. The tournament is well organised on a high level with the availability of modern technologies."



Seeb players chase history in AFC West Zone final

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

Oman’s representative Seeb will take on Bahrain’s Al Riffa in the AFC West Zone final at the Seeb Stadium on Tuesday. The summit clash kicks-off at 7 pm.

The Muscat based team is behind one step only to create history and to lift the prestigious trophy while Bahraini team will aim to recall the memories of 2021 as their neighbours Muharraq club won the 2021 AFC Cup. HH Sayyid Malik bin Shihab al Said, vice-president of Seeb club, will preside over the final match in presence of the Oman Football Association (OFA) officials and dignitaries.

Speaking on the eve of the match, Rasheed Jaber, newly appointed head coach of Seeb club said, “ All the team players are in full readiness to play this crucial game and there are no injuries in the squad. The preparation plan of the team went smoothly, and we are in good shape to play the awaited encounter. It is expected that the match will be tough for both sides and the opponent has all the success tools,” coach Jaber added in the press meet on Monday.

Seeb will look to end their campaign successfully in West Zone final that will take them to the overall final of AFC Cup 2022 on October 22. Seeb’s heroes are all set for the crucial game as the team squad had trained well for this game and had several training sessions under watchful eyes of experienced national head coach, Rasheed Jaber.

The former Dhofar club coach affirmed that he is fully aware of the

players’ performances and levels.

“I know the technical levels of all the players and the squad is well aware of my coaching style. I was willing to spend more time with the players but anyhow we have to be adapted with the current situation. We will work hard to spread the joy among the fans of Seeb and Oman. The spectators will be a key factor for the team to register a victory. We will look forward for attendance of the fans and their support,” he ended.

Seeb defender, Mohammed al Musallami, said that the team players are in good condition to take on Bahrain’s Al Riffa. “ The match is considered as historic game for us and will do our level best to register positive result. The accomplishment will be registered under Oman’s name and not only Seeb club.

The result of today’s game will not impact on Seeb’s long-term plans, and we will deliver all our efforts towards achieving good result. Since the first game in the AFC Cup campaign, our target was clear to accomplish a historic achievement after a successful domestic 2021-22 season. We have full confidence on our head coach and looking forward for a top match,” he concluded.

Seeb’s campaign in the AFC cup was not easy as they began with a victory over Syria’s Jableh SC 1-0 in the opener before recovering from the setback of losing 2-1 to three-time AFC Cup champions Kuwait SC to bounce back in style with a 4-0 defeat of Lebanon’s Al Ansar to seal the top spot in Group A. Then, they emerged 2-1 winners against Kuwait’s Al Arabi after 120 minutes in the semifinal.

Oman thump Bahrain to top group

SAUDI ARABIA’S RAZA CLAIMS 7 WICKETS AGAINST BHUTAN

MUSCAT: Hosts Oman defeated Bahrain by a margin of 86 runs to emerge as Group A topper in the ongoing ICC U19 Men’s Cricket World Cup Division -2 Asia Qualifier at the Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds on Monday.

The win meant Oman will take on the loser of the Group B match between Singapore and Hong Kong in the semifinals, scheduled on Thursday.

The Group B topper [winner of Singapore vs Hong Kong] will be decided on Tuesday. Bahrain will take on the Group B winner in the other semifinal.

It was a clinical all-round performance by the hosts despite the team failing to capitalise on the strong start as they were bowled out for 178 in 48.5 overs.

Openers Lakshmi Satish and Devansh Loya gelled well for the first time in the tournament as they shared a 61-run stand after Oman skipper Arjun Dhiman won the toss and elected to bat first at OCA 2 ground. Loya was first to depart for 29 and Satish (31) was next as Oman reached 84/2 in 25.3 overs. However, a double-strike by Bahrain’s Nadith Tennakoon put the hosts on the back foot in the 26th over as he prized the wicket of in-form Dhiman off the last ball



of the over.

Aryan Bisht, who had already scored a half—century (60) in the opening group game against Bhutan, then played another solid knock as he remained unbeaten on 48 off 55 balls. Bisht was resolute but found little support at the other end as Oman was restricted to 178.

Tennakoon and Muhammad Adil Khan were the most successful bowlers with four wickets each.

Bahrain had a disappointing start as medium pacer Mohammed Arafat Islam struck a double blow as he dismissed skipper Aryan Ashwin and Ananth Krishnan

Natesan off successive deliveries. Both the batters were snared behind by Rahil Habibulla, who had a good day behind as he later had one stumping to his name.

The early setback pushed Bahrain in a shell and the middle order caved in as they were left tottering at 28/5 in 15th over. Muhammad Adil Khan and Aryan Pande tried to fight back with a sixth-wicket stand of 34 but once Adil Khan departed, bowled by Satish for 22, the writing was on the wall. The tail failed to wag as Bahrain was bowled out for 92 in 34.3 overs.



Bisht followed his batting heroics with a tidy spell of 2/14 to be adjudged the man of the match.

Dhiman, Arafat Islam also had two wickets each while Glenalexi Menezes and Satish took one each.

Aryan Bisht, man of the match said: “I think we were always in the game. We had a decent start although we lost wickets in the middle. We couldn’t convert it to something big but I’m happy the way I contributed in terms of holding the ship and I am enjoying the role of batting under pressure.

“We always believed in our

bowling attack. They have the ability to bowl out the rival team. They executed the same today. Overall, it was a collective effort. We are looking forward to the semifinals and are happy going in with the momentum we have.”

AHMED RAZA’S DAZZLING SPELL

In the other game of the day at the OCA 1 ground, Muhammed Ahmed Raza came up with a dream spell of 7/20 to lead Saudi Arabia to a five-wicket win over Bhutan for a consolation win.

It was Saudi Arabia’s first win

in the tournament. Both Bhutan and Saudi Arabia were already out of reckoning for a place in the knockout stage.

Bhutan won the toss but failed to put up a respectable total as Raza ripped through the top order dismissing the top four batters to leave the rivals struggling at 21/4 in nine overs.

Sashwath Prasad picked two in between but Raza’s rampage continued as he picked three more wickets as Bhutan faced the ignominy of getting bowled out for less than 50 with the total 38/9 in 15 overs.

However, a gritty last-wicket partnership of 35 runs between Karma Dorji (16) and Rigser Namgyel (10) helped Bhutan reach 73 before Zuhair had Dorji out to end the innings in 27 overs.

Saudi Arabia chased down the target in 21.3 overs with opening batter Khaja Farhaan Uddin top-scoring with a 33-ball 32. There was a slight wobble in the middle when they lost two batters in a space of five balls for two runs.

Muhammad Ghayour’s six got the Saudis a comfortable win in 21.3 overs.

Tashi Chopfel took two wickets while the other three were shared apiece by Anand Mongar, Tashi Dorji and Tenjin Rabgye.



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Sur Industrial City signs 13 contracts worth RO 2 million



JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

Sur Industrial City, affiliated to the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), held a signing ceremony yesterday for handling contracts between large companies and SMEs, as well as a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) to implement Air Quality Monitoring Station Network (AQMSN) in the Wilayat of Sur as part of the national programme for environmental monitoring and detection of surrounding air quality.

The ceremony was held at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences — Sur under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment

Authority.

Speaking at the ceremony, Eng Abdulqadir bin Salim al Balushi, Director General of Sur Industrial City, said a total of 13 handling contracts worth RO 2 million got signed at the ceremony between Oman India Fertiliser Company (Omifco), Oman LNG, Phoenix Power Company and with a group of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Al Balushi added that as a result of constant coordination between Madayn and the Environment Authority, Madayn has signed an MoU with Oman India Fertiliser Company (Omifco), Oman LNG, and Phoenix Power Company to implement Air Quality Monitoring Stations in several locations in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

TURN TO PAGE 14

Supportive legislation buoys performance of mineral sector

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 3

Supported by investment-friendly mining regulation, Oman’s mining and mineral processing sector continues to growth from strength to strength. New data released by authorities show an uptick in revenues earned from the production and export of key mineral commodities.

Total production of building materials amounted to 48.3 million metric tonnes (MT) last year valued at RO 34.4 million.

Gypsum output totalled 10.2 million MT, of which 9.3 million MT was exported, generating RO 21.8 million in export revenue. Limestone production amounted to 6.3 million MT with a value of RO 12.8 million.

Chromite ore production totalled around 382.1 thousand MT. Of this total, around 315 thousand MT was sold, generating RO 8.9 million in revenue. Plastic clay production totalled 774 thousand MT, of which 739 thousand MT were sold to fetch RO 1.7 million in earnings.

Quartzite exports totalled 321.4 thousand MT (out of total production of 349 thousand MT) earning RO 1.2 million in revenue. Laterite output amounted to 626.6 thousand MT (of which 556 thousand MT was sold), netting producers RO 1.3 million in earnings. Production of marble blocks amounted to 373.3



NEW LAWS AND LEGISLATIONS HAVE NOW INCENTIVISED LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENTS IN GEOLOGICAL SURVEYS, EXPLORATION, APPRAISAL AND DEVELOPMENT OF THESE RESOURCES

thousand MT, of which 311.2 thousand MT were sold with a value of RO 7.6 million.

The Omani authorities, represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, have been focused on unlocking

the commercial and economic potential of the country’s vast mineral resources to support economic growth.

New laws and legislations have now incentivised local and international investments in geological surveys, exploration, appraisal and development of these resources.

Mining is also one of the key thrust sectors that has been identified for development in support of the government’s economic diversification strategy.

Overall oil and gas are not the only national wealth that deserves great work and effort in order

to enact laws and legislations to protect them and benefit from them fully because they support the national income, but there are mineral wealth that deserve research, exploration. In addition to establishing laws and legislation that protect this wealth and the diversity of the national economy.

The Sultanate of Oman possesses many minerals, and the state strives to make the most of this national wealth by regulating investment in it and achieving the largest possible return from it. This trend was on the tributaries that Oman Vision 2040 focused on.

Integrated power and water project launched in Duqm SEZ

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The Centralised Utilities Company (Marafiq), a joint venture owned by OQ, a subsidiary of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Gulf Energy Development Corporation of Thailand, announced the partial commissioning of the Integrated Power and Water Plant in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) to provide electricity and desalinated water for Duqm Refinery (OQ 8) and Oman Tank Terminal Company (OTTCO).

This outstanding achievement comes in line with the Company’s efforts to develop the utilities sector in Duqm under the Central Utilities Services Agreement with the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

Accordingly, Marafiq established the subsidiary company, Duqm Power Company, to develop Duqm Integrated



Power and Water Project and a 132-kV-high voltage line project to transmit electricity from the Plant to Ras Markaz oil tanks project, located around 80 km away.

In this regard, Eng Abdullah bin

Mohammed al Hashmi, Executive Director of Marafiq Company, pointed out, “The potential capacity of the Integrated Power and Water Plant is 326 megawatts of electricity and 36,000 cubic metres of water per day. The Plant

includes a seawater intake facility with a supply capacity of 1.5 million m3 per day, in addition to a water outtake line with a capacity of up to 1 million m3 per day.”

“This project boosted the Company’s contribution to the



This project boosted the Company’s contribution to the local In-Country Value (ICV) with over \$56 million invested in local products and services

ENG ABDULLAH
AL HASHMI
Executive Director, Marafiq

local In-Country Value (ICV) with over \$56 million invested in

local products and services.

Furthermore, nearly 60 training opportunities were provided for Omanis and 5 other training-for-employment opportunities were offered for Duqm’s community. Therefore, the number of overall job opportunities provided by the Company to Omanis reached 34 direct jobs with more than 360 other indirect jobs, marking Omanisation at 71 per cent,” he stated.

Eng Abdullah al Hashmi stressed that the Integrated Power and Water Plant marks one of the significant investments for OQ Group and Oman Investment Authority (OIA) in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. It comes among a number of other investments aimed at thriving the investment environment in the Zone. It is worth noting that the plant completed this year major commissioning tests and started supplying electricity and water to Duqm Refinery (OQ8).

Daleel Petroleum launches initiative to train workforce

MUSCAT: Committed to enhancing the capabilities of the national workforce in the oil and gas sector and in line with its dedication to contributing to the country's ICV agenda, Daleel Petroleum, in cooperation with a number of local institutions operating in the sector, launched an ambitious programme to train and empower the country's workforce in a critical and highly specialised area of operation.

Daleel Petroleum initiated this campaign in an endeavour to provide a sustainable solution to address the challenges faced in obtaining specialised international expertise when managing the electrical interconnection of petroleum wells.

Acknowledging the need to



be self-sufficient and reduce dependency on international companies, Daleel Petroleum, under its supplier development plan, launched a comprehensive training programme to empower

the team at Marmul Falcon Company, thereby enabling the company to be the local service provider of this highly technical and complex operation.

Daleel Petroleum's training

programme was conducted keeping international standards and protocols in mind and placed increased emphasis on various technical aspects, ensuring that each employee had the necessary

skills to effectively carry out assigned tasks.

The programme will play an instrumental role in achieving increased operational independence in the oil and gas sector while lowering costs and enhancing the efficiency of workflows.

Mabkhout bin Saad bin Mokaddam al Mahri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Marmul Falcon Trading and Contracting Company, said, "Daleel Petroleum has demonstrated utmost keenness in nurturing the national workforce and their efforts toward training the team at Marmul Falcon are indeed commendable. They have not only followed exceptional levels of professionalism in adhering

to the health, safety and environment guidelines but have remained unfaltering in their commitment to guiding the team in all administrative and technical aspects of operations."

Meanwhile, Mohammed Nasser al Hinai, Principal Project Engineer at Daleel Petroleum, said, "This idea was conceptualised and implemented in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic when it was difficult to find an international crew to carry out such operations.

Direct electrical connections are vital to the operation of the electrical network as it facilitates quick connections and avoids the closing of electrical lines. Having this service available locally will greatly benefit the petroleum production operations."

Alizz Islamic Bank offers discount on Etihad tickets

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank and Etihad Airways have announced exclusive 12 per cent discount on Etihad Airways economy and business class tickets for any destination in for all Alizz Islamic Bank retail or corporate debit and credit card holders. This discount can be received by visiting the Alizz Islamic Bank website or the bank's social media account and clicking the direct link (<https://www.etihad.com/alizzar>) to the Etihad Airways website. The customer will be requested to enter certain details of their Alizz Islamic Bank card and then they will immediately receive a 12 per cent discount on the base ticket price.

For example, if a customer buys a ticket with RO 300 as base ticket price, he/she will receive an RO 36 discount on the total ticket price. Such discounts shall apply until October 31, 2022 and is valid for the purchase of any ticket that can be used for travel anytime until the end of June next year.

Commenting on such discounts



and partnership with Etihad Airways, Mohammed al Ghasani, AGM - Chief Consumer Banking Officer at Alizz Islamic Bank said: "This partnership with Etihad Airways, one of the world's most leading & most famous brands, comes within the framework of an exclusive variety of discounts and offers for our customers. We are proud to always offer the best Shari'a-compliant services, products and offers to our customers"

Al Ghasani added, "We always work to increase the offers and discounts in partnership with the world's most leading brands to give our customers' and we work diligently to make Alizz Islamic Bank the first option for the those seeking Shari'a-compliant banking services and products."

Nesto Group opens 100th outlet in Sharjah

MUSCAT: Nesto Group, one of the most renowned names in the region's retail industry celebrates the iconic milestone of a hundred, with its 100th outlet opening at Al Nahda, Sharjah.

Nesto now has a diverse chain of 100 outlets operating across GCC and India with a presence in UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia. A part of the prestigious Western International Group, Nesto has set new standards for accomplishments with unique business strategies and attributes its growth to its unwavering emphasis on convenience and accessibility by providing customers with top-notch products of world-class brands at competitive prices.

This has established Nesto not only across multiple countries in the GCC, but also in the hearts of hundreds and thousands of customers in just a span of few years. Today, Nesto stands apart from its competitors by offering customers a relaxing and rewarding shopping experience



in thoughtfully designed retail spaces that they cherish and wishes to re-live time and again.

"A complete shopping experience under one roof". This has led to high preferences for the brand's offerings by customers from various nationalities under wide-ranged product categories.

The 100th outlet, Nesto Miyah Mall, is located in Al Nahda Sharjah, which strategically lies between Sharjah and Dubai, offering residents the best of both worlds. Widely recognised for its leisure spots, sport-themed central park, reputable schools, and commercial areas, the area

is also a popular favourite for freehold apartments in the Emirate.

The new Nesto outlet has a 600,000 sqft shopping area designed on five floors with each section curated in aesthetically pleasing themes to offer customers a refined shopping experience. The hypermarket offers fresh produce, grocery, hot food, fresh meat and fish, roastery, baby care, home needs, furnishings, lifestyle range, stationery, electronics and so much more.

The new Nesto emerges as a fashion hub offering the latest

and most sustainable collections for men, women, and kids of all ages. Women can now have their ethnic attire sorted with the Ethnic wear zone having extensive collections of traditional wear at Miyah Mall.

There is also a food court opening soon with an assortment of restaurants catering to the unique tastes of customers. Offering kids of all ages numerous entertainment options to choose from, the mall will also be opening a large play area with an exhilarating gaming zone in the coming days.

The inauguration was done by Western International Group Chairman, K P Basheer and Managing Directors Siddique Palollathil, Jamal KP and Directors Nawas Basheer, Noufal KP, Athif Kp, and Fayiz Basheer, in the presence of Dejem Group Chairman, Ayaedh Hussain and other prominent figures in the industry. Wishing everyone a spectacular and one-of-a-kind shopping experience at Nesto Miyah Mall.

AGAE announces low EMI offer on Changan Hunter pick-up

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC (AGAE) has announced a low EMI offer on Changan Hunter pick-up. Outfitted with safety features and modern driving systems, Changan Hunter pick-up that comes with two engine variants - 2.4 turbo gasoline (available in manual and automatic transmission) and 1.9 turbo diesel engine (manual transmission) guarantees excellent performance. Customers can now avail an exceptionally low EMI rate of RO 154 on Changan Hunter pick-up (terms and conditions apply).

EMI is calculated based on 20 per cent down payment for 6 years loan tenure. It is subject to credit approvals from banks and applicable on vehicles purchased for personal use only.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, "We are pleased to offer a low EMI on the outstanding Changan Hunter pick-up. With the perfect powertrain Changan



Hunter can takes you to the highest heights or any terrain. Among positive features of the Changan Hunter is its work horse capabilities and usage. Being a heavy-duty pickup for loading, it is sturdy, spacious and of high quality, and is suitable for various load and road conditions."

Boasting of class leading power and excellent ground clearance, it delivers an unmatched level of supremacy and capability especially for the farm and construction sector. Offering excellent seating comfort, SUV like interiors and

manifold features, Changan Hunter ensures a pleasurable and comfortable drive for the passengers.

Changan Hunter's double cabin pick-up comes with a 2.4 turbo gasoline engine producing 210 hp with a 6 speed Manual (2wd & 4wd) and Automatic transmission available only in 4WD. The 'power to perform' Changan Hunter also comes with a 1.9-litre turbo diesel engine producing 150 hp with a 6-speed manual transmission and is available in 4WD.

This incredible pick-up is built on a large wheelbase of

up to 3180 mm, and measures 5330 mm in length, 1930 mm in width and 1835 mm in height. With capacity to carry a substantial weight, it has a ground clearance of 230 mm and fuel tank capacity of 80 litres.

Changan Hunter is equipped with all safety and security measures and innovative driving systems that provide a smooth ride and enhanced performance. Changan Hunter Pickups are targeted to meet the needs of local commercial transporters as well small and medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Logistic solutions.

On the global level, Changan "Hunter" is described as a distinctive new generation of trucks that are characterised by strong capabilities and a very impressive exterior design with a practical and comfortable interior. All this is a result of the strong support of the research and development centres of Changan.

Sur Industrial City signs 13 contracts worth RO 2m

FROM PAGE 13

He said: "The contracts involve various logistics and support services, and we hope to maximise these services in the coming years through continuous cooperation and support received from the major companies in Sur Industrial City."

"Madayn pays significant attention to the environmental aspects being one of the national priorities of Oman Vision 2040. In this regard, Sur Industrial City has recently completed the engineering designs to implement phase 1 of 'green buffer zone' on 100,000 sqm in Sur Industrial City with the support from Omifco.

Work on this project will commence during Q4 of the current year and the implementation shall take 7 months. This project, which will include planting 1,000 trees, walkway and seating areas, shall generate small investment opportunities for the entrepreneurs to provide support services and consequently ensure the sustainability of the project," Al Balushi said.

The 'green buffer zone' initiative was launched in March to help increase green areas in the industrial

cities and enhance public-private partnership on areas that serve the industrial and environmental sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. It will contribute to the reduction of carbon emission at Sur Industrial City and its surroundings.

Within its annual agenda, Sur Industrial City is undertaking efforts to plant 500 trees to increase the green area and contribute to the national initiative implemented by the Environment Authority to plant 10 million trees in the Sultanate of Oman.

On his part, Eng Ahmed bin Khamis al Kasbi, Director of Operations at Sur Industrial City, commented that the industrial city is strategically located on a total area of 34 million sqm and offers 23 million sqm of investable areas. Sur Industrial City is home to 130 projects with a total investment value exceeding RO 2.3 billion.

In addition to the presence of several major projects and SMEs representing various industries, Sur Industrial City also enjoys the presence of service projects such as Sur Gate, Hay Al Sharooq Residential Complex, and Hay Al Sharooq International School.

Direct power sales now a reality in Oman

Liberalisation: New mechanism to enable power plants with expired Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) to enter into supply arrangements directly with large, industrial customers

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 3

In what has been welcomed as a lifeline to gas-based power plants that have either fallen out of contract or approaching the expiry of their contracts with state-owned electricity offtaker Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP), the sector's regulator – the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APRS) – has approved a mechanism that makes it possible for these generators to enter into direct supply contracts with large consumers.

The mechanism – the first of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman's power sector – is set out in the Direct Sales Regulatory and Legal Framework, which was approved by the Authority recently. It represents a further step in the ongoing liberalisation of Oman's power sector.

Announcing the introduction of the framework, the Authority said: "Article 22 of the Electricity and Related Water Sector Law



stipulates that the Authority shall review the conditions of the electricity market in order to measure the readiness of the market for further liberalisation.

The outcomes of the studies carried out by the Authority during the past period showed that the electricity market in the Sultanate of Oman has become ready for further liberalisation.

Accordingly, the Authority decided to implement the direct sale mechanism between the electricity producing companies licensed by the Authority and among major consumers other than the Oman Power and Water

Procurement Company SAOC," it added in a statement published on its website this week.

The Direct Sales Framework enables 'bilateral arrangements' agreed directly between generators and major customers, bypassing the state-owned monopoly offtaker OPWP, which is currently the sole buyer of all electricity output under the sector law.

Work on the initiative began last year with assistance from an international consultant that was tapped by the Authority to develop the appropriate regulatory framework in accordance with the requirements of the direct sale

mechanism. The framework also specifies conditions, rules and requirements that must be met by prospective generators seeking licenses to enter into direct sales arrangements with customers.

Beneficiaries will include power plants that have fallen out of contracts and those engaged in the captive power generation business. The Authority explained: "The implementation of the direct sales mechanism, at the first stage, will be limited to generators with expired contracts (PPA) with OPWP and companies that rely on self-production and have an exemption license from the Authority.

Moreover, it is necessary for the regulatory and legal framework for direct sales to consider the technical aspects — mainly to ensure that all economic and technical requirements are met such as: connection to the network, the effects of operating power units on the network, consumption calculation and settlement, ancillary services, and electricity losses."

Besides contributing to system cost savings, the Direct Sales Legal Framework is also expected to incentivise investments in large-scale renewable and green hydrogen projects, which the Omani government is banking on to support its transition away from hydrocarbons.

A pipeline of green energy projects, underpinned by renewable energy capacity aggregating a world-scale 30 gigawatts (GW), is envisaged for implementation in Oman over the coming years and decades. While part of the green hydrogen and green ammonia output from these multibillion-dollar investments is proposed to be exported to international markets, the rest is expected to be utilised locally as a planet-friendly fuel resource to support an array of green industries, as well as zero-carbon transportation and mobility solutions.

Oil jumps more than \$3 as Opec+ weighs biggest output cut since 2020



Pump jacks operate at sunset in Midland, Texas. — Reuters

LONDON: Oil prices jumped by more than \$3 on Monday as Opec+ considers reducing output by more than 1 million barrels per day (bpd) to buttress prices with what would be its biggest cut since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Brent crude futures rebounded \$3.37, or 4 per cent, to \$88.51 a barrel by 11:00 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude was up 4.1 per cent, or \$3.29, at \$82.78.

Oil prices have tumbled for four straight months since June, as Covid-19 lockdowns in top energy consumer China hurt demand while rising interest rates and a surging US dollar weighed on global financial markets.

To support prices, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and its allies, known collectively as Opec+, is considering an output cut of more than 1 million bpd ahead of Wednesday's meeting, Opec+ sources said.

That figure does not include additional voluntary cuts by individual members. If agreed, it will be the group's second consecutive monthly cut after reducing output by 100,000 bpd last month.

The backdrop for this week's meeting is precarious, but the fundamentals of oil are relatively healthy," said Peter McNally, global lead for energy at investment research firm Third Bridge.

"The two biggest question marks are the demand outlook (especially in China) and what happens to Russian supply after the EU ban goes into effect on December 5."

Opec+ missed its production targets by nearly 3 million bpd in July, two sources from the producer group said, as sanctions on some members and low investment by others stymied its ability to raise output. While prompt Brent prices could strengthen further in the immediate short term, concerns over a global recession are likely to limit the upside, consultancy FGE said.

"If Opec+ does decide to cut output in the near term, the resultant increase in Opec+ spare capacity will likely put more downward pressure on long-dated prices," it said in a note on Friday. The dollar index fell for a fourth consecutive day on Monday after touching its highest in two decades. A cheaper dollar could bolster oil demand and support prices. — Reuters

OQ Gas Network signs engineering service contract with GPS



MUSCAT: OQ's Gas Network (OQGN), wholly owned by OQ, signed an agreement with Gulf Petrochemicals Services (GPS) for a maintenance and engineering service contract. As part of this agreement, GPS will provide the entire gamut of day-to-day maintenance portfolio related to OQ's Gas Network (OQGN) assets across the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking on the occasion, Mansoor al Abdali, Managing Director of OQ Gas Network said, "This long-term service contract is vital to our business as it contributes to our Goals towards Reliability and Availability and serves as an effective platform to bring innovation and efficiency in serving our customers.

The scope and scale of this contract is significant and we are happy to partner with GPS as this reinforces our commitment to nurture and mature domestic organisations having capabilities of competing locally and internationally and supporting the country's economic growth. OQGN is delighted to support such organisations to

deliver sustainable outcomes in our facilities- safely and proficiently. We strongly believe that this contract will immensely contribute to our drive to create value through Localisation and enhancing In-Country Value. With long-standing business relationship, we believe GPS is well aligned with OQ expectations and priorities."

Naveen Chana, General Manager of Gulf Petrochemicals Services (GPS) said, "We are honoured that OQ Gas Network has selected us again to provide them with ongoing maintenance services. We will continue to provide top-notch service as we continue to renew this new business partnership."

The contract scope comprises preventive, corrective and predictive maintenance, call-off services and third-party services and also incorporates management and execution of minor scale EPC Projects (New Pipeline connection) which facilitates quicker project initiation/ kick-off and rapid mobilisation. — ONA

\$85 bn-worth investments needed to support sustainable waste management in GCC

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 3

With the expansion of GCC urban areas, municipalities in the GCC are challenged to handle the ever-increasing waste generation through the existing landfill strategies. However, many GCC countries are already investing to improve their waste management, with deals soaring in volume and value in 2019, according to a new report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG) in collaboration with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

The report, titled "Recycling in the GCC: Securing Valuable Resources for a Sustainable Future", finds that securing finite resources for future generations and minimising environmental impact will depend on further increasing waste collection and recycling targets globally as well as across the GCC.

The GCC generates between 105 and 130 million tonnes of waste per annum, primarily from Municipal Solid Waste (MSW), Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW), and agricultural waste, with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) accounting for approximately 75 per cent. The joint WBCSD-BCG study estimates that it will take USD 60-85 billion invested across four key value streams, plastic, concrete & cement, metal, and bio-waste over the next 20 years to meet targets throughout the GCC region. This investment would cover design, collection, sorting, and recycling



investment across these four key waste streams.

"Meeting bold targets and increasing circularity in the GCC region will yield multi-dimensional benefits. Beyond the obvious environmental value, the transition to a circular economy promises economic gains linked to job creation, economic growth, self-sufficiency, and independence from external regulatory pressures," said Shelly Trench, Managing Director and Partner, BCG.

Optimising circularity can moreover increase GDP by approximately \$95 -105 billion across the GCC from the four key waste streams, and therefore accelerate economic diversification away from fossil fuel resources. It will increase independence from environmental regulatory pressures on key regional export goods. Circularity also supports economic independence from imported goods such as fertiliser through bio-waste recycling.

Increasing waste circularity also aligns with environmental and economic benefits since recycling creates over 50 times as many jobs

as landfills and incinerators.

Looking ahead, given additional waste volumes of approximately 255 million tonnes across the four key waste streams, making up 75 per cent of all waste streams to be recycled in 2040 across GCC, this means potential for at least 200 - 300 thousand jobs in the GCC.

"It is estimated that contributing to such global targets is crucial as 80-90 per cent recycling would not only save up to 1.5 billion tonnes of CO2 emission by 2040 in the GCC, helping to reduce global warming, but also protect nature through the conservation of water, land, and biodiversity. Quality of life in the GCC could also be enhanced through reduced air pollution and cleaner, more livable surroundings," said Stefano Castoldi, Principal, BCG.

"These targets positively acknowledge the challenges ahead. They are ambitious considering that it has taken some G20 countries 20-25 years to achieve such high landfill diversion targets from a starting point comparable to that of the GCC today," concluded Trench.

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NOTICE

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Zooming in to see the beauty of small creatures

For photographer Hamed Saud al Busaidy there is so much more to bugs and small creatures than meets the eyes. Hamed is one of the few in Oman that specialises in minutiae — zooming in on insects and other small creatures in order to put in the spotlight these animals' eye colour, wing span, body shape and everything else we often do not see... **P20**



ROHM presents world premiere of Flamenco Meets Tango

THE ROYAL OPERA House Muscat is delighted to present the World Premiere of Flamenco Meets Tango, From Buenos Aires to Seville.

The Compañía Flamenca Antonio Andrade has joined forces with Tango Legends to deliver a vibrant show exploring two of the world's most loved dance and music genres. Each genre has been awarded the

title of 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' by UNESCO, shown to embody the identity and passion of two great countries.

The programme is designed to showcase the best of both genres, moving seamlessly from Flamenco to Tango and back before culminating in a grand finale which merges the two forms and redefines a cul-



tural relationship.

The concept is a Royal Opera House Muscat commission, designed by Javier Andrade of the Compañía Flamenca Antonio Andrade and produced by ConArte Music and Management for Teatro Flamenco Sevilla. Flamenco is brought to you by the musical genius of guitarist and artistic director, Antonio Andrade and his Flamenco dance company, while the Tango is presented by the Cinco Esquinas Quintet, the singer Solange Freyre and the dance partners of Guillermo León and Rebecca Nuñez, Mariano Otero and Alejandra Heredia and Gonzalo Capitani and Carolina González.

The show will be a stunning visual journey into a dramatic world of music and dance. Be inspired by the cultural experience and the originality of this World Premiere.

The performance will take place at the Royal Opera House Muscat over two nights on October 6 & 7, at 7pm. For more details or to book tickets please visit the ROHM box office, website or app.

READ

FAIRY TALE

BY STEPHEN KING

A high school kid inherits a shed that is a portal to another world where good and evil are at war.



TRAVEL TALES

Hundreds of devotees flocked to temples and staged processions to celebrate the annual vegetarian festival this week on the island of Phuket in southern Thailand, being held for the first time after the Covid-19 pandemic eased. — Reuters



FASHION

US rapper Kanye West (C), attends the Givenchy Spring-Summer 2023 fashion show during the Paris Womenswear Fashion Week, in Paris. — AFP





‘Moroccan nomads’ way of life threatened by climate change

IN THE BLISTERING DESERT of Morocco, the country's last Berber nomads, the Amazigh, say their ancient lifestyle is under threat as climate change brings ever-more intense droughts.

"Everything has changed," said Moha Ouchaali, his wrinkled features framed by a black turban. "I don't recognise myself anymore in the world of today. Even nature is turning against us."

Ouchaali, an Amazigh man in his 50s,

is steadily disappearing.

According to the last census, just 25,000 people in Morocco were nomadic in 2014, down by two-thirds in just a decade.

"We're exhausted," Ouchaali's 45-year-old wife Ida said emotionally.

"Before, we managed to live decently, but all these droughts, more and more intense, make our lives complicated. Without water we can't do anything,"

added.

In easier times, the Ait Aissa Izem would pass the summer in the relatively cool mountain valley of Imilchil, before heading to the area around regional capital Errachidia for the winter.

"That's ancient history," Ouchaali said, sitting in his tent and taking a sip of sweet Moroccan tea. "Today we go wherever there's a bit of water left, to try to save the animals."

Driss Skounti, elected to represent nomads in the region, said the area used to have around 460 tents. Today, they don't even add up to a tenth of that number.

'TIRED OF FIGHTING'

Some Moroccan nomads have given up their ancient lifestyle altogether – and not just because of the ever-worsening climate.

"I was tired of fighting," said Haddou Oudach, 67, who settled permanently in Er-Rich in 2010.

"We've become outcasts from society. I can't even imagine what nomads are going through today."

Moha Haddachi, the head of an association for the Ait Aissa Izem nomads, said social and economic changes were making a nomadic lifestyle ever-more difficult.

The scarcity of pastures due to land privatisation and agricultural investment also contributes to the difficulties, he said.

"Agricultural investors now dominate the spaces where nomads used to graze their herds."

Nomads also face hostility from some villagers, angered by those camping in their region despite officially belonging to other provinces.

A law was passed in 2019 to delineate where nomads and sedentary farmers could graze their animals, but "nobody applies it", Haddachi said.

Former nomad Oudach is despondent about "this era of selfishness where everyone thinks only of themselves".

"It wasn't always like this, we used to be welcomed everywhere we went," he said.

Embarking on a life of nomadism



has set up an encampment near a dry riverbed in barren hills about 280 kilometres (174 miles) east of Marrakesh.

Amid the rocky, arid landscape near the village of Amellagou, he and his family have pitched two black woollen tents, lined with old animal fodder bags and fabric scraps.

One is for sleeping and hosting guests, the other serves as a kitchen.

"Water has become hard to find. Temperatures are going up and the drought is so harsh, but we can't do much," said Ouchaali.

His tribe, the Ait Aissa Izem, has spent centuries roaming the country to find food for their animals, but their way of life

'LAST NAIL IN COFFIN'

This year has seen Morocco's worst drought in four decades.

Rainfall is set to decline by 11 per cent and average temperatures set to rise by 1.3 per cent by 2050, according to forecasts from the Ministry of Agriculture.

"Nomads have always been seen as a barometer of climate change," said anthropologist Ahmed Skounti.

"If these people, used to living in extreme conditions, can't resist the intensity of global warming, that means things are bad."

The drying up of water resources was "the last nail in the coffin for nomads", he

Severe water shortages have even pushed some nomads to take the rare step of taking out loans to feed their livestock, their most vital asset.

"I've gone into debt to buy food for my animals so they don't starve to death," said Ahmed Assni, 37, sitting by a tiny, almost dried-out stream near Amellagou.

Saeed Ouhada said the difficulties had pushed him to find accommodation for his wife and children in Amellagou, while he stays with his parents in a camp on the edge of the town.

"Being a nomad isn't what it used to be," he said. "I'll keep at it because I have to. My parents are old but they refuse to live in a town."

offers little to young people.

Houda Ouchaali, 19, says she can't stand watching her parents "suffering and battling just to survive".

"The new generation wants to turn the page on nomadism," she said.

She now lives with an uncle in Er-Rich and is looking for professional training to allow her to "build a future" and escape the "stigmatising gaze that city people often have for nomads".

Driss Skounti said he had little hope for the future of nomadism.

"Nomadic life has an identity and a tradition steeped in history," he said, "but is doomed to disappear within 10 years." — AFP

CHANGING WORLD

Skin whitening products remain popular in Cameroon despite risks



WEARING A LARGE hat protecting her face from the sun's rays in Cameroon, 63-year-old Jeanne now bitterly regrets using skin whitening products after being diagnosed with skin cancer.

She is one of many women in Cameroon who use the controversial products that have been banned after social media outrage.

"I am embarrassed when people look at me," the trader in the capital of Yaounde said, wishing to only use her first name.

After a lesion grew on her face over five months, she went to a doctor who diagnosed her with one of the most common skin cancers.

Doctors told her the cancer is linked to her use of skin lightening products for 40 years.

Jeanne, like millions worldwide, used the products for more "desirable" lighter skin, an ideal pushed by the beauty industry.

According to the Cameroon Dermatology Society (Socaderm), nearly 30 per cent of residents in the economic capital Douala and a quarter of school-girls used the products in 2019.

For some like 20-year-old student Annette, the effects can be harsh. She said she suffers from red patches on her face, peeling skin and also burns.

"Under a strong sun, my face became hot and I had to stop," she said.

The products with names like "White now" and "Super white", are instantly recognisable on shop shelves by the fair-skinned women on the packaging.

DANGEROUS CHEMICALS

The furore began in the summer after social media users criticised opposition MP Nourane Fotsing over her company that sells the products, angry that an elected official would profit from them.

Many of the products have never been scientifically tested and contain dangerous levels of chemicals that inhibit the production of melanin, a substance produced in the body by exposure to the sun.

One of the chemicals is hydroquinone, banned in the European Union since 2001 because of the risk of cancer and genetic mutations.

Cameroon's health ministry on August 19 banned the import, production and distribution of cosmetic and personal hygiene products containing dangerous substances such as hydroquinone and mercury.

Hydroquinone is in fact one of the most used in whitening products in Cameroon, according to a 2019 study by Yaounde I University.

'PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM'

"We encounter patients complaining of symptoms linked to skin depigmentation every day," Alain Patrice Meledie Ndjong, a dermatologist at a hospital in Douala, said.

It is a "public health problem".

According to the World Health Organization, the products are commonly used in many African, Asian and Caribbean countries by both women and men, and also among dark-skinned populations in Europe and North America.

Other skin whitening products include potions, tablets and even injections.

Some of the substances, when ingested, can cause diabetes, obesity, hypertension or kidney or liver failure, warned Ndjong, adding there was also a psychological impact on individuals like "anxiety and depression".

Despite the horror stories, men and women believe they will become more beautiful after using the products.

"Beauty standards promoted by media, advertising and marketing reinforce the bias that lighter skin tone is more desirable than darker skin tone."

Sociologist Achille Pinghane Yonta of Yaounde University offers blunter analysis of why the creams remain popular:

"There is a desire" rooted "in our consciences to want to look like" Western populations, he said.

"It's a very old practice. It's even said, in some parts of the country, that a light-skinned woman's dowry is higher than that of a darker woman."

But for Pascaline Mbida, she felt the difference.

"I noticed that men were more attracted to women with lighter skin and I had confirmation of this when I whitened my skin, I had never got so much attention," Mbida said.

BLACK MARKET

But the cost put off Mbida, who is currently unemployed. She spent 30,000 Central African Francs (45 euros) per month on the products.

The mandatory monthly minimum wage in Cameroon is 36,270 (55 euros).

Since the ban, police have launched raids, much to the chagrin of the sector's players who claim some seizures don't distinguish between the products that are banned by the government and those that are not.

The WHO in 2019 said "the skin lightening industry is one of the fastest growing" worldwide and was estimated to be worth \$31.2 billion by 2024.

The cosmetic and personal hygiene market grew in Cameroon by seven per cent in 2020 and was worth 380 billion CFA (around 580 million euros).

Despite the ban, there is already a black market for the products. — AFP



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AROUND THE WORLD

AUCTION

Licence to bill: Bond's Aston Martin sells for nearly £3 million



A REPLICA OF AN Aston Martin DB5 used for the stunts in James Bond blockbuster "No Time to Die" sold for nearly £3 million at auction on Wednesday, auction house Christie's said.

Proceeds from the sale, which fetched £2.92 million (\$3.18 million), will be donated to charity, along with receipts from the sale of 24 other lots auctioned at a special sale of items marking 60 years of 007.



The replica comes fitted with imitation machine guns behind the headlights.

A further 35 lots have been put up for auction online until October 5.

The replica of the iconic Aston, one of eight specially designed and manufactured for the 2021 film, is the only DB5 stunt car put up for sale by Aston Martin and EON productions, according to Christie's.

Other items on sale include cars as well as notable costumes and accessories linked to the franchise. — **AFP**

FASHION

L'Oreal Paris hosts exuberant catwalk presentation at fashion week



L'OREAL PARIS sent a pack of models and dancers down a giant runway in the centre of the French capital on Sunday, throwing the spotlight on its hair and beauty products in a star-studded show that was beamed around the world on digital channels.

"A fashion show is a nice way to show what we know how to do with hair colouring and make-up," Delphine Viguiet-Hovasse, global brand president of L'Oreal Paris told Reuters in an interview.

Models including Camille Emilie Razat, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau, Eva Longoria, Gemma Chan and Soo Joo Park sashayed down the catwalk, blowing kisses and twirling for photographers.

Andie MacDowell had sparkling eye make-up and a glittering, feather-lined dress, while Coco Rocha donned a slick, electric green mini-dress with matching boots, her bob cut straight.

Part of the L'Oreal group, which also owns Maybelline and Lancome, the label sits in the accessible luxury range, selling products spanning shampoo to more sophisticated skin treatments, costing from around 2.50 euros and to around 35 euros.

Members of the public were invited to the event, which was also shown on digital channels including Instagram, where it counts 10 million followers, and TikTok.

"It is obvious that TikTok is a digital platform that carries an enormous amount of weight with young people because it's a video platform — and we know that video is the format that is most watched," said Viguiet-Hovasse.

The L'Oreal group has been benefitting from a strong, post-pandemic rebound in demand for beauty products. — **Reuters**



A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



Dr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi
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Wadi Darbat Operation

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

Our regiment received orders to depart for Salalah to replace the Northern Frontiers Regiment. We had to cross the Dhofar mountains before the khareef season. By about mid-June, 1966, we set off by road, cutting across the Empty Quarter. It took us approximately seven days to arrive at the Om al Ghwaraf Camp.

During those days all the military barracks in Om al Ghwaraf were ready. The Muscat Regiment was the first to stay in them. We stayed there until August, engaged in daily exercises across the Jarbeeb Plain (Eteen), carrying out ambushes at the entrances of the valleys in Reshum, Jardom, Jarzeez, Nheez and Sahnot.

On intelligence of some anti-government activity, we received in the same month, August, orders to head towards Wadi Darbat. This took us, the soldiers, by surprise, as it came concurrent with the khareef, something akin to committing suicide. Nonetheless, more dangerous than suicide was not to obey the order; we had but do our duty notwithstanding weather conditions and seasons.

While heading towards Wadi Darbat, we took the "Rori" Lagoon as our headquarters. We stayed there for two nights. In the morning, we climbed up the mountain, walking amidst swamps while the rain persisted, till we arrived at the coconuts-laden entrance of the valley. Because the sun was about to set and the fog too heavy, we had few chances to move on, thus, we decided to spend the night at that spot.

As usual, we dug trenches in case of a possible night attack. When night fell the trenches

burnt like embers, for they were swarmed by a type of long, mud living insect we called "ghaweel alma". By digging through the mud, we found that we had cut them up, and they oozed fire-like blood.

Some soldiers thought that was due to sorcery and, as a result, climbed out of the trenches. It was something, though, quite ordinary for us, the palm tree people. On our explanation, they came back to their places.

The following day, we resumed our journey at mid-day, heading deep inside the valley. Our group consisted of three platoons, the 9th, the 10th and the 11th; from the third company, the Muscat Regiment, under the command of Maj. Revend and another British captain. We patrolled the area as we moved on slowly.

When we reached the head of the valley in the evening, our commander ordered us to spend the night in a big cave due to heavy rain. Because the cave was directly exposed to a lake, the soldiers felt rather uncomfortable with the prospect of being surrounded by the enemy. Amongst the soldiers who were of the view that we look for another place was Sgt. Mohammed bin Masaud al Busaidi, supported by other soldiers. Of course, the military man had but to obey the order.

After discussions between the commander and the heads of the other platoons, it was decided that we look for an alternative place. We did find another cave, spacious enough for three platoons, with a strategic location. We spent our night there. The following day we left the cave in the morning and spread out to inspect the area as we were instructed. We came back to the cave in the evening. I remember in the two nights we spent there we were stung several times by "Arnot", a small insect rather active in the khareef period. Most of the soldiers fell ill.

art & life

Local Scene

f t i y l n @omanobserver

TUESDAY | OCTOBER 4 | 2022



Zooming in to see the beauty of small creatures

By Mai al Abri

There are over one million documented bug species around the world and many of these critters live right outside your door. The bulk of us regard them as repulsive animals and they are rarely regarded as a source of beauty. Others are even puzzled as to what they contribute to the ecosystem.

For photographer Hamed bin Saud al Busaidy however, there is so much more to these creatures than meets the eyes. Hamed is one of the few in Oman that specialises in minutiae — zooming in on insects and other small creatures in order to put in the spotlight these animals' eye colour, wing span, body shape and everything else we often do not see.

Despite the considerable effort, the hefty materials, the lengthy search, and the complex set-up, he says that this is the only style of photography that interests him.

Over time, Hamed's interest also started to pique the curiosity of other people and he now enjoys a good following on social media because of his unique content.

WHAT THRUST YOU INTO THE WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY?

As I carry on the profession of my late cousin Hamad al Busaidy, who founded the first Omani photography forum at the time, my commitment to photography may be somewhat different from that of other photographers. I used to own a basic camera. I was motivated to enter the business with the same enthusiasm and passion that he had for photography when he passed away in 2009. I chose to illuminate fauna that conceals subtleties that cannot be seen with the unaided eye as a change of pace.

In truth, I have worked in several fields of photography,

including documentation. I also have several works in various sectors. But, through my social media profiles, I try to keep the majority of my work focused on the natural world.

IN THIS PARTICULAR GENRE OF PHOTOGRAPHY, WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING OR RISKY PART?

Actually, there aren't many hazards in Oman. We constantly seek the advice of professionals in the field of insects and reptiles on how to handle these critters. These hazards are usually avoided. In our search expeditions, there can be a few minor bites from insects like wasps, bee flies, and mosquitoes.

AS A NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER, WHAT'S THE MOST IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE ONE MUST POSSESS BEFORE EMBARKING ON ANY TRIP?

A wildlife photographer cannot be ignorant of natural organism behaviour. Documenting some unique behaviours, for example, some insects are present at a given time of year and some follow a certain behaviour in certain months, is considerably facilitated by information and understanding in this area. In order to benefit the audience of the image when presenting each work, it is also vital to know the types and names of insects.

THE VIBRANT COLOURS AND THE DETAILS OF YOUR WORK HAVE BEEN IMMENSE. HOW DO YOU CURATE WHAT YOU PUT OUT IN PUBLIC?

I always prefer it when my works aren't only documentation of insects, but also have an aesthetic quality, whether it's showcasing the intricacies or highlighting a certain habit or colour that insects have. As the photographer cannot modify the colour of the bug, I always attempt to develop the work in an aesthetic manner that fascinates the audience while retain-

ing the colours of the original insect.

WHAT IS THE GOOD AND BAD THINGS ABOUT MAKING YOUR WORK ACCESSIBLE TO SOCIAL MEDIA?

I am not looking for fame, but rather to promote knowledge in this sector and correct some misinformation. When showing bug works, we constantly meet certain drawbacks since the audience for this sort of photography is too small. We want to spread the word about it.

To some extent, sure, and we always amend public facts. For example, the news of the expansion of the extremely high toxicity black widow spider, also known as the red-back spider was wrong. It is a local peaceful spider with numerous species in Oman. Fortunately, some concerned parties and people contacted us and asked us to refer them to professionals for more precise information.

WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN A FEW YEARS?

I am now looking for a technological technique to document a larger number of insects from the Omani environment. I wish that the institutions here collaborate by doing scientific and technological study on this subject, rather than focusing on specific pests, because all insects are considered important to the environment and to humans. I have attempted to contribute to various special publications on Omani wildlife, and we have published a technical book on Omani wildlife linked with the Photographic Society of Oman. It is probable that several versions of such technical and instructional resources would exist in this subject.

