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HAMED RETURNS TO RALLY ACTION IN CYPRUS



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EXPERTS: COVID-19 CRISIS WILL CONTINUE TO TEST RESILIENCE OF HOSPITALITY SECTOR



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TREATS AND TRADITION IN TEHRAN'S OLDEST, TINIEST TEAHOUSE



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO SAUDI KING

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and long life to King Salman, praying to Allah the Almighty for the return of this occasion while the brotherly people of the Saudi Arabia realise aspirations of further progress and prosperity. — ONA

GENEVA

IRAN MINISTER MEETS SAUDI, GCC OFFICIALS

Iran's foreign minister has met officials from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf and Arab states in New York, and said strengthening ties with neighbours was the new government's top priority, the Mehr news agency reported. Mehr said on Tuesday's meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly was attended by Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and "foreign ministers and senior representatives" of countries.



'SHIELD 26' PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION

The Cadet Officers Batch at Sultan Qaboos Military College, Royal Army of Oman (RAO), on Wednesday conducted a practical demonstration marking the conclusion of the final mobilisation exercise (Shield 26). **SEE ALSO P3**

Industrial sector ICV has crossed RO 3.1 billion

MUSCAT: The volume of growth of Oman in-country value (ICV) in the industrial sector has crossed the RO 3.1 billion mark and that the contribution of non-petrochemical subsidiary sectors to industrialisation stands at 38 per cent.

This was stated by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary for Commerce and Industry, while addressing an ICV forum under the theme of 'Empowering Youth, Localising Industries and Creating Opportunities'.

The forum seeks to pursue the process of enhancing ICV and impart its benefits to all development sectors. The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA). "The OIA and its affiliate firms accord great attention to ICV and enacted regulatory systems which guarantee implementation of added value in tenders, procurements and projects", said Al Murshidi, noting that the OIA will digitise these regulations so that they could be enforced in a transparent manner.

Certain departments will be entrusted with continuously monitoring and assessing performance in this regard, he added.

TURN TO P2

READ IN

OPINION P9

Public perception is also important!
Ali al Matani

SMEs need membership in chamber of commerce
Haider al Lawati

INSIDE



LEBANON RAISES FUEL PRICES AS SUBSIDIES PHASED OUT

P6



RARE AUSTRALIA QUAKE TRIGGERS PANIC

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No Covid patients in Royal Hospital

SULTANATE SEES NO DEATHS FOR FIFTH DAY IN A ROW

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkuttvyp

As a sign of significant improvement in the epidemiological situation, Oman recorded zero Covid-19 deaths for the fifth consecutive day on Wednesday.

While 22 new cases and 388 new recoveries were registered, statistics from the Ministry of Health showed.

According to figures released by the ministry, the total number of positive Covid-19 cases reached 294,742 and the total deaths stood at 4,093. As many as 388 new cases

6 BILLION SHOTS INJECTED WORLDWIDE



More than six billion doses of anti-Covid vaccines have been given around the world, according to a tally on Wednesday based on official sources.

The vaccination drive has reached a steady rhythm taking 29 days to clock up the sixth billion, almost the same speed as the fourth and fifth billion at 30 and 26 days respectively. Nearly 40 per cent (2.18 billion) of the six billion shots have been administered in China. India (826.5 million) and the United States (386.8 million) complete the trio of countries that have given the most jabs.

have recovered.

Even as the Covid-19 situation has made remarkable improvement in the recent weeks, with a decrease in the number of deaths and infection cases, the ministry urged citizens and residents not to show any slackness in precautionary measures.

The Royal Hospital said that for the first time in 18 months, the Covid-19 unit at the Royal Hospital had zero patients on Wednesday. The last Covid-19 patient with coronavirus left the hospital on Wednesday.

Veteran runner urges public to 'run for a better life'

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Once a helicopter pilot and now a passionate runner, Paul Dean, representative of the Muscat Road Runners (MRR), a group which stands for running for a better life, advocates a healthy lifestyle and urges people to lead an active lifestyle.

Leading an active and sporty life is more important, as lifestyle diseases and fatalities are climbing their way up due to lack of physical activity and bad food habits. "I'm a casual runner interested in bringing people to run. Those who run for the first time, might find it difficult initially but will enjoy later", said an energetic Paul Dean.



Muscat Road Runners (MRR) is a multinational group which gets together several times a week to run since 1983. This group, with 80 members, constantly educates people to run to be healthy. It conducts running with the participation of at least 45 people of all abilities.

Speaking to the *Observer* on the sidelines of the press conference of Al Mouj Muscat Marathon, the biggest running event in the Sultanate, he said that most of those who found it difficult in the first instance, became better runners at a later stage in life.

Al Mouj Muscat Marathon will take place on February 11 and 12, 2022. **TURN TO P2**



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Go slow near schools when kids are around

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

As the first week of school students heading back to physical classrooms after the gap caused by the pandemic, the Royal Oman Police has alerted parents on the responsibility of alerting their children on road safety, "It is a necessity to make sure that the bus has stopped completely before getting off it, taking into account the correct traffic precautions while heading home."

The Director-General of Royal Oman Police, Colonel Mohammed bin Awadh al Rowas, speaking to the *Observer*, said it is customary for the ROP to follow closely on the safety of students and their vehicles at the beginning of each academic year.

"We want all the parents and drivers to be aware of all the safety measures and road safety regulations that must be followed to safeguard students particularly when they are near the schools. We request everyone to reduce speed and help the students in their movement while arriving at school and leaving the school premises," said Col Mohammed.

There has been a daily awareness campaign by the Royal Oman Police on social media. On Wednesday, the campaign highlighted the rights of the pedestrians.

The ROP stated, "Slow down. Come to a complete stop before entering the planned pedestrian crossing. Giving priority to pedestrians as soon as they place their feet on the first line of the zebra crossing."

On the other hand, the parents have also raised the importance of the role of the school bus drivers when it comes to the safety of their children while commuting to school and back.

"What is the role of the drivers?

We request everyone to reduce speed and help the students in their movement while arriving at school and leaving the school premises

MOHAMMED AL ROWAS
Director-General, ROP

They play a crucial role in the safety of the children. Some of them drive the bus before the student sits or gets off from the bus door onto the street or they stop next to the street so that one side of the vehicle is inside the street which obscures the vision of the student and can result in tragedies," said a concerned parent.

"I hope that buses are required to install a camera in front of the bus door," requested yet another parent on social media.

"Two of the biggest concerns are run-over accidents and young children being forgotten in the bus," reflected a mother.

There are strict traffic regulations to be followed by drivers while passing through school zones. The school buses being back on the roads the traffic has peaked during the rush hours and the ROP campaign also highlighted on the significance of using vehicle indicators, negligence of which is a traffic violation.

"The driver of the vehicle must use the side-signal light 'right, left' that indicates a lane change, and that the warning remains in place for the duration of the lane change. It is considered a violation if any driver does not use the side signal when changing from one lane to another."

BADR RECEIVES CREDENTIALS COPIES



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, on Wednesday received a copy of credentials of Khalid Mohammed Abdulhaleem Radhi, appointed Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Sultanate. During the meeting, Sayyid Badr welcomed the ambassador, wishing him success in carrying out his duties, and the fraternal relations between the two countries further progress and prosperity. Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy also received a copy of credentials of Bill Murray, appointed Ambassador of the United Kingdom (UK) to the Sultanate. During the meeting, Sayyid Badr welcomed the ambassador, wishing him success in carrying out his duties, and the bilateral relations between the Sultanate and the UK further progress and prosperity.



Nadhirah sets sights on world's eighth highest mountain peak

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Nadhirah al Harthy is on a mission to conquer yet another peak, Manaslu, after flying Oman's flag high on many of the world's top altitudes.

Located 8,163 metres above sea level (ASL) in the Mansiri Himal, part of the Nepalese Himalayas, Manaslu is the eighth highest mountain in the world. It is standing head and shoulders above the pine forests of Nepal's Budhi Gandak river valley. The mighty Manaslu is nicknamed 'killer mountain' by the local people in Nepal.

"I'm climbing Mount Manaslu at the moment... and we are in preparation for the last round of the summit push," she said from Manaslu. She added that communication might get disrupted as the Internet was not good at the heights and would soon be in touch with the rest of the world.

"I decided to climb Everest in 2017, and I trained for two years. Then I did it in 2019. So I started to learn everything during the two years when I was training."

Nadhirah started mountaineering at the



Nadhirah al Harthy with children at the foot of Manaslu. It is standing head and shoulders above the pine forests of Nepal's Budhi Gandak river valley. The mighty Manaslu is nicknamed 'killer mountain' by the local people in Nepal.

age of 40 after meeting Khalid al Siyabi, the first Omani to climb Everest. Nadhirah met Al Siyabi during her tenure with the Ministry of Education. In a few months, she was standing right in front of Mount Himalaya.

Al Siyabi became her coach, and she took arduous lessons in climbing the peaks from him that enabled her to become the first Omani woman to reach the mountain's summit.

"My simple message is to try and give space to do new things, but properly. When you want to do something, you should have a passion for what you are doing. If you have a goal, you have a dream. So you should know what exactly you have to do: what to eat and how to train," she said.

Nadhirah is the first Arab woman and the second Omani to reach the summit of Mount Ama Dablam (6,812 metres), one of the highest Himalayan peaks in the hilly country of Nepal, in May 2019.

The all-women Arab group 'Dream of Everest', which climbed the top of the world's tallest mountain, had Joyce Azzam, Nelly Attar of Lebanon, Mona Shahab of Saudi Arabia, and 42-year-old Nadhirah in the team.

ICV to empower youth, create jobs



FROM PAGE 1

Dr Saleh said that the forum is expected to come out with a roadmap to consolidate the concept of ICV, gaining impetus from the successful experience in oil, gas and petrochemical industries.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulamir Abdulhussein al Ajmi, Director of External Affairs and Value Creation at Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), said that as many as 200 small and medium enterprises were registered in 2020, and that the value of associated contracts stood at RO 118 million.

The PDO encourages retention of 34 per cent of ICV of national products and services within the country in 2020, he said.

The forum saw the launch of an initiative named "Tahfeez" (Incentivisation), the first one dealing with goals of developing ICV. Also, seven agreements and memorandums of cooperation were concluded within the context of rolling out a programme of employment-linked training.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by Oman Society for Petroleum

Services (Opal) and Seeh al Sarya Engineering, while three more MoUs were inked to train graduates of technical specialisations on the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR) skills.

The MoUs include training at three ICT companies (from the category of small and medium enterprise) and to provide 12-month employment for ICT graduates in the field of 'initial engineering designing'.

Two more MoUs were signed to enhance the skills of mechanical/electrical executives and to create employment for fresh graduates to replace expatriate manpower operating in mechanical and electrical fields.

Another MoU provides for the refurbishment of drivers' skills. Towards this end, the PDO and Opal will cooperate to train 100 drivers in different fields, so that they could access higher positions in future in the job scale.

During the forum, the "Products and National Services Directory" was inaugurated. It covered a set of papers, among them one themed "ICV in Small and Medium Enterprise", and another titled "2040 and Sustainability of ICV Programmes", among other topics. — ONA

Veteran runner urges public to 'run for a better life'

FROM PAGE 1

"We shouldn't stop running in a day; instead, continue running and lead a healthy lifestyle," Paul, who has been running since its first edition in 2012 and had inspired many to run along every year, said.

The 2020 edition had close to 11,000 participants, and the 2022 Al Mouj Muscat Marathon is expected to attract a large number of participants. The organisers are diligently working towards creating an environment where all safety protocols are in place during the event.

Cases of obesity are increasing in Oman. For them, Paul Dean has a simple message: Join the Muscat Marathon and make running a part of life.

The MRR works on the objective of adding more and more people to the running activity.

"Running takes care of your mind, body, and spirit. The simple act of putting one foot in front of the other and moving forward can make you healthier, happier, and more confident," it says.

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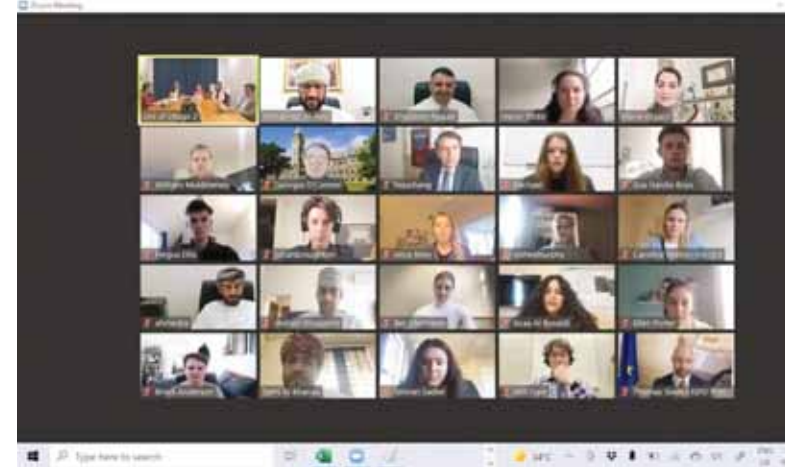


■ DISPLAYING BATTLE READINESS



The cadet officers of Sultan Qaboos Military College, Royal Army of Oman (RAO), on Wednesday conducted a practical demonstration marking the conclusion of the final mobilisation exercise (Shield 26). The live ammunition demo was held at the RAO range with support from the Engineering Services division of the Ministry of Defence. The event was held under the auspices of Maj Gen Matar bin Salim al Balushi, RAO Commander. — ONA

Third edition of Youth Summit 2021 begins



MUSCAT: The third edition of Youth Summit 2021 began on Wednesday. The two-day online event was organised by Sultan Qaboos University's (SQU) Political Science Group, in cooperation with students of Otago University in New Zealand.

The opening ceremony set the ground principles of negotiations between the Omani and New Zealand parties.

The summit seeks to enhance cooperation between the students of the two universities and discuss some common political, economic and cultural matters to find solutions that can be applied in both countries.

The opening of the summit, sponsored by the International Institute of Protocol and

Diplomacy (ISPD), was preceded by a series of virtual lectures.

During the lectures, the students were trained on the global diplomatic practices and protocols, and ways to apply them in official international conferences.

The opening of the summit was attended by Her Highness Dr Mona Fahd al Said, SQU Assistant Vice-Chancellor for International Cooperation, Dr Almkhtar bin Saif al Abri, Dean of the College of Economics and Political Sciences, Prof Helen Nicholson, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Otago and Prof Will Sweetman, Dean of the College of Social Sciences at the University of Otago.

— ONA

In brief

SULTANATE AND
NETHERLANDS
INK MOU

MUSCAT: The Sultanate and the Kingdom of the Netherlands signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the mutual recognition of Certificates of Competency (CoC) for seafarers.

The Sultanate was represented by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology and the Netherlands by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. The MoU was signed by Taher bin Mohammed al Busaidi, Acting Director-General of Maritime Affairs and Brigit Gijssbers, Director for Maritime Affairs in the Netherlands.

2,000 SEEDLINGS OF
MANGROVE TREES
PLANTED

The Environment Authority team launched a campaign to plant 2,000 seedlings of mangrove trees in Mirbat. Mangrove forests stabilise the coastline, reduce erosion from storm surges, currents, waves, and tides. The intricate root system of mangroves also makes these forests attractive to fish and other organisms seeking food and shelter from predators.

OCCI seeks investments in health sector

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) held a meeting with owners of some private institutions operating in the health sector on Wednesday. The meeting aimed at discussing the challenges facing these institutions, as part of the OCCI's efforts to ease the difficulties faced by these private institutions and find solutions to enable them adapt with the economic conditions amid pandemic.

Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the OCCI, welcomed the owners of private health institutions and hailed their role in supporting the health sector. He commended the contributions of these institutions to providing health, treatment and preventive services, in collaboration with the public health sector.

"This meeting was held with a view to promoting the partnership of the private health sector and



enhancing its role in supporting the health sector in the Sultanate. At the OCCI, we strive to set visions and suggestions for developing the economic sectors including the private health sector. These private medical and health institutions play a significantly important role in providing treatment services and taking them to the levels we aspire to."

The OCCI's Chairman explained that the government supports national and foreign

investments in the health sector as part of its efforts exerted to encourage investments in various economic sector. He stressed that the investment in this field is promising and bodes well. The government strives to support investments in the health sector through some initiatives such as obligating companies to provide insurance services for its employees.

Al Saleh also pointed out that the government encourages foreign



investments, which aim to add value to the national investments in the health sector. He emphasised that there is a dire need for medical expertise in the secondary and tertiary health saying: "We hope that the private health institutions will invest qualitatively in a way that supports the health sector. Foreign investments should focus on specialised hospitals and health centres to provide a qualitative addition to the health sector."

On the other hand, the owners

of private health institutions stressed the importance of investing in big health projects. They explained that such projects open up wider horizons for the specialised national cadres.

The meeting also discussed the importance of involving OCCI in the decision-making process in the health sector. It also touched upon the fees levied on private health institutions and the necessity of reconsidering them to ensure the sustainability of such institutions.

■ CAMEL RACE BEGINS



The two-day annual festival of camel races for 2021/2022 season kicked-off at Al Bashayer Camel Race track in the Wilayat of Adam in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate on Wednesday. Organised by the Royal Court Affairs, represented by the Royal Camel Corps, the 19th festival witnessed the participation of 930 camels from different governorates of the Sultanate. On the first day of the competition, 30 rounds were held, including 19 rounds for the Haja'ej category, for a distance of 3 km, and 11 rounds for the Laqaya category, for a distance of 4 km.

MASSRAT SHAIKH

Children face challenges when heading back to school and this year's return is different. Parents have an essential role in easing the jitters of returning to in-person learning this year. It is time to reassess what is best for our children and to consider establishing new norms. Here are a few suggestions to help parents get started.

After more than a year of learning virtually, returning to school may require managing a new schedule. As a parent, you can ease your child's anxiety by modelling confidence and calm behaviour and by imposing structure in family life, mealtime, homework and bedtime routines.

Getting out of home and getting back to school will be a difficult time for some children. It is vital to keep communication open at this vulnerable time. If you have not already started setting time aside each day to talk to your child about challenges and new experiences at school, now is the perfect moment.

Anxious parents send anxious kids to school. Children are like sponges, absorbing energy and adopting the behaviours around them. One of the most helpful things you can do is model calm, confident behaviour, particularly while helping a child get ready for school. A child usually starts school no calmer than her least-relaxed parent.

Teachers matter even more this year. Have open communication with teachers. The teachers can give you all kinds of information — Information about learning difficulties and peer problems and academic achievements and close friendships. Teachers are allies and we should talk to them regularly.

Resist the urge to overschedule. Many kids are eager to join their peers in extracurricular activities that they enjoy and many parents want their children to be out of the house, off devices and engaging in healthy tasks. After months of restrictions, most parents' instinct might be to dive back in and immediately pack their child's schedule with the sports, arts and other activities they have been missing. However, it is better to ease back into activities slowly and let your child take the lead.

Avoid an excessive focus on grades this year. Some parents are worried about learning loss from last year and may feel pressure to load kids up with additional coursework

PARENTS SHOULD INSTIL CONFIDENCE, CALM IN CHILDREN TO ENABLE A STRESS-FREE AND SAFE LEARNING EXPERIENCE AMID PANDEMIC

EASE SCHOOL REOPENING JITTERS



HOW TO GET STARTED

2

If kids show signs of not wanting to go back to school, investigate what might be the root cause

4

Reach out to teachers and counsellors at school if your child is feeling particularly disconnected

1

Better to ease back into activities slowly and let your child take the lead

3

Set time aside each day to talk to your child about challenges and new experiences at school

5

Stay attentive to the health and well-being of your child as you work together for balanced return to school

and tutoring. No one wants to see their child left behind, but some parents may be panicking prematurely. Educators know that students will likely be starting from different places this year, and many are adjusting their curricula and arranging for extra resources. Wait for the school to recommend when additional help may be needed.

Aim for a healthy child — physically and emotionally — who is motivated and engaged.

Focus on human connection and relationships. While so many of us long to return to in-person school and activities, reentry may be challenging. Returning to a highly structured routine with limited flexibility may be a welcome relief and significant stress for others. Some children have thrived emotionally or academically during remote learning — avoiding social pressures, bullying, or racism. Other children have experienced unprecedented isolation from their peers, teachers, communities and support systems. Some will bounce back quickly and reestablish their relationships and connections. Others may lack confidence in their social skills and need more support and encouragement as they return, especially as they re-enter spaces that did not feel safe before the pandemic.

You know your child best. Pay close attention and listen to their concerns. If they show signs of not wanting to go back to school, investigate what might be the root cause. If the first week is hard, consider whether this may be because of exhaustion, social anxiety, not feeling academically ready, or legitimate fears about Covid.

Check-in with your child regularly, normalise their experiences and offer reassurance. Reach out to teachers and counsellors at school if your child is feeling particularly disconnected and could use some help reestablishing trusting relationships.

Support your children where they are. Our children have learned critical coping skills in 2020 that will serve them well as they navigate back to school. Have patience during this period; everyone, including parents and teachers, may need more time to settle in and establish routines. Do not assume your child's experiences and emotions about returning to school match your own. Stay attentive to the health and well-being of your child as you work together to negotiate a safe, sane and balanced return to school.

The author is an educational psychologist.
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Oman takes part in GCC meeting

MUSCAT: The Sultanate, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, took part in the 7th meeting of the GCC Ministers of Social Development Committee headed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The Sultanate was represented in the virtual meeting by Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, Minister of Social Development. The meeting approved the vision of the GCC Secretariat-General on enhancing the joint action in the social



sphere for the post Covid-19 stage. During the meeting, it was agreed to form a working team specialised in devising social

development strategies that keep up with future needs. The meeting also discussed other topics of concern to the GCC social field.

Pact signed to train teachers, students in 3D printing



Majid al Bahri, Under-Secretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs, signed the agreement with Stephen Kelly, President and General Manager of Occidental Oman, on Tuesday.

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, SEPT 22

The Ministry of Education signed a cooperation agreement with Occidental Oman for implementing the specialised training programme in 3D printing, which aims to build students' capabilities and empower them in the field of 3D engineering design with knowledge and skills.

The signing of the agreement took place at the Ministry of Education HQ on Monday. From the Ministry's side, Majid al Bahri, Under-Secretary for

Administrative and Financial Affairs, signed the agreement with Stephen Kelly, President and General Manager of Occidental Oman.

Majid al Bahri, Under-Secretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs, said, "The signing of this agreement comes to implement the specialised technical training programme in the field of 3D engineering design directed to teachers of grades (10-12) schools from various governorates of the Sultanate. It is a starting point for teachers, students, and those interested in 3D engineering

design. We hope that this programme will contribute to promoting the culture of design and creating creative solutions for the target groups, which begin with understanding the basics of 3D engineering design, raising awareness about 3D design and printing techniques, and transforming students' skills in this field to practical experience."

The under-secretary also confirmed that the programme targets 110 teachers from various governorates in the Sultanate, alongside with 106 students from North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

OVER 1.5 MILLION VEHICLES REGISTERED TILL AUGUST

MUSCAT: The total number of vehicles registered in the Sultanate till the end of August 2021 increased by 0.12 per cent to reach 1,544,707 compared to 1,542,860 till the end of last July 2021, showed data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Vehicles with private registration accounted for 79.3 per cent of the total number of registered vehicles, reaching 1,224,408 vehicles. As for vehicles with commercial registration, the number reached 232,373 vehicles or 15 per cent while the number of taxis was 28,883 or 1.9 per cent. Rental vehicles were 22,770 vehicles or 1.5 per cent of the total vehicles registered until the end of August 2021.



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Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology



إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology
In AL Khuwair invites for the Following Projects:

TENDER NO	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MTCT/HQ-29 37/2021	WASHOUT REPAIR FOR MIRBAT - HASIK - SHUWAYMIYAH ASPHALT ROAD AT GOVERNORATE OF DHOFAR	23/09/2021	29/09/2021	13/10/2021	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE TENDER BOARD (EXCELLENT CLASS)	150/-) ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted online on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by local bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of (1%) of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to (Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee). And hard copy of the same should be submitted manually to the Tenders Section, Tenders and Contracts Department (1st Floor), Ministry of Transport Building at Al Khuwair before 11:00 am on submission date.

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
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Electronic Tender(s)

Majan Electricity Co. (SAOC) Announces the Following E-Tender:

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77/2021 Re-Tender	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW 33KV FEEDER TAPPING FROM NEW YANQUL GRID SUBSTATION TO WAQABAH PRIMARY SUBSTATION (DHAHIRAH GOVERNORATE)	B	3/10/2021	12/10/2021	160 /=
114/2021	REPLACEMENT OF 33KV OVERHEAD LINES FROM WOODEN POLES TO CONCRETE POLE FOR "33KV LINE FROM ZURUB(1) PSS TO ZURUB(2) PSS" AND CONVERSION OF 33KV OVERHEAD LINES TO UNDERGROUND CABLES FOR "33KV MAHDAH	B	7/10/2021	2/11/2021	111 /=
115/2021	REPLACEMENT OF 33KV OVERHEAD LINES FROM WOODEN POLES TO CONCRETE POLE FOR "33KV RADAT SAA'A" (AI-BURAIMI GOVERNORATE)	B	7/10/2021	2/11/2021	37 /=

Interested Firm having relevant experience in the similar nature of services and registered with Tender Board and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) for electrical work, may register and obtain the tender documents from **E-Tendering Site** <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against online payment of non-refundable fees mentioned above for each tender.

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The Completed signed and sealed commercial and technical offer with all tender documents should be submitted and uploaded online into the above mentioned E-Tendering website. The Hard copies of the tender document are not accepted.

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For any technical assistance please contact
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E-mail: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products & and have a High level percentage of Omanization.

The Company is not bound to consent the lowest Bid or any other Tenders.
"WITH ELECTRICITY WE PROGRESS PLEASE AVOID EXTRAVAGANCE IN CONSUMPTION"



شركة كهرباء مجان (س.ا.و.ع.)
Majan Electricity Company (SAOC)
أحد شركات مجموعة نعام
Member of Nama Group

Majan Electricity Company S.A.O.C
P.O Box 286, Sohar
PC 311, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 2694 4444 | Fax: +968 2694 4222
Information@majanco.nama.om | www.majanco.co.om



ELECTRONIC TENDER

The Internal Tenders Committee of the
Ministry of Higher Education Research & Innovation
announced the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Company that are entitled to participate	Tender Price	Last Date for purchasing Tender	The deadline for submission of Tenders
12/2021	Project of equipping mechanical engineering laboratories of Saham Vocational College	Specialized in providing Same service and registered with the Tender Board with Grade Excellent - First- Second- Third- Fourth	25 /= RO	12/10/2021	01/11/2021

The purchasing of the tender documents by E-Tendering system will starting on **Thursday 23/09/2021 at 07:30 am**. To purchasing, please visit the following link:
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om/>

All companies that are bidding must provide a bank guarantee or a certified cheque from a bank operating in the Sultanate for at least (1%) of the tender value on behalf of His Excellency Dr. / Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee.

Preference will be given to companies' or small and medium enterprises registered with the General Authority for the development of Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) that includes the largest proportion of its tender Omanization.

Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender.

Chairman of tender committee
Ministry of Higher Education Research & Innovation



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IRAQ GETS READY FOR ELECTIONS



Officials of Iraq's electoral commission undergo a polling day simulation to test run its systems ahead of the upcoming parliamentary elections, in the northeastern city of Sulaymaniyah in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region on Wednesday. — Reuters

Sudan military faults politicians over failed coup

CAIRO: Sudanese military leaders said on Wednesday the civilian politicians they share power with had opened the door to a coup attempt by neglecting public welfare while they were consumed by internal squabbles.

A body known as the Sovereign Council has ruled Sudan under a fragile power-sharing deal between the military and civilians since the overthrow of Omar al Bashir in 2019 but their relationship has remained fractious since then.

Military authorities said on Monday they had detained 21 officers who had attempted to take power in the early hours of the day. The threat appeared to have escalated the tensions between the partners.

Speaking at a military graduation in Omdurman, General Abdel Fattah al Burhan, head of the Sovereign Council, and his deputy General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, accused the civilian politicians of seeking personal gains and forgetting the aims of the revolution. "The politicians gave an opportunity for the

coup because they neglected the citizen and his livelihood and basic services and were occupied with fighting over seats and divvying up positions," Dagalo said, in unusually strong criticism of the civilian team.

After the coup attempt, civilian prime minister Abdalla Hamdok had reiterated calls to restructure the military and bring its business interests under civilian oversight, a key source of dispute, in a speech that did not emphasise military-

The Sovereign Council has ruled Sudan under a fragile power-sharing deal between the military and civilians since the removal of Bashir in 2019

civilian unity as he has done previously. Political parties called on citizens to reject military rule and protect the revolution. Burhan called such statements

"unacceptable".

"Who should they rise to protect the revolution against? From us, the military? We are the ones who are protecting it from them, the ones who want to steal it."

Burhan said the military was the group most interested in the transition to democracy and elections, scheduled for early 2024.

— Reuters

EU says Iran ready to resume nuclear talks at 'early date'

TEHRAN WANTS N-TALKS THAT LEAD TO LIFTING OF US SANCTIONS

BRUSSELS: The European Union's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Wednesday Iran's top diplomat had assured him at their first meeting that Tehran was ready to restart talks on the nuclear deal soon.

EU-mediated negotiations began in Vienna in April aimed at reviving a 2015 nuclear agreement between Tehran and world powers — an accord left hanging by a thread after former US president Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew in 2018 and ramped up sanctions. The discussions, which involve the remaining parties seeking to persuade Washington to rejoin the deal and Iran to return to its nuclear commitments, have been stalled since June, when ultraconservative Ebrahim Raisi was elected as Iran's president.

An EU statement said Borrell "underlined once again the great importance of a quick resumption of the Vienna talks" at a meeting on Tuesday with Iran's new top diplomat Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

"The Iranian Foreign Minister assured of the willingness to resume negotiations at an early date," the statement said.



Iran's President's Ebrahim Raisi remotely addresses the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly on Tuesday.

— AFP

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said he expected a resumption of the talks "in the coming weeks," without giving an exact date.

The 2015 nuclear agreement offered Iran a reduction of UN sanctions in return for strict limits on its nuclear programme.

Earlier, Iranian President

Ebrahim Raisi told the annual UN General Assembly on Tuesday that Tehran wants to resume nuclear talks with world powers that would lead to removal of US sanctions. "The Islamic Republic considers the useful talks whose ultimate outcome is the lifting of all oppressive (US) sanctions," Raisi said in his address.

"The (US) policy of 'maximum oppression' is still on. We want nothing more than what is rightfully ours. We demand the implementation of international rules. All parties must stay true to the nuclear deal and the UN Resolution in practice," he said.

Iran and the US in April started indirect talks. — Agencies

Lebanon raises fuel prices as subsidies are phased out

BEIRUT: Crisis-hit Lebanon on Wednesday raised fuel prices for the second time in less than a week amid severe rationing spurred by the collapse of a subsidy system that has depleted state coffers.

Grappling with its worst-ever financial crisis, Lebanon has gradually increased fuel prices in recent months because the cash-strapped central bank can no longer afford to fund fuel imports.

The latest price hike, expected to be followed by further increases in coming weeks, is widely seen as a prelude to a final and definite lifting of fuel subsidies by the government. The revised price list published by the energy ministry on Wednesday set the price of 20 litres of 95-octane petrol at 202,400 Lebanese pounds (\$13 at the black market rate), up from 174,000 pounds the previous week.

Since the end of June, the price of petrol has more than tripled



People wait in cars to get fuel at a gas station in Zalka, Lebanon, on Monday.

— Reuters

amid severe rationing that has turned entire streets into chaotic queues for cars lining up to fill up at the pumps. To fill a medium-sized vehicle's tank, most Lebanese would now have to pay close to the monthly minimum wage of

675,000 Lebanese pounds, at a time when nearly 80 per cent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line.

George al Brax, a member of the syndicate of gas station owners, told local media on Wednesday

that the latest price hike was not "final," suggesting that prices will soon go up again.

He also cautioned that the imminent lifting of subsidies would not spell the end of long petrol queues which began at the start of summer and have since only gotten worse. The energy ministry's announcement on Wednesday came as many pumps across the country remained closed to customers.

Importers and gas station owners say they are out of stock but authorities have accused them of hoarding supplies to sell at higher prices once subsidies are officially lifted.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati, whose government was sworn in on Monday, told CNN this month that 74 per cent of more than \$10 billion dollars spent on subsidies had been "misused by traders".

— Agencies

SANAA

Rally in north Yemen as their fighters push south

Thousands of supporters of Yemen's Ansar Allah rallied in the capital Sanaa to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the ousting of the government, as the group's fighters pushed through frontlines in oil-producing regions.

The movement swept into the capital and most of north Yemen in 2014 when they ousted the internationally recognised government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. A vast crowd of supporters thronged Sanaa's central public squares waving the



flags and chanting slogans.

"These are glorious days in Yemen's history, it's like we are born again because we rose up... against the aggressors," said one protester, Hamdi Ziyad.

JUBA

426,000 affected by flooding in South Sudan: UN

Heavy flooding has affected and displaced about 426,000 people in South Sudan, including 185,000 children, as overflowing rivers deluged homes and farms in the country, the UN's emergency-response agency said.

Emergency workers have used canoes and boats to reach people cut off by the deluge, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said in a briefing note, warning that more heavy rains and flooding were expected



in the coming months. The downpours "have exacerbated the vulnerability of communities, with many displaced by the floods seeking refuge in churches and schools", the agency said.

TUNIS

Tunisian police re-arrest hostile MP

Tunisian lawmaker Seifeddine Makhoul, an outspoken critic of President Kais Saied, has been re-arrested, for "undermining the dignity of the army", his lawyer said on Wednesday.

Like other MPs, Makhoul lost his parliamentary immunity when Saied assumed full power on July 25, sacking the prime minister, suspending the assembly and taking control of the prosecution service.

Makhoul heads Al Karama, a party allied to the Ennahdha



movement, Saied's rivals who were previously the strongest party in the legislature. He was briefly arrested on September 17 on his way to a Tunis military court.

In brief

■ GENEVA



UN FREES FUNDS TO PREVENT AFGHAN SYSTEM COLLAPSE

The UN released emergency funds on Wednesday to help prevent Afghanistan's battered healthcare system from collapsing, with the WHO chief warning of an imminent catastrophe.

UN aid chief Martin Griffiths said he had released \$45 million, warning in a statement that "medicines, medical supplies and fuel are running out in Afghanistan". "Cold chains are compromised. Essential health-care workers are not being paid", he said.

Afghanistan's healthcare system was plunged into crisis after the Taliban swept into power last month, complicating aid deliveries and leaving many health facilities understaffed.

■ UNITED NATIONS



DUTERTE VOWS ACCOUNTABILITY ON DRUG WAR

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte said that anyone found to have "acted beyond bounds" in his campaign against illegal drugs would be held accountable under national laws, while appearing to reject an International Criminal Court probe.

Duterte told the United Nations General Assembly he had instructed the justice ministry and police to review the conduct of the campaign, in which more than 6,100 suspected drug dealers have been killed since 2016. Activists say many thousands more, mostly users or small-time peddlers, were killed by mystery gunmen.

■ BANGKOK



APEC CALLS FOR RETHINK OF CHAOTIC PANDEMIC TRAVEL RULES

Governments need to "rethink global travel restrictions", according to the Singapore-based secretariat of the 21-country Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) bloc, which described the curbs as "chaotic."

"Border health measures are not consistent", the secretariat said on Wednesday, leading to "even essential travel" becoming "more cumbersome" and "more exclusive" than it has been for decades.

Many countries in the region have in recent months been reporting their highest death and case numbers since the start of the pandemic.

BEIJING IS STILL HEAVILY RELIANT ON COAL FOR DOMESTIC ENERGY NEEDS

China will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad: President Xi



UNITED NATIONS: Chinese leader Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China would not build new coal-fired power projects abroad, using his address at the United Nations General Assembly to add to pledges to deal with climate change.

Xi provided no details, but depending on how the policy is implemented, the move could significantly limit the financing of coal plants in the developing world.

China has been under heavy diplomatic pressure to put an end to its coal financing overseas because it could make it easier for the world to stay on course to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement to reduce carbon emissions.

Xi's announcement followed similar moves by South Korea and Japan earlier this year, and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and US climate envoy John Kerry have urged China to follow the lead of its Asian counterparts.

"China will step up support for other developing countries in developing green and low-carbon energy, and will not build new coal-fired power projects abroad", Xi said in his pre-recorded video address at the annual UN gathering, in which he stressed China's peaceful intentions in

international relations.

Xi spoke after US President Joe Biden gave his first United Nations address. Biden mapped out a new era of vigorous competition without a new Cold War despite China's ascendancy.

In a calm and measured speech, Xi made no direct mention of China's often bitter rivalry with the United States, where the Biden administration has made policies on climate change mitigation a top priority and sought to cooperate

with Beijing.

Xi repeated pledges from last year that China would achieve a peak in carbon dioxide emissions before 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060.

Some experts have criticised that target as not ambitious enough, though it allowed Beijing to claim moral high ground on the issue after then-US president Donald Trump, who had called climate change a "hoax", had withdrawn from the Paris climate

agreement.

China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, is still heavily reliant on coal for its domestic energy needs.

One of Biden's first moves after assuming office in January was to reassert US leadership on climate change and return the United States to the Paris agreement.

"China was the last man standing. If there's no public finance of coal from China, there's little to no global coal expansion",

Justin Guay, Director of Global Climate Strategy at the Sunrise Project, a group advocating for a global transition from coal and fossil fuels, said of Xi's promise.

BREATHE FREE

Hours earlier, Biden said democracy would not be defeated by authoritarianism.

"The future will belong to those who give their people the ability to breathe free, not those who seek to suffocate their people with an iron hand", Biden said.

Ties between the world's two biggest economies have been languishing at their lowest point in decades over issues ranging from human rights to transparency over the origins of Covid-19.

Xi said there was a need to "reject the practice of forming small circles or zero-sum games", a possible reference to the US-led Quad forum of Australia, India, Japan and the United States seen as a means of pushing back against China's rise, which is due to meet at leader level in Washington on Friday.

China last week warned of an intensified arms race in the region after the United States, Britain and Australia announced a new Indo-Pacific security alliance, dubbed AUKUS, which will provide Australia with the technology and capability to deploy nuclear-powered submarines. — **Reuters**

Australia sets conditions for China joining Pacific pact

SYDNEY: China must end a freeze on contacts with senior Australian politicians if it hopes to join a trans-Pacific trade pact, Canberra's trade minister said on Wednesday, setting de facto preconditions for accession.

Dan Tehan linked China's bid to join an 11-nation trading alliance with steps to improve bilateral relations that are at their lowest ebb in decades.

China formally applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) last week, and is lobbying to gain the consensus support of members including Australia.

This comes after a war of words between the two countries, a string of sanctions on Australian goods and a months-long freeze on senior-level government contacts.

"When I became trade minister, I wrote to my Chinese counterpart in January setting out how we can work more closely together. I am still waiting for a reply", Tehan said in a Monday speech.

"One of the most important things about negotiating the accession process of any country into the CPTPP is that you have to be able to sit down at ministerial level, look your economic partner in the eye,

and talk about that accession process."

Tehan also indicated China would have to resolve disputes at the World Trade Organization (WTO) stemming from a slew of politically driven sanctions on Australian imports.

"All parties will want to be confident that any new member will meet, implement and adhere to the high standards of the agreement as well as to their WTO commitments and their existing trade agreements", he said.

"It's in everyone's interests that everyone plays by the rules."

Australia this month asked the WTO to rule against China's imposition of crippling tariffs on Australian exports, after initial consultations failed to resolve the dispute.

Australia is also challenging Chinese tariffs on barley at the WTO and has objected to sanctions on a string of other goods, which Canberra describes as "economic coercion."

The measures are widely seen in Australia as punishment for pushing back against Beijing's operations to impose influence in Australia, rejecting Chinese investment in sensitive areas and publicly calling for an investigation into the origins of the pandemic. — **AFP**

In Indian mining hub, farmers bring polluted land back to life



Trucks transporting for iron ore mines parked along the Sandur bypass in southern state of Karnataka, India. — **Reuters**

PAPINAYAKANAHALLI: For years, Indian farmer Chape Hanumaiya struggled to grow anything on his tiny plot of land — it was caked in the thick, red dust drifting from the iron ore mines that surrounded it.

But today, Hanumaiya and his wife are about to harvest pearl millet and sesame crops thanks to a pilot project that seeks to fight migration and boost food security around the southern city of Hosapete, the heart of India's iron ore industry.

"My father grew millet and cotton on this land decades ago", said Hanumaiya, 46, sitting in the shade of a tree near his one-acre smallholding. "Then the mining grew and over the years, when we came to the field, our clothes, the

grains and everything would be covered with mine dust. We slowly gave up farming."

India is the world's fourth-biggest producer of iron ore, the key ingredient in steel-making, and demand for the commodity is expected to grow as the global construction sector rebounds from Covid-19. That could prompt a surge in output, putting additional strain on local farmers and fuelling environmental damage in mining areas. More than 15,000 acres of land, both private and community-owned, have been blighted by iron ore mining in India, affecting nearly 30,000 people, according to data research agency Land Conflict Watch.

Hanumaiya's land was revived under a sustainable co-operative

agriculture scheme led by the Sakhi Trust nonprofit, which works with communities affected by mining in the area and encourages organic farming.

So far, it has helped bring more than 200 hectares of barren farmland back into production — creating a safety net and shielding local people from the ups and downs of mining. "When the mines closed and agriculture failed, it forced people to migrate", said Nagesh R Sannaveer, a coordinator at Sakhi Trust.

"People were looking for food security and we started helping them get back to farming — from getting plots ready to cultivate to organising collective farming for the landless", he added.

— **Thomson Reuters Foundation**

Aide to Ukraine’s president survives assassination attempt

KYIV: A volley of automatic gunfire hit a car carrying a senior aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Wednesday, an incident a senior official called an assassination attempt and Zelenskiy said may have been a message intended for him.

The aide, Serhiy Shefir, survived unscathed but police said his driver had been wounded after more than 10 bullets hit the car near the village of Lesnyky, just outside the capital Kyiv.

A local television station said at least 19 bullet holes could be seen on the driver’s side of the car. Police said in a statement they had opened a criminal case on suspicion of premeditated murder.

Zelenskiy, who is in New York for the UN General Assembly, said he did not know for now who was responsible for the attack, which shocked the country’s political elite. “I don’t know yet who stood behind this,” said Zelenskiy. “Sending me a message by shooting my friend is weakness.”

Shefir is close to Zelenskiy and leads a group of advisers.

Zelenskiy came to power on a promise to take on the country’s



Investigators examine bullet holes in a car of Serhiy Shefir, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s principal aide, following an assault outside capital Kyiv. — Reuters

oligarchs and fight corruption, and Mykhailo Podolyak, one of his advisers, said the assassination attempt could be a result of the campaign against the oligarchs.

Zelenskiy said he would be doubling down on his planned reforms rather than backing off.

“It does not affect the strength of our team, the course that I have chosen with my team — to

GUNFIRE HITS CAR
CARRYING PRESIDENTIAL
AIDE AS PRESIDENT
ZELENSKIY SAYS HE
DOESN’T KNOW WHO IS
BEHIND ATTACK

change, to clean up our economy, to fight crime and large influential financial groups,” he said.

“This does not affect that. On the contrary, because the Ukrainian people have given me a mandate for changes.”

Podolyak, Zelenskiy’s adviser, promised tougher measures against oligarchs after the attack.

— Reuters

Carlos the Jackal seeks to reduce life sentence

PARIS: Carlos the Jackal, the leftist militant who carried out attacks across the globe in the 1970s and 1980s, opened a bid in a French court on Wednesday to reduce the life sentence he had been given for a deadly grenade attack on a Paris shop in 1974.

The self-declared “professional revolutionary”, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, has been behind bars in France since he was captured and spirited out of Sudan by French special forces in 1994.

He was found guilty in 2017 over a grenade attack in 1974 on a shop on Paris’s Champs Elysees, the Drugstore Publicis, that killed two people and injured 36.

The appeal that started on Wednesday will not seek to overturn that conviction but will only concern how many years he should be jailed for, after the country’s top court struck down the latest ruling over technicalities and sent it back to the lower court.

The decision is expected on Friday.

Ramirez, who was born in Venezuela and is now aged 71, is already serving two other life terms and has lost appeals



Illich Ramirez Sanchez, better known as ‘Carlos the Jackal’

against them.

One is for the murder of two French police officers and an informant in June 1975 and the other for attacks on trains, a railway station and a Paris street in 1982 and 1983 that killed 11 people and wounded about 150 others.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Marxist militant, became public enemy number one for Western governments and the world’s most wanted man.

He sealed his international notoriety by taking OPEC’s oil ministers hostage in the name of the Palestinian struggle in a raid on its Vienna headquarters in 1975 in which three people were killed. The nickname was given to him by the media after a reporter saw a copy of Frederick Forsyth’s “The Day of the Jackal” at Ramirez’s London flat. — Reuters

Rare Australia earthquake triggers panic in Melbourne

MELBOURNE: A rare quake rattled southeastern Australia on Wednesday, shaking buildings, knocking down walls and sending panicked Melbourne residents running into the streets. The shallow 5.9 magnitude tremor hit east of the country’s second-largest city at the start of the working day and was one of the largest to hit the country in decades.

With Melbourne beginning its eighth week of pandemic lockdown and braced for a third straight day of violent anti-vaccine protests, most residents were at home when the quake struck.

Zume Phim, 33, owner of Melbourne’s Oppen cafe, said he rushed onto the street as the tremor hit. “The whole building was shaking. All the windows, the glass, was shaking — like a wave of shaking,” he said. “I have



People gather near a damaged building in Melbourne after a 5.8-magnitude earthquake. — AFP

never experienced that before. It was a little bit scary.”

In a popular shopping area around Melbourne’s Chapel Street, masonry debris tumbled from buildings and littered the roads.

Bricks and rubble surrounded a burger restaurant and large sheets of metal hung off the restaurant awning.

“We were fortunate that nobody was in the restaurant at the time,” the restaurant said in a Facebook post.

Victoria’s State Emergency Service said it had received 100 calls for assistance “largely related to minor structural damage to chimneys and facades on buildings.”

“It was quite violent but everyone was kind of in shock,” Melbourne cafe worker Parker Mayo, 30, said. Sizable earthquakes are unusual in Australia.

At magnitude 5.9 and a depth of 10 kilometres, this was “the biggest event in southeast Australia for a long time” Mike Sandiford, a geologist at the University of Melbourne, said. “We had some very big ones at magnitude six in the late 1800s, though precise magnitudes are not well known.” — AFP

HILLARY HONOURED AT OXFORD



Former US secretary of state and first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton attends the annual Encaenia ceremony at Oxford University in Oxford, west of London, where she received an honorary degree. The honorands, along with senior members of the University, walked in procession from Exeter College to the Sheldonian Theatre. — AFP

FRANKFURT

Court finally bans ‘hang the Greens’ campaign

A court in Germany ordered neo-Nazi election posters bearing the slogan ‘hang the Greens’ to be taken down, after they were initially allowed to stay in place.

The upper administrative court in Bautzen, Saxony, on Tuesday overturned a provisional ruling, which permitted the posters from the radical far-right group “The Third Way” to be displayed away from Green party election materials. The Third Way has incited controversy with divisive public campaigns in the run up to na-



tional elections in Germany on September 26. On Saturday, the group displayed blood-smeared dummies representing the three candidates to be chancellor from the mainstream parties. — AFP

PRAGUE

Slovakia reports spike in Covid cases

Slovakia reported 1,180 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday, the highest daily tally since April as the country of 5.5 million experiences a surge in infections.

The government said last week it expected the daily tally to rise to 1,500-3,000 by the end of September, which would be a smaller wave than peaks seen at the height of the pandemic in the central European country.

The state has been tightening epidemic measures on a regional basis, including tighter mask-



wearing mandates and introducing restrictions in some services and activities. The ministry said nearly 76 per cent of new cases were people without vaccinations. — Reuters

WASHINGTON

US to donate 500 m additional Covid vaccines

President Joe Biden will announce US plans to donate an additional 500 million Pfizer-BioNTech Covid vaccines to the rest of the world, bringing its total commitment to 1.1 billion, officials said. Biden will relay the news at a virtual summit to be held on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, where he will challenge world leaders to vaccinate 70 per cent of every country by September 2022.

The donations are being made “free of charge, no strings at-



tached,” a senior administration official said. “For every one shot we have administered in this country to date, we are now donating three shots to other countries,” she added. — AFP

Brazil faces future of floods, drought

FABIO ZUKER

In May and June, heavy rain pushed Brazil's sprawling Negro River to its highest level in more than a century, causing flooding in Manaus, the Amazon rainforest's largest city.

At the same time, parts of southern and west-central Brazil in the Paraná River basin — including Brazil's largest city of Sao Paulo — have suffered unprecedented drought due to low rainfall.

The disastrous mix of floods, drought and intense downpours could be a glimpse of a potentially dire future as a heating planet and surging deforestation alter long-standing weather patterns throughout Brazil and South America, scientists warn.

Climate shifts could lead to a range of environmental and socioeconomic shocks, from dwindling farm harvests to more destructive forest fires and energy blackouts, climate and forestry experts said.

“What we see now in terms of extremes in temperature and rainfall are perhaps a sample of things that may come if warming continues,” said José Marengo, a climatologist with Cemaden, the Brazilian government's disaster monitoring centre.

Climate experts say deforestation of the Amazon and the Cerrado — the largest savanna in South America — are key drivers of the country's changing climate patterns.

“The process (of climate change) is becoming stronger because of human activities,” Marengo said.

In the first six months of this year, the amount of forest cleared in the Brazilian Amazon rose 17 per cent compared to last year, with 3,600 square kilometres disappearing, according to national space research agency Inpe.

Most of the tree losses were to make way for soy farming and cattle rearing, as Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro focuses on expanding agribusiness as the development model to boost the Amazon region's economy.

Increasingly heavy rain and floods in the Amazon are linked to atmospheric changes caused in part by ocean warming linked to climate change, said Jochen Schoengart, a researcher with the National Institute for Amazonian Research.

During the first 70 years of water level measurements at the port in Manaus, a big flood was recorded every 20 years, said Schoengart, who specialises in the history of hydrological cycles and forest floods. — **Thomson Reuters Foundation**



A SEDATED PYTHON!
This picture shows wildlife rangers posing with a sedated 9-metre-long python, estimated to weigh about 100 kg, they caught near a village in Kampar and later released back into the neighbouring jungle of Palalawan. — AFP

What we see now in terms of extremes in temperature and rainfall are perhaps a sample of things that may come if warming continues
JOSÉ MARENGO
A climatologist



Ali Al Matani
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PREPARATION OF THE CONTENT IS THE KEY. THEY ARE DONE ACCORDING TO EACH PLATFORM, PRINT TO ELECTRONIC

Public perception is also important!

When devising communication and media strategy to build good reputation, it is important to focus on the preparation of content. This is the formula practiced by all organisations, be it government or private. It is important because riding on the back of it strong relations are built between them and the masses.

But it is unfortunate that most of the organisations are not realising the significance of proper preparation of the media content and its management in the print, electronic and social media. This is the reason why many of its highly beneficial initiatives face undue public criticism and become ineffective.

Despite all this, many organisations do not learn any lesson on how to manage media content where public opinion is also respected. Perhaps the way the announcement of the names of those who were recruited in the public sector was one of the examples which needed content preparation.

The organisations should revisit their strategy on how they are preparing the contents meant for explaining their role, responsibilities and duties, instead of just publishing group photos of new recruits in a manner which does not match with the stature of any organisation.

We are of the firm view that the organisations make lot of work which

needs to be highlighted, but in a proper manner. It is unfortunate that most of its valuable contributions to the society and the country as a whole have remained out of sight. Public perception should match with the volume and type of the initiatives.

Media is not mere screens, pieces of papers or chat on social media. It is also not audio and video clips. It is primarily content prepared in a manner which matches with the format of print, audio-visual and electronic media.

If the content is weak, it will never convey the message to the targeted audience. Instead, such material may draw ire and prove to be counterproductive.

When we watch channels such as CNN, BBC or Al Jazeera, it is not because of the dress and make-up of the anchors and presenters. We watch them because of their content they present to their viewers. The content is made of the style of writing.

Those who work behind the camera are more important in preparing the content. They do this round the clock, look into it with precision, keeping in mind the required approach and know what impact the content would make when it would be presented by the presenters. Sometimes, they restructure the same content if they need to repeat

them in their programmes, so that they appear fresh and are not boring for the viewers.

It is the content on the back of which public opinion moves. This is what makes perception about organisations, private firms, and their initiatives. Therefore they need to be of quality and are balanced so that they reflect a positive image about the subject and convince the minds of the people.

There are several stages of preparation of contents, from collection of information and data to writing and editing. They go through several processes by different people who are masters in their areas of specialisation. Now everybody is using social media, including government and private sector organisations. All of them need proper content to present on these platforms so that they can achieve their objectives. They do not compromise on the quality as it shows their own reputation.

Any ignorance of any aspect of the work is counterproductive. Preparation of the content is the key. They are done according to each platform, print to electronic. Different social media platforms also have their own format of content. It is not enough just to upload the content. It is important to engage with those who are engaging with the content through chat or comment.

SMEs need membership in chamber of commerce



Haider al Lawati
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THE NUMBER OF SMES HAS REACHED 51,663 AT THE END OF MARCH 2021 COMPARED TO 44,830 DURING THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR

Official data shows that the number of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Sultanate is constantly increasing as a result of the desire of Omanis to move towards commercial and free work, despite the difficulties they face. They faced hard time last year due to the pandemic. Today, there is a great desire among these institutions to get representation in some official institutions such as the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), in addition to their presence in Riyadh which supervises them.

The number of these institutions has reached 51,663 at the end of March 2021 compared to 44,830 during the same period

last year, an increase of 17.2 per cent, according to data issued by the NCSI.

This proposal was recently discussed at the Al Khunji Virtual Council, in the presence of a number of officials and businessmen from the OCCI. Sixty per cent of the revenues that the OCCI receives annually come from small and medium enterprises, while we see that 90 per cent of the members belonging to the chamber are from small and medium enterprises.

This is what Ahmed al Houti, a member of the chamber's board of directors, recently discussed with the council, with his assertion that representatives of large companies do not attend the chamber's

periodic meetings.

He believes that as a result of the presence and registration of about 60,000 members in Riyadh, these institutions have the right to have a membership of the OCCI to defend their interests and develop the capabilities of its members in administrative, financial and technical aspects.

The attendees believe that the chamber's real strength lies in the existence of partnership between large and small institutions with the aim of bringing together these efforts and matching the requirements of the Omani market in all aspects.

Other members of the OCCI believe that there is a reluctance from large traders towards the

activities of the chamber, so that their suggestions or initiative do not reach the chamber's board of directors, which requires holding sessions to discuss these issues, and to complete the required roles.

It is the competencies which can make a difference in this institution. In the midst of this discussion, some believe that there should be a special room for small enterprises as is the case in a number of European countries with the aim of supporting small projects, especially in such circumstances that institutions are going through due to the pandemic, with their affirmation that these institutions have a seat in the chamber's membership.

According to some opinions, the country's major traders do not need the services of the OCCI, and therefore they are far from representation and discussing issues due to their lack of free time, which requires focusing on small traders segment whose membership has reached about 70 per cent of the total members. In the same context, some members see the need to activate the roles of associations that represent the sectors of industry, tourism, trade and agriculture to play a greater role in the development of the Omani economy, while emphasising that small groups of members of the chamber need the chamber's services and not the large institutions.

sport

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HAMED RETURNS TO RALLY ACTION IN CYPRUS

OMANI VETERAN TEAMS UP WITH
SIRCOMBE AT CYPRUS RALLY

Hamed al Wahaibi tests his Skoda Fabia before the Cyprus Rally.



Hamed al Wahaibi and Tony Sircombe in Cyprus.

“I have been out of rallying for a long time. I cannot wait to get started. My goal is to get to the finish and have a clear run and gain the miles that I have lost through the years

HAMED AL WAHAIBI
Oman rally driver



The Asyad Express team in Cyprus.

NICOSIA, Cyprus: Omani rallying legend Hamed al Wahaibi returns to international rallying action at this weekend's Nicosia-based Cyprus Rally, round four of the 2021 FIA Middle East Rally Championship (Merc).

Absent from the special stages in the Merc since taking part in the 2011 Dubai International Rally in a Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X, Al Wahaibi's original return to action was curtailed by a testing accident in Jordan back in May. But the Omani is relishing

the challenge of taking on the notoriously demanding gravel stages in Cyprus.

The 53-year-old carried out testing on the island on Tuesday and Wednesday with New Zealand navigator Tony Sircombe, his former co-driver on rounds of the WRC.

“I am excited to be back in Cyprus again after all these years,” said Al Wahaibi. “It is such a great place with very good people and culture. The roads are fantastic, but very slow and twisty. It requires

a different rhythm. There is a different flow. A different driving technique is needed here.

“I have been out of rallying for a long time. I cannot wait to get started. My goal is to get to the finish and have a clear run and gain the miles that I have lost through the years. I want to get the confidence back. We are doing the stages two times. It is really difficult to push, especially on stages like these. You need a lot more precise notes and we will have a big disadvantage against

the guys who have been doing this rally year-after-year.

“The team is good, the car feels great. What happened in Jordan was a setback for me. That's why here it is like starting again at my first event.”

Al Wahaibi will drive a Motortune-run Skoda Fabia 1.6 with logistical support from Asyad Express, an Omani delivery and logistics company, and Sandan (a new industrial area near Muscat).

Competition for Al Wahaibi comes from multiple regional

champion Nasser Saleh al Attiyah (Volkswagen), his cousin Nasser Khalifa al Atya (Ford), Oman Rally Team's Abdullah al Rawahi, Turkey's Raul Denktas (Hyundai i20), the local Petrolina Racing Team duo of Alex Tsouloftas and Simos Galatariotis in their Volkswagen Polo R5s in a strong 32-car field that includes numerous local drivers.

This year's Cyprus Rally gets underway with a ceremonial start at 19.00hrs in Nicosia city centre on Friday evening. The Cyprus

Automobile Association (CAA) has then laid on 12 gravel stages over the weekend.

Two loops of three stages of 6.19 km (Nikadari), 20.07 km (Kapouras) and 21.21 km (Kourdali) make up the opening leg on Saturday. Crews will tackle three sinuous stages of 13.01 km (Lythrodontas), 19.02 km (Ayios Ephifanios) and 10.96 km (Ayia Marina) on two occasions on Sunday.

The ceremonial finish is scheduled for 18.00hrs in Nicosia.

Monza GT Open challenge awaits Al Zubair, Soucek

MONZA, Italy: Al Faisal al Zubair and Andy Soucek head to the legendary Italian circuit of Monza this weekend to continue their challenge for honours in the 2021 International GT Open Championship.

Soucek currently holds second place in the championship standings, 24 points behind the leading duo of Michele Beretta and Frederick Schandorff in their Vincenzo Sospiri Racing Lamborghini.

Belgium's Baptiste Moulin and Japanese team-mate Yuki Nemoto are third and Al Zubair lies fourth after missing one race in the Lechner Racing Team's Porsche 911 GT3 R because of illness.

Omani racer Al Zubair said: “I am really looking forward to Monza. It is a track that I love



from the past and my days in the Porsche Super Cup. It is a track that I have performed strongly at and I hope to keep the form for this year and my first appearance there in the endurance series.

“The team has been on great form. Obviously we had some bad luck in Austria. But the important thing was that Andy and myself kept up a good pace

throughout and the car was running great. If that continues on the same path, and with a bit of luck, hopefully we can get back to the podium with race wins.

“There are two race meetings of this season left for us. It will be difficult because there are four or five Pro car guest entries that will be added this weekend. I am confident



in myself and Andy and am looking forward to getting back on track.”

Teams will be permitted up to three free practice sessions on the Italian circuit with the opening 40-minute stint getting underway at 17.10hrs on Thursday (September 23rd) afternoon.

Sessions two and three start at 11.00hrs and 15.10hrs

respectively on Friday and the first 30-minute qualifying session fires into life at 10.55hrs on Saturday. This precedes the opening 70-minute race, starting with a rolling start at 16.55hrs.

Second qualifying for GT Open teams takes centre stage from 09.00hrs on Sunday morning and the second one-hour race starts at 14.30hrs.

2021 INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN – OVERALL STANDINGS AFTER 10 RACES:

1. Frederick Schandorff (SUI)/Michele Beretta (ITA) **114 pts**
2. Andy Soucek (ESP) **90 pts**
3. Baptiste Moulin (BEL)/Yuki Nemoto (JPN) **81 pts**
3. Al Faisal al Zubair (OMN) **72 pts**
5. Ollie Millroy (GBR)/Brendan Iribe (USA) **65 pts**
6. Loris Spinelli (ITA) **53 pts**

In brief

■ LONDON



FORMER WINDIES CRICKETER SAMUELS CHARGED FOR GRAFT

Former West Indies all-rounder Marlon Samuels was on Wednesday charged under the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption code more than a decade after he served a ban for breaching regulations.

Samuels, who played international cricket between 2000 and 2018, was charged by the ICC on behalf of the Emirates Cricket Board for breaching four elements of their T10 League anti-corruption code. Charges include failing to disclose "receipt of any gift, payment, hospitality or other benefit that was made or given in circumstances that could bring the participant or the sport of cricket into disrepute".

■ DUBAI



FIRST IPL PLAYER TESTS POSITIVE FOR COVID

Sunrisers Hyderabad bowler Thangarasu Natarajan has become the first Indian Premier League player to test positive for coronavirus just ahead of the team's match on Wednesday, organisers said. Natarajan and six close contacts, including all-rounder Vijay Shankar, have been isolated from the players who will face Delhi Capitals in the IPL in Dubai. Hyderabad said Natarajan is "asymptomatic".

The six contacts and other players all returned negative tests on Wednesday. Team manager Vijay Kumar, physiotherapist J. Shyam Sundar, doctor Anjana Vannan, logistics manager Tushar Khedkar and net bowler Periyasamy Ganesan will stay in isolation.

■ LONDON



MCC CHANGES 'BATSMAN' TO 'BATTER' IN LAWS

Marylebone Cricket Club on Wednesday announced an amendment to the laws of the game meaning the gender-neutral term "batter" will be used from now on instead of "batsman".

The club, the sole authority on the laws of the game, said the use of the terminology would "help reinforce cricket's status as an inclusive game for all".

The profile of women's cricket has rocketed in recent years.

"MCC believes in cricket being a game for all and this move recognises the changing landscape of the game in modern times," said Jamie Cox, assistant secretary with responsibility for cricket and operations. "Use of the term 'batter' is a natural evolution in our shared cricketing language and the terminology has already been adopted by many of those involved in the sport.

TIDY TYAGI'S LAST-OVER HEROICS HELP RAJASTHAN WIN THRILLER



Kartik Tyagi of Rajasthan Royals celebrates the wicket of Fabian Allen of Punjab Kings in the final over to win the game. – BCCI

DUBAI: Pace bowler Kartik Tyagi defended four off the last over as Rajasthan Royals edged out Punjab Kings by two runs in an Indian Premier League thriller on Tuesday.

Needing 18 off 18 balls, Punjab lost their way and Tyagi gave away just one run and took two wickets in the 20th over to keep the opposition down to 183-4 while chasing 186 in Dubai.

Rajasthan, who come into the revived Twenty20 tournament in the United Arab Emirates without their key England imports, posted 185 with Yashasvi Jaiswal top-



Kartik Tyagi of Rajasthan Royals celebrates a wicket with teammates. – BCCI

scoring with 49.

England players including Ben Stokes (mental health break), Jofra Archer (injured) and Jos Buttler (personal reasons) are missing from the Royals' team.

But Tyagi and fellow quick Mustafizur Rahman, who gave away just four runs in the 19th over, kept Rajasthan in the hunt for the play-offs as they stayed fifth in the eight-team table.

"It's funny that we kept believing (that we could win)," said Rajasthan skipper Sanju Samson.

"I kept the overs of Mustafizur and Tyagi for the end, believing,

"I kept the overs of Mustafizur and Tyagi for the end, believing. Cricket is a funny game right. We just kept fighting and believing"

SANJU SAMSON
Rajasthan skipper

Cricket is a funny game right. We just kept fighting and believing."

Evin Lewis of the West Indies hit a quickfire 36 and put on 54 with fellow left-hander Jaiswal after Rajasthan were invited to bat first. Jaiswal fell short of his fifty but hit six fours and two sixes in his 36-ball knock before Mahipal Lomror contributed 43.

Left-arm paceman Arshdeep Singh claimed his first five-wicket haul in the IPL as Punjab checked Rajasthan's surge in the final few overs.

In reply, skipper KL Rahul (49) and Mayank Agarwal (67) put on 120 for the first wicket to set up the chase in the absence of the big-hitting Chris Gayle who was left out of the team. South Africa's Aiden Markram made an unbeaten 36 and Nicholas Pooran hit 32 before falling to Tyagi on the third ball of the final over. — AFP

Brief scores: Rajasthan Royals 185 all out (Yashasvi Jaiswal 49, Mahipal Lomror 43; Arshdeep Singh 5/32) beat Punjab Kings 183/4 (Mayank Agarwal 67, KL Rahul 49; Kartik Tyagi 2/29) by 2 runs

Upbeat Kolkata take on mighty Mumbai



IPL Strokes
PRANAV MEHTA

After thrashing RCB in a one-sided encounter a couple of days back, Kolkata Knight Riders are taking on the mighty Mumbai Indians. After a slow start, Kolkata have slowly started to pick up and they need five wins from their remaining six games to qualify.

Things are not easy as Kolkata are going to clash against four-time champions Mumbai Indians, who themselves are in a tough position, where they need to win 4 out of the 6 games to qualify. When going head-to-head, Mumbai have totally dominated Kolkata with a tally of 22:6, with 3 games happening at this venue where again Mumbai Indians dominate with 2:1 wins.

ROHIT, HARDIK ABSENT

Mumbai are a well balanced side, but the absence of captain Rohit Sharma and star all-rounder Hardik Pandya cost them in a crucial encounter against Chennai Super Kings. Both are expected to be back in Thursday's match, but the question is that would their return cost Anmolpreet and Saurabh Tiwary their slots, even



Venkatesh Rajasekaran Iyer of Kolkata Knight Riders plays a shot against RCB. – BCCI

when both looked pretty good and deserve another chance.

Krunal Pandya, who has been in the core of Mumbai Indians, got hit for 27 runs in 2 overs and also looked quite shaky while batting. Krunal was pretty unfortunate to get run out at a crucial time, yet he might not be considered for a replacement.

In the bowling department, Trent Boult, David Milne and Jasprit Bumrah looked quite good initially, before they were destroyed by the class of Rituraj in the death overs. Another young leg spinning sensation was Rahul Chahar, who did extremely well in

the match against Chennai. Pollard is too good a back-up bowler and certainly needs to be considered coming in a little early. The West Indian could also play as the fifth bowler in the team.

POWER-HITTING TEAM

Kolkata is known for their power-hitting abilities, because of a middle order which consists of Eoin Morgan, Andre Russell, Dinesh Karthik and Sunil Narine. They were led by the class of Shubman Gill and Venkatesh Iyer, who had an opening partnership of 82 runs in 9.1 overs, chasing 93 to win against the Royal Challengers

Bangalore. The main damage was done to Royal Challengers Bangalore by Varun Chakravarthi and Andre Russell, who picked up 3 wickets a piece to break the back of Bangalore.

Between the raw aggressive pace of Prasidh Krishna, Lockie Ferguson and Andre Russell, the slow mystery spin of Varun Chakravarthi and Sunil Narine excel at its best. After making it to the Indian team since this year, Varun's bowling has been extremely impressive. His confidence has been at another level and his habit of picking of wickets regularly, while being extremely miser in

terms of conceding runs has been the key for Kolkata.

Bowling has not been a major reason for concern for KKR so far. The problem was with Shubman Gill not able to give them a good start, which would allow the middle order batsman to play free and express themselves. If Venkatesh also supports Shubman to make sure that Kolkata get to 100 for somewhere around 2 wickets, then the middle order has to power to completely destruct the opposition out of the game, on their day.

WHAT TO EXPECT?

It is a contest of Mumbai's bowling vs Kolkata's batting. Both teams would like to chase, considering the initial movement in the first innings, which has led to most teams' losing a few early wickets.

All wickets are trying to be preserved for the T20 world cup, which forces the groundsmen to leave a certain amount of grass cover, that allows the ball to swing for at least 15 to 20 minutes, which is quite a big share in the T20 category.

Also expect some good and clean power hitting from Hardik and Russell, which should allow this match to be an over 170 runs contest, with some big towering sixes in and over the stands.



Liverpool's Japan forward Takumi Minamino celebrates scoring their first goal against Norwich City. – Reuters

Holders Man City hit Wycombe for six, Liverpool cruise

LONDON: Manchester City started their bid to lift a fifth successive League Cup with a 6-1 rout of Wycombe, while Japan forward Takumi Minamino inspired Liverpool's 3-0 victory at Norwich on Tuesday.

Everton and Watford were the major Premier League casualties in the third round, losing to QPR and Stoke respectively.

City will move past Liverpool onto a record nine League Cup triumphs if they take the trophy this term.

The holders made the perfect start to that mission as Pep Guardiola was rewarded for fielding a strong attack featuring Kevin De Bruyne, Phil Foden, Raheem Sterling, Ferran Torres and Riyad Mahrez at the Etihad Stadium

City, who gave debuts to six academy graduates, were stunned in the 22nd minute as Brandon Hanlan tapped in his first ever goal for third tier Wycombe.

But Guardiola's men equalised seven minutes later when De Bruyne sprinted onto Foden's pass and slotted into the far corner for his first goal since May.

Mahrez fired City in front with a crisp finish two minutes before the break after good work from debutant Josh Wilson-Ebrand.

Foden smashed in City's third seconds later, collecting a short corner and drilling home from 25

ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP RESULTS ON TUESDAY
Third Round
Brentford 7 (Forss 3-pen, 16, 44, 60, Wissa 38, 87, Diarra 43-og) Oldham 0
Burnley 4 (Rodriguez 50, 60, 62, 77) Rochdale 1 (Beesley 47)
Fulham 0 Leeds 0 Leeds won 6-5 on penalties
Manchester City 6 (De Bruyne 29, Mahrez 43, 83, Foden 45+1, Torres 71, Palmer 88) Wycombe 1 (Hanlan 22)
Norwich 0 Liverpool 3 (Minamino 4, 80, Origi 50)
Preston 4 (Hughes 25, Rafferty 37, Maguire 82, Jakobsen 90)
Cheltenham 1 (Vassell 56)
QPR 2 (Austin 18, 34) Everton 2 (Digne 30, Townsend 47) QPR won 8-7 on penalties
Sheffield Utd 2 (Stevens 8, McBurnie 66) Southampton 2 (Diallo 23, Salisu 53) Southampton won 4-2 on penalties
Watford 1 (Fletcher 61) Stoke 3 (Powell 25, Clucas 80, Tymon 85)
Wigan 0 Sunderland 2 (Broadhead 26, O'Nien 54)

yards. Torres got the fourth after 71 minutes with a close-range finish and Mahrez's tap-in and a first City goal for Cole Palmer capped the demolition.

"I just have to say thank you to the academy. They all do an incredible job," Guardiola said.

"I was lucky to grow up in Barcelona. Won the Champions League with seven players from the Barca academy. That is unique. "Here, you have the feeling that we have not just one or two potential players but many of them. They have something special." — AFP

Suarez puts Atletico on top

URUGUAYAN'S LATE STRIKES SEE MADRID EDGE GETAFE

MADRID: Luis Suarez scored twice, including an injury-time winner, as Atletico Madrid came from behind to beat 10-man Getafe 2-1 and move top of La Liga on Tuesday.

Hosts Getafe took the lead through Stefan Mitrovic on the stroke of half-time, but the game changed when Carles Alena was sent off in the 74th minute.

Reigning champions Atletico are now a point clear of city rivals Real Madrid who host Real Mallorca on Wednesday. "In the first half, we had a lack of movement, of dynamism, and the match was flat until the opponents' goal," said Atletico coach Diego Simeone. "In the second period, the match had more rhythm, more intensity, we had more efficiency in attack."

A goalless draw with fellow unbeaten side Athletic Bilbao at the weekend saw them drop two points behind Real in the early table and Simeone's men were far from convincing again for long stages. A limp first-half display from the visitors ended in poor fashion as Getafe's Mitrovic headed home.

Antoine Griezmann and Suarez, who saw a header strike the crossbar, both went close to an equaliser before former Barcelona midfielder Alena gave Atletico a helping hand.

Alena, who had already been booked, was given a straight red card following a VAR review for a poor studs-up challenge on Brazilian international Matheus Cunha.

Suarez made Alena pay only four minutes later, running onto Mario Hermoso's long pass and lashing a left-footed shot into the roof of the net.

The Uruguayan completed the comeback just as the clock ticked past 90 minutes, nodding in at the back post as Getafe goalkeeper David Soria backtracked after initially attempting to collect Sime Vrsaljko's cross. — AFP

LA LIGA RESULTS ON TUESDAY:
Getafe 1 (Mitrovic 45) Atletico Madrid 2 (Suarez 78, 90+1)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ciss 33-og) Rayo Vallecano 2 (Garcia Rivera 5, Falcao 90+6)
Levante 0 Celta Vigo 2 (Aspas 66, Mendez 85)



Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan forward Luis Suarez heads the ball during the Spanish League match against Getafe CF. – AFP

Omani drifter Ali secures spot in Lebanon finals

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Oman's drift champion Ali al Balushi secured a spot to compete in the finals of Driven Challenge in Lebanon on September 28.

Al Balushi, fondly called 'Lalou' managed to book a ticket in the finals after finishing first in the qualifier last month. He earned 76 points from 100 and topped the group which featured participation of top's drifters in the Middle East.

The former 'King of Drift' in the Sultanate will be the only Omani and GCC representative in the finals of Driven Challenge at Pit Stop Karting venue in Lebanon on September 28. Many top drifters will take part in the event including champions from Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The participants will use the



same route and vehicle that was used in the qualifiers, during the championship.

"It is a great start to the drifting events after a suspension of the sporting activities due to the

Covid-19 pandemic. I am glad to represent my country in this high-class drifting event. I will deliver my best as I performed during the qualifier. I am adopted with the track and looking forward for a

good show and aim for the title," he said.

The Driven Challenge Championship is part of a programme broadcast at MBC Action channel and presented



by World Rally Champion Abdo Feghali. The 'Driven' programme is one of the top programmes specialised in the motor sports, racing, speed, modified cars and engines. Many seasons of the

programme were broadcasted including the first, second, third and fourth seasons.

The Oman Automobile Association (OAA) had hosted the Oman International Drift Championship in February 2020 in presence of many domestic, GCC and international top drifters.

In the national level, Ali al Balushi bagged the third place while Sami al Shibani secured the first place and Haitham al Hadidi was positioned as the runner-up.

'Lalou' became Oman's 'King of Drift' for three consecutive times from 2013. After his performance in the drift events, OAA appointed him as in charge of technical affairs for Muscat Speedway arena.

Ali is also involved in designing the drifting routes besides managing many motor sports events.

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Oman sets up task force to study cryptocurrencies

EXPLOSIVE GROWTH:
No authorisation issued yet by CBO for operation of, or trading in, virtual currencies in the Sultanate

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu



A high-level task force is currently studying the complete gamut of issues encompassing the economic advantages — as well as risks — associated with any decision to authorise the use of cryptocurrencies in the Sultanate, a top official of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) said here on Wednesday.

Tahir bin Salim al Amri (pictured), CBO Executive President, said the breath-taking speed at which virtual assets, such as cryptocurrencies are evolving globally, is continuing to cause considerable challenges to regulators like the CBO.

“In order to firm up our policy response (to the use of virtual assets), studies are under way at the national level by a task force team consisting of members of the financial sector regulators”,

Al Amri said. But he hastened to warn that, pending the apex bank’s regulatory stance on the issue, virtual assets of any kind are associated with risks.

“The Central Bank, through public notices, has cautioned the users, holders and traders of cryptocurrencies about the financial, operational and legal and security-related risks, besides the lack of customer protection mechanisms in this regard. It’s a new thing for all of us, and we have to make sure that everybody is protected before we engage into either regulating or allowing or even avoiding banning anything that may actually move the economy forward.”

The official stressed that, pending a final decision on the issue of virtual assets, the CBO has



not authorised any entity to date to “operate or facilitate trading in cryptocurrencies”.

The Executive President’s latest comments on cryptocurrency came at the opening of the 2021 edition of the New Age Banking Summit, which was held at Al

Bustan Palace — A Ritz Carlton Hotel on Wednesday. The forum was organised by UMS Events with the support of the Oman Banks Association (OBA).

Earlier, Al Amri commended banks and financial institutions on their “agility” in enabling the

provision of banking services through digital channels in response to pandemic mitigation measures implemented by the government. At the same time, he warned banks against any complacency in the face of risks posed by new technologies that

have been deployed as part of the sector’s digital journey.

“We are passing through an era of unexpected challenges and heightened uncertainties — but one of the silver linings amid these testing times has been the agility of the banking and financial industry in adapting swiftly to the evolving situations to ensure the wheels of the economy are moving and customer expectations are met”, he stated.

As social distancing protocols kept customers from visiting bank branches and outlets, the use of digital channels soared exponentially, according to the Executive President. He credited this growth to the wide array of digital options provided by the banks, ably supported by the robust infrastructure of the CBO.

But he cautioned the industry to stay vigilant amid these difficult times. “Our accomplishments should not push us into a zone of comfort. We need to be vigilant, cognisant of the technology-related risks in our digital journey, and accordingly keep revisiting the robustness of our technological infrastructure to sustain and build on the momentum”, the Executive President added.

Pacts signed to employ 100 Omanis in engineering, IT fields

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) has signed agreements with seven contractors to upskill and employ more than 100 Omanis in a variety of positions within the engineering and IT disciplines.

The Memorandums of Understanding (MOCs) were signed on Wednesday at the Oman In-Country Value Forum held under the auspices of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, President of the Oman Investment Authority.

Under the terms of the agreements, PDO will fund the training of the participants who will then secure work with Al Baraka Oilfield Services (ABOS), KCA Deutag (KCAD), Arabian Industry Projects (AIP), Data Boat (DB), Data Migration and Services (Rihal), and Phaze Technologies (PT) upon the successful completion of their one-year training programme. PDO also signed an MOC with the Oman Society of Petroleum Services (OPAL) to support in executing the training programme.

The MOCs signed with AIP, ABOS and KCAD are part of PDO’s efforts to upskill Omani



electricians and mechanics by equipping them with the skills required to become licensed chief electricians and mechanics. The same programme mandates that for every upskilled electrician or mechanic, a fresh graduate should be employed to fill the vacant entry-level position. This is part of a bigger effort to increase the Omanisation percentage within this field.

Additionally, the MOCs signed with AIP and OPAL aim to upskill light vehicle drivers to take up new professions to improve their career prospects and increase their productivity, while the agreements signed with DB, Rihal and PT aim to

train and develop 14 women holding Bachelors’ degree in majors related to hi-tech fields such as Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Front-end Engineering.

PDO External Affairs and Value Creation Director Eng Abdul-Amir al Ajmi, who signed the MOCs on behalf of PDO, said: “We are constantly striving with our contractors to identify meaningful ways to upskill the Omani workforce. Creating work for our job-seekers is a key aim for PDO and a national priority for Oman, and we remain committed to generating employment opportunities both within and beyond the oil and gas sector.”

\$30m Duqm plant of Raysut Cement to launch in Q4

STRONG GROWTH: New facility to boost Raysut Cement’s aggregate capacity to 22 million tonnes in the near future

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 22

Raysut Cement Company (RCC), Oman’s largest cement manufacturer with a global footprint, announced on Wednesday that its \$30 million Duqm grinding unit in Duqm in southeast Oman will be on stream in Q4 2021.

“Duqm plant will add another 1 million tonnes to our capacity, helping us cater to Oman and other regional markets with increased supplies, where construction activity is poised to pick up in post-pandemic resurgence”, said Joey Ghose, Group CEO of RCC.

The Duqm plant will raise RCC’s annual group output to 7.4 million tonnes, and help the Muscat Stock Exchange-listed company raise output to 10 million tonnes by 2022.

Yousuf bin Ahmed bin Alawi al Ibrahim, Chief of Support Services and Business Development, RCC, said the Duqm grinding unit’s construction has been progressing



despite the Covid-19 pandemic situation, thanks to the prudent safety and health protocols in place. “This has been a challenging year for manufacturing industries in general, but RCC has been able to negotiate the hurdles with effective planning focusing on health and safety”, he said.

The Duqm plant is also a milestone project for RCC to scale up its output to 22 million tonnes in the near future. Al Ibrahim, who has been with Raysut since 2004, said RCC’s capacity expansion will help create employment opportunities for Omani nationals, leading to social and economic progress.

As part of developing the Duqm plant, RCC had signed a

land lease and Port of Terminal services agreement with Port of Duqm Company SAOC. The new grinding unit will also complement RCC’s expansion and new investments and acquisitions in Oman, Asia and East Africa.

Last year, RCC had acquired Sohar Cement Company SAOG in Oman at \$60 million. It is also developing a new green field 1.2 million tonnes per annum cement plant near Tbilisi, Georgia, at an investment of \$200 million. A majority takeover of Lafarge Holcim’s cement terminal at Thilafushi Islands in Maldives and an investment of \$40 million in a grinding unit in Berbera, Somaliland, are other RCC projects.

Bank Nizwa, AAOIFI sign MoU for Islamic finance development

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa signed a comprehensive MoU with the top Islamic Finance Standard Setting Body, AAOIFI, Bahrain, in a virtual signing ceremony, on September 13. This makes Bank Nizwa the only bank in the Sultanate and internationally to carry such a wide-ranging relationship with AAOIFI. The association, covering mutual benefits, is set for joint development of Islamic Banking and Finance in the Sultanate and beyond.

Bank Nizwa, Oman, will thus become AAOIFI's official candidate registration and exam centre for AAOIFI's Shariah (CSAA) and Accounting (CIPA) certifications. Omanis who plan to register and sit for the prestigious programmes can now visit Bank Nizwa, Head office to fulfil the same.

Exclusive staff discounts for Bank Nizwa on all AAOIFI lead initiatives and special subsidies/scholarships of over 70 per cent the fee for AAOIFI, CIPA and CSAA programmes, with complimentary training and mentoring for staff. The customised staff development facility for Bank Nizwa.

Bank's select staff to be annually deputed for a short period in AAOIFI as visiting fellows. Internship for select CIPA and CSAA qualified Omanis in



Bank Nizwa. Joint R&D support and assistance in other technical, Shariah, Branding, Fintech, Product Development, and other similar solutions that relates to mutual development of Islamic banking and Finance and much more.

Oman follows AAOIFI standards and fully adopts AAOIFI accounting standards while being in line with AAOIFI Shariah standards.

Khaled al Kayed, the CEO Bank Nizwa, says, "We at bank Nizwa are proud and pledge our full support to AAOIFI. We shall aim to give our best to fully materialise the potential of this grand and pioneering

association, assuring AAOIFI of brotherly partnership for meeting set objectives of Islamic Finance in Oman. AAOIFI carries the backbone status for the industry and to have partnered with them in a comprehensive way, speaks volumes of the commitment of Bank Nizwa in 'contributing through synergy' for achieving national aims and vision 2040. This association is set to provide a much refined, well entranced and an active modern Islamic financial sector in Oman via Bank Nizwa. No doubt this partnership with AAOIFI will facilitate in a big way to meet desired ends". May Allah bless this association and guide us to reap maximum

benefits for both entities and industry.

Omar Mustafa Ansari the Secretary General of AAOIFI, says, "Bank Nizwa is fast becoming Oman's brand of Islamic Finance and even the region is becoming familiar with the success story and brand of Bank Nizwa. AAOIFI feels proud to partner with such a prestigious entity that epitomises the rapid success of Islamic Finance in Oman. We are elated to provide our full support to such a progressive bank while being certain that we are partnering with an entity that is going to further strengthen its leadership in Islamic Finance".

Alizz Islamic Bank unveils 'Hiyya' awards for women

MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank unveiled its special and exclusive 'Hiyya' awards for women, recently, and announced that the grand award ceremony would coincide with the Omani Women's Day, which is celebrated all over the nation on October 17, every year.

The announcement of the first edition of the prestigious 'Hiyya' award augurs well for the growing number of women in the business stratum and reflects rightly on the country's stand towards empowerment of women in general.

Alizz Islamic Bank has adopted rigorous steps to maintain transparency and credibility to the selection of nominees and short-listing of winners.

Beginning with a 10-day nomination period — starting from September 22 to October 1, 2021 — it will follow through by opening the voting process on its website from October 2 to 14.

The nomination process will be available for everyone, with the option of self nomination or nomination of other women deemed worthy of 'Hiyya' awards. Winners will be selected from the final tally of the public vote and the awards will be distributed on October 17.

Designed to recognize and felicitate women, the 'Hiyya' awards come as an expression of appreciation and gratitude



for the pioneering role played by women in building the nation; it is a formal acknowledgement of their contribution in various fields as they continue to demonstrate their expertise and experience in the social and economic arena.

Mohammed al Ghassani, AGM — Chief Consumer Banking Officer at Alizz Islamic Bank, said: "The awards come as an appreciation and gratitude from the executive management of the bank and as an expression of solidarity with Omani Women's Day. It is our way of celebrating this great day and we spare no effort to support women's creative energies in various fields, and at all levels. Besides the awards, we have also organised several events and celebrations to enhance the spirit of cooperation among women working in our bank, while establishing a sense of belonging to the workplace, which is reflected in their continuous productivity at work."

Mazoon Dairy celebrates start of school year in Al Buraimi

MUSCAT: Mazoon Dairy celebrated the start of 2021-2022 school year by distributing its milk products across all public and private schools in Al Buraimi Governorate. A number of company employees, along with representatives from Directorate General of Education in the governorate, participated in the celebratory event.

Yousef bin Khamis al Fazari, Director of Corporate Affairs at Mazoon Dairy, expressed his happiness with the start of the new school year, explaining that the company, within its responsibility towards the local community, was keen to implement a number of



initiatives and events that support educational activities in the governorate.

The company also supported the opening of the induction class at Al-Sunaina School for Basic Education, and felicitated a group of students who had excelled in the recent exams for general diploma students.

BankDhofar's credit card users get rewards programme

MUSCAT: BankDhofar offers a wide array of exclusive privileges for credit card users, through the comprehensive Rewards Loyalty Programme. The programme includes various added-value options for shopping, dining, holidays, travelling and much more.

Yousuf bin Ahmed al Balushi, Executive Manager Payment Hub at BankDhofar says: "We strive to enrich our customers' experience, not only through our innovative products and services, but through the various offers.

The comprehensive loyalty programme offers BankDhofar credit card users a wide array of exclusive privileges, including various added-value options for shopping, dining, holidays and

travelling. We encourage our customers to use their cards and benefit from the points of the Rewards Programme."

With the Rewards Programme customers can earn points when they use their credit cards. These points can then be redeemed, allowing customers to choose from more than 300 airlines and destinations worldwide. They also have the choice of over 180,000 hotels across the globe to use the points.

Additionally, the rewards programme allows customers to redeem points at various shopping outlets, restaurants, cafes, health clubs and spas. Customers may view their points through BankDhofar's Mobile Banking App, or they may visit



Yousuf bin Ahmed Al Balushi - Executive Manager Payment Hub.

the website to redeem their points.

In addition to the rewards programme, BankDhofar credit cards — as well as debit cards — offer a vast array of exclusive benefits and privileges including appealing discounts and special

offers at various shopping outlets including hotels, health and wellness outlets, dining, boutiques, cinema, leisure and entertainment. Special offers include exclusive discounts up to 50 per cent when using BankDhofar debit or credit cards.

More information is available on www.bankdhofarrewards.com as well as website www.BankDhofar.com. Customers can also learn more about the bank's exclusive products and services via social media channels www.facebook.com/BankDhofar, Twitter @BankDhofar, Instagram www.instagram.com/BankDhofar. For further information contact the uptime BankDhofar Call Centre on 24791111.

Nissan X-Terra amazes customers with 'Go Anywhere' capabilities

MUSCAT: Nissan X-Terra, the vehicle especially designed for adventure and the outdoors has received a terrific response from customers in Oman. The model, which empowers owners to go anywhere has impressed customers with its robust yet sophisticated look. They have defined the vehicle as an ideal partner for customers seeking exciting outdoor adventures.

Powering the all-new X-Terra is a 2.5-litre four-cylinder petrol engine with a seven-speed automatic transmission. The petrol engines deliver 124kW /165 hp and 241Nm of torque that ensures an exciting drive of speed and acceleration.

Created for adventures, with a roomy interior and advanced technologies Nissan X-Terra ensures safety and comfort. Nissan Intelligent Mobility features add to its attraction.

A spokesperson for Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA) said, "The seven-seater, spacious, comfortable X-Terra is a catalyst for new experiences, allowing owners to connect with the people in their lives, and to confidently 'Go Anywhere' together. It addresses a variety of needs and all types of terrains as it is both, good for city use and great for an adventure with family and friends. Developed in



line with the "unbreakable" frame vehicles design philosophy, it combines masculine solidity with sleek and modern execution."

The all-new X-Terra delivers a robust four-wheel drive system, including a four-wheel lock, brake limited slip differential and electronic locking rear differential — while leading

the class in interior room and comfort.

Built on 70 years of unmatched Nissan SUV expertise, the all-new Nissan X-Terra 2021 reflects the evolution of four-wheel adventure travel and a growing consumer desire for connection. It effortlessly combines impressive strength with bold

new design and built-for-comfort roominess. Underlining this is breakthrough engineering and a suite of cutting-edge Nissan Intelligent Mobility (NIM) technologies to offer a superior driving experience and adventure-ready confidence for drivers to explore new places.

The SUV's rugged frame facilitates its durability and practicality, while the future-forward aesthetics are exhibited in the quad LED projector lamps and a bold new V-motion grille. The revised rear and new LED taillights add to the all-new X-Terra's athletic look, reflecting the Nissan Design team's dynamic and modern philosophy.

The styling of the all-new X-Terra was developed at the Global Design studio in Japan. At 4.9m in length, 1.9m in height and just over 2.1m in width — with a ground clearance of 243 mm — the X-Terra looks right at home next to its bigger sibling, the Patrol, and borrows some design elements.

Nissan Oman is extending a 'book a home test drive' service for its prospective customers. A home test drive can be booked simply by logging on to the official SBA Nissan Oman website on the link <https://en.nissanoman.com/services/book-home-test-drive.html> or through customer service toll free number 80050011.



In brief

■ FRANKFURT

SUPPLY CHAIN WOES
DRIVE DOWN GERMAN
GROWTH OUTLOOK

Economists cut their growth forecast for Germany on Wednesday as shortages in key components, including computer chips, weigh on the country's industrial sector. The Munich-based Ifo institute said Europe's largest economy would grow 2.5 per cent this year, down 0.8 percentage points from its previous prediction, due to supply chain upheaval.

But they raised their growth forecast for 2022 by 0.8 percentage points to 5.1 per cent, as the economic rebound from the coronavirus is delayed.

— AFP

■ SANAND

FORD INDIA WORKERS
PROTEST OVER PLANNED
PLANT CLOSURE

Hundreds of workers at a Ford Motor Co factory in India's western Gujarat state protested outside the automaker's plant on Tuesday, demanding that the factory's closure plan be scrapped or workers be provided other jobs. The blue-uniformed workers gathered outside what is Ford's car manufacturing and engine-making facility in Gujarat's Sanand city and said the plant's closure planned for the year-end would lead to the loss of their livelihoods.

"After working here for seven years, I am suddenly being told I do not have a job. What is my future?" asked Anil Singh Jhala, one of the workers. — Reuters

■ SYDNEY

FACEBOOK WRAPS
UP DEALS WITH
MEDIA FIRMS

Facebook Inc has told Australian publishers it has stopped negotiating licensing deals, an email to the industry seen by Reuters showed, a move which came just six months after the passing of a law designed to make tech giants pay for content.

While Facebook has announced deals with most of the country's largest news outlets, some companies including TV broadcaster SBS and smaller publishers have been left out in the cold, raising questions about the scope and effectiveness of the ground-breaking law. Facebook's regional head of news partnerships, Andrew Hunter, said it had "now concluded" deals where it would pay Australian companies for content on its just-launched "Facebook News" channel.

— Reuters

Experts: Covid-19 crisis will continue
to test resilience of hospitality sector

LIJU CHERIAN

@lijuchermanoman

Hospitality industry was the hardest hit sector due to the impact from Covid-19 pandemic. The industry faced toughest challenges with travel demand declining from March 2020.

The industry looked for creative ways to generate revenue and utilise hotel assets. The *Observer* spoke to few hoteliers and experts who offered insights of how hotel groups generated ideas during the pandemic and spurred the domestic market with staycations.

Prashant Sharma, a seasoned hotelier and mentor in Oman, says with the increase of room supply in Oman in the coming months, hotels will be able to broaden their array of distribution through electronic channels. This will mean low-cost source of business and if used wisely through revenue management techniques, there can be an increase in occupancy with the right average room rate.

"Revenue Management (RM) is constantly evolving and technology plays a key role today and if we take a serious look at room occupancy, high percentages directly or indirectly are influenced by the Internet. TripAdvisor, Google Hotels, Trivago will play a key role as these metasearch sites are particularly good with an easy booking process for hotels. Online Travel Agency (OTA)'s are a good source for consumers to research sites like Priceline, Expedia, Booking.com and Orbitz which have huge audiences while in some properties OTA contributes 45 to 50 per cent of total room nights", he explains.

Samir Messaoudi, General Manager, Sheraton, says RM like all hotel departments has evolved with the pandemic and has been a learning curve to market conditions. Covid-19 has shown the importance of total yielding including rooms, F&B, spa and will continue as a trend in upcoming years.

"Hotels were forced to make the most out of limited demand with borders closed as opposed to high demand in pre-Covid times. "With supply constantly increasing in the market, RM

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will evolve to a more dynamic state that rates and strategies are changed rapidly reacting to changing conditions. Short-term room rate yielding will gain importance over traditional long term rate positioning", he says.

Fady Gerges, Director Revenue Management, JW Marriott Muscat, is of the view that RM plays a critical role in recovery strategies during crises, helping to understand the changes in business which enables it to take data-driven actions.

"The pandemic", he says, exposed the limits of existing RM systems and forced leaders' approaches to evolve. He says they are focusing on a more strategic approach to RM by working in close collaboration with other key departments to develop long-term, and above all, flexible, strategies and using analytics to measure, understand and make informed recommendations."

While, **Sushrita Tripathy**, Revenue Manager, Fraser Suites Muscat, views the Covid-19 crisis as a challenge as hotels cannot rely on historical data and need to

HOTELS MUST STRIVE TO BE INNOVATIVE TO CREATE DEMAND AND ADJUST TO DOMESTIC MARKET TRENDS DURING THE PANDEMIC AS THE ONLY SOURCE OF BUSINESS, WITH THE OPENING OF BORDERS AND RESTRICTIONS SELLING AT THE RIGHT PRICE AND ENSURING TO RE-BUILD BUSINESS

input more externally generated data to create predictive models for demand and forecasting. She says the situation will continue to test the resilience of the hospitality sector for a foreseeable future which will depend on the circumstances of individual countries.

Tripathy suggests that operational policies have been relaxed to boost travel, including free cancellation and flexible check-ins and check-outs to encourage travelers to book hotels as the domestic market is seen to have potential for growth.

"Industry is expected to analyse and focus on various market intelligence sources to understand different segments of the market, their travel purpose, behaviour, value perception changed by the pandemic. It is important to maintain business continuity, and strictly follow government policies, managing service demand compliance risk", she adds.

Shailesh Fernandes, Revenue Manager, Shangri-La Resorts in Muscat, says, "the behavioural change towards embracing digital channels of communication unlocks whole new opportunities for revenue generation, which is not only convenient but also a great way to stay in touch and build meaningful relationships with guests quickly and efficiently."

He mentions that the Shangri-La Resorts anticipates a sizable portion of their business shifting from the traditional offline channels to online, where most of their guests have already switched to chatting via their business WhatsApp channel or sending notes on social media platforms.

CMA raps
National
Real Estate
DevelopmentBUSINESS
REPORTER

MUSCAT, SEPT 22

A Disciplinary Committee constituted under the Capital Market Law issued a warning to National Real Estate Development Company SAOG, a local firm listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), for failing to implement IAS 40, which affects the authenticity of the financial statements of the company disclosed to investors, thus breaching Article 209 of the Commercial Companies Law and Article 282 of the Regulation of the Capital Market.

Article 209 of the Commercial Companies Law states: "A company shall keep financial records showing its transactions and financial position, provided that the financial statements shall be prepared according to international financial reporting standards, and shall be audited according to international audit standards, and the concerned body may add any other standards which shall not be inconsistent with these standards."

Clause 1 of Article 282 of the Capital Market Regulation stipulates that "Financial statements shall be prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and shall include all required information to fairly reflect the financial position of the company and its performance during the relevant financial period.

The five key archetypes of travellers

EMANUELE VERATTI AND
KARIM HENAIN

To take off in a post pandemic world, companies can tailor their marketing strategies to consumer preferences.

As parts of the world emerge from the pandemic, travel and transport companies are bullish on the prospect of a rebound in consumer demand. Of the industries hit hardest by Covid-19, advertising spending in 2021 could increase 28 per cent year-over-year for travel, compared with 15 per cent in media and entertainment, and 5 per cent in retail.

Historically, however, airlines, hotels, cruise companies and travel intermediaries have struggled to make the most of their marketing budgets.



They miss opportunities to delight customers by relying on "one-size-fits-all" offerings, deploy digital marketing assets ineffectively, and fail to deliver a seamless user experience.

A Google survey of 1,990 travellers found that different consumer segments share specific preferences for accommodations, destinations, transportation, budget and more.

Evaluating consumers on five factors, Bain has identified five traveller archetypes.

1. High rollers are more likely to travel long distances and spend more than average — about 22 per cent spend €1,000 to €2,500 on a trip.

2. Voracious travellers tend to be younger, digitally savvy consumers who seek out the best accommodations, experiences, and services.

3. Comfort-trotters are primarily interested in relaxing locations, such as the seaside, and luxury accommodations, with a majority preferring 4- to 5-star hotels.

4. Sports enthusiasts, who skew female, seek out physical activity and prioritise a healthy lifestyle.

(Emanuele Veratti is Partner, Bain & Company Milan, while co-author Karim Henain is Partner, Bain & Company Middle East)

German auto giants place
their bets on hydrogen cars

MUNICH: Battery power may be the frontrunner to become the car technology of the future, but don't rule out the underdog hydrogen.

That's the view of some major automakers, including BMW and Audi, which are developing hydrogen fuel-cell passenger vehicle prototypes alongside their fleets of battery cars as part of preparations to abandon fossil fuels.

They are hedging their bets, calculating that a change in political winds could shift the balance towards hydrogen in an industry shaped by early-mover Tesla's decision to take the battery-powered road to clean cars.

Global auto hub Germany is in sharp focus. It is already betting billions on hydrogen fuel in



sectors like steel and chemicals to meet climate targets, and closely-fought elections this month could see the Greens enter the coalition government and further push the technology.

BMW is hydrogen's biggest proponent among Germany's carmakers, charting a path to a mass-market model around 2030. The company also has one eye on shifting hydrogen policies in Europe and in China, the world's largest car market.

— Reuters

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INDIAN male, accountant with 8 years experience in GCC (4 years in Oman), doing up to finalisation of accounts, looking for suitable placement, Oman D/L & NOC available, Mobile: 93849217, email: ishaque150@gmail.com

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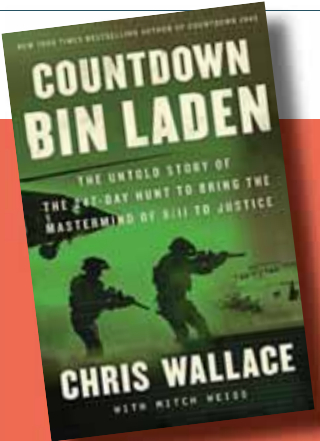


questions
with food and
experience
curator

Moe Khadra

Back in Oman for 10 months, multi-hyphenate Moe Khadra is putting his chef's hat on collaborating with different establishments in the country to infuse a burst of life into the food scene in Oman debilitated by the pandemic. Busy in putting together the 'Garden Night' which he promises will offer an experience that is both intense and out-of-the-box, he answered eight questions that define where he's headed... **P20**

READ



**COUNTDOWN
BIN LADEN**
by Chris Wallace
with Mitch Weiss

The intelligence gathering, security strategising and military planning during the final eight months of the pursuit of Osama bin Laden.

FASHION

Fashion label Valentino makes \$690 hoodie to support Covid-19 vaccine

LUXURY LABEL VALENTINO is producing a limited-edition, \$690-apiece 'V Vaccinated' hoodie using its V signature logo in support of the vaccination campaign against Covid-19, with proceeds donated to UNICEF.

The black sweaters, with the "vaccinated" writing in red on the chest, were first created by a small Los Angeles company called Cloney without the Italian brand knowing about them.

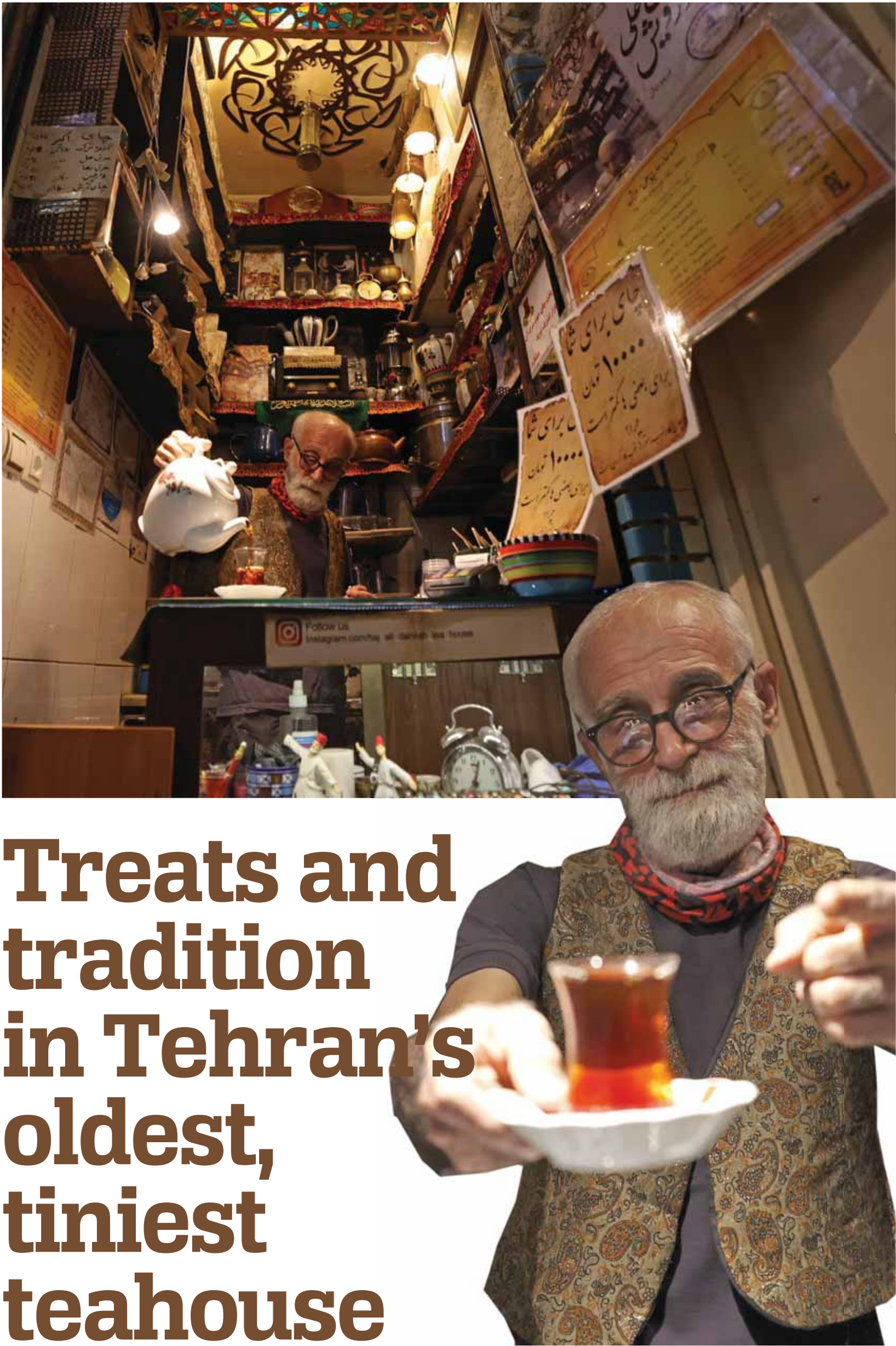
When Valentino's designer, Pierpaolo Piccioli, found out about the initiative, he decided to buy all the initial 5 hoodies available and give them as a present to

friends, including Lady Gaga, Valentino said in a statement.

He then went on to produce a series of hoodies to be sold on Valentino's website from September 23. Proceeds will go to the UN children agency UNICEF to support its work with the global vaccine-sharing platform COVAX, which is focused on getting anti-coronavirus jabs to poorer countries.

"Getting vaccinated has become the most effective way to fight this global pandemic, as well as a symbol of respect for others and social responsibility," Piccioli said. — Reuters





Treats and tradition in Tehran's oldest, tiniest teahouse

WITH HIS TRIMMED beard, red scarf and bronze-coloured waistcoat, Kazem Mabhutian serves a steady stream of customers in the smallest and oldest teahouse in Tehran, but at 63 years old, he is counting on God to find him a successor.

Tucked in an alleyway of the Grand Bazaar, wedged between a clothes shop and the door of a mosque, his 1.5-square-metre chaikhaneh (tea house) is invisible from the main street.

And yet it is the most famous among tea connoisseurs in the Iranian capital.

In between pouring glasses of steaming brew for his customers, Mabhutian tells the century-old story of the fabled Haj Ali Darvish Tea House with pride.

His father Haj Ali Mabhutian, nicknamed the Dervish or Beheshti, or "He who deserves paradise", was born in Hamedan in western Iran, he says.

"He came to Tehran at the age of 15 to earn a living. He bought this shop from Haj Hassan who had opened it in 1918."

Arranged around him are cups and teapots, boxes of tea and a samovar water-heater. There is an antiquated radio, a paraffin lamp, statuettes of dervishes, and gold-coloured sticks of Nabat, a saffron-scented barley sugar.

On the wall, a tourism ministry certificate assures that the place "is part of the intangible

heritage of the national culture".

'TEA OF KINDNESS'

Aside from the traditional Iranian black tea, Mabhutian prepares cardamon, cinnamon, mint, thyme and hibiscus brews every day from 7:30 am.

But his favourite is his signature "tea of kindness", a mixture of mint, lemon and saffron which gives it a zesty yellow colour.

Business is usually steady. Experts say that Iranians consume an average of nine small glasses of tea a day, or 100,000 tonnes nationwide every year.

"Until 2007, my father ran this house, known as the smallest in the world", said Mabhutian. "Then he broke his leg and never returned to work. He stayed at home until his death in 2018 at the age of 92."

Kazem then left his advertising agency job and took over the business.

"I don't regret it at all", he said. "Advertising was a business, but this is a question of love. I chose this job with my heart, not for the money."

On the menu, the price of a cup of tea is listed at 100,000 rials (35 cents), but "the rates are not fixed", he said. "It depends on the financial situation of the customer."

Everyday he serves some 200 customers.

"Most of them come from outside the market because they



know us", he said.

"There used to be a lot of tourists too, because this shop was in the guidebooks, but the foreigners disappeared with the pandemic."

'MADE WITH LOVE'

Given the miniature size of the teahouse, there are no tables, but customers can pull up a plastic stool outside, amid the bazaar's bustle.

Seated there was Shafagh, a 32-year-old graphic designer, with her friend Forough, 47.

"Everyone sells tea, but the important thing is to know how to make it", said Shafagh, enjoying a cup of kindness tea.

"It's like cooking — when someone makes tea with love, it tastes completely different."

Forough chimed in that, "I

also come to chat with the owner. I think his tea is nothing like the tea served in other places".

Every weekday, Habibollah Sayadi, 70, leaves his nearby clothing shop to enjoy his Iranian black tea.

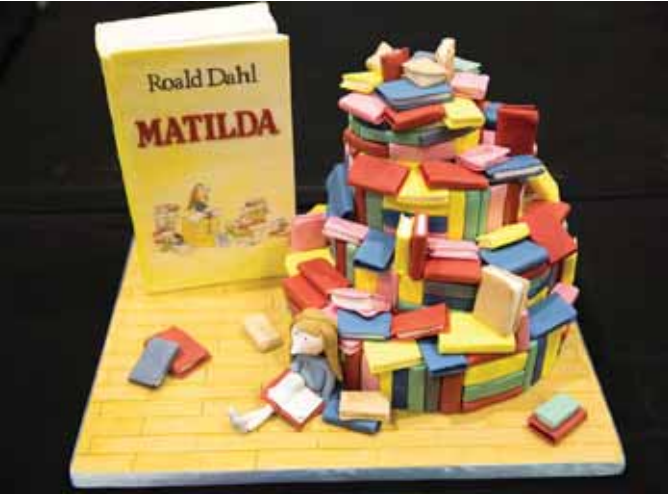
"I'm a regular — I've been coming here for almost 50 years because I love the taste of his tea", he said, adding approvingly that "Mr Kazem respects hygiene" in times of Covid.

Mabhutian, the owner, is getting on in years and is still single, so does he worry about what will become of his beloved shop in future?

"Not at all", he said confidently. "God will find me a successor. A place like this one does not die." — **AFP**

DIGITAL TREND

Netflix acquires the whole works of Roald Dahl



NETFLIX SAID on Tuesday it has acquired the whole works of acclaimed children's author Roald Dahl, creator of such classics as "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and "Matilda."

The streaming giant said it had bought The Roald Dahl Story Company — the family firm which owns the late British author's copyright.

Netflix in 2018 signed a deal with the company to create animated series based on 16 Dahl books.

"This acquisition builds on the partnership we started three years ago to create a slate of animated TV series", Netflix Co-chief Executive Ted Sarandos and Luke Kelly, Managing Director of the RDSC and Dahl's grandson, said in a joint statement.

Under the previous deal, Oscar-winning film-maker Taika Waititi and "Zootropolis" screenwriter Phil Johnston are working on a series based on the world of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" and an adaptation of "Matilda the Musical" is under way.

"These projects opened our eyes to a much more ambitious venture — the creation of a unique universe across animated and live action films and TV,

publishing, games, immersive experiences, live theater, consumer products and more", Netflix said.

Dahl died in 1990 aged 74 after penning several classic titles including "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory", "Fantastic Mr Fox", "Matilda", "The Twits", "The Witches" and "The BFG."

His books have been translated into 63 languages and sold more than 300 million copies worldwide.

"These stories and their messages of the power and possibility of young people have never felt more pertinent", the statement said.

"As we bring these timeless tales to more audiences in new formats, we're committed to maintaining their unique spirit and their universal themes of surprise and kindness, while also sprinkling some fresh magic into the mix."

No financial details of the deal were given.

The *Hollywood Reporter* in 2018 quoted sources as saying the licensing deal covering just 16 Dahl books cost Netflix more than \$100 million. Several Dahl works have already been adapted for the big screen, including "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory", "The Witches", "Fantastic Mr Fox" and "The BFG." — **AFP**

Sony to take on Disney in India with media merger

SONY'S INDIA unit will merge with ZEE Entertainment, the major local broadcaster said on Wednesday, as the battle for eyeballs with international streaming services heats up.

The merged entity — which analysts say is likely to rival market leader Star and Disney India in terms of viewership and channel offerings — could create the country's biggest entertainment network.

"We have unanimously provided an in-principle approval to the proposal (from Sony) and have advised the management to initiate the due diligence process", ZEE Entertainment said in a statement to investors.

Sony Pictures Networks India will hold a majority stake of 52.93 per cent in the merged entity following a proposed capital infusion of \$1.58 billion, the statement added.

Shares in the subscription TV network jumped by 30 per cent on the announcement.

The new entity will be publicly listed on Indian stock exchanges.

India, home to 1.3 billion people, has attracted leading US streaming giants Netflix, Amazon's Prime Video and Disney's Hotstar, keen to tap into the growth in online audiences.

The entertainment

market — valued at \$24 billion by accountancy giant EY — is already one of the world's biggest, while smartphone adoption is forecast to expand further in coming years.

Sony and ZEE Entertainment currently operate 75 channels in English, Hindi and 10 Indian regional languages, which are broadcast in 173 countries.

"There is a big opportunity in terms of synergies as Sony is doing well in sports and mainstream GEC (general entertainment channels) whereas ZEE has a strong recall in the regional genre, which is less or absent for Sony", Elara Capital media analyst Karan Taurani told AFP.

"Both have a very strong movie catalogue which can be used for OTT (over-the-top web platforms) and TV offerings."

Sony's sports offerings in India include cricket, UFC, WWE wrestling and UEFA football. It also recently showed the Tokyo Olympics.

The merger will also combine subscription-based streaming platforms SonyLIV and ZEE5.

ZEE5 is the biggest publisher of original digital content in India, having released more than 75 original shows in 2020-21 according to the company's annual report. — **AFP**



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INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



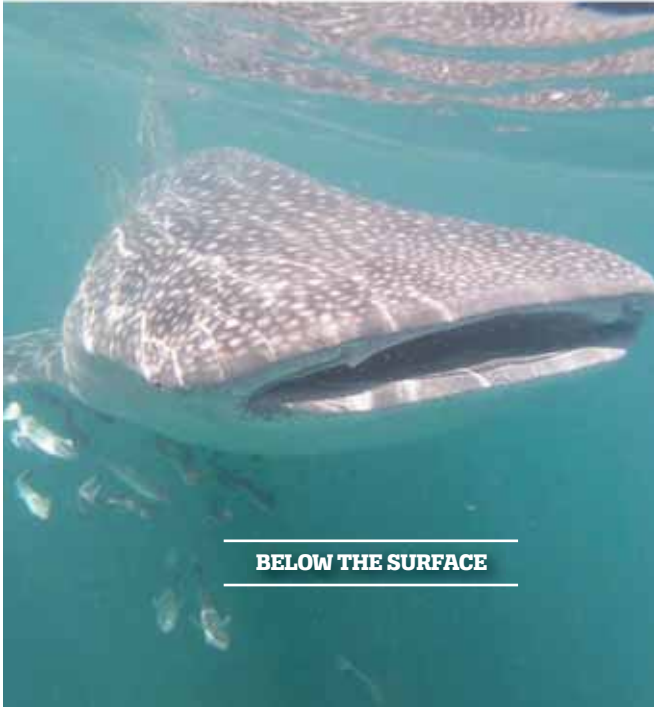
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AROUND THE WORLD

BOOK

Murakami library unveiled at author's alma mater in Tokyo



HARUKI MURAKAMI fans can marvel at a vast collection of the Japanese author's novels, scrapbooks and vinyl at a cavernous new library unveiled on Wednesday at his old university in Tokyo.

Murakami, 72, is one of Japan's most famous writers, whose intricately crafted tales of the absurdity and loneliness of modern life are global bestsellers.

The library dedicated to his work, which opens next week at Waseda University, features a replica of his minimalist workspace, a cafe and even a radio studio.



"Honestly, I wish something like this had been built after my death," Murakami joked as reporters were shown around the facility.

"Now it has been finished while I am alive, I am a bit nervous. What if I commit a crime? It would cause serious trouble to Waseda," the writer and jazz fanatic said.

The arched wooden interior and funky white facade of the Haruki Murakami Library is the work of celebrated architect Kengo Kuma, who also designed Tokyo's National Stadium, used at the Olympics this summer.

Officially named The Waseda International House of Literature, the library opens on October 1 and will initially focus on Murakami's novels, essays, interviews and other texts related to him.

It has been remodelled from an existing classroom building on the campus where the writer was a student five decades ago.

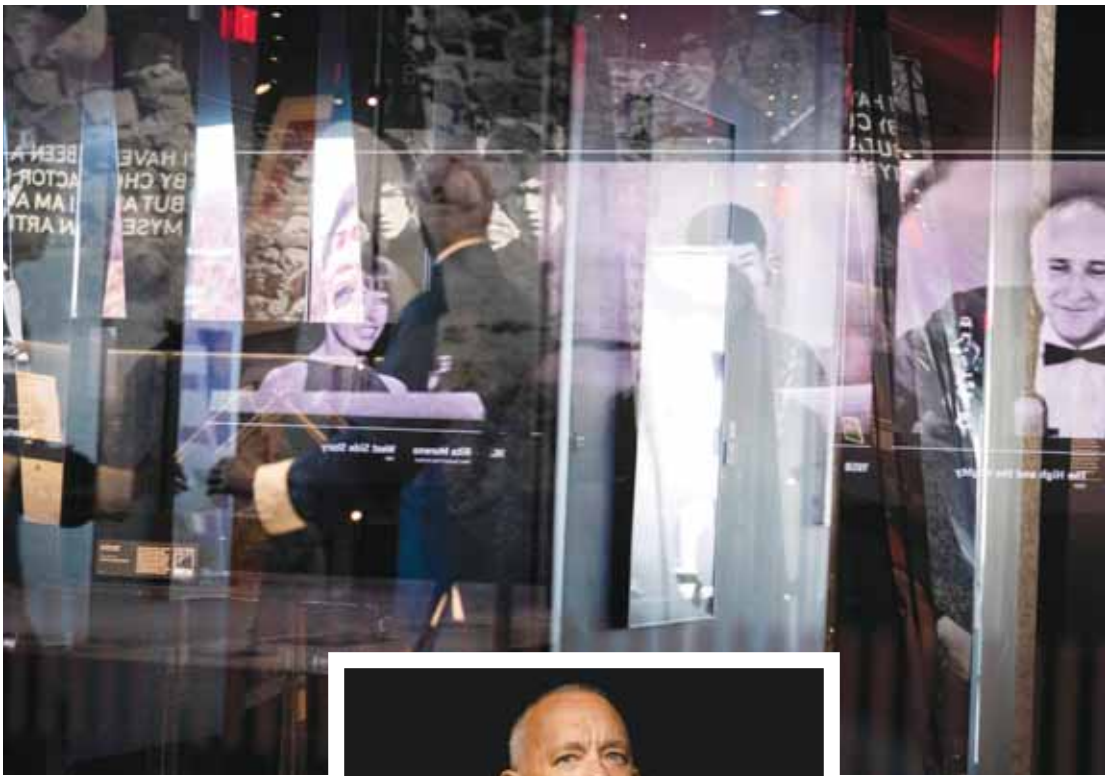
Murakami, wearing a navy jacket and mustard yellow T-shirt, recalled reading books and skipping classes at a time of radical student movements.

"I hope this will be a facility where students will freely produce their own ideas and launch them as concrete projects," he said.

More books by other authors will be added to the shelves in the future, "so it is my hope that it will be a wide-ranging and fluid research space," he added. — **AFP**

ENTERTAINMENT

Los Angeles to open 'Parthenon of film museums,' says Tom Hanks



LOS ANGELES IS finally getting a museum for movies — and it's about time, said Tom Hanks, as he welcomed journalists to a special pre-opening event on Tuesday.

The world capital of film-making and home of Hollywood boasts museums for everything from natural history to selfies, but until now has never had one dedicated to the silver screen.

After decades of delays, the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures opens to the public next week.

"It matters for Los Angeles to have this film museum," said double-Oscar winner Hanks, who serves as a trustee.

"We all know that films are made everywhere in the world, and they are wonderful films. And there are other cities with film museums.

"But with all due respect, a place like Los Angeles, created by the Motion Picture Academy... this museum has really got to be the Parthenon of such places."

Upon opening, the museum — run by the Oscar-awarding Academy — will be the largest film-dedicated museum in North America.

Drawing on some \$390 million funding from Hollywood institutions old and new — including Disney, Warner and Netflix — and beyond, the building was

designed by famed architect Renzo Piano.

Piano reworked a historic 1930s department store to house the museum's main galleries.

He added the gleaming, orb-shaped David Geffen Theater, which appears to hover above the museum's courtyard, inviting some obvious comparisons to the "Star Wars" films.

"Don't call this the Death Star!" joked Piano, at Tuesday's press conference. "Call it the Zeppelin. A Zeppelin to take you (to) a different world."

The museum presents a broad overview of more than a century of motion pictures from around the world.

Modern Tinseltown treasures include costumes from "Bram Stoker's Dracula," an orc from "The Lord of the

Rings," the amphibian man from "The Shape of Water," and "Star Wars" droids C-3PO and R2-D2.

Older heirlooms include a "Rosebud" sled from "Citizen Kane," regularly named the best film ever made.

Only three wooden sleds were ever made — on set, director Orson Welles wasn't happy with the first take, but wrapped filming after the second was thrown onto a furnace for the film's climactic scene, meaning the third survived.

"Do we need a movie museum? Yeah. Because we need to celebrate everything that this town has brought to the world," said Hanks.

The museum's temporary space opens with an exhibition of Japanese animator Hayao Miyazaki's work, leading visitors through a "tree tunnel" inspired by classic "My Neighbor Totoro" to see sketches of flying castles and early character designs.

"We want to bring through all of the international and diverse stories of movie-making through our galleries," museum director Bill Kramer said.

After a star-studded opening gala on Saturday, the museum opens to the public on September 30. — **AFP**

FASHION

Audiences back in Milan as Italy fashion seeks 'rebirth'



THE TAXIS AND courtesy cars, street style and front row stars are back in Milan on Wednesday as fashion week returns with mostly live audiences for the first time in 18 months.

Fendi, Prada, Versace, Dolce & Gabbana, Missoni, Ferragamo, Etro — almost all the big fashion houses have opted for in-person shows for the spring/summer 2022 women's collections.

Out of 65 catwalk shows over the next five days, 43 will have a physical audience, as will 77 out of the 98 presentations — and many of the parties are back.

However, Covid-19 will still make its presence felt. Invitees will be required to show proof of vaccination or negative test, and wear masks.

Many buyers and journalists are unable to travel to Milan due to ongoing travel restrictions, and the number of attendees at events is being restricted.

With many shows dubbed "more intimate", there is also no sign yet of a return to the budget-busting blockbuster shows of previous years.

However, this season is full of novelty. Roberto Cavalli is back, under new artistic director Fausto Puglisi, while MM6 Maison Margiela and Luisa Spagnoli have shows for the first time.

Gucci is not on the catwalk schedule in Milan but will unveil a new project entitled The Vault, while Giorgio Armani celebrates 40 years of his Emporio line with a retrospective exhibition.

- 'Moment of rebirth' -

Italy was the first European country to face a wave of coronavirus cases in February 2020, sparking a nationwide lockdown that plunged the euro zone's third largest economy into recession.

But a successful vaccination campaign has brought hopes of a return to some kind of normality — and economic growth.

Carlo Ferro, President of the Italian Trade Agency, said the resumption of physical events at Milan Fashion Week "comes in a context of economic restarting and shows the courage of the organisers, the tenacity of the companies and the support of Italian industry".

The numbers on the Italian fashion industry — including the textile, clothing, leather, shoe and leather goods sectors — are encouraging, with turnover in the first quarter of 2021 up 24 per cent compared to the same period in 2020.

It is still 15 per cent lower than before the pandemic, but industry players are hoping a sharp increase in orders will make up some of the difference by year end. The collections this week "mark a moment of rebirth", said Carlo Capasa chairman of Italy's national fashion chamber, the CNMI. — **AFP**

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8 Questions With Food and Experience Curator Moe Khadra

By Yeru Ebuen

As a multi-hyphenate shifting between his role as a creative producer, fashion consultant, designer and chef, Moe Khadra is accustomed to a well-curated life be it in food, clothes, the projects he affiliates himself with and even the space he inhabits.

Born in Beirut and spent his growing years in Oman, Moe is a combination of the best of both worlds crafting a narrative that is not only dizzying to follow because of its constant ebb and flow and numerous changes and detours but so mesmerising that he is able to turn chaos into structure – and not just structure but the final product that speaks tonnes about who he is as a person and as a master craftsman.

Back in Oman for 10 months, his latest project is partnering with different food establishments in the country, working side by side with chefs and executives to come up with curated food and crafting its narrative and changing the aesthetics of food hubs that help elevate the dining experience in what would usually be a monotonous environment. In a way, it's infusing a burst of life into the food scene in the country that is looking for the best way forward after the debilitating effects of the pandemic.

Moe is currently busy collaborating with one of the country's premier Japanese cuisine destinations, Takara Restaurant at the Intercontinental Hotel Muscat. Calling it 'the Garden-Teien' and happening on September 29, it's an exciting foray into the mesmerising world of Japanese cooking.

Oman Daily Observer reached out to Moe for an 8-question interview:

YOU WERE BORN IN BEIRUT AND GREW UP IN OMAN. CAN YOU FILL IN THE GAP OF WHAT THIS DUAL CULTURE WAS LIKE FOR YOU AND HOW DID THIS INFLUENCE THE PERSON THAT YOU'VE BECOME?

Between Beirut and Muscat, I lived in Hong Kong, Madrid, Amsterdam, Milan and Dubai. The past years have taught me to appreciate the innate nomad in me and people and watching their habits is by far my main source of inspiration. I don't necessarily look so much into culture, but I think the diverse intense experiences I have encountered in such a short time has influenced how I look at

identity as inspiration, as a language, as a form of expression. I believe so much in self-expression and individuality.

CAN YOU GIVE US A BETTER IDEA OF YOUR CAREER TIME-LINE: WHEN DID YOU MOVE BACK TO OMAN AND WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT BEING BACK?

My career has been a fusion of performing arts and theatre. I was an actor in my early teenage years up until my mid-20s. I then moved into being a media figure and worked in Beirut on a TV station as a presenter. In 2003, I decided to start my fashion and styling studies in Amsterdam and then lead to my main profession as a designer, stylist/fashion consultant and art director.

So I come from a very creative solid background that had nothing to do with cooking really. Then again, it's so much connected to gourmet somehow. It's all an art of something. I moved back to Muscat 10 months ago and I'm excited about the unexpected – excited about being able to share with my community bits and pieces of my experience and also living the new changes or the changes that are about to hopefully happen. Change is inspiring, too.

THIS LATEST VENTURE WHERE YOU CURATE FOOD, CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT IT?

I like to think of my food or kitchen takeovers/events as storytelling happenings just like my theatre or fashion concepts. I have been privately cooking at homes around Muscat and it was really an opportunity for me to not only introduce myself to the crowd but also to act as a listener, a watcher and sometimes a performer. So much is always said over food, so much ice breaking happens and I think that's why I enjoy it.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED AS A CHEF AND WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST INFLUENCE?

My biography as a chef is still in its toddler phase. But I can recall loving the kitchen ever since I was three years old. I'm influenced by the streets, by the villagers, by their people. I like the essence of things when it comes to food, the basics that are so organic and spontaneous. I don't find inspiration in too polished sophisticated atmospheres. I tend to be mesmerised by authenticity. I am a very Mediterranean man and I

adore that cuisine. I find it warm, vibrant, diverse, healthy, you name it!

CAN YOU GIVE US A BETTER IDEA OF WHAT "THE FIG GOURMET" IS AND DOES IT PLAY A ROLE IN THE EXPERIENCES YOU'RE GIVING TO THE FOODIES WHEN YOU CRAFT YOUR COLLABORATIONS?

I will share something with you. I never think of ingredients first then create a dish, in fact, I look at the visual then create taste. It's just how my brain is trained to function coming from fashion. If your eye is going to love it, then you are going to want to taste it, right? The FIG is about that. It's visual, it's storytelling, it's experiential and it's personal. This is why I wanted to step into people's own kitchen spaces, restaurant's own venues and maybe this is related to how I have always adapted to new cities and new habits. The FIG as a fruit is so symbolic and visually fascinating, let alone its versatile taste.

THIS LATEST COLLABORATION WITH TAKARA, WHAT CAN GUESTS EXPECT AND WHY IS THIS EXCITING FOR YOU?

It's another exciting challenge after the Bank Beach Club. Only with Takara did I come to a cuisine that I am not so familiar with and that made this project even more appealing. Japan in my design work is constantly an inspiration and you can see that if you are familiar with my work in fashion and design, but I never ventured into its cuisine. I have had such a great experience so far with the Takara team, their professionalism and passion to put this event together have been so rewarding and we are both so excited to launch this GARDEN night. I think the guests are going to experience something with intensity, something that is slightly out of the box, dynamic and definitely.

FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NEW TO KITCHEN TAKEOVERS, WHY DO YOU THINK THEY SHOULD GIVE IT A TRY?

Why not? We are here for a short time. We might as well just have fun, it's all part of putting our own stories.

WHERE WILL WE SEE YOU NEXT?

Honestly, I don't know. I follow my instincts and I dread routine there is so much more out there I want to live.

