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SOUTH KOREA
TYPHOON DEATH
TOLL RISES TO 10



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MBAPPE,
HAALAND
SIZZLE



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OMAN SEEKS PPP-BASED
OFFERS FOR DRUG
REHAB CENTRE



Oman committed to UN values on peace

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman reaffirmed its constant stance concerning its commitment to the United Nations charter and values that aim at fostering the principle and culture of peace and establishing relations of good neighbourhood.

Mohammed bin Ali al Shehi, Second Secretary at the Sultanate of Oman's permanent delegation to the United Nations, delivered the country's speech at a High-Level Forum on Culture of Peace held at the United Nations headquarters in New York.

The Sultanate of Oman reiterated its policy of non-intervention in the internal affairs of states, which is a key pillar of Oman's foreign policy and part and parcel of the Omani values.

The Sultanate of Oman also emphasised its role in serving peace on all the regional and international levels including fixing the truce signed between the warring parties in the sisterly Republic of Yemen and contributing to creating rapprochement in a number of issues of the Middle East. — **ONA**



NEW SITES FOR INTEGRATED NEIGHBOURHOODS

Within the framework of Sorouh Initiative for Integrated Residential Neighbourhoods, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning will offer five new sites this month for real estate developers. These locations are distributed among the governorates of Musandam, Dhofar, South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah. The new neighbourhoods will be set up based on the system of a partnership agreement with real estate developers. **DETAILS ON P2**

Free multiple entry visa for World Cup fans

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

In a step to support efforts by the State of Qatar to host the Fifa World Cup 2022, the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, has announced several special programmes.

With Muscat as one of the major and approved cities to receive World Cup fans, the details were unveiled at a press conference held on Wednesday.

Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and Head of the Steering Committee for the management of the programme, affirmed that Oman supports the efforts of the State of Qatar in hosting the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 through several areas of cooperation.

Al Busaidy added that the objective of the programme

focuses on promoting Muscat as a major city chosen to receive World Cup fans, and to provide an easily accessible and exceptional experience for the fans visiting Oman.

FAN ZONES

Speaking to the *Observer*, Saada al Busaidy, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said, "The World Cup is organised for the first time in the region and Oman seeks to benefit from fans who prefer to stay in the country during that period. We discussed visas, shuttle flights, and briefly the fan zones, which will be set up at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC)."

He added, "While big companies will be able to provide facilities, we also want SMEs to take part, be active and take advantage of the opportunities available."

TURN TO P5

AT THE BEHEST OF HIS MAJESTY

Tenders floated to repair rain-hit roads

MUSCAT: At the behest of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to accelerate repair of infrastructure damaged by recent torrential rains and overflow of wadis in some governorates in the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology on Wednesday floated some tenders to repair the aforesaid damages.

The tenders were floated in coordination with the committee tasked with accelerating the repair of damages caused by the torrential rains and overflow of wadis in some governorates of Oman.

The tenders will be awarded to the companies specialised in roads by the end of this month.

Eng Khamis bin Mohammed al Shamakhi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for



The repair works also include maintenance of the current Al Batinah road.



Transport, said that the tenders floated to repair the damages following the torrential rains include all roads affected by the recent climatic conditions in the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah,

North Al Sharqiyah, Musandam and parts in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

He added that the Governorate of Musandam took the brunt of the climatic conditions, followed by the road linking the wilayats of Nakhal and Al Awabi, as well as Wadi Al Sahtan, Wadi Bani Auf and Wadi Mistal.

He said that the repair works also include the maintenance of the current Al Batinah road. — **ONA**

HM issues Royal Decree

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued Royal Decree No 58/2022 on granting Oman Tower Company a first-class license to establish and operate the inactive infrastructure for telecommunication towers. Article (1) grants a first-class license to Oman Tower Company to establish and operate the inactive infrastructure for telecommunication towers, in accordance with the provisions of the license attached to this Decree.

Article (2) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — **ONA**

OMAN FM 90.4

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WEEKDAYS 12-3PM
HOSTED BY ASMA AL RIYAMI





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Cloud services, digital content industries to get a boost



VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) organised a meeting with the governors of various governorates to discuss the implementation of programmes under the National Programme for the Digital Economy for 2021-2025, which has been approved by the Council of Ministers.

Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said the National Programme for the Digital Economy would be a solid platform for achieving national visions and goals.

He said the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology will focus on several important areas, namely the growth of data centres and cloud services and the use of Fourth Industrial Revolution techniques to empower economic sectors, digital content industry, cybersecurity industry, government digital transformation and attracting technical investments to the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting also reviewed a digital transformation programme, which touched on the governance, smart services, digital innovation, decision-

making and the achievements of the e-transformation plan during the period between 2012 and 2020.

The meeting reviewed the performance of the human resources management system (Mawred), the individual performance management system (Ejada) of the Ministry of Labour, the unified financial management system at the Ministry of Finance, the health services management system, the unified system for municipal work services in the Governorate of Muscat, the electronic document management system and digital archives, the tender management system, the national planning and follow-up system at the Ministry of Economy, in addition to the feedbacks received on the Vision 2040 platform.

The meeting recommended that the governorates reclassify services and document their procedures to ensure their conformity and alignment with administrative changes after restructuring the state's administrative apparatus, simplifying procedures, and re-engineering operations before starting the stage of automating services.

It was also recommended the importance of cooperation in the use of central digital solutions and services to avoid duplication and enhance spending efficiency.

Ministry offers five new sites for integrated neighbourhoods

MUSCAT: Provision of integrated residential complexes with modern specifications and different sized buildings to provide stability for families is among the major objectives of Sorouh Initiative for Integrated Residential Neighbourhoods.

The initiative represents one of the pillars of housing policies in the Sultanate of Oman.

Within the framework of this initiative, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning will offer five new sites during this month (September 2022) for real estate developers.

Those locations are distributed among the governorates of Musandam, Dhofar, South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah.

The new neighbourhoods



will be set up based on the system of a partnership agreement with real estate developers.

Eng Masoud bin Said al Hashmi, Director General for Real Estate Development, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that these types of integrated projects are provided with all necessary and modern services.

Al Hashmi added that the first project implemented within this initiative is "Hai Al Naseem" and it contains 1,000 housing units, divided into 320 apartments, 120 villas and 475 twin-villas. "Hai Al Naseem" is set up on an area of 350,000 square metres. In this project, the real estate developer is tasked with building the infrastructure and services

within the boundaries of the project, while the government provides services beyond its boundaries.

He said that housing units of "Hai Al Naseem" project will be handed over to citizens in May 2023. Applications for those units were open during March 2022 for people eligible to receive residential land plots.



SOHAR Port and Freezone invites Tenderers to the following tenders:

No	Tender Ref	Tender Title	Tender Fee OMR
1	SIPC 2022/076	Concrete Repairing of Sea Water Return Canal (SWRC)	262.500
2	SIPC 2022/079	Marine Concrete Enhancement	262.500
3	SIPC 2022/089	Supply and Installation of Inclination Sensors at SOHAR Port Quay Walls	26.250

The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5%.

Tenderers can request to receive the electronic tender documents from 9:00 am on Thursday, 08/09/2022 until 4:00 pm on Thursday 22/09/2022.

Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:

Step 1: Interested Tenderers should remit the stated tender fees as per the below bank details:

Account Name	Sohar Industrial Port Co
Account Number	3101-007970-500
Bank Name	Oman Arab bank SAOC - Main Br
SWIT	OMABOMRUXXX

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted

Step 2: Tenderers to send the following documents:

- A request for the electronic tender documents
- Scanned bank transfer
- The firm's commercial registration documents
- All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address: sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

Step 3: Tenderers will receive the electronic tender documents by email.

- SOHAR reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reasons.
- All SMEs are requested to provide their Green Card along with the required documents.
- For any clarification regarding the tenders please send an e-mail to: sipc.procurement@soharportandfreezone.com

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Work resumes on Al Khad-Sham road



SUHAR: The work on the final stage of Al Khad-Sham road project in the Wilayat of Suhar in North Al Batinah Governorate resumed after a hiatus.

Eng Mohammed bin Hamad al Kindi, Director of Projects and Maintenance, said that the implementation rate at the project now stands at 80 per cent and the remaining works will be completed during the coming months. He

noted that this is one of the vital projects in mountainous areas. A 7-km road that aims to bypass dangerous curves and reduce downhill driving.

The new road involves safety concrete barriers at 14 spots and 45 steel barriers distributed along the road, a number of viaducts at valleys and low-lying terrain. The road also has structures for protection against landslides and falling rocks. — ONA

Job Vacancy

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
GCC Office in Muscat has 2 positions available

1. National Officer - C (Functional Title - Assistant Representative)
(For Omani Nationals Only)

2. Senior Driver

For details and instructions on how to apply, please refer to our website: gcc.unfpa.org (Vacancies Section)

Deadline to apply: 22 September, 2022



Oman participates in GCC Ministerial Council meeting

RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 153rd meeting of the GCC Ministerial Council, held at the GCC Secretariat-General in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Oman's delegation in the meeting was headed by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister.

The meeting reviewed the implementation process of the decisions issued by the GCC Supreme Council in a bid to strengthen joint GCC action and boost efforts to realise future aspirations.

The GCC foreign ministers reiterated the importance of working closely to achieve peace and sustainable development at the regional and international arenas.

The Sultanate of Oman

also took part in the first joint ministerial meeting of the strategic dialogue between the GCC states and Central Asia countries.

The meeting, held at the GCC Secretariat-General in Riyadh, stressed the importance of enhancing mechanism of the joint action which is based on values, joint interest and cooperation in various areas.

The meeting saw the participation of the GCC foreign ministers and their counterparts in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Republic of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Kazakhstan, in addition to the GCC Secretary-General.

The second meeting will be held next year in the Uzbek capital, Tashkent. — ONA



OCO initiates support to Pakistan flood victims

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) spearheaded charity and humanitarian aid for the people of Pakistan, which underwent the deadliest floods in its history.

Two-week-long floods have affected more than 33 million people and nearly 3.4 million children across the country following the record monsoon rains that have submerged over a third of the country.

According to the OCO sources, the funds and charity aid collected so far will be shipped to Islamabad next week.

"We will be shipping the collected materials and provisions to Pakistan next week," the OCO representative said.

The efforts to collect relief aid from people to support the victims of the disastrous floods bore

fruition as the initiatives under the OCO saw an overwhelming response, and people from different walks of life contributed to the same.

Meanwhile, charity efforts were evaluated, and the ambassador of Pakistan held meetings. Charity initiatives evoked a good response in the capital city as well as in Salalah.

"With due gratitude to the government of the Sultanate of Oman, we are glad to note that there has been an overwhelming response to our calls to support the flood victims in Pakistan and we are truly thankful to the Sultanate of Oman and the general public from across the world," Imran Ali, the Ambassador of Pakistan to the Sultanate of Oman, said.

UNICEF says the nearly 11-day-long rains impact 16 million children, and 3.4 million are in need of humanitarian support.

Drive to remove abandoned vehicles intensifies in Muscat

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

The Muscat Municipality has launched a drive to move abandoned vehicles in Bausher and adjoining areas.

Besides being a risk to general health and the environment, abandoned vehicles consume lots of parking space for genuine vehicle owners.

Muscat Municipality exhorted such vehicle owners to cooperate in ensuring cleanliness and civic order in the municipal area.

The issue of abandoned vehicles came after many citizens complained about them and brought to the notice of the Muscat Municipality.

There is a legal provision to deal with such irresponsible civic behaviour that affects aesthetics, people's health and the environment.

The urban inspection department of the Muscat Municipality is making an all-out effort to preserve the environment. They are doing field visits to monitor abandoned vehicles. There are vehicles which are parked in certain locations for a long time with the purpose of sale without referring to the competent authorities or obtaining necessary permits for the same.

The municipality decreed the regulations to deal with such situations. Article (2) of the provision of Administrative Decision No (171/2018) issued in the matter of regulating abandoned vehicles in public places in the Governorate of Muscat, which does not allow leaving vehicles in a public place, which leads to distortion of the public view.

Article (3) clarifies the municipal procedures. After observing abandoned vehicles, the urban inspection teams place alert stickers on vehicles left in public places. It then coordinates with the Royal Oman Police



within seven days from the warning sticker's date.

Article (4) also indicates that the municipality may withdraw and impound abandoned vehicles in public places at the expense of the vehicle owner after the lapse of fourteen days from the date of placing the warning label, without the municipality bearing any responsibility for damages to the abandoned vehicle during its transportation.

Article (5) imposes an administrative fine after seizing the abandoned vehicle on its owners when they visit the municipality to receive it. The fine amounts to RO 200 for cars and buses designed to transport 15 passengers or less and bicycles. RO 400 for trucks and buses designed to transport more than 15 passengers, locomotives, trailers, tractors, and equipment, and RO 1,000 for a vehicle meant for transporting hazardous materials.

A fine of RO 5 shall be imposed on the owner of the abandoned vehicle for each day as a late fine if he does not turn up to claim the vehicle. Article (6) stipulates that the municipality will coordinate with the Royal Oman Police to take the procedures for selling the abandoned vehicle through a public auction, in the event that the owner of the abandoned vehicle does not review the municipality to receive it, and pay the dues within 90 days from the date of its withdrawal and seizure without an acceptable excuse.

The municipality is also making continuous efforts to raise awareness of this phenomenon's harmful effects and show its social, health and environmental impact.

■ OMAN PARTICIPATES IN ARAB SCOUTS AND GUIDES CONFERENCE

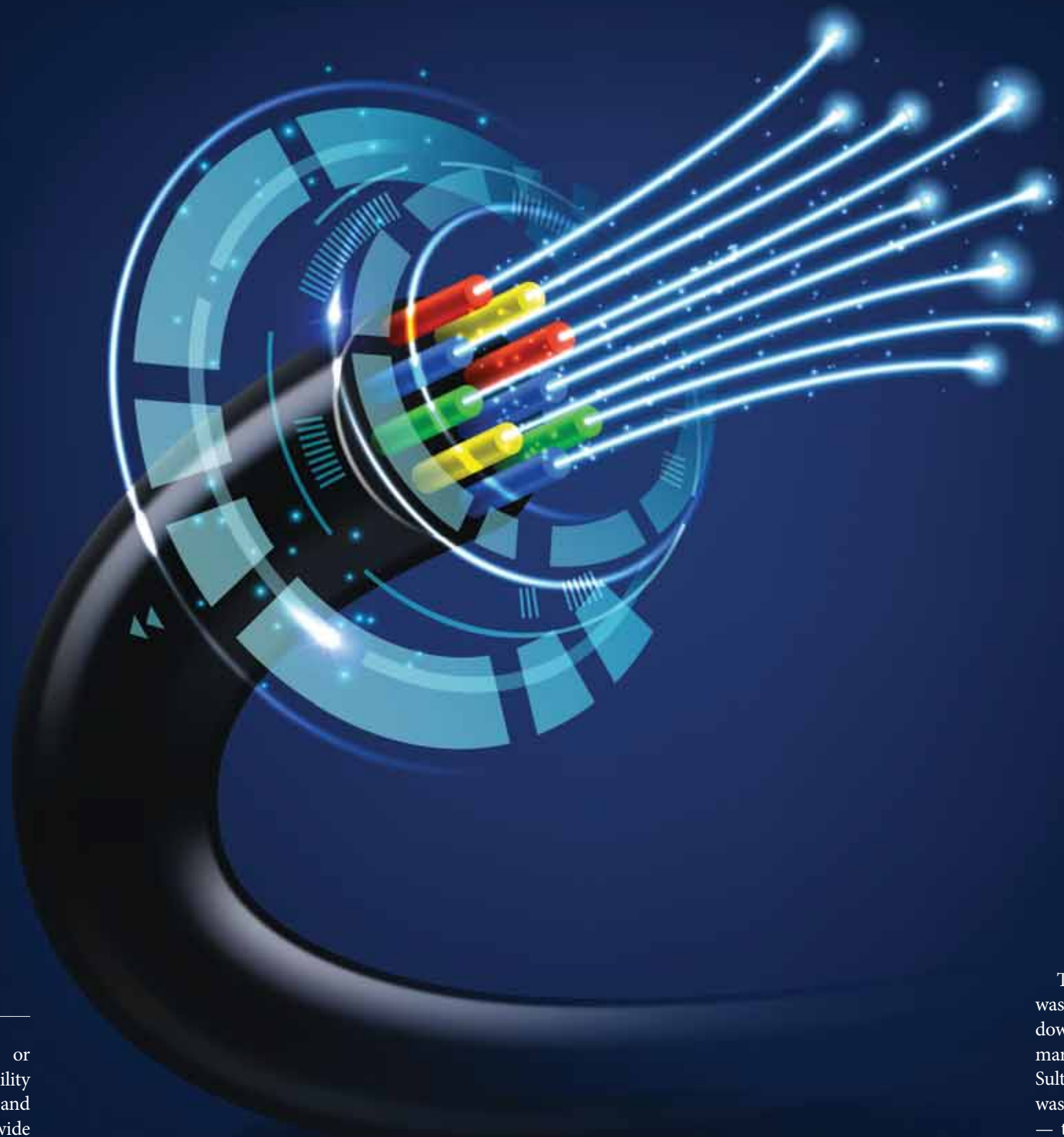


ABU DHABI: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Education's Directorate-General for Scouts and Guides, is currently taking part in the 23rd Regional Arab Guides Conference themed "Together we Thrive". The three-day event, held in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi, aims to avail a promising generation of female guides. It adopts programmes and initiatives to prepare guides for the future of scouting. — ONA



WHY WE NEED A STABLE INTERNET

HAVING AN EFFICIENT INTERNET SYSTEM IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT FROM THE SAFETY AND SECURITY POINT OF VIEW BECAUSE OF THE DEPENDENCE ON TECHNOLOGY-BASED SURVEILLANCE AND TRACKING



VINOD NAIR

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The Wi-Fi-enabled Internet or mobile data is an essential utility requirement, just like water and electricity. The almost-nationwide power outage on Monday demonstrated how normal life could come to a standstill, including cutting-off people from each other.

The Internet is also equally important to keep the CCTVs running all the time and for all Artificial Intelligence (AI) purposes, especially with the advent of the 5G network.

In the Sultanate of Oman, Omantel has covered the populated areas in the governorates of Muscat, Al Batinah South and Al Batinah North with real 5G speeds. Speaking to the Observer, customers said the quality of home Internet has improved with the expansion of the fiber to the home network. However, they are still expensive, and the speed is questionable, especially with the older 4G networks.

“We are not using the Internet for watching movies and games, but purely for a livelihood. I am fully into e-commerce, and even a small delay in transactions due to technical problems can lead to losses amounting to thousands of rials,” said Basher, who has been

guiding the online businesses in the region, including the Sultanate of Oman, for a decade now.

Having an efficient Internet system is equally important from the safety and security point of view because of the dependence on technology-based surveillance and tracking.

“From my experience about using the Internet in various countries, I can easily say that no market is perfect, but certainly the Sultanate of Oman needs a faster and affordable product, which will be easily achievable as the government embarks on its smart Oman programmes,” said an ex-senior IT specialist who was involved with various IT projects.

The recent Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) regulation to monitor the quality of telecommunication services, including data speed for each fixed broadband service package (wired

and wireless) and details of the quality of communications services, packages and offers, is an important step in the right direction.

The UK-based mobile analytics company, Opensignal, said the 5G is the most important wireless connectivity technology across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) due to its faster download speed and easy availability.

The 5G peak download speed is 743 Mbps in UAE, 713.4 Mbps in Qatar, 663.7 Mbps in Kuwait, 635.9 in Saudi Arabia, 503.5 in the Sultanate of Oman, and 469.4 in Bahrain.

On the 5G download speed, UAE has 316.8 Mbps, Qatar 278.5 Mbps, and 263.4 Mbps in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia 234.4, Bahrain 187 and the Sultanate of Oman 185.8.

As for the upload speed, Qatar has 30.5, UAE 27.6, Kuwait 24.6, Saudi Arabia 23.7, Bahrain 15.3, and the Sultanate of Oman 13.5.

The 5G peak download speed was over twice as fast as the average download speed in all six GCC markets. In Saudi Arabia and the Sultanate of Oman, the difference was closer to three times as fast — the ratio between 5G peak and average speeds was 2.7 times. Kuwait is top for 5G Video Experience and is the only market where users experienced an excellent experience (75 or above).

5G subscriptions in the Middle East and Africa (MEA) region are expected to reach 263 million by 2026, according to research by Nokia.

In GCC countries, 5G technology will dominate, with the subscriber base reaching 64 per cent of the total and data traffic likely to surpass 70 per cent by 2026, according to the study.

“Globally, the pace of 5G network rollouts has surpassed 4G/LTE networks. Two years after the first LTE launch there were only 25 million subscriptions across 60 networks, while two years after the first 5G launch, 340 million subscriptions were registered across 155 networks. Similarly, in MEA, our MEA Broadband Index Report finds 40 per cent year-on-year growth in 4G data traffic but a huge 350 per cent year-on-year growth in 5G data traffic in 2021 alone.



Breakthrough device to diagnose Alzheimer at early stage

KABEER YOUSUF

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Marking a milestone in the research and development (R&D) of Alzheimer's Disease, a group of researchers in Oman have developed an AI-powered medical device for early detection of Alzheimer's.

Named Ganglio-Nav for early detection of Alzheimer patients, this device, if used well in advance or around the time one suspects to have started decaying brain cells, will alert how close one is before losing his 'yesterdays' as no medicine has been found to fight the disease effectively.

The research team, led by Dr Sherimon PC, Faculty of Computer Studies, Arab Open University, Oman, was collaborated by the researchers from Royal Oman Police (ROP) hospital, and University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Muscat and includes Dr Vinu Sherimon (UTAS, Muscat), Dr Rahul V Nair (ROP), Dr Renchi Mathew Kurian (ROP), and Dr Khalid Sheikh (ROP).

The team presented their findings followed by a demonstration to various academicians, medical practitioners and media in Oman on Tuesday. The research was funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Oman.

"Our research contributions include the development of an Artificial Intelligence Neurologist to conduct the cognitive assessment in Alzheimer suspect patients and, the development of a Neuroscope," Dr Sherimon PC told the Observer.

The study, entitled 'WithYou - A clinical decision support system for early detection of Alzheimer

disease in the Sultanate of Oman', the brainchild of the group of doctors and academicians holds high importance in Oman as Alzheimer & Dementia deaths in Oman have reached 323 or 2.18 per cent of total deaths. Oman ranks 24 in the world and the age adjusted Death Rate in the country is 22.46 per 100,000 of population, according to the statistics released by the WHO.

Studies prove that about 60 per cent of dementia cases are caused by the degenerative, irreversible neurological disorder known as Alzheimer's disease (AD). Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have been utilised in this domain to help doctors in diagnosing Alzheimer.

In this research, the AI Neurologist which is developed by the team includes a 3D Avatar to conduct a variety of cognitive tests that evaluate language, direction, attention, memory, and visual-spatial abilities of Alzheimer suspected patients. Scores are calculated by the system and correspondingly the patient's current situation is determined. Also, the team developed a neuroscope based on fNIRS (functional Near Infrared Spectroscopy), a device for analysing the neuronal activities of the prefrontal cortex of the human brain of Alzheimer patients. This device is wearable, portable, and reasonably compact.

World observes 'Alzheimer's Day' on September 21 and towards supporting the patients and creating awareness among the people, Oman has formed the Oman Alzheimer's Society founded by Dr Hamed al Sinawi in 2013 and has been a member of ADI (Alzheimer's Disease International) since 2018.

Free multiple entry visa for World Cup fans

FROM PAGE 1

HOTEL PACKAGES

As for hotel rooms, different categories of tourists will have a variety of hotels to choose from various packages, which will be provided by a number of tour operators.

It was revealed at the press conference that visitors holding the Hayya card of the Qatar government could apply for a visa online or on arrival at land or airports.

Specific gates will be allocated for World Cup flights at Muscat International Airport, apart from a dedicated terminal for buses ferrying football fans.

The ministry officials said that a Fifa village (Fan Zone) would be established at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, and the details are to be revealed soon.

The press conference was attended by a joint working team chaired by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, which includes several governmental bodies, especially the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Royal Oman Police, and the companies under the Oman Investment Authority — Omran, Oman Air and Oman Airports.

The press conference was chaired by Al Busaidy with the official delegation from Qatar - Al Fadel Khaled al Mawlawi, Deputy Director-General of Tourism, and Fadel Saeed Quarry, CEO of Hayya platform (the official platform for registering the Qatar World Cup fans' Hayya card).

Al Mawlawi said that the official acceptance of the Hayya card for entry to Oman is a great achievement to achieve our main goal, as this World Cup is for all Arab countries.

MULTI-ENTRY VISA

Lt Col Ahmed bin Said al Ghafri, Director of Administrative and Financial Affairs at the Directorate-General of Passports and Civil Status at the Royal Oman Police (ROP), said that the exceptional advantages of Hayya card holders are represented in a free multi-entry visa, with the feature of obtaining



the visa on arrival and a validity period of up to 60 days.

Lt Col Al Ghafri said that the visa holder can bring first-degree relatives to enjoy a stay in the Sultanate of Oman and can change the visa category while staying in Oman (conditions apply).

Dr Khalid bin Abdulwahab al Balushi, Senior Manager of Government Affairs at Oman Air, said that the fares for booking one-day flights start from RO 99 for economy class and RO 305 for business class, during the World Cup matches period from November 20 to December 3.

He added that to encourage citizens, special fares have been provided for them, starting from RO 49 for economy class and RO 155 for business class.

Shabib bin Mohammed al Ma'amari, Managing Director of the National Travel Operator representing Omran Group, pointed out that tourism products offered within the programme exceed 20,000 hotel rooms and more than 200 tourism products through 35 local operators and 10 land transport companies. Those companies struck partnerships with 52 airlines from around the world, which operate flights to the Sultanate of Oman.

He said that the programme will include events and activities, most notably the World Cup Fans Festival, which will be held on the gardens of Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on an area of more than 9,000 square metres. This event aims to provide a festive atmosphere for the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022. An official site for the Fan Village will be launched.

Mohammed bin Ahmed al Amri, Director-General of Sports Activities at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, said that a continuous coordination is maintained by Oman Football Association (OFA) to host international teams in the Sultanate of Oman. He said that sports facilities in Oman are ready to host the trainings of those teams.

Meanwhile, Saud bin Nasser al Hubaishi, Acting Chief of Operations, highlighted Muscat International Airport's preparation plan to ensure smooth flow of fans at the airport. The preparations include special routes for inbound and outbound flights through gates designated for aircraft carrying fans, outlets dedicated to verifying fans, identification devices for customs inspection and an integrated crew of the customer service team to guide travellers through the designated routes.

Khaled al Mawlawi, Deputy Director-General for Marketing, Communications and Event Experience at Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, said that Qatar has been keen to cooperate and form broad global and regional partnerships for the World Cup, including the fan-hosting cities programme, which includes Muscat in the Sultanate of Oman.

Al Mawlawi stressed that the Sultanate of Oman's programme to support the State of Qatar in hosting the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 has been beyond expectations.

Moreover, Said al Kuwari, Executive Director of the Hayya platform in the State of Qatar, gave a presentation on the official

platform tasked with managing the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 cards and the facilities it provides to the fans according to organised and easily accessible mechanisms for all.

The Sultanate of Oman's programme for the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 seeks to provide an exceptional experience for the spectators who would like to visit Oman through the visa issued for Hayya cards holders. Those fans will enjoy a set of packages including competitive flight offers and transport services. The programme is run by a joint team under the purview of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

The team includes various government and private units, namely the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Royal Oman Police, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran), Oman Air and Oman Airports. The programme provides accommodation services and tourism experiences in the form of accommodation offers, tourism products, experiences and tours. These services will be rendered by tourism management companies and SMEs.

It also includes a festival and events for the fans, activities to attract visitors, offers and incentives for business partners and package options at competitive prices. The joint programme also includes exceptional promotional campaigns, coinciding with the World Cup 2022, through the implementation of two plans for marketing and promoting for the unique tourism features enjoyed by the Sultanate of Oman. (With ONA inputs)

Expatriates celebrate Onam

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

Expatriate Indians in Oman, especially from the south of India, are celebrating Onam with traditional floral decorations on the floor, elaborate feast and people wearing the authentic golden threaded sarees and dhotis.

Hotels and restaurants are abuzz with people celebrating Onam while many families are celebrating Onam with their close relatives with traditional floral carpet and delicious meals at homes cherishing the childhood memories.

A delicious 'sadya', an extensive lunch with scores of side dishes, is served on a banana leaf platter, from forenoon till evening and are arranged on a pre-booking basis.

This is the first time in the last two years that people are fearlessly gathering outside of their homes after the pandemic and organisations as well as corporates are making the most of the celebrations.

Various associations under



the umbrella of Indian Social Club (ISC) and other NGOs are organising festivities and cultural celebrations which culminate in the delicious 'Onam Sadya', which is also a treat made of vegetables that accompany traditional rice on the plantain leaf.

Onam, known as the 'Harvest Festival of Kerala', is a day of memories in abundance and most of them are connected to childhood days. As the myth aptly indicates an era of sweet memories, people rejoice those days of their days with their dear and near ones.

On the tenth day of the Malayalam month 'Chingam' is the "Thiruvonam, which is a combination of myths, folklore and traditions and one of the great occasions where Malayalis rejoice together and reaffirm the values of harmony and coexistence.

Many Omani citizens with their families are joining their expat fraternity in celebrating the feast festival at the hotels as well as their homes.

Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Defence
ENGINEERING SERVICES

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

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

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

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



South Korea typhoon death toll rises to 10

SEOUL: The death toll from Typhoon Hinnamnor rose to 10 in South Korea, authorities said on Wednesday, after the storm battered the southern coast with huge waves and heavy rain this week.

The typhoon, one of the most powerful to hit the country in decades, flooded streets and buildings as it passed through on Monday and Tuesday.

In the southeastern port city of Pohang — one of the hardest-hit areas — seven bodies and two survivors were pulled out of the submerged underground parking lot of an apartment complex, the Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasures Headquarters said.

The nine were trapped after they went into the parking lot to move their cars during the heavy downpours, according to local media reports.

Search and rescue operations continued on Wednesday, and authorities said two people were still missing.

One other death was confirmed in Pohang on Wednesday, and another in Gyeongju where a person was killed when a



A man takes photos on a promenade as waves crash in the sea after Typhoon Hinnamnor passed through Busan. — AFP

home was buried in a landslide, authorities said. The nine fatalities follow the death of a woman in her 70s who died in Pohang after being swept away by floodwaters on Tuesday. Hinnamnor forced

more than 4,700 people to flee their homes for safety, and it destroyed around 12,000 homes and buildings.

Nearly 90,000 households lost power nationwide as the storm

hit, but supply had been restored to most of them by Wednesday morning, authorities said.

Before the typhoon made landfall, South Korean authorities closed more than 600 schools

nationwide as a precaution and local airlines cancelled some 250 domestic flights.

Meanwhile, two South Koreans have been rescued after being trapped in a submerged

Typhoon Hinnamnor tore through South Korea's southern industrial hubs leaving at least 10 people dead, 2 missing and thousands displaced

underground parking garage for more than 12 hours in a city battered by a powerful typhoon, authorities said on Wednesday.

Typhoon Hinnamnor tore through South Korea's southern industrial hubs this week, leaving at least 10 people dead, 2 missing and thousands displaced.

Residents cheered and clapped as rescue workers carried the survivors, a man in his 30s and a woman in her 50s, on stretchers out of the flooded underground garage at an apartment complex in the southern city of Pohang.

The man was found alive clinging to pipes, while the woman had climbed atop construction panels, both able to breathe because of a pocket of air in the flooded underground space, fire official Park Chi-min told a televised briefing. — AFP/Reuters

Gaza kids get tablets to connect with world

GAZA CITY: The United Nations said on Wednesday it was helping connect Palestinian children in the blockaded Gaza Strip to the outside world by distributing tablets to hundreds of pupils.

Children make up nearly half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million. Most of them have never been able to leave the coastal territory, which is ruled by the Hamas movement.

Some 890 tablets are being handed out this week at schools run by UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, following a pilot that saw a few dozen devices given to children last year.

"We're very conscious that for children as they grow, they're going to have to be able to engage with an increasingly digitalised world," Thomas White, the agency's Gaza director, said.

The 15-year blockade of the enclave led by Israel has crippled Gaza's economy, leaving 74 per cent of young graduates unemployed, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. The European Union-funded project to boost children's computer skills is seen by UNRWA as a way to increase their chances of getting a job in the growing tech sector, either locally or remotely.



Students at a school run by the UNRWA use new electronic tablets in class in Gaza City. — AFP

The EU-funded project to boost children's computer skills is seen as a way to increase their chances of getting a job in the growing tech sector

This could "provide opportunities for young Gazans to make an income and get ahead," White said, standing in a school yard in Gaza City.

The project could help young Gazans go into coding, providing

back office IT support for companies or customer support online, he added.

But Gazans still have to contend with frequent power cuts and Internet access limited to 2G. Thirteen-year-old Salma

Shamiah was among those to receive a new tablet, after excelling at a tech summer school. "I hope to learn programming in the future and have a programming company in Gaza," she said in a classroom filled with computers. "I feel that Gaza is behind in programming. I expect in the future programming will be dominant in the world and we will do useful and beautiful things." — AFP

Covid-19: More Chinese cities advise residents to stay put for holiday

BEIJING: More Chinese cities advised residents on Wednesday to avoid unnecessary trips for the upcoming holiday long weekend, adding to Covid policies that are keeping tens of millions of people under lockdown and exacting a growing economic toll.

Nanjing and Wuxi, major cities in eastern China's Jiangsu province, recommended residents not leave town during the Saturday-Monday mid-autumn festival, echoing similar advisories made by other cities.

China reported a slight uptick in new cases for September 6 to 1,695 - low by global standards - but its "dynamic zero" Covid policy to stamp out every infection chain means numerous cities have imposed various curbs on movement.

Chinese authorities have not announced any plan to exit the policy that has all but shut China's borders to travel.

The latest advisories aimed at curbing Covid's spread come just over a month before Beijing hosts a once-in-five-years congress of the ruling Communist Party,

where President Xi is expected to secure a precedent-breaking third leadership term.

The southwestern city of Chengdu, where most of the 21.2 million residents remained on Wednesday in a lockdown that began last Thursday, has yet to announce a plan to end the strict curbs.

In Beijing, the suburban Yizhuang economic and technological development zone said Communist Party officials must not leave the city unnecessarily during mid-autumn festival or the week-long holiday in early October, while residents of the area were also advised to stay put.

"The whole zone... must strictly and assiduously implement various tasks for Covid prevention and control, in order to create a safe and stable social environment for the party congress," it said in a statement.

Beijing reported 14 locally transmitted infections for Tuesday, the capital's highest daily count since mid-June. — Reuters

TUNISIA

Tunisia oppn says to boycott December elections

Tunisia's main opposition alliance said on Wednesday its members including the once-powerful Ennahdha party would boycott December polls to replace a parliament dissolved by President Kais Saied.

The vote is set for nearly a year and a half after Saied suspended the Ennahdha-dominated assembly and sacked the government, later pushing through a constitution enshrining his one-man rule.

"The National Salvation



Front has definitively decided to boycott the upcoming elections," said Ahmed Nejib Chebbi, head of the front which is made up of parties and movements opposed to Saied. — AFP

BEIRUT

Lebanon seeks to name second investigator

Lebanon's judiciary wants to appoint a second judge to a stalled investigation into the Beirut port blast, according to a letter, further complicating efforts to hold officials to account over a tragedy that killed more than 220 people.

Judge Tarek Bitar's probe investigation into the 2020 explosion, which flattened swathes of the city when hundreds of tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored at the port detonated, has been suspended since late



2021 by lawsuits. That has left him unable to summon suspects or press charges, but also means that individuals detained after the blast but cleared of suspicion have remained in custody. — AFP

NEW DELHI

Indian mum fights tiger with bare hands to save son

An Indian mother fought off a tiger with her bare hands to save her toddler from its jaws, an official said. Archana Choudhary stepped out of her house in the central state of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday night as the 15-month-old boy wanted to relieve himself.

A tiger believed to have strayed from the nearby Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve pounced on them, local official Sanjeev Shrivastava said. It attacked and tried to sink its teeth into the child's head but



the mother leapt to the rescue, he said. The tiger kept trying to snatch the boy until villagers heard her screams and rushed to her rescue. — AFP



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In brief

■ LONDON



BRITISH ROYAL MAIL WORKERS TO STAGE FRESH STRIKES

Royal Mail workers will launch a fresh, 48-hour strike on Thursday in a dispute over pay, which threatens disruption to deliveries. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) said 115,000 of its members will walk out in protest against an 'imposed' 2 per cent pay rise. Picket lines will be mounted outside delivery and sorting offices, following strikes last week, and there is a prospect of further industrial action if the deadlock is not broken. The union also said its members face a "dramatic" reduction in living standards because of the soaring rate of inflation. — dpa

■ WASHINGTON



US MILITARY TEST LAUNCHES ICBM

The US military tested an unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile on Wednesday, the second in less than a month after a previous launch was delayed twice. Washington announced the test in advance, an unusual move apparently aimed at heading off an escalation of tensions with Russia that are already heightened due to Moscow's attack on Ukraine. "Air Force Global Strike Command Airmen launched an unarmed Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile equipped with three test re-entry vehicles" early on September 7 from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, the US Air Force said in a statement. — AFP

■ KAMPALA



CHILDREN AMONG 15 DEAD IN UGANDA LANDSLIDE

At least 15 people, mainly women and children, died in a landslide in a western Ugandan town after the area was battered by heavy rains, the Red Cross said. The disaster in the town of Kasese on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo has left an unknown number of people missing and wiped out homes. "15 bodies now. Majority are women and children," Red Cross spokeswoman Irene Nakasita said in a briefing to the media. Nakasita said the exact number of missing was not known, but that six people had been injured and taken to hospital. — AFP

Putin defends Russian campaign in Ukraine

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin defended his country's war against Ukraine and lashed out at the West for international sanctions adopted in its wake while speaking at an economic forum in Russia's Far East on Wednesday.

Putin called the sanctions Western countries imposed on Russia for its belligerence towards Ukraine a "threat to the entire world." This Western zeal for sanctions was the main threat to world peace, he added.

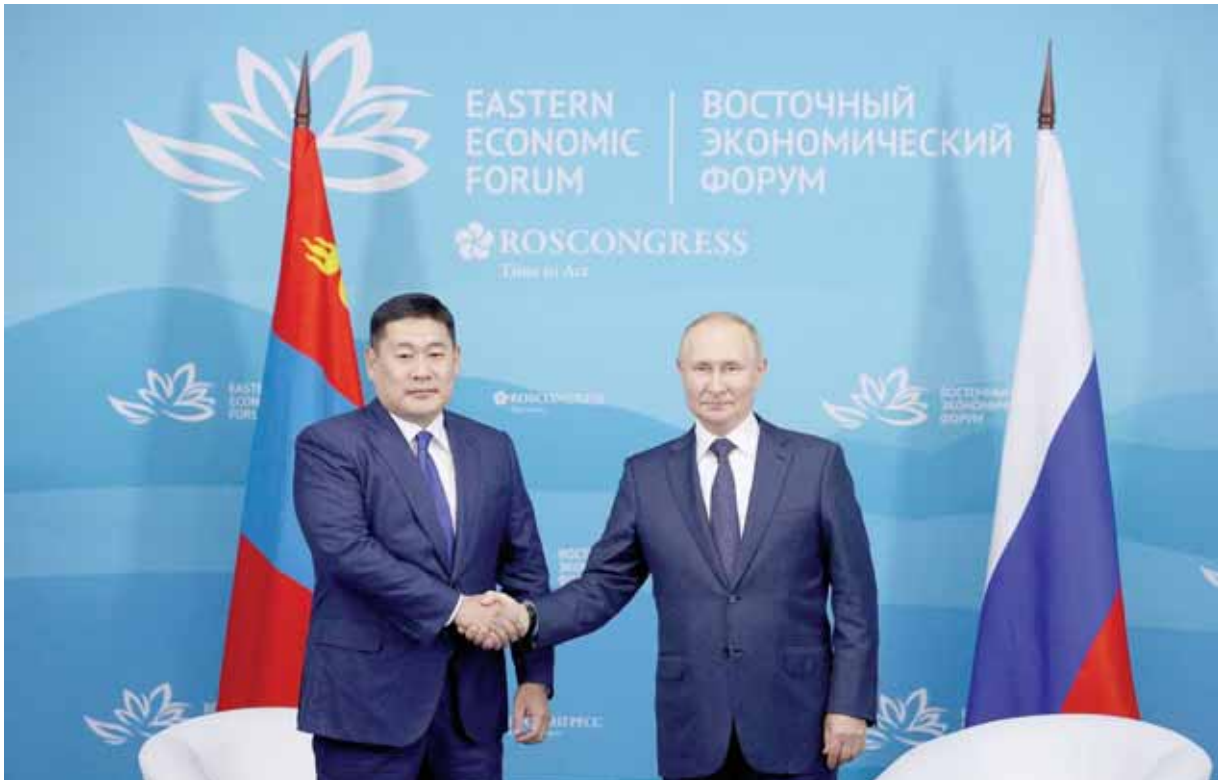
The Russian president also claimed that his country is weathering what he termed "the economic, financial and technological aggressions" of the West well, and insisted that Western countries are suffering more due to the sanctions than Russia has.

Putin slammed the West for what he called "its aggressive attempts to force other countries towards its model of behaviour, to rob them of their sovereignty and to impose their own will on them."

In his remarks on Wednesday, Putin claimed that Russia's attack on Ukraine was necessary.

"I can say that the main benefit has been the strengthening of our sovereignty, and that is an unmistakable result of what is happening right now," he said, arguing that the assault on Ukraine had been needed to defend Russia.

"We have lost nothing and we will lose nothing," Putin asserted. It's possible his statements



Russian President Vladimir Putin with Mongolia's Prime Minister Luvsannamsrai Oyun-Erdene on the sidelines of the 2022 Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. — AFP

found some listeners among Western allies. Later in the day, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a sometime Putin ally, charged that Western countries are "provoking" the Russia-Ukraine war with weapons deliveries, among others.

"The West is pursuing a policy based on provocation ... It is said that weapons are being sent; they are sending all the scrap they have to Ukraine," Erdogan told reporters in Belgrade, without naming any country.

Since the attack started at the end of February, Russia has dug in forces in the Ukraine's

Putin argues that the assault on Ukraine had been needed to defend Russia

east and south, though Ukraine says it is beginning to launch counteroffensives.

One hotly contested region is the area around the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant. The fighting around an active nuclear plant has sparked serious fears about a potential nuclear disaster.

Putin insisted that there are no weapons at the Zaporizhzhya

plant in Ukraine, disputing one of the charges laid out in a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) this week.

"In the reports it speaks about the necessity of getting military technology off of the plant's territory," Putin told reporters. "But there is no military technology on the grounds." He invited Western journalists to come to the site themselves to make their own impressions.

The IAEA has called the situation there untenable, sparking the United Nations to call for an end to fighting around the power plant.



However, according to the Interfax news agency, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has requested more information about the opinion of a team of international nuclear experts there. Russia and Ukraine have traded accusations about who has fired shots at the site for weeks now. Independent confirmation of these accounts is impossible. Russia has occupied the site since early in its attack on Ukraine.

Ukraine on Wednesday reiterated its call for Russian troops to withdraw from the Zaporizhzhya plant. Otherwise, security proposals made by IAEA cannot be implemented, Energy Minister German Galushchenko wrote on Facebook.

"Because only we, unlike the Russians, are able to guarantee the implementation of all the components of operational safety," Galushchenko asserted.

In another rebuke of Western views, the Russian president described the Western accusation that Russia was using gas as a weapon as "nonsense and madness." — dpa

Manhunt in Canada continues for suspect

JAMES SMITH CREE NATION: A second suspect remained at large in Canada on Tuesday night after the death of his brother despite a massive and intensifying manhunt in and around an Indigenous community left reeling by a deadly stabbing spree.

The attack in the James Smith Cree Nation Indigenous community and the town of Weldon on Sunday left 10 dead and 18 wounded.

A massive manhunt for the two brothers across the vast Prairies region ensued, focusing at one point on Regina, Saskatchewan province's capital 300 kilometres to the south. The body of one of them was found on Monday evening.

The search suddenly turned back to this Indigenous

community on Tuesday after police released an emergency message warning that investigators had "received reports of a possible sighting" of suspect Myles Sanderson.

Police in heavily armoured vehicles surged into the community, while calling on area residents to "seek immediate shelter/shelter in place."

A police helicopter flew overhead into the Indigenous area. But hours later the lockdown was lifted.

Late on Monday, federal police assistant commissioner Rhonda Blackmore announced they had found the mutilated body of one suspect, 31-year-old Damien Sanderson, in a grassy area near a house that was being examined in the James Smith Cree Nation. — AFP

SETU to connect Indian startups with mentors

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Supporting Entrepreneurs in Transformation and Upskilling (SETU) is the latest move of the Indian government to boost startups in India.

The idea behind SETU is to connect startups in India to US-based investors and the startup ecosystem, media reports said.

After the programme launch in the Bay Area of San Francisco, Indian Union Minister Piyush Goyal said, "One of the key takeaways is that the Bay Area is very bullish on India, very excited about the potential that India, Indians and Indian startups and



Indian Union Minister Piyush Goyal

Indian businesses have to offer.

Very excited about the talent available in India.

They see huge potential in the large market that India is, 1.3 billion aspirational Indians."

Done meticulously to support

investors and startup owners, SETU is aimed at building a startup ecosystem in the country.

Startups have witnessed tremendous growth in India.

From a mere 417 startups in 2016, the number has grown rapidly, with each passing year taking the count to 20,160 in 2021.

As of July 2022, India was home to 105 unicorns with a total valuation of \$338.50 billion. Since 2016, the startup industry in the country has registered a 15 time increase in funding and a 9 times increase in the number of investors, making it an amazing success story of 'Brand India', news agency ANI reported.

UK PM hopes for 'solution' on N Ireland row

LONDON: New UK Prime Minister Liz Truss on Wednesday said she hoped talks with the EU could help resolve a dispute over post-Brexit trade in Northern Ireland.

"My preference is for a negotiated solution," she told MPs in parliament, in her first appearance as premier since formally taking office on Tuesday.

"But it does have to deliver all of the things we set out in the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill," she added. The bill, spearheaded by Truss in her former role as foreign secretary, proposes



Britain's Prime Minister Liz Truss with members of her new cabinet inside 10 Downing Street in central London. — AFP

scrapping parts of the deal that London signed with Brussels as part of the UK's departure from the bloc. It is currently winding its way through parliament, despite EU warnings that it breaks international law and could spark retaliatory trade sanctions.

The UK government opposes internal border checks on goods heading from mainland Great Britain — England, Scotland and Wales — to Northern Ireland. The EU has stipulated checks are needed to prevent goods getting to the European single market via neighbouring member state the

Republic of Ireland. Removing hard border infrastructure between Northern Ireland and the republic was a condition of the 1998 peace deal that ended 30 years of violence over British rule.

But pro-UK unionist parties say that the checks cut Northern Ireland adrift from the rest of the UK, heightening the risk of a united Ireland. Truss said her "number one priority" was "protecting the supremacy" of the peace deal, against a backdrop of concern from US President Joe Biden's administration in Washington. — AFP

Are you taking the right decisions?



Dr Anchan C K

The writer is an international adviser

There has always been choice, in today's life you are clustered and bogged with so many choices for anything and everything. Every aspect has become more challenging and people are forced or are influenced to take decisions. It is getting more perplex and competitive and has started influencing even the family life of individuals. Today we live a life where a decision has to be made where will be the child be born, the hospital, the locality, the country and so on. It's fantastic to have two or more brilliant choices ahead of you. You might feel like you are between a rock and a hard place having to make this choice, but in fact it's exactly the opposite.

Sometimes you have a choice between something 'safe' and something which 'can be great'. Sometimes, it's a short-term over a long-term choice. If you're making these decisions when you're young it's almost impossible to predict outcomes. No one wants to be wrong after taking decisions. It is often found that people have trouble with making choices as they hate being wrong. As they are afraid of the consequences of making wrong decisions. How do they know that they have truly found what they prefer, suppose they find something else is better and it is too late? Making decisions sometimes means making a commitment to

SOMETIMES THE EVENTS IN OUR LIFE GIVE US A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY. YOU MIGHT FAIL, BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO GIVE IT A TRY. YOU CAN ALWAYS LEARN FROM FAILURE, PERFECT SITUATION WILL NEVER COME

a choice and sticking with it, but often there is an opportunity to find out something new, either about oneself, or about another person or topic. Having an opportunity to find out something can make decisions fun. Most people get used

to thinking of what they like. Soon, many things become habit. The best advice is to cover all bases and make sure you have an alternative 'Plan B' in case 'Plan A' doesn't work out. It is good to seek advice in these situations, and to get support. But it's important to choose a confidante who is objective and constructive, not someone who will impose their opinions on you or tell you what to do. While we know that we should follow our passions, sometimes we come into situations where different passions conflict with each other and make it difficult to decide. In such cases, we should go where our passions unify. You are facing the journey of

life, which will see you change your world view countless times, and take you down all sorts of different paths - all of which will add to your wide experience of life and development of wisdom. Look at the events in your life, especially the recent ones. Can you see certain patterns in the events? Can you see where they are pointing to? The events that happen in your life often give you clues of the way to go. Sometimes the events in our life give us a unique opportunity. They may open a door which normally would not. You might fail, but the important thing is to give it a try. You can always learn from failure, perfect situation will never come.

Tech show facing up to era of energy scarcity

FLORIAN CAZERES

From portable solar panels to smart thermostats and "intelligent" radiators, exhibitors at the IFA tech show in Berlin are touting smart solutions for an energy-starved world. But the clever gadgets sometimes belie their hefty carbon footprint. The motto for the 2022 edition of the German fair for cutting-edge technology — the first since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic — is "energy efficiency", a timely mission with prices for electricity soaring. One such exhibitor which believes it has the answer is Busch-Jaeger, whose stand is carpeted in switches and small blank screens. The German company, owned by the Swiss group ABB, has become a specialist in "smart home" technologies. Their idea: to regulate energy consumption at home on the basis of a stream of data, including the current ambient temperature, the light in the room and the quality of the air. Such devices are "more and more sought after" as the cost of energy skyrockets in Europe, says Ulf Ehling, who is tasked with presenting the company's technology at IFA. A few hundred metres away, the Norwegian company Mill is offering black and white "intelligent" radiators. Thanks to a smartphone app, users can control the temperature in their homes over the course of the day. According to Bashir Naimy, Mill's technical director, the device can help save "37 per cent of a household's energy". IFA also boasts regular displays of eccentric gadgets, among them a fridge that cools a drink in "two minutes" or an odour generator for buying perfume online. The French company Y-Brush has descended on IFA to tout a "sonic" toothbrush that looks like dentures, which is "capable of brushing all teeth at once in 5, 10, or 15 seconds". Visitors to the fair, which closes on Tuesday, are, however, preoccupied by the question of energy usage. "When you see how much all these devices consume it is crazy," says Justin, 23, a tech enthusiast, who came to Berlin specifically for the show. "We're always thinking about that," says Christoph Boettger, 39, who has come with his partner. European energy prices have soared over recent months in the wake of the Russian attack on Ukraine and the subsequent throttling of gas supplies to Germany from Moscow. — AFP

How will Ukraine rebuild (and who should pay)?



Steven Erlanger

The writer is the chief diplomatic correspondent in Europe for *TNYT*

Even as Russia's war on Ukraine grinds on with no end in sight, Ukraine's allies are facing complicated questions about the country's reconstruction. Who will pay for what, and who should control the process and funds? What kind of external oversight of the money should be required and what changes must Ukraine make? An international conference on reconstruction is scheduled for next month in Berlin to grapple with those thorny issues, and also determine whether reconstruction should begin before a peace settlement. There is also the vexed question of what kind of security guarantees should be offered to encourage private investment in the rebuilding. To that end, the German government has asked a research institution it helps finance, the Washington-based German Marshall Fund, to come up with proposals for donor countries. Their report was provided to The New York Times and is already being discussed among donor countries as "a private note to stakeholders." Among the key recommendations are that the Group of 7 industrialised nations appoint a Ukraine coordinator to oversee reconstruction, ideally an American with global stature; that existing institutions be used for the project to ensure timeliness; and that different multilateral financial institutions should be used, to limit the influence of Russian or Chinese board

NON-EUROPEAN DONORS FROM THE G-7 COULD FRONT-LOAD AID, WITH THE EU GRADUALLY BECOMING THE PREDOMINANT DONOR AND THE UNITED STATES COULD CONTINUE TO BE THE LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR TO UKRAINE'S SECURITY

members. The report also says that Ukraine must accept strict oversight of the funds, as well as strengthening its legal and judicial systems, to reduce the potential for corruption. "The vision of a free and democratic, modernised and European Ukraine is the answer" to Russian aggression, the report says. In June, at an international conference in Lugano, Switzerland, Ukraine presented its own national recovery plan. But its democratic allies have not responded in kind, with the Berlin conference already postponed a month

until late October. This report tries to fill the void and deal with the main challenges. First, how to keep Ukraine afloat, given that it needs some \$5 billion to \$6 billion a month to finance the government, according to the International Monetary Fund. "Reconstruction won't be possible with a collapsing, failed state," said Thomas Kleine-Brockhoff, Berlin director of the German Marshall Fund and one of the authors. Donors need reassurance to keep pouring large sums into a state that has a reputation for corruption. That leverage will push Kyiv to overhaul its institutions and courts if it wants a rapid integration into Europe, the report says, along with the help of the European Union, which has high legal standards and has offered Ukraine candidate status. "We will also need very solid donor oversight, and Ukraine must understand that," Kleine-Brockhoff said. Ukraine would need to appoint an independent inspector-general with real teeth and join the European Public Prosecutor's Office, designed to investigate fraudulent use of EU funds. Foreign aid of this size will require foreign oversight, which Ukraine must accept, the report says. Another challenge is whether to create new institutions for the massive reconstruction project; the report suggests that is unnecessary and would waste time. — *New York Times*



The wreckage of a bombed bridge across the Irpin River in Bucha, Ukraine, near Kyiv.

Hopes and aspirations from OCCI elections



Ali Al Matani
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The new rules of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) were decided by the Royal Decree No 56/2022. It gave it certain powers, expanded its ambit and decided the regulations for participation in its elections as the sole institution meant for looking after the interests of the private sector.

Now the ball is in the court of the entrepreneurs and business community to elect their representatives on the board of directors of the new OCCI. The board has 21 members, among them five are from the Muscat Governorate and five others who represent public joint stock companies and a member who represents foreign investors. Other 10 members represent various governorates.

The members of the board are elected to serve the public interest as well as those who are associated with the business community. Same as any other elections, the voters are asked to elect the best among the candidates. This is because it is the foundation for participation in decision-making aimed at strengthening democratic values as an essential element in the system.

There is no doubt that the OCCI elections have seen many ups and downs, hopes and despair,

THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD ARE ELECTED TO SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST AS WELL AS THOSE WHO ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. SAME AS ANY OTHER ELECTIONS, THE VOTERS ARE ASKED TO ELECT THE BEST AMONG THE CANDIDATES

confidence, and loss of faith when it came to choosing its board in the past. It has learnt lot of lessons from the elections in various other institutions of the country. All the elections for Majlis Ashshura, municipality and other organisations of the civil society have a lot to teach as institutions based on democratic values.

We, in the country, have a rich legacy of political participation in decision-making, and we must take

advantage of it. There should be an increase in the number of votes polled for the OCCI board. This will show the level of awareness among citizens of the country, and highlight the importance of popular participation in the process.

Further, it will motivate the state to give more powers and expand the base of participation. This is required for a comprehensive evaluation of the powers. It also shows the level of awareness among voters. It is the percentage of total votes which shows how much this institution is needed by them to help in decision-making process so as to serve the interest of the common people and business and industrial community.

Only by taking advantage of the opportunity of sending suitable representatives to the OCCI can help in the process of policy making so as to serve the interests of the trade and industry community.

There have always been demands for making OCCI again active and allow it to play desired role of serving the private sector. Now this demand has been accepted. Now it is everybody's duty to take the new rules of the OCCI positively as it has its own benefits and advantages. It has got lot of powers. Now, it will be able to review the rules and regulations and propose amendments. This is the body which will propose a general strategy of the organisation to serve the private sector. The experiment of the OCCI is one of the other major achievements of the country. It cannot be separated from what all have been accomplished by the Sultanate of Oman on every front, within the country and abroad.

What has been done by the OCCI for the private sector of the country is always a matter of pride. Its successes has been celebrated at individual as well as institutions level in the country. It is distinct among other similar experiments in the country. Rather, it has set an example for other such associations in Oman.

It is our duty to participate in the OCCI elections with a positive mind and make it a success. Large scale participation is necessary for the success of these polls. It raises hopes and fulfils aspirations.



FIGHTING THE FIRES

An airplane flies past the setting sun after making a water drop on the Fairview Fire under excessive heat conditions in Hemet, California on Wednesday. — AFP

Saving the life of a human!



Peter Singer

The writer is Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, is founder of the nonprofit organisation The Life You Can Save

Consider the following statements describing our moral judgments: If a child is hungry, or hurt, the child's parents or friends have a greater obligation to help than a stranger does. If we have to choose between saving the life of a human or that of a dog — or even many dogs — we ought to save the human.

Almost everyone agrees with these moral judgments, right? Wrong. A sizable group of people disagree.

In the past two years, separate studies have compared adults' views on these two issues with those of children between the ages of five and ten years, and found that their responses differed significantly.

Both studies seek to shed light on the formation of our moral judgments, and so to help us to answer one of the Big Questions about morality: is it rooted primarily in our culture, or is it innate?

When anthropologists spread across the globe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, their reports emphasised the variation in moral beliefs between societies.

As a result, the view that morality is a cultural phenomenon became dominant.

In the 1970s, however, evolutionary theorists like E O Wilson and Richard Dawkins began to push back against cultural explanations of morality.

A great deal of human behaviour, they argued, could be explained by genetic selection, not necessarily aimed at the preservation of each individual organism, but rather at the preservation of genes that are likely be shared, not only with offspring, but also with other kin. Thus, moral rules imposing stronger obligations to assist kin rather than strangers would have evolved, along with other rules encouraging reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships.

The evolutionary view of the origins of morality has a lot going for it, including the discovery of precursors of human morality in other social mammals, some

CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF FIVE AND TEN VALUE STRANGERS, AND LIFE ITSELF, VERY DIFFERENTLY THAN ADULTS DO. WHAT DOES THIS TELL US ABOUT THE ROLES CULTURE, BIOLOGY, AND OUR CAPACITY TO REASON PLAY IN THE FORMATION OF OUR MORAL JUDGMENTS?

of whom, as Frans de Waal showed, clearly have a sense of fairness. And this sense can be more developed than just, "you scratch (= pick the lice from) my back and I'll scratch yours."

It can mean demanding something rather like equal pay for equal work: "I'm not accepting a food pellet for doing the same task that you gave that other monkey a grape for doing!"

Evolutionary theory does, however, have great difficulty in explaining the idea that we have obligations to come to the aid of strangers.

In my book The Expanding Circle, I accepted the evolutionary explanation of the basis of morality, but supplemented it by arguing that our capacity to reason does more than enable us to survive and reproduce: it also enables us to take a universal perspective from which we see that strangers are like us, and disregarding their needs is wrong.

Children certainly seem to think so. One of the two studies, led by Julia Marshall, a postdoctoral fellow at Boston College, shows that children between

five and ten years of age say that if a child is hungry or hurt, a stranger has an obligation to help them.

Older children and adults, by contrast, are more likely to differentiate between strangers, who don't have to help, and parents or friends, who do.

The study was carried out in Germany, India, Japan, Uganda, and the United States, and in all these countries, younger children thought that strangers ought to help.

The main cultural difference found is that in India, Japan, and Uganda, participants gave less weight to the differences between parents, friends, and strangers than they did in Germany and the United States.

In Uganda, in fact, older children were even more inclined than younger children to regard friends and strangers as being obliged to help.

The study of priorities regarding saving a human or animals, led by Matti Wilks, a lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, also showed that children aged 5-9 take a broader view than adults. But in this case, it was a broader view of the value of life.

Whereas almost all adults chose to save one human rather than as many as a hundred dogs, many children gave as much weight to saving a dog as they did to saving a human, and although the children valued dogs, the majority still chose to save ten rather than one human.

This may shed some light on why some children raised to eat meat refuse to eat it after they discover that meat is the flesh of an animal who has been killed.

A video of a small girl doing just that has been viewed nearly eight million times.

Both studies suggest that young children have broad moral sensitivities, both in terms of who should help someone in need, and in terms of the range of beings for whom they are concerned.

The studies also indicate that in most cultures, these sensitivities are narrowed during the child's development.

Does this narrowing result from the children's upbringing and cultural immersion, or could it be that the children revise their judgments in the light of greater knowledge of the world? We don't yet have the answer.

The studies have something else in common: the co-authorship of Paul Bloom, a professor of psychology at the University of Toronto.

Bloom has acknowledged that the findings of both studies challenge claims he made in his book Just Babies. That is of course laudable.

It is only by remaining open to the evidence that we may eventually untangle the roles culture, biology, and our capacity to reason play in the formation of our moral judgments.

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Studies suggest that young children have broad moral sensitivities.

Sports

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Manchester City's Norwegian striker Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring his team's third goal during the Uefa Champions League Group G first-leg match against Sevilla FC in Seville. – AFP

MBAPPE, HAALAND SIZZLE

PSG, CITY WIN AS CHELSEA LOSE IN ZAGREB

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe and Erling Haaland starred on Tuesday as Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester City made winning starts in the Champions League group stage, but big-spending Chelsea suffered a shock 1-0 defeat away to Dinamo Zagreb.

Real Madrid rode their luck at times before demonstrating their class to kick off their title defence with a 3-0 win at Celtic despite the loss of Karim Benzema to injury.

Mbappe showed why PSG were so desperate to keep him at the end of last season when he seemed set to depart for Real by scoring both goals in PSG's 2-1 victory at home to Juventus, to launch the French champions' quest for the biggest prize in European club football.

"We played well and we got a win in a tremendous atmosphere at home," Mbappe told Canal Plus.

"We always want to play against big teams -- that's why you play in the Champions League. It's



Paris Saint-Germain's Kylian Mbappe (R) and Juventus' Juan Cuadrado (L) fight for the ball during the Group H first-leg match in Paris. – AFP

that sort of atmosphere we love; matches like this, in which you have to show character."

The France forward volleyed Neymar's delightful scoop past Mattia Perin in the fifth minute at the Parc des Princes before adding another brilliantly-worked goal midway through the first half.

Substitute Weston McKennie headed Juventus back into the game but PSG held on and are level with Benfica in Group H. The Portuguese side beat Maccabi Haifa 2-0 courtesy of goals from Rafa Silva and Alex Grimaldo.

Pep Guardiola has warned Haaland alone cannot lead City

to Champions League glory this season, but the Norway striker kept up his scintillating form for his new team with two goals in their 4-0 rout of Sevilla.

"He has an incredible sense of goal. We have incredible numbers in scoring goals, so we want to continue like that," said Guardiola.

Having already scored 10 times in six Premier League outings, Haaland put City in front on 20 minutes in Spain as he poked in a Kevin De Bruyne cross.

Phil Foden doubled the lead on the hour before Haaland struck again. Ruben Dias bagged a fourth to compound the misery for a struggling Sevilla side.

Haaland faces a reunion next week with old club Borussia Dortmund, who eased to a 3-0 win over FC Copenhagen earlier in Group G.

First-half goals from Marco Reus and Raphael Guerreiro had the hosts cruising, with 19-year-

old England international Jude Bellingham delivering a late third.

GOOD START FOR REAL

Scottish champions Celtic were left to rue not making the most of a bright start against Real in Glasgow as Callum McGregor rattled the post before the Spanish giants made their experience count.

Vinicius Junior, who grabbed the winning goal in last season's final, opening the scoring on 56 minutes and Luka Modric soon doubled the advantage.

Eden Hazard, who came on for the ailing Benzema, netted his first goal for the club since January to seal victory. "It was like two games, first half we suffered a bit with intensity, second half we had control," Ancelotti told BT Sport.

"We were not surprised (with Celtic's start). We knew they could start really fast. We were lucky because they hit the post." — AFP

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS ON TUESDAY:

GROUP E
In Zagreb
Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 1 (Orsic 13)
Chelsea (ENG) 0
In Salzburg, Austria
Red Bull Salzburg (AUT) 1 (Okafor 28)
AC Milan (ITA) 1 (Saelamaekers 40)

GROUP F
In Glasgow, Scotland
Celtic (SCO) 0 Real Madrid (ESP) 3
(Vinicius 56, Modric 60, Hazard 77)
In Leipzig, Germany
RB Leipzig (GER) 1 (Simakan 57)
Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 4 (Shved 16, 58, Mudryk 76, Traore 85)

GROUP G
In Dortmund, Germany
Borussia Dortmund (GER) 3 (Reus 35, Guerreiro 42, Bellingham 83)
FC Copenhagen (DEN) 0
In Seville, Spain
Sevilla (ESP) 0 Manchester City (ENG) 4
(Haaland 20, 67, Foden 58, Dias 90+2)

GROUP H
In Paris
Paris Saint-Germain (FRA) 2 (Mbappe 5, 22) Juventus (ITA) 1 (McKennie 53)
In Lisbon
Benfica (POR) 2 (Silva 50, Grimaldo 54)
Maccabi Haifa (ISR) 0

Chelsea rush to sack Tuchel after poor start

LONDON: Chelsea on Wednesday sacked manager Thomas Tuchel just seven games into the new season, hours after they suffered a chastening Champions League defeat at Dinamo Zagreb.

The former Borussia Dortmund and Paris Saint-Germain boss leaves Stamford Bridge after a tumultuous period at the club, which included a Champions League triumph and the end of Roman Abramovich's reign.

Chelsea said they would move "swiftly" to appoint a replacement, with former Tottenham and PSG boss Mauricio Pochettino and Brighton manager Graham Potter among the early favourites.

"On behalf of everyone at

Chelsea FC, the club would like to place on record its gratitude to Thomas and his staff for all their efforts during their time with the club," the Premier League club said in a statement.

"Thomas will rightly have a place in Chelsea's history after winning the Champions League, the Super Cup and Club World Cup in his time here."

The Stamford Bridge club, bought by Todd Boehly's consortium in late May, defended the timing of the decision, which is understood to have been made before the loss in Croatia. "As the new ownership group reaches 100 days since taking over the club, and as it continues its hard work to take the club forward, the new owners believe it is



Chelsea coach Thomas Tuchel during the Champions League match against Dinamo Zagreb. – AFP

the right time to make this transition," the statement said.

Chelsea are sixth in the Premier League table after three wins, one draw and two defeats in their opening six matches -- already five points

behind leaders Manchester City

Tuchel, who was in charge for less than 20 months at Chelsea, admitted "everything is missing" after their shock 1-0 defeat on Tuesday.

"Too much to analyse," he said. "I'm a part of it. We are clearly not there, where we need to be and where we can be. So it's on me, it's on us, we need to find solutions."

Tuchel replaced Frank Lampard as Chelsea boss in January 2021, immediately adding steel and focus to the Blues, whose expensively assembled squad were badly under-performing.

The German, 49, steered Chelsea to their second Champions League triumph just four months later, with a stunning 1-0 win over Manchester City in Porto.

His contract was extended by two years just days later.

But Chelsea hit stormy waters on and off the pitch last season. — AFP

India near exit after Lanka defeat

DUBAI: Sri Lanka produced an impressive run chase to down India by six wickets on Tuesday and leave their opponents staring at an early exit from the Asia Cup.

If Pakistan beat Afghanistan on Wednesday, they will face Sri Lanka in Sunday's final and knock out arch rivals India in the process.

Half-centuries from openers Pathum Nissanka (52) and Kusal Mendis (57) gave Sri Lanka the perfect start to their chase of 174 in the Super Four game of a tournament which acts as a tune-up to the T20 World Cup in October-November.

India hit back with a flurry of wickets, but Bhanuka Rajapaksa and captain Dasun Shanaka, who hit an unbeaten 33, helped Sri Lanka get over the line, with two scrambled byes off the penultimate ball completing the job.

"The environment in the team set the tone. It is what gave us the confidence," said man of the match Shanaka, whose team began the tournament with a heavy defeat against Afghanistan but bounced back with three successive wins.

"The batting unit won it for us. The bowlers bowled well in patches, Dilshan and Theekshana in particular. The Indian batsmen came hard, but we did well to keep them to 173."

Rajapaksa, who hit 25 not out, and Shanaka put on an unbeaten stand of 64 to leave the hopes of tournament favourites India



SCOREBOARD

INDIA	4-0-29-1, Karunaratne 4-0-27-2, Fernando 2-0-28-0, Hasaranga 4-0-39-0, Shanaka 2-0-26-2
KL Rahul lbw Theekshana	6
R Sharma c Nissanka b Karunaratne	72
V Kohli b Madushanka	0
S Yadav c Theekshana b Shanaka	34
H Pandya c Nissanka b Shanaka	17
R Pant c Nissanka b Madushanka	17
D Hooda b Madushanka	3
R Ashwin not out	15
B Kumar b Karunaratne	0
A Singh not out	1
Extras (nb1, w7)	8
Total (8 wickets, 20 overs)	173
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-13, 3-110, 4-119, 5-149, 6-157, 7-158, 8-164	
Bowling: Madushanka 4-0-24-3, Theekshana	

hanging by a thread, after also losing their Super Four opener to Pakistan.

Left-arm quick Dilshan Madushanka led the bowling charge with figures of 3-24 in his four overs to keep down India to 173-8 despite a 41-ball 72 from skipper Rohit Sharma.

If Afghanistan do India a favour against Pakistan, Rohit's men will still have to beat the Afghans on Thursday to have any chance of reaching the final.

'LOOKING FOR ANSWERS'

Nissanka started cautiously before he hammered Arshdeep Singh for two fours and a six in an 18-run fifth over.

Mendis joined in the fun and cleared the fence three times, including with a brilliant shot over wide long-off against Ravichandran Ashwin.

Nissanka reached his fifty in 33 balls, but Indian leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal broke the partnership and struck twice in one over.

Mendis also completed his fifty but Sri Lanka lost Danushka Gunathilaka for one off Ashwin.

Chahal then trapped Mendis lbw to put Sri Lanka in trouble at 110-4 from 14 overs. But Rajapaksa and Shanaka dug them out of that hole with some inspired batting, leaving only seven needed from the final over. — AFP



Bank Muscat presents Al Mahadir Team sports field in Al Rustaq

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat has announced the opening of the Al Mahadir Sports and Culture Team sports field in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq as part of its flagship Green Sports CSR programme. The event was held

in the presence of Khalifa bin Hamad al Sakhbouri, Head of the Al Mahadir Sports and Culture Team in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq, and Abdullah bin Mohammed al Abri, Team Manager.

Abdul Rahman bin Abdullah al Shezawi, Regional Manager – South Al Batinah, Bank Muscat, said: "We are pleased to inaugurate the Al Mahadir Sports and Culture Team sports field within the Green Sports programme which is implemented by the bank as part of its strategy to enhance its leadership role in the field of corporate social responsibility and sustainability. On this occasion, the bank is pleased to congratulate the team's management and appreciate their efforts during the various stages of the project. We would also like to wish them further growth, development and success as well as excellent contribution to local sports."

He added that Bank Muscat would be opening a number of new Green Sports fields across the Sultanate of Oman for different youth teams in the coming months.

On his part, Khalifa bin Hamad al Sakhbouri, Head of Al Mahadir Team, thanked the bank for the completion of the team's lighting system, which was implemented through Bank Muscat's Green Sports programme. Pointing out that the new sports field will now be used to organise different sports, social and cultural activities and events, Al Sakhbouri affirmed

that they will continue to work hard to advance the team and develop the capabilities and talents of its members, emphasising the team management's keenness to develop the project in the future and enhance the team's facilities.

Bank Muscat's Green Sports programme is one of the leading CSR programmes in Oman which provides support to local sports teams as part of the bank's efforts to develop sports infrastructure in Omani sports and provide green spaces throughout the Sultanate of Oman. The scope of support under the Green Sports programme includes installation of artificial turf or natural grass on sports fields, floodlighting and water-desalination systems. In 2021, the bank increased the number of annual beneficiaries to 20 on the occasion of the flagship CSR programme's 10th Anniversary and the bank recently announced the 20 winners for this year. It is a matter of great encouragement that the Green Sports programme has benefited 163 teams and over 50,000 team members across the Sultanate of Oman so far.

The facilities developed as part of the programme are often used as a venue for other social activities by communities across Oman, leading to stronger social bonding and positive behaviour among young people as well as the development of talented Omani youth. Through the 2022 edition of this flagship CSR programme, Bank Muscat has further strengthened its pioneering role in the field of social responsibility and sustainability, and its continuing drive to develop modern sports infrastructure across Oman in the spirit of the Public-Private Partnership model.

England recall Hales from exile for T20 World Cup

LONDON: Alex Hales's long international exile is over after he was recalled to the England squad for the T20 World Cup in Australia as a replacement for the injured Jonny Bairstow.

The 33-year-old Nottinghamshire batsman has not represented his country for three-and-a-half years, having been dumped on the eve of the 2019 World Cup in the aftermath of two failed recreational drug tests.

While his official ban only totalled 21 days, in line with England and Wales Cricket Board policy, he was left out in the cold after what then white-



ball captain Eoin Morgan described as a "complete breakdown in trust".

Now, with Morgan retired, Bairstow sidelined by a "freak" leg injury and fellow opener Jason Roy dropped due to lack of form, circumstances

have combined to hand Hales a fresh chance. Hales recently became the first Englishman to reach 10,000 runs in the Twenty20 format, and also has useful experience in Australia's Big Bash League so knows the tournament pitches well.

The hard-hitting batter has scored 1,644 runs in 60 T20 internationals at an average of 31, with a strike rate of more than 136 per 100 balls. Hales will also be available for the upcoming tour of Pakistan.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed the player's recall in a short team update issued on Wednesday.

Test captain Ben Stokes, speaking ahead of the third Test against South Africa, said of Hales's return to the international fold: "At the end of the day, everyone's goal is to win that World Cup for England. "My goal, Alex's goal and everyone else's goal who is part of that squad is to win the World Cup. Alex is definitely one of the best T20 players in the world and unfortunately with what happened with Jonny we had to call another player up and Alex is definitely one of the guys that bowlers don't want to be bowling at in the T20 format." — AFP

Gary Kirsten Cricket to hold high-performance camp in Oman

MUSCAT: It is not often that young cricketers and coaches in Oman get lessons and training sessions from one of world's renowned cricket academies. Oman Cricket's endeavour to get the local talent and coaches high-class coaching and training has led them rope in Gary Kirsten Cricket Academy for a high-performance camp at the Oman Cricket Academy in Al Amerat from October 5-9.

The five-day camp will have three days devoted to youngsters (age group from 14-19) and a course for Oman coaches. With an aim to have a strong foundation, the visiting team from Gary Kirsten Cricket will also organise a day-long grassroots camp.

Evert Laubscher, Oman Cricket Academy manager, said that a team of three high-performance coaches from Gary Kirsten Cricket (GKC) will be conducting the camp.



Among the GKC coaches expected to arrive in Oman are Ryan Cook, Jimmy Cook, Ryan Van Niekerk, Garreth Von Hoesslin, Murray Ranger, Justin Kemp and Russel Symcox.

Laubscher said the inaugural camp will be organised by three GKC coaches but in the future there may be more coaches coming down. GKC founder Gary Kirsten

is also likely to pay a visit to Oman in the future.

In a video message, Kirsten said: "We can't wait to share our best thinking with Oman's best talent. This camp is only the beginning of some exciting things to come, I look forward to seeing and meeting everyone as this partnership grows."

Laubscher said: "We at Oman

Cricket are delighted to be hosting a coaching camp of this quality for the first time in Oman. It will definitely be a great opportunity for all aspiring young cricketers in Oman to improve their skills under the guidance of Gary Kirsten Cricket Academy's professional team."

"It won't just be the players who will be benefiting from the camp, but also our coaches who will be attending a workshop conducted by CoachEd."

World Cup-winning coach and South African legend Gary Kirsten is a household name among cricket fans across the world. Since his retirement in 2004, the former opening batter has devoted his time coaching international teams and franchises and tasted tremendous success, leading India to a World Cup title in 2011 and more recently as a mentor of Gujarat Titans in IPL 2022.

HIGH PERFORMANCE
GARY KIRSTEN CRICKET

**Gary Kirsten Cricket
HIGH PERFORMANCE CAMP**

5 OCT - Coaching course for Oman coaches
6 OCT - Grassroots camp (3 - 4 hours)
7 OCT - High performance camp (u14 and u19)
8 OCT - High performance camp (u14 and u19)
9 OCT - High performance camp (u14 and u19)

Evert Laubscher
Phone No : +968 91924529
Email : evert@omancricket.org



Rachid El Morabity to take part in Oman Desert Marathon

ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

Seven-time Oman Desert Marathon winner Rachid el Morabity of Morocco has confirmed his participation for the eighth Oman Desert Marathon, the organisers said on Wednesday.

Rachid, one of the top world ultra-runner, has won the Marathon de Sables nine times to his credit.

The Moroccan athlete will be the major attraction for the eighth edition of the Oman Desert Marathon that will take place from January 21 to 23, 2023.

First held in 2013, the Oman Desert Marathon is a 165-kilometre race of self-sufficiency in four stages, including one night stage, through the spectacular Omani landscape with all its variety, from the Al Wasil oasis, crossing the desert to the Al Jawharat resort.

The race is held in January to assure runners the best weather conditions.

The Oman Desert Marathon has now run up seven previous editions and in 2023 presents a 165-kilometre route in four stages through one of the most spectacular deserts in the world. The course, in which the sand is present in every stage, offers the discovery of a very rich country in culture and landscape, while still being a tough challenge for those who want to enjoy a race through the desert.

In this next edition, the stage distances will be 47, 55, 42 and 21 kilometres, thus offering the runners a spectacular route, an epic stage of 55 kilometres followed by a marathon distance, and a more relaxed last day for a good end to the party.

The last edition of OSD happened in 2019, in which the brothers Rachid and Mohammed El Morabity claimed the top two podium spots.

Oman taking part in world youth chess tourney in Romania

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

Oman national chess team started their participation in the Fide World Youth Championship from September 6 to 17 in Romania.

Oman team includes Abdulrahman al Zadjali in the U-16 category and Mohammed al Riyami in the U-14 category.

Mohamed al Riyami lost his first round match against Kazan Zaglo of Greece. Al Riyami will play the second round with Canada's Lyn Lo. Abdulrahman al Zadjali also lost in the first round against Hungary's Zik Zizou. Al Zadjali takes on Norwegia's Yaltrest Oil in the next round of the eight-rounds competition.

The Oman Chess Committee is preparing the local chess players to compete with the best players in the world in effort to improve the international ranking points for them.

Oman are participating in this tournament for the second time, after the first participation was via video communication in last year's edition, with the participation of Anas al Darwishi and Mohammed al Rashdi.

On the other hand, Oman Chess Committee in coordination with the Asian Chess Federation will host the Asian Amateur Chess Championship 2022, which will be held from September 28 to October 6 with participants from all Asian countries which are members of Fide.



Khachanov battles past Kyrgios

RUUD MAKES SECOND GRAND SLAM SEMIFINAL

NEW YORK: Karen Khachanov set up a US Open semifinal duel with Casper Ruud on Tuesday when he battled past "devastated" Nick Kyrgios in a big-hitting five-setter, shattering the Australian crowd-pleaser's dreams of a maiden Grand Slam title.

Russian 27th seed Khachanov triumphed 7-5, 4-6, 7-5, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4 over the Wimbledon runner-up to make the last-four at a major for the first time.

Earlier on Tuesday, Norwegian fifth seed Ruud defeated Italy's Matteo Berrettini 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) to make his second Slam semifinal of 2022 having finished runner-up to Rafael Nadal at the French Open.

Khachanov fired 30 aces and a total of 63 winners past Kyrgios.

"I did it, guys. Finally, you are showing me some love," Khachanov told the mostly pro-Kyrgios crowd on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"It was a crazy match I was expecting it would be like this. I'm ready to run, to fight to play five sets. We played almost four hours and that's the only way to beat Nick."

The Russian said he had "nothing to lose" when he faces Ruud on Friday.

"I would like to win it," said Khachanov who lost to the Norwegian on clay in Rome in 2020 in their only previous meeting.

"But as deep as you go the expectations rise up. I did the step forward, I made my first semifinal and I think I have nothing to lose.

"I just want to go for it and be ready for the next match and hopefully it will be a good one."

Kyrgios, who had knocked out defending champion Daniil Medvedev in the last-16, hit 31 aces in his 75 winners.

However, his unforced error count of 58 was almost double the 31 of Khachanov. "I'm devastated. It's heart-breaking for me and everyone," said Kyrgios. "I feel like I have let so many people down."

After Kyrgios had levelled the contest just after midnight with a dominant tie-breaker, he allowed Khachanov to break for a 1-0 lead in the final set. Kyrgios then failed to convert break points in the



TOP:Russia's Karen Khachanov hits a return to Australia's Nick Kyrgios during their 2022 US Open quarterfinal match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York. BELOW: Norway's Casper Ruud reacts after defeating Italy's Matteo Berrettini in another quarterfinal.

second and fourth games and his chance was gone. They were two of seven break points saved by the Russian on the night. Khachanov went to match point off a net cord and claimed victory from an unreturned serve after three hours and 39 minutes of action.

'WALK ON WATER'

Ruud reached the US Open semifinals for the first time after breaking Berrettini five times while saving seven of nine break points. He raced through the first

two sets under the roof of Arthur Ashe Stadium before 2019 semi-finalist Berrettini stopped the rot with a break for 2-0 in the third.

At 2-5 down, the 23-year-old Ruud saved two set points before recovering and going on to dominate the tie-break.

"It was a better start to a match than I ever had before. Everything was going my way plus Matteo didn't serve as well as he usually does," said seventh-ranked Ruud who could finish the US Open as the new world number one.

"I got a little nervous towards the end of the second set because things were going a little too well.

"You think you can walk on water, which is not possible. The third set was very tough."

Berrettini, who missed the French Open because of a hand injury and Wimbledon due to Covid, admitted he had endured a day to forget. "Nothing more I can say than the worst day of the tournament probably in the most important moment," he said.

— AFP

Jabeur, Garcia march into US Open last four

NEW YORK: Tunisia's Ons Jabeur became the first African woman in history to reach the semifinals of the US Open on Tuesday as France's Caroline Garcia ended the hopes of American teenager Coco Gauff to advance to the last four.

Jabeur, who also claimed a notable first in July as the first woman from Africa to reach the final at Wimbledon, scored a 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) win over Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic.

The 28-year-old will now face Garcia in the semifinals after the in-form 17th seed dispatched the 18-year-old Gauff 6-3, 6-4 in Tuesday's other quarterfinal.

Tomljanovic had landed in the quarterfinals after a run which included a third round victory over Serena Williams, in what was most likely the 23-time Grand Slam champion's final singles match before retirement.

But the Croatia-born Aussie's battling campaign came to a



Tunisia's Ons Jabeur celebrates defeating Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic.

grinding halt against the dynamic fifth-seeded Jabeur, the Tunisian attacking from the outset and never letting up. Jabeur said she had been infused with belief since reaching the Wimbledon final, where she was beaten in three sets by Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina.

"I believe more in myself," Jabeur said. "After Wimbledon it was very positive. Even though



France's Caroline Garcia celebrates after defeating USA's Coco Gauff.

I lost the final, I knew I had it in me to win a Grand Slam. And here I am in the semifinals of the US Open."

Jabeur is known affectionately as the 'Minister of Happiness' by fans in Tunisia for the joy that her progress on court has brought to her homeland.

However Jabeur admitted she had let her frustration get the

better of her on Tuesday, when she banged her racquet in frustration several times after coughing up multiple service breaks in the second set. "I think I'm gonna be fired from my job as Minister of Happiness," she joked.

"It is tough to manage my frustration. I apologise for my behaviour. I really wanted to keep calm but the racquet kept slipping away from my hand."

SWEET CAROLINE

Garcia reached the first Grand Slam semifinal of her career after an ultimately emphatic win over American hope Gauff.

"My head is buzzing, I can't describe how I feel," Garcia said after a quarterfinal she dominated almost from start to finish.

Garcia arrived in New York fresh from winning the Cincinnati Masters, and Tuesday's win was her 13th straight singles victory.

— AFP



Ministry ramps up drive against red palm weevil menace



HAMMAM AL BADI
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

A work camp was organised by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Waqbah, Wilayat of Yanqul, to survey, explore and treat palms infected with the red palm weevil. The event was held with participation from all the departments of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

This camp was part of an integrated managed programme approved by the Directorate-General for Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate to advance the eradication of the red palm weevil with the support of a local community and civil partners.

As part of the programme, participants were divided into eight field teams and a women's guidance and awareness team at home to convey the message about the palm weevil menace and ways to detect it before an infestation occurs.

Salim bin Ali al Amrani, Director-General of Agriculture, Fisheries

This camp was part of an integrated managed programme approved by the Directorate-General for Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah Governorate to advance the eradication of the red palm weevil with the support of a local community and civil partners.

and Water Resources in Al Dhahirah, stressed the importance of conducting work camps to identify the extent of insect infestations in targeted villages, as well as utilising control teams to do collective work, and completing the survey, exploration, treatment and removal work with accuracy and quality, as well as educating the community and providing them with information.

Abdul Rahman al Badi, an engineer and observer of the red palm weevil in Al Waqbah, explained the camp's progress plan and the distribution of the participating teams to achieve the best results for surveying, exploration, treating and removing severely infested palm trees.

Potential IPO candidate Abraj Energy posts revenue of \$323m

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

Following the successful roll-out of its new brand identity, Abraj Energy Services (Abraj), a leading Omani oilfield and gas services company and a wholly owned subsidiary of OQ, participated in the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) Investor Roadshow that included potential IPO candidates.

The company demonstrated to investors and key stakeholders its robust business model underpinned by strong financial and operational performance.

The MSX Investor Roadshow emphasised the extensive reforms being implemented to boost the Sultanate of Oman's capital markets and bolster its privatisation efforts.

Abraj's newly appointed CEO Saif al Hamhami was joined by Business Development Director Salah al Harthy in presenting the company's role as an Omani oilfield services champion to a group of local, regional and global investors.

Al Hamhami said: "Through targeted investments and an experienced workforce, Abraj



has grown into a leading Omani oilfield services company that is underpinned by strong financial performance, a modern drilling fleet and an unwavering commitment to providing clients with quality services.

At Abraj, we promote consistently high standards of excellence and a culture of safety across our operations.

Abraj is focused on strengthening its role as a quality oilfield services provider that

enhances in-country value and seeks to develop more productive, efficient and greener services that contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's sustainable economic growth."

Al Hamhami and Al Harthy highlighted that Abraj's commitment to excellence has sustained the company's robust financial standing, which is supported by stable, contracted income from a diversified blue-chip customer base.

In 2021, the company generated \$323 million in revenues and \$121 million in EBITDA, which grew at 21 per cent CAGR in the last 3 years. Al Hamhami and Al Harthy attribute this success to their experienced management team and dedicated workforce.

Abraj's team of experts is part of a strong base of more than 2,500 dedicated employees, 93 per cent of which are Omanis.

Abraj Energy Services is among a number of state-owned entities indirectly owned by Oman Investment Authority (OIA) that are tipped to be listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) in the coming years as part of OIA's exit plan.

OPAZ appoints slate of new GMs and managers

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), issued decisions appointing a number of general managers and managers for its different sectors and departments.

The decisions stipulated the appointment of Mahmood bin

Hamoud al Rawahi as General Manager of Planning and IT Sector, Dr Said bin Khalifa al Tuirshi as General Manager of Investment Development Sector, Ahmed bin Saleh al Farsi as General Manager of Compliance and Legislation Sector and Eng Ahmed bin Ali Akaak as In-Charge of Managing the Operations of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

Other decisions stipulated

the appointment of Eng Ahmed bin Harib al Balushi as Manager of Compliance and Environmental Affairs, Said bin Ahmed al Harthi as Manager of HR, Adil bin Saif al Raqadi, Manager of IT, Salim bin Said bin Khuwaydem Qatan, Manager of Investors Services in Duqm, and Eng Abdullah bin Salim al Hakmani, Manager of Technical Affairs in Duqm.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) was established as per the provision of the Royal Decree No (105/2020), issued on August 18, 2020. It oversees the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, free zones in Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah and any other special economic zone or free zone in the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman seeks PPP-based offers for drug rehab centre

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 7

Building on its portfolio of projects offered up for investment on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) basis, Oman's Ministry of Finance has invited qualified local and international companies to submit Expressions of Interest (EoI) for a contract to finance and operate a modern drug rehabilitation centre in the port city of Suhar.

It's the latest in a growing pipeline of projects planned for procurement by the Omani government under its recently promulgated PPP Law. Projects and initiatives lined up for PPP-based procurement span the following sectors: Healthcare, Education, Research and Development, Environment, Transport, Ports, Renewable Energy, Office Accommodation and Information communication



(Image for illustration only)

and Technology.

On Wednesday, the ministry announced that it is seeking a qualified company to operate and manage the Al Taafi Suhar Centre, which has been set up to provide advanced levels of treatment and

rehabilitative care to recovering drug addicts. In addition to financing and provisioning the facility, the successful bidder will also be required to expand the centre at the appropriate time.

PPP-based operation of the

Al Taafi Suhar Centre is one of several projects planned for procurement by the Ministry of Finance on behalf of the Ministry of Health. It includes plans for the establishment of a string of dialysis service centres

around the country, a Central Laboratory, and a number of small hospitals and health centres. In the Education sector, the Ministry of Finance is currently evaluating proposals received from local and international

developers for the procurement of 42 schools via the PPP route.

The client is the Ministry of Education which, for the first time, has invited the private sector to undertake the design, finance, construction and maintenance of a package of 42 schools under the PPP model.

Oman's PPP law, which came into force on July 1, 2019, enables government entities to enter into arrangements with the private sector in relation to infrastructure and public utility projects.

Another project being procured by the Ministry of Finance under the PPP model concerns the development, management, operation and maintenance of the Liwa Fishery Harbour Project on the North Al Batinah coast. The competitive procurement process is being pursued in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

ahli islamic launches Al Shumookh Banking for high-net-worth customers

MUSCAT: As part of its continuous endeavour to provide premium banking services to high-net-worth individuals, ahli islamic has launched Al Shumookh Banking segment, targeting its growing base of elite clients. Tailored for premium, private and wealth management clients, it offers a range of exclusive products and services to enhance their everyday banking experience.

The new Al Shumookh banking segment is open for existing and prospective Omani, and expatriate customers, whose monthly incomes — RO 3,500 and above — are transferred to the bank or have a total deposit of RO 35,000 and more.

Under this segment, customers of Al Shumookh Premium Banking, Al Shumookh Private Banking, and Wealth Management, will enjoy the facilities of a designated service centre and will be attended by dedicated relationship managers who will assist them in their investments and financial planning. In addition, they will be offered exclusive rates on financing and will have special access to the airport lounges.

Speaking about ahli islamic's strategic growth initiatives, against the backdrop of the



new banking segment, Yousuf al Rawahi, DGM, and Head of ahli islamic said, “Al Shumookh reflects our commitment to create and implement banking solutions that are convenient and suitable for the current market conditions.

We believe innovation is the key to progress, and our value-added approach to banking has helped us enhance our product portfolio with segments tailored to meet the needs and requirements of our growing base of clients.

Al Shumookh, designed for our elite customers, is a testament to the Bank's commitment to protect and manage wealth in the best interests of its customers.

“We are aware of the newfound global popularity of Islamic

banks and are capitalising on this wave with our top-class service standards, where the focus is on partnering with customers. Our Shari'a-compliant banking solutions have, and will continue to shape, the fortunes of our customers and pave the path of our progress in the local and regional banking sector. The recent past has demonstrated our strong intent to enhance our presence in the country with newer branch networks, and to meet everyday banking needs of our growing customer base with relevant and timely products.”

Reiterating similar sentiments, Noora Sabah Sultan – AGM, Head of Retail, ahli Islamic, commented: “We rely on customer

feedback and market trends in conceptualising new products. As a key player in the Omani banking sector, we have strengthened our wealth management portfolio to meet specific requirements of our growing client base, empowering them with financial flexibilities designed to enhance their wealth - for now, and in the future. We expect this to bolster Oman's economic and social development further.”

Al Shumookh clients will have access to a bundle of investment options via Wealth Management; they will have dedicated Relationship Managers at selected branches at their disposal; they will be provided with a branded platinum debit card for (premium banking) and a signature debit card for (private banking) with an increased daily withdrawal limit of up to RO 1,000 – branded cheque book, with the quickest turnaround time. Credit card holders of Al Shumookh Private and Al Shumookh Premium banking will earn higher Pearl Points (8 and 6 for every RO 3 spent for Private and Premium, respectively).

They will be eligible for 1 per cent cash back, chauffeur, concierge services, a dedicated service centre, relationship manager, multi-travel insurance, and access

to more than 1,000 airport lounges worldwide.

Explaining Al Shumookh Wealth Management further, Noora Sabah Sultan pointed out that the Bank would offer a range of Shari'a-compliant investment solutions to meet its customers' current and future needs.

“We are following global banking standards in providing wealth management as an investment advisory service, combining other financial services to address the specific needs of our wealthy clients. Our wealth management advisors will help clients develop comprehensive investment strategies to cover various Islamic investments.

They will also coordinate with them to incorporate an optimal tax planning strategy into their wealth planning,” she added.

ahli islamic continues to provide innovative products and services structured to increase its market presence, catering to customers keen to adopt sharia-compliant products. The Bank facilitates customers to operate their businesses under Shari'a principles by providing a wide array of Shari'a-based financial products and ensuring the highest level of service standards that focus on 'Partnering' with its customers.

Halal booking continues offers for Alizz Islamic Bank customers



MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank continues to offer its customers the best hotel reservations and holiday packages in the most affordable way through its partnership with HalalBooking.com. Through this offer Alizz Islamic Bank provides it's customers the best offers and discounts for both debit and credit card holders.

This partnership comes within the vision of Alizz Islamic Bank to provide exclusive and exceptional services, products and discounts that the customers deserve and customers can benefit from these packages and a variety of offers until the end of December 2023.

To take advantage of these discounts, cardholders only need to visit the HalalBooking.com website and enter the first 6 digits of their card number in the designated area, then follow the easy registration instructions to benefit from a world of offers from the best hotels around the world.

Upon registration in HalalBooking.com, Titanium Debit or Credit Card holders will have access to some special offers and discounts. They can get up to 15 per cent discounts on a variety of selected hotels, and a free upgrade to the Platinum Category of several services, including late check-out, room upgrade, breakfast at selected Platinum Partner Hotels upon the availability of reservation, plus a one-time \$30 cash discount on the first reservation with a minimum booking amount of \$300.

Alizz Islamic Bank Platinum Debit Card, Platinum, World, World Elite retail Credit Card, and World and Executive Corporate Credit Cards, will be directly upgraded to Diamond Category, upon registering at HalalBooking.com.

Moreover, they will have access to a diverse world of discounts and rewards, such as up to 20 per cent discounts and free Platinum Privileges at selected hotels, upgrade to complimentary Diamond Privileges, early check-in, upgrade to a double room, and airport transfer service based on availability upon check-in.

Subaru Forester takes driving confidence to new heights

MUSCAT: Long the top pick of off-road enthusiasts in the region, Subaru's best-selling compact SUV – 2022 Forester – has a bolder look, upgraded capabilities and next-level safety features that together deliver unmatched peace of mind and driving comfort.

Engineered for motoring pleasure within the city as much as for adventure amid the outdoors, the 2022 Subaru Forester that has been crafted in Japan, provides a great combination of quality and value.

Crafted to provide complete driving confidence, Subaru's acclaimed Symmetrical All Wheel Drive (AWD) system distributes power to all wheels for better traction, that is very reliable on wet and slippery roads as well. With its well-balanced low centre of gravity design, the Symmetrical AWD ensures a more stable and safe ride – giving the Forester its much-deserved reputation as the most versatile SUV in its segment.

Under the hood of every Forester is its beating heart – a boxer engine



– that has provided Subaru vehicles with their legendary durability and reliable performance for over 50 years. Standard across all Forester trims, the iconic boxer engine delivers 156 horsepower and 196 Nm of torque.

Together with its Lineartronic transmission system, the engine performs at its most efficient range, offering smooth acceleration, driving performance and better fuel efficiency.

Leading Omani automotive firm OTE Group is the exclusive distributor of Subaru vehicles in the Sultanate of Oman. Visit any of OTE's showrooms, located around the country, for a first-hand look and feel of the 2022 Forester range across multiple trims and colours.

Foton Aumark raises benchmark for light duty trucks in Oman

MUSCAT: Foton Aumark, the popular light duty truck is a preferred choice for the customers in Oman and has a strong value proposition. Aumark is designed to meet the Oman users' pursuit for an efficient and worry-free logistics. The truck which is powered by legendary Cummins 3.8L turbo diesel engine, ZF Transmission and DANA Axles is known for its excellent fuel economy, safety, and top-quality performance in the logistics and cargo industry.

The Foton Aumark – light duty truck (3 tonne) coupled with Cummins Engine and ZF (6-speed) manual transmission. Available in two wheelbase 3360 and 3800 mm, the light duty truck has many features including cruise control, low engine noise, reversing sensor, remote control central door-locking, ABS+EBD, air with exhaust brakes, power windows among others.



The light duty truck, which is perfect for intra city use and city-to-city movements of goods, offers industry leading technology that

augments the truck's driving experience while providing supreme safety and provides customers with the best experience for their customised transportation needs, Foton Aumark – light duty truck is an ideal choice for its superior loading, fuel efficiency and less frequent service requirements features (Service can be done at every 20,000 km).

With its outstanding features, Foton Aumark – light duty truck is great value for money too. Owner of three Foton Aumark, Ali Ghasi Mabrook Saleem, is captivated by the light duty truck's high-class engine Turbo engine with good power and excellent fuel economy, outstanding braking system, Exceptional loading capabilities and excellent stability during long distance.

Bank Nizwa holds Ras Al Hadd beach clean up

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa, the leading and most trusted Islamic Bank in the Sultanate of Oman, recently organised a beach cleanup event of Ras Al Hadd on September 2, in cooperation with the Environment Authority.

A drive toward preserving the environment, the beach cleanup comes as part of the bank's 'Masoliyati' programme that falls under its corporate social responsibility umbrella. Bringing together employees from across the bank family, the event promotes an attitude of voluntary responsibility among employees

and contributes to achieving social and environmental well-being.

“As a bank with sincere adherence to Shariah law, we firmly believe in giving back to the local community. We will continue undertaking sustainable initiatives that not only help enhance individuals' well-being but also contribute significantly to promoting social development in the country,” said HH Sayyidah Wisam bint Jaifar al Said, Head of Marketing & Communications at Bank Nizwa.

“Organising beach cleanup



campaigns is part of Bank Nizwa's sustainability strategy to raise

awareness of environmental issues and engage employees

in their community. As Oman's marine ecosystem is extremely diverse and significant, it also strengthens the public's awareness and appreciation of the coastal environment,” she added.

Bank management and volunteers worked together to pick up the waste glass, litter, and trash along the shoreline, following safety protocols and guidelines. This initiative aimed to highlight the importance of beaches in supporting marine life and sustaining Oman's ecological system. In addition, it also motivated community efforts to

eliminate waste and pollution from public places. As a leading Islamic financial institution that upholds strong values of philanthropy, public service and community involvement, Bank Nizwa has gained commendable recognition for its contributions to humanitarian causes, social initiatives and charitable programmes.

Bank Nizwa's drive to build a better future for communities and individuals throughout Oman is encompassed by the 'Masoliyati' volunteering programme, founded in 2014.



Oman hosts UNEP workshop on mercury management

JOMAR MENDOZA

@JmObserver

The United National Environment Programme (UNEP) with the support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) conduct a training workshop on legal and institutional frameworks to manage mercury in the Sultanate of Oman. This is to facilitate the early implementation of the Minamata Convention as Oman is in the process of the development of the Minamata Initial Assessment (MIA).

This will help assess the national use, emissions, and releases of mercury and its compounds in the Sultanate of Oman and develop an action plan for the implementation of Minamata Convention.

In May 28, 2020, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 58/2020 ratifying Oman's joining the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which was signed in Kunamoto, Japan on October 10, 2013. On June 23, 2020, the Government of the Sultanate of Oman deposited its instrument of accession, thereby becoming the 122nd party to



the Minamata Convention. The national focal point in Oman is Dr Mohammed al Kasbi (pictured), Director of the chemicals and waste management department, Environment Authority.

The specific objectives of the training workshop includes (1) training the national team on the compilation and assessment of the existing policy, institutional and legal frameworks for the management of chemicals, specifically mercury in the country data, and (2) understanding and providing insights on the challenges and recommendations in the management of mercury in the country.

The Minamata Convention on Mercury was the first new global convention on environment and health adopted for close to



(Image for illustration only)

a decade. It is named after the place in Japan where, in the mid-20th century, mercury-tainted industrial wastewater poisoned thousands of people, leading to crippling symptoms that became known as the 'Minamata disease'.

According to UNEP, mercury is a highly toxic heavy metal that poses a global threat to human health and the environment. Together with its various compounds, it has a range of severe health impacts, including damage to the central nervous system, thyroid, kidneys, lungs, immune system, eyes, gums and

skin. Victims may suffer memory loss or language impairment, and the damage to the brain cannot be reversed.

There is no known safe exposure level for elemental mercury in humans, and effects can be seen even at very low levels.

Fetuses, newborn babies and children are amongst the most vulnerable and sensitive to the adverse effects of mercury. Mercury is transported around the globe through the environment, so its emissions and releases can affect human health and environment even in remote

locations.

Mercury is a naturally occurring element. It can be released to the environment from natural sources – such as weathering of mercury-containing rocks, forest fires, volcanic eruptions or geothermal activities – but also from human activities.

Currently, it is mostly utilised in industrial processes that produce chlorine and sodium hydroxide (mercury chlor-alkali plants) or vinyl chloride monomer for polyvinyl chloride (PVC) production, and polyurethane elastomers. It is extensively used to extract gold from ore in artisanal and small -scale gold mining.

It is contained in products such as electrical switches (including thermostats), relays, measuring and control equipment, energy-efficient fluorescent light bulbs, batteries and dental amalgam. It is also used in laboratories, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, including in vaccines as a preservative, paints, and jewellery.

Mercury is also released unintentionally from some industrial processes, such as coal-fired power and heat generation,

cement production, mining and other metallurgic activities such as non-ferrous metals production, as well as from incineration of many types of waste.

Once released, mercury persists in the environment where it circulates between air, water, sediments, soil and biota in various forms. Mercury can be transported long distances in the atmosphere. It can also be incorporated by microorganisms and converted to methylmercury, and then concentrated up the food chain.

The objective of the Minamata Convention is to protect the human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. It contains, in support of this objective, provisions that relate to the entire life cycle of mercury, including controls and reductions across a range of products, processes and industries where mercury is used, released or emitted.

The treaty also addresses the direct mining of mercury, its export and import, its safe storage and its disposal once as waste.

Oil prices swing on Russian supply fears

LONDON: Oil prices fluctuated wildly on Wednesday as the market balanced demand worries related to looming recession risks with fears that Russia will halt all oil and gas supplies.

After session lows not seen since before Russia's attack on Ukraine, Brent crude futures were up 2 cents, or 0.02%, at \$92.85 a barrel at 12:02 GMT while US West Texas Intermediate crude gained 9

cents, or 0.1%, to \$86.97.

Oil pared losses after Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened to halt all oil and gas supplies if price caps are imposed on Russia's energy resources.

The European Union proposed to cap Russian gas only hours later, raising the risk of rationing in some of the world's richest countries this winter. Analysts already expect oil supply to be tight for

the last quarter of the year. "The halt of release from the US SPR (strategic petroleum reserve) coupled with the implementation of an EU embargo on Russian crude has the makings of a global supply crunch this winter," said PVM analyst Stephen Brennock.

Adding further support were expectations of tighter oil inventories in the United States. US crude stockpiles are expected to have fallen for a fourth

consecutive week, declining by an estimated 733,000 barrels in the week to September 2, a poll showed on Tuesday.

Weekly US inventory reports from the American Petroleum Institute will be released later on Wednesday, a day later than usual because of a public holiday on Monday. The market is also juggling bearish sentiment from the prospect of a global economic recession. — **Reuters**

The salary dilemma in the private sector



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The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

total) received salaries ranging from RO 325 to less than RO 400 per month. Another 51,000 Omani workers (representing 18.4 per cent) received salaries ranging from RO 400 to less than RO 500. Around 35,000 others (12.4 per cent) received monthly wages ranging from RO 1,000 to less than RO 2,000. As many as 17,638 Omanis (6.25 per cent) were paid over RO 2,000 per month.

As for the remaining 31.5 per cent of the Omani private sector workforce, they received salaries of between RO 500 and 900. The decision of the Ministry of Labour to keep minimum salary of RO 325 in the private sector, while well-received by private employers, has disappointed citizens.

The demand of many citizens is to raise the minimum salary to RO 550, while some experts believe that the Omani at the beginning of his work should search for a job that qualifies him to gain some experience in addition to his certificate, which may help them obtain a higher salary later.

In fact, there are Omani institutions and companies that give new employees a salary at the beginning of their work that amounts to between RO 500 and 600 in appreciation of their academic qualifications.

However, entry into these institutions has since become competitive. This will help to link the wage system to skills and not certificates. In light of this, the Ministry of Labour is re-examining the minimum wage decision once again through community dialogue committees formed by several institutions in light of rising inflation and economic changes taking place in the world.

The government is working to reduce the differences and privileges between workers in the two sectors so that everyone can enjoy similar remunerative packages.

China's trade falters as demand wanes at home and abroad

BEIJING: China's exports and imports lost momentum in August with growth significantly missing forecasts as surging inflation crippled overseas demand and fresh Covid curbs and heatwaves disrupted output, reviving downside risks for the shaky economy.

Outbound shipments have outperformed other economic drivers this year but now face growing challenges as rising interest rates, inflation and geopolitical tensions pummel external demand.

The disappointing August trade figures rattled global financial markets, which have already been buckling under a surging dollar and the prospect of much higher US interest rates.

"It seems the export softness arrived in earlier than expected, as recent shipping data suggests that demand from the US and EU has already slowed as shipping prices have been falling significantly," said Zhou Hao, chief economist at Guotai Junan International. He expects pricing effects will continue to disrupt trade and said import growth in



An aerial view shows containers and cargo vessels at the Qingdao port in Shandong province, China. — **Reuters**

real terms had already turned negative since the late first quarter, suggesting more headwinds for demand.

Responding to the disappointing data, China's yuan extended losses, losing 0.36% to 6.98 per dollar and approaching the psychologically crucial 7 mark.

Despite languishing around two-year lows, the weakening

yuan has failed to give China's exports the competitive edge they need to make up for softening external demand.

The slower growth is also in part due to unflattering comparisons with strong exports last year, but also worsened by more Covid restrictions as infections spiked and heatwaves disrupted factory output in southwestern

areas.

Export hub Yiwu imposed a three-day lockdown in early August to contain a Covid outbreak, disrupting local shipments and delivery of Christmas goods amid the peak season. Bucking the broader trend, auto exports remained robust in August, jumping 47% from a year earlier. — **Reuters**

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URGENT REQUIREMENT

1. INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEER - 1 No.

- Candidate should have experience in Road, Sewage, Pipeline, Telecom Networking, Electrical works in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Should have worked with MOTC, Municipalities, Madayan and other related Govt. Bodies.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be willing to lead team of qualified engineers.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with qualifications in Mechanical Engineering will be an added advantage.
- Should have 25 years of work experience.

2. PROJECT ENGINEER - 1 No.

- Candidate should have experience in Construction of Roads and other civil works in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with 15 years of work experience.

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Muscat.. a shining jewel among cities

With the advent of the winter season, Muscat is getting prepared for some exceptional weather attracting all the cultural events and tourists from around the world. Being the warmest city in the region, the moments to be lived in the nights of Muscat will make a wonderful memory for any visitor.

Reflecting the old style of architecture, some buildings in Muscat show the authenticity of the past while others follow the modern style keeping pace with the rest of the world.

In the heart of Muscat, the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque shines among the most important landmarks in the city. The Mosque contains a library that is known as an important source of knowledge and research for students.

Many researchers and students visit the library daily to benefit from references and

resources. In turn, the library provides all services to reviewers and a calm atmosphere for reading and reviewing.

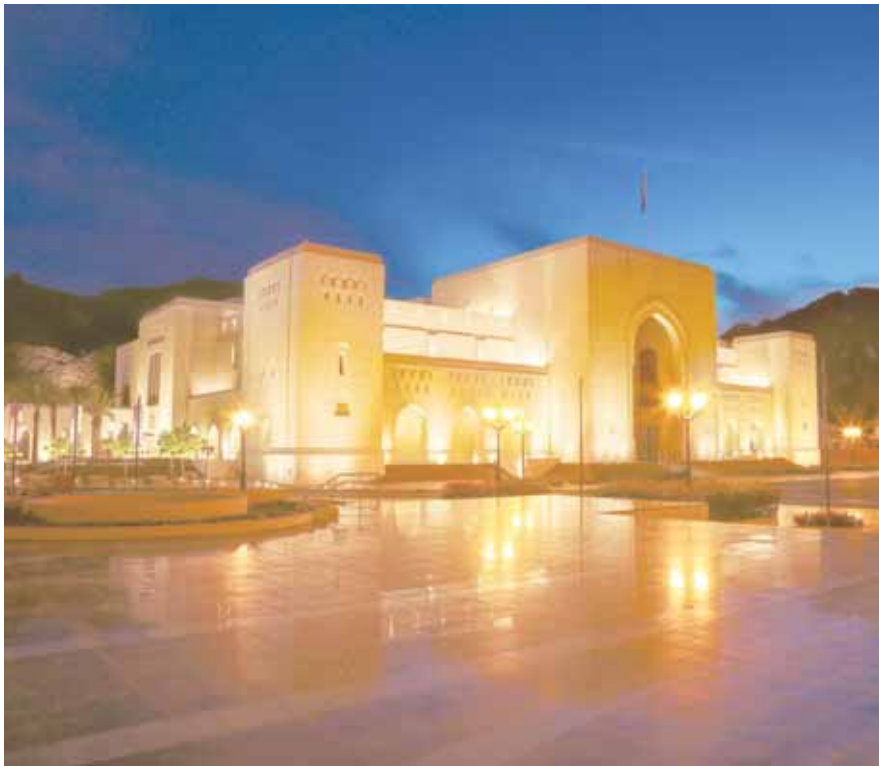
On the other hand, the experience of the heritage markets in Muscat seems different, as the fragrance of Omani frankincense is scattered, scenting the corners of the place, and the voices of sellers rise to attract buyers amid an active purchasing movement like the case is in Muttrah Souq. Muscat has undergone many development operations for the Souq in different stages to make it a vibrant commercial oasis.

On Sultan Qaboos Street, the Royal Opera House Muscat is one of the finest cultural and artistic centres featuring the grandeur of Omani castles; An enriching cultural and artistic experience with a theatre that matches the largest theatres in the world. It also includes a shopping centre that contains many restaurants and international brands, and

gardens designed in a unique style that gives the visitor a unique visual enjoyment.

The Sea of Oman, whose waves wash the golden sands of Muscat's beaches back and forth, tells the old stories of this ancient city. A visitor to Bandar Al Rawdhah can experience the silence of the night in Muscat through a cruise accompanied only by the stars up in the sky. The silence in the middle resembles the silent positions and the wisdom of Omani politics.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is working to make the winter tourist season exceptional, especially with the warm weather that characterises the Sultanate of Oman compared to other countries in the region, as well as the diversity of terrain, which adds more beauty. The ministry aims to stimulate the tourism movement and raise the occupancy rate of hotel establishments.

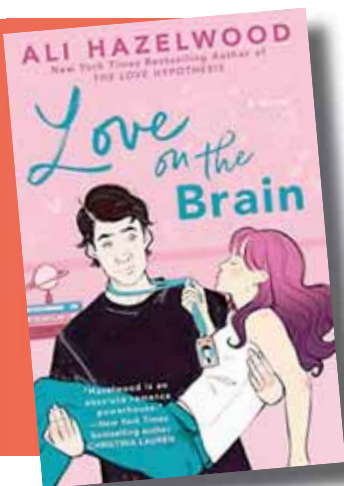


READ

LOVE ON THE BRAIN

BY ALI HAZELWOOD

The Washington Post columnist describes Republican actions between the signing of the Contract With America and the January 6 insurrection.



SPOTLIGHT ON PAKISTAN

A paramedic checks an internally displaced girl in a college building where people are taking shelter in a flood-hit area following heavy monsoon rains in Hyderabad, Sindh province. Record monsoon rains have caused devastating floods across Pakistan since June, killing more than 1,200 people and leaving almost a third of the country under water, affecting the lives of 33 million. — AFP



FASHION TREND

A model displays a creation from the XONEE by Mao Yingwen during the China Fashion Week in Beijing. — AFP





The Dreamiest Shrimp Pasta Anchors This Summery Menu

There's an eye-popping display at the farmers' market right now. If you feel like cooking, meander the overflowing vegetable stalls, grab anything and take it home for dinner. It's bound to be at peak ripeness, juicy and sweet, no matter what it is. Peppers, tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, fresh herbs, stone fruit, berries, melons: We are gleefully overwhelmed with choice. So here's a menu that seizes the moment, without requiring much in the way of effort: a zesty salad of marinated sweet peppers, a main-course pasta that requires only a pot of boiling water and a skillet, and an icy, refreshing dessert. All are utterly simple and customisable, to be embellished according to whim or happenstance find.

Right now, sweet peppers of every colour are ready, and far better than the bland year-round supermarket varieties. Look for Corno di Toro, a meaty Italian variety, in red or gold, or any local sweet peppers. Freshly picked, they have real flavour, and when thinly sliced and dressed with an assertive vinaigrette, they're an ideal first course or antipasto component. Here, they're built into a salad with capers, olives and anchovy that's delicious as is, but could be upgraded to include halved cherry tomatoes, quality canned tuna or hard-cooked eggs. For the main, most Italian cooks wouldn't gravitate toward the particularly American combination of shrimp and corn when setting out to cook pasta. But the fact is, it's lovely, light, summery and very tasty. It's really only the corn that's a non-traditional element.

For the shrimp, choose the best available. Wild shrimp from North Carolina or Georgia is a good bet, fresh or frozen, but beware of too-cheap-to-be-true frozen shrimp, which don't taste as good and most likely are not as sustainably or ethically harvested as wild shrimp. Then, cook them gently, to keep them tender.

Aside from that, all you need is perfectly al dente pasta, extra-virgin olive oil, a bit of garlic, and a good pinch of red-pepper flakes. (You could also use Calabrian peppers in oil.) It's the balance of spicy, salty and sweet that you're after. You could make this pasta even more deluxe with lobster or scallops instead, if you're feeling flush. Finally, to cool the palate and refresh the spirit, especially on a sweltering day, the Italian cocktail sgroppino comes to mind. It's a slushy, lemony concoction, recipes for which usually call for a scoop of lemon sorbet and a shot of vodka. In experimenting, I found that, when stirred together, sweetened slightly and frozen, prosecco and lemon juice yielded similar results. The ingredients never harden completely, so it eats a bit like a soft sorbet. Topped with raspberries, it looks festive, but you can add any berry you like. Then top it with a splash of prosecco for what becomes a half-frozen drinking dessert — because, at summer's end, we can all use a celebratory meal.

BELL PEPPER SALAD WITH CAPERS AND OLIVES

By David Tanis

At summer's end, sweet peppers of every colour are ripe and ready, far better than the bland supermarket hot-



house varieties available year-round. Thinly sliced and dressed with an assertive vinaigrette, these peppers make an ideal first course or antipasto.

Yield: 4 servings
Total time: 30 minutes

4 sweet bell peppers, in different colours
1 anchovy fillet, plus more for garnish
1 small garlic clove
2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon capers, chopped, plus whole capers for garnish
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes, lightly salted
1/2 cup green or black olives, such as Castelvetrano or Moroccan, pitted, if desired
Arugula, for garnish (optional)
Dried Italian oregano, for sprinkling (optional)

1. Cut peppers in half from top to bottom. Remove stems, seeds and veins, then slice peppers into strips about 1/8-inch wide.
2. Make a vinaigrette: Using a mortar and pestle, smash anchovy fillet and garlic into a paste. Transfer to a small bowl, and add red wine vinegar and chopped capers. Stir in olive oil and season vinaigrette with salt and pepper.
3. Put sliced peppers in a large bowl. Season with salt and pepper, and toss. Add vinaigrette and toss again. Leave for 10 minutes, then taste again and adjust seasoning. (The salad can sit for 15 to 20 minutes without suffering.)
4. Transfer to a serving platter. Garnish with cherry tomatoes, whole capers, olives and anchovy fillets. Surround with arugula, if using. Sprinkle with oregano, if using.

SHRIMP PASTA WITH

CORN AND BASIL
By David Tanis

This particularly American combination of flavours — shrimp and corn — is light, summery and very tasty, both sweet and slightly spicy. If you are feeling flush, you can make this pasta with lobster instead.

Yield: 4 servings
Total time: 30 minutes

Salt and pepper
1 pound pasta, such as linguine or spaghetti
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 small garlic clove, minced
1 1/2 pounds small shrimp, preferably wild, peeled and deveined, patted dry
Generous pinch of red-pepper flakes
2 cups tender corn kernels (from 2 or 3 ears)
2 tablespoons thinly sliced scallions
2 tablespoons roughly chopped basil, plus more basil leaves for garnish

1. Bring a pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Cook pasta to al dente according to package instructions.
2. As pasta cooks, put oil in a large skillet over medium. Add garlic. Cook gently without colouring, about 1 minute.
3. Raise heat to medium-high and add shrimp. Season with salt, pepper and red-



pepper flakes. Cook, stirring, until shrimp puff and turn pink, 1 to 2 minutes. Add corn and continue cooking until warmed through.
4. Drain cooked pasta and transfer to a warm serving bowl. Pour skillet contents over pasta and toss. Sprinkle with scallions and chopped basil. Garnish with basil leaves.

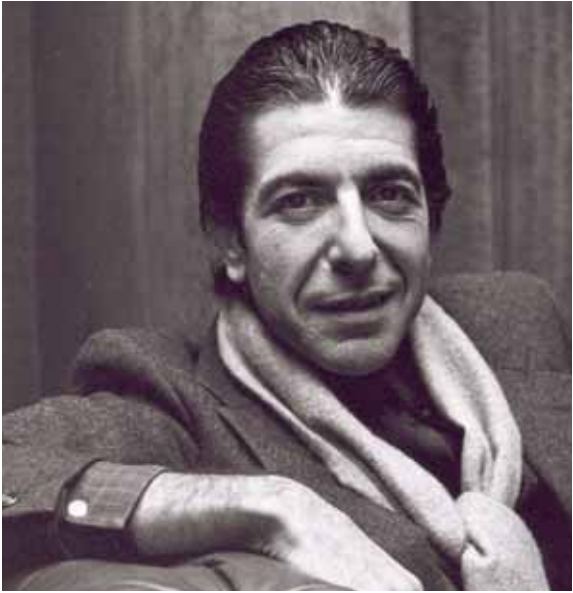


LEMON SLUSH
By David Tanis

Similar to the Italian cocktail sgroppino, which calls for a scoop of lemon sorbet, this recipe instead freezes sparkling wine and Meyer lemon juice for a fresher taste and a cooling dessert. The slushy concoction makes a refreshing finish to a meal, and, topped with raspberries (and more prosecco, if you wish), it looks festive, sort of like pink lemonade for grown-ups. Best of all, it stays fresh-tasting for several days, and never freezes completely solid.
Yield: 4 servings
Total time: 5 minutes, plus freezing
1 cup chilled prosecco, plus more to finish
1 cup Meyer (or other) lemon juice
1 teaspoon grated Meyer (or other) lemon zest
1/2 cup granulated sugar
Raspberries, for garnish
1. Stir together the prosecco, lemon juice, lemon zest and sugar in a small, chilled stainless-steel mixing bowl until the sugar dissolves. Place the bowl in the freezer, stirring every 15 minutes or so, until the mixture is semi-frozen and slushy, about 2 to 3 hours. It will not freeze to rock hard, even if left overnight.
2. To serve, divide mixture across four wineglasses or small bowls. Top with berries. For the ultimate slushy consistency, add 2 tablespoons cold prosecco to each just before serving.

ENTERTAINMENT

'Not a god': Filmmakers dissect Leonard Cohen through 'Hallelujah'



A FILMMAKER DUO retracing Leonard Cohen's life through his legendary anthem "Hallelujah" said they were so in awe of the Canadian singer that it took them years of preparation before tackling the documentary.

Presenting "Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song" at the American Film Festival that opened at the weekend in Deauville, France, Dan Geller and Dayna Goldfine said they studied Cohen's personal notebooks, rare footage and even his selfies for eight years before making the film.

"When we first thought about the project, and then even when we were first embarking upon it, my feelings about Leonard were that he was a god. You know, it was the great Leonard Cohen," Goldfine said.

"How were we possibly going to do justice to this god?"

Geller and Goldfine approached the life of the singer — who gave his blessing to the project two years before he died aged 82 in 2016 — through "Hallelujah", his most famous song, which has acquired cult status in the world of rock.

When Cohen first released the song, tucked away on the "Various Positions" album from 1984, it went almost unnoticed.

But then Bob Dylan performed a cover, followed by The Velvet Underground's John Cale, and Jeff Buckley, and then some 300 artists recording their own versions of "Hallelujah".

"It's looking at Leonard Cohen through the prism of his most famous song," Goldfine said.

HE'S A HUMAN BEING

Focusing on the one song relieved the filmmakers of "the burden of having to do like a cradle to grave by a biography", she said.

Instead, they highlighted "his influences and the parts of Leonard's spiritual journey that illuminated



why he was the only person in the universe who could have possibly written "Hallelujah", Goldfine said, adding: "The song is so much about everyone's spiritual journey."

Geller and Goldfine, based in San Francisco and whose previous work includes "Ballet Russes" and "Isadora Duncan," acknowledged that obtaining Cohen's blessing was crucial.

"Without that, we would have gotten nowhere," Geller said.

It still took the duo years to access Cohen's notebooks, now owned by his family, which contain detailed insights into the several years it took the singer to get "Hallelujah" right.

As they studied the archives, they also discovered that Cohen had developed an early knack for photographic self-portraits.

"We like to say Leonard was the first selfie taker because he was way ahead of his time, he started taking selfies of himself using this old Polaroid camera, probably going back to the 70s," Goldfine said.

The film also contains a moving scene when a young, nervous Cohen broke off a performance of his first hit "Suzanne" in 1967, choking with stage fright, only to be coaxed back onto the stage by his duet partner, US singer Judy Collins.

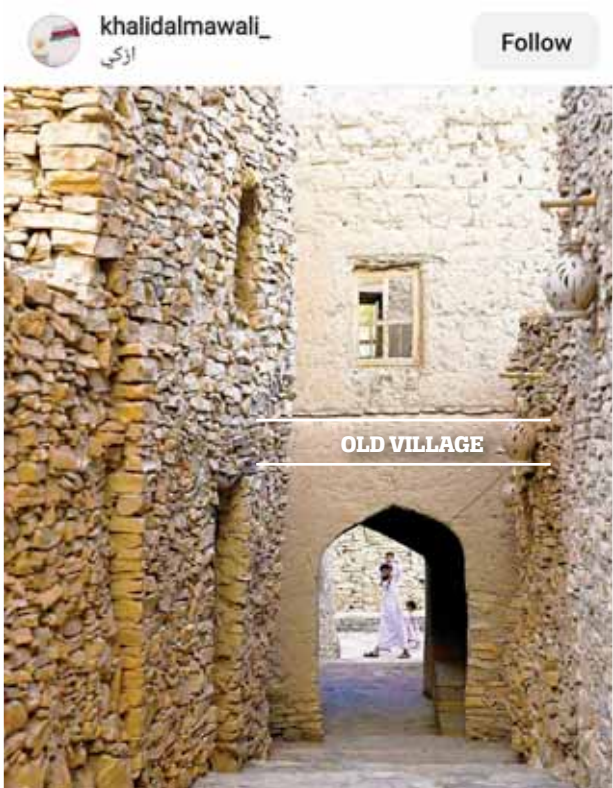
The incident added to the filmmakers' growing realisation that even the great Cohen was only human.

"He's a man. He's not a god," Goldfine said. "He's a human being who worked very hard on himself. Everyday of his life." — AFP



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AROUND THE WORLD

DISCOVERY

'Extremely rare' Iron Age papyrus note unveiled



ISRAEL'S ANTIQUITIES Authority displayed on Wednesday a rare papyrus note in ancient Hebrew dating back 2,700 years, recently brought back to Jerusalem after its chance discovery in the United States.

The letter fragment, written in the Palaeo-Hebrew used during the First Temple era, constitutes four lines beginning "To Ishmael send", with the rest of the words incomplete.

"We don't know exactly what was being sent and to where," said Joe Uziel, director of the antiquities authority's Judean Desert scrolls unit.

In the Iron Age, Hebrews used clay fragments to scrawl short notes and animal hide for scriptures, with papyrus reserved for official correspondence, said Eitan Klein, deputy director of the authority's antiquities theft prevention unit.

Papyrus left in the dry climate of the Judean desert could have survived the ages, but there were only two other papyri from the First Temple era known to researchers before the latest discovery, Klein said. "This papyrus is unique, extremely rare," he said.

Its serendipitous journey to the Israel Antiquities Authority's conservation laboratory began when Shmuel Ahituv, one of Israel's top ancient Near East scholars, was tasked in 2018 with completing the work on a book about ancient Hebrew script by the recently deceased Ada Yardeni.

Ahituv was surprised to see in the book's draft a picture of the "To Ishmael" papyrus, which he had not been familiar with.

He contacted Klein, and with the help of Yardeni's daughter, managed to locate the US academic who had connected Yardeni to the owner of the fragment — a man in Montana.

The owner had inherited the papyrus from his late mother, who in 1965 purchased or received it as a gift from Joseph Saad, curator of the then Palestine Archaeological Museum.

Saad had obtained it from legendary Bethlehem antiquities dealer Halil Iskander Kandu, who Klein said had most likely bought it from Bedouin who found it in a Judean Desert cave.

Back in the United States, the woman had framed the papyrus below a picture of Saad and Kandu, and hung it in her home.

Klein invited the Montanan to visit Israel in 2019, showing him the Antiquities Authority's facilities to persuade him that the rare artefact would be preserved best there.

"He was convinced, and at the end of his visit, left the papyrus with us," Klein said, without providing further details on the man or process.

The authenticity and age of the artefact were determined using palaeographic and carbon-14 dating, Uziel said, noting researchers' apprehension about removing the papyrus from the back of the frame.

"She used adhesive glue and glued it and then framed it," he said. "Removing it will actually cause further damage to the papyrus."

To Uziel, any discovery of an artefact "is really a high," but "when we come to the written word, it's another level."

"We actually can make a much closer connection to the people living in the past," he said. — AFP

ART

New York returns \$19m of stolen art to Italy



PROSECUTORS IN NEW York on Tuesday returned dozens of antiquities stolen from Italy and valued at around \$19 million, some of which were found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"These 58 pieces represent thousands of years of rich history, yet traffickers by Italian diplomats and law enforcement officials.

The stolen items had been sold to Michael Steinhardt, one of the world's leading collectors of ancient art, the DA's office said, adding that he had been slapped with a "first-of-its-kind lifetime ban on acquiring antiquities."

nal enterprises — often in competition with one another — where they would use local looters to raid archaeological sites throughout Italy, many of which were insufficiently guarded," the DA's office said.

One of them, Pasquale Camera, was "a regional crime boss who organised thefts from museums and churches as early as the 1960s. He then began purchasing stolen artifacts from local looters and sold them to antiquities dealers," it added.

It said that this year alone, the DA's office has "returned nearly 300 antiquities valued at over \$66 million to 12 countries." — AFP

throughout Italy utilised looters to steal these items and to line their own pockets," said Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, noting that it was the third such repatriation in nine months.

"For far too long, they have sat in museums, homes and galleries that had no rightful claim to their ownership," he said at a ceremony attended

A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

Do not teach them to fear!

IF YOU ARE A parent, your biggest fear in life is probably that something might happen to one of your children! This is a reality that all parents are aware of, as they spend many hours a week worrying about their children, especially the first concern of returning to school is related to their safety. Interestingly that makes sense if you believe safety is a foundation to be established before dealing with other concerns!

Here you notice that some parents mention that if you want children to be safe (and therefore happy), you must teach them that the world is dangerous and they will be more vigilant and careful. These beliefs indeed come with good intentions on the part of these parents but in reality, don't you see with me that teaching them that the world is dangerous is detrimental to their health, happiness and success?

However, if I, the son or the child, think the world is dangerous, it will affect the way I see many other parts of my life, my relationships and my work. I would be more suspicious of other people's motives, for example, and less likely to do things that might endanger me or my loved ones!

Indeed here, I am with parents with caution, but not entirely with people who hold negative primitives, is that the world and those around them are dangerous, because you may make children less healthy than their peers, often sad, and more prone to depression and less satisfied with their lives. Perhaps in the future, they will tend to hate their jobs and perform worse than their more positive counterparts.

Therefore, it is not entirely in the interest of the youth to instil in them such negative things. In doing so, we may harm them by making them less happy, less healthy and more intolerant of others. To break this pattern, parents and anyone who interacts with children should instead work to develop a sense of safety. Especially since some parents cultivate those negative thoughts because they hold such opinions themselves. Even many of them pass on their anxiety to their children. Therefore, parents should always assuage those fears by looking at the facts.

Moreover, adults may indeed want to teach young people how to stay safe in the face of threats. However, an overall attitude of fear can make them less able to do so. I would say here that if you want to give a warning to the child to make him better prepared, focus on one specific danger he might face and how to deal with it. Instead of saying (people will try to take advantage of you in general), say: If someone tries to make you do a bad job, avoid that person!

What I'm trying to get across here is simple, to be specific about the good behaviours we've seen and how the world or any community is safer today than it was in the past. Rather, the real belief is that most people are good and that things are generally better. Most important is also to avoid instilling a fear-based belief in children and to try to develop a positive core belief that can improve their lives.

In the end, instead of teaching our children to fear those around them, let's teach them goodness and positivity, which neutralises fear and puts something good in its place. Let them know that people are made for good and love and surely we can find something good and lovable in every person we meet. If you want to give your children a base to live on, this is a safer bet.

Dr Yousuf Ali Al Mulla, a physician, medical innovator and a writer.

art & life

Local Scene

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THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 8 | 2022

Exceptional Season of the Apricots

By Arwa Al Hashimi
Photos by Muiaad Al Siyabi

Growing fruits in a hot country is very challenging but not for Oman — a country that is known for its exceptional weather in different areas due to the diverse terrains along with its special location surrounded by most of the important seas in the area.

Many villages in Oman are special in growing different species of fruits that are usually not found in hot countries including grapes, apricot, strawberry, peach and many others.

Apricot trees are grown in different villages in Oman like Wakan village and Jabal Shams. Apricot trees are perennial fruit trees that grow in different places of the Sultanate of Oman, especially the high mountainous parts such as in the villages of Wadi Mistal in the Wilayat of Nakhal, specifically in the villages of Wakan, Hadash and Al Qura, which is the appropriate place for their growth, where the weather is cold during winter and mild in summer. This allows apricot trees to grow in quantities that enable farmers to market their fruits commercially, which constitutes a suitable income for them due to the large demand.

As for the flowering season of apricot trees and the stages the tree goes through before fruiting, dormancy and leaf fall season starts at the beginning of December each year whereas the flowering phase begins at the beginning of February until the beginning of March every year. The apricot fruits begin to ripen in mid-April and the harvest continues for a month to a month and a half. Farmers sell them by placing them at the entrances of the villages so that the tourists visiting the village can buy from them or by selling them in Nakhal market and other

nearby markets.

Apricot trees need special care to bear their fruits. At the end of the harvest season, and in the middle of June of each year, the farmers fertilise the apricot trees for the first time to provide the trees with the nutrients they lost during the ripening and harvesting of the crops. In mid-November, the next fertilisation is done before the tree's dormancy and leaf fall season. The trees are fertilised for the last time when the flowers begin to open at the beginning of February, and the fertilisation continues in simple portions until the beginning of April of each year. Farmers use local fertiliser to fertilise apricot trees and they are keen not to use chemical fertilisers or chemical pesticides to maintain the natural growth of trees as well as their resistance to agricultural pests naturally.

During the tree's dormancy and leaf fall, Farmers make sure to prune dry tree branches and clean them of weeds and other plants. Watering of apricot trees is stopped during this, while it is watered once every 12 days throughout the year, except for the days of crop maturity, where it is watered once every 6 days to facilitate the ripening of the fruits and increase its size.

Amazingly, the apricot tree is one of the most abundant trees, as it begins producing when the tree is 1.5 meters high, while it continues to produce and rise until it reaches a height of 20 meters in some cases. They are characterised by their ability to grow many branches similar to mango trees in terms of size and growth.

Away from this, Apricot trees form a splendid scene during their flowering season where the farms and terraces become covered in white for apricot, and white for pinkish-peach, which provides a special scenery to locals and visitors.

