

P10

SALALAH TO
HOST OMAN
SAILING
FESTIVAL 2022



P13

OQ GROUP'S
H1 PROFIT
SOARS TO
RO 822 MILLION



P20

WALKING
THROUGH THE
ANCIENT ALLEY OF
AL MUDHAIRIB



MUSCAT

ARAB-US RELATIONS
FOSTER GLOBAL VISION

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, has said that the 31st Annual Arab-US Policymakers Conference promotes collaboration that is enhanced by a global humanitarian vision. Sayyid Badr made the statement at the conference, organised in Washington by the National Council on US-Arab Relations. “The conference contributes extensively to understanding the challenges, opportunities, and uncertainties in the Arab-US relations that we face together today,” Sayyid Badr explained. He added that the council’s contribution comes as a measure to foster elaborate and enlightened cooperation that stems from a global humanitarian vision. The conference offers serious and objective dialogue aimed to handle issues that emerge within the context of the future of Arab-US relations.

DETAILS ON P3

Oman committed to cut emissions

CAIRO: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, took part in the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) 2022. The session is being held in the Egyptian city of Sharm El Sheikh from November 6-18. Al Aufi said that the Sultanate of Oman’s participation in this important event stems from its conviction in the significance of endorsing coordinated measures in partnership with the world to reduce global warming to levels below 2 degrees Celsius, namely the endorsement of



Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi at the 27th session of the COP27. – ONA

the Paris Agreement by 196 countries, which became effective November 4, 2016 at a time the world is set to reach the peak of global

greenhouse gas emissions. He added that the pact also aims to achieve a climate-emission-neutral world by mid-century, as various countries have pledged to provide nationally-determined contributions in order to ensure energy transition and mitigated emissions. Oman took major steps forward in cutting down carbon emissions by declaring commitment to meet carbon neutrality in 2050 and establishing the Oman Sustainability Centre — based on the outputs of the Carbon Management Laboratory — and announcing the launch of the national strategy for an orderly transition to the carbon neutrality plan, besides launching the National Environmental Policy for Energy, Al Aufi said.

TURN TO P2

STATE COUNCIL APPROVES TWO STUDIES

MUSCAT: The State Council began its fourth annual session of the seventh term (2019-2023), on Sunday. During the meeting, the State Council approved a study on the accreditation and equivalency system of academic certificates issued by international higher education institutions and a study on psychological health. Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, said that the council’s meeting discussed a number of topics most importantly a study submitted by the ad hoc committee entrusted with the accreditation and equivalency of academic certificates issued by international universities as well as the study submitted by the Social Committee on the psychological health. DETAILS ON P2

WORLD CUP FEVER



Men walk past a mural of former Brazilian forward Ronaldo in Doha on Sunday, ahead of the Qatar 2022 Fifa World Cup football tournament. From today a special page in Sport section is dedicated for Fifa World Cup. – AFP

UN chief hails Oman’s efforts in backing peace in Mideast

NEW YORK: The UN Secretary-General António Guterres commended the efforts taken by the Sultanate of Oman in backing peace and stability in Middle East and the world at large. Guterres gave the statement when he visited the premises of Oman’s Permanent Delegation to the UN at New York. He pointed out that the world is well aware of Oman’s history and the role of Omanis in propagating peace in the globe through their culture of tolerance and co-existence. He added that the landmarks left behind by Omanis stand evidence to this approach in



António Guterres

different parts of the world, notably in Asia and Africa. “The respect earned by Oman at the international level and the culture of tolerance, coexistence

among the Omanis mirror its civilised heritage,” Guterres said. VISIT OF GUTERRES Meanwhile, Dr Mohammed bin Awadh al Hassan, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman at the UN Headquarters, expressed his appreciation for the visit of Guterres. He affirmed that Oman, led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, is pressing ahead with its initiatives to serve security and peace in the world, consolidate international stability and cooperation and elevate the status of the international law. — ONA

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Diwan of Royal Court Minister receives Qatari ambassador



MUSCAT: Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, received in his office on Sunday Shaikh Jassim bin Abdulrahman al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman. The two sides reviewed the advance bilateral relations between Oman and Qatar and ways of enhancing them in various fields. — ONA

Shura Council begins session

MUSCAT: Majlis Ash’shura held its first meeting of the fourth annual session of the ninth term on Sunday. The Majlis discussed several topics including the draft cooperation agreement in the field of ports and maritime transport between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the draft cooperation agreement in air transport between the governments of the Sultanate of Oman and Canada and the draft agreement on avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of tax evasion for income taxes between the Sultanate of Oman and the Arab Republic of Egypt. Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash’shura, said: “Based on the Royal order issued by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and pursuant to the provisions of the Basic Statute of the State, today I am inaugurating the fourth session of the ninth term of Majlis Ash’shura in conjunction with the 52nd National Day.”



The chairman of Majlis Ash’shura expressed his thanks and appreciation to the members of Majlis Ash’shura and the Secretariat-General for the efforts they exerted to make the sessions successful. During the meeting, the Majlis discussed the proposed amendments of Article (1) of the Law on Combating Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. The Majlis also reviewed the Economic and Financial Committee’s report on the reality of the mining sector, the draft small and medium enterprises law, the draft law on income tax on high-income earners, the draft law on public debt, the draft law on school education and the draft higher education law. The Majlis was briefed about the state general budget for the fiscal year 2023 forwarded by the government. — ONA

State Council begins 4th annual session, approves two studies

MUSCAT: The State Council began its fourth annual session of the seventh term (2019-2023), on Sunday. During the meeting, the State Council approved a study on the accreditation and equivalency system of academic certificates issued by international higher education institutions and a study on psychological health. Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, said that the council’s meeting discussed a number of topics most importantly a study submitted by the ad hoc committee entrusted with the accreditation and equivalency of academic certificates issued by international universities as well as the study submitted by the Social Committee on the psychological health. The chairman of the State Council noted that the outset of the fourth session comes in conjunction with the 52nd National Day celebrations. He expressed his confidence in the members’ good efforts in debating the studies at the council’s sessions, and his appreciation of the roles they undertake by presenting proposals for improving the council’s works. He pointed to the improvement in the economic indicators issued by the international organisation and the efficiency of the economic plans. At the end of the meeting, the council members reviewed an explanatory memorandum submitted by the Council of Ministers concerning the government’s response to the visions and observations of the Council of Oman on the draft general budget for fiscal year 2022 and the two reports submitted by the Technology and Innovation Committee on the committee’s member’s visit to Expo 2020 Dubai during March 15-17, and Karwa Motors in the Special



Economic Zone at Duqm on February 23. Besides, the council reviewed a report submitted by Dr Rashid bin Salim al Badi regarding his participation in the 32nd Conference of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union which was held in Cairo on 17-18 February and the report of the Assistant Secretariat-General for Sessions and Committees Affairs on the third annual session (2021-2022). The State Council also reviewed a memorandum submitted by the Economic Committee concerning the settlement of non-performing personal loans and the Secretariat-General’s report on the council’s activities. Sayyid Dr Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, head of the ad hoc committee entrusted with the accreditation and equivalency of academic certificates issued by international universities, said the committee studied the subject thoroughly and hosted many concerned authorities and came out with this study. In a press statement, Al Busaidy said that the study on the the accreditation and equivalency of academic certificates issued by international universities came in implementation of the directives issued by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik that aimed at renewing the legislations and simplifying the procedures to keep pace with the developments. The study aimed at redressing the issue of the delayed accreditation. He added that the committee registered several observations that were raised by the members of the State Council during the meeting, whether those related to the drafting of the study or the justification for preparing the study. He said that out of over 107,000 certificates presented for accreditation over the past five years only a meagre 105 were not accredited by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Dr Ahmed bin Ali al Amri, head of the Social Committee, reviewed the study on psychological health as health is a right to everyone regardless of his or her race, faith, skin colour or nationality. He stressed that within the framework of the purviews of the State Council, the Social Committee decided to find an integrated and comprehensive legislation to address the anticipated repercussions of the changes that occurred in society and to expedite the issuance of a special law for psychological health to ensure a proper implementation of Oman Vision 2040 especially the aspects related to human and society section.

■ SQU HOLDS GRADUATION CEREMONY



MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) celebrated the graduation of the 33rd batch which comprises 1,691 students from the colleges of humanities under the auspices of Dr Mahad bin Said bin Ali Baowain, Minister of Labour, at the university’s amphitheatre on Sunday. — ONA

Oman committed to cut carbon emissions

FROM PAGE1 Al Aufi announced the start of the pre-qualification phase for investors wishing to participate in the first round of investment opportunities in green hydrogen production projects through the platform of Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom) company. Oman’s pavilion at this conference discussed climate change, carbon neutrality, investment in the green energy sector, and other related topics. The summit is part of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, an international treaty signed by most countries of the world with the aim of reducing human activity’s impact on the climate. The participating countries pledged to return to the meeting this year, to agree on further reduction of

rates of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide emissions in a manner that keeps the rise in global heat within less than 2°C. The conference envisages four main goals: mitigation, adaptation, financing and cooperation of countries concerned to help limit global warming within less than 2°C and and to keep the 1.5°C target alive. Oman accords attention to energy transformation in line with the world to reduce carbon emissions. It is also working to promote local value-added policies, localise industries related to the renewable energy and hydrogen sector, enable strategic studies, research and development and to enhance community awareness of clean energy.

— ONA



Arab-US policymakers' conference promotes humane collaboration: Foreign Minister

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, has said that the 31st Annual Arab-US Policymakers Conference promotes collaboration that is enhanced by a global humanitarian vision.

Sayyid Badr made the statement at the conference, organised in Washington by the National Council on US-Arab Relations.

"The conference contributes extensively to understanding the challenges, opportunities, and uncertainties in the Arab-US relations that we face together today," Sayyid Badr explained.

He added that the Council's contribution comes as a measure to foster elaborate and enlightened cooperation that stems from a global humanitarian vision.

The conference offers serious and objective dialogue aimed to handle issues that emerge within the context of the future of Arab-US relations.

The dialogue envisages the role that the United States wishes to assume in the modern Arab world, bearing in mind the nature of US commitment towards the security of the region, said Sayyid Badr, noting that GCC states may combine, in a better way, their relations with the United States alongside their ties with other powers.

In his statement, Sayyid Badr laid emphasis on broadlines of



the process of reorganisation. He pointed out that transmission requires large investments in renewable energy and that Oman has some of the world's top potentials to produce solar power and wind power. In this context, he referred to a study that asserts that green hydrogen resources

equate ten multiples of its current oil and gas production.

Sayyid Badr explained that economic diversification and technological development will play a vital role in other areas for the sake of economic diversification and the establishment of partnerships

with technology innovators in the future.

Sayyid Badr affirmed that Oman works hard towards encouraging innovation by supporting Omani youth and developing products, services and SMEs. He added that "Oman Vision 2040 made this approach

a priority which promotes renewable energy, emerging tech startups with government support and reflects a desire to ensure that the new economy is an economy that provides opportunities and prosperity for all," he said.

Winding up his statement, Sayyid Badr said, "The American

OMAN WORKS
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participation in the region will support security, stability and prosperity more effectively than it was before through the development and implementation of policies that promote decarbonisation, achieve economic diversification and enhance social integration." — ONA

Regional Cybersecurity Week kicks off



MUSCAT: A Regional Cybersecurity Week kicked off on Sunday. The event is being held simultaneously with the 10th Regional Cybersecurity Drill for Arab States and Member States in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The two-day event is organised by the Arab Regional Cybersecurity Centre in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and

Information Technology.

As many as 400 specialists from 45 countries are taking part in the event, themed "Overview of Rapidly Developing Cybersecurity Threats". The event aims at enhancing communication and honing the skills of cyber-emergency response teams.

The drill includes simulation of four scenarios developed by the Arab Regional Cybersecurity Centre and the International

Telecommunication Union.

This drill is tailored for national centres for cybersecurity and info-emergency, as well as cybersecurity teams at vital establishments in Arab countries and OIC centres.

The inaugural ceremony of the drill was held under the auspices of Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Under-Secretary for Communications and Information Technology. — ONA

Talk on perfumery industry today

Oman will play host to a first-of-its-kind talk on perfumes at the National Museum, thanks to the Omani French Friendship Association (OFFA) and the Embassy of France to the Sultanate of Oman. Held under the auspices of Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad al Busaidy, Chairman of SABCO Group, the talk titled, "The Perfumery industry: exploring new frontiers", a conversation with fragrance creators of the prestigious perfume brands such as Amouage, Givaudan and Hermes will shed light into the nitty gritty aspects of perfume making, the olfactory sector, managing the supply chain, and adopting effective distribution channels, individual tastes and preferences.



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT Building CMA Network Infrastructure

Tender Number	Tender Main Scopes	Release Request for Bids	Last date for Specifications Purchase	Last date of Bid Submission	Tender Fee OMR
5 / 2022	Designing Network Infrastructure , Delivering, mounting, configuring and migrating all equipment, software and licenses (perimeter and Data center Firewall , NAC solution , access and core switches , and security end point solution)	6 November 2022	15 November 2022 3:00 PM	1 December 2022 3:00 PM	100/- OMR Non Refundable

Companies and institutions registered as Grade excellent, Grade I and II and specialized in mentioned tender main scopes, may obtain tender document / Specifications from Finance and Admin department upon receipt of complete payment of the tender fees via bank transfer and provide scanned copy of the deposit receipt along with Registration certificate and business card to the email .

- All RFQs submitted become the property of CMA.
- Tenderer should submit a Tender Bond not less than (2%) of the Tender value, valid for Ninety (90) Days from the latest date of submission.
- The CMA reserves the right to cancel any RFQ at any time and reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Proposals, or any or all of the items in one of the Proposals, without assigning any reasons.
- CMA is not obligated to accept the lowest bid or any other bid.

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Account no : 0423019706330018
Bank: Bank Muscat- Corporate Branch- CBD
SWIFT code: BMUSOMRXXXX
Please attach a copy of the deposit receipt

If the tender is not awarded to the company, the bank guarantee will be refunded.
For inquiries, please contact :
e-mail : admin@cma.gov.om
Telephone Number : 24823299
From 8 am to 3 pm.
Sunday to Thursday.



NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that **Mr. Kotak Jaydeep**, worked as the controller, receivable & MIS holder of **Indian passport No. M6623589**. He is & was not authorized to represent the M/s.

Muscat Electronics LLC and Muscat Air conditioning and Electronics LLC in any way.

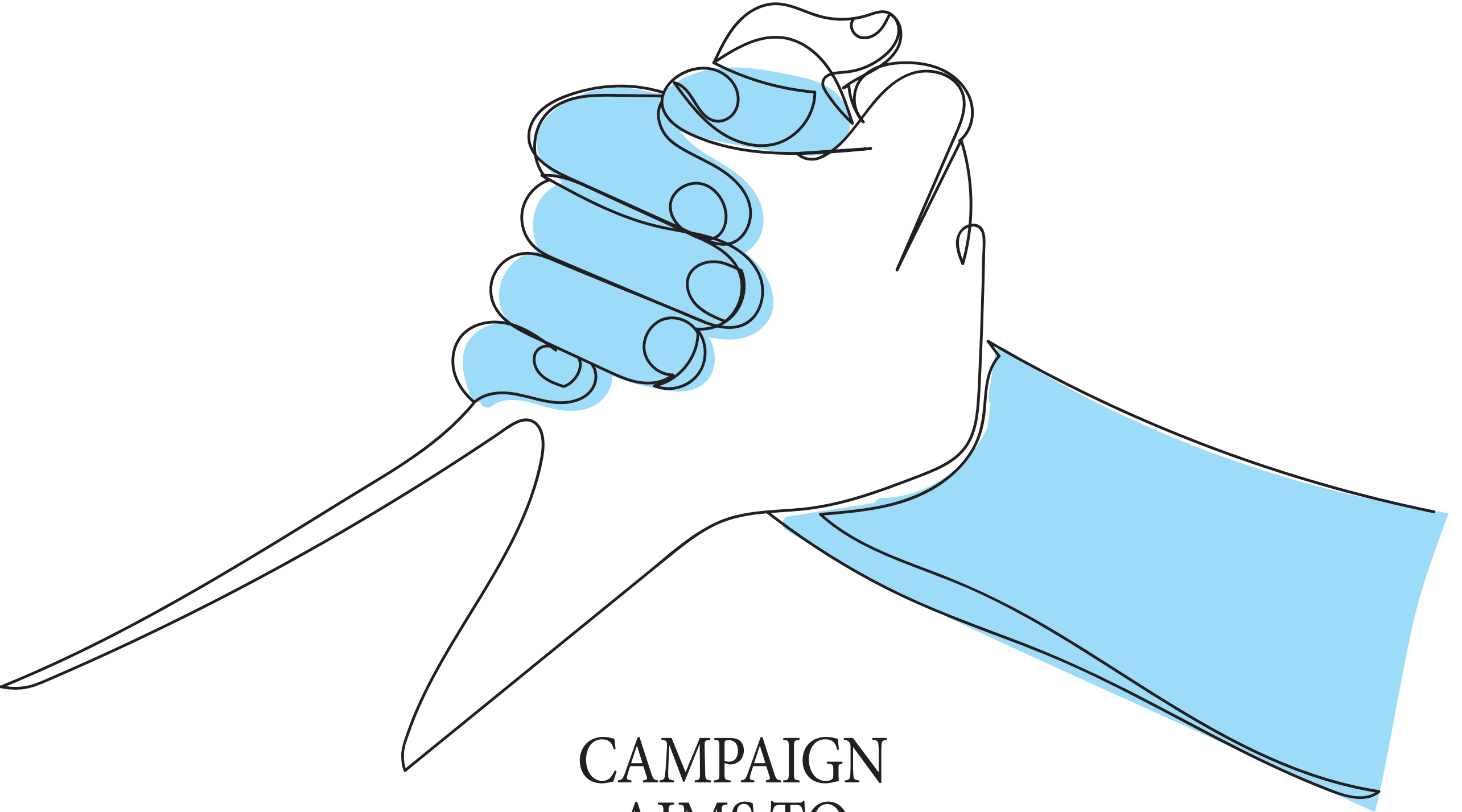
Muscat Electronics LLC

P.O Box 1916, Jibroo, Postal Code : 114, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: 22352255, Fax: 22352334





NOT ALONE



CAMPAIGN AIMS TO ENCOURAGE SENSE OF BELONGING

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
[@lakshmioman](#)

The third edition of ‘Not alone’ is all set to commence this month, organised by the Whispers of Serenity. The team of professionals will be at various wilayats to have a conversation and reach out with various topics on mental health.

Under the campaign, sessions would be conducted at various venues ranging from forts, beaches, university campuses, Omani Women Association branches and malls. ‘Not Alone’ is a campaign that has creativity and closeness.

“It is not part of any study; we do it to get closer to people and talk about mental health. So this is our main goal. Through this campaign, we also go to forts, and we get to see places in this beautiful Sultanate of Oman. In a way, this drive has tourism

 The sense of belonging is essential for every human being. And if you don't have a sense of belonging, then quite often, it is also associated with poor mental health. Also, people who live with us in Oman will be part of this campaign because we believe we have people from diverse countries with us

HH SAYYIDA BASMA AL SAID
FOUNDER, NOTALONE

potential as well, and when we move around, we document everything during our previous visits.

On the other hand, what people share is kept with complete confidentiality. The main reason the campaign is in November is that it is the month of National Day.

“The sense of belonging is essential for every human being. And if you don't have a sense of belonging, then quite often, it is also associated with poor mental health. Also, people who live with us in the Sultanate of Oman will be part of this campaign because we believe we have people from diverse countries with us, which also makes the Not Alone campaign a unique experience. ‘Not Alone’ is with everyone who lives on this land. And that is what the Sultanate of Oman is known for - its friendliness. We are also hoping that when other countries see us, they

will follow suit,” explained HH Sayyida Basma al Said, founder of the ‘Not Alone’ campaign and Whispers of Serenity.

They have already received queries from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan and London. The journey to each wilayat will occur every two weeks.

MENTAL HEALTH
HH Sayyida Thagreed al Said, the founder of Learn and Inspire and member of the ‘Not Alone’ team, said, “We are reaching out to people with creative ideas. We hope once we cover the Sultanate of Oman, we will move on to the Gulf countries, Arab countries and then the world. We speak heart-to-heart with people. We make sure we are not lecturing; instead, it is dealt with in a way where people with different educational levels feel connected.

The relationship between belonging and mental health is a very important need to be fulfilled after meeting physiological needs and the sense of security; then, it is the sense of belonging. The feeling of being related to the country and wanting to give back to the society hold a lot of value.”

The campaign will start with the first session in Muttrah. In this edition, the ‘Not Alone’ campaign will visit Ibra, Ibri, Al Rustaq, Nakhl, Samayil, Al Jabal al Akhdhar and Duqm.

“Each speaker will talk about different topics, and then the audience will interact, followed by discussion. So it is conducted in a chilled-out atmosphere but is very informative. What has been fascinating is that wherever we went in the past, the people would tell us what they could do for us.”



More than 1.5 million vehicles registered till September



MUSCAT: The total number of vehicles registered in the Sultanate of Oman reached 1,586,947 by the end of September 2022, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Vehicles with private registration constituted 79.5 per cent of the total vehicles registered in Oman, to stand at 1,260,833, while the number of vehicles with commercial registration reached 236,867, constituting 14.9 per cent of the total number of vehicles.

Meanwhile, taxi vehicles

reached 28,186, comprising 1.8 per cent and the number of rental vehicles stood at 26,932, comprising 1.7 per cent. The number of government vehicles stood at 12,158 and motorbikes stood at 6,623.

The number of tutoring vehicles stood at 5,806 and the number of vehicles with temporary registration (temporary inspection, export and import) stood at 7,438.

Moreover, the number of farming tractors stood at 1,284 and vehicles with diplomatic entity registrations stood at 820.

— ONA

Oman Air’s Match Shuttle flights ready to take off from Nov 21

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
[@lakshmioman](#)

Oman Air’s World Cup shuttle between Muscat and Doha (return) is now RO 49 in Economy for all fans. The airline exhorted fans to enjoy the service, saying, “Experience the best of Omani hospitality on your way to and from the match and create unforgettable football memories.”

The travel agencies in town said they have been receiving calls with queries on flights between Muscat and Doha, and there have been online bookings too.

The shuttle service will continue from November till December 3.

International world Cup fans can have special fares to fly to Muscat with Oman Air and connect to the game on one of the daily Match Day Shuttle flights — Economy RO 149, Business RO 309.

There are conditions, match tickets and a Hayya card. The fan ID application must be completed before booking the flight.

The Qatari authorities have reminded ticket holders that all local and international fans must apply for a digital Hayya Card, an entry permit to the State of Qatar



and stadium access along with the match ticket. International fans are also expected to confirm their accommodation plans to receive final approval on their digital Hayya Card.

Hayyacard and accommodation booking can be applied at Qatar2022.qa, or the App Hayya to Qatar can be downloaded on IOS, Android and Huawei.

Meanwhile, to utilise Oman

Air’s offer, there should be at least minimum 24 hours of stopover in Muscat and the maximum stay duration for Match Day Shuttle is 24 hours.

Passengers can only carry one hand luggage weighing no more than seven kgs. Fares include fees, taxes and airport charges. All Oman Air Match Day Shuttle flights contain three digits starting with the number 5, such as ‘533’.

While ticket sales are valid until December 2, tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable. Offer is valid only on Economy and Business classes. In case of a no-show or any changes to the travel date, the airline on its website pointed out that additional charges will apply. Customers have been advised to arrive I. Doha at least four hours prior to the start of the match.

Price hike: Mazoon Dairy issues clarification

KABEER YOUSUF
[@kabeeryousef](#)

Mazoon Dairy, Oman’s youngest local dairy products producer and supplier, has clarified the reasons for its recent decision to increase the prices of some of its products.

In conversation with the Observer on the sidelines of the meeting convened in connection with the price hike, Ahmed al Ghafri, Chief Supporting Officer, and Ali al Buali, CEO of Mazoon Dairy, said: “The changes around the world during the past period have contributed to affecting international supply chains and the movement of goods and goods between countries, which affected the rise in production input costs and shipping and transportation costs by up to 70 per cent, due to the direct and indirect effects of political and military conflicts, waves of inflation in global prices and



economic impacts and logistical procedures for dealing with the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic.”

“This forced the dairy and derivatives production companies in the region to try to adapt to that rise by reviewing the prices of their products over the past two years to ensure the continuity of

their business,” Al Ghafri said.

He further said that the operations of dairy production companies and their derivatives are generally related to the abundance and ease of transporting some basic materials that are key elements in the various stages of production, most notably the cow feed that Mazoon Dairy

Company purchases locally and from different countries around the world.

This is done to ensure high quality standards and covering the growing needs of the company’s operations in addition to other basic materials within the production and packaging stages, according to Al Ghafri.

The members of the senior management officials informed the media at the meeting attended by officials from the Oman Investment Authority (OIA) that the company has also formally notified the distributors to conduct a price review after the approval of the official authorities to the reasons mentioned. The company confirmed that it would continue to provide its products according to the same levels of quality received by the community, and maintain its brand value in the Sultanate of Oman for dairy products and its derivatives.

Training programme on detecting fraud



MUSCAT: Tasks of a training programme on detecting cheating and fraud kicked off here on Sunday. Organised by the State’s Audit Institution (SAI), the 4-day event is being held in cooperation with supreme audit institutions and the Arab Organization for Supreme Audit Institutions (ARABOSAI). It is attended by 35 participants from Arab regulatory bodies

and the SAI.

The programme, which comes in implementation of the ARABOSAI training and research plan, seeks to enable participants to understand the specifications and control procedures for fraud risk assessment. It also aims to provide the participants with the skills needed to identify risks and detect fraud when conducting audit tasks. — ONA

Oman Airports to host WTA grand final ceremony for second time

MUSCAT: With a view to supporting the efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to promote the country and position Oman on the global tourism map as a key player, Oman Airports is once again sponsoring the WTA Grand Final Gala Ceremony 2022, now in its 29th edition, which will be held at the Al Bustan Palace, A Ritz-Carlton Hotel on November 11. The event will be attended by hundreds of senior airline, hotel, and tourism industry officials.

Commenting on this important step, Shaikh Aimen bin Ahmed al Hosni, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Airports, said, “Having hosted the 26th edition of this prestigious global event with

great success, we are pleased to once again invite major players in the tourism industry to visit the Sultanate of Oman and attend the WTA Grand Final Gala Ceremony.”

He added, “Hosting this global event falls within the framework of our role in supporting the efforts of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in placing Oman on the map of major global events. We are confident that the presence of the best travel and tourism companies from around the world, and the accompanying media coverage, will reflect positively on these efforts.”

Graham Cooke, Founder of WTA, said, “It is an honour to host the Grand Final Gala Ceremony in



Muscat for the second time. Our first ceremony in Oman, in 2019, was a great success that prompted us to repeat the experience and return to this beautiful country

again. In recent years, the Sultanate of Oman has emerged as one of the top destinations for millions of travellers, as well as a major regional hub. It will be an honour

for me to welcome top decision makers from major travel and tourism companies to the beautiful capital city of Oman.”

“With the Fifa World Cup taking place in the region this year, and Muscat being one of the satellite cities to host fans, I am sure our participants will have a wonderful experience. We guarantee that every participant attending the Gala Ceremony will be left speechless by the beauty of our city; right from the very first moment they step through the gate at Muscat International Airport, all the way to the Al Bustan Palace, one of the most beautiful hotels in Muscat, and with every other tourist attraction the capital has to offer, they are in for a mesmerising

experience from start to finish,” Shaikh Al Hosni said.

Each year WTA covers the globe with its Grand Tour – a series of regional gala ceremonies to recognise excellence within each continent, culminating in a Grand Final at the end of the year. The winners of these regional ceremonies are going head-to-head at the Grand Final in Oman on November 11 when the winners of the prestigious World categories will be unveiled.

Established in 1993 in England, the World Travel Awards celebrates its 29th anniversary this year. Its annual programme is renowned as the most prestigious and comprehensive in the global tourism industry.



KISHIDA DENOUNCES NORTH KOREA’S RECENT BLITZ OF MISSILE TESTS

Japan PM pledges to boost military capacity

SAGAMI BAY, Japan: Prime Minister Fumio Kishida pledged on Sunday to beef up Japan’s naval and military capacity, warning that nations must prepare to face aggressors.

Kishida also condemned Russia’s war in Ukraine and denounced North Korea’s recent blitz of missile tests, one of which flew over Japan for the first time since 2017 and prompted a rare evacuation warning.

“We must prepare ourselves for an era when actors emerge to disobey rules and use force or threats to destroy the peace and safety of other nations,” Kishida said as he addressed Japan’s international fleet review.

The leader’s remarks come as Tokyo is drafting security plans that may call for doubling the nation’s defence spending within five years. That would represent a sea change in Japan, where the pacifist constitution limits its military capacity. “We will accelerate realistic discussions on what’s needed to defend our people by keeping all options on the table,” Kishida said.

“The enhancement (of Japan’s naval capacity) cannot

wait, including construction of new naval ships, bolstering our missile defence capacity and improvement of the work conditions and compensations for our (military) personnel,” he said.

He did not name China but said that “the national security environment surrounding our nation is growing more severe including the East China Sea and South China Sea,” where Beijing has taken assertive positions in territorial disputes with countries including Japan. Kishida added that Japan will ensure transparency of its military spending.

“Japan will maintain our way as a pacifist country as we have done so since the end of (World War II),” he said.

The fleet review gathered ships from Japan and 12 other countries — including Australia, India and the United States — at Sagami Bay, south of Tokyo. South Korea also took part for the first time in seven years, as Tokyo and Seoul attempt to mend strained relations.

MEETING PLAN

The Japanese and Chinese governments have started planning a meeting between Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio



Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (R) listens to an explanation from officials aboard the US Navy’s nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan during an “International Fleet Review”, held by Japan’s Maritime Self-Defence Force with some 12 other countries, in Sagami Bay. — AFP

Kishida and China’s President Xi Jinping for mid-November, the Sankei newspaper reported.

The meeting would be held alongside an international conference set to take place in Southeast Asia, the Sankei said, citing multiple government sources.

The latest in-person China-

Japan summit was in 2019, when Xi met with then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Beijing. Xi was set to visit Japan in 2020 as a state guest, but the trip was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno told a regular news conference that nothing

has been decided on a summit meeting with China but that it is important to maintain dialogue at various levels.

“Through both governments’ endeavours, we aim to build constructive and stable ties with China, in which dialogue is firmly maintained and cooperation takes place on matters of common

challenges,” Matsuno said.

The Xi-Kishida meeting would be on the sidelines of a summit of the Group of 20 big economies in Indonesia on November 15-16, or at a meeting between leaders of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries on November 18-19 in Bangkok, Sankei said.

Sino-Japanese ties have long been plagued by a dispute over a group of tiny uninhabited East China Sea islets, a legacy of Japan’s World War Two aggression and regional rivalry.

Bilateral ties were strained further after China fired ballistic missiles into waters near Japan as part of a military exercise Beijing launched in August.

Arrangements are being made for trilateral meetings between Kishida, United States President Joe Biden, and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol in mid-November as well, news agency Jiji reported, amid heightening tensions in the Korean peninsula over North Korea’s repeated missile launches. A summit between Kishida and Yoon is also in the works, the Nikkei newspaper said. — Agencies

Syrian perfumer needs ‘one whiff’ to mimic luxury brands

DAMASCUS: One whiff of a fragrance is all Syrian perfumer Mohammad al Masri needs to recreate the scent of a luxury brand — without the label and for a fraction of the cost.

Dozens of customers flock daily to his tiny store, nestled in the historic market of Damascus’s old city, many flashing photos on their phones of high-end perfumes they want to replicate.

“All I have is my shop, and this nose I’ve been training since I was 15,” the 55-year-old said, pointing at his face.

“I don’t have a big workshop or high-end equipment.”

After 11 years of war and economic dislocation, most Syrians struggle to afford life’s bare necessities, let alone perfume. Before the war, Masri would mostly concoct expensive oriental fragrances, with heavy notes of oud, a sweet and woody



Syrian perfumer Mohammad al Masri works at his shop in a historic souq of Damascus’s old city. — AFP

scent, like his family has done for a century. But after Syria plunged into conflict, demand for cheap imitations of premium brands skyrocketed and Masri’s shop walls are filled with pictures of world-famous perfumes.

“For young women, perfume

is essential, it’s like food or water,” said 24-year-old customer Cham al Falah.

“I used to buy Western perfumes but I can no longer afford them because imported products are becoming increasingly hard to come by in Syria,” she said while

ordering a fragrance imitating her favourite Italian perfume.

Although Damascus has been spared the worst destruction of the war, which began after its government repressed protests, the local currency has lost almost 99 per cent of its value on the parallel market.

Syrian employees and civil servants reportedly make roughly \$25 a month on average -- a quarter of the price of a bottle of imported perfume. Masri sells his fragrances for about six dollars, drawing in a flow of clients from all walks of life. Ahmad Dorra, 60, travelled from the mountain town of Zabadani, a 50 km drive away, to buy five bottles of perfume for his family. He watched as Masri lined up dozens of vials on a table — essences of jasmine, Damascus rose, musk and other fragrances used for his concoctions.

— AFP

Pakistan ex-PM Imran Khan leaves hospital

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan left hospital on Sunday, a senior aide said, three days after being shot in the legs in a failed assassination attempt.

The shooting -- and Khan’s accusation that his successor Shehbaz Sharif was involved -- have significantly raised the political temperature in a country that has been on the boil since he was ousted in April.

Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry said that Khan “has been discharged” and a local TV channel showed him wearing a blue hospital gown as he left the Lahore clinic by wheelchair.

Khan, 70, was wounded by gunfire aimed at his open-top container truck as he led a political party convoy through thick crowds in the eastern city of Wazirabad on Thursday.

One man is in custody following the attack, which government officials have said was the work of a lone gunman



Former prime minister Imran Khan addresses the media representatives at a hospital in Lahore. — AFP

and “a very clear case of religious extremism”.

In an apparent confession video leaked by police to media, the sole suspect said he tried to kill Khan because his convoy was interrupting the call to prayer.

Khan, however, insists two shooters were involved, and speaking to reporters from hospital on Friday claimed Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, and a senior intelligence officer were behind the plot. — AFP

MANAMA

Pope prays for ‘suffering peoples’ in ME

Pope Francis said on Sunday he was praying for “suffering peoples of the Middle East”, at the end of a Bahrain visit promoting dialogue with Islam.

In a final address before boarding a flight to Rome, he also urged congregants to pray “for Ukraine, which is suffering so much”, and for an end to the war. He told Lebanese congregants he was praying for “your beloved country, so weary and sorely tried, as well as (for) all peoples suffering in the Middle East”.



The 85-year-old Argentinian used his four-day visit to Bahrain to meet both senior Muslim officials and Catholic residents of the Gulf, home to a large migrant community.

NAIROBI

Kenya Airways pilots extend strike

Kenya Airways pilots on Sunday extended their strike and warned of “major flight disruptions”, forcing fresh cancellations as the carrier’s deadline for disciplinary action against those participating lapsed. Thousands of passengers were stranded as a result of the strike by the Kenya Airline Pilots Association (KALPA), which earlier said that no Kenya Airways flight flown by its members had departed Nairobi’s Jomo Kenyatta International Airport from 6:00 am (03:00



GMT) on wards on Saturday.

The pilots announced the strike in defiance of a court order against industrial action and have given no indication of how long it would last.

DAMASCUS

6 displaced Syrians killed in rocket strike

Syrian rocket fire killed six civilians including two children at makeshift camps for displaced people in the country’s last major rebel-held bastion early on Sunday, a war monitor said.

The victims had all been uprooted from their homes during Syria’s years of war, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has a broad network of sources on the ground. It said more than 30 rockets exploded in several areas, including the



camps, west of the city of Idlib in northwest. The Observatory said the number of people wounded in the shelling increased from 20 to 75, and they were in various conditions.



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In brief

LAKE VICTORIA



19 KILLED AS PLANE CRASHES IN TANZANIA

The death toll from Sunday's plane crash in Lake Victoria in Tanzania has jumped to 19, Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa said, after the Precision Air flight with dozens of passengers aboard plunged into water while approaching the northwestern city of Bukoba. "All Tanzanians are with you in mourning the 19 people who lost lives during this accident," Majaliwa told a crowd after arriving at Bukoba airport, where the flight had been scheduled to land from financial capital Dar es Salaam.

Regional authorities and the airline earlier said that 26 survivors out of the 43 people on board flight PW 494 had been pulled to safety.

BEIJING



BEIJING MARATHON BACK AFTER TWO YEARS WITH COVID CURBS

About 30,000 runners, some wearing face masks, took part on Sunday in a chilly and smoggy first Beijing Marathon since 2019 after Covid cancelled previous races. It was the first major sporting event in the Chinese capital since the Winter Olympics in February.

China continues to adhere to a strict zero-Covid policy, with harsh lockdowns, quarantines and testing regimes imposed after even the smallest outbreaks. As a result, only people living in Beijing were allowed to take part in the race, unlike previous editions, which had attracted foreign runners.

Some runners kept their face masks on for the race.

LONDON



PUBLIC HOLIDAY FOR KING CHARLES CORONATION

A public holiday will be held to mark the coronation of King Charles III in May, eight months after the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II, the British government said on Sunday.

The national holiday will be held on Monday (May 8), two days after the ceremony at Westminster Abbey.

The government said that as with the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, the royal event would be an opportunity for "families and communities across the country to come together and celebrate."

King Charles, 73, will be formally crowned at London's Westminster Abbey.

Republicans rally for Trump in Pennsylvania

LATROBE, United States: He may not be on the ballot in the upcoming US midterm elections, but Donald Trump was still the main draw for Pennsylvania's Republicans ahead of what they hope will be a "red wave" sweeping control of Congress.

Trump fans gathered at a rally in the city of Latrobe in the battleground state to hear the former president rally Republican votes ahead of Tuesday's elections, and tease his potential White House run in 2024.

"I promise you in the very next very, very, very short period of time, you're going to be so happy," Trump told his supporters. Leslie Boswell, in a red "Trump 2020" T-shirt, said she came to "have fun and vote for Trump" — or, at least, for Republicans on Tuesday.

The midterms, held two years after the presidential election, are usually seen as a referendum on the current occupant of the White House, and determine control of the House of Representatives and the Senate — as well as many state governors and other officials.

For Trump's supporters, a Republican victory on Tuesday will help pave the path for their hero to make his triumphant return to power.

"He's the only one that is worth the presidency," Boswell, 39, said.

"It's a stepping stone" for 2024, agreed 49-year-old Dixy Chappell. "He brings energy to the campaign."

"I really hope he reruns," said a woman who only gave her name as Janine and who wore a T-shirt in the red, white and blue of the American flag.

She drove four hours to hear Trump speak. "He is what America stands for, what America was before," she said, without defining what she meant by "before."

"In three days we'll have a red wave, baby," the 52-year-old said.

The former president is



Former US President Donald Trump arrives for a 'Save America' rally ahead of the midterm elections at Arnold Palmer Regional Airport in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, on Sunday. -- AFP

I promise you in the very next very, very short period of time, you're going to be so happy

DONALD TRUMP

Former President

pushing hard in the final days of the campaign, visiting Iowa and Florida as well as Pennsylvania. On Saturday, Trump was supporting Republican Senate candidate Mehmet Oz, a slick and famous TV doctor who is running against Democrat John Fetterman, currently the state's lieutenant governor.

With the Senate evenly divided between Republicans and Democrats -- Vice President Kamala Harris, a Democrat,

holds the tie-breaking vote -- the winner in Pennsylvania could determine control of the upper house of Congress and thus the fate of President Joe Biden's agenda. Before Trump took to the stage among hundreds of supporters and countless flags, local candidates took turns rallying their followers with one watchword: inflation, inflation, inflation.

Prices are "outrageous" said Norm Volpe, who came with his biker group for Trump. The United States is currently grappling with inflation levels not seen since the 1980s, with Americans struggling to pay for everything from food to gas. And, Volpe said, the Democrats should be punished for that. "Seems like everything went up after they took over," he said.

For this 57-year-old metal worker, Trump is a man of his word. "I believe he did everything he campaigned on, at least he's doing it and tried to do it," Volpe said. — AFP

Italy accepts some migrants, not others as tensions rise

ROME: Italy on Sunday readied to allow vulnerable migrants off a second charity rescue vessel in Sicily, but sources close to firebrand minister Matteo Salvini warned those not eligible to remain would be forced back into international waters.

Minors and the sick were let off the German-flagged Humanity 1 in the early hours at the port of Catania, but 35 adult male migrants were refused permission to set foot on Italian soil, charity SOS Humanity said.

Fellow humanitarian vessel Geo Barents, run by Doctors Without Borders' and sailing under a Norwegian flag, said it too has been summoned so authorities could "evaluate vulnerable cases" among the 572 rescued people on board.

Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi earlier said those who do not "qualify" would have to "leave territorial waters", after refusing requests by four charity vessels for a safe port.

The Geo Barents, Ocean Viking and Rise Above are still carrying 900 migrants between them. Italy's new far-right government, which was sworn in last month, has vowed to



Captain of the rescue ship Humanity 1 of German organisation SOS Humanity, Joachim Ebeling arrives to speak to the media. -- AFP

crack down on boat migrants attempting the perilous crossing from North Africa to Europe.

Over 87,000 people have landed in Italy so far this year, according to the interior ministry — though only 14 per cent of those were rescued at sea and brought to safety by charity vessels. Sources close to far-right transport minister Matteo Salvini, who controls the ports, said on Sunday the Geo Barents was only being allowed in temporarily.

"Those who remain on the vessel will be provided with the assistance necessary to leave territorial waters," the sources said. — AFP

A HUNTING EVENT



Denmark's Crown Princess Mary (C-R) and Princess Josephine arrive to attend the Hubertusjagt drag hunting event in Dyrehaven, Klampenborg, north of Copenhagen on Sunday. -- AFP

No electricity, water in Kherson after Kyiv strike

MOSCOW: Ukraine's Moscow-occupied southern city of Kherson was cut off from electricity and water supplies after a Kyiv strike on nearby power lines, Russian-installed authorities said on Sunday.

"In Kherson and a number of other areas in the region, there is temporarily no electricity or water supply," the city's Moscow-installed administration said on Telegram.

It said it was a "result of an attack organised by the Ukrainian side on the Berislav-Kakhovka highway that saw three concrete poles of high-voltage power lines damaged".

Energy specialists were working to "quickly" resolve the issue, the Russian-backed authorities said, as they called on people to "remain calm".

It is the first time Kherson — which fell to Moscow's forces within days of their offensive launched in February — has seen such a power cut.

As Ukraine presses with a counteroffensive in the south, Moscow's occupational forces

in Kherson have vowed to turn the city into a "fortress". Russian forces have for weeks organised a civilian pull-out from the Kherson region as Ukrainian troops advance, which Kyiv has called "deportations".

Moscow has in recent weeks hit Ukraine's energy infrastructure, causing mass power cuts across the country.

Meanwhile, emergency services in Moscow-occupied Ukraine said the key Kakhovka dam in the Russian-controlled region of Kherson was "damaged" by a Ukrainian strike, Russian news agencies reported.

"Today at 10:00 (0800 GMT) there was a hit of six HIMARS rockets. Air defence units shot down five missiles, one hit a lock of the Kakhovka dam, which was damaged," Russian agencies quoted local emergency services as saying.

Ukraine has in recent weeks warned that Moscow forces intended to blow up the strategic facility to cause flooding.



A local resident cries in front of a destroyed residential building after a shelling on the outskirts of Kharkiv on Saturday. -- AFP

The RIA Novosti news agency then quoted a local Moscow-backed official saying the damage was not "critical."

"Everything is under control. The main air defence strikes were repelled, one missile hit (the dam), but did not cause critical damage," Ruslan Agayev, a representative of the Moscow-installed administration of nearby city Novaya Kakhovka told the agency.

The Kakhovka hydroelectric dam in southern Ukraine was captured by Moscow's forces at the start of their offensive. It supplies Russian-annexed Crimea with water.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has accused Russian troops of planning to blow it up to trigger a devastating flood. Upstream from the dam is the Kakhovka reservoir on the Dnieper.

Kyiv has said that the dam bursting would cause a "catastrophe on a grand scale" and has called for an international mission to be deployed at the dam. — Agencies

Those who mind don't matter, those who matter don't mind



By **Hyesha Barrett**
@coach_hyesha
The writer is a master life coach and NLP practitioner

Know your tribe. It is important to have a support system of people that are trustworthy and loyal who hold your best interests at heart. Keep them in your close knit circle. Inopportunately, so many of us go to the wrong people for help, expecting them to be the solution holder to our problems. We also venture to these individuals hoping they will celebrate our successes, but they demonstrate the opposite.

These very same people strengthen our inner critic rather than diminish it. They want to control as much as they can about our life without our consent. Pay less attention to the naysayers and rely more on the individuals who lend a listening ear and give advice

only when requested.

Surrounding yourself with people who “get you” is vital to your growth. The ones who don't value your worth on materialistic possessions but embrace you for who you are and revel with you in your joy and achievements. Within this environment you are bound to flourish. The basic needs of being seen, heard and understood are present factors in this symbiotic relationship to feeling protected and safe.

Here, you will have the freedom to explore new territories within which you will be less afraid to make mistakes. You will be much more inclined to be who you are with less concern about the judgement of others. Even if you

SURROUNDING YOURSELF WITH PEOPLE WHO ‘GET YOU’ IS VITAL TO YOUR GROWTH. THE ONES WHO DON’T VALUE YOUR WORTH ON MATERIALISTIC POSSESSIONS BUT EMBRACE YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE AND REVEL WITH YOU IN YOUR JOY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

do make mistakes, within this milieu, falling forward is growing, moving you that one step closer to your goals. The safe container that this environment provides is exponentially beneficial for your

expansion.

Now is the time to no longer bestow such importance to the people that don't aid our development nor progress. When we truly understand the power we have inside of us to no longer be captive to the external validation from those who don't merit our emotions, then arises a light-heartedness and a sense of relief. When we create boundaries to shield our insecurities from those who are not in alignment with our values and goals, then ensues a feeling of empowerment and freedom.

Quality over quantity, we only need a handful of like-minded friends. It can take time to transition from removing the toxic people

from your life to creating space for the new to enter. So strengthen the relationships with those whom you have a much more meaningful connection with. Create a circle of trust where you have a voice and you are heard, where you have a platform so you can be seen by your fellow peers and where you are understood as the connection between everyone is palpable.

The mindset of “those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind” is a wonderful model to abide by. Guaranteed that letting go of those who don't serve you and encircling yourself with people who live life in conjunction with your vision will allow your creativity to flow and your light to shine.

Anatomy of the week the Musk tornado hit Twitter

JULIE JAMMOT

The whirlwind week that Elon Musk took over Twitter began with sleepless nights for company engineers -- and ended with half the staff getting the axe.

“It was a strange week,” said one former employee speaking on condition of anonymity.

“Executives were getting fired or were resigning, but there was basically no official communication until 5 pm on Thursday,” some seven days after the deal was officialised.

The employees received a first email on Thursday informing them that they would know their fate the next day. On Friday, the second email confirmed the rumours: 50 per cent of the staff lost their jobs.

The cull hit the marketing department hard, took two-thirds of the design department, and maybe 75 per cent of managers. Content moderation was somewhat spared, with a layoff rate of only 15 per cent, according to Yoel Roth, head of safety at the platform.

After 24 hours without addressing the layoffs, Musk finally tweeted that “unfortunately there is no choice when the company is losing over \$4M/day” and that all those who lost their jobs were “offered three months of severance.”

The layoff decision did not come as a surprise to employees -- rumours had been growing -- but they were shocked by how brutally it was carried out.

“People would find out not by any phone call or any email... but just by seeing their work laptop automatically reboot and just to go blank,” Emmanuel Cornet, a French engineer who had been at Twitter for a year and a half, said on Friday.

CLASS-ACTION SUIT

Cornet was dismissed on Tuesday after being told in an email he had “violated” several company policies, without further explanation, after spending an entire weekend in the office on projects launched by edict of the new owner.

“I'm still trying to find out what the actual reason is,” he said.

The Tesla chief executive had engineers from his flagship company parachute in to assess the work of Twitter developers, examining in particular the volume of code produced by each, Cornet said.

He is one of five former Twitter employees who filed a class-action suit against the company on the grounds that they had not received the 60-day notice required by the 1988 federal Warn Act in the event of a plant closing or mass layoff.

— AFP

What can US democracy learn from Brazil?



Jack Nicas
The writer is the Brazil bureau chief for The New York Times

The run-ups to the most recent presidential elections in the Western Hemisphere's two largest democracies were remarkably similar.

Down in the polls, the right-wing president claimed, without evidence, that the election could be rigged. He suggested that he might not accept a loss. And millions of his followers vowed to take to the streets at his command.

But the outcomes, at least so far, have been drastically different.

In Brazil, when the tallies showed that the incumbent had been voted out after just one term, the government responded jointly, swiftly and decisively. The Senate president, attorney general, Supreme Court justices and the heads of the electoral agency went on television together and announced the winner. The House speaker, perhaps the president's most important ally, then read a statement reiterating that the voters had spoken. Other right-wing politicians quickly followed suit.

President Jair Bolsonaro, politically isolated, stayed silent for two days. Then, under pressure from his top advisers, he agreed to transfer power.

Thousands of his supporters took to the streets, blocking highways and demanding a military intervention, but the armed forces have shown no interest in disrupting the electoral process. The demonstrations quickly fizzled and the government began its transition.

In the United States, the aftermath was longer, messier and marked by the worst assault on the Capitol in two centuries. President Donald Trump and many of his allies denied that he had lost the 2020 election.

Two years later, the nation faces one of the most dire threats to its democracy in generations, with many Republicans openly rejecting what has been repeatedly shown to be a clean election, including many who promote that lie as they seek office in the midterm election on Tuesday.

The differing pictures raise a fundamental question: Is there something the United States, the world's oldest democracy, can learn from Brazil, a nation that was emerging from military dictatorship when President Joe Biden first ran for the White House in 1988?

Brazil, for its part, has watched closely what has happened in the United States, where democracy did not break after the 2020 election but it



Former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign rally in Robstown, Texas.

BOTH THE US AND BRAZIL HAD PRESIDENTS WHO ATTACKED THEIR ELECTIONS — BUT THEIR RESPONSES — AND THE AFTERMATHS — WERE MUCH DIFFERENT

did bend.

With similar chaos forecast for their country this year, Brazilians buttressed their system well ahead of time. Government leaders added additional tests of voting machines and checks of the results, they standardised poll hours so the returns would arrive quickly and they planned to present a united front once a winner was declared.

“We learned from the experience of the United States,” said Bruno Dantas, chief of Brazil's watchdog court, which completed a rapid audit of vote returns on election night intended to preempt fraud claims. “We built a network of institutions that anticipated the questions we knew could arise.”

The speed of Brazil's vote-counting system was also an important factor.

In many US states, voters use paper ballots, which can slow down counts, and the use of absentee ballots also jumped sharply in 2020 because of the pandemic. The outcome of the election was uncertain for days. By contrast, Brazil is the only country in the world to use a fully digital system without paper backups, which enabled results within hours of the polls closing.

That design was precisely what Bolsonaro and his allies attacked as a dangerous flaw. They argued that without paper backups, no one could be sure their vote had been counted correctly.

Independent experts agree that paper backups would add assurances, but they also say that multiple layers of security built into the Brazilian system prevent fraud and errors.

As Americans waited nearly a week for the 2020 election to be called for Biden, Trump, his allies and pundits on social media capitalised on the delay to sow doubts about voter fraud, using lies and conspiracy theories.

In Brazil last Sunday, nearly every vote was counted in less than three hours. Before 8 pm local time, the winner, President-elect Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, was declared. Bolsonaro did not explicitly accept the result, but he also did not dispute it.

— The New York Times

Have an attitude of gratitude...

Sometimes it is difficult to take a moment to express how thankful you are for all the blessings you have in life. Else, you don't pay attention to show how thankful you are to all those who have done you good. There is never enough time in the day for all of your obligations, from family and friends to work and minding your personal commitments. The list of things to do gets longer and longer everyday! However, you must find time to stop for a moment and thank the people who make a difference in your life.

Thank you, it sounds "I'm grateful" to what you have done for me. This phrase signifies an expression of gratitude, used to tell someone that you are thankful or grateful for what one has given you or done something for you. In other cases, it is expressed to politely accept or refuse something that has been offered to you. John F Kennedy, a former US president, said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them".

How often do you thank others? Is it something you do very often as a habit or just once in a blue moon? Do you really mean it, is it sincerely expressed with emotions or just uttered as a routine thanks? Do you usually recognise when you should thank people? Do you know the power of a heartfelt thank you? Do you remember how it feels when someone appreciates or thanks you? A serious and effective thanks and gratitude should come from the bottom of heart. It has been said that gratitude is the fairest blossom that springs from the soul.

To experience the real feeling and meaning of gratitude, you need to realise the impact that "thank you" makes when addressed to you? On the other hand, how would you feel to



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TO EXPERIENCE THE REAL FEELING AND MEANING OF GRATITUDE, YOU NEED TO REALISE THE IMPACT THAT "THANK YOU" MAKES WHEN ADDRESSED TO YOU?

express your thanks and gratitude to someone else?! Is the phrase "Thank You" listed in your communication bank of words? Is it something that you express when communicating with family, colleagues, friends and others whom you communicate with? "Thank You" is a therapy and a dose of happiness that we all need every now and then; either at home, office or public. It is highly and mostly needed.

Being thankful and expressing your gratitude is very essential to be happy in life. Finding the proper way to thank others for their generosity or reminding ourselves of how much we have to be thankful can be pleasing. Expressing gratitude can strengthen relationships, improve your outlook, lower your blood pressure and keep you focused and self-assured. It also helps building trust and closer ties with people around us.

Practicing gratitude has proven to be one of the most reliable methods for increasing happiness and life satisfaction. It boosts feelings of optimism, joy, pleasure, enthusiasm, and other positive emotions. It further serves as a therapy reducing anxiety and depression; a little of gratitude can go a very long way. Gratitude is the sign of noble souls for kindness is a language, which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.

Another side of gratitude is that one must be thankful for what he has on his plate. This is not about what you have in your pocket that makes you thankful, rather what you have in your heart. One should always be thankful and grateful as William Shakespeare advised, "O Lord that lends me life, lend me a heart replete with thankfulness." If there is a person in your life whom you are thankful for, don't let the sun go down without saying thank you to him or her.

A TIGHTROPE ACT



A girl performs a tightrope act using a balancing pole during the annual fair at Pushkar in India's desert state of Rajasthan on Sunday. – AFP

Sanctions fail to halt North Korea's accelerating weapons programmes

DAVID BRUNNSTROM

Economic sanctions, the primary means the United States has used for years to try to exert pressure on North Korea, have abjectly failed to halt its nuclear and missile programmes or to bring the reclusive northeast Asian state back to the negotiating table.

Instead, North Korea's ballistic missile programme has become stronger and it has carried out a record-breaking testing regime of multiple types of weapons this year - including of intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to reach the US mainland. Expectations are that it may soon end a self-imposed five-year moratorium on nuclear bomb testing. Now, US policy makers and their predecessors can do little more than pick through the wreckage and seek to determine what went wrong, and who might be to blame.

"We've had a policy failure. It's a generational policy failure," said Joseph DeThomas, a former US diplomat who worked on North Korea and Iran sanctions and served in the administrations of Democratic Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama.

"An entire generation of people worked on this. It's failed... so alright, now we have to go to the next step,

NORTH KOREA'S BALLISTIC MISSILE PROGRAMME HAS BECOME STRONGER AND IT HAS CARRIED OUT A RECORD-BREAKING TESTING REGIME OF MULTIPLE TYPES OF WEAPONS THIS YEAR

figure out what we do about it."

Biden administration officials concede that sanctions have failed to stop North Korea's weapons programmes - but they maintain they have at least been effective in slowing North Korea's nuclear programme.

"I would disagree with the idea that sanctions have failed. Sanctions have failed to stop their programmes - that's absolutely true," a senior administration official said. "But I think that if the sanctions didn't exist, (North Korea) would be much, much further along, and much more of a threat to its neighbours to the region and to the world."

In response to a request for comment, a State Department spokesperson said, in apparent reference to China and Russia: "The UN Security Council has passed multiple resolutions to establish a robust sanctions regime intended to impede these unlawful weapons programmes. It is incumbent upon all member states to fully implement these resolutions, and we will continue to call upon them to do so."

Former officials and experts say sanctions were never imposed and enforced robustly enough for

long enough and blame faltering US overtures to North Korea as well as pressures like Russia's war in Ukraine for making them ineffective and easy for North Korea to circumvent. North Korea has long been forbidden to conduct nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches by the UN Security Council.

The Security Council has imposed sanctions on North Korea since 2006 to choke off funding for it nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. They now include exports bans coal, iron, lead, textiles

and seafood, and capping imports of crude oil and refined petroleum products.

However UN experts regularly report that North Korea is evading sanctions and continuing to develop its programmes. Russia and China backed toughened sanctions after North Korea's last nuclear test in 2017, but it is not clear what UN action - if any - they might agree to if Pyongyang conducts another nuclear test.

The senior Biden administration official said Washington believes China and Russia have leverage

to persuade North Korea not to resume nuclear bomb testing. But the Biden administration has accused China and Russia of enabling North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Anthony Ruggiero, who headed North Korea sanctions efforts under former President Donald Trump, said they were only pursued vigorously enough from the last year of the Obama administration to early in Trump's second year. They then dropped off in the ultimately vain hope of progress in summit negotiations between Trump and Kim.

Some critics like sanctions expert Joshua Stanton fault both the Trump and Biden administrations for failing to exert maximum pressure to stop China allowing North Korea's sanctions evasion. They point to the powerful option of imposing sanctions on big Chinese banks that have facilitated this.

"The sanctions we don't enforce don't work, and we haven't been enforcing them since mid-2018," Stanton said, noting that history had shown a correlation between stronger enforcement and North Korea willingness to engage diplomatically. — Reuters



Men look at a military fence decorated with ribbons bearing messages wishing for the reunification of the two Koreas near the demilitarised zone separating the two Koreas, in Paju, South Korea. – Reuters

sport

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Salalah to host Oman Sailing Festival 2022

MUSCAT: The Oman Sailing Festival gets under way in Salalah this week with professional instructors from Oman Sail offering free sessions to Try Sailing, Try Windsurfing and Try Kitesurfing. Kicking off on November 8 at the Beach Front, Dahariz Beach, the festival runs until November 12 with a showcase of local SMEs and local craftspeople also on offer every day.

Musab al Hadi, Oman Sailing Festival Project Manager, said, “The ancient trading port city of Salalah has a long history on the water. As one of the most important ancient cities in the region, its prosperity was dependant on the sailing skills of generations of mariners and traders. The Oman Sailing



Mussab Al Balushi

Festival aims to reintroduce competitive sailing to this area and inspire a new generation of sailor to head out onto the water and learn the basics. We have free Try Sailing, Try Windsurfing



and Try Kitesurfing sessions on offer during the festival and look forward to welcoming the community to discover a new hobby. “We are also carrying an

important environmental message with us at every stop during the Oman Sailing Festival. Each of us has a responsibility to care for the local environment and preserve the beaches and seas so that they



can be enjoyed for years to come and have a positive impact on the native plant and marine life our beautiful country is blessed with,” he added. The Oman Sailing Festival

returns on November 24-26 at the Barceló Mussanah Resort offering Try Sailing, Try Windsurfing, Try Kitesurfing, a showcase of local SMEs and a beach clean-up. The event coincides with the RS Venture Connect World Championships, Oman’s first exclusively-para sailing event, and will also feature the chance to learn how to sail using the versatile RS Venture boat designed for people with disabilities. The festival will be supported by Office of the Governor of Dhofar, Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar, Beach Front, Oman Air, National Mineral Water Company (Tanuf), Environment society of Oman (ESO), and National University Science and Technology (International Maritime College).

Al Nahda take OL lead after edging Al Ittihad, Seeb and Al Suwaiq in draw

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Five matches out of seven ended in a draw in the eighth round of 2022-23 Omantel League. Al Nahda and Al Rustaq are leading Omantel League table order after completion of eight weeks on Saturday.

The Al Buraimi representative club posted a 1-0 win over Al Ittihad in an away game at the Al Saada Stadium to remain at the top with 18 points.

Al Ittihad suffered their third consecutive loss and are in 13th place with five points.

The Southern Al Batinah clash between Al Rustaq and Al Musannah ended in a goalless draw. With one point, Al Rustaq missed the chance to go top alone.

The top fixture of the week ended in a goalless draw as well between the AFC champions and Al Suwaiq at the Seeb Stadium. The defending champions are behind the toppers by nine points as they are placed in seventh place with nine points while Al Suwaiq are in fifth position with 14 points.

SOHAR EDGE DHOFAR

On Thursday, Sohar managed to defeat 11-time winners Dhofar 1-0 at Al Saada Stadium. The loss dropped the Salalah giants



to fourth place with four points while the northern Al Batinah team raised their credit to 16 points in third place with a two-point gap to the league leaders.

Post the defeat, Dhofar’s board of directors announced the termination of the contract of Jordanian coach Ammar al Ruzaqi and appointment of the national experienced coach Mussbah Hashil to lead the team in the remaining rounds of the top-tier league.

Earlier on Thursday, this week’s derby between Sur and Al Oruba ended in a goalless draw at Sur Sports Complex. The draw did not help both sides as they are positioned in the danger zone with seven and five points respectively.

Al Nasr played out a goalless

draw against Al Bashayer at Al Saada Stadium. Oman Club and Bahla shared the draw points as they ended the fixture at 1-1 draw at the Seeb Stadium. Both teams have nine points. Before the break for the tenth round, the top domestic league clubs will be back to action on Tuesday in the ninth week matches.

Al Rustaq will host Al Nahda in a tight clash which will determine the league toppers. Dhofar will travel to Al Rustaq Sports Complex to meet Al Suwaiq in another strong encounter.

Sur will meet Al Nasr while Al Musannah will take on Oman Club. Sohar will face off Bahla while Al Bashayer will play against Al Ittihad and Seeb will take on Al Oruba at Sur Sports Complex.

3-match bilateral ODI series with Canada from Nov 23

MUSCAT: Cricket fever would continue in the Sultanate of Oman after the ongoing ICC Men’s T20 World Cup as Oman Cricket is set to host a quadrangular T20I series from November 14.

A day after the T20 World Cup winners will be crowned at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Oman will host Canada, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain for a T20I series at the picturesque Oman Cricket Academy grounds in Al Amerat.

Oman Cricket’s chief development officer Duleep Mendis said: “It would be a good platform to have upcoming cricket nations like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain play quality cricket against teams like Oman and Canada.

“Though our national team do not have an immediate international assignment as we have completed the ICC World Cricket League (WCL) 2 engagements, we would like to have our boys in good form and in match-playing mode.”

The T20I series will be played from November 14-21 with the top two teams in the round-robin format playing the final.

The four-nation tournament will be followed by a bilateral

50-over-a-side three-match series against Canada, a formidable side with a long history of international participation. The team qualified for the 1979 World Cup and then in 2003. A leading Associate team, the T20I and ODI matches between Canada and Oman are expected to be competitive and intense, providing a good opportunity for the domestic fans to enjoy the game.

Canada also took part in the 2007 and 2011 World Cup but has since then struggled to be at the global stage. The team has never made it to the ICC T20 World Cup. On the contrary, Oman’s record in the T20 format is noteworthy, having qualified for the ICC T20 World Cup twice, first in 2016 and then in 2021 though they have yet to play in the ODI World Cup.

The inclusion of young Associate cricketing nations like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain is an initiative of Oman Cricket to help promote the game in the region.

“We would like national teams of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to get good exposure by playing against stronger teams. There are not many matches with other international teams for them. So, we decided that it will be a positive step to get them play against us

and Canada,” said Mendis, who is also Oman national team chief coach.

Oman are currently on top of the ICC World Cricket League (WCL) 2 that features seven nations.

The top three from the ongoing league with qualify for the ICC World Cup Qualifier. The other teams in fray are Namibia, USA, Papua New Guinea, UAE, Nepal and Scotland.

Oman are leading the table with 44 points after finishing their quota of all 36 games. At this stage, Scotland are next with 40 points from 28 games, USA are third with 29 from 32 matches followed by UAE (27 points from 26 matches), Namibia (26 pts from 22), Nepal (17 from 20 games) and PNG (5 from 24 games).

Oman’s fate on their qualification is likely to be known by the end of December.

The ICC World Cup Qualifier will feature ten teams – bottom five of the Super League, three from WCL 2 and top two of Qualifier playoff [bottom four of WCL 2 and top-two of Challenge League]. The top two teams of the ICC World Cup Qualifier will secure a berth in the 2023 World Cup in India.



The 45-year-old Boucher admitted that it was among the worst defeats of his career. — **AFP**

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An Evening with Chris Botti

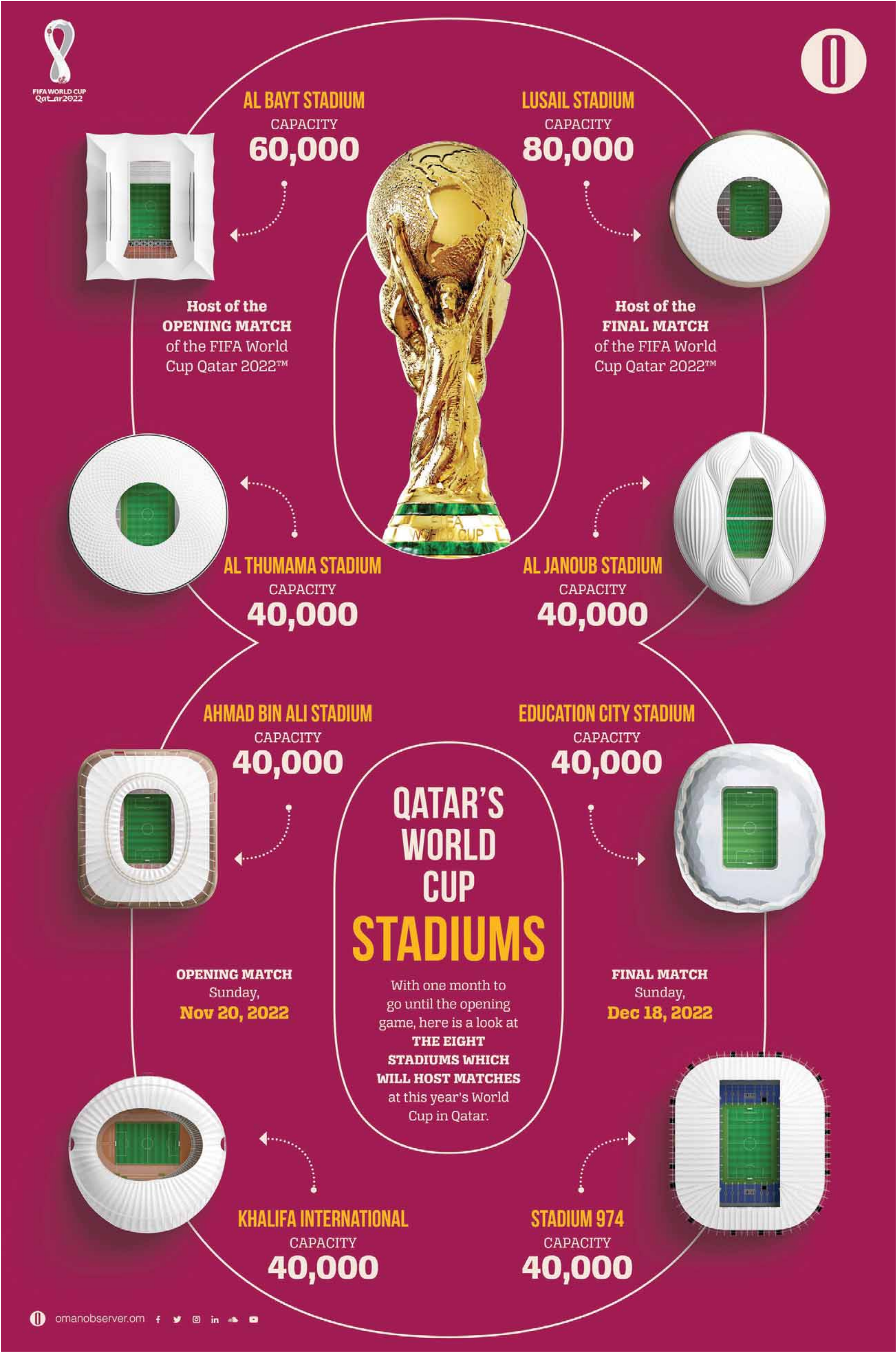


10, 11 November | 7:00 PM

Grammy Award-winning trumpeter Chris Botti has amassed an astounding variety of honours, including multiple Gold and Platinum albums, to become the nation's largest selling instrumental artist. His mesmerizing performances with legends have cemented his place as one of the most brilliant forces of the contemporary music scene.

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OQ Group’s H1 profit soars to RO 822 million

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

OQ – the integrated global energy group of the Sultanate of Oman – has recorded a post-tax profit of RO 822.461 million for the six months ended June 30, 2022, up from RO 314.840 million for the corresponding period of 2021.

Announcing its condensed consolidated financial results for the first half of the year, the wholly state-owned energy group – part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – reported a near doubling of revenue to RO 7.734 billion during H1 2022, up from RO 3.979 billion a year earlier.

Cost of sales was similarly higher at RO 6.752 billion versus



RO 3.577 billion in H1 2021.

Operating profit surged to RO 963.332 million this year, up from RO 405.389 million during H1 2021.

Earnings per share climbed to

increase of 63 per cent.

Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) stood at \$3.699 billion, an increase of 154 per cent as compared to 2020. The net profit

amounted to \$1.818 billion.

The strong performance comes as OQ prepares to shoulder a more robust role in the development of Oman's green hydrogen economy. It has been tipped to represent

the government's 20 per cent stake in all privately developed green hydrogen projects.

The company is already a partner in a portfolio of proposed ventures envisioning a total of 30 gigawatts of upstream generation capacity.

In 2021, OQ completed construction of the \$6.9 billion Liwa Plastics project that annually produces 880,000 tonnes polyethylene and 300,000 tonnes polypropylene.

Other key OQ downstream projects include the \$8.3 billion Duqm refinery with 230,000 barrels per day, a 50:50 JV with Kuwait Petroleum (Europe) BV that is expected to be commissioned in 2023.

Galfar wins tender worth RO 32m

QASIM AL
MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Well-known Omani construction firm Galfar Engineering & Contracting SAOG has announced that it has been awarded a contract, together with Catering & Supplies Co LLC for the establishment of a Field Operating Base in Block 10 in central Oman.

The contract worth RO 32 million has been



awarded by Oman Shell.

A 12-month implementation period has agreed upon from the date of commencement of works, the listed company said in a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

“We take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Shell Development Oman for the confidence vested on Galfar through the award of this project,” it further stated.

Oman kicks off public auction of land blocks for green hydrogen projects

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Wholly government-owned Hydrom – Oman's hydrogen-centric energy company – has formally launched the first round of public auctions of land blocks for the development of green hydrogen projects in the Sultanate of Oman.

A post on the company's Twitter account said: “Stay tuned for Hydrom's first round of public auctions launch this Sunday, 6th November. Keep up to date for Oman's green hydrogen auctions here,” it noted, referencing an online link to the auction platform.

Since the unveiling of Oman's green hydrogen strategy on October 23, 2022, interested international investors and developers have been invited to register their interest in bidding for the first of several land blocks offered up by Hydrom for development.

The first round of auctions covers two blocks in Duqm (Al Wusta Governorate) each of around 320 sq kilometres. They are among a total of six blocks (totalling 1,900 sq kilometres in area) that will be auctioned off as part of Phase A of the programme.

Interested developers will receive a Request for Qualifications (RfQ) in December, kicking off a competitive bidding process that will culminate in the award of the first land concessions by April 2023.

Oman has earmarked a total of around 50,000 square kilometres of land, distributed across the



THE FIRST ROUND OF AUCTIONS COVERS TWO BLOCKS IN DUQM (AL WUSTA GOVERNORATE) EACH OF AROUND 320 SQ KILOMETRES. THEY ARE AMONG A TOTAL OF SIX BLOCKS (TOTALLING 1,900 SQ KILOMETRES IN AREA) THAT WILL BE AUCTIONED OFF AS PART OF PHASE A OF THE PROGRAMME.

country, for green hydrogen projects over the long term.

Delineated into blocks of 320 sq metres each, these plots will be awarded to successful bidders against 47-year land concessions.

Bids in the form of offers for land lease fees start as low as

20 baisas per square metre. But weightage will also be given to the overall merits of the developer's project proposal in terms of the socioeconomic value it brings to the country as well.

A subsidiary of Energy Development Oman (EDO), Hydrom's mandate includes the delineation of government-owned land areas and the structuring of associated large-scale world-class green hydrogen projects, managing the process for their allocation to developers as well as facilitating the development of common infrastructure and connected ecosystems in industries and hubs in close collaboration with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).



PDO SIGNS DRILLING CONTRACT WITH WEATHERFORD

MUSCAT: Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) signed a contract yesterday with Weatherford Drilling International for the Marmul Polymer Phase 3 and Greater Saqar integrated drilling services to deliver safely, efficiently and timely 837 wells in Marmul and Greater Saqar fields for the five-year contract duration.

Meethaq celebrates 10 years of success and leadership in Oman’s Islamic banking sector

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat is the most popular and leading Islamic banking services provider in Oman and since its launch in 2012, it has been contributing to changing the landscape in the Omani banking sector.

Through multiple steps and initiatives, Meethaq today offers a full suite of Sharia-compliant retail, corporate banking and wholesale banking products and services to its wide range of customers whether they are individuals, corporates or government and private sector institutions.

Meethaq has been actively supporting Oman’s economic development with its ever-growing suite of Islamic finance products and services, which provides banking solutions for sectors ranging from real estate and housing to manufacturing, energy, retail and food production.

The many successes and achievements of Meethaq in partnering in the growth and development of Oman was highlighted during the media visit organised by Meethaq at the Bank Muscat Head Office to celebrate its 10th anniversary.

Journalists and media professionals from over 30 different media houses attended the event, which was held in the presence of Shamzani Mohammed



Hussain, General Manager — Meethaq Islamic Banking. During the media visit, the journalists were introduced to the world-class Islamic banking products, services and facilities offered by Meethaq to its wide range of customers.

Modern banking products and services

Speaking on the occasion, Sami Arfah Bait Rashid, Assistant General Manager — Meethaq Personal Banking, explained about the products, services and banking facilities that Meethaq offers to its retail customers.

He explained how Meethaq has been delivering world-class innovative Islamic banking products and services in the Sultanate of Oman driven by its strong customer-centric vision.

Meethaq products include

savings accounts, current accounts, debit and credit cards, Hafawa Premier Banking, takaful options including motor, life and critical illness coverage plans as well as financing solutions for homes, cars, education, travel, household goods, and personal finance.

In line with its excellent customer-centric vision and full commitment to offer a world-class Islamic banking experience, Meethaq has established the largest Islamic branch network in Oman consisting of 12 branches in Muscat and 12 branches across other governorates.

In addition to its already excellent network of branches, Meethaq has a dedicated network of over 40 ATMs/CDMs while also providing free access to about 800 ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat

across the country for customers to conduct their banking transactions with ease.

Customers can also benefit from the world-class Mobile and Internet banking facilities as well as access to a state-of-the-art call centre, which is easily reachable at 24656666.

Sami Bait Rashid explained that Meethaq is committed to continuous investments in the latest technologies to increase the efficiency of services, products and improved customer services, with a focus on a multi-channel approach to enhance efficiencies and to launch new products and services which meet both the current and future needs of its customers.

This has resulted in Meethaq enjoying the tremendous

confidence of its extensive base of different customer segments including the youth. He thanked Meethaq’s customers for their strong trust in Meethaq Islamic Banking over the last 10 years, and for their continued confidence in its new products and services.

Supporting institutions and corporates

Speaking about Meethaq’s contributions to the Corporate Banking space Ali bin Ahmed al Lawati, Assistant General Manager — Meethaq Corporate Banking, explained how Meethaq is playing an essential role in supporting the economic sector in general, and the industrial sector in particular, as it is the preferred choice for companies whether in the investment side or benefiting from the banking facilities.

He added that Meethaq’s large suite of cutting-edge Islamic banking offerings include project financing, working capital facilities, trade financing, access to the largest Islamic banking branch network in the Sultanate of Oman, and digital banking facilities.

Meethaq strongly believes in the tremendous investment prospects and opportunities for growth that the Sultanate of Oman provides and hence, it constantly develops new solutions, products and services to support Oman’s economic development.

NBO participates in OCGS annual members’ gathering



MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) recently participated in the Oman Center for Governance and Sustainability’s (OCGS) annual members’ gathering. The event was attended by Sayyid Hamid bin Sultan al Busaidy, Executive Director of OCGS, Amal Suhail Bahwan Chairperson of NBO and a number of key personalities and experts.

Panelists discussed three main topics related to Omani women representation on corporate boards, sustainability, and evaluation of boardrooms and their efficiency.

Amal Suhail Bahwan participated in the first session titled ‘Representation of Omani Women as Board of Director in Companies’, which was moderated by Jawaher al Tamami, NBO Board Secretary.

The session highlighted the impact of female board members on the decision-making and performance of companies among other topics.

Bahwan shed light on NBO women’s role in contributing to the nation and the opportunities the bank provides to empower more women to step forward to take senior roles that will advance their careers and develop their talent further.

NBO has long been an active participant in conferences and events that add value to the development of the industry and diversification of the economy. The bank will continue to seize opportunities and work together with key partners to unlock opportunities that drive progress and create value for its stakeholders.

ahlibank participates in OCA’s annual walkathon



MUSCAT: In line with its Corporate Social Responsibility, and as part of its ‘ahli cares’ initiative, ahlibank joined the Oman Cancer Association (OCA) in its 18th annual walkathon to raise awareness on Cancer prevention in general and Breast Cancer in particular under the slogan (Towards life), aiming to support Cancer patients, survivors and their families.

Since its inception in 2013, the walkathon has garnered the support of more than 8,000 participants who walk together to raise funds and awareness on Cancer prevention in support of the Association, encouraging volunteerism and community

engagement, giving a sense of togetherness to those affected by Cancer; the event saw participation from companies from various sectors, schools, universities, families, social clubs, and many other individual and organisational volunteers.

Jumana Aflah al Hashmi, ahlibank’s Deputy Head of Marketing & Corporate Communications, said: “We are proud of the ahlibank team members who joined this noble cause and also encouraged each other to participate in the walkathon, seeing the community come together and garner support in an uplifting and beneficial way is inspiring.”

OAB celebrates talented photographers

MUSCAT: On the occasion of Omani Youth Day, Oman Arab Bank organised an event to recognise a number of talented Omani photographers. The event was held to celebrate the photographers’ contribution to the bank’s second eco-friendly desk calendar for 2022, showcasing stunning photographs of Oman’s rich wildlife.

Through this initiative, OAB reiterated its commitment to establishing strong partnerships with various segments of society, and further reinforced its objectives as part of its sustainability strategy. This event was an opportunity for the photographers to showcase their work and raise awareness around the importance of preserving Oman’s wildlife.

Leen al Atassi, Head of Corporate Communications, said: “We are pleased to host this event on Omani Youth Day, and to have the opportunity to share the powerful images that these talented photographers had captured of Oman’s wildlife with the public. Our hope is that



their images continue to raise awareness around the diversity of our ecosystem and inspire action to conserve and protect our environment.”

“Our commitment to introducing strong platforms that recognise and celebrate the achievements of Oman’s young talent is aligned to His Majesty’s vision and the 2040 objectives,” added Al Atassi.

The 2022 Wildlife Calendar is an eco-friendly desk calendar made entirely of recycled paper and vegetable ink. The calendar showcases Oman’s breathtaking wildlife. Each of the talented photographers were recognised

for their contributions, with their name and social media details shared on their photographs to ensure they get the full visibility they deserve.

OAB’s sustainability strategy was designed to strengthen the bank’s social impact within its three main strategic pillars: Community partnerships, environmental responsibility and financial inclusion. The strategy was developed to boost the bank’s social contribution in line with its business growth. The bank will remain steadfast in its commitment towards delivering impactful and sustainable initiatives.

W Muscat unveils great offers for Omanis and residents

MUSCAT: W Muscat is inviting its guests to elevate their stay in Oman’s capital with an enticing new promotion that includes great rates on Wonderful Rooms and a wealth of added extras. The Wonderful Room with Mixbar features elements of Oman’s culture. As inspiring as the name suggests, Wonderful Room features subtle Arabic features, presented in true W style.



The corner Majlis seating showcases Zanzibar-inspired print, reminiscent of the Omani Kumma, set against an inviting coffee table in celebration of Qahwa.

In keeping with the theme of ‘travel’, the room boasts a saddle-like leather chair, a bold mustard stool, and a faux fur feature wall.

Stacked luggage trunks comprise the Mixbar as well as a trunk closet lined with exotic silks;

linking back to the narrative of the Nomad. Interchangeable pieces in the majlis area indicate Omani hospitality, with some rooms offering a camping-style mat, as a part of the magnetic journey.

The weekend room rate starting from RO 100 is inclusive of all applicable taxes and is available from Thursday to Saturday. The offer is inclusive of breakfast for two at HARVEST, 20% off on

beverages and food (excluding not-so-innocent bevviess), and 20% off on SPA.

The promotion is valid for a maximum of two people and children under six years, children aged six to 12 also receive 50% off on breakfast. Triple occupancy supplement is RO 25 including extra bed and breakfast. The promotion is valid until December 23 and is subject to availability.



PDO integrates asset monitoring of 75 sites in Oman

JOMAR MENDOZA

@JmObserver

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), the country's largest oil and gas producer, says it is integrating its entire asset monitoring system with the creation of an Integrated Operations Centre (IOC).

Khalifa al Aamri, senior control and automation (C&A) engineer at PDO revealed the creation of a centralised dashboard of the company during the Emerson Exchange 2022 conference held last week in Texas, USA.

During the session on Integrated Asset Management System (iAMS), Khalifa al Aamri, Jagannathan Malligeswaran, engineering manager at Emerson and Pankaj Mumgain, Plantweb Business Development Manager at Emerson, elaborated the company's integration of asset monitoring across the organisation.

"We need to cover these sites



because most are run by local operators during the day but run unmanned at night. The vision for our Integrated Operations Centre (IOC) was getting all our assets to collaborate, so we needed a centralised dashboard that everyone could focus on," said Al Aamri.

"The challenge was each has different controls from different OEMs, such as Emerson,

Schneider Electric, Yokogawa and Honeywell. They also have different protocols, such as HART, Foundation Fieldbus and others, and all this prevented predictive maintenance because we had no dashboard," he added.

The Integrated Operations Centre project, which centralises ownership of operational issues and enhances visibility of optimisation opportunities across

the PDO network, is a step towards achieving the company's aspiration to become a High Reliability Organisation (HRO) and to take its equipment reliability and availability to world-class levels.

There was a significant reduction in alarm rates at all assets.

Integrity Operating Windows have been established for critical assets and exception-based surveillance has started to review

process parameter deviations. The 75 control facilities manage the entire operations of PDO, and each has its own distributed control systems (DCS) with hosts from different suppliers.

PDO uses traditional condition monitoring equipment with assets connected at each site, but each of the 75 sites had a separate control room. The Integrated Operations Centre (IOC) unites existing field-based control into one building in Muscat.

All PDO assets comprising Conventional Oil, Gas, Power, Sour, Thermal, Polymer and Terminal is controlled and monitored from this centralised coastal location in Mina Al Fahal.

Based on the assessment during the Basis for Design (BfD) stage, in general Microsoft Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) based technology was considered for integrating the facilities with the IOC.

The brand new Centralised

Control Room in Mina Al Fahal is staffed by production support controllers, supported by multi-discipline, decision-making Centre of Excellence.

This integrated model enhances communications between field and coastal staff so that all data is visible to the operator and operations support simultaneously.

One major benefit of the IOC is the physical proximity of operators from different PDO assets, enabling them for effective interactions, knowledge sharing and standardising work practices.

According to its website, PDO operates in a concession area of about 90,000 km² (one third of Oman's geographical area) and has 205 producing oil fields, 64 gas fields, 29 production stations, more than 8,400 active wells, more than 33,000 kilometres of pipelines and flowlines and 231 operating units in its well engineering fleet, including 49 rigs and 39 hoists.

Biomass: A promising resource for renewable energy development in the Sultanate of Oman



MARYAM AL NOFLI

Biomass is one of the major energy resources that can provide energy that is made from recently living organic materials. It has also been part of our human heritage since ancient times through its use for cooking, lighting, heating, electricity generation, and transportation.

Nowadays, it is also predominantly used for cooking purposes in many rural and remote areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Biomass, as a renewable energy source, can play a crucial role in achieving the UN's 2050 goals for sustainable development, especially the energy goal for ensuring the access to reliable and sustainable energy at an affordable cost.

Furthermore, the other related development goals such as eradication of hunger and poverty as well as the control of climate change in the context of the goals of the United Nations Convention Framework on Climate Change Mitigation (1992) and the Paris Agreement (2015).

The agreement is pressing all the countries to use alternatives to fossil fuels. Sustainable development is a big challenge in Arabian region where many countries are involved in exporting and importing energy, besides the rural and remote areas where a large portion of the population lives.

Oman, like other Gulf countries, generates electricity from resources that are no longer long-lasting or sustainable. Oman's oil and gas reserves are limited in comparison to other GCC countries; hence the government is seriously working on the transition to sustainable energy alternatives.



Various research investigations demonstrate that Oman can generate electricity using renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and biomass. In the total energy mix, Oman is planning to use 2 to 3 per cent biopower within a decade.

Oman is investing extensively in energy sector, under the National Strategy to meet the growing energy demand and reduce fossil fuel utilisation by boosting the use of alternative energy.

As a result, in 2017 Oman Oil Company (OOC), the Sultanate of Oman's investment arm in energy-related projects, and GS Holding Korean Company together celebrated the completion of the fourth phase of the largest combined cycle biopower plant in Dangen, north of South Chongqing Province, South Korea, which has a production capacity of 900 MW from imported LNG.

The plant was one of the largest bioenergy plants in the Asian continent, operates three combined cycle bioenergy plants powered by liquefied natural gas (LNG) with a capacity of 1,500 MW and 100 MW. It is worth noting that OQ Group (part of Oman Investment Authority) has an investment portfolio of more than 50 domestic and foreign investments, with 63 per cent of its total investments concentrated in the Sultanate of Oman, and the company has contributed to the establishment of several investment projects in various industrial zones throughout the

Sultanate of Oman by entering strategic partnerships with major companies operating in the energy value chain.

In this regard, on the first day of Oman Sustainability Week, Oman Environmental Services Company (be'ah) and Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPPWC) inked a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoU) to implement the Barka Waste Power Plant project.

The project is currently in permitting stage. It will be developed in single phase. The project's development is anticipated to begin in 2022, with commercial operations beginning in 2023. The waste power plant in Barka Governorate, is expected to have a capacity of 130 to 150 MW and will handle 4,500 tonnes of municipal waste per day, with a development cost of \$1 billion.

Besides providing new career opportunities in several disciplines such as management, operation, and maintenance, the project will save landfill costs and the construction of new landfills, while reducing the carbon footprint by approximately 50 million tonnes over 35 years, at a rate of 1.3 million tonnes per year, which is approximately 30 per cent of the total carbon dioxide equivalent produced by current landfills annually, according to the Sultanate of Oman's pledges in accordance with the Paris Agreement. As this project reflects the Sultanate of Oman's Vision 2040 for sustainability

and economic diversification, it will bring many economic and environmental benefits that will contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's sustainable development goals. In an evaluation on the use of biomass for electricity generation from two sources (animal dung and wastewater), it was reported that the biogas production from selected animal dung (cow, camel, goats, and sheep) could be up to 55.4 million cubic meter per year, with a capacity of 2604.44 GWh.

The processed wastewater was estimated to be 335 thousand cubic meter per day, with a capacity to generate electricity of 47.37 GWh. Mazoon Dairy launched the Sultanate of Oman's first biogas facility, as well as the region's first of its sort in the food processing business, in 2019. The farm planned to produce more than 270 million litres of milk per year by 2028, establishing Oman as a net exporter of dairy products within the next 20 years.

The capacity will be increased to over 900 million litres by 2040. The agreement also reflects Oman LNG's tireless efforts to boost local value by providing Mazoon Dairy Company with a biogas generator to produce energy for use at its site in Al Sunainah of Al Buraimi Governorate, by leveraging biogas produced from organic waste at the company's site and transforming it into a sustainable source of renewable energy.

Towards establishing a \$1.4 billion waste-to-hydrogen plant in association with United States, Oman has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Madayn (Public Establishment for Industrial Estates) for a waste-to-hydrogen facility in the Sultanate of Oman.

The facility will be built on a 2 square kilometre coastal location. Besides a solar PV system and a 70MW of energy storage, the facility will have the capacity to transform up to 4 million tonnes of solid municipal waste each year.

The facility will be able to produce 67,000 tonnes of green hydrogen and savings of one million tonnes of CO₂, with an export value of more than \$268 million. The municipal solid waste (MSW)

can be used for power production from waste-to-energy plants.

The MSW samples obtained from various entities such as residential homes, retail malls, hotels, and restaurants showed that a good volume (50 per cent) of combustible garbage can be utilised in a waste-to-energy plant. The statistical study showed Oman's current MSW generation is 1.3 kg/per capita.

Since landfilling is employed to dispose of total waste in Oman, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) criteria must be followed to control MSW emissions. If the emissions from MSW are added with the electricity generation, the total annual emissions in Oman will be around 165.205 million tonnes CO₂.

Towards overcoming issues with CO₂ emissions, a waste-to-energy plant with a capacity of 5000 tonnes per day is proposed to use waste from the governorates of Muscat, North Al Batinah, Al Dakhiliyah, South Al Batinah, South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah and Al Dhahirah.

Aside from producing 29.30 million kWh per day, this facility will be able to drastically reduce MSW and energy production emissions in Oman. The annual emission reduction from this waste-to-energy plant is anticipated to be 24,527 million kg CO₂. Since Oman is current progressing towards meeting the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs), such a waste-to-energy plant venture will assist fulfilling the same. In Oman, renewable energy sources are plentiful and promising, and government planning with institutional participation is pioneering. We anticipate that the media will throw light on the many successful experiences, with increasing societal awareness and the collaboration of researchers and academics toward a better and more complete energy reality in Oman.

(The author is a lecturer at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Shinas. She can be contacted at alnoflimaryam@gmail.com)

OOMCO to add 16 new filling stations in Saudi Arabia

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 6

Leading Omani fuel marketing company Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Tamiyoz, a well-known real estate investment and development company based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to facilitate the expansion of OOMCO service stations across the Kingdom.

The agreement was signed by Tarik al Junaidi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Oil Marketing Company, and Yousif al Saadi, Chief Executive Officer of Tamiyoz. OOMCO currently operates 10 sites in eastern and western Saudi Arabia, with 16 stations in the pipeline across the country. The agreement will see further growth of OOMCO's footprint in the eastern and western, and southern regions of Saudi Arabia.

Tariq al Junaidi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Oil Marketing Company, said, "We're delighted to partner with Tamiyoz to grow our footprint in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is an important step in our global expansion and advancing our plans to operate a total of 26 fuel stations across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the end of 2023.

We look forward to working with Tamiyoz to create new employment opportunities and rewarding business ventures for local suppliers, as well as offering customers innovative products that provide them with convenience, variety and joy, and offer much more than only fuel to become a highly-anticipated element of each journey."

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Walking through the ancient alleys of Al Mudhairib

Barely a couple of hour's drive from Muscat, it is easy to underestimate Al Mudhairib and what it has to offer as a destination. Al Mudhairib is one of those villages that looked so unimposing it packed a lot of surprises once you start to explore it... **P20**

Tanzanian 'Tug of War' wins top prize at Carthage Film Festival



TANZANIAN FILM "Tug of War", about love and politics during the final years of British colonial Zanzibar, has won the Tanit d'Or at Tunisia's prestigious Carthage Film Festival. Africa's oldest film festival, held in the capital Tunis, presented a total of 170 films from around 40 countries, and ended with the prizes on Saturday night. The winning film whose title in Swahili is "Vuta N'Kuvute" was directed by Amil Shivji. Two other feature-length films also received awards at the 33rd edition of the festival

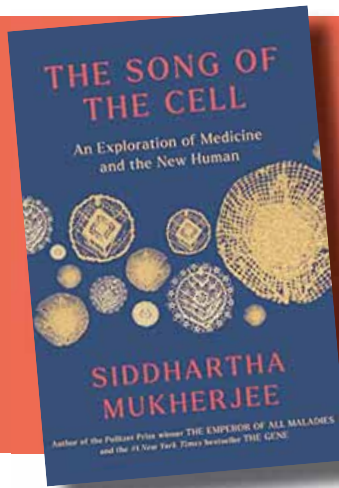
devoted to Arab and African film-makers. "Under the Fig Trees", directed by Tunisia's Erige Sehiri, won the Tanit d'Argent. It looks at romantic relations during harvest in a Tunisian village. The Tanit de Bronze went to "Sharaf" by German-Egyptian director Samir Nasr, which presents a sombre portrait of Egyptian society through the confines of a prison. The festival also included a focus on Palestinian cinema and featured Saudi Arabia — with four films — as guest of honour. — **AFP**

READ

THE SONG OF THE CELL

BY SIDDHARTHA MUKHERJEE

The Pulitzer Prize-winning author chronicles the discovery of cells and describes how modern medicine uses them.



AUCTION

Graham Budd poses with the match ball used in the 1986 FIFA World Cup Quarter-Final football match between Argentina and England, played at the Estadio Azteca, Mexico City, during a photocall ahead of its auction, at Wembley Stadium in London. The ball that Diego Maradona used to score his infamous "Hand of God" World Cup goal for Argentina against England in 1986 will go under the hammer on November 16. — **AFP**



MUSEUM

V&A Director Tristan Hunt (L) greets Britain's King Charles III (2nd R) and Britain's Camilla, Queen Consort (2nd L) as they arrive at the Victoria and Albert Museum, to visit the Africa Fashion exhibition in London. Africa Fashion is a landmark exhibition celebrating the creativity, ingenuity and global impact of African fashion. — **AFP**





Tutankhamun: Egyptians bid to reclaim their history

IT'S ONE OF THE 20TH century's most iconic photos: British archaeologist Howard Carter inspecting the sarcophagus of Tutankhamun in 1922 as an Egyptian member of his team crouches nearby shrouded in shadow.

It is also an apt metaphor for two centuries of Egyptology, flush with tales of brilliant foreign explorers uncovering the secrets of the Pharaohs, with Egyptians relegated to the background.

"Egyptians have been written out of the historical narrative," leading archaeologist Monica Hanna said.

Now with this weekend's 100th anniversary of Carter's earth-shattering discovery — and the 200th this year of the deciphering of the Rosetta Stone which unlocked the ancient hieroglyphs — they are demanding that their contributions be recognised.

Egyptians "did all the work" but "were forgotten", said chief excavator Abdel Hamid Daramalli, who was born "on top" of the tombs at Qurna near Luxor that he is now in charge of digging.

Even Egyptology's colonial-era birth — set neatly at Frenchman Jean-François Champollion cracking the Rosetta Stone's code in 1822 — "whitewashes history", according to specialist researcher Heba Abdel Gawad, "as if there were no attempts to understand Ancient Egypt until the Europeans came."

The "unnamed Egyptian" in the famous picture of Carter is "perhaps Hussein Abu Awad or Hussein Ahmed Said," according to art historian Christina Riggs, a Middle East specialist at Britain's Durham University.

The two men were the pillars, alongside Ahmed Gerigar and Gad Hassan, of Carter's digging team for nine seasons. But unlike foreign team members, experts cannot put names to the faces in the photos.

UNNOTICED AND UNNAMED

"Egyptians remain unnoticed, unnamed, and virtually unseen in their history," Riggs insisted, arguing that Egyptology's "structural inequities" reverberate to this day.

But one Egyptian name did gain fame as the tomb's supposed accidental discoverer: Hussein Abdel Rasoul.

Despite not appearing in Carter's diaries and journals, the tale of the water boy is presented as "historical fact", said Riggs.

On November 4, 1922, a 12-year-old — commonly believed to be Hussein — found the top step down to the tomb, supposedly because he either tripped, his donkey stumbled or because his water jug washed away the sand.

The next day, Carter's team exposed the whole staircase and on November 26 he peered into a room filled with golden treasures through a small breach in the tomb door.

According to an oft-repeated story, a half century earlier two of Hussein's ancestors, brothers Ahmed and Mohamed Abdel Rasoul, found the Deir el-Bahari cache of more than 50 mummies, including Ramesses the Great, when their goat fell down a crevasse.

But Hussein's great-nephew Sayed Abdel Rasoul laughed at the idea that a goat or boy with a water jug were behind the breakthroughs.

Riggs echoed his scepticism, arguing that on the rare occasions that Egyptology credits Egyptians with great discoveries they are disproportionately either children, tomb robbers or "quadrupeds".

The problem is that others "kept a

record, we didn't", Abdel Rasoul said.

THEY WERE WRONGED

Local farmers who knew the contours of the land could "tell from the layers of sediment whether there was something there," said Egyptologist Abdel Gawad, adding that "archaeology is mostly about geography".

Profound knowledge and skill at excavating had been passed down for generations in Qurna — where the Abdel Rasouls remain — and at Qift, a small town north of Luxor where English archaeologist William Flinders Petrie first trained locals in the 1880s.

Mostafa Abdo Sadek, a chief excavator of the Saqqara tombs near Giza, whose discoveries have been celebrated in the Netflix documentary series "Secrets of the Saqqara Tomb", is a descendant of those diggers at Qift.



His family moved 600 kilometres (370 miles) north at the turn of the 20th century to excavate the vast necropolis south of the Giza pyramids.

But his grandfathers and great-uncles "were wronged", he declared, holding up their photos.

Their contributions to a century of discoveries at Saqqara have gone largely undocumented.

- 'CHILDREN OF TUTANKHAMUN' -

Barred for decades from even studying Egyptology while the French controlled the country's antiquities service, Egyptians "were always serving foreigners", archaeologist and former antiquities minister Zahi Hawass said.

Another Egyptologist, Fatma Keshk, said we have to remember "the historical and social context of the time, with Egypt under British occupation."

The struggle over the country's cultural heritage became increasingly political in the early 20th century as Egyptians demanded their freedom.

"We are the children of Tutankhamun," the diva Mounira al-Mahdiyya sang in 1922, the year the boy pharaoh's intact tomb was found. The same year Britain was forced to grant Egypt independence, and the hated partage system that gave foreign missions half the finds in exchange for funding excavations was ended.

But just as Egyptians' "sense of ownership" of their heritage grew, ancient Egypt

was appropriated as "world civilisation" with little to do with the modern country, argued Abdel Gawad.

"Unfortunately that world seems to be the West. It's their civilisation, not ours."

While the contents of Tutankhamun's tomb stayed in Cairo, Egypt lost Carter's archives, which were considered his private property.

The records, key to academic research, were donated by his niece to the Griffith Institute for Egyptology at Britain's Oxford University.

"They were still colonising us. They left the objects, but they took our ability to produce research," Hanna added.

This year, the institute and Oxford's Bodleian Library are staging an exhibition, "Tutankhamun: Excavating the Archive", which they say sheds light on the "often overlooked Egyptian members of the

archaeological team."

EXCAVATORS' VILLAGE RAZED

In Qurna, 73-year-old Ahmed Abdel Rady still remembers finding a mummy's head in a cavern of his family's mud-brick house that was built into a tomb.

His mother stored her onions and garlic in a red granite sarcophagus, but she burst into tears at the sight of the head, berating him that "this was a queen" who deserved respect. For centuries, the people of Qurna lived among and excavated the ancient necropolis of Thebes, one of the pharaohs' former capitals that dates back to 3100 BC.

Today, Abdel Rady's village is no more than rubble between the tombs and temples, the twin Colossi of Memnon — built nearly 3,400 years ago — standing vigil over the living and the dead.

Four Qurnawis were shot dead in 1998 trying to stop the authorities from bulldozing their homes in a relocation scheme.

Some 10,000 people were eventually moved when almost an entire hillside of mud-brick homes was demolished despite protests from Unesco.

In the now deserted moonscape, Ragab Tolba, 55, one of the last remaining residents, said how his relatives and neighbours were moved to "inadequate" homes "in the desert".

The Qurnawis' dogged resistance was fired by their deep connection to the place and their ancestors, said the Qurna-born excavator Daramalli.

But the controversial celebrity archaeologist Hawass, then head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, said "it had to be done" to preserve the tombs.

Egyptologist Hanna, however, said the authorities were bent on turning Luxor into a sanitised "open-air museum... a Disneyfication of heritage", and used old tropes about the Qurnawis being tomb raiders against them.

Sayed Abdel Rasoul's nephew, Ahmed, hit back at what he called a double standard.

"The French and the English were all stealing," he said.

"Who told the people of Qurna they could make money off of artefacts in the first place?"

SPOILS OF WAR

Over the centuries, countless antiquities

made their way out of Egypt.

Some, like the Luxor Obelisk in Paris and the Temple of Debod in Madrid, were gifts from the Egyptian government.

Others were lost to European museums through the colonial-era partage system.

But hundreds of thousands more were smuggled out of the country into "private collections all over the world," according to Abdel Gawad.

Former antiquities minister Hawass is now spearheading a crusade to repatriate the Rosetta Stone and the Dendera Zodiac, and his petition has already attracted more than 78,000 signatures.

Returning the two artefacts to Egypt would show "the commitment of Western museums to decolonising their collections and making reparations for the past," the petition says.

The Rosetta Stone has been housed in the British Museum since 1802, "handed over to the British as a diplomatic gift", the museum said.

But for Abdel Gawad, "it's a spoil of war". The Frenchman Sébastien Louis Saulnier meanwhile had the Dendera Zodiac blasted out of the Hathor Temple in Qena in 1820.

The celestial map has hung from a ceiling in the Louvre in Paris since 1922, with a plaster cast left in its place in the southern Egyptian temple.

"That's a crime the French committed in Egypt," Hanna said, behaviour no longer "compatible with 21st-century ethics." — **AFP**

A LOOK INTO THE ACADEME



Dr Zainab al Ajmi
zeinbf@moe.om

Games-Based Learning Assessment

GAME-BASED learning has become significant in the digital era as a new instructional option in recent years due to its support of learning motivation. Classroom platforms shows have given way to entirely immersive online experiences to impart skills, and expand knowledge accessible anytime, anywhere.

There is a clear need for outcomes assessment in game-based learning, particularly in assessing complex problem-solving processes and critical thinking. However, illustrates the various results of the assessment can be taken in the different learning contexts as behaviour, skills, digital activity patterns, knowledge, emotions, and mental models, linked to a problem-based gaming model, a set of achievement indicators, a response to computer-adaptive testing, all depending on the theoretical perspective taken (Ifenthaler, Eseryel, & Ge, 2012).

Davis (2014) stated that Powerful games in the classroom often include: Multiple levels or challenges, intriguing storylines, unique experiences for each learner, additional rewards, feedback from the teacher or classroom, and tools to Analyse Game-Based Learning. On the other hand, Pappas (2022) indicates that there are some rules for e-Learning game designers including:

1. Game design starts with objectives and outcomes: The difference between games for entertainment and learning games is that there's a purpose behind the latter to achieve the best results.
2. Reinforce Favourable Behaviours: this gives the ability to correct negative behaviours or habits, as well as reinforce positive ones and this requires a broad range of skills and tasks.
3. Mobile Users: learners aren't working in the same way, with a mouse or not, they must click, tap, and swipe their way to the finish line. It would help learners understand the task if avoids small text, buttons, and interactions that are more difficult to access on mobile devices. At last, regarding the extent of the control of the game, can they pause in the middle of a scene and resume in a quiet environment? Are they able to lower the volume if they're in a crowded area?
4. Social Learning: A common misconception about game-based learning is that it's a solo activity. That there's no room for social interactions. But it should incorporate collaborative elements to facilitate peer-based feedback and knowledge sharing.
5. Encouraging learning: This ties into the risk-taking component of eLearning games. Learning games should encourage self-reflection. As an example, the game features a virtual customer who's unhappy with their recent purchase, then applies what they've learned in the real world to promote their learning.
6. Incorporate Gamification to Improve Learner Motivation: For example, they're able to earn badges or points when they reach the best outcome or display certain skills.

To conclude, there's various way to assess games-based learning environments, starting from designing, using, and assessing not only to provide feedback about technological and methodological innovations for game-based learning but also, great methods to determine areas for improvement and strengths. Lastly, this field requires more experimental scientific research to assess learners' competencies.



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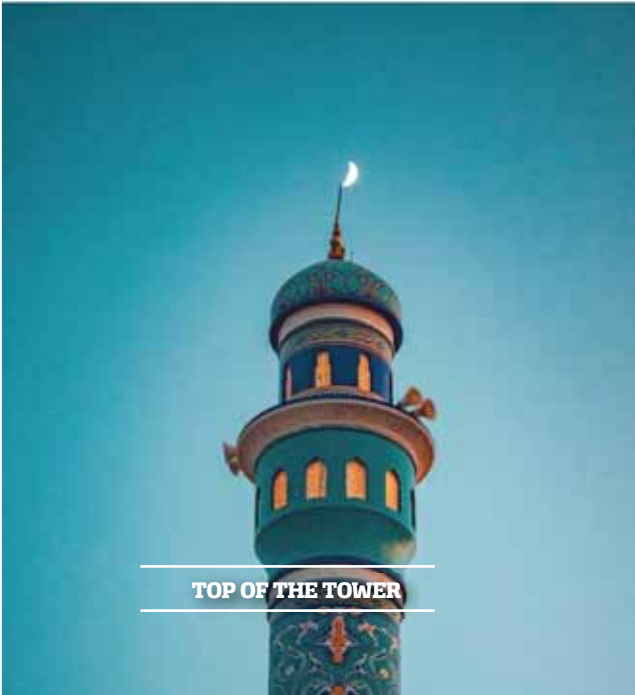
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AROUND THE WORLD

ART

New York art auction fall highlights include Paul Allen collection and a rare Warhol



THE FALL ART auction season kicks off in New York City next week, with auction houses Christie's and Sotheby's both expecting to bring in record-breaking sales.

Among the highlights is Christie's Paul G. Allen Collection, which includes more than 150 pieces spanning 500 years. The collection, from the estate of the late Microsoft co-founder, includes works by Pablo Picasso, Georges Seurat, Paul Cezanne and Lucien Freud.

"Many of the works in the collection are expected to be records for the artist. Many of them actually were records for the artist at the time that they were purchased by Paul Allen from previous auctions, the Freud being one of them," said Christie's Vice Chairman Johanna Flaum.



"We will expect records for Seurat, Cezanne, many of the masterpieces within the collection."

The estimated \$1 billion collection will be sold in two live auctions at Christie's Rockefeller Center on November 9-10.

Then on November 17 Christie's will hold a 21st century evening sale with highlights that include Jean-Michel Basquiat's "Sugar Ray Robinson," a portrait of the legendary boxer.

"Our estimate is in the region of \$35 million... This painting is an absolute masterpiece by the artist," said Christie's Head of the 21st Century Evening Sale, Isabella Lauria.

Sotheby's, meanwhile, expects to break records with Piet Mondrian's "Composition No. II," estimated in excess of \$50 million, and Andy Warhol's "White Disaster."

"The Warhol is estimated to sell in excess of \$80 million. There have only been three large scale 'Disasters' to come to market in the past 20 years, and each time one has come up — in 2007 and 2013 — it's reset the auction record for Andy Warhol," said Sotheby's Head of Contemporary Art for the Americas, David Galperin. Sotheby's Modern Art Evening Auction will be held on November 14, followed by a Contemporary Evening Auction on November 16.

"There are so many amazing works on offer," Sotheby's head of impressionist and modern art for the Americas, Julian Dawes, said. "I certainly feel that we will see a very strong market this fall." — Reuters

ENTERTAINMENT

'I'm a rock star now!': Dolly, Eminem join Rock Hall of Fame



DOLLY PARTON LED a supergroup in a rousing rendition of "Jolene" as Eminem brought the entire room to its feet at Saturday's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame gala, which inducted its most eclectic group of legends in years in an ode to rock's spirit.

The country queen and rap agitator were joined by pop futurists Eurythmics, smooth rocker Lionel Richie, confessional lyricist Carly Simon and enduring rock duo Pat Benatar and Neil Giraldo in entering the music pantheon.

"I'm a rock star now!" yelled Parton as she took the stage, fists in the air. The 76-year-old had tried to decline the prestigious honour because she didn't feel rock enough — "I didn't understand at the time that it's about a little more than that," she said with her infectious smile.

Artists including Pink and Brandi Carlile gathered to perform Dolly classics including "9 to 5," before Parton returned to the stage in a stunningly body-con outfit dripping in chains.

The icon then jammed out on a crystal-encrusted electric guitar to debut her new rock song, which included a mean solo from Parton herself.

"I've still got rock and roll down in my country soul and I'll be rockin' it til the cows come home," she belted.

RAP VILLAGE

Eminem delivered a blend of hits old and new, after one of music's master provocateurs walked out to the quintessential "My Name Is."

His loyal mentor Dr Dre inducted the artist behind "The Marshall Mathers LP" — one of the best-selling albums of all time — who gained the hall's coveted recognition in his first year of

eligibility. The superstar built a massive career off his blistering flow and lyrical talent, but at times fuelled it with eyebrow-raising controversy.

Eminem invited none other than Steven Tyler to perform "Sing For The Moment" which samples "Dream On," and Ed Sheeran made a surprise appearance to sing Dido's "Thank You" sample in "Stan."

The now 50-year-old then donned his glasses to read his acceptance speech, touching on the obstacles he overcame including a troubled childhood and addiction struggles.

But he spent most of his time at the podium thanking dozens of fellow rappers.

"They say it takes a village to raise a child. Well it took a whole genre and culture to raise me," he said. "I'm a high school dropout, man, with a hip hop education, and these are my teachers."

"And it's their night just as much as it is mine."

ROCK VIBES

The 2022 class saw the hallowed institution continue to bring rappers, pop, R&B and country stars into the hall's fold.

"Rock and roll is not a colour, it is a feeling, it is a vibe," said Richie to a chorus of cheers.

"If we let that vibe come through, this room will grow and grow."

Richie's show-stopping performance included a sing-off with Dave Grohl, who offered guitar riffs to accompany the classic "Easy (Like Sunday Morning)."

Synthpop pioneers Eurythmics — the duo comprised of Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart — also took their place among rock's greatest, but not before delivering a performance that included their classic "Sweet

Dreams (Are Made Of This)."

And Duran Duran met the moment with a best-of medley including "Girls On Film" and "Hungry Like The Wolf."

But the British group also held a somber moment for former member Andy Taylor. Frontman Simon Le Bon read an open letter from the guitarist that revealed he had been struggling with stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer for years.

But Taylor said he was "sure as hell glad I'm around to see the day" that the hitmakers made it into the rock hall.

Simon, known for her deeply personal songwriting, was inducted by Sara Bareilles but unable to attend, as two of her sisters recently both died of cancer.

"One of the greatest things about music," Simon said in a message read by Bareilles, "is its uncanny knack for making physical art out of formless emotions like joy and pain."

Pop sensation Olivia Rodrigo then took the stage to perform Simon's seminal 1970s hit "You're So Vain," as audience members including Carlie and LL Cool J bobbed their heads and sang along.

Inducted by Sheryl Crow, Benatar and Giraldo delivered a heart-thumping rendition of their top songs including "Love is a Battlefield" and "Heartbreaker."

And none other than Bruce Springsteen, who attended Saturday to give a special induction to master producer Jimmy Iovine, took the stage to perform alongside John Mellencamp in honor of the late Jerry Lee Lewis.

The Boss slayed a fiery guitar solo as the band delivered a rollicking version of the original hall of famer's "Great Balls of Fire."

— AFP

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

Salmonella Song

AFTER LEAVING Mani's still feeling hungry (what's with the new Barbie portions of pancakes and French toast for breakfast?)

My unsatisfaction is best described by grandma's words 'the fox who went in hungry and came out hungry' plus: and paid for it! my friend Dalia decided to go for a ride.

Dalia's rides are always educational as she keeps updating me with weird songs that she comes across when browsing social media. Almost a month back, she played a song called "Low Life" by Lebanese singer Reem El-Sawass.

It had a catchy beat, funny and supposedly empowering lyrics that made us laugh and text about it for a week. However, the song this time wasn't funny at all.

It was called Salmonella by Tameem Younis, an Egyptian singer that I'd never heard of. The lyrics of the song starts with an innocent description of a scene of him meeting a girl he likes while she's sipping cappuccino.

He sings about asking for her number and if she refuses him — that's where the tone changes and ill wishes start — may she be afflicted with Salmonella infection, fails in her life and gets rejected by him every-time. As my shocked brain was still trying to process these threats, it was hit by the second part. Now he's promising her a good life that includes a fun wedding and cooking for her, but if she dares to reject him then he'll besmear her reputation so that she'd end up being a spinster. Obviously, the song was promoting violence against women if they reject men's approach. It took me back to last summer's femicide cases that occurred in Egypt and Jordan, where young women in their early twenties were killed publicly by men whom they rejected. This started in August when Nayera Ashraf, a 20-year-old Egyptian student was stabbed to death by her male colleague at their college's gate after an argument.

This sent a wave of shock and polarity in the Arab world — the crime was premeditated with indifferent bystanders taking videos of the cold-blooded homicide instead of defending the victim-before being hit again with other femicides in less than a month.

I decided to find out more about this song. The music video is of Tameem Younis singing, before the screen gets filled with young men breaking into a fight. The next scene shows the singer continuing his song with a bleeding nose. The dance is even worse being very sexually suggestive.

The repetitive chorus of the song is "dare to say no!" and this is what people started calling it instead of its original title. It was produced on January 2020 and caused a great controversy on social media, even with the singer claiming that his song was a 'joke' adding that 'it's a parody of men who consider themselves romantic but when things don't go their way, they show their true colours'. However, Egyptian National Council of Women called for the song to be banned as it was very demeaning, encouraged bullying and physical abuse.

Many female activists described it as a 'the unfeigned reality of what women usually go through if they break off an abusive relationship'. Yet some people considered banning the song as censorship that if applied, should include other songs that degrade women especially a few of Tamer Hosni's. Sadly, these songs reflect male-dominated societies that many Arab women live under where chauvinism is accepted. And the solution? A radical cultural change where gender equality and laws protecting women from any form of abuse are implemented. It would be slow, hard to enforce though achievable.

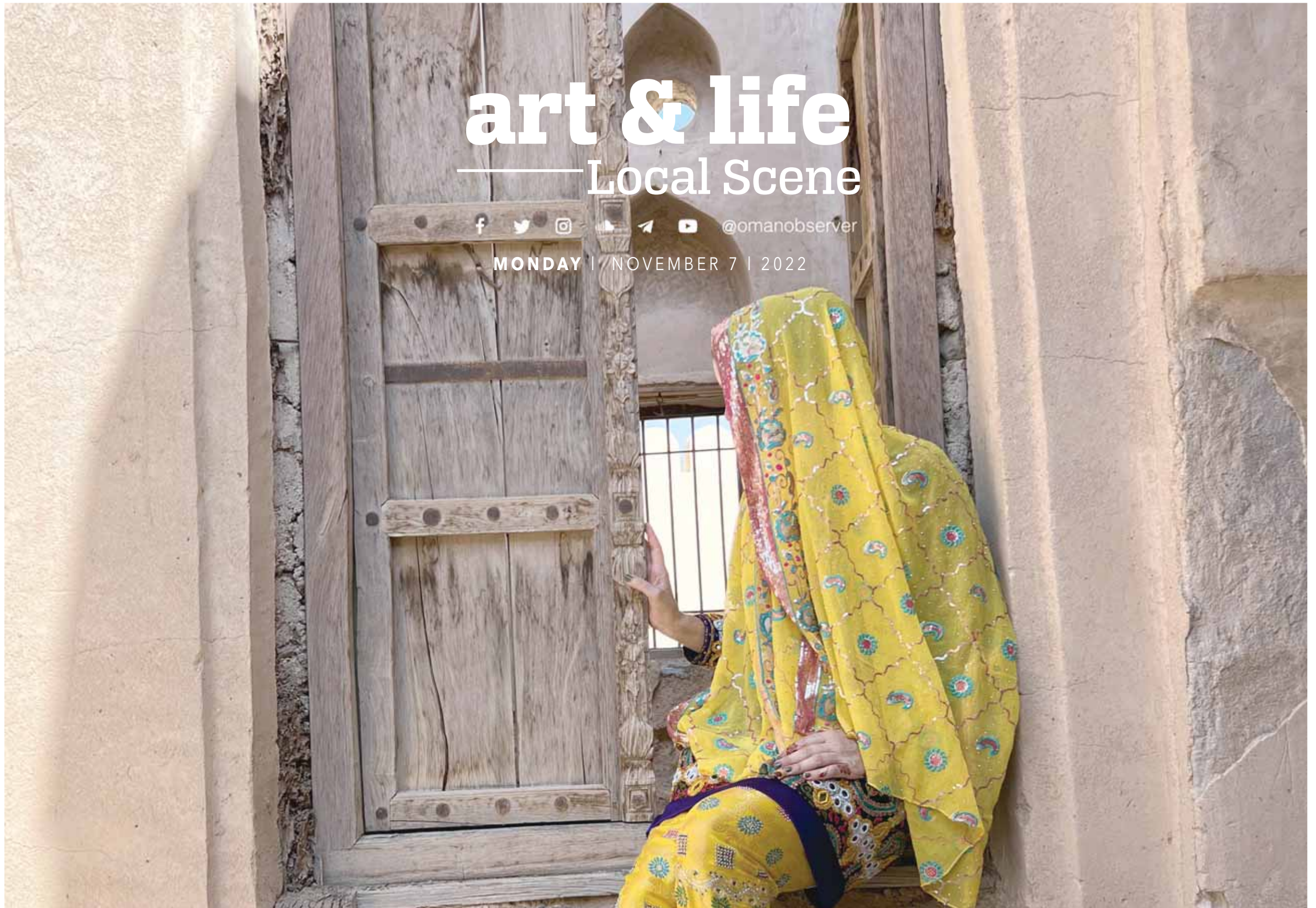
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Walking through the ancient alleys of Al Mudhairib

By Rumpa Mitra
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If you haven't heard of Al Mudhairib yet, chances are you've missed visiting one of Oman's most historic villages.

Barely a couple of hour's drive from Muscat, it is easy to underestimate Al Mudhairib and what it has to offer as a destination. First thing first though, if you've been to Rimal al Sharqiyah, you definitely would have passed by the village.

Al Mudhairib is one of those villages that looked so unimposing it packed a lot of surprises once you start to explore it.

From our quick escape to Al Qabil, a 10-minute drive from the souq led us to the sleepy streets of Al Mudhairib right by the stairs of an aged tower a few metres away from what the guide said is a good coffee shop.

This is where Fahar Hamood al Farsi is really from and through his Instagram, @generations_oman, he has begun to create some events to bring people to the town. In the last two years alone, he organised donkey and foot trips from the desert to the town. As the country celebrates National Day this November, he is kicking off another event that would coincide with the celebration of this important day.

Al Mudhairib is famous for being the home of the Al Harthy tribe. The village is sur-

rounded by green farms and ruins, forts, and watch towers. Villagers mentioned that the watchtowers and the interconnected walls of the old village were built during the invasion of the Portuguese. To protect the villagers, a stronghold has to be created and thus, the watch towers served a very important purpose to deter the enemies away.

If you are willing to take a 10-minute uphill walk to the ruins, you will be awarded the best view of the Al Qabil area and you will be able to see the ruins closely. During our trip, we realised that the best time to come would definitely be early morning or sunset to avoid the heat and enjoy the view.

Within the village there is a "Cultural and Heritage House" but truth be told, all the old buildings that remain standing are on their own telling unique stories.

As Fahar pointed out, Al Mudhairib used to be homes of many different shaikhs and the abandoned houses still, to this day, store different artefacts.

A quick run around the village will reveal a lot of the village's storied past. Several ruins are easy to access and open to all including towers and houses.

Climbing one of the towers, Fahar mentioned that the way the structures were built was very strategic primarily because the inhabitants create areas where they can fire canons and guns if a threat becomes

apparent.

While the old houses in Al Mudhairib share a few things with those in Al Hamra, the noticeable difference is how the ceilings were semi-curved and each house has its own private well.

Fahar also pointed out that some of the houses have their own prison or private jail – a hole in the ground or the upper level of the house which is about 2x2 metres in size, about 10 feet high and pitch black when covered.

"These jails, these were necessary to keep things in order. If someone is being troublesome or is disrespecting and committing crimes, the families would throw them into those cells," Fahar shared.

The structures all over the village retained their old-world charm and based on the different designs, a few of them has some foreign influences as well.

Social media influencer Amelia German who is one of the strong supporters of promoting local attractions shared that one of the houses has doors inspired by Africa because the design is used to deter elephants from banging their heads on the said door design.

Overall, Al Mudhairib is a great place to add to your list of places to visit if you love culture, history and scenic hills and gardens. You would also definitely love the rustic coffee shop where you can spend some time while watching the view of the ruins outside.

