

Condolences to Pakistan

The Sultanate of Oman expressed its sincere condolences and sympathy to the government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and families of the victims following the bombing that targeted Khyber Province. It also wished the injured a speedy recovery. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry on Monday, the Sultanate of Oman reaffirmed its firm stance in condemning all forms of violence and terrorism. — ONA



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ROYAL CAVALRY GRABS TENT PEGGING TITLE IN DHOFAR



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GLITZY DUBAI HUNGRY FOR CULINARY FAME



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OMAN'S MINING SECTOR OPENED UP TO STRONG INVESTMENT INFLOWS: MEM



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO SWISS PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Alain Berset of the Swiss Confederation on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to President Alain Berset and the people of his country further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM GREETINGS TO BENIN PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Patrice Talon of the Republic of Benin on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes to President Patrice Talon and the people of his country. —ONA

FAREWELL TO ALGERIAN AMBASSADOR



Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received at his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Monday Filali Ghouini, Ambassador of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. HH Sayyid Shihab thanked the ambassador for the efforts he exerted to enhance relations between Oman and Algeria, wishing him success in his future assignments. On his turn, the ambassador lauded the distinguished relations binding the two countries. He expressed his appreciation for the cooperation he received during his mission in Oman. — ONA

RO 48.4m new Khasab Hospital to open in 2024

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, July 31

Construction work at a number of health institutions is progressing well and they will be opened in a short time to meet the increasing demand for healthcare services resulting from the population increase Musandam Governorate is witnessing.

Eng Jamal bin Salim al Shanfari, Director-General of Projects and Engineering Affairs at the Ministry of Health, noted that among the projects currently under implementation is the new Khasab Hospital which is built on an area of 100,000 sq m with a built-up area of approximately 36,000 sq m. The main building of the hospital consists of three floors with a capacity of 164 beds. The new hospital will have a number of inpatient wards covering a wide range of medical specialties for men and women including a surgical ward, an internal diseases ward, obstetrics and gynaecology ward, paediatrics ward, intensive care unit, paediatric intensive care unit, an intensive care unit for



newborns and premature babies, emergency and resuscitation unit, day care unit, dialysis unit, cardiology unit, among others. The structural work of the nearly RO 48.4 million Khasab Hospital has been completed and the implementation rate has reached 64 per cent and the hospital is expected to be operational in 2024. The Ministry of Health has embarked on the construction of 11 hospitals in various wilayats and governorates, to develop

the health sector and keep pace with the growth of population in Oman. The projects will benefit both Omani citizens and residents. Al Shanfari earlier said that the ministry is upgrading Madha Health Centre in Musandam Governorate, to make it a full-fledged hospital, and is slated to be opened later this year. He said that Thamrait Health Centre will also be upgraded into a hospital and is likely to be completed this year.

A NEW ATTRACTION



Al Naseem Water Park opens in Salalah

Al Naseem Water Park in Salalah opened on Monday evening, coinciding with the khareef season. HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, accompanied by Dr Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani, Head of Dhofar Municipality, visited the park, which is spread over an area of 40,000 sq m at Sahel Attin area. The project consists of three phases, the first is the integrated water park with all its facilities, the second phase is the establishment of a mini zoo, and the third phase will witness the establishment of a park for recreational games, as the project targets different age groups, starting from two years and above.

A double treat for sky-watchers

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, JULY 31

The first of the two supermoons to appear in August will be visible in the Sultanate of Oman today (Tuesday) when the moon will be 357,530 km from the Earth. According to the Omani Astronomical Society, the sky of the Sultanate of Oman will be brighter during August and the second one which will be the largest and brightest supermoon of 2023 will be on August 30. Mahmoud al Amiri, a member of the Omani Astronomical Society, said, "The phenomenon



of the full moon occurs when the moon is full and is located near the closest point in its orbit around the earth, as the moon revolves around the earth in an elliptical orbit, and accordingly the distance between the moon and the earth changes during the month once again at the farthest

point in its orbit." "The moon will appear with an estimated size of about 8 per cent and with a brightness of about 16 per cent more than it is at the farthest point at 10:33 pm Sultanate of Oman time. It passed at the nearest point from the earth at 11.52 am today at a distance of 358,121 km from earth," he added. He said that colour will be reddish or orange at the moment of sunrise as a result of dust and other plankton in the atmosphere around the earth, which dissolve the white light reflected from it and disperse the colours of the blue spectrum.



Tender Announcement

Capital Market Authority announces the following tender:

Tender Number	Description	Tender Main Scopes	Release the RFP	Last date for Purchase of RFP	Last date of Submitting the proposal	Tender fees in OMR
CMA / 2023/002	Risk Based Capital Solvency	Electronic system for calculation of risk based capital solvency for insurance companies licensed in the Sultanate of Oman.	31 July 2023	8 th August 2023 03:00 PM	17 th August 2023 03:00 PM	25 /- OMR Non Refundable

- Specialized companies interested in participating in the above tender must deposit the tender fee into bank account, and submit the original payment receipt of the tender along with a copy of the commercial registration certificate and the contact details of the authorized person (business card) to the Services and Public Relations Department ; hence, we shall provide you with Tender document.
- Bidders must attached an electronic copy of the tender bond of not less than %2 of the tender value. The bond shall be valid for 90 days from the submission of the proposal.
- CMA is not obliged to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without any justifiable reasons.

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

For inquiries, please contact :
E-mail : Admin@cma.gov.om
Telephone Number : 24823299
From 8 am to 3 pm
(Sunday to Thursday).







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Several coconut shops booked for violations

MUSCAT: The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) in Dhofar Governorate has seized a number of coconut shops in the Wilayat of Salalah that refrain from providing the service and hide the price lists authorised and approved by the administration before the khareef season.

They also hike the prices of coconut products, which have high demand during the peak tourism season. CPA said it is



monitoring activities at various markets and commercial centres in the governorate, with the aim of maintaining price stability and ensuring that suppliers comply with the Consumer Protection Law and its regulations.

The authority has booked 15 people representing different stores for various types of violations. Violators were arrested and released following legal measures.

Al Numani receives Indian naval chief



MUSCAT: Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office received on Monday Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff in the Republic of India and his accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged cordial conversations and discussed a number of matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by the Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman and the Indian Ambassador to the

Sultanate of Oman.

Also, Maj Gen Matar bin Salim al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa Admiral Kumar. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged viewpoints and discussed a set of military matters of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), senior RAO officers and the Military Attaché at the

Indian Embassy in Muscat.

Meanwhile, Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa Admiral Kumar. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged viewpoints and discussed a set of naval matters of mutual interest.

Also, Maj Gen Hamid bin Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies received at Bait Al Falaj Admiral Kumar. — ONA

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Abraj Energy Services SAOG, I am pleased to present the condensed interim financial statements for half year ended and for three months period ended 30th June 2023.

HSE:

Abraj HSE performance in Q2 2023 was great as there was no Loss Time Incident (LTI) or major incident in Q2 2023. All Units have achieved unit KPI target score in Q2 2023 as per the set criteria.

Company Financial Performance

During the half year ended 30th June 2023, the Company has completed all the planned major maintenance activities for some of the drilling rigs in 2023. This is required to be done for ongoing recertification of rig equipments.

Key Financials of your company:-

- Revenue during H1-2023 (6 months period ended 30th June), has increased compared to H1 2022 by 2.2% from OMR 68.2 M to OMR 69.7 M. Further, during Q2-2023 (3 months period ended 30th June) increase in revenue compared to Q2 2022 by 7.4% from OMR 33.8 M to OMR 36.3 M).
- Total expense during H1-2023 (6 months period ended 30th June) has increased compared to H1-2022 by 8.8 % from OMR 58.2 M to OMR 63.3 M. Further, during Q2-2023 (3 months period ended 30th June) total expense has increased compared to Q2-2022 by 8.3% from OMR 30 M to RO 32.5 M.
- Profit after tax during H1-2023, has decreased compared to H1 2022 by 37.5% from OMR 10.4 M to OMR 6.5 M as a result of major planned maintenance activities and also finance cost had increased due to higher benchmark rate of USD loans for USD LIBOR rate in H1-2023 compared to H1-2022.

Segment Financial Performance – H1-2023 Vs H1-2022 and Q2-2023 Vs Q2-2022:

Drilling and Workover

- This segment revenue has remained almost the same during H1-2023 at OMR 61.4 M as compared to that of H1-2022 i.e. 61.3 M. However, during Q2-2023, the revenue has increased compared to Q2-2022 by 7.3 % from OMR 30.0 M in Q2-2022 to OMR 32.2 M despite no change in the asset count.
- Profit after tax for this segment has decreased by 42.1 % in H1-2023 as compared to that of H1-2022 from OMR 10.6 M to OMR 6.1 M. During Q2-2023 profit after tax for this segment has decreased by 10.3 % from OMR 4.1 M in Q2-2022 to OMR 3.7 M in Q2-2023. This decrease is largely due to increase in OPEX as a result of major planned maintenance activities carried out during H1-2023 and higher finance cost due to higher benchmark reference rate for USD loans as compared to H1-2022.

Well Services and Others

- This segment revenue has increased by 19% during H1-2023 as compared to that of H1-2022 from OMR 6.9 M to OMR 8.2 M. This segment revenue during Q2-2023 has increased compared to Q2 2022 from OMR 3.8 M to OMR 4.1 M). The increase in revenue is mainly from fracturing business.
- As a result of the above, Profit after tax for this segment during H1-2023 has increased to OMR 353 K compared to a loss of OMR 213 K in H1-2022. During Q2-2023, profit after tax for this segment has increased to OMR 161 K as compared to a loss of OMR 220 K during Q2-2022.

Acknowledgements:

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to express their sincere and deep gratitude to the vision and leadership of the country's leader His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for maintaining sustainable growth and prosperity of Omani Economy. Abraj Board also appreciates the valuable support and guidance from the various stakeholders such as Government agencies, Shareholders, Clients, Management, Employees, Bankers and Suppliers.

Ayad Al Balushi
Chairman of the Board

CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	30 June 2023 (Unaudited) RO'000	31 Dec 2022 (Audited) RO'000
ASSETS		
Non-current assets		
Property and equipment	191,801	196,106
Right-of-use assets	5,035	5,996
Intangible assets	248	191
Deferred tax assets	540	662
Deferred expenses – non-current	106	119
Capex Advances	2,322	1,180
Total non-current assets	200,052	204,254
Current assets		
Trade and other receivables	39,768	33,974
Advances and prepayments	1,453	2,895
Deferred expenses – current	30	140
Inventories	21,776	18,605
Bank term deposits	-	18,449
Cash and cash equivalents	4,573	4,120
Total current assets	67,600	78,183
Total assets	267,652	282,437
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Capital and reserves		
Share capital	77,020	77,020
Legal reserve	9,710	9,062
Retained earnings	48,970	58,539
Total equity	135,700	144,621
Non-current liabilities		
Term loans – non-current portion	69,982	76,953
Deferred income	1,475	1,857
Deferred tax liabilities	4,387	4,437
Employees' end of services benefits	2,061	1,955
Lease liabilities - non-current portion	3,378	4,288
Total non-current liabilities	81,283	89,490
Current liabilities		
Term loans - current portion	22,112	18,841
Lease liabilities - current	1,932	1,958
Trade payables	15,906	15,928
Other payables	8,754	7,489
Deferred income	772	1,027
Income tax payable	1,193	3,083
Total current liabilities	50,669	48,326
Total liabilities	131,952	137,816
Total equity and liabilities	267,652	282,437

CONDENSED INTERIM STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTHS PERIOD ENDED 31 JUNE (UNAUDITED)

	Three months ended 30 June		Six months ended 30 June	
	2023	2022	2023	2022
	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000	RO'000
Revenue from contracts with customers	36,308	33,775	69,647	68,195
Cost of sales	(27,981)	(25,804)	(55,111)	(49,816)
Gross profit	8,327	7,971	14,536	18,379
General and administrative expenses	(1,813)	(1,613)	(3,232)	(2,990)
Other expenses	(443)	(412)	(541)	(653)
Other income	-	17	14	103
Expected credit loss reversal / (charge) on trade receivables	-	(10)	204	(38)
Operating profit	6,071	5,953	10,981	14,801
Finance costs	(1,422)	(1,454)	(3,286)	(2,833)
Finance income	57	126	101	238
Net Finance costs	(1,365)	(1,328)	(3,185)	(2,595)
Profit before tax	4,706	4,625	7,796	12,206
Taxation	(829)	(702)	(1,313)	(1,839)
Profit for the period	3,877	3,923	6,483	10,367
Other comprehensive income for the period	-	-	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the period	3,877	3,923	6,483	10,367
Earnings per share				
Basic and diluted earnings per share-Baiza	5.0	5.1	8.4	13.5

Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.

Indian Chief of Naval Staff visits SAF museum, MSC

MUSCAT: Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff in the Republic of India visited on Monday the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Museum.

During the visit, the guest was briefed on the march of SAF's development. He also toured various sections of the museum and viewed its glorious military heritage.

Admiral Kumar also visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC). He was accompanied during the visit by Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO).

Upon the guest's arrival at the centre, he was greeted by the Acting Head of the MSC.

During the visit, the guest and his accompanying delegation were briefed on the tactical roles and tasks carried out by the centre in the safety of the Omani maritime environment. They also toured the MSC's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies used in carrying out its national duties.

– ONA

Iconic watch manufacturer, Franck Muller and Oman's leading luxury watch and lifestyle boutique, Mistal have collaborated to create two limited-edition collections

The two forces from the horology universe have come together to launch the collections that showcase 50 individually numbered timepieces in the Vanguard model and 10 Vanguard Crazy Hours. Made exclusively for the Sultanate, the Franck Muller Vanguard Oman Edition and Vanguard Crazy Hours have been created in association with Mistal.

The fascinating Franck Muller Vanguard Oman Edition and Vanguard Crazy Hour a hand-brushed Grade-2 titanium case measuring 41.0 mm in diameter, and 49.95 mm in length with thickness of 12.2 mm and are water resistant up to 30 metres. The Vanguard Crazy Hour gets a special touch with a Red colour crown tip along with a hologram on the dial that has never been seen on this Franck Muller model before.

Both the novelties feature Islamic/Indian hours, minutes, and seconds hands that are super luminous. The date display at 6 o'clock is super luminous as well. The distinctive applique numerals have been meticulously hand-polished and hand-brushed in both



collections staying true to the craftsmanship of Franck Muller.

Franck Muller, for the first time, released a dial featuring the Sultanate of Oman written in Arabic Calligraphy at the 6 o'clock position enclosed in sapphire crystal glass.

The winding shaft has three positions for winding, date setting, and time setting. The movement decoration includes Côtes de Genève and brushing soleil papier on the bridges and rotor. The main plate has circular graining on both sides and the bridges are chamfered. The components have 24k gold bath and rhodium plating, with 24k gold finish on the written engravings. The rotor ball bearing is circular brushed, while the barrel is brushed soleil papier and polished at 45°. The

ratchet is also brushed soleil and polished, and the screws are polished and blued. The bracelet is a beautiful hand-sewn alligator/rubber strap with a black PVD coating and a brushed Grade-2 titanium folding buckle.

The two self-winding references are powered by Franck Muller in-house 800-DT manufactured automatic movement with a 42-hour power reserve in a fine showmanship of bringing together watch-making technology and traditional know-how.

Each of these models has been designed and executed by Mistal with the support of Franck Muller.

Franck Muller timepieces are characterised by complicated movements and original designs, APTLY KNOWN AS THE MASTER OF COMPLICATIONS.



Chemical pollution in Hasas landfill risks health of residents

YUSEF AL HABSI
MUSCAT, JULY 31

Oman Arabic newspaper previously published a report on chemical pollution at Hasas landfill in Samayil. The report was supported with experts' opinions and testimonies of local residents.

However, the authorities have not taken any measures that suit such emergencies where a chemical pollution has been detected of the kind that does not only affect the soil but also the lives of people and animals.

In May, the Environment Authority wrote in its Twitter account that it had taken appropriate measures and issued environmental violations against the entity that caused the pollution but nothing has changed, Citizens submitted a letter to the Environment Authority demanding compensation for the livestock that died in the landfill but they did not receive a response for their complaint.

Engineer Salim bin Humaid al Shibli, Director-General of Municipalities in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, confirmed that an agreement was reached with the Environment Authority to handle solid materials in the landfill and



to build an earthen barrier around the entrances leading to it while avoiding exposure to hazardous waste which should be handled by a specialised company.

The central laboratory at the College of Agricultural and Marine Sciences at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), affirmed that the presence of some oil compounds soluble in water may affect human health and animals as well as groundwater and disturb the environmental balance.

Many questions will emerge repeatedly regarding contingency



plans for dealing with such dangerous cases the moment they occur and not when they

turn into a public opinion issue because people's lives matter more than anything else.

Indian School student bags gold medal in global dance contest

MIDHUN RAJ
MUSCAT, JULY 31

In an outstanding display of talent, Abhinanda Rajeev, a 12-year-old student from the Indian School Darsait, has made Oman proud by clinching the gold medal at the Global Dance Open final in Spain. The competition took place from July 19 to 22, attracting 1,200 contestants from 32 countries, making her victory even more remarkable.

Abhinanda showcased her exceptional skills in the Hiphope category, leaving the international judges and audience mesmerised by her captivating performance. Her dedication and hard work were evident as she outperformed participants from around the world to claim the coveted top spot. Prior to her resounding victory in Spain, Abhinanda had already showcased her talent on multiple stages. She had secured the first place with a scholarship in the semi-final round held in Qatar, proving her consistency and prowess in the dance arena.

"Abhinanda's success is an inspiration to aspiring dancers



and young talents across Oman. Her achievements mark a significant milestone in the country's dance community, celebrating the power of passion," said her father, Rajeevan Puthan Purayil, a businessman in Oman.

Abhinanda's talents have been recognised not only on the global stage but also within Oman. She has consistently won numerous prizes in programmes organised by various Indian organisations in the Sultanate of Oman, earning acclaim for her exceptional skills.



Notice of Public Auction Sale

Muscat National Development And Investment Company S.A.O.C. Announces Its Desire To Auction The Following Items.

SRL	Asset Description	QTY
1-	File Cabord	50
2-	Small Cabord	17
3-	Office Partitions with desk full set	118
4-	Exutive office desk	12
5-	Small Table	13
6-	Round Table	12
7-	Meeting Table	8
8-	Office Chairs	223

All bids must be submitted in closed envelopes, and the following terms and conditions must be observed:

1. All items are available for inspection at the ASAAS Office, Al Khuwair, during official working hours 7:30 AM- 2:30 PM starting from Wednesday 2nd of August 2023 to the end of working hours on Monday 7th of August 2023. All safety and security instructions should be adhered to.
2. All items in the above table are for sale, and the auction's winner shall bear all costs of removing and transporting items from the Office.
3. Every bidder shall pay a bidding guarantee of OMR (200) deposited to the following bank account:

Account Name: Muscat National Development and Investment Co SAOC
Account Number: 01011213840001
Bank Name: Dhofar Bank

*The amount mentioned above is refundable only to those who did not win the auction.

4. Any offer without a copy of the guarantee deposit will not be considered.
5. All offers are to be submitted in closed envelopes sealed with red wax containing the bid value and a copy of the guarantee deposit mentioned in item (3) above. The outside of the envelope should bear only the title of "Muscat National Development And Investment Company/ sale of assets. All bids are to be submitted not later than 12:00 PM, at Muscat National Development and Investment Company (ASAAS) at Al Khuwair.
6. The winning bidder must pay the remaining amount of goods value within ten days of the date of receiving the award notification. Failure to pay the remaining amount shall give the company the right to utilise the guarantee amount paid earlier and to award the tender to the next best offer.
7. The winning bidder must remove and transport all items and goods within seven days after depositing the total bidding amount at the company's bank account mentioned above.
8. Failure to transport the goods and items within the agreed-upon grace period will automatically entitle the company to collect a penalty fee from the winning bidder, equal to %2 of the total bid value for every week of delay as storing charges.
9. The winning bidder shall strictly adhere to safety and security instructions while transporting goods and items.
10. The company reserves the right to change the date or cancel the auction without giving reasons.

Note: Individual bidders must present their IDs, and corporate entities must write an authorisation letter for all matters relevant to the auction.

For further inquiries, kindly call: **24392437 - 24399800**

www.asaas.om

Number plate should be clearly visible at all times: ROP

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has warned that leaving the vehicle's license or number plate covered in dust or concealing some numerals is a traffic violation.

In a statement, ROP said that motorists should keep their cars clean or risk facing fines.

The fine is said to be RO10.



Tourism ministry winds up promotion workshops

MUMBAI: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism concluded on Monday a series of mobile promotional workshops in the Republic of India.

The workshops, which lasted from 24 to 31 July 2023, kicked off in the city of New Delhi and moved to the cities of Jaipur and Calcutta.

As many as 200 establishments and companies took part in the workshop.

The workshops saw a large turnout from major tourism firms and Indian media.

Asma bint Salim al Hajriyah, Assistant Director General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that various agreements were signed within the context of the workshops.

By organising such programmes, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism seeks to explore global markets to attract target segments, highlight key products, study the requirements of those markets, enlighten travel and tourism companies and the media about Omani tourism landmarks and introduce incentives offered by the Omani tourism sector.— ONA

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialize companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tender in Dhofar Governorate.

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/ 2023/123	UNE-LOT 07 A-2023	01/08/2023	23/08/2023	RO. 52.500
DISC/ 2023/124	REPLACEMENT OF 2 NOS. 10MVA 33/11KV POWER TRANSFORMERS AND RTCC PANELS AT HANFEET PRIMARY SUBSTATION	01/08/2023	04/09/2023	RO. 52.500
DISC/ 2023/128	UNE-LOT 07 C-2023	01/08/2023	23/08/2023	RO. 52.500

- To view the tender details, you can visit www.dhofarservices.nama.om / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- For any clarifications contact us on:
Tel No. 23232554
email: purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om



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FRIDAY MARKET SUHAR TO REVIVE ESSENCE OF OMANI CULTURE

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JULY 31

THE Al Batinah North Municipality announced the initiation of an extensive project to revive the Friday Market in the Wilayat of Suhar. This ambitious endeavour seeks to enhance the market's capacity, facilitating the display of local products and ensuring a more spacious and accessible environment for both vendors and shoppers. The redevelopment will also mitigate overcrowding and guarantee the market's smooth operation during adverse weather conditions. The Friday Market holds a significant place in the hearts of the Al Batinah North Governorate's residents, exuding the delightful blend of the past and present. It has long been a bustling meeting point for sellers and shoppers, attracting visitors from Suhar and various wilayats in the Al Batinah North and South governorates. Its unique assortment of traditional supplies makes it a treasure trove not easily found elsewhere, adding to its allure for both locals and tourists keen on exploring the essence of Omani and Islamic architecture. According to Sulaiman bin Hamad al Sunaidy,

the Director General of Al Batinah North Municipality, the rehabilitation project for the Friday Market is a vital measure to diversify the region's markets while ensuring the continued presence of such vibrant economic hubs that contribute significantly to the community's well-being. The market's redesign includes an impressive 178 parking spaces, an expansive umbrella-covered area of approximately 2,276 square metres, a well-paved 1,655-metre-long road, 17,260 square metres of asphalted space, and 4,680 square metres of interlocking tiles in several sections of the market. Additionally, there is a provision for a comprehensive 1050-metre-long rainwater drainage system. Sulaiman al Sunaidy stressed that the market's rehabilitation will stimulate commercial and economic activity not only within the Wilayat of Suhar but across the entire governorate. With local products proudly displayed by the region's pioneers, this rejuvenated market is set to boost the income of many families and provide consumers with access to authentic goods that draw both local and external visitors. The Friday market's strategic location in close proximity to the historic Suhar Fort, the Suhar



THE MARKET'S REDESIGN
INCLUDES AN IMPRESSIVE
178
PARKING SPACES

UMBRELLA-COVERED
AREA OF APPROXIMATELY
2,276
SQUARE METRES

market, the sea road, and the castle market for trade and traditional crafts makes it an attractive destination for those visiting the Wilayat of Suhar. Its juxtaposition with modern commercial centres and complexes further encourages visitors to explore this dynamic marketplace, rooted in the rich heritage of Omani sellers. Said al Harthy, a devoted vendor at the Friday Market, shared his decade-long experience in selling at the animal feed corner, emphasising the market's immense economic and social importance. Said expressed his commitment to his profession, which has proven to be both fulfilling and financially rewarding. He enthusiastically welcomed the market's rehabilitation, believing that it will invigorate the market and draw in numerous merchants once again. Another loyal visitor to the Friday Market, Yousef al Jabri, cherished fond memories of his childhood visits and continued to frequent the market to purchase fodder and camel supplies. For Al Jabri, the market represents more than just a place for transactions; it symbolises a cherished traditional gathering spot by the present generation. He commended Suhar Municipality's proactive step in reviving and preserving the market, recognising its far-reaching positive impact on the entire region.



Muscat Municipality taps SQU engineering expertise in construction

MUSCAT: Muscat Municipality on Monday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) to benefit from the university's engineering expertise in modern construction systems. The MoU was signed by HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice Chairman of SQU, and Ahmed bin Mohammed al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality. The SQU will provide technical consultancy, examine existing building materials and systems and help devise basic methods for supporting Muscat Municipality's efforts in endorsing modern building materials and systems. The MoU enables the two sides to consolidate partnership, exchange knowledge and expand cooperation in the fields of research and advisory. In addition, it will set out norms for implementing approved testing methodologies. As per the MoU, the SQU's College of Engineering will provide Muscat Municipality with services that include technical support and advanced facilities. — ONA

Oman, Mexico celebrate 48th anniversary of diplomatic ties

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and Mexico today celebrate the 48th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Anibal Gomez Toledo, Ambassador of Mexico to the Sultanate of Oman, hailed the distinguished bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Mexico. He stressed the keenness of the governments of the two countries to promote everything that would advance the bilateral relations to broader horizons in all spheres. The ambassador said that there are areas of cooperation between the two friendly countries, including economic, cultural and investment fields. He pointed out that the Sultanate of Oman enjoys a very important strategic location supporting trade between the countries of the world. This unique location, the ambassador said, attracts



the interest of the Mexican side to invest in Oman, which is represented in the presence of Mexican companies in the Sultanate of Oman, such as Octal. There are continuous visits between the two countries, the last of which was paid a high-level delegation from Mexico last May during which bilateral meetings were held with the Omani side, the Mexican ambassador concluded. — ONA



Al Zeeg showcased in film festival in S Korea

SEOUL: Oman's documentary 'Al Zeeg', which means a concentrated syrup of boiled sugarcane juice, is participating in the 12th edition of the Arab Film Festival.

The festival is organised by the Korean-Arab Society in South Korea.

'Al Zeeg' was selected from among 10 films from 9 Arab countries namely: Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Jordan, Egypt, Qatar, Palestine and the Sultanate of Oman.

'Al Zeeg' documentary was shown in the Korean city of Busan. It will be also shown on August 3 and 6 in the Korean capital Seoul. This is the first participation of an Omani film in this festival, which was launched in 2008.

Salah al Hadhrami, Director of the documentary 'Al Zeeg', said: "I am happy with this participation in this version of the festival. It is a source of pride for the work



team, as there were no previous participations of Omani films in the previous editions of this festival. I congratulate the work crew on this achievement".

'Al Zeeg' is a long documentary film produced by the Oman Film Society. The film deals with the Omani man's connection to the profession of sugarcane cultivation. The process of making sugarcane syrup is mixed between pleasure and difficulties.

The documentary highlights the nutritional and economic value of sugarcane. It also showcases the social impact, and how to accept change and modernisation.

The documentary won a number of local and international awards. It was also chosen for display in a number of local and international events to highlight the culture of Omani society.

— ONA

Al Batinah Internatiinal Film Festival from Nov 12-15

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Al Batinah Internatiinal Film Festival, part of regional film festivals, will be held from November 12 to 15 and will be held in cooperation with the Office of the Governor of Al Batinah South. It is organised under the slogan 'Human Relationship with Earth' to highlight the strong ties between the Omani citizens and the environment.

"The festival is considered an attractive space for youth creativity in the field of film industry and an opportunity to benefit from international cinematic experiences, and contributes to the dissemination of cinematic culture and the advancement of Omani cinematic works," Dr Hamid al Ameri, Chairman of the festival and head of Oman Film Society said.

"This year, a new competition for government and private institutions in the Sultanate of



Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi

Oman is introduced with the aim of enhancing cooperation and communication between the various institutions in producing documentaries using high-quality techniques in terms of clarity of idea, scenario and implementation, and contributing to the dissemination of culture and human values."

He added that this edition of the Al Batinah International Film Festival is a continuation of the series of festivals held by the Society, through which it seeks to achieve many common goals, the most important of which is spreading cinematic culture in the

society, promoting the Sultanate of Oman as a future interface for the international film industry, and further presenting the Omani governorates and states to the media world.

"We are pleased to welcome all film-makers from within and outside the Sultanate of Oman to participate in the Al Batinah Film Festival in its second edition, which is a unique opportunity for them to display their creativity, exchange knowledge and enhance cultural communication in this field," said Mohammed bin Abdullah al Ajmi, Director of the festival.

It is also an opportunity to discover Omani and international talents in the film industry, and the Society believes in the importance of cinema as a means of conveying stories and enhancing cultural and human communication.

Those who wish to participate in the festival's competition can submit their works until October 1, 2023 via the festival's official website www.albatinahfilm.com



Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs

TENDER NOTICE

The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs hereby announces the following tender:

Tender Number	Name/Description	Grade	Closing Date for Collecting Tender Documents	Closing Date for Submitting Tender	Tender Document Cost
3/2023	PROVISION OF CLEANING SERVICES FOR THE MINISTRY BUILDING	EXCELLENT GRADE	10/8/2023	17/9/2023	RO. 25/-

All specialized and interested companies that are registered with the Tender Board participate and get the specifications and condition of the tender from the ESNAD Electronic Tendering Services website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) In exchange for paying the amount specified above electronically, which amount shall be non-refundable.

Offers must be submitted in ESNAD Electronic Tendering Services website **before (11) eleven am** on the closing date for submitting Tenders; Tenders submitted after that will not be considered regardless of the reasons for lateness, which is valid for ninety (90) days from the closing date for submitting tenders.

NOTE:

For clarifications, you may contact via ESNAD Electronic Tendering Services website mentioned above.

***The Ministry is not obliged to accept the lowest or any Tender.**

Oman, ESCWA discuss joint cooperation



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation on Monday reviewed the joint cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA).

This online meeting between Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of the ESCWA discussed cooperation between Oman and the ESCWA, particularly what is related to Oman's hosting of the launch of the skills observatory platform for the Arab world (widget). — ONA



SALE OF VEHICLE/EQUIPMENT

Leading Construction Co. in Oman intends to dispose of their used vehicles and equipment, in 'as is where is' condition. The items identified are presently located at their Al Khoud yard and will be offered for inspection to the public on 7/8/2023, 8/8/2023 and 9/8/2023 between 08:00 am to 12:00 pm and 03:00 pm to 05:00 pm.

Last date for submission of closed tender is 9/8/2023 at 05:00 pm at our Al Khoud office.

Interested parties may contact at
Tel: (+968) 26983767 / 26983777 / 24525303 , Mob: (+968) 91354151

MOORE STEPHENS LLC

NOTICE ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF LIQUIDATION OF PRECIOUS ESTABLISHMENT LLC (AS APPEARED IN OFFICIAL GAZETTE NO 1502)

Moore Stephens LLC announces the liquidation process of Precious Establishment LLC, bearing commercial registration number 1692470, in accordance with the decision taken by the Company's Members on 4 July 2023. The liquidators alone have the right to represent the Company under liquidation before third parties, and all parties are to confirm with the liquidator for all matters concerning the company's business at the following address:

**Office No. 41, 4th Floor, Building No. 1022, Way No. 1013;
Al Walaj Street, Al Qurum
P O Box 933, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: 24061000, Email: info@moore-oman.com**

By this announcement, the liquidator calls the company's creditors to submit their claims against the company, together with the supporting documents, to the above address within six months from the date of publishing this announcement for the first time, and any debtors should settle the company's rights with the liquidator on the address above.

**Moore Stephens LLC
Official Liquidators of Precious Establishment LLC
(Under voluntary liquidation)**

MOORE STEPHENS LLC

NOTICE ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF LIQUIDATION OF SAJAM MODERN LLC (AS APPEARED IN OFFICIAL GAZETTE NO 1502)

Moore Stephens LLC announces the liquidation process of Sajam Modern LLC, bearing commercial registration number 1139095, in accordance with the decision taken by the Company's Members on 22 June 2023. The liquidators alone have the right to represent the Company under liquidation before third parties, and all parties are to confirm with the liquidator for all matters concerning the company's business at the following address:

**Office No. 41, 4th Floor, Building No. 1022, Way No. 1013;
Al Walaj Street, Al Qurum
P O Box 933, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: 24061000, Email: info@moore-oman.com**

By this announcement, the liquidator calls the company's creditors to submit their claims against the company, together with the supporting documents, to the above address within six months from the date of publishing this announcement for the first time, and any debtors should settle the company's rights with the liquidator on the address above.

**Moore Stephens LLC
Official Liquidators of Sajam Modern LLC
(Under voluntary liquidation)**



Tender Number T-26-2023

Tender Announcement

"Mwasalat" invites professional firms for the following tender:

Tender Name	Framework Agreement for Supply and Installation of Fire Extinguishing Systems for Mwasalat Vehicles
Project Summary	This tender aims to procure a supplier for providing and installing Vehicle Fire Extinguishing Systems in Mwasalat's Bus Fleet, ensuring compliance with the tender's terms and conditions.
Tender Fee	NIL
Grade & Speciality	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field

Start date for tender document distribution
Tuesday, 08th August 2023

Last date for tender document distribution
Tuesday, 08th August 2023

Last date for submission
Tuesday, 22th August 2023

- The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M.
- Tenders are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.com and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Document shall be shared by email.
- The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.
- Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head-quarter Oman National Transport Company S.A.O.C "MWASALAT" at Ghala, Muscat (Jabal Shams Building 5th floor). Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

"Mwasalat"
Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: +968 1551
P.O.Box: 911, Al Khuwair, PC: 133, Sultanate of Oman

For more information
please send to:
tenders@mwasalat.com

Looking for
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Check out
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classified
page. It's
where buyers
meet sellers.



2.3 billion people in 44 countries remain unprotected by any WHO anti-tobacco measures Only 4 nations doing enough to stub out smoking

GENEVA: Only four countries — Brazil, Mauritius, the Netherlands and Turkiye — have adopted all the anti-tobacco measures recommended in the fight against the “deadly scourge” of smoking, the World Health Organization said on Monday.

In a fresh report, the UN health agency urged countries to scale up their use of recognised measures to reduce tobacco use, including enforcing advertising bans, plastering health warnings on cigarette packages, raising tobacco taxes and providing assistance to those who want to quit.

It said Mauritius and the Netherlands had now joined Brazil and Turkiye in implementing all of its recommended measures.

WHO said 5.6 billion people, or 71 per cent of the world’s population,

were now protected by at least one tobacco control measure — five times more than in 2007.

The health agency said the global rate of the prevalence of smoking had dropped from 22.8 per cent in 2007 to 17 per cent in 2021.

Without this decline, there would have been 300 million additional smokers now, the WHO said.

“Slowly but surely, more and more people are being protected from the harms of tobacco,” WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, adding that his organisation was eager to support national efforts to “protect their people from this deadly scourge”.

Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death, killing 8.7 million people each year, including 1.3 million who die from inhaling second-hand smoke.



An owner displays tobacco, which is used to produce homemade cigarettes at Darussalam on the outskirts of Banda Aceh. — AFP

According to the organisation, eight countries are one policy step away from joining the leaders in tobacco control: Ethiopia, Iran, Ireland, Jordan, Madagascar, Mexico,

New Zealand and Spain.

However, 2.3 billion people in 44 countries remain unprotected by any WHO anti-tobacco measures.

And a full 53 states still do not

have complete smoking bans in healthcare facilities — something Ruediger Krech, the WHO’s health promotion director, called “completely unacceptable”.

LITTLE REGULATION FOR E-CIGARETTES

The WHO report also decried far too little regulation of e-cigarettes.

Globally, 121 countries have adopted some measure addressing e-cigarettes. But 74 countries — home to almost one third of the global population — have no regulations in place addressing such products, meaning no bans on use in public places, no labelling requirements and no bans on advertising.

“Astonishingly, very few countries have measures in place to protect children,” the report said, noting that 88 countries, covering 2.3 billion people, have no minimum age for

buying e-cigarettes.

Some companies are out to “hook our children onto e-cigarettes and vaping instead to make them nicotine-dependent”, said Krech.

Mauritius Health Minister Kailesh Jagutpal said it was better to try to get the tobacco industry onside before changing the law.

“Otherwise, the industry is going to have developed all tactics to come up and fight you,” he told reporters.

Krech said the tobacco firms were “insidiously making their way to policymaking tables”, decrying “whitewashing tactics where they try to be part of the solution”.

“The tobacco industry is a powerful and resourceful industry which even today continues to grow in terms of profit and influence,” he said. “But we can fight back.”

— AFP



Security personnel examine the site of a bomb blast in Bajaur district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province on Sunday. — AFP

Empty seats, discarded shoes remain after Pakistan blast toll rises to 47

KHAR: Blood-stained chairs, scattered ball bearings and shoes shed by the dead, wounded and panicked bore testimony on Monday to the carnage caused by a suicide bombing at a Pakistan political event.

At least 47 people were killed and more than 100 wounded on Sunday when a blast ripped through a gathering of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) party members in northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. The marquee hoisted in the town of Khar lay mangled and charred the morning after the explosion, partly collapsed onto blood-soaked carpets with around 400 upended red chairs strewn about.

“Upon arriving at the scene, I was confronted with a devastating sight,” Khar resident Fazal Aman, 29, said on Monday. “Lifeless bodies scattered

on the ground while people cried out for help.” Party paraphernalia, including hats and scarves in JUI-F’s black-and-white branding, were abandoned and trampled into the dusty ground, some flecked with dried blood. The first funerals for the victims got under way on Monday, including for a pair of cousins aged 16 and 17 where young boys wept by coffins. “These two were very serious and down-to-earth individuals in our family,” said 24-year-old shopkeeper Najeeb Ullah. “This is a great injustice on our land.”

Remnants of human flesh and hair could be seen as far as 30 metres (100 feet) from a shattered stage, the apparent epicentre of the blast near Khar’s main bazaar.

Gulistan Khan, a 40-year-old farmer being treated at a nearby

hospital, said he was in the third row when the bomb detonated as local JUI-F leaders arrived to crowds chanting slogans.

“I was thrown backwards as if lifted off the ground,” he said.

“The blast was powerful. Flames coming out were very high so I couldn’t see anything.” A mound of about 40 sandals and shoes had been piled in the shade behind a cordon of yellow police tape as zebra-striped JUI-F flags fluttered in the breeze.

Investigators in rubber gloves and facemasks picked through the scene on Monday morning, one using a trowel to scoop up a sample from a dark patch on the floor of the stage.

The site was swarmed by security forces carrying assault rifles and surrounding roads were peppered with police checkpoints. — AFP

2 killed as heavy rain batters north China

BEIJING: Heavy rains battered northern China on Monday, killing at least two people in Beijing while washing away cars and forcing the capital to issue its highest alerts for flooding and landslides.

Storm Doksuri, a former super typhoon, has swept northwards over China since Friday, when it hit southern Fujian province after scything through the Philippines.

Emergency personnel recovered two bodies from waterways in Beijing’s Mentougou district on Monday, the state-run People’s Daily said. AFP reporters saw tree branches and dented cars, left by receding floodwaters, strewn on riverbanks in Mentougou on Monday afternoon.

“This morning it was crazy, the water overflowed the Mentougou river and the whole avenue was flooded,” Guo Zhenyu, a 49-year-old resident, told AFP.

Yellow bulldozers, workers in orange mackintoshes and residents cleared away the mud and debris

during a period of lighter rain on Monday afternoon.

“I’m old but I’ve never seen flooding like this before in my life,” Mentougou resident Qin Quan said. She showed AFP a video on her phone, shared among residents of the area, of workers attempting to resuscitate an unconscious man, as well as footage of a man desperately clinging to a pole with one hand as water washes over him. The much larger and still swollen Yongding River in the same district churned up debris in brown torrents as residents looked on in shock from a bridge.

Other footage showed a traffic barrier dozens of metres long snaking down a road as the water carried it away.

Chen Hong, a resident of the southern Fengtai district, shared footage with AFP that showed a parked van half-submerged in fast-flowing brown water on Monday morning as the rain continued to fall.

— AFP



A view of the overflooded Yongding river, after heavy rains in Mentougou district in Beijing on Monday. — AFP

India likely to receive below-average monsoon rains in August

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI: India is likely to receive below-average rainfall in August due to the El Nino weather pattern, a senior weather department official said on Monday, after an above-average monsoon in July helped farmers accelerate crop planting.

The monsoon, vital for India’s \$3 trillion economy, delivers nearly 70 per cent of the rain needed to water its farms and refill reservoirs and aquifers.

Rainfall in August is estimated at 92 per cent of the long-period average, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director-general of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), told a virtual press conference.

Farmers typically start planting rice, corn, cotton, soybeans, sugarcane and peanuts, among other crops, from June 1, when monsoon rains are expected to begin drenching India. Sowing usually lasts until July and early August.

Summer rains are crucial as nearly half of India’s farmland lacks irrigation.

Rice growing states in eastern India could receive surplus rainfall in August, while rainfall in rice, cotton and sugar cane growing southern states could be below normal, Mohapatra said.

— Reuters

SHORT TAKES

COPENHAGEN

Sweden, Denmark mull banning burnings

Sweden and Denmark are thinking about banning Quran burnings, as the actions endanger their security and have provoked strong protests in Muslim countries. Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson (pictured) said he was in close contact with his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen about a possible ban.

“We are in the most serious security situation since World War II, and we know here that both states, state-like actors and individuals can take advantage of the



situation,” Kristersson wrote on Instagram on Sunday. Earlier, the Danish government announced that it would consider legal remedies to ban Quran burnings in front of foreign embassies.

RIGA

Lithuanian president worried over Wagner troops

Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda has again expressed concern about the presence of Russian Wagner mercenaries in neighbouring Belarus, saying they pose a serious threat to the country’s security.

Nauseda said it may prove “really too tempting” for those involved with the Wagner mercenaries to use the soldiers to create provocations against Lithuania, Poland or Latvia. All three countries are members of the European Union and Nato alliance that



share a border with Belarus.

At the same time, however, Nauseda admitted that there were no indications that such provocations were being prepared.

THE HAGUE

Fire-struck cargo ship towed to new location

A cargo ship packed with electric cars ablaze off the Dutch coast has been towed to a new temporary position, authorities said on Monday, racing to prevent an ecological disaster.

The 66-kilometre operation to move Fremantle Highway began on Sunday and was carried out “without any problem”, the water management agency said. The cause of the fire that broke out last Tuesday remains unclear, though the vessel’s owner has said one of the electric vehi-



cles on board may have been the source. One sailor died after he and 22 others were rescued from the burning ship that had forced some crew members to jump overboard.

Knowing the ‘sole reference’

Over the years there must have been numerous times where there were discussions regarding weather forecasters at Oman Met Office about high and medium clouds.

But this week had an opportunity to fly through these clouds. The experience was overwhelming so much so that one even forgot to capture them on camera. The transition of the waking up sky with a long line in orange colour to dense clouds as the flight approached Muscat International Airport was breathtakingly enchanting. It was a master class on light and weather, an understanding of earth and it’s atmosphere.

And beneath of it all are we with other living things battling with daily challenges and happiness.

Certain times in our life we go through dark clouds not knowing how long the darkness will remain. And that is when we hope and wish for sunshine. The light that removes all darkness, but we know all we need is patience — the light will reach us.

Sitting in the flight, the thoughts went to the pilot.

Today we looked for details and this is what came up — “Pilots are unable to see inside a cloud when flying into it. Once the pilot loses visual reference to the earth’s surface they must control the aircraft using sole reference to the aircraft cockpit instrumentation. This is known as instrument flying and is flown under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR).

The term ‘sole’ reference clicked in mind and wondered why we don’t think of soul reference. And we don’t have life rules or we probably do, then again who likes rules?

Most people follow traffic rules because of hefty fines, and the



Lakshmi Kothaneth
@lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

TODAY MANY ARE SENSITIVE TOWARDS OTHERS FEELINGS — SO SENSITIVE AND POLITICALLY CORRECT AND AT TIMES WE SEARCH FOR WORDS WHILE ADVISING YOUNGSTERS

inconvenience that comes with breaking them. The consequences are what strikes us and reminds us at crucial times. I remember teachers who took time to discuss life in school — refer to consequences of steps we take in life.

Today many are sensitive towards others feelings — so sensitive and politically correct and at times we search for words while advising youngsters. The rules are safety nets, but every young person in each generation must have laughed at breaking rules. Once older and wiser, the outlook changes. It is not the age that makes us wiser, it is the collection of experiences that makes us that way.

Some may never learn and others might evolve while few others would regret or take a new path. Regret — in psychology this is how ‘regret’ has been classified — according to one source ‘Regret’ has been defined as a counterfactual emotion (Kahneman and Miller 1986), meaning that its basis rests on a counterfactual inference because that the past could have been different if we had taken different decisions.

So even when we think regretting is being almost stuck in life, it is still better than other negative feelings. Maybe it is because there is a sense of what could have been.

Just like the pilot flying in the clouds we still need to stay focused and have a ‘sole reference’ to continue to move ahead in life.

And the tricky part is that ‘sole reference’ most often is gained with experience or the ones who search early in life.

Then again, life, people often say is destiny or fate.

Could it be that there is more to life where being prepared is what requires for the journey. And that include education and awareness.

WATER WOES!



Palestinian children carry water gallons in the Al Shati refugee camp in Gaza city on Monday, amidst a heatwave and power cuts. — AFP

A pragmatic COP?

Recent climate negotiations have been heated, to say the least. Beyond the usual recriminations over financing, the choice of Sultan al Jaber – Chief Executive of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) – as the president of the upcoming United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates has fuelled considerable controversy.

But if the world is to make genuine progress on climate change, the engagement of both the oil and gas industry and the Gulf region is essential. In this sense, COP28 could be a real game-changer – if the rest of the world manages to set dogma aside and focus on finding common ground.

This message is particularly important for the European Union, whose approach to climate change has often been characterised by a self-defeating combination of ideology, hubris, and tunnel vision. While the EU has made important progress in reducing its carbon footprint and improving energy efficiency, it has failed to devise a common energy framework, thereby undermining both energy security and, ironically, sustainability.

This became starkly apparent after Russia’s full-scale war on Ukraine in 2022, when European countries had to scramble for alternative energy supplies. Germany resorted to burning coal, the dirtiest fossil fuel. Now, the EU is being forced to reassess the practicality of some of its green initiatives, including a law banning the sale of diesel and gas-powered cars by 2035 and the Nature Restoration Law, a key component of the European Green Deal.



ANA PALACIO

The writer is a former minister of foreign affairs of Spain and former senior vice president and general counsel of the World Bank Group, is a visiting lecturer at Georgetown University

IF THE WORLD IS TO MAKE GENUINE PROGRESS ON CLIMATE CHANGE, THE ENGAGEMENT OF BOTH THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY AND THE GULF REGION IS ESSENTIAL

Moreover, though the EU has established itself as a global standard-setter in the green transition, it overestimates the extent to which its green philosophy resonates with the rest of the world. This is especially true for non-OECD countries, which bristle at the notion that they should make a direct leap from energy poverty to fully renewable and decarbonised consumption.

These countries contributed little to the climate crisis and now face the immense challenge of delivering economic opportunities to fast-growing populations. They can hardly be expected to prioritise sustainability over growth and development. Where they do contribute to the green transition – and pursue related imperatives like climate-change adaptation – they should be receiving generous funding from the rich world.

But such support is currently falling far short of what is needed. It is estimated that if emerging and developing economies are to have any chance of reaching net-zero emissions, their annual clean-energy investments must reach roughly \$2.8 trillion by the early 2030s. That is more than triple the \$770 billion delivered in 2022.

In 2021, net transfers from official loans to the developing world amounted to just \$38 billion. The \$100 billion in annual climate financing that high-income countries pledged in 2009 to deliver by 2020 never materialised. Instead, some donors have begun imposing green conditionality on foreign aid and

loans. Meanwhile, Europe has continued to make up its own energy shortfalls with gas, often from countries such as Senegal or Mozambique, to which it has denied financing for anything other than renewable energy.

If COP28 is to be a success, such green idealism and hypocrisy must be replaced by a clear-eyed agenda that considers the broad range of interests at play.

Only by recognising the needs and goals of all relevant actors can we hope to make green initiatives sustainable and accelerate the energy transition.

A more realistic approach to the oil and gas sector is also needed. For starters, there is no getting around the fact that, for now, it remains essential to energy access and security. As a recent International Energy Agency report argues, only continued investment in the oil and gas industry can ensure that the world’s oil and gas supply does not fall faster than demand.



The world cannot afford to prioritise ideology over pragmatism.

But the IEA also notes that the industry should be investing in reducing the emissions intensity of its operations. In fact, reducing the oil and gas industry’s emissions – such as by eliminating all non-emergency flaring and expanding the use of low-emissions hydrogen in refineries – is one of the most cost-effective approaches to reducing total global emissions and limiting near-term global warming. Oil companies – beginning with those owned by states – should commit to tangible, verifiable emissions-reduction goals.

But oil and gas companies have an even greater role to play in the green transition. Energy firms have a global reach, a high-risk appetite, substantial financial resources, and established connections with energy stakeholders such as buyers and regulators. They also have considerable expertise in offshore projects, hydrogen production, and transporting fuel. All of these strengths can be leveraged

to advance sustainability-related objectives.

Firms like ADNOC have already made progress not only in lowering their carbon intensity, but also in contributing to development. Saudi Aramco’s \$500 million corporate venture fund to back renewables and energy-efficient technologies is also a step in the right direction. But much more needs to be done.

To encourage the private sector – and not just oil and gas companies – to invest more in emissions reduction, we must make better use of carbon pricing and cross-border emissions-trading schemes. But such efforts must account for differences in energy needs and priorities, and avoid unrealistic expectations for renewables. A one-size-fits-all approach would be neither fair nor effective. Each country must be able to strike its own balance between sustainability, security, and cost-effectiveness. The EU, for its part, needs a new framework for climate action that reflects a more practical, global perspective – one with the broad appeal that will be essential to make real progress on climate change.

The world cannot afford to prioritise ideology over pragmatism. A just green transition will be possible only with a sober, balanced approach that accounts for each country’s energy and development needs. If COP28 is to yield meaningful progress, we must stop squabbling and start recognising what various actors – including the oil and gas industry – can bring to the table.

sport

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Chelsea agree to sign France defender Disasi from Monaco



CHELSEA: Chelsea have agreed a deal to sign France defender Axel Disasi from Ligue 1 side Monaco, British media said on Sunday.

The 25-year-old is set to move to Stamford Bridge in a deal reportedly worth 45 million pounds (\$49.58 million) and will be another option to cover for injured compatriot Wesley Fofana.

Disasi is expected to compete for the centre back position with the likes of Thiago Silva, Trevoh Chalobah and Levi Colwill, while another Frenchman Benoit Badiashile is preparing to return from a hamstring injury early in the season.

Fofana is likely to miss much of the season after anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction surgery in July.

Disasi has four caps and was first called up for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, making his France debut in the 1-0 group stage defeat by Tunisia.

Chelsea are looking to revive their fortunes under new manager Mauricio Pochettino after coming 12th in the standings last season - their worst finish since 1994. — **Reuters**

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, JULY 31

The Royal Cavalry snatched the team title of the first day of the tent pegging Championship, while the Royal Guard of Oman's Rashid bin Hamad al Sawai was bagged the individual title.

The championship was organised by the Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF), as part of the Khareef Dhofar activities for 2023 in association with the Dhofar Equestrian Committee, the Dhofar Governor's Office, and Dhofar Municipality and sponsored

by Hala FM. The first day's competitions consisted of seven spear rounds for individuals and teams of various stake sizes, where 10 teams from various government cavalry units and private stables competed.

TEAM COMPETITION

The winning Royal Cavalry team consisted of Hamad bin Nasser al Riyami, Safwan bin Zaid al Maamari, Hamad bin Saif al Raisi, and Saif al Ashkhari.

The runners-up Royal Guard of Oman team was represented by Rashid bin Hamad al Sawai, Yahya bin Masoud al Abawi,

Dhafer al Zaabi and Ali al Rahbi. Badr al Qasabi, Khaled al Amri, Omar al Mazrouei and Nasser al Siyabi represented the third placed Sultan's Armed Forces team.

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

Rashid bin Hamad al Sawai from Royal Guard of Oman grabbed the first place in the individual category followed by Omar al Mazrouei of Sultan's Armed Forces ranked and Safwan bin Zaid al Maamari of Royal Cavalry.

The tent pegging tournament also included a show of archery skill on the horse

back thrilled the spectators. The show is now a popular item in many GCC countries.

Ahmed bin Saif al Abri, Secretary-General of OEF, gave prizes to winners in the presence of Dr Youssef al Wahaibi, Treasurer and Acting Executive Director, Mohammed al Balushi, member of the OEF Board. The tent pegging competitions will continue on Tuesday with spear, pommel and lemon.

Meanwhile, the national tent pegging team will host a training camp, from August 2 to 15, ahead of the world cup tournament in South Africa.

Zambia beat Costa Rica 3-1 for first World Cup win

HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND: Debutants Zambia claimed their first ever victory at the Women's World Cup with a 3-1 win over Costa Rica at Waikato Stadium on Monday, although both teams were already out of contention for the knockout stage.

Zambia, whose first two games ended in 5-0 hammerings, finished third in Group C, with Japan top after their 4-0 thrashing of Spain. Costa Rica finished bottom and did not pick up a point in their three matches.

Defender Lushomo Mweemba scored the fastest goal of the tournament so far, with a spectacular volleyed effort at two minutes and 11 seconds, and captain Barbra Banda doubled the lead from the penalty spot just after the half-hour mark.

Melissa Herrera cut the deficit two minutes after the break and Costa Rica pushed for an equaliser, but substitute Racheal Kundananji netted the third in stoppage time

to ensure Zambia's debut World Cup campaign ended on a high.

"It's a historic day," Banda said. "We've had a lot of support back home so we wanted to win today ... It was not an easy game for us. It was a battle."

Zambia were awarded the spot kick after Banda went to ground inside the six yard box and the forward stepped up to calmly slot the ball into the bottom left corner, scoring the 1,000th goal in Women's World Cup history.

"I've been practicing penalties in training so I was confident," Banda added. "At the same time, I was nervous ... carrying the hopes of thousands of people back home. It was an honour for me to take that penalty."

Playing at their second World Cup, Costa Rica were still searching for their first win in the competition and scored two minutes after the break, when forward Herrera bundled the ball home after goalkeeper Catherine

Musonda was unable to clear it.

Costa Rica appealed for a penalty when midfielder Priscila Chinchilla collided with Musonda in the box, but were denied after a lengthy VAR check when replays showed forward Sheika Scott was offside in the build-up.

Herrera had the ball in the net again with around 20 minutes remaining but was ruled offside and Valeria Del Campo fired wide before, against the run of play, Kundananji scored from Banda's cross in stoppage time to seal a historic result.

"We are very happy to win our last game in the tournament," Zambia coach Bruce Mwape said. "Everybody worked very hard to come up with this positive result... I hope next time we'll come (to a World Cup) with a different approach. "We have learnt a lot from different teams. We have played against some of the best players in the world. This is a good experience." — **Reuters**



Zambia's Barbra Banda celebrates scoring their second goal. – REUTERS

LOS ANGELES: Lee Hodges fired two eagles in a four-under-par 67 on Sunday to claim his first US PGA Tour title with a wire-to-wire, seven-stroke triumph in the 3M Open in Blaine, Minnesota.

Hodges finished with a 24-under par total of 260 at TPC Twin Cities, where he'd pushed his lead to as many as seven and seen it shrink to three over playing partner J.T. Poston before Poston's disastrous triple-bogey at the final hole. That left Poston, who carded a two-under 69, tied for second with Kevin Streelman and Scotland's Martin Laird. Streelman carded a 66 while Laird produced a seven-under-par 64 that featured five birdies and a 20-foot eagle at 18. None of them ever really looked like catching Hodges, who started the day with a five-shot lead.

He pushed that to seven after a birdie at the second and an eagle at the sixth, where his 255-yard approach with a three-wood left him an 11-foot putt.

After a bogey at the ninth he eagled the par-five 12th in spectacular style, again using a three-wood and landing his 257-yard second shot within three feet.

"Those were two of the greatest shots I ever hit," said Hodges, who has secured his berth in the FedEx Cup playoffs as well as an



Hodges marches to first US PGA Tour title

invitation to next year's Masters. "Anytime you win, you really set yourself up for some special stuff," he said. "My caddie was telling me on 18, I honestly didn't even think about it, we get to

play Augusta next year. That's something else. That was probably the coolest thing I heard all day." Hodges responded to a three-putt bogey at 15 with another birdie at 16, and answered a bogey

at 17 -- that saw his lead reduced to three shots -- with a final birdie at the 72nd hole. He could enjoy the congratulations of the crowd as he walked to the 18th green having

stuck his third shot from the fairway a foot from the cup. "It's just a dream week, the whole thing," said the 28-year-old ranked 110th in the world, who won for the first time in his

65th tour start. "Honestly, From Monday to Sunday I played really good golf, even in practice rounds." Poston had looked a sure bet for solo second, arriving at the tough par-five 18th three strokes behind Hodges but three clear of Laird and Streelman.

His tee shot landed in the right rough, narrowly avoiding the water hazard. From an awkward stance on the bank he opted to go for the green rather than laying up but his ball ended up in the lake.

"I had to try and give it a shot and see if there was some way I could make three there at the end and put some pressure on Lee," Poston said. "It was a shot that was going to be hard to pull off, but we weren't playing for second place."

Dylan Wu and Keith Mitchell shared fifth on 268. Defending champion Tony Finau was a further shot back alongside Sam Ryder and Aaron Baddeley.

Beau Hossler matched the TPC Twin Cities course record with a career-low 62 that featured eight straight birdies from the ninth through the 16th.

That had put Hossler in a tie for fourth as Hodges and Poston teed off. "Usually, you shoot that kind of number on Sunday and you ideally have a chance to win," said Hossler, who ended up tied for 13th.

— AFP

Final Ashes Test in balance for exciting finish at Oval



England's Chris Woakes celebrates after taking the wicket of Australia's Usman Khawaja – Reuters

ANDY JALIL
LONDON, JULY 31

With a battling opening stand, Usman Khawaja and David Warner have given Australia a realistic chance of overhauling the very substantial target of 384 set for them to win. If it is reached it will be a record at the Kia Oval where the previous highest score to win was 263.

In addition to that it will be the second highest total in an Ashes series – and the sixth highest by any team anywhere – to chase successfully after 404 for three at Headingley in 1948 under Sir Donald Bradman's captaincy on his last tour of England when Australia remained unbeaten throughout the tour.

The truncated fourth day's play ended an hour after lunch with Australia on 135 without loss, they require a further 249 with all wickets intact for a 3-1 series win. England on the other hand need the ten wickets hoping the rain,

which has been forecast again, stays away and gives them at least a 2-2 drawn series, having failed to regain the Ashes.

Khawaja and Warner began their task with caution knowing that with two days remaining it was imperative to keep wickets intact. The two left-handers saw off the morning session scoring 75 by lunch as they gradually picked up the scoring rate keeping pace with each other with Khawaja on 39 and Warner on 30.

They played their shots more freely after the break and Warner reached 40 with a powerful straight drive off Anderson. Mark Wood was brought into the attack for the first time in the day for the 33rd over but neither he nor any of the other four bowlers used seemed to make an impression on the batsmen.

They brought up the hundred of the partnership for the first time in this series and Khawaja reached his 24th Test half century steering Wood past gully for his

fourth 4, from 110 balls. Warner then followed with his 36th Test half century from 90 balls with 7 fours. They continued with their stroke play and Khawaja's delicate late cut off Joe Root saw him to 60.

Root conceded three fours in one over with two of them consecutively hit by Warner as he reached 58 before rain stopped play for the day.

Earlier, resuming on the fourth morning on 389 for nine, England's two tail-end batsmen could only extend the total to 395 before James Anderson fell without adding to his overnight score of 8. The review by third umpire confirmed he was lbw to Todd Murphy giving the off-spinner his fourth wicket of the innings for 110.

Meanwhile, Stuart Broad had added to his overnight score of 2 with a hit for six, his last scoring shot in Test cricket having announced his retirement at the end of the third day's play.



Fritz downs Vukic to win Atlanta ATP

MIAMI: World number nine Taylor Fritz shrugged off a second-set wobble to claim the sixth title of his career with victory over Alexsandar Vukic in the ATP Atlanta Open on Sunday.

US number one Fritz dug deep to overpower Australia's Vukic, ranked 82nd in the world, in 2hr 16min, winning 7-5, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4.

Fritz looked to be heading for a straight sets victory after taking two match points on Vukic's serve

while leading 6-5 in the second set.

But Vukic showed great character to claw his way back from the brink, eventually holding serve with an ace to force a tie-break.

The 27-year-old from Sydney then relied on his thunderous serve to grab the tie-break as Fritz was left rueing a golden chance to wrap up victory.

However the American regained his composure in the

deciding set, claiming the decisive break in the seventh game to take a 4-3 lead before holding for 5-3.

Vukic then held comfortably but there was no way back as Fritz produced a dominant service game to seal victory.

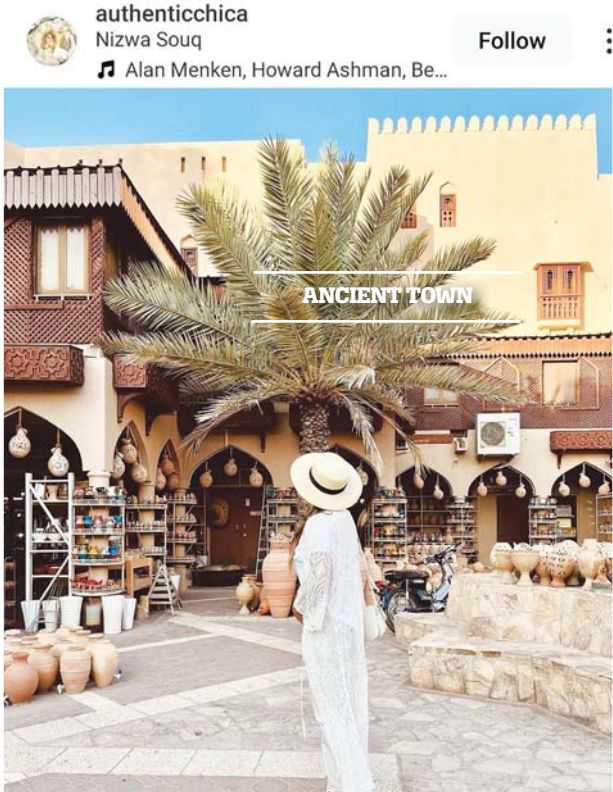
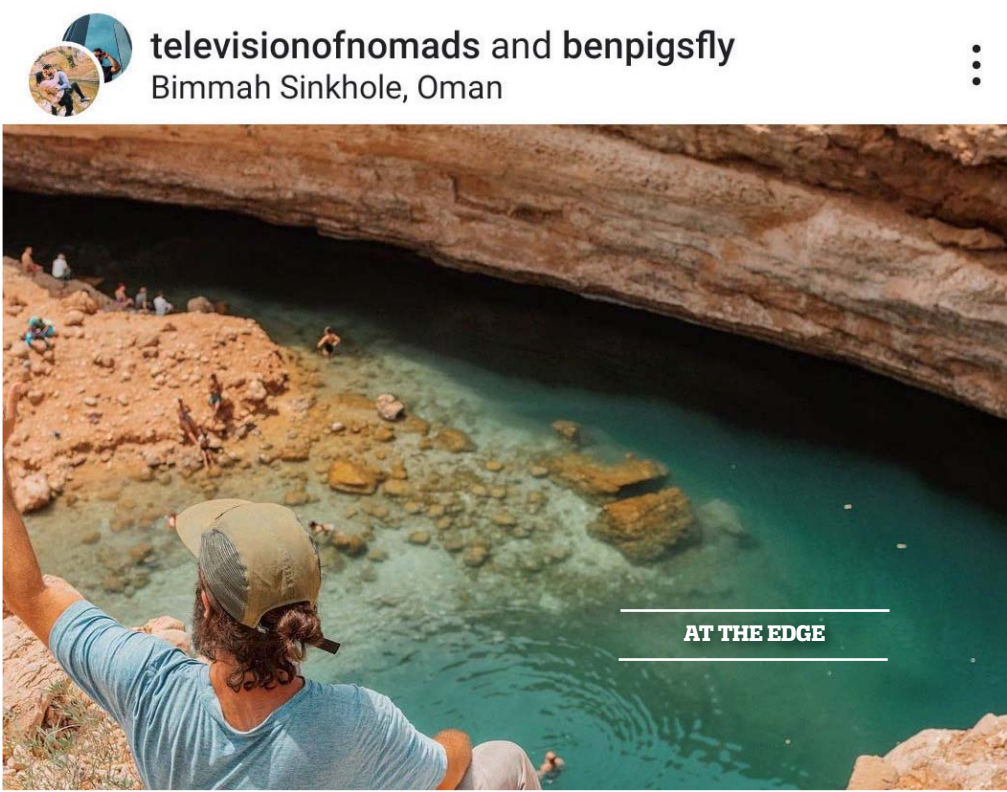
A booming ace -- his 16th of the tournament -- brought up three match points at 40-0, and another powerful serve left Vukic flailing with a wild return to give the American the win.

— AFP





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Glitzy Dubai hungry for culinary fame

FRENCH CHEF RENAUD Dutel never thought his career would take him to the United Arab Emirates' glam hub of Dubai, but has found there a culinary capital in the making.

Five years since he was offered a spot at a fancy restaurant in the Gulf financial and tourism hub — better known for its skyscrapers than its food scene — Dutel is delighted to have “taken the risk.”

“I believe Dubai is at the beginning,” he said as lobster cuts were sizzling on a skillet beside him at STAY, a Michelin-starred restaurant specialised in French cuisine on the city's signature Palm Jumeirah man-made island.

“But (Dubai) is on the way to becoming one of the best destinations in the world to come to dine.”

Boasting about 13,000 restaurants and cafes, some of the city's eateries are already making global waves.

Last year, 11 Dubai restaurants were awarded the Middle East's first Michelin stars, with more joining the prestigious club this year.

Some like STAY by Yannick Alleno clinched two stars, but none made it to three — Michelin's highest honour.

“Dubai's gastronomy scene has transformed the city into one of the most diverse and dynamic food hubs in the world,” said Issam Kazim of the local government's tourism and economy department.

100 PER CENT DUBAI

The UAE, a five-decade federation of seven emirates along the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula, lacks the rich culinary heritage of other Arab states.

The meat-heavy Emirati cuisine is

strongly influenced by historic trade ties with present-day Iran and India.

But it did not see the “gastronomisation” that culinary traditions in much of the West did, according to Loic Bienassis of the European Institute for the History and Culture of Food.

Still, it “can be done”, he said. “And political will can play a role.”

Instead, with expats largely outnumbering the local Emirati population, the city's rich cultural mix has yielded a unique culinary identity.

Moonrise, a rooftop restaurant which offers a Middle Eastern-Japanese fusion and only seats 12 people at a time, is a prime example.

Solemann Haddad, Moonrise's head chef and co-owner, described the food as one-third European, one-third Japanese and one-third Arabic, “but it's 100 per cent Dubai”.

Haddad, born in the city to French and Syrian parents, won a coveted Michelin star last year at the ripe age of 27.

His dishes reflect the cosmopolitan spirit of Dubai, he said, combining elements such as date syrup with a chutney of saffron and pineapple.

Having established itself as a business and luxury hot spot, Dubai is now also attracting some of the world's leading culinary names including Alleno and fellow Frenchman Pierre Gagnaire.

DESERT-SOURCED

Britain's Gordon Ramsay, Japan's Nobu Matsuhisa and Italy's Massimo Bottura have also joined the roster of celebrity chefs with a presence in the city.

But beyond importing top talent,



Dubai is also fostering local stars, said Habib Al Mulla, an Emirati lawyer and culinary blogger who has reviewed more than 700 establishments worldwide.

“A new, young generation of homegrown chefs are coming up,” he said.

“Many of them are winning... world-wide recognition.”

Dubai's rising culinary stars include not only chefs but also restaurateurs such as Omar Shihab, born and raised in the UAE to a Jordanian family.

The restaurant he founded, BOCA, was awarded the Michelin Green Star for sustainability this year.

Shihab sources a bulk of his produce from the UAE — a feat in a country that

imports more than 80 per cent of its food needs.

“Let's face it, we live in the desert,” he said.

“But through our sourcing policy, we prioritise local ingredients.”

Some 30-40 per cent of fruit and vegetables served at BOCA come from hydroponic Emirati farms, and up to 80 per cent of the fish sourced from the UAE or nearby shores, said Shihab.

“We do not have any local or regional suppliers” for meat and chicken, he said.

“But we make sure that the farms we rely on, we know their names, we know a little bit about their practises, no matter where they are in the world.” — AFP

LIFE AT THE ACADEME



Dr Zainab Al Ajmi

Differentiated Assessment

THERE IS A QUOTE from Chapman & King's book, 2012, that “There is no one tool that works for all students.” Generally, assessment tools are an essential component of the educational process. It helps learners see how far they have progressed, informs parents of their children's achievement level, provides teachers with important information about learning progress and achievement of educational objectives in a timely manner, and helps in planning teaching better to improve learning outcomes and supports effective teaching practices. Additionally, assessments are conducted to recognise alterations to the education system occasionally.

Differentiated Assessment is an “ongoing process through which teachers gather data before, during, and after instruction using multiple formative and summative tools. An acceptable assessment is a gauge to navigate the pathways for individual learning. Through interpretation of the assessment data, teachers, students, and parents can identify each learner's needs and strengths. Each learner can reveal what he or she knows when appropriate assessment tools are used. The teacher analyses the results and customises the planning to differentiate instruction” (Chapman & King, 2012). According to Lindgren (2006), Grading is one of the most bizarre aspects of teaching. Does a grade truly reflect what a student has learned, how hard they tried, or what they can do? Considering practicality, it is crucial to accommodate students' individual differences, making differentiated assessments requisite for their success.

To this end, the following scenarios illustrate sample ways of moving toward differentiated assessment practices in different contexts: 1. Rethinking grading practices: A teacher is rethinking his grading and reporting practices. He sees that he has been using a one-size-fits-all approach that does not consider individual student readiness, interests, or learning preferences. Therefore, redesigns his grading and reporting practices to include some student choices, different support for different students as required, opportunities for students to better their performance on significant assessment tasks, and flexibility in the timing of major assessment tasks. 2. Assessment for learning practices: A teacher adopts a set of assessments for learning strategies and realises two things: Firstly, assessment-for-learning practices help identify student strengths and needs and, therefore, support differentiated instruction and assessment. Secondly, some assessments for learning strategies are, by their nature, already differentiated assessments since these strategies provide students with choice and a broader scope for how they can respond. 3. Foster metacognition: Students self-assess and reflect on what they have learned and on how they learn. For example, students may be asked to complete an “exit slip” at the end of class. This is an opportunity for them to reflect on their learning, record their reflections and then pass this written record to the teacher as they exit the classroom. 4. Learner profiles: They can help teachers to understand and track their student's unique learning journeys. As a student progresses through the grades, a wealth of information can be amassed about his or her achievements, interests, learning preferences, and general strengths and needs. (https://differentiatedinstruction.ca)

In conclusion, in a differentiated classroom, assessment plays a vital role in providing valuable information about various aspects of teaching and learning. It serves as a continuous and dynamic process, offering insights into student strengths and interests, which in turn guides instructional planning and classroom organisation. Differentiated Assessment supports teachers in identifying individual student strengths and areas that require attention, ensuring it aligns with the principles of differentiation and supports effective teaching practices.

Dr Zainab Al Ajmi is very passionate about the growth of the education system in Oman and wants the country to produce globally competitive workforce. Her column tackles movements and developments within the education sector.

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Surging global cyber-attacks underscore risks to Oman’s financial sector: CBO



CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JULY 31

Oman’s pivotal financial sector, while having been spared any damaging cyber-attacks in recent years, continues to be a potential target for cyber-criminals, particularly as the country embraces fintech and electronic payment systems in support of its digital transformation, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has warned.

The cyber-risk advisory came in the apex bank’s Financial Stability Report 2023 issued here last week.

It cited in this regard a staggering 46 per cent spike in cyber-attacks targeting financial institutions globally in 2022 (versus figures for 2021).

The surge, it noted, underscores the worldwide banking and financial industry’s dominant appeal as a target for international cyber gangs, given the potential for huge rewards if the attacks are successful.

“This renewed surge in cyber-attacks, especially targeting financial institutions, could negatively impact customer trust in digital financial services and the financial sector as a whole,” the Central Bank said in its report.

“Oman has also not experienced any significant disruptions from cyber risks in recent times.

However, like any other jurisdiction, the Omani financial sector is vulnerable to such risks.

Therefore, cyber-security remains a top strategic priority for CBO,” it stressed.

The renewed warning comes amid an exponential increase in the usage of electronic payment channels and fintech apps for a growing variety of banking, retail and e-commerce related transactions.

This growth builds on a trend that first gained major traction during the Covid-19 pandemic.

To help meet the soaring demand for e-payment solutions, the Central Bank announced recently in June the launch of a new Real

THE RENEWED WARNING COMES AMID AN EXPONENTIAL INCREASE IN THE USAGE OF ELECTRONIC PAYMENT CHANNELS AND FINTECH APPS FOR A GROWING VARIETY OF BANKING, RETAIL AND E-COMMERCE RELATED TRANSACTIONS

Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS), which enables the processing and settlement of high-value payments exchanged between market participants seamlessly and around-the-clock.

Reflecting the robust growth in the uptake of e-payment options, the volume of transactions processed by the CBO’s Payment and Settlement Systems (PSS) climbed a steep 37.6 per cent to 275.1 million transactions in 2022, up from 199.9 million in 2021.

Likewise, the aggregate value of these transactions jumped 15.6 per cent to RO 206.6 billion in 2022, up from RO 178.8 billion a year earlier.

Retail payments made via digital channels also ballooned 37.8 per cent to 274.4 million in 2022, up from 199.2 million in 2021.

The corresponding aggregate value of these transactions increased 13.1 per cent to RO 27.3 billion in 2022, driven by a sharp rise in the use of e-payment services, the CBO noted.

In concluding, the Central Bank pledged to stay vigilant in the face of the risks from cyber-attacks even it weighs the roll-out of new digital products, notably Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs).

A task force has been commissioned to study the introduction of CBDCs, while separate groups are focused on other digital innovations, it said.

“This proactive approach allows the CBO to equip itself with the expertise required to navigate the evolving landscape of digital finance and stay prepared to take appropriate action when necessary,” it added.

Oman’s mining sector opened up to strong investment inflows: MEM

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, JULY 31

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MoEM) says it has taken significant measures to open up Oman’s promising mining sector to local and international investment.

These efforts are reflected in the growing number of concession agreements signed with investors covering the allocation of land blocks for mineral exploration and development based on a fair and transparent competitive process affording a level playing field to all investors.

Strategically located throughout Oman, the concession areas offer diverse mineral resources, including copper, gold, chromium, and potash, the ministry said in a post on Monday.

It has carefully selected these sites based on their economic viability and environmental considerations.

Additionally, the ministry has allocated public mining sites for industrial minerals to local companies, meticulously studying their impact on residential areas and wadi streams to ensure responsible mining practices.

These efforts are expected to attract substantial investments, create job opportunities, and bolster Oman’s economic growth. The country’s rich history of mining, dating back 5,000 years, coupled with its natural wealth and unique geological diversity,



makes it an ideal destination for exploration and mining ventures, it noted.

The mining sector in Oman plays a crucial role in the country’s construction and industrial activities, contributing directly to the production of essential building materials like cement. It also offers a fertile ground for private sector investments in exploration and exploitation activities.

Furthermore, the mining industry provides various job opportunities, ranging from direct mining activities to supporting roles in transportation, production supplies, spare parts, and maintenance.

Other initiatives by the ministry that have helped strengthen the investment and regulatory

environment around the mineral sector include the following: Implementation of transparent and equal opportunities for licence applicants based on the Mineral Resources Law 19/2019; Enhanced occupational health and safety standards to help attract investments and employ Omani workers;

Elevated technical requirements in exploration and mining to meet international standards; and Mandating licensed operators to allocate at least 10 per cent of contract work to local companies and Omanis, especially for small and medium enterprises.

Additionally, to help maximise local value creation from mining licenses, the ministry has

stipulated Omanisation rates in quarries, and has encouraged the establishment of factories to utilise quarried minerals, and ensuring the quality of raw materials produced.

Furthermore, it has championed collaboration with universities and research institutions to advance knowledge and expertise in the mining sector. The sale of geological maps and studies to researchers and mining companies has also facilitated informed decision-making.

Oman’s mineral wealth is abundant, encompassing a range of metal and non-metallic elements, such as copper, gold, chrome, marble, limestone, dolomite, manganese, laterite, gypsum, silica, and lead.

KPC confirms Duqm Refinery to be operational by year-end

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, JULY 31

Kuwait Petroleum Corporation’s (KPC) Chief Executive, Shaikh Nawaf Saud al Sabah (pictured), has confirmed that Duqm Refinery (OQ8), a major project in the Sultanate of Oman, is set to commence operations by the end of this year. The announcement was made during a video presentation on Sunday.

Duqm Refinery, located in Oman’s Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), is a joint venture between OQ Group and Kuwait Petroleum International, the international subsidiary of KPC. This \$7 billion project is one of the most significant in the Middle East’s downstream sector and is projected to significantly enhance Oman’s industrial and economic capabilities.

The refinery has a planned capacity of 230,000 barrels per day (bpd), processing a range of light, medium, and heavy crude oils. Its products will include diesel, jet fuel, naphtha, LPG, sulphur, and pet coke.

The Duqm Refinery is expected to transform Oman’s downstream sector, as it will not only leverage the country’s strategic location but



also drive its economic diversification strategy.

“The full commercial operation of Duqm Refinery in Oman will be at the end of this year,” said Al Sabah. “Our (Kuwait) refining capacity from joint ventures in Oman, Italy and Vietnam will increase to more than 600,000 barrels per day.”

The refinery project is part of Oman’s larger vision to develop

Duqm into an integrated energy and industrial hub.

Once operational, the refinery is expected to act as a catalyst for Oman’s industrial sector, attracting downstream industries and promoting the development of ancillary businesses. The facility will also create direct and indirect job opportunities, contributing to the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts to diversify its economy away from oil and gas.

This aligns with Oman Vision 2040, which aims to create a sustainable and diverse economy. The Duqm Refinery is seen as a game-changer in Oman’s economic landscape. It signifies a significant shift towards

downstream activities, underlining the Sultanate of Oman’s efforts to diversify its economy and reduce dependence on oil revenues.

The refinery will also position Oman as a key player in the global energy market, providing a strategic advantage due to its location on international trade routes.

As the project nears completion, it is expected to contribute significantly to Oman’s GDP, boost foreign direct investment, and foster new trade partnerships. The Duqm Refinery will play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Oman’s economy while strengthening its position in the global petrochemical industry.

ahlibank marks H1 2023 with awards and financial distinction

MUSCAT: ahlbank's first half results reflect a strong performance driven by its growth strategy. The results emphasise the Bank's long-term competitive success and sustained operational excellence, with a portfolio of innovative products and services.

With its ongoing comprehensive digital transformation, ahlbank has established itself as one of the fastest growing banks in the country, garnering several awards in recognition of its robust performance.

Key performance indicators for the six-month period ended on June 30, 2023, reveal the Bank's impressive results. ahlbank's total assets recorded a 4.5% growth, reaching RO 3.2 billion. Customer deposits increased by 9.0 %, reaching RO 2.4 billion, while net loans and financing grew by 6.8%, reaching RO 2.7 billion compared to the same period in 2022.

The Bank's operating income rose by 9.7%, reaching RO 49 million as of the end of June 2023, while operating expenses



increased by 1.3%. Net Profit for H1 2023 at RO 19.9 million increased by 26%, primarily due to higher net interest income and fee income. Commenting on the bank's first half results, Said bin

Abdullah al Hatmi (pictured), CEO of ahlbank, stated, "The key financial indicators demonstrate our commitment to maintain the trust and confidence placed in us by our stakeholders.

Our focus has always been in maximising shareholder value and ensuring customer satisfaction through efficient delivery of results and good corporate governance. This approach has enabled us to drive business successfully and establish new benchmarks for innovation in customer service and

stakeholder engagement."

Al Hatmi added, "Our commitment to strategic innovation doesn't merely involve the pursuit of novelty but is deeply rooted in our unwavering dedication to a customer-centric ethos. We recognise that the heart of our success lies in understanding and anticipating the evolving needs of our valued clients. This customer-focused approach permeates every aspect of our operations, as we strive to deliver tailored solutions that address their

unique requirements."

In its continuing endeavours towards social responsibility, the Bank launched a special initiative during the first half of 2023 with the aim of supporting underprivileged families during the holy month of Ramadhan, under "ahlicares" umbrella.

Concurrently, it introduced the ahlbank Souq, a unique initiative that provided a platform for 40 SMEs from different sectors to showcase their products and services.

BankDhofar set to become bank of choice in Oman with strategic branch expansion

MUSCAT: 100 branches and counting – that, in essence, is the inspiring journey of BankDhofar, Oman's second largest bank, which has employed a strategic expansion process to provide customer-centric services through its countrywide distribution network BankDhofar is unleashing the power of possibility with its strategic expansion and strengthening its credentials as the second largest bank in the country through its rapidly growing footprint.

The Bank is writing a new chapter in Oman's banking horizon by empowering its customers to avail high quality and easily accessible banking services — in every part of the country.

Having grown from 64 to 96 branches in a span of 6 months is a significant milestone. The bank plans to capitalise on the momentum, with plans of many other branches in the region for the network including Maisarah Islamic Banking Services and corporate branches.

By opening several new branches, even in far-flung



places like Khasab, Masirah, Al Ashkharah and Mahout the bank is committed to transforming the way people experience banking in Oman.

These branches are more than mere physical structures; they are portals that help fulfil financial aspirations, and support communities to traverse their banking journeys. BankDhofar is the only bank in the entire GCC region to have diligently followed an expansion plan during recent

times and it is rooted in its vision to be closer to customers to provide access to financial and non-financial services, as well as community development services focused on SMEs. Its key intent is to foster accessible and inclusive banking services for all, including the differently abled, and support all segments of the bank, at all times.

As part of its current expansion process, BankDhofar will not only establish a network of new

branches, it will also enhance its digital channels for customers from diverse backgrounds and across various geographical locations.

It will encompass several new cities and villages throughout the Sultanate of Oman, facilitating greater access to banking services and fostering a thriving ecosystem.

However, the Bank has categorically maintained that its objective is not merely to score high in the number game, as it aims

to become the neighbourhood bank for all customers and amplify its reach and scope through experienced and reliable banking personnel.

"In line with Sultanate of Oman's Vision 2040 objectives of sustainable development, BankDhofar remains firmly committed to its philosophy of providing a comprehensive, convenient, and inclusive banking experience to its increasingly diverse community of customers.

Through our planned expansion across the country, we want to relay to our customers that our endeavours to become the most preferred banking partner will lead us to become the 'Bank of Choice'.

Customer convenience and satisfaction have always been our top priorities and we will continue delivering unparalleled banking experiences by bringing the Bank closer to them, offering exceptional services and meaningful value propositions," said Abdul Hakim bin Omar al Ojaili, Chief Executive Officer of BankDhofar.

Genesis GV60 tops small premium SUV in J D Power 2023 US APEAL study



MUSCAT: The Genesis GV60 was named top small premium SUV in the J D Power 2023 US Automotive Performance, Execution, and Layout (APEAL) Study.

Commenting on the award, Omar al Zubaidi, Head of Genesis Middle East and Africa, said: "Receiving international recognition of the Genesis GV60 is a testament to the car's impressive performance and user-focused design, which brings innovative technology and customisable features to the forefront of the driving experience.

We're thrilled to see another one of our models being celebrated on the global stage and remain committed to delivering automotive products that set the standards for sustainability, safety, and speed."

GV60 embodies the Genesis design language of Athletic Elegance and 'Beauty of White Space' ethos. Its interior features a spacious layout while incorporating more eco-friendly and recycled materials with leading safety and technology.

GV60 also features world-first innovative technologies like Face Connect and Crystal Sphere, allowing the driver to further connect with and personalise their driving experience.

"We are pleased that our customers have recognised the exceptional design and performance of GV60, our first dedicated electric vehicle, in this year's APEAL study," said Claudia Marquez, Chief Operating Officer of Genesis Motor North America.

"GV60 represents the brand's customer-centric focus as our most personalised model yet. With leading technologies like Face Connect, GV60 delivers on our commitment to tailor the vehicle ownership experience to suit customers' individual needs."

Lahunna Oman partners with Salalem to prepare youth for future of work

MUSCAT: Lahunna Oman and Salalem, a workplace readiness company, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to complement the development of participants in Sidrah 2.0, a youth leadership programme for Omani Women, for the future of work.

The partnership will provide an unprecedented opportunity for Sidrah participants to catalyse their personal and professional growth through a highly engaging learning experience.

Phase II of Sidrah will run for three months and will see participants immersed in gamified challenges to stimulate their learning and growth. The programme is carefully curated to align with Sidrah's objectives, and it will include weekly micro-learning courses that cover soft skills, personal development, digital literacy, financial literacy and leadership principles.

This customised curriculum, online exams and competitions, will equip the young women with the necessary competencies to thrive in an increasingly dynamic and digital world. "We are pleased to collaborate with Salalem in our shared vision



to nurture Omani youth for the future," said Shatha al Maskiry, Founder of Lahunna Oman and Director of Phase II of Sidrah 2.0.

"This partnership will offer our participants an engaging learning experience with instant recognition to boost their confidence and also gain essential knowledge on soft skills, personal development, business conduct and digital literacy."

"The synergy between our AI-powered solution and the Sidrah programme will create a unique capacity building approach that will help unleash the intrinsic potential in Omani youth and create the next generation of inspiring leaders" said Amin al Hussein, Chairman of Salalem.

Explore life with the all-new Geely Azkarra

MUSCAT: The fastest growing automotive brand in the world, Geely's lineup of exceptional vehicles is designed to offer the ultimate driving experience, combining cutting-edge technology, advanced safety features, unparalleled comfort, bold styling, high quality, superior performance and smart interiors.

Crafted to be the flagship of the multi-use sports car category, the all-new Azkarra has been developed to be at the centre of the desires of young drivers, eager for technology, communication and superior design aesthetics.

The all-new Geely Azkarra Sport Utility Vehicle is a game-changer. It is a versatile SUV that combines style and performance.

It comes equipped with a 1.5-litre turbocharged engine with a direct fuel injection that delivers a powerful driving experience, a spacious interior, and high-end safety features.

The lifestyle-inspired premium SUV is equipped with 48V Electric Motor Synergy with a mild hybrid system that uses a 48-volt battery system to reduce fuel consumption with lesser emissions. Its sharp



dynamic appearance is sure to fascinate you. The all-new Azkarra is equipped with a choice of driving modes — normal, eco, sport and off-road.

The all-new Azkarra comes with an attractive and modern design with a high level of design accuracy, both inside and outside the SUV. It boasts a new innovative front grille design that mimics water ripples to give the car a streamlined and dynamic look and LED headlights, including a daytime running light.

It offers a range of advanced features such as wireless charging for smartphones, adjustable interior ambient lights (42 colours), a 7-inch HD dashboard, a panoramic sunroof, a 360° camera, an entertainment system

with a 12.3-inch screen, electric shift lever where with just one click, one can enjoy smart and modern driving functions, Nappa Leather Seats and ISO Fix child seat anchorage system.

In Oman, Geely vehicles are brought to you by Towell Auto Centre LLC. To know more about the products, test drive booking, and get a quote, please log on to www.geelyoman.com. With the introduction of this new model, Geely continues to lead the way in the automotive industry with its innovative designs, customer satisfaction, and commitment to quality.

Omani drivers can be confident that they will get the very best in performance, comfort, and safety when they choose a Geely vehicle.



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A close-up of a hand on a black steering wheel. In the background, a small white toy car with red and white stripes is visible.

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An advertisement for property rental services. It features a 3D orange figure holding a blue and white megaphone. The text is arranged in a dynamic, overlapping layout. At the top, a grey box contains the text 'HAVE A PROPERTY'. Below this, a red banner with white text reads 'FOR RENT?'. To the right of the figure, the text 'Advertise with us.' is displayed. At the bottom, a red box contains the text 'Contact us on:' followed by the large yellow number '99639264'. The entire advertisement is framed by a thick red border.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement of Capital Reduction

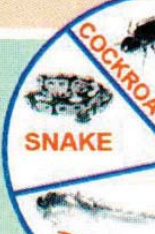
In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **Aad Ventures (SPC)**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1271635**, hereby announces that is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials **20,000.000** to **20,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.



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ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear customers of **Gulf Services and Industrial Supplies LLC - (agent of Makita tools and machines in the Sultanate of Oman)**. Our company's policies are to keep the tools and machines for a maximum of 90 days after being repaired/discovered unrepairable or pending repair approval. Accordingly, it was decided to dispose of all tools and machines received from customers until December 31, 2022, which the customers have not yet collected. Please visit our service centres to collect your tools and machines no later than 15 August 2023.

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Web 3.0 opportunity unchained: Tejarah Talks unpacks next Internet revolution

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 31

Back from its summer break, the next Tejarah Talks session tackles one of the most transformative tech developments yet: Web 3.0, the next generation of Internet technology.

Decentralising power from platforms and improving security, privacy and scalability, this digital disrupter builds on the foundations of Web 2.0, taking its concepts up a notch by incorporating advanced technologies like AI, blockchain, augmented reality and the Internet of Things.

Organised by Oman Business Forum in association with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, “Web 3.0: Opportunity Unchained”, scheduled for 7:30 pm, on Wednesday, September 13, at Zain Auditorium, Omantel Head Office, Airport Heights. Open to all and always free of charge, Tejarah Talks



Jamal al Asmi, Executive Producer, RealityCG

is sponsored by Jindal Shadeed, Sustainable City Yiti, Nortal, Omantel and Oman FM.

“This Tejarah Talks session is not just about keeping pace with tech trends, it is about discussing an equitable, user-centric digital future that breaks from the traditional, centralised paradigms,” explained Maymuna al Adawi, Director, Public-

Private Partnerships, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Tejarah Talks organiser.

The MoCIIP Director added: “With a focus on the future of the Internet, we will be exploring the challenges and opportunities presented by Web 3.0 technologies for business here in Oman and what it can offer our entrepreneurs. We will also delve into security and privacy issues, how it is transforming finance, logistics, healthcare, entertainment, what is going on with cryptocurrencies and more.”

It is expected that Web 3.0 will deliver an Internet that is easier to use, one that supports increasing personalisation and ramps up user experience, helping businesses understand their customers better, enabling them to tailor marketing campaigns to specific groups, increasing conversions, impacting reach and boosting brand awareness.

For online shoppers, Web 3.0 augmented reality technology will allow users to look, feel and interact with all kinds of products in the virtual space, mimicking the customer shopping experience in a real-world store with purchases paid for with digital tokens, taking away the need for intermediaries such as banks and credit card companies and along with them transaction fees.

“Web 3.0: Opportunity Unchained” will be moderated by Jamal al Asmi, Executive Producer, RealityCG. Expressing his expectation of an especially informative and impactful discussion, Al Asmi said: “Web 3.0’s impact will be far-reaching and profound, not just enhancing the experience but reshaping the way we interact with the digital world.

Giving users more control, privacy and freedom, it will allow buyers and sellers to interact directly once again, without a

third-party, and likely toppling Web 2.0 giants like Amazon and eBay. I have to say, I am very much looking forward to what the panellists have to share and what I am sure will be a particularly lively audience question and answer session. This is a Tejarah Talks that must not be missed.”

Joining Al Asmi on stage to talk about their own Web 3.0 experiences, the way it is already being used here in Oman and what we can expect as this digital catalyst makes its mark will be panellists Ghada al Kharousi, Manager, Innovation Department, Central Bank of Oman; Azzan al Kindi, CEO and Co-founder, Rihla Data Migration & Services; Thuraya al Harthy, Acting Director, Government Digital Services Unified Portal, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology; and Saud al Zakwani, Head, Digital Transformation, Petroleum Development Oman.

OCCI supports resolution to combat hidden trade

MUSCAT: Rashid bin Amer al Musalhi, First Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), explained that the interest of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by government agencies concerned with economic affairs and the private sector to attract foreign investment, is achieved through the system of integrated economic laws and legislation that stimulates investment in all economic sectors.

In a press statement, Al Musalhi said that these frameworks had become clear to the foreign investor, enabling him to benefit from the Foreign Capital Investment Act, noting that the regulation and facilitation of investment required the regulation of hidden trade, given the danger it posed to the national economy and the private sector’s efforts to increase its contribution to the country’s gross domestic product.

The OCCI supports the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion’s Decision No. 412/2023 on combating hidden trade in Oman and its provisions aimed at correcting the conduct of economic activities in accordance with the applicable regulations and not covering up business.

He said: “The private sector has suffered from the negative effects of hidden trade, including the failure to keep pace with private sector growth and the impact on economic stability policies as well as the inaccuracy of price-related economic indicators and job seekers’ rates.”

He noted that increased activities in the context of commercial cover-ups increases demand for cash and retains liquidity outside the banking system as well as illegal competition with citizens, especially SMEs and entrepreneurs. — ONA

Oman joins Kearney’s Global Services Location Index

KABEER YOUSUF
MUSCAT, JULY 31

The Sultanate of Oman joined the list of Kearney’s 2023 Global Services Location Index, which envisages a country’s ability to reskill and deploy its workforce as a vital part of its attractiveness as an offshore location, for the first time along with six other Middle East countries such as Jordan, KSA, Qatar, Kuwait and Lebanon.

Kearney’s is a global consulting partnership present in more than 40 countries which assesses the Global Services Location Index which are selected based on corporate input, current remote services activity, and government initiatives to promote the sector.

Countries like Jordan, KSA, Qatar, Kuwait and Lebanon joined the list for the first time while the UAE improved on its global ranking, moving up four spots on the list this year to 21st place.

The 78 countries in the 2023 Global Services Location Index were evaluated against 52 metrics across four major categories such as financial attractiveness, people skills and availability, business environment, and digital resonance.

This year, Kearney refocused the Index to be forward-looking and captured digital resonance and talent regenerative capabilities and availability.

In the process, a few metrics were dropped from the people skills availability and digital resonance pillars that were focusing on traditional IT, and new digitally focused parameters were added. This along with global trends and key local disruptors led to marked differences in some countries’ rankings.

In Kearney’s 12th edition Global Services Location Index,

which studied the vital factors that make countries attractive as potential locations for offshore services, UAE improved its score, with its business environment standing out as its strongest advantage while Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proved to be the two strongest new entrants from the Middle East region.

This year’s Index focused on talent regeneration and digital skills, bringing Canada, Poland, and Singapore into the limelight as emerging technology destinations for establishing innovation hubs.

“In an ever-changing global market landscape, where skills take precedence over cost advantages, a nation’s true strength lies in its capacity to foster and unleash the potential of its talented people,” said Rob Van Dale, Middle East and Africa Lead, Digital at Kearney.

“While countries such as United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia do not naturally have a cost advantage, we see that their considerable focus on talent regeneration is starting to pay off, and in a world where this is expected to become more important, coupled with their investments in digital resonance and an already attractive business environment, they may in the near future further increase their attractiveness for high skilled services catering to their region.”

On the other hand, countries like India, China and Malaysia continued to lead thanks to their immense cost advantage, abundant talent pool, and strong skills.

Additionally, India and China also showed signs of strength in talent regeneration capabilities making them global frontrunners in the availability of a tech-enabled workforce, according to Kearney’s Global Services Location Index (GSLI).

Added value of enterprises in Oman exceeds RO 8.9 billion in Q1 2023



MUSCAT: The total added value of 221,346 active private enterprises in the Sultanate of Oman during the first quarter of 2023 amounted to RO 8.941 billion, constituting a growth by 11.4% compared to the corresponding period in 2022, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The contribution of active enterprises to the gross domestic

product (GDP) at current prices reached 77.2% during Q1 of 2023 compared to 82.6% during the first quarter of 2022.

The added value of large enterprises reached RO 6.261 billion constituting 54.1%, comprising a rise by 3.7% compared to the corresponding period in the previous year.

Further, the added value of medium enterprises amounted to RO 731.5 million, comprising an

increase by 18.5%. Meanwhile, the added value of small enterprises reached RO 863.6 million, constituting a rise by 36.6%.

The added value of micro enterprises reached RO 1.084 billion, an increase of 47.1%.

Furthermore, workers in active private enterprises in Oman increased by 14.2% to stand at 1,749,974 during Q1 2023 compared to 1,532,227 during the same period last year. — ONA

Zain Omantel International and du announce strategic partnership

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 31

Zain Omantel International (ZOI), the Middle East’s premier international wholesale powerhouse, has recently formed a strategic wholesale international agreement with du, from Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company (EITC). The partnership guarantees exceptional voice, messaging, and data roaming services powered by advanced 5G technology connectivity.

The collaboration will significantly improve the customer experience for ZOI and du end-users across two continents. The partnership aims to expand and enhance international roaming



services across nine countries, including Oman, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Sohail Qadir, ZOI CEO said, “This agreement between two innovative entities further demonstrates our commitment to transforming the business and creating synergies while extending our reach and capabilities to provide the highest quality



services to our customers. By leveraging our combined expertise and resources, we are confident that we can deliver enhanced connectivity and convenience for customers in the UAE and across ZOI’s operational countries.”

Fahad al Hassawi, du CEO commented, “The partnership between ZOI and du signifies a pivotal move in our joint pursuit of providing exceptional

telecommunication services to our valued customers.

With the substantial roaming traffic exchange in the UAE, our collaboration enables us to harness each other’s unique strengths, positioning us at the forefront of shaping the future of roaming.

This partnership is dedicated to delivering a seamless and effortless experience for travellers throughout the region, surpassing their expectations and setting new industry standards.”

The partnership with du marks a significant milestone in the consolidation of Zain and Omantel’s wholesale business through ZOI, aimed at achieving Group synergies and creating value for partners.