

HM thanked by Emperor of Japan

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from Emperor Naruhito of Japan, in reply to His Majesty's condolences cable on the death of the former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. In his cable, Emperor Naruhito expressed his sincere appreciation to His Majesty's heartfelt sentiments, wishing His Majesty good health, happiness and long life. – **ONA**



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OPEC+ AGREES SMALL OIL PRODUCTION CUT



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17TH CENTURY SCOTTISH CASTLE GOES ON SALE FOR £625,000



Outage throws life out of gear

TECHNICAL FAILURE IN TRANSMISSION LINE LED TO POWER DISRUPTION

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Major power outage in Muscat and some other governorates threw life out of gear for few hours on Monday, as traffic signals stopped functioning, work in offices, schools, banks and stock exchange came to an abrupt halt.

The outage affected the governorates of Muscat, parts of North and South Al Batinah, North and South Al Sharqiyah, and Al Dakhiliyah. The power supply was restored within three to four hours in a phased manner in affected areas.

Essential services, including hospitals, ran on power generators, while many found solace in their vehicles by putting car ACs on. The power supply got disrupted at around 1.45 pm on Monday.

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) issued statements explaining the situation in which it stated the Electricity Main Interconnected System (EMIS) faced partial blackout.

A source from the Public



Vehicular movement came to a halt as traffic signals stopped working.

Authority for Electricity and Water (PAEW) said the snag was due to a power failure in the main grid owing to excessive consumption of power.

Vehicular movement in major cities came to a halt, while minor accidents were reported due to chaos at traffic signals, which stopped working.

Many commercial complexes and offices had to shut down for a few hours till the electricity was restored.

The Emergency Cases Management Centre at the Ministry

of Health said that health institutions in the governorates affected by the power outage are not affected, and are operating at their normal efficiency with the help of backup generators.

Sources at the APSR further said that power supply has been partially restored in areas including Muscat, parts of Al Mawaleh, Ghala, Al Misfat, Ghala Heights, Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos.

In the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah, power was restored fully in Nizwa, Adam, Izki, and

parts of Bahla.

In South Al Batinah, electricity in Nakhl and Barka has been restored fully, while efforts are on to restore power supply in parts of Al Rustaq.

In North Al Sharqiyah, power restoration was completed in Samad al Shan and Sinaw.

“This is the first time that I have seen a power outage for so long, and I hope it would be rectified soon,” Azra Aleem, an expatriate living in Oman for nearly four decades, told the *Observer*.

The third APSR statement said electricity supply was restored in parts of Al Seeb, Samayil, Izki and Nizwa, and parts of Al Suwaiq and Barka areas.

By 5:30 pm, power supply was restored in almost all the affected areas. The work is on to restore electricity supply to other affected areas.

Nama Group clarified that the cause of the interruption is a technical failure in one of the transmission lines of the network, stressing that work is under way to complete the return of service to the rest of the affected areas.

Truss wins party nod to be next British PM

LONDON: Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is set to be the next prime minister of Britain after winning a vote of Conservative Party members.

Truss received 81,326 votes, compared to 60,399 votes for her rival Rishi Sunak, the counting revealed on Monday.

In her victory speech, Truss promised a “bold plan” to cut taxes and boost the economy and “deliver on the energy crisis, dealing with people’s energy bills but also dealing with the long-term issues we have on energy supply.” She also praised outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson: “Boris, you got Brexit done, you crushed Jeremy Corbyn, you rolled out the vaccine and you stood up to Vladimir Putin. You were admired from Kiev to Carlisle.”

She finished her speech promising to win the next election. “I know that we will deliver, we will deliver and we will deliver,” Truss said.

Defeated Tory leadership contender Rishi Sunak accepted

HM congratulates new UK premier

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to Liz Truss on being elected as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK). In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to Truss, wishing her success in carrying out her duties. His Majesty also wished the relations between Oman and the UK further development and growth. – **ONA**

his defeat, saying: “It’s right we now unite behind the new PM, Liz Truss, as she steers the country through difficult times.”

Johnson said his successor Truss “has the right plan to tackle the cost of living crisis, unite our party and continue the great work of uniting and levelling up our country.” **SEE ALSO P5**

Omani consortium acquires \$1.5-bn India power plant

SINGAPORE: A consortium led by Oman Investment Corporation (OIC) in partnership with the Ministry of Defence Pension Fund, and a local investment firm, has announced acquisition of a power plant in India which is owned by Singapore’s Sembcorp Industries. The acquisition is worth \$1.5 billion, with an estimated production capacity of 2.6 gigawatts.

This was announced following the signing of an agreement with Sembcorp Industries in Singapore. The deal will accelerate the transition of Oman Investment Corporation into a global company based in Oman and specialised in managing investment assets. The

signing was attended by Anwar bin Ahmed Muqaibal, the Sultanate of Oman’s Consulate General for Republic of Singapore.

This deal progresses OIC’s vision to build an international asset management business headquartered in Oman. OIC is a leading Omani private equity investment company established in 2005 with a strong track record in establishing, investing in and growing businesses.

OIC focuses on investing in energy and infrastructure projects, real estate, logistics, healthcare as well as asset and project management services.

DETAILS ON P13

PROTECTING THE OZONE LAYER



Since its ratification of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete Ozone Layer in 1998, the Sultanate of Oman has actively contributed to the efforts of the international community aimed at protecting the ozone layer and protecting all forms of life on the planet. **DETAILS ON P2**

OMAN FM 90.4

SUNSET DRIVE

WEEKDAYS AT 4PM

WITH CHASE & BUBBA YU





MoSD holds forum on juvenile delinquents

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Social Development, represented by the Department of Juvenile Affairs, held the first forum on aftercare for juvenile delinquents, at the Grand Millennium hotel, on Monday.

The three-day forum, attended by 50 participants from the Ministry of Social Development and its partners, was aimed at acquainting with the concept of aftercare for juvenile delinquents, reviewing the latest international approaches of aftercare for juvenile delinquents, training workers on devising assistant programmes and mechanisms to help juveniles undergoing aftercare programme in a manner that sustains behaviour change and enable them to integrate into the society.

Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, Minister of Social Development, presided over the forum opening. The event was attended by a number of the ministry's officials.

The Minister of Social Development said that the forum aims to provide skills and experiences for workers in the field



of aftercare for juvenile delinquents after the end of their sentence and help them to integrate into society.

The minister pointed to the efforts being made to preserve the traditions and norms and inculcating the Omani identity and the feeling of belonging to the country through providing programmes and activities that contribute to family cohesion

which the ministry considers as a key factor in protecting children against delinquency.

Mohammed bin Ali al Saadi, Director-General of Social Care at the Ministry of Social Development, delivered the ministry's speech in which he said: "The reality of humankind is shrouded in mystery. By their nature, humans are by nature

prone to delinquency in a changing society. Globalisation and the technological revolution have resulted in an unprecedented increase in the number of juvenile delinquents in the Arab world. The statistics indicate that there were 283 juvenile delinquents by the end of 2020."

Al Saadi added that Oman Vision 2040 is the country's

gateway to overcome challenges and keep pace with regional and global changes in order to boost the economy and enhance social welfare all across the Sultanate of Oman. Welfare and social protection are among the government's top priorities. Social protection is among the fundamentals of Oman Vision 2040 which aims to achieve integrated social protection directed to the neediest groups to enable them to become self-reliant and contribute to the national economy. Another objective of Oman Vision 2040 is to create a society covered with an effective, sustainable and fair social protection network.

Based on the Oman Vision 2040, the Ministry of Social Development, has adopted the Social Action Strategy (2016-2025) with regard to social protection being one of the main axes that seek to provide social care and protection as part of the development plans and programmes.

RO 4 million paediatrics centre to be set up



MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) and Al Jisr Foundation on Monday signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) to establish Centre for Excellence for Developmental Paediatrics to the tune of RO 4 million.

The MoC was signed by HH Sayyid Dr Fahd al Julanda al Said, Vice Chancellor of SQU and Nouf bint Abdullah al Hosniyah of Al Jisr Foundation. The MoC aims to consolidate the concept of smart partnership between civil institutions and the public sector. The move also comes in line with SQU's drive to establish a centre for developmental paediatrics to serve the segment of society in need of this service, as well as to achieve SQU's pioneering role in paediatrics and training Omani medical staff.

Dina al Khalili, General Manager of Al Jisr Foundation said that the centre is expected to contribute to early detection, intervention and reduction of disabilities. Dr Watfa bint Said al Maamariyah, Senior Consultant of Child Health at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital (SQUH), said that the hospital provides diagnostic services for 70 per cent of children with developmental disorders and disabilities in Oman. She added that statistics indicate approximately 10 per cent of children have such disorders. The number of Omani children with disabilities aged below 18, according to the 2020 e-census, reached 1,185,059 constituting 43 per cent of total of the Omani population, which needs to be taken into consideration, Al Maamari affirmed. — ONA

Oman actively contributes in ozone layer protection

MUSCAT: Since its ratification of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete Ozone Layer in 1998, the Sultanate of Oman has actively contributed to the efforts of the international community aimed at protecting the ozone layer and protecting all forms of life on the planet.

Oman was able to meet and achieve all requirements for compliance with the Montreal Protocol, as it ratified the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.

Further, Oman worked on preparing a national programme to determine the procedures and

requirements for the disposal of ozone-depleting substances in accordance with the Montreal Protocol, as well as the issuance of a legislative regulation that defines the legal responsibility for the requirements of the protection of the ozone layer.

As part of the effective efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in protecting the ozone layer, a national team has been formed under the Executive Committee for Climate Change and Ozone Layer Protection. The move aims at coordinating policies and procedures for the requirements of ozone layer protection and

achieving requirements of compliance with the Montreal Protocol.

Additionally, an electronic system has been approved for importing ozone-depleting substances in accordance with the reduction requirements as per the protocol.

The National Ozone Unit in the Sultanate of Oman provides technical support and training in many vital sectors in a bid to contribute to the elimination of ozone-depleting substances, and the transition to materials and technologies that are not harmful to the ozone layer.

Moreover, Oman was able to stop consumption of materials with a high ozone depletion factor by the end of 2010 through implementing a national strategy to get rid of these materials.

Oman has also implemented a national strategy in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to completely phase out the use of ozone-depleting substances by 2030.

The Sultanate of Oman began coordinating with the competent

authorities to approve the licensing system for technicians working in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector. The move aims to ensure the application of best practices and the adoption of special specifications in terms of energy efficiency of domestic cooling devices, in addition to coordinating with the UNIDO to develop safety specifications for flammable refrigerants, and to inspect imported shipments to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Montreal Protocol, as well as ensuring their quality and purity.

— ONA

Experts set agenda for Green Hydrogen Summit Oman

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

A high-calibre advisory body of local and international energy sector executives gathered together in the mountaintop resort town of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar last week to put the finishes touches to a thought-provoking and engaging programme agenda for the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman 2022 – Global Conference and Exhibition, due to be held in Muscat later this year.

The three-day event, set to take place from December 5-7, 2022 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), will help shine a powerful spotlight on Oman's potential to evolve into a global-scale producer and exporter of green hydrogen. Backed by Oman Vision 2040 and the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, GHSO 2022 has the support of a wide array of prestigious international and local energy organisations, notably the International Energy Agency (IEA), OQ Group, Energy Development Oman (EDO), Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), Asyad Group, and OPAL.

Crafting an innovative and impactful conference agenda is the responsibility of the GHSO Technical Committee, whose members met in scenic Al Jabal



Al Akhdhar to brainstorm and finalise the programme.

The Technical Committee comprises Prof Michael Modigell (Chair); Dr Ruth Prelicz, Expert on Sustainable Energy and Hydrogen, AHK Oman; Basil Elzein, Integration Manager, Shell Oman; Dr Khalil al Hanashi, Energy Technology Lead – Energy renewable unit, PDO; Monica Trench, Hydrogen Origination and Business Development, BP; Dr Zakiya al Azri, Corporate Research and Development Adviser, PDO; Maher Ayed, Regional Director

— Energy Transition: hydrogen-carbon capture and storage UAE; Dr Olav Carlsen, Founder and CEO, Hydrogen Rise LLC; Dr Rashid al Abri, Assistant Professor, SQU; and Mohammed al Tae, Project Engineer Manager, Oman LNG.

Delighted to have influential energy sector executives meeting in his resort town, Ali al Busaidy, Wali of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, attended the opening to extend a warm welcome to the committee members. Speaking on the

occasion, he provided an overview of the important initiatives under way in the newly established wilayat to support sustainable tourism while carefully preserving the fragile environment of this popular holiday destination. Later, as an apt finale to their meeting, the Committee members visited the distinctive natural and geographical attractions of the wilayat.

Following an extensive review of the programme agenda proposed at an earlier meeting, The Technical Committee finalised

Clean hydrogen continues to make strides in the global energy arena. The Green Hydrogen Summit Oman will be the forum where technical experts, hydrogen producers, hydrogen consumers and policymakers meet to support the development of hydrogen economy locally and globally

DR KHALIL AL HANASHI
Energy renewable unit, PDO

the speakers for four key sessions focusing on the following themes: Green Hydrogen Production Technologies; Green Hydrogen Plant Design and Usage; Certification and Regulation; and Green Hydrogen Transportation and Storage. Abstracts submitted by key experts were also reviewed for quality, substance, style and focus.

The brainstorming session that followed yielded the makings of a coherent, substantive and impactful conference agenda featuring topics that align with

Oman's own strategic vision for a green hydrogen-based energy future.

Committee Members broadly hailed the meeting as a resounding success. Dr Olav Carlsen of Hydrogen Rise commented, "Bringing together smart minds with a common goal in an offsite away from the daily routines was again very successful. The summit is an extraordinarily important event for the building of the future hydrogen economy in Oman. It is now, that global investment decisions are made and international hydrogen supply partnerships are planned. Placing Oman in the focus of these developments is a national responsibility by all of us. For this a dedicated and detailed planning of content and context for the summit is most important and we at Hydrogen Rise are proud to have been again part of it in a team of such engaged contributors from industry, academia and government."

Dr Khalil al Hanashi of PDO said, "Clean hydrogen continues to make strides in the global energy arena. The Green Hydrogen Summit Oman will be the forum where technical experts, hydrogen producers, hydrogen consumers and policymakers meet to support the development of hydrogen economy locally and globally."



Research claims breakthrough in treatment of Alzheimer’s disease



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A study on early detection of Alzheimer’s in the Sultanate of Oman claims to have developed a medical device ‘Ganglio-Nav’ for an early detection of the disease. The study, entitled ‘WithYou — A clinical decision support system for early detection of Alzheimer in the Sultanate of Oman’ is the brainchild of a group of doctors and academicians. The research is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (MoHERI), and the report will be circulated on Tuesday, according to the researchers. “We have developed a medical device ‘Ganglio-Nav’ for an early detection of Alzheimer’s. This is crucial for the treatment of the disease,” said Dr Sherimon PC at

Arab Open University. According to the latest data released by the WHO, Alzheimer’s & dementia deaths in the Sultanate of Oman have reached 323 or 2.18 per cent of total deaths. The country ranks 24 in the world and the age-adjusted death rate here is 22.46 per 100,000 of population. Researchers have found out that chronic stress may be one of the factors involved in the development of Alzheimer’s as constant stress can affect the brain’s immune system leading to dementia symptoms. Additionally, age is the biggest risk factor for Alzheimer’s and it mainly affects people over 65. A person’s risk of developing Alzheimer’s doubles about every five years after 65 and one in six people over 80 have dementia while many of them have Alzheimer’s disease.

“We have developed a medical device ‘Ganglio-Nav’ for an early detection of Alzheimer’s. This is crucial for the treatment of the disease

DR SHERIMON PC
Arab Open University

To extend support and to create awareness on Alzheimer’s, the Oman Alzheimer’s Society was founded by Dr Hamed al Sinawi in 2013 and has been a member of ADI (Alzheimer’s Disease International) since 2018. Based in Muscat, the Oman Alzheimer’s Society have recently

launched a Dementia Friends programme to support those at the risk of Alzheimer’s and dementia. Dr Renchi Mathew, an associate in the research said the device uses the latest advancements in machine learning and works through the implementation of a mobile application. A formal demonstration of the technical nuances of the device and how it can be used in a beneficial manner will be conducted during the research dissemination meeting. Arab Open University, Royal Oman Police (ROP) hospital and University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Muscat worked jointly for the project. “We plan to disseminate our findings on Tuesday, in front of a large number of invitees from various authorities and scholars and other academicians,” said Dr Sherimon.

Fire incidents go up in 2021

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The Sultanate of Oman reported 4,058 fire-related incidents in 2021, compared to 3,409 in 2020, 3,864 in 2019, 4,602 in 2018 and 4,748 in 2017. According to the Statistical Yearbook of the National Centre of Statistics and Information (NCSI), 1,353 incidents or 33.3 per cent of the total cases were reported in Muscat in 2021, followed by 904 cases in North Al Batinah, 379 cases in Al Dakhiliyah, 342 in South Al Batinah and 214 in South Al Sharqiyah. Overall, nearly 29.3 per cent of cases were reported from housing facilities, 20.1per cent from vehicles, and 21.3 per cent from residues. It may be noted house and industrial fires are reported in the capital on a regular basis.

According to sources in the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA), fire-related cases generally increase during summer. If not controlled in time can lead to a loss of human life and properties. One of the main reasons is the failure to maintain and update fire safety equipment. The causes of vehicle fires have been due to neglect and lack of seriousness while maintaining the vehicle at regular intervals, especially the presence of enough water in the coolant can reduce the occurrence of such fire incidents. To avoid electricity-related fires and their dangers, according to CDAA, people should follow preventive measures at home by avoiding touching the devices with wet hands, tampering with the devices, and trying self-repairs as these should be left to competent persons.



The firefighting teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority extinguish fire that broke out in a building in Muttrah.

HOME AMBULANCE SERVICE LAUNCHED



MUSCAT : The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority launched the second phase of the home ambulance service in several governorates to provide advanced emergency medical care to cases that citizens, residents and visitors. Home ambulance service is available in the governorates of Muscat, South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, North Al Batinah, Al Wusta, Al Dhahirah, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Buraimi and Musandam. The service will be implemented in the rest of the governorates soon.

Job training procedures begin at MTC

MUSCAT: Interviews and tests required for admission to the work-related training programme began at the Military Technical College (MTC) in coordination with the Ministry of Labour, on Monday. Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, visited the MTC on Monday to inspect the procedures. He took a tour around the facilities and training workshops at the college. During his visit to the MTC, Al Busaidy said: “No doubt that this academic edifice has a great contribution in creating a patriotic generation that is armed with knowledge, good conduct, discipline and a passion for acquiring skills and sciences. This



visit has enhanced the existing cooperation between the Ministry of Labour and the MTC in the field of employment-related training and also opened new horizons for joint cooperation between the two sides in a number of modern technological programmes. We are proud of all nationals who are in charge of the MTC and I wish the MTC more progress and development.” — ONA

Education ministry holds training in managing sports events

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Administrative Affairs — Department of Training and Rehabilitation, organised a training programme in managing sports events and tournaments in cooperation with the Omani School Sports Federation and the Ocean Institute. The training programme kicked-off on Sunday and will continue until Thursday at Al Amal Club. The implementation

of this training programme comes in light of the increase in the number of events organised annually by the sports committees in the educational governorates. These 100 odd sports events require organising by specialists in managing events. The programme targets 34 employees of the Office of the Omani School Sports Federation and the educational governorates to provide them with effective management skills and accurate planning. Participants in the programme

will obtain qualification to work in the management of sports events, through several themes, including methods of organising, evaluating, and managing sports events, financial and accounting management of sports events, management of sponsorship, financiers, designers, suppliers, stakeholders and the public, and attracting, managing and training employees and volunteers to work in sporting events, marketing sports events, and managing risks related to sports events.





WATCH OUT FOR CHILDREN

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

The death of a student on the very first day of the new academic year sounded an alarm bell for traffic safety for school-going children in the Sultanate of Oman.

It was a painful incident not only for the members of Umm Waraqah School in South Maabala but also for all those who heard about the tragic incident in which a student was run over on Sunday.

It is necessary to harness all efforts to spread traffic awareness among road users to ensure the safety of school students.

It is very equally necessary to take necessary measures before the beginning of the school year, including procedures to ensure the availability of special requirements for buses and the availability of all means of security and safety in accordance with the specific controls in coordination with the Ministry of Education

and in line with the Traffic Law and its executive regulations.

Dr Ali bin Humaid al Jahwari, Director-General of the Directorate General of Education at the Ministry of Education for Muscat Governorate, said, “The initial indications of the run-over incident indicate a clear neglect of the bus driver and the carelessness of the car driver.” He also mentioned that circulars are issued to school principals to meet with drivers to educate them and stress the need to adhere to security and safety instructions for students. The Ministry is strict with regard to bus traffic safety rules.

The Assistant Director-General of Traffic, Colonel Khamis bin Ali al Batashi said: “All drivers of public and private school buses must abide by traffic advice and instructions, such as adherence to regulations and rules, be careful when approaching student gathering places and not move until and after making sure that all students went up or down and crossed the street to their homes or schools, as well as making

The death of a girl on the first day of the new school year is a grim reminder that it is necessary to harness all efforts to spread traffic awareness among road users to ensure the safety of students

sure that there are means of transportation.

Safety on the bus and maintaining public order by stopping buses in their designated places, whether in front of schools or after work is finished.

He also added that it is important to have a supervisor on buses carrying children and the need for the bus driver to inspect all students after they get off at school and make sure that they leave the bus so that the direction of the students’ exit door faces their homes or places of study.

All these steps are necessary to avoid blocking the road in front or behind the bus. Family plays a major role in this aspect by following up about children and ensuring they reach their homes.

The Royal Oman Police ensures school students’ traffic safety to reduce traffic congestion caused by buses.

The Royal Oman Police published, on its account on Twitter, some instructions that the bus drivers must stand by for the safety of students.



Truss vows tax cuts after winning vote to be next British PM

LONDON: Liz Truss will become Britain's next prime minister after winning a leadership race for the governing Conservative Party on Monday, vowing to press ahead with promised tax cuts and action to tackle a deepening energy and cost of living crisis.

After weeks of an often bad-tempered and divisive leadership contest, Truss, currently the foreign minister and the favourite to win, beat former finance minister Rishi Sunak in a vote of Conservative Party members, winning by 81,326 votes to 60,399.

"I will deliver a bold plan to cut taxes and grow our economy," Truss said after the result was announced. "I will deliver on the energy crisis, dealing with people's energy bills, but also dealing with the long-term issues we have on energy supply," read more

Truss takes over as the country faces a crunch on household finances, industrial unrest, a recession and war in Europe, where Britain has been a leading backer of Ukraine. She appeared to rule out another national election before 2024, when she promised to deliver a great victory for her party.

But in a sign of deep divisions in her party, her winning margin was much narrower than had been expected and the narrowest in any Conservative leadership election held this century. Truss also won with the support of less than 50% of members, as almost one in five did not vote.

"It's right we now unite behind the new PM, Liz Truss, as she steers the country through difficult times," Sunak said on Twitter.

Truss will succeed Boris Johnson, who was forced to announce his resignation in July after months of scandals saw



Liz Truss leaves the Conservative Party headquarters, after being announced as Britain's next Prime Minister, in London. — Reuters

support for his administration drain away and ministers quit to force him out.

Johnson will travel to Scotland to meet Queen Elizabeth on Tuesday to officially tender his resignation. Truss will follow him and be asked to form a government by the monarch.

"I know she has the right plan to tackle the cost of living crisis, unite our party and continue the great work of uniting and levelling up our country," Johnson said on Twitter. "Now is the time for all Conservatives to get behind her 100 per cent."

Long the front-runner to replace him, Truss will become the Conservatives' fourth prime minister since a 2015 election. Since then Britain has stumbled from crisis to crisis, and now is seen facing a long recession and inflation that hit double digits in July. Within minutes of her victory, business leaders from the hospitality sector to



manufacturing and chemical industries demanded help with the soaring cost of energy and tight labour markets to stop firms going bust.

Truss, 47, has promised to act quickly, saying within a week she will come up with a plan to tackle rising energy bills and secure future fuel supplies.

She signalled during her leadership campaign she

would challenge convention by scrapping tax increases and cutting other levies in a move some economists say would further fuel inflation.

That, and a pledge to review the remit of the Bank of England while protecting its independence, has prompted some investors to dump the pound and government bonds.

— Reuters

Global reactions

LONDON: Following are quotes of international reaction to the naming on Monday of Liz Truss as Britain's new prime minister.

EU COMMISSION PRESIDENT URSULA VON DER LEYEN: "We face many challenges together, from climate change to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I look forward to a constructive relationship, in full respect of our agreements."

GERMAN CHANCELLOR OLAF SCHOLZ: "Congratulations on your new role, @trussliz! I am looking forward to our cooperation in these challenging times. The UK and Germany will continue to work closely together — as partners and friends."

IRISH PRIME MINISTER MICHEAL MARTIN: "Congratulations Liz Truss on your election as Conservative party leader. I look forward to working with you, as PM of our nearest neighbour, on important issues we face together, both bilaterally and globally."

GIORGIA MELONI, ITALY'S FRONT RUNNER AT S NATIONAL ELECTIONS: "Congratulations to Liz Truss, the new leader of the British Conservative Party and Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The Tories are among the founders of the family of European Conservatives that I am honoured to chair, and I am sure that, together with her, it will be possible to strengthen our already consolidated political and cultural collaboration."

KREMLIN SPOKESMAN DMITRY PESKOV: "I wouldn't like to say that things can change for the worse, because it's hard to imagine anything worse. But unfortunately, this cannot be ruled out, given that the contenders for the post of British prime minister competed with each other in anti-Russian rhetoric, in threats to take further steps against our country, and so on. Therefore, I don't think that we can hope for anything positive."

POLISH PRIME MINISTER MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI: "I spoke to Liz Truss several times over the last few months, when she was head of foreign affairs, and I can already say that I am very, very pleased, because this will be at least a continuation, perhaps even a strengthening, in accordance with her announcements, of this British policy, which until now has been a de facto policy identical to our Polish policy of supporting Ukraine in its fight for independence, freedom, sovereignty and for our European values." — Reuters

New PM faces open hostility

LONDON: Openly scornful of Liz Truss long before she became prime minister, the Kremlin is in no mood to grant a honeymoon period to Britain's new leader. Among the many foreign politicians who flew to Moscow at the start of this year in an effort to head off an invasion of Ukraine, it was Truss who appeared to annoy Russia's leadership more than any other.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov described their conversation as like a dialogue between deaf and mute people, complaining that facts had "bounced off" her.

Then a Russian newspaper reported that Truss, during their meeting, had inadvertently told Lavrov that Britain would never recognise Moscow's sovereignty over two Russian cities, Rostov and Voronezh, and had to be corrected by her ambassador.

The Kremlin seized on the error as an example of Western leaders being poorly informed. Britain dismissed that as



Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

propaganda and said Truss had simply misheard a question from Lavrov.

Tatiana Stanovaya, founder of political analysis firm R.Politik, said that incident had played a significant role in forming Russia's attitude to Truss.

"The Kremlin dreams to deal with great, strong and competent leaders. Truss seems to the Kremlin as a representative of this new generation of superficial Western politicians who come and go and are unable to deal with such countries as Russia, think strategically and plan in the long term," she said. — Reuters

Major challenges facing Liz Truss

LONDON: British foreign minister Liz Truss was elected leader of the governing Conservative Party and the country's new prime minister on Monday. She faces the task of navigating the economy through the worst cost of living crisis in decades.

Truss must tackle industrial disputes, surging inflation and foreign policy challenges that include implementing Brexit and the war in Ukraine.

Below are the main problems facing her:

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

By far the biggest challenge will be how to help people cope with the highest inflation in four decades, surging energy prices and warnings of a prolonged recession.

An annual average household energy bill of £1,277 last year will leap to £3,549 from October and prices are expected to go higher next year.

Truss said last month that she favoured tax cuts over "handouts" to help people with the cost-of-living crisis. But she is now expected to offer wider support to households.

Truss has also promised an emergency budget soon after she takes office, with tax cuts. That would include a reversal of Sunak's 1.25 per cent point national insurance rise.

STRIKES

The new prime minister will immediately be confronted by the anger of union leaders. Workers ranging from rail workers, lawyers, healthcare and university staff are striking or planning to as inflation fuels demands for



higher pay.

To combat this unrest, Truss has said she would bring in "tough and decisive action" to limit strike action by unions.

BREXIT

Truss will have to grapple with the practicalities of leaving the European Union while delivering on a promise to rewrite the deal agreed by her predecessor. As foreign secretary, she pushed through plans to enact the Northern Ireland protocol bill, which would rip up part of Johnson's Brexit deal.

Britain has long complained that negotiations with the EU have failed to come to fruition and the legislation is seen

as an insurance policy.

However, unless the new prime minister backs away from unilateral action, the EU may retaliate by cutting British scientists out of Horizon, the world's largest research programme. The dispute could eventually lead to a trade war.

Truss has also promised to scrap all remaining European Union laws that still apply in Britain by 2023.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Britain's government has for years struggled to reduce the number of migrants crossing to Britain in small boats.

Government officials have said that up to 60,000 people could arrive by small boat this year, double last year's record. To deter the flow of migrants, the government in April announced plans to send people arriving on its shores to Rwanda where they will have their asylum applications processed. The first planned deportation flight in June was blocked by a last-minute injunction from the European Court of Human Rights.

Truss has pledged to extend the policy by sending asylum seekers to other countries. She is determined to make the policy work, saying Britain would legislate to leave the European Court of Human Rights if it continues to block the policy.

If that happened, Britain would join Belarus and Russia as the only countries in Europe not being part of the convention.

— Reuters

Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Defence
ENGINEERING SERVICES

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Ministry of Defence invites Contractors/consultant specialized in the under mentioned works and registered with the Govt. Tender Board and Ministry of Defence to participate in the following tender.

Tender No.	Tender Name	Contractors Grade	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Submission Date	Tender Price (RO)
27/2022	Public Health Work (Replacement of two sewage lines) – MAM	First and Above	15 th September 2022	17 th October 2022	100/- R.O
26/2022	Building Works – MAM	First and Above	15 th September 2022	17 th October 2022	200/- R.O

*For more information about the above Tenders please visit gate number (14)

- Tender Documents (Electronic Tender Document) can be obtained from the Tender office, Gate No: 14, Muaskar Al Murtafa'a after payment of the tender fee indicated above.
- The Payment should be made electronically by using SMART CARD, VISA CARD and VISA ELECTRON. Sunday to Thursday (0900 – 1300 Hours).
- The Bid to be accompanied by Tender Bond in the value of (1%) of the bid value in the form of a Bank Guarantee or Certified Cheque issued by a local bank and addressed to HE the Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Bids are to be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to HE the Chairman of Tender Committee and marked with Tender Number and Name. Name of Bidder or any other marks should not be printed on the envelopes.
- Bids to be deposited in the Tender office at Gate No: 14 Muaskar Al Murtafa'a before 1300 hours on the assigned day for submission of the Tender.
- We would like to draw your attention to the importance of adherence to the submission date, request and any queries related should not be submitted to MODES fourteen days prior to submission of offer & that queries must be on electronic (Microsoft word).
- You are requested to submit the following items within your tender submission, failure to submit the required information may result a disqualification of your offer without any further notification.
 - Percentage of Omanisation within the company supported by an authenticated certificate from the Ministry of Manpower (Updated Copy).
 - Detailed priced breakdown to be specified as per scope of works and drawings.
 - Full set of stamped drawings and documents, Tender Form and Tender Bonds to be submitted as hard copy and others documentation shall be as **SOFT COPY** (USB) in two separate files:
 - A. financial (bill 1&2 separated file from bill 3).
 - B. Technical files.
 - Confirmation of site visit.
 - All addendums and circulars.
 - List of sub-contractors/suppliers and their acceptance letter to this project.
 - List of current and executed projects for the last Five years.
 - Valid Registration Certificates from Tender Board.
 - Financial Statement for the last Three years.



■ TYPHOON WRECKS CHINA'S COAST



People take photos as waves generated by Typhoon Hinnamnor break along the coast in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province. — AFP

Trial opens in France over 2016 Nice truck massacre

PARIS: Eight suspects go on trial on Monday over the July 2016 attack in the Mediterranean city of Nice, where a fighter killed 86 people by driving a truck into thousands of locals and tourists celebrating France's national day.

The attacker, a 31-year-old Tunisian named Mohamed Lahouaiej-Bouhlel, was shot dead by police following the more than four-minute rampage down the seaside embankment of the Promenade des Anglais.

The seven men and one woman who will go on trial in Paris are accused of crimes from being aware of his intentions to providing logistical support and supplying weapons.

Only one suspect, Ramzi Kevin Arefa, faces the maximum penalty of life imprisonment if convicted as a recurring offender. The others risk between five and 20 years in prison.

The trial, which gets underway at 1:30 pm and due to last until mid-December, is the latest legal process over the attacks that have



The attack left permanent scars on the city of Nice, a byword for urban seaside glamour on France's Cote d'Azur.

hit France since 2015.

A Paris court on June 29 convicted all 20 suspects in the trial over the November 2015 attacks in the French capital which left 130 dead.

The trial will take place within the historic Palais de Justice in Paris at the same purpose-built courthouse that hosted the November 2015 attacks hearings, and a special venue has been set up in Nice to allow victims to follow proceedings via a live broadcast.

While Lahouaiej-Bouhlel cannot now be brought to justice, the trial — as in the November 2015 case — marks a hugely important moment for survivors and relatives of the victims as they seek to move on with their lives.

The IS group rapidly claimed responsibility for the Nice attack, though French investigators ultimately did not find any links between the attacker and the organisation which at the time controlled swathes of Iraq and Syria. — AFP

7 dead in southwest China earthquake

BEIJING: At least seven people were killed when a strong earthquake struck southwestern China on Monday, state media reported, as violent tremors in a remote region damaged homes and left some areas without electricity.

The Magnitude 6.6 quake hit around 43 kilometres southeast of the city of Kangding in Sichuan province at a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the US Geological Survey.

Tremors shook buildings in the provincial capital of Chengdu -- where millions are confined to their homes under a strict Covid lockdown -- and in the nearby megacity of Chongqing, local residents said.

State broadcaster CCTV reported that at least seven people died and at least one town had suffered "severe damage" from mountain landslides triggered by the quake.

A road to another town was blocked while telecommunications lines in areas home to more than 10,000 people were severed, according to CCTV. The shocks also forced some power stations offline in the areas of Garze and Ya'an, the broadcaster said.

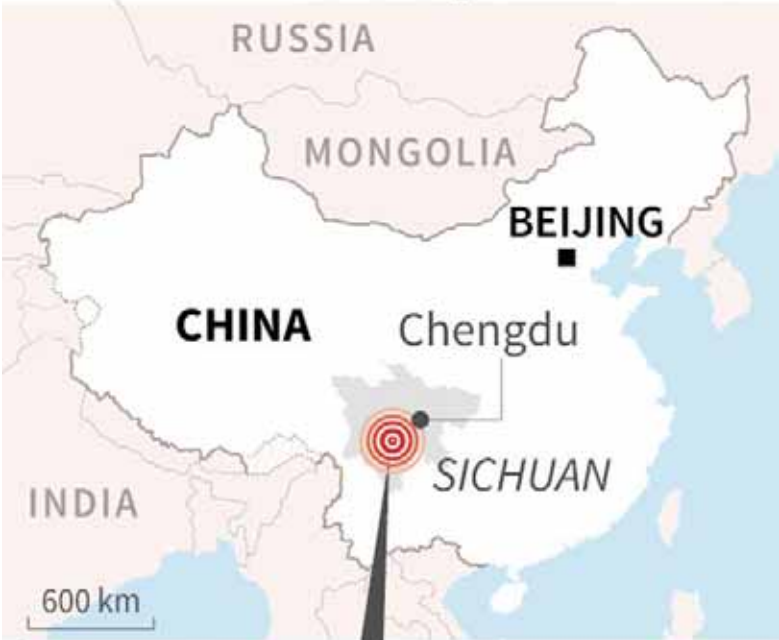
"I felt it quite strongly," said Chen, a resident of Chengdu.

"Some of my neighbours on the ground floor said they felt it very noticeably," she added.

"But because Chengdu is currently under epidemic management, people aren't allowed to leave their residential compounds, so many of them rushed out into their courtyards."

A video posted online by the China Earthquake Networks Center showed boulders thundering down mountainsides in stricken Luding county, kicking up clouds of dust as tremors

China earthquake



6.6-magnitude quake September 5
Source: USGS
AFP

swayed roadside telephone wires.

State media reported that several aftershocks were recorded in nearby areas. A smaller Magnitude 4.6 tremor hit eastern Tibet less than an hour after the initial quake, according to the USGS.

Hundreds of rescue personnel were dispatched to the epicentre while workers attempted to clear roads blocked by landslides, according to state broadcaster CGTN.

Photos published by state media showed officials in military fatigues heaving shovels and other equipment along a highway -- all while wearing face masks as a Covid-19 precaution. A resident of Chongqing said the quake was "pretty noticeable" and that it had shaken the lights and furniture in his fifth-floor apartment. "I was pretty scared," he said, "but it

didn't seem to faze people here."

Earthquakes are fairly common in China, especially in the country's seismically active southwest.

An 8.0-magnitude quake in 2008 in Sichuan's Wenchuan county left tens of thousands dead and caused enormous damage.

At least four people were killed and dozens more injured after two earthquakes in southwestern China in June.

That month a shallow 6.1-magnitude quake hit a sparsely populated area about 100 kilometres west of Chengdu. It was followed three minutes later by a second quake of magnitude 4.5 in a nearby county, where the deaths and injuries occurred. Authorities in Chengdu extended the city's virus lockdown on Sunday as they fight a Covid flare-up with hundreds of cases. — AFP

10 dead, 15 wounded in Canada stabbing rampage

OTTAWA: A stabbing spree in an Indigenous community and a nearby town in Canada's Saskatchewan province left at least 10 people dead and 15 wounded on Sunday, police said, as they launched a manhunt for two suspects in one of the nation's deadliest incidents of mass violence.

Police responding to emergency calls found 10 dead in the remote Indigenous community of James Smith Cree Nation and the nearby town of Weldon, Saskatchewan,

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore told a news conference.

She said at least 15 other people had been wounded and transported to hospitals. "It is horrific what has occurred in our province today," she said. "We are actively looking for the two suspects."

The alleged attackers fled in a vehicle and have been identified as Myles and Damien Sanderson, aged 30 and 31 respectively, both with



Damien Sanderson and Myles Sanderson, the two suspects in the stabbings in the Saskatchewan province in Canada. — AFP

black hair and brown eyes.

The James Smith Cree Nation, with a population of 2,500, declared a local state of emergency, while many residents of Saskatchewan province were urged to shelter in place.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called the attacks "horrific and heartbreaking" in a tweet, offering condolences and urging residents to heed authorities' instructions.

Blackmore said authorities believe "some of the victims were

targeted by the suspects and others were attacked randomly."

"To speak to a motive would be extremely difficult at this point in time," she added. No information was released about the victims.

Television images showed a few rural homes in fields of tall grass and trees, cordoned off with police tape, while on social media locals shared images of the attacks' aftermath, such as the broken door handle to a burgled home. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

KHARTOUM

Death toll from Sudan floods hits 112

More than 100 people have been killed and tens of thousands of homes destroyed by flooding caused by torrential rain since Sudan's wet season began in May, police said. Heavy rains usually fall in Sudan between May and October, and the country faces severe flooding every year, wrecking property, infrastructure and crops.

Last month, Sudan declared a state of emergency due to floods in six states. "The number of people killed by floods and



heavy rains has reached 112," said Abdel Jalil Abdelreheem, spokesman for Sudan's National Council for Civil Defence, a unit of the police.

TEHRAN

Iran to buy Sukhoi Su-35 jets from Russia

Iran is weighing plans to buy Sukhoi Su-35 fighter jets from Russia, Air Force chief Hamid Vahedi was reported as saying by local media.

"The purchase of the Sukhoi 35 from Russia is being considered by the Air Force" of Iran, Vahedi told Borna news agency which affiliated to the sports ministry. It comes after the United States military said last week that Russia began receiving Iranian combat drones to be used in the Ukraine war, with many of them having



already proven faulty.

Both Iran and Russia are targeted by stringent sanctions — Iran after the US unilaterally pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers, and Russia since it attacked Ukraine in February.

BANGKOK

Myanmar leader makes third visit to Russia

The general who seized power in Myanmar last year has begun his visit to Russia, his third visit, which comes just two months after his second visit. Ming Aung Hlaing is largely discredited as a legitimate government representative within the international community, having been barred from most international gatherings and summits, including the Association of South-East Asian Nations leadership discussion. Hlaing remains tightly allied with



the Kremlin, however. Russia is one of South-East Asia's most valuable arms suppliers. Moscow has more recently supported Myanmar by providing Covid-19 vaccines, gasoline and oil.



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In brief

■ LISBON



POPE NOT TO VISIT KYIV, MOSCOW DUE TO KNEE PROBLEM

Pope Francis will not be able to visit Moscow and Kyiv until after a gathering of religious leaders in Kazakhstan on September 13-15 on his doctor's orders due to a knee problem, he told CNN Portugal in an interview to be aired in full later on Monday. In an excerpt published on the channel's website, Francis was asked about his previously announced plans to visit Ukraine and Russia following his recent trip to Canada to foster dialogue for the end of hostilities between the two countries.

"Now I cannot go because after the trip to Canada there's been a bit of a setback with the knee recovery and the doctor banned it, saying 'Before Kazakhstan you cannot travel,'" Francis said. "But I have been maintaining contact over the telephone ... Among all of us, something could be done."

■ RIGA



GERMAN BUSINESSMAN ON PVT JET THAT CRASHED IN BALTIC

A prominent German businessman was aboard the private jet that crashed into the Baltic Sea off Latvia after flying half way across Europe from Spain without responding to controllers' calls, his company, Quick Air, said on Monday.

The jet, an Austria-registered Cessna 551, left Jerez in southern Spain on Sunday afternoon, turning at Paris and Cologne before flying straight out to the Baltic Sea, where it spiralled into the water off the Latvian coast, flight tracking data showed.

"I can confirm that it was the private jet of our owner, Karl-Peter Griesemann," said a spokesperson for Quick Air, an air charter company based in Cologne. Griesemann and three others were on board the plane, the spokesperson added.

■ MOSCOW



RUSSIAN EX-JOURNALIST GETS 22 YEARS IN PRISON FOR TREASON

A Russian court on Monday sentenced a former journalist to 22 years in prison for treason after prosecutors said he disclosed state secrets, a ruling his supporters said was a harsh punishment that showed the absence of media freedom in Russia.

Ivan Safronov, a former defence reporter for the Kommersant and Vedomosti newspapers turned adviser to the head of Russia's space agency, was arrested in 2020 and accused of disclosing classified information.

Safronov's lawyers said they would appeal the verdict. His supporters say the case is retribution for his reporting which exposed details of Russia's international arms deals. Speaking outside the courtroom, Safronov's lawyer Dmitry Katchev said he was almost lost for words at the ruling.



Kenyan Police officers stand at a police check point on a street towards the Supreme Court of Kenya in Nairobi. — AFP

Kenya's Supreme Court upholds Ruto's presidential victory

NAIROBI: Kenya's Supreme Court on Monday upheld the August 9 election of William Ruto as president in a unanimous decision, Chief Justice Martha Koome said, throwing out a petition brought by opposition leader Raila Odinga.

The Supreme Court of the East African country confirmed the result, saying it was legal.

There was no credible evidence of manipulation of the electronic voting system or the vote counting, court president Martha Koome said in Nairobi.

Runner-up Raila Odinga had complained that a corrupt process led to the narrow victory of his rival, Ruto.

The Electoral Commission had been divided regarding the result. Four of its seven members had refused to recognise the officially announced election result, although they had initially validated the individual results.

According to Koome, this shows that the electoral commission needs far-reaching reforms.

Election observers from the African Union and the East African Development Community did not find any irregularities during the vote.

With around 54 million



Kenya's President-elect William Ruto addresses a news conference at his official residence in Karen district of Nairobi. — Reuters

inhabitants, Kenya is considered one of the most stable countries on the African continent. However, past elections have seen unrest and violence. In 2008 more than 1,000 people died due to a wave of violence following the voting. Violent incidents also occurred in 2013 and 2017. The main reason was tensions between the different ethnic groups.

Earlier, Kenyans anxiously awaited a Supreme Court ruling on petitions challenging the outcome of the August presidential election, with weeks of political uncertainty looming if the poll is annulled.

Deputy President William

Ruto was declared the winner of the tightly fought race, scraping to victory by a narrow margin of less than two percentage points against Raila Odinga, a veteran opposition politician now backed by the ruling party.

Odinga filed a petition to Kenya's top court last month, alleging fraud in the vote tallying process and claiming he had "enough evidence" to show he had in fact won the August 9 election, which ranks as one of Africa's most expensive polls.

"Judgment day," was the front-page headline in The Standard, while People Daily declared: "Moment of Truth".

Although voting day passed off peacefully, the results sparked angry protests in some Odinga strongholds and there are fears a drawn-out dispute may deepen widespread economic malaise and lead to violence in a country with a history of post-poll unrest.

"We have already wasted a lot of time and money so if we go back to election we will waste (even more) time and resources," said Anne Karanja, a fruit seller in the capital Nairobi.

"I voted but I feel like I can't vote again," she said echoing the frustration felt by many Kenyans.

— Reuters/AFP

■ RUSSIAN MILITARY EXERCISE



Russian sailors from 'Marshal Shaposhnikov' military ship prepare to shoot as they take part in the 'Vostok-2022' military exercises at Gulf of the Peter the Great in the Japan sea outside the city of Vladivostok on the Russian Far East. Vostok 2022 strategic command post exercise will be held from September 1 to 7, headed by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation with practical training in defensive and offensive operations at seven training grounds of the Eastern Military District. — AFP

Zelenskiy: Ukraine takes 3 settlements

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Sunday marked progress in a counter-offensive Ukraine that began last week, thanking his forces for taking two settlements in the south, a third in the east, as well as additional territory in the east of the country.

He did not say precisely where the territories were and provided no timeline except to say that he had received "good reports" at a meeting on Sunday from his military commanders and head of intelligence.

In his nightly video address, Zelenskiy thanked his forces for liberating a settlement in the eastern Donetsk region, the taking of "certain heights" also in an eastern area in the Lysychansk-Siversk direction and for liberating two southern settlements.

Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the president's office, earlier on Sunday posted an image of soldiers raising the Ukrainian flag over a village he labelled as being in the southern area that is the main focus of the counter-offensive.

"Vysokopillya. Kherson region. Ukraine. Today," Tymoshenko wrote in a Facebook post over a photo of three soldiers on rooftops, one of them fixing a Ukrainian flag to a post.

Located just north of the Crimean peninsula, which Moscow invaded and annexed in February and March 2014, the Kherson region was seized by Russian forces early in the current conflict.

Lysychansk was claimed by pro-Russian separatists in the Luhansk region in early July as part of a battle over the coal mining Donbas area in eastern Ukraine, which also includes Siversk.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy attends a news conference in Kyiv, Ukraine. — Reuters

Meanwhile, Ukraine will receive another \$496.3 million in grants from the European Union to provide housing and education to people internally displaced by the war and returnees, the European Commission announced on Monday.

The financial aid, some of which will also support Ukraine's agricultural sector, is part of pledges made at donor conferences and donor events earlier this year.

The announcement came as Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal visits Brussels for the first time since the start of Russia's attack in late February.

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell wrote on Twitter on Monday that Shmyhal's trip to the EU capital amid the war is "yet another proof of Ukraine's resilience and bravery."

Since the beginning of the war, Ukraine has already received grants and loans worth \$5.4 billion from the EU to support the country's "overall economic, social and financial resilience," according to European Commission website, in addition to military assistance worth \$2.5 billion. — Reuters/dpa



A supporter of the reject option reacts to the results of the referendum on a new Chilean constitution in Santiago. — Reuters

Chileans reject new progressive constitution

SANTIAGO: Chile will go back to the drawing board to redraft its Augusto Pinochet-era constitution after a new text got overwhelmingly rejected in a historic referendum vote on Sunday, a blow to the country's progressives, including young President Gabriel Boric.

Boric on Monday held meetings with political and social leaders over how to salvage plans for a new constitution, bruised by the vote that saw some 7.9 million Chileans reject the proposal against 4.9 million in favour, a larger-than-expected landslide loss.

With mandatory voting driving strong turnout of some 13 million people, the reject camp overturned momentum from a 2020 referendum when 80% of Chileans

had voted in favour of drafting a new constitution, though only 7.6 million people then had voted.

"Beyond the legitimate differences, I know that the desire for dialogue and meetings prevails. We continue and will move forward," Boric wrote on Twitter on Monday after having given a conciliatory speech on Sunday night calling for unity.

The reject camp won in almost all districts of the country, the world's top producer of copper and the No. 2 for lithium, where decades of relative conservative and market-led policy were shaken up in 2019 by fiery protests against inequality that many blamed on the Pinochet-era constitution. — Reuters

Staying motivated in the new school year



Sandhya Rao Mehta

The writer is Assoc Prof, Dept of English Language and Literature Sultan Qaboos University

As thousands of children head towards their schools in Oman this week, some are excited, prancing to the school gates in anticipation while others will be less enthusiastic, maybe wistfully looking back at the holidays which have just ended.

Being and staying motivated is always difficult. Humans are wired to doing the predictable and we like to stay in our comfort zones. Breaking away from a routine cultivated over a long summer can be difficult, especially for youngsters who know that the school year will bring exams, homework and assignments.

Yet, it is important to look forward in hope and anticipation because, otherwise, there will be no

goals, purpose or meaning to what we do. That state of mind can only lead to stress and disappointment.

Motivation comes from the root word ‘motive’, that is the drive, purpose or reason for an action. Motivation can be external, like better grades or salary, or it can be internal, like satisfaction and happiness or contentment.

For schoolchildren, motivation is mainly external. Students react to positive reinforcement, appreciation of small gestures and verbal praise. These are important strategies teachers can follow to keep young students motivated.

Education is more about developing confidence and curiosity than providing knowledge. Making learning an enjoyable activity

MAKING LEARNING AN ENJOYABLE ACTIVITY RATHER THAN A CHORE WILL ENSURE THAT STUDENTS REMEMBER AND RETAIN LESSONS MORE SUCCESSFULLY

rather than a chore will ensure that students remember and retain lessons more successfully. Students should want to come to class, not feel they are being forced into one.

Parents can help to keep their children motivated by communicating with them. This may sound simple, but walking

the tight rope of being a parent and a friend to one’s child is always a challenge. While discipline is important, encouragement is more successful in keeping the interest of children and motivating them to do better. So is listening to them, being interested in their opinions and giving them freedom to think independently.

Knowing what not to do to de-motivate a child is equally important for teachers and parents. This includes not comparing them to other children in class or in the family, not judging them only for their grades, not overburdening their day with regimented activities and not making affection for them conditional to their achievements.

Older students can find

motivation by creating achievable goals which they can write down ahead of time, create enjoyable challenges, however small, and appreciate all accomplishments as small steps towards a larger goal.

Youngsters also tend to follow their own inspirational idols and parents and teachers should encourage them to do so as long as these public figures are genuinely praiseworthy.

Walt Disney once said, “if you can dream it, you can do it”. Except that dreams do not always have to be climbing Mount Everest. Whatever one’s dream, it is important to keep a clear focus, aim for it with hope and purpose and put as much energy and enthusiasm behind it as possible.

Nile islanders face eviction to make way for Egypt’s grand plan

SOFIANE ALSAAR

Residents of a Nile island in greater Cairo woke up in recent weeks to find officials taking measurements of their houses — a final step before enforcing demolition orders.

Since then, people from Warraq — some of whom have been on the working-class, agricultural island for generations — have renewed efforts to oppose a mega development project that would see the island’s character and their homes erased.

“Just give us a part of the island, even if it is behind a wall,” one resident in his thirties said, requesting anonymity due to security concerns.

“We will not leave,” he added, insisting he has all the proper documentation for his house.

With its green fields, red-brick buildings, irrigation canals and livestock farming, Warraq — located in Giza governorate and home to around 100,000 people — is just a ferry ride away from Cairo’s traffic-choked streets.

The government in late July evoked images of Manhattan as it unveiled an almost billion-dollar plan for the six-square-kilometre island’s redevelopment, featuring glittering skyscrapers, helipads and marinas.

Minister of Housing Assem al Gazzar has labelled those who oppose the redevelopment as “divisive forces of evil”, calling the old buildings “dilapidated”.

But residents like the man in his thirties remain defiant. “We pay our taxes, our water and power bills, why can’t we benefit from the development of our island?” he said.

Authorities “gave some residents four days to leave their homes” in late July, a resident in his fifties said, also requesting anonymity for security reasons.

The move triggered demonstrations, clashes and arrests the following month as the years-long fight against the project kicked off again.

The government has been promising massive returns on the redevelopment of Warraq since the administration of longtime president Hosni Mubarak, who was deposed in 2011.

The project for the capital’s largest island was reactivated under current President Abdel Fattah al Sisi, whose other “mega projects” include a sparkling new capital rising from the sands 50 kilometres east of Cairo.

The general-turned-president has entrusted military engineers with the Warraq project — dubbed “Horus City” after the ancient Egyptian sky god.

In 2017, authorities moved to demolish “illegal” buildings on Warraq as part of a campaign aimed at restoring state-owned land. At least one person was killed after the operation triggered clashes between residents and security forces. — AFP



CHARLES M BLOW

The writer is an opinion columnist with NYT

Biden shouldn’t apologise to Republicans

Republicans are outraged — or possibly simply pretending to be outraged — that President Joe Biden has, in recent speeches, warned that “Maga Republicans” are a threat to democracy and, at one point, called the philosophy fuelling Trumpism “semi-fascism.”

But there is no scandal here. Biden was simply calling a thing a thing. In fact, I would prefer that he be even more pointed and not try so hard to dodge the charge that he’s casting the net too widely.

Biden first used the term “semi-fascism” two weeks ago, at a Democratic fundraiser in Maryland, saying: “It’s not just Trump; it’s the entire philosophy that underpins the — I’m going to say, something, it’s like semi-fascism.”

Republicans quickly demanded that he apologise for insulting half the electorate. But those Republicans who voted for Donald Trump deserve to be called out for their actions. Trump has consistently exhibited fascist tendencies, as well as espoused racism, misogyny and white nationalism. Republicans supported him, defended him and voted for him. They’ve been actively courting this condemnation.

And yet, ever since the initial brouhaha over his fascism comments, Biden has insisted on walking back his assertion, seemingly determined to distinguish more genteel Republicans from the rest of their party. At a rally in Maryland, shortly after his fundraiser, Biden said: “I respect conservative Republicans. I don’t respect these Maga Republicans.”

Personally, I have a very hard time splitting that hair.

In 2020, 92 per cent of Republican and Republican-leaning independent voters backed Trump.

According to a Quinnipiac University poll released last week, 73 per cent of Republicans still have a favourable opinion of him, and 72 per cent want him to run for reelection in 2024.

The overwhelming majority of Republicans support Trump. The pool of respectable conservatives is shallow, and that’s assuming that they can be neatly defined as those not voting for Trump.

Still, it is clear that Biden is sensitive to the criticism, even as he charges ahead with this pointed assessment.

In Biden’s speech in Philadelphia

on Thursday, he returned to the idea that “Maga Republicans represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our Republic.” But he took pains to more clearly separate them from other Republicans, saying that “not every Republican, not even the majority of Republicans, are Maga Republicans. Not every Republican embraces their extreme ideology.”

Still, he underscored that “there is no question that the Republican Party today is dominated, driven and intimidated by Donald Trump and the Maga Republicans.”

Biden was twisting himself into a rhetorical knot when there was no

73 PER CENT OF REPUBLICANS STILL HAVE A FAVOURABLE OPINION OF TRUMP, AND 72 PER CENT WANT HIM TO RUN FOR REELECTION IN 2024

reason to do so. When he said that not even a majority of Republicans are Maga Republicans, it muddled the waters. What, to Joe Biden, is a Maga Republican?

On Friday, Biden walked his comments back further still, telling reporters, “I don’t consider any Trump supporter to be a threat to the country.”

He went on to say, “I do think anyone who calls for the use of violence, fails to condemn violence when it’s used, refuses to acknowledge an election has been won, insists upon changing the way in which we rule and count votes — that is a threat to democracy.”

Make no mistake: A significant portion of Republican voters have done exactly what Biden has tried to exempt them from having done.

A Public Religion Research Institute poll published in November found that nearly a third of Republicans agreed with the statement “Because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country.”

Also, a later poll found that a quarter of Republicans were adherents of the Internet conspiracy theory QAnon and believe that “there is a storm coming soon that will sweep away the elites in power and restore the rightful leaders” and that “a group of Satan-worshipping pedophiles who run a global child-trafficking operation” control America’s government, media and financial system.

As PolitiFact noted in June, citing a number of polls, roughly 70 per cent of Republicans don’t see Biden as the legitimate winner of the presidency.

Furthermore, a July accounting by FiveThirtyEight found that “halfway through the primary season, we can say definitively that at least 120 election deniers have won their party’s nomination and will be on the ballot in the fall.” Republican voters delivered primary victories to those candidates.

Republicans have a knack for persuading Democrats to pull their punches. It was the same strategy they used against Barack Obama after he said some Americans were “bitter” and “cling to guns or religion or antipathy towards people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.”

— New York Times



President Joe Biden

Blame it on electricity



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

It was lunch break during an important conference and it just became dark. Soon it became a candlelit lunch. There was laughter and no one really bothered because it was still bearable and had a faint hint that the building would have generator.

The generator was switched on and the screens were back to

life; now came the next worry. It was beginning to get sultry. Rushed to the power point to charge the phone and that is when we realised how much we should appreciate the power called electricity.

Being at a resort for a conference has its advantages, I thought and rushed to the seaside, but in vain as the sea breeze is still and stirring the sea to churn out gentlest of waves now and then when the wind thought of moving.

This situation led the way back to the hall and by now no one wanted to drink a coffee - now this is the land of kahwa and you don't feel a dessert session is complete unless it is topped with a few sips of kahwa.

'Not in a situation like this,' pointed out a colleague.

Walked up to the lift and almost pressed it before it dawned on me how foolish it would've been. Soon the mobile data and wifi began to act out of sync.

IT MADE US REALISE ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS WE TAKE FOR GRANTED IN LIFE. IMAGINE THE DAYS WHEN THERE WAS NO ELECTRICITY. PEOPLE STILL LIVED AND WORKED IN THOSE CONDITIONS. MAYBE SOME WILL SAY IT WAS COOLER THEN AND OTHERS MIGHT SAY THE BUILDINGS WERE MADE IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WAS EASY TO LIVE

WhatsApp messages stopped coming in just when people were beginning to share a variety of self proclaimed confessions when that too seemed to act strange due to impact on wifi and mobile data.

Disruptions are inevitable and has bigger impact when least expected.

The reality is many people got stuck on elevators and others felt the pain of leaving any floor above the fourth. It was a question of few hours, but the discomfort was felt by all. Schools also felt the impact.

It made us realise about various aspects we take for granted in

life. Imagine the days when there was no electricity. People still lived and worked in those conditions. Maybe some will say it was cooler then and others might say the buildings were made in such a way that it was easy to live. Sarooj was the material that was used then and now we have concrete and cement. They generate heat on their own and not to air conditioning that makes it warmer outside.

Can we say people then were more resilient? Of course one aspect is that we are a generation that seems to be at the edge with anxiety and curiosity because when the electricity did announce it's come back with the hum of the ceiling fan, which was a relief, the question did pop in the mind for many - what could have caused it?

Does it matter? Electricity is back and air is cooler and so are we. Meanwhile we can practice gratitude and understand the whole process of getting the energy into the households, offices, resorts and not to forget hospitals.

Resorts didn't feel that fancy without electricity and thoughts went to in-patients in hospitals. At the same time thoughts also went out to everyone who works in the sector which we take as our basic right.

Just a few hours of power cut created havoc on the roads as traffic lights stopped functioning and cars were jammed or was it because people preferred to stay behind the wheels than indoors? Within minutes the Royal Oman Police was manning the traffic under the midday sun.

A crisis brings out the worst and best in us. But it definitely gave us an opportunity to appreciate others and what we have. At the table, the staff came and kept candle like lamps. All we had to do was imagine it was for us to relax.



DISPLACED BY FLOODS

This aerial photograph shows makeshift tents for people displaced due to the floods after heavy monsoon rains at Sohbatpur in Jaffarabad district of Balochistan province, Pakistan, on Monday. - AFP

Is nuclear war inevitable?



Joseph S Nye, Jr

The writer is a professor at Harvard University and author of Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump

Russian war on Ukraine and nuclear saber rattling against the West have revived a debate about nuclear weapons. Last year, when a United Nations treaty to ban such weapons outright entered into force, none of the world's nine nuclear-weapons states was among the 86 signatories. How can these states justify possessing weapons that put all of humanity at risk?

That is a pertinent question, but it must be considered alongside another one: If the United States were to sign the treaty and destroy its own arsenal, would it still be able to deter further Russian aggression in Europe? If the answer is no, one also must consider whether nuclear war is inevitable.

It's not a new question. In 1960, the British scientist and novelist C P Snow concluded that nuclear war within a decade was "a mathematical certainty." That may have been an exaggeration, but many believed Snow's prediction would be justified if a war occurred within a century. In the 1980s, Nuclear Freeze campaigners like Helen Caldicott echoed Snow in warning that the buildup of nuclear weapons "will make nuclear war a mathematical certainty."

Those advocating the abolition of nuclear weapons often note that if you flip a coin once, the chance of getting heads is 50 per cent; but if you flip it ten times, the chance of getting heads at least once rises to 99.9 per cent. A 1 per cent chance of nuclear war in the next 40 years becomes 99 per cent after 8,000 years. Sooner or later, the odds will turn against us. Even if we cut the risks by half every year, we can never get to zero.

But the coin-flip metaphor is misleading where nuclear weapons are concerned, because it assumes independent probabilities, whereas human interactions are more like loaded dice. What happens on one flip can change the odds on the next flip. There was a lower probability of nuclear war in 1963, just after the Cuban Missile Crisis, precisely because there had been a higher probability in 1962. The simple form of the law of averages does not necessarily apply to complex human interactions. In principle, the right human choices can reduce probabilities.

The likelihood of nuclear war rests on both independent and interdependent probabilities. A purely accidental war might fit the model of the coin flip, but such wars are rare, and any accidents might turn out to be limited. Moreover, if an accidental conflict remains limited, it may trigger future actions that would further limit the probability of a larger war. And the longer the period, the greater the chance that things may have changed. In 8,000 years, humans may have much more pressing concerns than nuclear war.

We simply do not know what the interdependent probabilities are. But if

we base our analysis on post-World War II history, we can assume that the annual probability is not in the higher range of the distribution.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, US President John F Kennedy reportedly estimated the probability of nuclear war to be between 33 per cent and 50 per cent. But this did not necessarily mean unlimited nuclear war. In interviews with participants in that episode on its 25th anniversary, we learned that, despite the massive superiority of the US nuclear arsenal, Kennedy was deterred

RUSSIAN WAR AND NUCLEAR SABER RATTLING HAVE REMINDED US THAT THE LIKELIHOOD OF NUCLEAR WAR IS A MATTER OF BOTH INDEPENDENT AND INTERDEPENDENT PROBABILITIES. PARADOXICALLY, REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF AN ALL-OUT CATASTROPHE REQUIRES THAT WE LEARN TO ACCEPT A CERTAIN DEGREE OF RISK AND UNCERTAINTY

by even the slightest prospect of nuclear war. And the outcome was hardly an unalloyed American victory; it involved a compromise that included the quiet removal of US missiles from Turkey.

Some people have used the mathematical-inevitability argument to push for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Inverting the Cold War slogan, future generations would be better off red than dead. But nuclear knowledge cannot be abolished, and coordinating abolition among nine or more ideologically diverse nuclear-weapon states would be extremely difficult, to say the least. Unreciprocated unilateral steps could embolden aggressors, increasing the odds of an unhappy endgame.

We have no idea what utility and risk acceptance will mean to distant future generations, or what people will value in 8,000 years. While our moral obligation to them compels us to treat survival

very carefully, that task does not require the complete absence of risk. We owe future generations roughly equal access to important values, and that includes equal chances of survival. That is different from trying to aggregate the interests of centuries of unknown people into some unknowable sum in the present. Risk will always be an unavoidable component of human life.

Nuclear deterrence is based on a usability paradox. If the weapons are totally unusable, they do not deter. But if they are too usable, nuclear war with all its devastation might occur. Given the usability paradox and the interdependent probabilities related to human interactions, we cannot seek an absolute answer to what constitutes "just deterrence." Nuclear deterrence is not all right or all wrong. Our acceptance of deterrence must be conditional.

The just war tradition that we have inherited over the centuries suggests three relevant conditions that must be met: a just and proportionate cause, limits on means, and prudent consideration of all consequences. I derive five nuclear maxims from these conditions. In terms of motives, we must understand that self-defence is a just but limited cause. As for means, we must never treat nuclear weapons as normal weapons, and we must minimise harm to innocent people. And regarding consequences, we should reduce the risks of nuclear war in the near term and try to reduce our reliance on nuclear weapons over time. A bomb in the basement involves some risk, but not as much risk as bombs on the front lines.

The war in Ukraine has reminded us that there is no way to avoid uncertainty and risk. The goal of reducing (not abolishing) the role of nuclear weapons over time remains as important as ever. Richard Garwin, the designer of the first hydrogen bomb, calculated that, "If the probability of nuclear war this year is 1 per cent, and if each year we manage to reduce it to only 80 per cent of what it was the previous year, then the cumulative probability of nuclear war for all time will be 5 per cent." We can live moral lives with that probability.

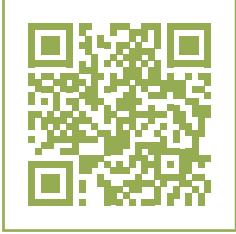
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How can states justify possessing weapons that put all of humanity at risk?

Sport

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ICC Chairman Greg Barclay (2R) receives a memento from Oman Cricket chairman Pankaj Khimji (2L) during his recent visit to Oman. Also seen are OC vice-chairman Paul Sheridan (R) and OC's chief development officer Duleep Mendis.



Greg Barclay at a dinner reception hosted by Oman Cricket chairman Pankaj Khimji. The reception was attended by OC board members, advisors, Oman Olympic Committee chairman Khalid al Zubair (3L) and Oman Football Association president Sheikh Salim al Wahaibi (5R).

OMAN CRICKET A ROLE MODEL FOR ASSOCIATE NATIONS: ICC CHIEF

MUSCAT: The giant strides and development made by Oman Cricket (OC) over the past few years have been taken notice by the cricket world. Be it the infrastructure development at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds in Al Amerat or the performances of the national team, Oman has made an impressive march.

So it was hardly a surprise when Greg Barclay, the independent chair of the International Cricket Council (ICC), gave a thumbs up to Oman Cricket (OC) during his recent visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

In a video call interview with OC's media consultant, Ashok Purohit, after concluding his brief visit, Barclay said, "Oman Cricket has made very good progress in the recent years. It was great to witness the excellent facilities at the Oman Cricket Academy."

"Oman Cricket's overall progress can be a role model for the rest of the Associate nation members. I was impressed with the lovely ground and the facilities there in Al Amerat. Oman Cricket is a good example for other countries to emulate."

Barclay, who was elected as the independent chair of the ICC in November 2020, is nearing his completion of his two-year tenure and the New Zealander termed his

experience as 'satisfying'.

The former chief of New Zealand Cricket said, "Credit to Oman for developing such world-class facilities. The teams have also done fairly well and it is encouraging to see Oman Cricket focusing on women's cricket and targeting grassroots development. Oman Cricket chairman Pankaj Khimji and his team are passionate in the progress of the game and I wish them the very best."

CRICKET AT 2028 OLYMPICS? Barclay reiterated ICC's strong intention to have cricket included as one of the disciplines at the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

ICC already has constituted a Olympic Working Group with an aim to have cricket as part of the Olympic Games.

Cricket was played only once at the Olympic Games in 1900 and that too had only the men's competition. Since then it has not been part of the Summer Olympics.

"One of our strategic priorities is to have cricket included at the LA Olympics. The decision will be made by the IOC in consultation with the local organising committee of 2028 Los Angeles Games. We will put our best foot forward to convince them and hope to see cricket being played at the Games."



Greg Barclay is all smiles after receiving the Oman national team jersey from Pankaj Khimji.

"We see the Olympics as a part of cricket's long-term future. We have more than a billion fans globally and they are as keen as us to see cricket at the Olympics."

"Cricket has a strong and passionate fanbase, particularly in South Asia where majority of our fans come from. But we also have lot of cricket fans in the USA. The opportunity for those fans to see their heroes competing for an Olympic medal is exciting."

"We believe cricket would be a great addition to the Olympic Games. We realise it won't be easy to secure our inclusion as there are so many other sports out there wanting to do the same. But we feel now is the time to show what



Greg Barclay (L) along with Pankaj Khimji (C), Paul Sheridan and OC's treasurer Alkesh Joshi at the Oman Cricket Academy pavilion during the ICC chairman's recent visit.

a great partnership cricket and the Olympics could be."

GROWTH OF SHORTER FORMAT

The ICC chairman admitted that the growth of white-ball cricket is putting a lot of pressure on the Future Tours Program (FTP) calendar.

"It is important to find a balance between the white-ball cricket and Test cricket. Due to economic considerations, we find that the shorter format is gaining more and more emphasis."

"Test cricket will be compromised in future given the growth of the shorter format. But we are aware that Test cricket is a

legacy we need to safeguard and that's certainly challenge ahead," the Kiwi said.

Barclay said, "As far as the World Test Championship (WTC) goes, it is still not perfect in the current format. Discussions are on to make it even better."

Over the past two years, ICC faced enormous challenges due to the global pandemic but Barclay was satisfied that the game overcame them to a large extent.

"We are growing globally and will continue to do so. We recently sold the media rights to telecast ICC tournaments till 2027 for US\$3 billion. It underlines the interest for the game. We would now like to have more fans engagement on

digital platforms ahead.

"The ICC T20 World Cup in 2024, which will be co-hosted by West Indies and USA, will feature 20 teams for the first time. We know that the inclusion of more teams is great for the growth of the game but it comes with a huge responsibility. We want the Associate nations to gear up well to compete with the best. We wouldn't like to see lop-sided matches. To ensure that the Associate nations perform well, they need to invest time, money and effort and ICC will back them strongly."

The Kiwi feels white-ball cricket is the future due to its popularity among fans and broadcasters.

"If you look at strategically the way that cricket is going, there's no doubt that white-ball cricket, short-form cricket, is the way of the future."

"That's the game that's sought after by fans, that's where the broadcasters are putting their resource, it's what's driving the money," Barclay said.

Barclay said that he is open to take up the responsibility of becoming the ICC independent chair for another term if the board members entrust him with the role.

"I am ready to shoulder the role for another term if the board members feel that I should carry on," he said.

Verstappen claims Dutch home win

ZANDVOORT, NETHERLANDS: World champion and runaway series leader Max Verstappen stayed cool to ride his luck and claim a dramatic victory for Red Bull, as his rivals floundered with a series of tactical errors, in Sunday's chaotic and unpredictable Dutch Grand Prix.

Amid wild celebrations at the packed Zandvoort circuit, with 105,000 orange-clad fans revelling in their hero's triumph, the 24-year-old Dutchman took full advantage of his team's calm decision-making in an incident-filled race to finish 4.071 seconds clear of Mercedes' George Russell.

Charles Leclerc came home third for Ferrari and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton fourth in the second Mercedes, scant reward after what seemed a probable victory was taken away when he was left on cold, worn tyres as both Verstappen and



Russell switched to softs during a late safety car intervention. Exposed and unable to defend his position Hamilton was furious, but the sea of ebullient fans celebrated Verstappen's good fortune as he passed Hamilton and pulled clear to claim a second successive Dutch triumph, a fourth consecutive win and his 10th of the season. He now leads the championship with 310 points ahead of Leclerc and Perez each

on 201 in the championship, making it possible for him to take his second drivers' crown in Singapore on October 2. "It's always special to win your home race and this year I had to work for it even more," said Verstappen. "It wasn't straightforward, but we pushed and we made the right calls," said Verstappen. "It's worked out really well. An incredible weekend and really happy we got the Dutch win!"

"I lost it for a second" Hamilton, seeking a first win this year, was furious with Mercedes and launched an expletive-laden tirade over the team radio. He later apologised to the team for his language, explaining that his emotions were running high and "the car was finally working. And I lost it for a second." Russell said: "I thought we had a chance to fight for victory and I'm sorry for Lewis. He drove a great race and as a team we deserved better." Leclerc said: "To be honest, we were a little unlucky with the VSC. I don't know if this would have changed anything, but Max was too quick today. And then there was the Mercedes which were flying on the hard tyres." Ferrari not for the first time suffered with confused strategy calls and a bungled pit stop for Carlos Sainz. — AFP



Sultanate of Oman

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects:-

Tender No.	Project Category	Location	Fees R.O.	Grade In Tender Board Registration
14/2022	CONSULTING OFFICE	CONSULTANCY SERVICE TO MAKE STRUCTURAL STUDY ON THE EXISTING BUILDING OF BAIT AL BARANDA AT MUTRAH	25/-	First
15/2022	CONSULTING OFFICE	CONSULTANCY SERVICES (DESIGN AND SUPERVISION) SUR EQUESTRIAN CLUB	25/-	First
16/2022	CONSULTING OFFICE	CONSULTANCY SERVICES (DESIGN AND SUPERVISION) TO AL BASHAYER CLUB	25/-	First
17/2022	CONSULTING OFFICE	TENDER DOCUMENTS FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES (DESIGN AND SUPERVISION) TO REHABILITATION WORK ALSALAM CLUB – SHINAS BRANCH	25/-	First
18/2022	SUPPLY	CONSTRUCTION OF GRASSED FOOTBALL PITCH AT OF SAADAH SPORTS COMPLEX & SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FLOODLIGHT TO SPORTS CENTER AT DHOFAR GOVERNATE	25/-	Excellent & First
19/2022	SUPPLY	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF FENCING & FLOODLIGHT FOR FOOTBALL PITCH OF AHLY SIDAB CLUB	25/-	Excellent & First

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) until 17/09/2022.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00am 17/10/2022.

A Tender Bond equivalent to 1% of the tender sum issued from a registered bank, in the prescribed form, in Sultanate of Oman and valid for 90 days should enclosed with the tender.

Any tender without the bond will be reject and the tender committee is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender received.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om



Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan plays a shot during the Asia Cup Twenty20 Super Four match against India at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium in Dubai. — AFP

RIZWAN, NAWAZ HELP PAKISTAN EDGE INDIA

DUBAI: A key partnership between Mohammad Rizwan and Mohammad Nawaz set up a thrilling five-wicket win for Pakistan in their opening Super Four game against India in the Asia Cup on Sunday.

Chasing 182 for victory, Pakistan achieved their target with one ball to spare in Dubai after Rizwan hit 71 and the left-handed Nawaz, who was promoted to number four, made 42.

Rizwan was out after his second successive half-century in the 17th over but Khushdil Shah, with his unbeaten 14, and Asif Ali, who made 16 off eight balls, made sure Pakistan got over the line in a tense final over bowled by Arshdeep Singh.

Reprieved after Arshdeep dropped an easy catch at short third man, Asif hit a six and two fours before falling with two balls left, leaving Iftikhar Ahmed to

score the remaining two runs.

“There was positive pressure,” said Nawaz, who also returned bowling figures of 1-25 with his left-arm spin.

“I felt I have to play well for my team and that time it was 10 runs per over and I knew I can do this. I just had to focus on my batting and execute the skills.”

It was the second meeting in the tournament between the arch-rivals, who only play each other in multi-nation events due to political tensions, after India’s group-stage win.

Earlier, Virat Kohli’s 60 guided India to 181-7 after being put in to bat.

Pakistan started their chase cautiously and lost skipper Babar Azam for 14 with leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi luring the batsman into a chip straight to mid-wicket.

The in-form Rizwan, who made 43 and 78 in the previous

two matches, hit back with three boundaries off pace bowler Hardik Pandya and a six in the next over.

He put on 41 with Fakhar Zaman who played a scratchy knock of 15 before falling to Yuzvendra Chahal’s leg-spin.

Pakistan promoted the left-handed Nawaz, primarily a spinner, to up the scoring and he delivered by promptly hitting a four and six.

“To play such an innings in a high-pressure game has given me confidence and made me grow as a player,” said Nawaz.

“I will try to live up to the expectations which will rise (after this innings) and perform like a proper all-rounder.”

Rizwan, who hurt himself keeping wicket after landing awkwardly on his right leg but was able to continue, anchored the innings and reached fifty in 37 balls. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

India
KL Rahul c Nawaz b Shadab28
R Sharma c Khushdil b Rauf28
V Kohli run out (Asif)60
S Yadav c Asif b Nawaz13
R Pant c Asif b Shadab14
H Pandya c Nawaz b Hasnain0
D Hooda c Nawaz b Naseem16
B Kumar not out0
R Bishnoi not out8
Extras (b4, w10)14
Total (7 wickets, 20 overs) 181
Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-62, 3-91, 4-126, 5-131, 6-168, 7-173
Bowling: Naseem 4-0-45-1, Hasnain 4-0-38-1, Rauf 4-0-38-1, Nawaz 4-0-25-1, Shadab 4-0-31-2

Pakistan (target 182)
M Rizwan c Suryakumar b Pandya71
B Azam c Rohit b Bishnoi14
F Zaman c Kohli b Chahal15
M Nawaz c Hooda b Kumar42
K Shah not out14
A Ali lbw Arshdeep16
I Ahmed not out2
Extras (lb2, w6)8
Total (5 wickets, 19.5 overs) 182
Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-63, 3-136, 4-147, 5-180
Bowling: Kumar 4-0-40-1, Arshdeep 3-5-0-27-1, Bishnoi 4-0-26-1, Pandya 4-0-44-1, Chahal 4-0-43-1

Kohli reveals Dhoni was lone supporter



DUBAI: Virat Kohli has revealed that only Mahendra Singh Dhoni sent him messages of support during a tough phase of mental struggle after quitting the Test captaincy.

Kohli, 33, has shrugged off his extended dry run with the bat at the Asia Cup, hitting two successive half-centuries, including 60 against Pakistan in a losing cause in Dubai on Sunday.

Kohli took a month off to recharge ahead of the six-nation tournament that acts as a tune-up to the T20 World Cup beginning next month.

The former captain’s loss of form became a constant talking point in world cricket, but he said the hard times had revealed his true friends.

“I would only say one thing, when I left Test captaincy I got messages only from MS Dhoni and nobody else,” Kohli said.

“Lot of people have my number and say things on TV but no one sent me a message. If you want to give me suggestions, give me one-on-one, otherwise it has no meaning to me.”

Kohli started his Test and one-day international career in 2011 when Dhoni was captain.

“The respect and connection that you have with someone, that shows in this way,” Kohli said. “There are some connections which are genuine and it has some security.”

The former top-ranked

Test batsman gave up the T20 captaincy after last year’s World Cup and was soon axed as one-day skipper in the worst period of his international career.

Kohli, who has not scored an international century since November 2019, then relinquished the Test leadership in January as Rohit Sharma became captain across all formats.

Critics, among them former World Cup-winning captain Kapil Dev, even suggested Kohli should be dropped.

‘HAPPY AGAIN’

But Kohli insisted such comments had never bothered him after his 44-ball 60 helped India to 181-7, which Pakistan overhauled with a ball to spare in a thrilling Super Four contest on Sunday.

“I never really paid attention to these things to be honest,” Kohli told reporters.

“Played 14 years and it doesn’t happen by chance. My job is to work hard on my game, something that I am keen to do.”

Kohli said he was welcomed back to the India dressing room after his month-long break and was “absolutely loving playing all over again and feeling good when batting.”

“It’s not bad to take a break and I hope this gives people strength and are able to address their feelings,” Kohli reiterated. — AFP

Farah returns to winning ways in London half-marathon

LONDON: British distance great Mo Farah found himself top of the podium again with a third victory in the ‘Big Half’ — a London half-marathon — on Sunday.

Farah’s win, which a month ahead of the London Marathon proper, followed the four-time Olympic champion’s shock defeat by club runner Ellis Cross in a 10 kilometre race in London in May.

That reverse led to a fresh debate over whether the 39-year-old Farah, who won double Olympic gold (5,000m and 10,000m) at both the 2012 and 2016 Games, should retire from competitive racing.

But he was out on front in south London on Sunday, crossing the finish line in Greenwich in a time of 61 minutes and 49 seconds after surging clear of the field in the final three miles of a 13.1-mile course.

Jack Rowe was second and defending champion Jake Smith



third.

“Today wasn’t easy but most important is the win and it is nice to be back,” Farah told BBC Sport.

Somalia-born Farah, who in July revealed he had been illegally trafficked into Britain as a child, added: “The key thing for me today was to try and win, no matter what happened.

“It was to play around with

things, pick up my drink and all practice ahead of the London Marathon.”

Scotland’s Commonwealth Games gold medallist Eilish McColgan won the elite women’s race with a record time of 67.34 minutes but unlike Farah she will not be competing in the London Marathon.

McColgan suffered an adverse reaction while refuelling during long-distance races and has been diagnosed with rebound hypoglycemia — a condition affecting endurance athletes that leads to reduced blood sugar levels and means there is not enough glucose in the blood to meet the body’s demands.

But McColgan stuck to water on Sunday as she bettered Charlotte Purdue’s time of 69.51 minutes last year.

“To run a two-minute course record, I can’t ask any more,” she said. — AFP

Bangladesh’s Mushfiquir retires from T20 internationals

DHAKA: Former Bangladesh captain Mushfiquir Rahim announced his retirement from Twenty20 international cricket on Sunday, three days after the team’s unceremonious exit from the Asia Cup.

“Today, I am announcing my retirement from T20 internationals,” Mushfiquir, 35, said in statement on social media.

“I will proudly continue to represent Bangladesh in Test and ODI formats. I am hopeful that I can bring success for our nation in these two formats,” he added.

Mushfiquir added that he would continue to take part in the Bangladesh Premier League and other Twenty20 franchise tournaments.

Mushfiquir’s announcement came after Bangladesh lost their Group B matches in the Asia Cup against Afghanistan and Sri Lanka in United Arab Emirates, in which he contributed only five runs.

It was his comeback



Bangladesh’s wicketkeeper Mushfiquir Rahim (L) breaks the wicket to dismiss Afghanistan’s Rahmanullah Gurbaz (R) during the Asia Cup in Sharjah. — AFP

tournament having missed the previous two series against the West Indies and Zimbabwe.

He played in 102 Twenty20 matches for Bangladesh and scored 1,500 runs at 19.48. His captained for 23 of those matches, leading Bangladesh to eight wins.

Mushfiquir is the second senior Bangladeshi cricketer to retire from Twenty20s in recent months after Tamim Iqbal.

Bangladesh have won just two of 12 matches in the shortest format since T20 World Cup last year. — AFP



Australia's Nick Kyrgios reacts during his 2022 US Open match against Russia's Daniil Medvedev. — AFP

Kyrgios stuns Medvedev

NEW YORK: Australia's Nick Kyrgios sent defending champion Daniil Medvedev tumbling out of the US Open on Sunday as US teenager Coco Gauff reached the quarterfinals for the first time.

The notoriously temperamental 23rd-seeded Kyrgios produced some scintillating shot-making on his way to a superb 7-6 (13/11), 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win over the world number one from Russia.

Kyrgios, who was beaten by Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon final in July, showed grit and composure to save three set points in the opening set before holding his nerve to win an epic tie-break 13/11 before a raucous Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd.

Although Kyrgios dropped the second set, he roared back to dominate Medvedev in the third and fourth sets to clinch victory in 2hr 53min.

"It was an amazing match, obviously Daniil as the defending champion had a lot of pressure on his shoulders, but I've been playing amazing the last couple of months," Kyrgios said after the win.

"What a place to do it — packed house in New York. I'm extremely blessed."

Medvedev meanwhile said the mercurial Kyrgios had elevated his play to the same level as great such as Rafael Nadal and Djokovic.

"Nick today played kind of at the level of Novak and Rafa," said the 26-year-old after seeing 21 aces and 53 winners whizz past him. "If he plays like this until the end of the tournament, he has all the chances to win it."

Kyrgios will face Karen Khachanov in the quarterfinals on Tuesday. Khachanov equalled his best performance in a Grand Slam event by defeating Spanish 12th seed Pablo Carreno Busta in a 3hr 21min five-set thriller.

The 27th-seeded Khachanov dug deep to down Carreno Busta 4-6, 6-3, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 on the Louis Armstrong Stadium.



France's Caroline Garcia reacts while playing against USA's Alison Riske.

Elsewhere in the fourth round on Sunday, fifth seed Casper Ruud became the first Norwegian man to reach the US Open quarterfinals with a 6-1, 6-2, 6-7 (4/7), 6-2 victory over French lucky loser Corentin Moutet.

The 23-year-old Ruud, seeded fifth, will face Italy's Matteo Berrettini for a place in the semifinals. Berrettini extended his impressive run of recent Grand Slam singles performances with a 3-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-3, 4-6, 6-2 defeat of Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina.

GAUFF MARCHES ON
In the women's draw meanwhile, rising American star Gauff kept home hopes alive with a battling 7-5, 7-5 win over China's Zhang Shuai on the Arthur Ashe Stadium. The 18-year-old 12th seed will now play France's in-form Caroline Garcia for a place in the semifinals. Garcia beat Alison Riske-Amritraj (USA x29) 6-4, 6-1.

Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic — who knocked out tennis icon Serena Williams in the third round on Friday — advanced to the last eight with a 7-6 (10/8), 6-1 victory over Russia's Liudmila Samsonova.

The 29-year-old world number 46 will play Tunisia's fifth-seed Ons Jabeur in the quarters.

Jabeur, who became the first African woman to reach the final at Wimbledon in July, secured the first US Open quarterfinal appearance of her career with a 7-6 (7/1), 6-4 win over Russia's Veronika Kudermetova. — AFP

Fifth place for Al Faisal, Schiller and Jeffries

HOCKENHEIM, GERMANY: Oman's Al Faisal al Zubair, German team-mate Fabian Schiller and Zimbabwe's Axcil Jeffries finished fifth in their category and 13th overall in a 49-car field at the three-hour round of the 2022 Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe Powered by AWS – Endurance Cup at Germany's Hockenheim circuit on Sunday.

After qualifying their Al Manar Racing by HRT Mercedes-AMG GT3 in seventh place, they were able to make up two places in the Silver Cup category and finished the race in fifth, a mere 15 seconds off the winners after the grid bunched up in the latter part of the race. The result dropped the trio to fourth in the Drivers' points standings.

Al Zubair said: "P5 in Silver class and P13 overall out of 49 cars. Honestly, it was not so bad but we were aiming for a win or the podium this race weekend. Coming into the race we realised that the balance of the

performance of the Mercedes was not as strong as the Audis. In the race, it was even more difficult for the Mercedes teams.

"Nonetheless, P5 on a very competitive grid is something to be happy with. I am just excited now for the last round in Barcelona. Hopefully we get a good result there and see how it goes."

Al Zubair drove the first stint and handed over to Jeffries after around 55 minutes.

By the mid-point, after 50 laps had been completed, Konsta Lappalainen, Mick Wishofer and Stuart White led the Silver Cup Endurance category in their Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini. Aurelien Panis, Cesar Gazeau and Nicholas Baert held second position and the Al-Manar Racing by HRT Mercedes was down in seventh place, just under 35 seconds off the category lead.

With a little over an hour to go and 83 laps on the board, Lappalainen, Wishofer and White



continued to top the Silver Cup standings from Nicolas Scholl, Alex Aka and Marius Zug in the Attempto Racing Audi R8. Al Zubair, Schiller and Jeffries had bunched up with the leaders, moved up a place to sixth and were running around seven seconds off the pace-

setters. Lappalainen, Wishofer and White held on to claim victory when the chequered flag was waved after 101 laps. Zug, Aka and Scholl came home in second place and Al-Zubair, Jeffries and Schiller crossed the finish line in fifth.

Benjamin Goethe, Thomas

Neubauer and Jean-Baptiste Simmenauer topped the Silver Cup times in free practice with a best lap of 1min 54.558sec in a session where the Al Manar Racing Mercedes finished eighth with a best run of 1min 56.104sec.

After a further pre-qualifying

stint on Saturday afternoon, competitors took part in three 15-minute qualifying sessions on Sunday morning.

Al Zubair, Schiller and Jeffries were classified ninth in Q1 in a stint where the Silver Cup's fastest lap was set by Lappalainen's, Wishofer's and White's Lamborghini.

The Garage 59 McLaren of Vargas Maldonado, Nicolai Kjaergaard and Dean Macdonald claimed the top spot in Q2 and the second fastest time amongst all the entrants. Meanwhile, the Al Manar Racing Mercedes slotted into sixth with a best lap of 1min 38.298sec.

The Garage 59 McLaren again topped the Silver Cup times in Q3 and Al Manar Racing by HRT slipped into seventh place. With the times from the three sessions combined, Silver Cup pole position fell to Goethe, Neubauer and Simmenauer but Al Zubair, Schiller and Jeffries had to settle for a disappointing seventh place on the Silver grid.



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Oman Investment Corp-led consortium to acquire Sembcorp’s India power plants for \$1.5 billion

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

A consortium led by Oman Investment Corporation SAOC (OIC) in partnership with the Ministry of Defence Pension Fund, Oman (MODPF) and an Omani family office (collectively, (the Tanweer Consortium) has announced that it has, through Tanweer Infrastructure Pte Ltd (Tanweer Infrastructure), entered into a share purchase agreement with Sembcorp Utilities Pte Ltd (“SCU”) to acquire 100 per cent of the shares of Sembcorp Energy India Limited (SEIL).

SEIL is one of the largest independent power producers in India, operating two supercritical coal-fired plants totalling 2.6GW. SCU is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sembcorp Industries (Sembcorp).

The signing was attended by Anwar Ahmed Muqail, the Sultanate of Oman Consulate General for Republic of Singapore. The acquisition of SEIL for a consideration of INR117 billion, approximately \$1.5 billion, will result in Tanweer Infrastructure, a company incorporated by the Tanweer Consortium, becoming the sole shareholder of SEIL post completion. Tanweer Infrastructure will settle the final consideration via a deferred payment note provided by SCU.



This deal progresses OIC’s vision to build an international asset management business headquartered in the Sultanate of Oman. OIC is a leading Omani Private Equity Investment company established in 2005 with a strong track record in establishing, investing in and growing businesses. OIC focuses on investing in energy and infrastructure projects, real estate, logistics, healthcare as well as asset and project management services.

OIC’s partnering with MODPF for this acquisition is in line with its plan to work in partnership with Omani Pension Funds, Government Institutions and private sector investors to invest

in profitable, well-managed business opportunities, with the aim to support the diversification of Oman’s economy and achieve the Sultanate of Oman’s national objectives.

Sembcorp is a leading energy and urban solutions provider. Sembcorp and OIC have a proven and trusted relationship built over a decade, having jointly developed and operated the \$1 billion Salalah Independent Power and Water Plant in Oman since 2009.

To ensure continuity of the highest standards of reliability, operational efficiency and best practices in the management of SEIL’s supercritical plants, Sembcorp will continue to render

technical advisory services to SEIL through a technical services agreement.

SEIL’s existing operations team will continue to be employed under the new ownership of Tanweer Infrastructure. Tanweer Infrastructure will continue with ongoing initiatives at SEIL to reduce greenhouse gas emissions intensity.

SEIL provides critical energy needs to over 2.5 million households. It owns two of the largest and most efficient national grid-connected plants in India and is a trusted and reliable supplier through ongoing contractual relationships with power distribution companies.

OIC’S PARTNERING WITH MODPF FOR THIS ACQUISITION IS IN LINE WITH ITS PLAN TO WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OMANI PENSION FUNDS, GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS AND PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTORS TO INVEST IN PROFITABLE, WELL-MANAGED BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES, WITH THE AIM TO SUPPORT THE DIVERSIFICATION OF OMAN’S ECONOMY AND ACHIEVE THE SULTANATE’S NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

communities and employees. The provision of the innovative GHG emissions intensity reduction incentive rate also underscores our commitment to sustainable energy transition.”

Kalat al Bulooshi, CEO of OIC, on behalf of Tanweer Infrastructure said: “We are glad to acquire this world-class asset, serving essential energy to the community. We are committed to deliver power to our customers on a continuous and efficient basis and to work with our team of committed employees at the plant, our stakeholders such as the power distribution customers and the local community, to achieve their objectives.

Availability of power to households and industries is of vital importance in today’s world of energy uncertainties.”

Furthermore, he added, “this transaction is in line with OIC’s vision to become a global investment house pursuing fruitful investment opportunities in promising markets.”

The proposed acquisition is subject to the approval of Sembcorp shareholders at an extraordinary general meeting (“EGM”) of Sembcorp, to be convened around November 2022. The proposed acquisition is expected to close six months after the EGM, and is subject to the satisfaction of certain conditions precedent.

CMA suspends Guarantee Insurance Services

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

The Capital Market Authority has issued a decision suspending Guarantee Insurance Services from carrying out licensed activities for four months while it regularises its status into line with legal requirements.

The suspension is for violating Article 22 of the Insurance Brokers Regulation which stipulates that: “Insurance broker shall submit to the CMA audited annual balance sheet and financial statements within not more than ninety (90) days from the end of the financial year.”

“CMA is keen to obligate all insurance brokers to submit their audited financial statements to follow up their financial positions to ensure they meet all the legal and technical obligations to provide adequate protection for all the parties dealing with the broker,” the Authority stated.

MSX roadshow to look at future listings of four state-owned Omani firms

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

A key conference showcasing investment opportunities in Oman’s transforming capital market sector opened at Shangri La’s Barr Al Jissah Resort & Spa on Monday.

Held under the auspices of Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), the newly rebranded securities market currently owned by Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the MSX Roadshow is a platform for MSX listed companies to attract local and foreign investment via the exchange.

Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of the Muscat Stock Exchange, explained that the conference came after the completion of defining the strategic plan for the stock exchange, which is a commercial entity, whose sustainability is based on its profits and operations.

He pointed out that the growth



in profits was good during the past years, but the growth in prices did not take its real growth, indicating that raising

liquidity in the market depends on several factors, including the presence of alternative investment opportunities, explaining

that the focus is currently on finding alternative investment opportunities through companies with large capital is included in

the market.

The two-day conference is being attended by more than 300 participants representing bodies, financial organisations, banks, investment companies, managers from different countries of the world, representatives from the Omani capital market sector, investors from investment institutions and financial brokerage companies. It features a number of working papers on the features of MSX’s strategy for growth and development in the coming years, investment in the capital market sector, and available opportunities.

The highlight of the roadshow is the exit plan of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) envisioning the latter’s divestment from four key state-owned entities: Majis Industrial Services (MIS), Abraj Energy Services, OQ Group’s gas pipeline network, and a real estate trust fund.

Bank Muscat hosts corporate banking event in Dhofar to highlight the importance of digitalisation

MUSCAT: In line with its role in strengthening national development and digitalisation of the economy as part of the ambitious Oman Vision 2040, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organised an event in Salalah which focused on the importance of digital transformation.

The event was aimed at enhancing partnership with government institutions and corporates, especially those in Dhofar, by offering a platform to discuss new developments in corporate banking.

As the pioneer of many of the latest financial and banking trends in the Sultanate of Oman, Bank Muscat is continuously developing new digital services that helps enhance security and ease of banking for its Government and Corporate customers benefitting them immensely from the digitalisation of various banking services and facilities.

Speaking on the occasion,



Ilham bint Murtadha al Hamaid (pictured), General Manager — Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “As a pioneer of Corporate Banking in the country, Bank Muscat has always been a pillar that supports the country’s needs across both the government and private sectors.

We are very happy to meet our valued customers in Dhofar today following our earlier meeting with customers in Sohar. Over the last few years, the bank has been working hard to promote digital banking by constantly adding new features and services to strengthen the customer experience as much as possible.



Over the last 40 years, we are delighted to have played a key role in the facilitating the growth and development of our Government and Corporate partners across different sectors.”

She added: “Going ahead, the current shift to digital will only gather more pace and play a key role in enabling our customers to transact securely and conveniently from anywhere and at any time. We are delighted to note that our Government, Institutional and Corporate customers have been wholeheartedly shifting over highly-efficient digital banking over the past two years.

Bank Muscat is glad to further

popularise the importance of the ongoing digital transformation by holding more such events so that we can reach out to the maximum number of our Government and Corporate partners as possible.”

Eng Nasser bin Khalifa bin Nasser al Kindi from the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology gave an interesting presentation about the Government’s Digital Transformation Programme 2021-2025 during the event.

This was followed by a Transaction Banking presentation by Abbas bin Fayadh al Lawati on the bank’s digital facilities which have been developed for

Government and Corporates across different sectors.

A presentation was also made by Sakina bint Naseeb al Shahiyah from Bank Muscat on safeguarding against fraud. Wafa bint Ibrahim al Ajmiyah, Assistant General Manager — Transaction & Government Banking, Bank Muscat, thanked the corporate guests at the event and expressed appreciation for their strong confidence in the bank’s services and facilities.

She pointed out how Bank Muscat has been spearheading a massive digital transformation in the banking and financial services sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The bank provides a complete range of technology-driven digital offerings, which cater to government entities, corporates and SMEs and enable institutions to become future ready, agile and digitally-mature organisations.

She concluded by adding that Bank Muscat would continue to support corporates and government entities to make the best use of digitalisation to transform and supercharge their business environment.”

Digitalisation is in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and will further enhance financial inclusion in Oman. The bank’s customers are at present benefiting immensely from the latest devices, solutions and technological advances made available to them through the implementation of cutting-edge technology. Bank Muscat has announced a number of plans to keep introducing new digital services and features that further enhance banking convenience and security in the future too.

Own the Lexus RX with exclusive benefits



MUSCAT: Lexus enthusiasts wishing to own the RX can look forward to exclusive benefits like service 3 years/30,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and 1 year free registration. (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

Lexus RX is an SUV that has pioneered advanced technology like a unique combination of petrol engine and hybrid electric motor. It is available in 5 & 7-seater configurations. The Lexus RX embraces Lexus’ reputation for engaging performance.

The RX is available with two engine options. The RX 350 is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine, which produces 296 HP and 37.7 Kg.M of torque and is paired to an eight-speed automatic transmission.

And the RX 450h hybrid variant is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 petrol engine and two electric motors and produces a combined system output of 308 hp. The RX Hybrid is available with a hybrid battery warranty of 8 years or 160,000 kms, whichever is earlier.

To get the best out of every drive, the Lexus RX 450h can be switched to EV drive mode to reduce noise while driving in residential areas and to reduce exhaust gas in indoor parking lots and garages or through a combination of its petrol engine and two electric motors, depending on the vehicle’s speed and customer’s driving behaviour.

The batteries in the hybrid electric drivetrain are

automatically charged by either the petrol engine or when braking and decelerating, eliminating the need to plug in a power cord. A host of advanced technologies ensure the RX 450h drives like any other conventional vehicle, while not requiring special fuel.

Inside the RX a 12.3-inch high-resolution, split-screen Lexus Multimedia System touchscreen positioned closer to the driver, offers control of both audio and climate systems.

The touchscreen also includes a rear-view camera to assist the driver in reversing. Furthermore, the Lexus RX’s advanced smartphone integration offers access to in-car connected technology applications from Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, together with a designated phone storage area and USB ports to ensure occupants always remain connected on the go.

As with any Lexus vehicle, safety is a top priority for the new RX. Drivers can enjoy complete peace of mind thanks to the Lexus Safety System+, an advanced safety technology package that includes Pre-Collision System (PCS), all-speed range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control (DRCC), Lane Tracing Alert (LTA), and Adaptive High-beam System (AHS).

For more information, please visit www.lexusoman.com or www.youtube.com/lexusoman or www.facebook.com/LexusOmanSBA or [instagram.com/oman.lexus/](https://www.instagram.com/oman.lexus/). For further details & to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Lexus Showroom.

Hawkish Fed and China woes send commodities into reverse



OLE S HANSEN

The commodity sector turned sharply lower this week as the market reacted negatively to renewed growth concerns after the Federal Reserve Chairman, Jerome Powell, left the market in no doubt that the US and other major central banks would continue to hike rates and keep them high for a prolonged period in order to combat runaway inflation.

This development helped to drive stock markets sharply lower, while the dollar reached multi-year highs and bond yields climbed back towards the June high. In addition, we saw renewed growth concerns related to China’s prolonged battle with Covid infections and President Xi’s zero-Covid policy after fresh lockdowns were implemented, the most noticeable being Chengdu, a metropolis of 21 million residents.

Both developments turned the focus in commodities back to demand, which may suffer as economic growth slows and away from a tight supply outlook across several major commodities from corn and coffee to diesel and gas, as well as several industrial metals due to mining and production challenges.

Growth and China-dependent commodities, such as industrial metals and cotton, suffered a major setback while the prospect for Gazprom resuming gas supplies through its Nord



Stream 1 pipeline from Saturday morning helped drive gas prices in Europe lower. With this, gas oil (diesel) fell on the assumption gas-to-fuel switch demand could slow.

Crude oil rangebound, but volatile

Crude oil’s bounce from a six-month low became unstuck following Jerome Powell, the Federal Reserve Chairman’s hawkish message. Together with renewed lockdowns in China, it once again triggered a reversal in the market focus away from tight supply and back to worries about demand.

What followed was a near 12-dollar correction to near \$90 in Brent and \$85 in WTI with some of the selling being driven by speculators having bought the break above \$100 following Saudi comments that OPEC+ could consider a production cut.

In Europe and increasingly also Asia, elevated prices for gas and power continues to attract substitution demand into fuel products like diesel and heating oil.

In the short-term, the price of gas into the autumn months will continue to be dictated by

Russian flows, and not least whether Gazprom (and Putin) will resume flows on the Nord Stream 1 pipeline as announced, following the three-day maintenance shutdown that ends at 01:00 GMT on September 3.

On the supply side, the market will be watching the impact of the EU embargo on Russian oil, which will begin impacting supply from December and the 180-million-barrel release, at a rate of one million barrel per day from US Strategic Reserves that look set to end on October 21.

Finally, an Iran nuclear deal has yet to be reached, and after the US called Iran’s response to the latest effort to revive the 2015 nuclear as “not constructive”, the risk of failure remains. Following a 25 per cent drop in US retail gasoline prices since June and the Democrats not wanting to be seen as going soft on Iran, a deal looks increasingly unlikely, at least in the short-term.

With Opec+ meeting to talk output on September 12 the price of oil is unlikely to fall further with support at \$85.50 in WTI and \$91.50 in Brent unlikely to be challenged soon.

EU gas and power prices

The European energy market have reversed some of the recent strong gains in gas and power prices following a recent surge that was driven by robust demand for pipeline supplied gas after low water levels on the river Rhine prevented normal shipments of coal and diesel to utilities and industries in the German heartland.

However, it was a three-day shut down for maintenance on the important Nord Stream 1 pipeline which sent prices surging on fear supplies would not resume at 0100 GMT on 3 September – the time Gazprom had announced the reopening would occur.

However, as the week wore on, the risk of a non-opening faded and Dutch TTF gas tumbled to near €200 per MWh while German Year ahead power more than halved after briefly surging above a €1000 per MWH .

In response to these eye-popping and growth killing power prices, the EU is preparing to intervene and adjust the price setting of power prices within the region. (*The writer is Head of Commodity Strategy, Saxo Bank*)

SEZAD's One-Stop Shop stops paper-based transactions



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has announced that it will stop printing and receiving all paper-based transactions and documents at the One-Stop Shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

This environment-friendly initiative aims to combat the use of paper documents in the different zones, overseen by OPAZ. It also serves the efforts towards digital transformation and accelerating the process of transactions.

This initiative aims to stop printing and receiving land usufruct applications or any other documents or publications provided by the One-Stop Shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm to investors. It also seeks to enhance OPAZ efforts in preserving the environment by minimising the print and use of paper-based transactions.

The environment-friendly initiative enables investors to easily obtain all documents and publications that have been converted into electronic copies by scanning the QR code from the tablets placed at the One-Stop Shop or downloading them from OPAZ website.

Getting the electronic copies will minimise the need

THIS INITIATIVE AIMS TO STOP PRINTING AND RECEIVING LAND USUFRUCT APPLICATIONS OR ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS OR PUBLICATIONS PROVIDED BY THE ONE-STOP SHOP IN THE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AT DUQM TO INVESTORS.

for printing the documents and allow investors to save the documents digitally in their computers or phones and have an easy access at any time.

Further, such initiative also contributes to facilitating procedures for investors and accelerating the completion of transactions at the One-Stop Shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, in addition to ensuring business continuity.

OPAZ accords a great attention to improving the standard of services provided to investors, meeting their aspirations, as well as enhancing their experience in digital transformation with OPAZ. In this context, OPAZ has launched, over the past years, a number of electronic services that have greatly contributed to facilitating investors' access to different services provided online without the need to visit OPAZ office in Muscat or SEZAD's building in Duqm.

Third IntercityHotel opens in Oman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

IntercityHotel Muscat, the hotel brand's third property in the Sultanate of Oman, has opened its doors on September 1, 2022. The new hotel building is located within the Ministry and Embassy district of Al Khuwair and is part of the prestigious A'Raya development Complex.

IntercityHotel Muscat boasts 273 guest rooms ranging from Standard Rooms to Deluxe Suites. The property includes a special Business Floor offering Business rooms and suites with added benefits of early check-ins, late check-outs, complimentary welcome drinks, and VIP in-room amenities, to name a few.

Furthermore, the hotel features the all-day-dining restaurant Citrine as well as a lobby cafe, a pool and gym, a spa with six treatment rooms, four multi-function meeting rooms with a capacity of up to 135 guests and A'Raya Ballroom which can accommodate up to 1,200 guests.

According to Siegfried Nierhaus, Vice President Middle East, Deutsche Hospitality: "The Middle East is an important destination for both classical tourism and business travel. IntercityHotel fits nicely into the region, as the concept accommodates the needs of any and all travellers. We look forward to our continued



successful trajectory in positioning the brand in Oman alongside the hotels in Salalah and Nizwa while successively expanding our portfolio in this region."

General Manager Renjith Chandran adds: "We are delighted to open the IntercityHotel Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman. The hotel will cater to all markets from

business and leisure to major MICE events. Also working with the National Hotel Management (NHI) and Ministry of Labour, I look forward to welcoming Omani talents to the team."

IntercityHotel Muscat is perfectly positioned within easy reach of Muscat International Airport and the cultural sights of Al Alam Palace and the Muttrah Corniche with its three-kilometre-long promenade. The Al Khuwair Beach is ten-minutes walking distance from the hotel – just one of the Sultanate of Oman's many beautiful beaches along its more than 2,000 kilometre coastline.

Opec+ agrees small oil production cut

LONDON: Opec and its allies led by Russia on Monday agreed a small oil production cut to bolster prices that have slid on fears of an economic slowdown.

The oil producers will reduce output by 100,000 barrels per day, amounting to only 0.1 per cent of global demand, for October and also agreed they could meet any time to adjust production before the next meeting on October 5.

The decision essentially maintains the status quo as Opec has been observing wild fluctuations in oil prices, being pulled by multiple factors in both directions.

"Opec+ is wary of protracted price volatility generated by weak macro sentiment, thin liquidity and renewed China lockdowns, as well as uncertainty over a potential US-Iran deal and efforts to create a Russian oil price cap," said Matthew Holland at Energy



A 3D printed oil pump jack is seen in front of displayed Opec logo in this illustration picture. – Reuters

Aspects.

Top Opec producer Saudi Arabia last month flagged the possibility of output cuts to address what it sees as exaggerated oil price declines. Benchmark Brent crude oil has dropped to about \$95 a barrel from \$120 in June on fears of

an economic slowdown and recession in the West.

It was also dragged down by a potential supply boost from Iranian crude returning to the market if Tehran is able to revive its 2015 nuclear deal with global powers. Iran is expected to add 1 million

bpd to supply, or 1 per cent of global demand, if sanctions are eased, though the prospects for a nuclear deal looked less clear on Friday.

Signals from the physical market, however, suggest that supply remains tight and many Opec states are producing below targets while fresh Western sanctions are threatening Russian exports. Russia has said it will stop supplying oil to countries that support the idea of capping the price of Russian energy supplies over its military conflict in Ukraine. Russia's gas deliveries in Europe, meanwhile, have been cut further, which is likely to spark more price spikes. "An output cut won't make them any friends at a time when the world is facing a cost-of-living crisis," said Oanda analyst Craig Erlam. — Reuters

bp Oman extends warehousing contract with TruckOman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 5

bp Oman signed on Monday a four-year agreement with TruckOman extending its warehousing and material management contract. The renewal of the contract reinforces bp's commitment to supporting the sustainable development of Oman's economy through advancing local business growth and overall economic productivity.

bp Oman president, Yousuf al Ojaili, commented: "The partnership over the past five years has been

instrumental in growing TruckOman's knowledge and experience by thoroughly being integrated in bp's work process. Encouraging the development of Omani capabilities and supporting the businesses growth and overall economic productivity isn't only aligned with bp's aims but with the country's Vision 2040."

This integration has allowed an accelerated learning curve to support the transformation of TruckOman from a trucking and transportation company, into a full-service logistical company including



warehousing and inventory management services.

The contract extension will also allow the continued

delivery of bp's services through adding various

supply chain responsibilities such as inventory and stock management to Truckoman – in line with bp's policies.

The Chairman of the board of TruckOman group commented: "TruckOman is indeed grateful for having the privilege of providing warehouse management services and for all the support it has received throughout the period of this contract. This has enabled TruckOman to provide seamless and efficient services to the satisfaction of bp."

He also added: "TruckOman is also proud

to note that 85 per cent of its staff employed on the contract are Omanis compared to 45 per cent at the start of the contract.

The staff continue to receive online and offline trainings to develop their capabilities. TruckOman is proud of being the only company in Oman that has 305 staff as shareholders, 272 of whom are Omanis."

The contract was signed by Malik al Hajri, bp's Middle East senior procurement manager and Chris Fidler, TruckOman's Chief Executive Officer, as representatives for both companies.

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Putting the flexibility of date palm wood into good use

While Omani artist Ghalib al Sawafi may not have a fancy degree in the art given by a university, he has great experience from the university of life which taught him all he has to know to convert things into something awe-inspiring. His passion for arts and crafts has made him one of the country's pioneers in creating beautiful things from the trunk of date palms .. **P20**

Battle of biwis: Oman to witness a new contest

JUST AS THE EXPATRIATE Indian population, primarily Malayalis are celebrating 'Onam', a festival of colours and a commemoration of the victory of good over bad, the capital city will witness a unique contest of cookery on September 9.

The open to all competition is all about making a delicious pudding ('paayasam' as they call it) and displaying it at the Lulu Ruwi outlet and letting the passerby try them out.

Organised by the Wasel Exchange,

the contest will see nearly 25 men and women vying for a position in paayasam making.

Paayasam is a sweetened pudding made with either milk or coconut milk on special occasions and with 'Onam', paayasam must accompany the delicious feast on a plantain leaf.

The first three winners will be given first positions while all participants will have their own share of the prize after the event.



A panel of three acclaimed chefs will adjudicate the event. The public will be served with the variety of paayasam that competed, according to the organisers.

Those who want to participate

can get in touch with the organisers on either 79482122 or 99443622. A show of talents by upcoming dancers and artists will add colours to the event, the organisers hoped.

Saji C Thomas, GM, Al Wasel

Exchange, Jasil Kovakkal, Manager-Operations, Vimal AG, Compliance Officer, Mohammed Niyaz, Marketing Manager, Priya Devan and Mohammed Iqbal attended the announcement.

HOW TO MAKE 'PAAYASAM':

A typical semiya paayasam Mix contains Sugar, Vermicelli, Skimmed Milk Powder, Cashew nuts, Raisins and Cardamom.

Method of preparation:

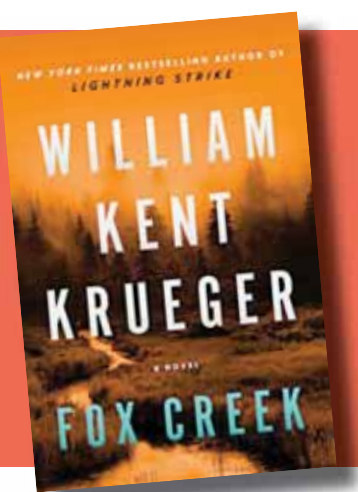
1. Take 500ml fresh milk and pour it into a heavy bottom pan and boil
2. Add semiya paayasam mix to it and cook for 10 minutes on a medium flame with constant stirring
3. Then add rice to the milk
4. Slowly bring to the boil and then let it simmer on low heat
5. Turn the heat to medium and cook until the milk has reduced
6. Add condensed milk, stir and cook for another 2 min
7. Serve it hot or cold as you like

READ

FOX CREEK

BY WILLIAM KENT KRUEGER

The 19th book in the Cork O'Connor mystery series. Cork uses his skills as a hunter to track mercenaries and confronts his own self-doubt.



SPOTLIGHT ON PAKISTAN

Surriya, a flood-affected resident poses for a photograph at her makeshift tent in the flood-hit area of Sukkur in Sindh province. Monsoon rains have submerged a third of Pakistan, claiming at least 1,190 lives since June and unleashing powerful floods that have washed away swathes of vital crops and damaged or destroyed more than a million homes. — AFP



FASHION TREND

Models display creations from Saint Joy by Bian Huizhong during China Fashion Week in Beijing. The models were seen sporting ethereal headgears of white and gold. — AFP





Heat, Water, Fire: How Climate Change Is Transforming the Pacific Crest Trail

IN THE DESERT NEAR Agua Dulce, north of Los Angeles, hikers along the Pacific Crest Trail who reached mile marker 502 encountered a cistern of water that smelled bad and tasted worse, with a dead rat floating inside. They got out their filters and refilled their bottles anyway. “Will update if I get sick,” one wrote on a message board to those coming up behind.

The message was just one sign of how global warming is affecting life along the trail, where, during a hot season nearly devoid of rain, water tanks and caches were more important than ever; the last line of defense against dehydration. At least some hikers were willing to take their chances.

Thru-hikers on the PCT spend up to five months walking from Mexico to Canada through a landscape that ranges from high desert scrub to giant sequoias, basalt craters and alpine meadows. The route changes slightly each year, meaning that the trail’s official length, 2,650 miles, is really only an estimate.

What is a fact now is the imprint of climate change, felt along the whole trail in the form of weirder weather, bone-dry soil and, most of all, the increasing threat of wildfires. Fire is a hazard that leaves other hazards in its wake: meager shade, disruptions to streams and water sources, “blow down” trees you have to clamber over or walk around, and fine black soot that lingers in the back of hikers’ throats and aggravates open blisters. Fire scars — the blackened expanses a wildfire leaves behind — can take days to walk through.

More than 1,600 miles of the trail run through California. Over the last decade, record after record for high temperatures, droughts and wildfires have been broken in the state. Last year, the Dixie fire, the largest in California history, burned 85 miles of the PCT. It was the first fire ever to cross the crest of the Sierra Nevada.

In late July, I intercepted the main burst of northbound thru-hikers — the so-called bubble — on a 40-mile section of trail north of Mount Shasta as it jogs west over rugged granite peaks toward the California-Oregon border.

“It used to be a race against getting to Washington before the snow, now it’s that and fires,” said Melanie Graham, 32, who started her hike March 15 to give herself the best chance of finishing before smoke intervened. Hiking near Lassen Volcanic National Park, she’d tried to imagine the vista as it was before the Dixie fire, a sharp volcanic summit wreathed in forest stretching to the horizon. Now it was an island of green and gray surrounded by something that felt hard to see as forest. “The peak was just gorgeous, but everything in the background was decimated,” she said.

A SINGLE-FILE SUMMER CAMP
Even without the threat of climate

change, any hike so long means planning around the seasons. Travelling from south to north, as roughly 90% of hikers do, means trying to get through 700 miles of high desert before triple-digit temperatures set in but not so soon that you enter the Sierra Nevada high country when it’s still buried in snow — and then 1,000 miles later, getting safely out of the North Cascades before the first fall snowstorms.

The trail was originally proposed in 1926 by Catherine Montgomery, an



starring Reese Witherspoon. The trail has developed its own subculture over the years, with an atmosphere somewhere between a spiritual pilgrimage and a single-file summer camp, blending long stretches of solitude with the ambling camaraderie of fellow hikers and “trail angels” who assist with advice and logistics. “Tramilies,” or trail families, hike and camp together. Trail nicknames, like Lemony Snicket — “I experienced a series of unfortunate events on-trail,” Graham said,



unlike in recent years, when thru-hikers have confronted a barrage of disruptions, either in the form of smoke and active fires forcing them off the trail, or the closing of trails through past burns to give the eco-systems time to stabilise.

In 2021, the fire season in California started in January and did not let up throughout the summer. Before my trip last month, I spoke with Andrew Carter, 65, who started the trail in April 2021, days after retiring from a career in marketing,



educator and avid hiker from Bellingham, Washington, but it would be nearly 50 years before the PCT emerged as a sanctioned route in 1973, crossing a patchwork of parks, national forests and even a smattering of private land. For decades, thru-hiking remained a fringe pursuit: According to the Pacific Crest Trail Association, it wasn’t until 2000 that more than 100 hikers completed the trail in a given year. That changed with the visibility brought by Cheryl Strayed’s bestselling memoir, “Wild,” which was adapted in 2014 into a film

explaining hers — replace given names for months at a stretch.

Anyone planning to hike 500 miles or more along the trail generally gets a long-distance permit from the PCTA, with start dates spread across March, April and May, to reduce the effect from too many people camping in one place at one time. Of the several thousand hikers who get a permit, more than two-thirds drop off before they reach Oregon.

So far this year, despite heat waves and paltry snowpack, there has not been a megafire along the trail. That’s

Fires forced him off the trail on three occasions, including August 31, when the US Forest Service made the decision to close national forests across California because of fire risks. (Already, some 6,800 fires had burned through 1.7 million acres). When the forests reopened two weeks later, Carter walked through smoke, envious of the fellow hikers who’d had the foresight to don N95 masks. He finally gave up altogether on September 24. “It took me three or four weeks before I stopped coughing,” he said. — NYT

TRAVEL TALES

17th century Scottish castle goes on sale for £625,000



AN A-LISTED 17th century castle in Dundee with turrets and leaded glass windows has gone on the market with offers for more than £625,000 (\$730,000).

Powrie Castle, located to the north of the city, has had extensive renovation work done on it by its current owners over the last three decades.

In keeping with its history, parts of the building’s medieval and renaissance features have been preserved.

The castle sale is being managed by Thorntons Property, which has advertised the site as suitable for a family home, a holiday home or an investment.

At the heart of the historic building lies a 30.2-square-metre drawing room with a high vaulted ceiling, and a dining room with flagstone flooring, an inglenook fireplace and an oak-beamed ceiling.

The property used to have its own bakery which has now been converted into a dining kitchen, complete with a stone vaulted ceiling, bread oven and Aga range cooker.

The home has three double-sized bedrooms, including “the grand laird and lady’s bedroom,” which incorporates an open fireplace and a barrel-vaulted ceiling, plus an en-suite shower room.

From this room can be accessed the “Tower Room”, which is currently a study and has previously been used as an art room.



The castle includes a monument in its grounds, The Keep, which dates back to the 16th century.

But the origins of the grounds themselves can be traced about 850 years back, to 1172, when King William the Lion gifted the land to Robert Ogilvie, the Earl of Angus.

Since then, the stewardship of the property has been dominated by two families: the Ogilvies and the Fotheringhams.

Owning the castle for around 600 years between them, the families were actively involved in the politics and conflicts of the late Middle Ages, Renaissance and the Age of Discovery.

Letters show their correspondence with royal figures including MaryQueen of Scots.

Property manager David Fletcher said: “Powrie Castle is a rare opportunity to own a beautifully renovated castle, with links to some of Scotland’s noted royal figures and significant historic events.

“Despite its grand connections, it is a remarkably comfortable and enchanting home that offers great flexibility.

“The Tower and Turret rooms could be converted into two further bedrooms, which would be especially suitable for children, and its large formal dining and drawing rooms are the perfect spaces for entertaining.

“Just three miles to Dundee, which has excellent road, rail and air links, and close to world-classing golfing at St Andrews and Carnoustie, Powrie Castle is sure to attract interest from a wide range of buyers.” — dpa



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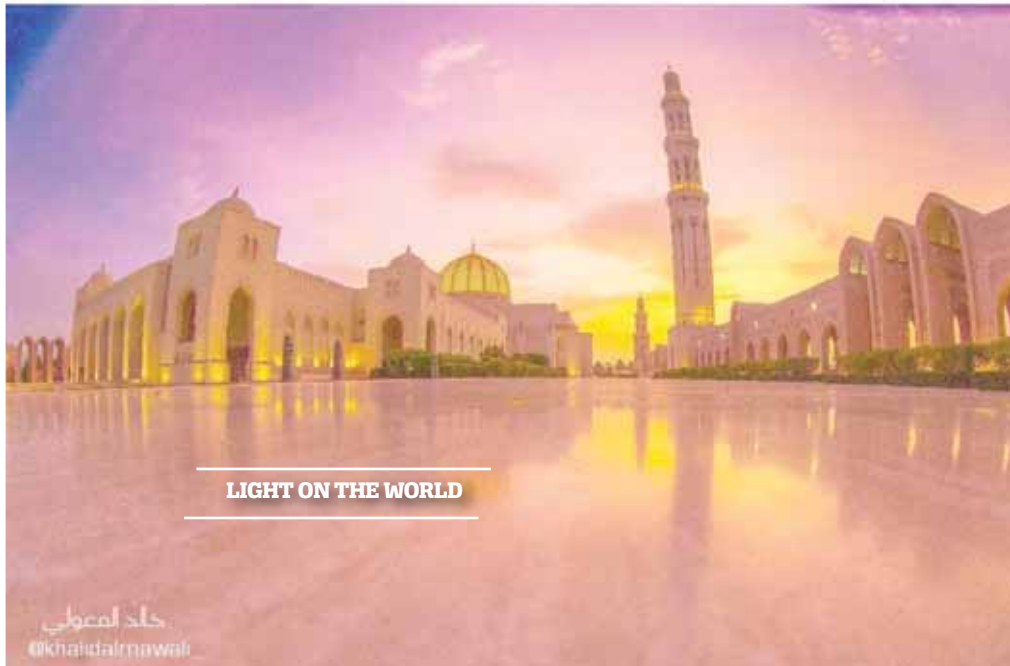
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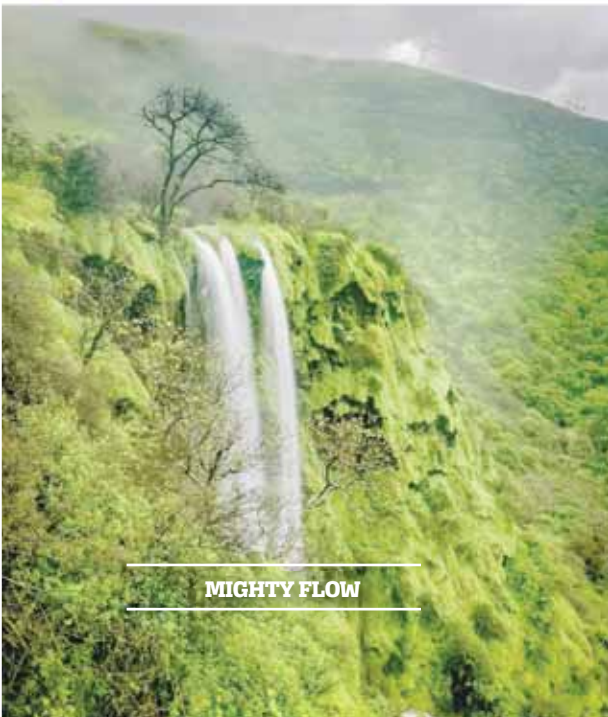
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AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Google's immersive Street View could be glimpse of metaverse



FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER its launch, a Google Maps feature that lets people explore faraway places as though standing right there is providing a glimpse of the metaverse being heralded as the future of the Internet.

There was not yet talk of online life moving to virtual worlds when a "far-fetched" musing by Google co-founder Larry Page prompted Street View, which lets users of the company's free navigation service see imagery of map locations from the perspective of being there.

Now the metaverse is a tech-world buzz, with companies including Facebook parent Meta investing in creating online realms where people represented by videogame-like characters work, play, shop and more.

"Larry Page took a video camera and stuck it out the window of his car," Google senior technical programme manager Steven Silverman said, while showing AFP the garage where the company builds cameras for cars, bikes, backpacks, and even snowmobiles dispatched to capture 360-degree images worldwide.

"He was talking to some of his colleagues at the time, saying, 'I bet we can do something with this.' That was the start of Street View."

Street View lets people click on locations in Google Maps to see what it might look like were they at that spot, and even look around.

Now, the Internet behemoth is introducing an "immersive view" that fuses Street View images with artificial intelligence to create "a rich, digital model of the world," Miriam Daniel, Google Maps Experiences vice president, said in a post.

"You'll be able to experience what a neighbourhood, landmark, restaurant or popular venue is like — and even feel like you're right there before you ever set foot inside," Daniel said.

"With a quick search, you can virtually soar over Westminster to see the neighbourhood and stunning architecture of places, like Big Ben, up close."

Google will start rolling out immersive view later this year, starting in Los Angeles, London, New York, San Francisco and Tokyo.

FROM MAPS TO METAVERSE

Street View imagery has been gathered in more than 100 countries and territories, ranging from places such as Mount Fuji and Grand Canyon National Park to the Great Barrier Reef.

"If you want to see what it's like to go down a ski slope, you can see where that snowmobile has gone," Silverman said, nodding towards a maroon snowmobile in the garage in the Silicon Valley city of Mountain View, California.

"That trike was really funny because it went around Stonehenge, and we put it on a barge and went down the Amazon River," he said of another vehicle.

He pointed to a backpack camera system taken for a zip-line ride in the Amazon, to provide a bird's-eye perspective.

Years spent capturing the real world in 360-degree imagery bodes well for Google when it comes to a future in which Internet life shifts to immersive digital worlds, said Creative Strategies tech analyst Carolina Milanesi.

"It absolutely plays into the metaverse," Milanesi said. "The idea of a digital twin of the world is certainly one aspect of it that Google will solve."

Silverman reasoned that, in a sense, Street View has been giving users a virtual experience for more than a decade, and the imagery naturally lends itself to depicting the real world in virtual settings.

"Ideally, that metaverse, that world that we move into, we're going to be there," Silverman said. — **AFP**

CULTURE

'Man of the hole' dies, last known survivor of Amazon tribe



FOR MORE THAN 20 years he lived alone in the Brazilian Amazon eating nuts, fruit and game — a symbol of the struggle of indigenous people who exist in isolation in the rainforest.

Now this man whose very name was unknown is dead, and his passing has made headlines around the world.

His life was marked by massacres that left him as the lone survivor of a small tribe attacked by gunmen apparently hired by ranchers seeking to exploit the pristine Amazon.

He was found dead lying in a hammock on August 23 in Tanaru Indigenous Territory. Authorities found no signs of violence and believe he died of natural causes.

The man was covered in the bright feathers of a bird called the guacamaya, a kind of macaw, local news reports said.

The Tanaru Indigenous Territory covers 8,000 hectares (30 square miles) of protected rainforest in Brazil's southwestern Rondonia state, bordering Bolivia. The reserve is surrounded by sprawling cattle ranches.

Rife with rogue miners and wood cutters whose work is illegal, it is one of the most dangerous regions of Brazil, according to the Survival International NGP.

The Tanaru land "is like an oasis of green in the sea

of destruction," said NGO director Fiona Watson.

AN ARROW SHOT

The "man of the hole" was first spotted in 1996 by a documentary team travelling with officials of the National Indian Foundation, a government agency that was probing a massacre committed against his tribe.

Proving the presence of indigenous people in the Tanaru forest area was necessary in order to grant the area legal protection.

The footage was featured in a documentary called "Corumbiara" in 2009.

In it, the man's eyes are seen peering out from inside a straw hut. A spear pokes out at one point, as if to scare visitors away. But no one utters a word.

Over the years Funai teams came back with representatives of neighbouring tribes to try to determine what language the man spoke and learn more about his people.

But he made clear he did not want to engage anyone. Feeling threatened, one time he shot an arrow that left a visiting team member seriously wounded.

"One can only imagine what this man was thinking, going through, living on his own, not able to speak to anybody and I think very frightened because any outsider for him represented a threat, given his terrible

experience," Watson said.

After that, authorities just tried to patrol his territory and look for signs that he was still alive.

In the last known footage of him alive — shot in 2011 but not released until seven years later — he is seen semi-naked cutting down a tree with an axe.

Besides bows and arrows that showed he hunted, there were gardens where he grew fruit and vegetables, such as papaya and manioc.

"We saw one of his gardens and it was full of produce — very beautifully kept," said Watson who visited the site in 2005.

But what most fascinated researchers were the many holes he dug — some two metres (seven feet) deep and with sharp spears at the bottom.

Funai said officials found 53 places that had been his home in the Tanaru territory, always with the same structure: a small straw hut with one door and a hole.

The holes were used to trap animals but experts think they may also been a place for him to hide from intruders or had some kind of spiritual purpose.

The holes, Watson said, are "a mystery that has died with him," as is the history of the Tanaru people.

Funai has identified 114 indigenous groups that live in isolation in Brazil's part of the Amazon. — **AFP**

A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



Dr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi
khalidalbalushi@hotmail.com

The Metal Animal in the Air, Butting the Skies

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

IN APRIL, 1965, orders were issued that our regiment be transferred to Nizwa, where the companies were distributed in the following manner:

A Company in Nizwa (with the HQ)
B Company in Ibri
C Company in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar.

strength and stood up to continue till we reached the camp. Once in the camp, we had to fetch wood for cooking and heating water. We carried out patrols, kept guard and did manoeuvres. When free, we exercised and played a polo like game: while on our donkeys, we would hit the ball with a club.

During that time, we were briefed to make a runway. We were able to make a dust runway, and subsequently the "Beaver" aircraft began to come to Al Jabal Al Akhdhar.

THE ROAD TO THE SOUTH

By the end of May, we received orders to go down to the Dhofar Governorate. We called at Wadi Ma'edin and then resumed our journey towards the town of Farq. There we found a huge British plane from Sharjah* waiting for us. We looked at it with awe and amazement and began to say to each other, "How can this rather unwieldy tent take us to the air?"

To be honest, at that time we hadn't become used to travelling by car. To our surprise, an altogether different experience was waiting for us. What was more, this metal "animal" didn't walk on the earth, but flew in the air, butting the skies. This reminded me of our Miskan man talking of the wood (ship) that flew in the air. When the plane took off we all were swept by a wave of nausea and vomiting. We arrived in Salalah City after the sunset. Upon praying Isha** we slept for about two to three hours. By two o'clock in the early morning, we left our beds.

* In the United Arab Emirates (the translator).

** Night prayers, the last of the daily five prayers (the translator).

art & life

Local Scene

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TUESDAY | SEPTEMBER 6 | 2022

Putting the flexibility of date palm wood into good use

BY MAZOUN AL GHAILANI

Dates are some of nature's best gifts to Oman. Everything about the different parts of a date plant can be utilised for different purposes making it a close competition to coconuts as a tree of life for its many different uses from roots to fruits.

One of the many people who can attest to its many uses is Omani artist Ghalib al Sawafi whose main medium for his work usually involves a portion of these prized trees. Growing up in one of Oman's villages with access to these trees, he has a connection with these palm trees that he considers them his dear friends — an important part of his childhood.

His latest artworks involve tapping the core of the palm trees and using them into different pieces that can be displayed beautifully in homes, galleries and everywhere else that art is the centrepiece.

"According to my experience, it is possible to take advantage of the core of palm tree to produce products such as chairs, tables, bookholders, plant pots and many others", Ghalib said.

With palm tree trunks as his medium, Ghalib combines his passion for art and his love for crafts. While he may not have a fancy degree in the art given by a university, he has great experience from the university of life which taught all he needs to be able to convert things into something awe-inspiring. Multi-skilled in arts and crafts, his mission is to help conserve Omani heritage through his art.

"Work-wise, I have lived in many parts of Oman during my career. I learned and gained many experiences that had a good impact on developing myself. I have always adored the Omani environment and was inspired by the beauty around me and have its impact obvious on my works", he shared.

The quality of the product recycled from the wood of the palm tree depends on the age of the stem.

"The older the palm tree, the better the quality of the wood. If the palm tree is young, the quality is low. Although the types of palm trees are similar in terms of shape, the quality of their wood depends on many factors. The most important is the type of palm from which the wood is extracted", he said.

He added, "For example, there are types of palms whose wood had been used in the construction of Omani castles and forts, and which were able to withstand very difficult environmental factors such as Al naghal, Al barshi, Al khasab and many more of them", Ghalib said.

"There are other factors besides age, which play a role in the quality of the product, like the place of cultivation, care and nutrition, the type of soil, the weather and availability of water directly affect the type of wood. And don't forget that the method of drying wood or deal-

ing with it after the tree has been cut plays an effective role in the hardness and quality of wood", he said.

Just like any art process, creating something out of palm trunks start with an idea. Ghalib's wild imagination has led him into creating the most intricate of accessories, the most detailed of window frames, the most elaborate of decors and even the simplest of benches and home furniture. Some craft products take one day and some need more effort and time that it takes him two weeks or a month to finish a project.

"The methods of working with palm wood are mostly similar to the methods of working on the other types of wood, but the palm wood needs more care due to the nature of its fibre formations and the possibility of product damage in the advanced stages if some steps were neglected or exceeded", he shared.

The carving and formation of the palm wood product differ from those of the products of other types of wood. Unlike palm wood, timber imported from outside the Sultanate of Oman is widely used in various industries and comes in multi-size ready panels which doesn't need much effort to work on.

Palm trees wood requires working from scratch, starting with choosing the best types of trees, and then many very stressful stages. Also, palm wood needs expenses that do not ultimately lead, and in most cases, to reach satisfaction with a modest financial return compared to the effort expended in producing any craftwork.

He said there are several materials to work with. He prefers using many mechanical tools to execute piercing, screwing, polishing and snapper tool because they give a quick result during the work.

Carving from palm wood is very different from carving on hardwood. Date palm wood, in particular, is a softwood that contains longitudinal fibres of low density and is hard relative to its fibres. The fibres are of low density and thickness, but they are solid as a formation, capable of cohesion and withstand external conditions of heat, rain and other hard conditions. "Our forefathers in the past used palm trunks, that give constant and continuous heat unlike the other types of wood, to make plaster used in construction. This was a challenge for firefighters because a fire on palm wood wouldn't extinguish easily and the fire remains alive for days", Ghalib said. For Ghalib, it is important to also look into caring for the arts and crafts that use date trees.

"In the Sultanate of Oman, we do not have an industry or a real investment for this wasted wealth, which can supply the national economy and support the tourism sector if it is optimally invested. Coordination with experienced Omani after investing in this project would support tourism greatly", he said.

