

HM greets Vietnam President

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Luong Cuong of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, on being elected and sworn in as his country's new president. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to President Luong Cuong, wishing him success in leading the people of Vietnam towards further development and growth in all spheres.

SUNRISE - 06:08 AM
PRAYER TIMINGS
FAJR - 04:52 AM
DHUHR - 11:56 PM
ASR - 03:13 PM
MAGHRIB - 05:40 PM
ISHA - 06:50 PM



P15

OMAN HAS ALL THE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF BLUE ECONOMY

P12

AL DAWSARI HAT-TRICK SEALS AL HILAL WIN

P20

NAVIGATING SELF AND SOCIETY OPENS AT STAL GALLERY

MUSCAT

CRUDE PRICE AT \$73.48 A BARREL

Oman oil price for December delivery on Tuesday reached \$73.48, comprising a decline of 3 cents compared to the price on Monday which stood at \$73.51. The average price of Oman oil for October delivery stabilised at \$77.54 per barrel, thus \$6.31 per barrel lower than September delivery. World oil prices also steadied and Brent crude futures traded at \$74.86 a barrel, up 0.8 per cent on the day. China's oil-demand growth is expected to remain weak in 2025, the head of the International Energy Agency said on Tuesday.

WASHINGTON

HARRIS AND TRUMP PUSH FOR EVERY VOTE



One of the tightest US election races of modern times entered its final two-week stretch on Tuesday, with Republican Donald Trump making a pitch to Latino voters as Democratic rival Kamala Harris sits down for a national TV interview. Both campaigns are pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into a last push for undecided voters who could tilt the balance in their favour, with polls showing the candidates in a dead heat ahead of Election Day. About 18 million Americans have already voted by mail or in person — representing more than 10 per cent of the total in 2020 — and turnout could well be the deciding factor in who wins the White House. **DETAILS ON P7**

KAZAN

MODI FOR QUICK END TO UKRAINE CONFLICT

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he wanted the Ukraine conflict to be resolved “quickly” and peacefully as he met President Vladimir Putin at a summit of major emerging economies on Tuesday. Putin is hosting around 20 world leaders including Modi and China's Xi Jinping at the three-day BRICS gathering, an event he hopes will demonstrate that Western attempts to isolate Moscow over its Ukraine offensive have failed. “We have been in constant touch over the conflict between Russia and Ukraine,” Modi told Putin after the two shook hands and embraced. **SEE ALSO P7**

RO 4.2 billion projects under way in Salalah Free Zone

SALALAH: As many as 75 industrial projects are now in the operational and implementation stages in Salalah Free Zone, with a total investment volume of more than RO 4.2 billion. This was revealed at the Salalah Future Industries Forum, organised by Salalah Free Zone, which kicked off on Tuesday in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

The two-day event seeks to promote investment and economic development. The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, who honoured the forum speakers and supporters. Organised in cooperation with Tazeez International

Foundation, the forum will focus on industries of petrochemicals, food processing and pharmaceutical industries. Visual displays to be presented during the forum will highlight investment opportunities, comparative advantages and nascent sectors in Dhofar Governorate. Dr Ali bin Mohammed Tabouk,

CEO of Salalah Free Zone, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that industrial activities constitute the highest percentage of projects in the free zone. Three working papers will be presented at discussion panels during the forum. The first addresses infrastructure, logistical advantages and investment opportunities in the

petrochemical sector in Salalah. The second deals with the role of Salalah in global investments in the food industry. The third elaborates on prospects of high returns for investment in the pharmaceutical industry in Salalah. It will also underscore the significance of Salalah's proximity to emerging markets and shipping lines.

UN ‘appalled’ by deadly Israeli strike near Beirut hospital

BLINKEN TELLS ISRAEL TO WORK ON THE GAZA CEASEFIRE

GENEVA: The UN rights chief said he was “appalled” by a deadly Israeli strike near a hospital in south Beirut on Monday, demanding a “prompt and thorough investigation.” Lebanon's health ministry said that at least 18 people had been killed in the Israeli strike near the Rafic Hariri Hospital, Lebanon's biggest public health facility, located a few kilometres from the city centre. “I am appalled,” United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement, insisting that “the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law concerning the protection of civilians must be respected.” He pointed out that four children reportedly figured among the at least 18 people killed, while 60 people had been wounded. Rescuers were on Tuesday still searching for survivors, amid fears that the toll may rise further. The facility in the densely populated Jnah neighbourhood sustained minor damage in the strike, with windows shattered and its solar panels destroyed, its director said. Turk stressed that “in the conduct of military operations, all feasible precautions must be



A distressed woman reacts at the site of an Israeli strike near the Rafik Hariri University Hospital in Beirut on Tuesday. – Reuters

taken to avoid, and in any event to minimise, incidental loss of civilian life, injury to civilians and damage to civilian objects.” “Hospitals, ambulances and medical personnel are specifically protected under international humanitarian law because of their lifesaving function for the wounded and

the sick,” he said. “When conducting military operations in the vicinity of hospitals, parties to the conflict must assess the expected impact on healthcare services in relation to the principles of proportionality and precautions.” The UN rights chief insisted that “any incidents which affect

hospitals must be subjected to a prompt and thorough investigation.” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to work towards a Gaza ceasefire. Blinken also pressed for more aid to be allowed into the Palestinian territory. **SEE ALSO P6**

Guerrilla attacks near COP16 host city

CALI, Colombia: Colombian authorities on Tuesday announced reinforced security around the city of Cali, host of the COP16 UN biodiversity summit, after guerrillas at war with the government targeted soldiers with a bomb overnight and shot dead civilians travelling in a car. The EMC rebel group, engaged in stop-start peace negotiations with Bogota, had told international delegations not to attend the UN meeting after its fighters were targeted in a military campaign, warning the conference “will fail.” Security was stepped up, with some 11,000 Colombian police and soldiers deployed to safeguard the event with the backing of UN and US security experts. The EMC, or Central General Staff, is a splinter group of the FARC guerrilla army that disarmed under a peace agreement with the government in 2017. On Monday night, just hours after the official start of the high-stakes negotiations in Cali on ways to stop humankind's rapacious destruction of nature, EMC fighters targeted a military vehicle with a bomb. The attack happened at El Bordo, about 150 km from Cali, the army reported on X. — **AFP**

Rare comet Atlas observed in Dhofar Governorate

BAKHEET AL SHAHARI
SALALAH, OCT 22

Astronomer Awad bin Said al Saadouni, head of the Astronomical Observatory in Dhofar Governorate, managed to capture an image of the rare comet Atlas from the Duka Frankincense Tree Reserve in the Najd region in Dhofar Governorate. The comet was sighted in the west half an hour after sunset



Atlas has appeared in the skies since October 11.

and remained visible for up to three hours after sunset. In the picture, the comet appears on the

right side, and on the left side is the planet Venus, with the Milky Way galaxy appearing in the

background. Al Saadouni said that for the first time in 80,000 years, the rare comet Atlas has appeared in the skies since October 11, enabling scientists to monitor it in the northern hemisphere. After a long journey that began thousands of years ago, the comet Atlas recently passed close to the sun and is now on its way back to planet Earth. It can be observed with the naked eye in areas without light pollution.



MARINE MAMMAL SURVEY KICKS OFF

The fourth phase of the marine mammal survey project kicked off on Tuesday in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate. Implemented by the Environment Authority in cooperation with relevant government departments, the project will continue until October 31. **DETAILS ON P2**

Hackathon launched to promote innovation in Omani embassies

MUSCAT: The Foreign Ministry on Tuesday launched a programme code-named “Your Embassy Hackathon” to enhance continuous innovation and upgrading of services at Omani embassies around the world.

Khalid bin Hashil al Muselhi, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs (the chief guest at the event) underscored the significance of the programme. He pointed out that “Your Embassy Hackathon” brings about “a qualitative leap in the efficiency of diplomatic action”, since it upgrades the standards of function-

ing at embassies in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Al Musalhi explained that the programme seeks to expand the use of modern technology by introducing smart solutions for improving embassy procedures and make them more sustainable.

He added that “Your Embassy Hackathon”, the first-of-its-kind in Oman, reflects the Foreign Ministry’s efforts to develop smart embassies that use modern technology to improve efficiency and sustainability in providing services.

The hackathon paves the way for the presentation of initiatives



The programme seeks to expand the use of modern technology by introducing smart solutions for improving embassy procedures. — ONA

and ideas for the application of modern technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) in serving citizens abroad and establishing effective communication.

“Your Embassy Hackathon” contributes to digital transition, cybersecurity, resource management and digital communication, Al Muselhi said. The programme, which will continue until mid-December 2024, has already generated wide response from the Ministry’s employees and Omani missions abroad. The entries will be assessed by a jury that will announce the winning projects and initiatives in time. — ONA



SALALAH FUTURE INDUSTRIES FORUM KICKS OFF

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The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, who honoured the forum speakers and supporters.

Organised in cooperation with Tazeez International Foundation, the forum will focus on industries of petrochemicals, food processing and pharmaceutical industries. Visual displays to be presented during the forum will highlight investment opportunities, comparative advantages and nascent sectors in Dhofar Governorate. — ONA

MUSCAT AIRPORT RECEIVES 9.8 MILLION PASSENGERS IN H1

MUSCAT: Muscat International Airport witnessed an increase of 4.7 per cent in the number of international and domestic passengers in the first nine months of this year.

A total of 9,764,530 passengers travelled through the Muscat International Airport from 73,137 flights (an increase of 3.4 per cent).

These included 16,826 transit passengers A total of 1, 230,326 passengers travelled through the Salalah Airport from 8,374 flights (an increase of 6.8 percent). It may be noted that Sohar Airport received 62,842 passengers from 544 flights during the same period while Duqm Airport received 44,753 passengers from 233 flights.

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

A NEW investment landmark, the “Malak Tower” project, valued at RO 12 million, was officially unveiled on Tuesday, at the W Hotel in Muscat. The event, held under the auspices of Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, President of the Oman Investment Authority (OIA), brought together dignitaries, including their highnesses, excellencies, and prominent business figures.

Malak Tower is the result of a strategic partnership between HH Sayyid Dr Kamil bin Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the project owner; Al Khalili Group, the developer; and Tibiaan, responsible for marketing and management.

This collaboration underscores a shared vision of delivering high-quality real estate developments that meet the growing demand from Oman’s business owners and investors.

Speaking at the event, HH Sayyid Dr Kamil bin Fahd bin Mahmood al Said emphasised the tower’s unique commercial appeal, stating, “Malak Tower is more than just a real estate venture; it’s a collaborative initiative designed to bring significant added value for businesses and investors. Its prime location on Sultan Qaboos Street, a vital artery in Muscat, enhances its status and opens up new investment opportunities.”

Malak Tower, a Grade A office building, will feature a total built-up area of 17,000 square metres across 12 storeys, including two basement levels for parking, a ground floor for retail spaces, and nine floors of office units.

Its prime location offers companies and individual investors the rare opportunity to acquire office and retail spaces at competitive prices, with flexible payment



Malak Tower, a Grade A office building, will feature a total built-up area of 17,000 square metres across 12 storeys



plans.

Set for completion by the end of 2027, Malak Tower aims to attract a wide range of companies, making it a hub for com-

mercial activity and collaboration.

The project’s architectural excellence, designed with modern trends and high-quality standards, will serve as a catalyst for economic growth and development in Oman, enhancing the business landscape and elevating the work experience.

Fahad al Ismaili, Founder of Tibian Properties, expressed excitement about the project’s potential. “I had the honour of overseeing the design of this project, and I’m eagerly looking forward to seeing it come to life on Sultan Qaboos Street in the next two or three years.”

He emphasised that Malak Tower presents a rare opportunity for investors and businesses to secure office and commercial space in a prime location, tailored to the growing market and future business trends, including artificial intelligence.

Fourth phase of marine mammal survey kicks off in Khasab

KHASAB: The fourth phase of the marine mammal survey project kicked off in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate, on Tuesday.

The survey by the Environment Authority (EA) in cooperation with relevant government departments will continue until October 31.

The project seeks to develop a comprehensive database of marine mammals at the National Nature Park in Musandam, including the compilation of a distribution chart of species within the reserve.

Aida bint Khalaf al Jabriyah, head of the project team from the EA, said: “This project is part of the survey and monitor-



The survey by the Environment Authority in cooperation with relevant government departments will continue until October 31.

ing programmes included in the Musandam National Park Nature Reserve, which includes a number of basic tasks distributed among the project team, including monitoring to search for marine mammals.” She added: “We are looking for spots on the surface, dark objects and birds hovering in a specific place as a result of the presence of fish, which in turn attract marine mammals, in addition to steering the boat towards the correct path, photographing and documenting the observations, and recording data using a technology specially prepared for this project.” She explained that when sightings are monitored, basic data

is recorded electronically, including the sighting location, date, time, type, group size, and behaviour. Sightings are photographed using high-quality cameras, drone cameras, and GoPros.

Hamed bin Salim al Hussaini, Environmental Systems Technician at the General Directorate of Nature Conservation, said: “The Sultanate of Oman has many types of marine mammals due to its geographical location overlooking three seas, namely the Arabian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea, as marine mammals contribute to maintaining the health of the marine environment’s ecosystems. — ONA

SHORT TAKES



TWO CITIZENS
KILLED IN ADAM
TRUCK ACCIDENT

MUSCAT: Two citizens died following an accident involving trailer and tanker trucks, which led to the leak of Triethylene Glycol (TEG) in the Wilayat of Adam in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

“The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority’s rescue teams specialised in dealing with hazardous materials incidents responded to an accident involving two trucks and were able to contain the leak of the substance. The accident resulted in the death of two citizens,” the official statement said.

TEG is used as a dehydrating agent for natural gas processing; as a lubricating and finishing agent for textiles; as a constituent in brake fluids, lubricants, antifreeze formulations, wallpaper strippers, and artificial fog solutions; a solvent for printing inks and dyes.



Omani Lawyers
Association discusses
challenges

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The Omani Lawyers Association (OLA), in collaboration with the Board of Directors of the Lawyers Association, organised a joint dialogue session on the professional challenges faced by lawyers.

The session took place in the presence of Dr Hamad bin Hamdan al Rubaie, Chairman of the Association, members of the Board of Directors, and lawyers at various levels of litigation at the Association’s headquarters in Al Sanhouri Library in Airport Heights.

Dr Al Rubaie discussed many of the professional challenges that the association must address in partnership with lawyers to enhance the legal profession. He also highlighted the achievements and efforts made by the association in recent years.

Dr Said bin Suleiman al Raisi, Vice-President of the Association for Professional Affairs, elaborated on the most significant challenges facing the legal profession, their causes and strategies to advance the profession.

He also explained the tools used by the Board of Directors to tackle various challenges and develop the legal profession.

White Cane event highlights support for visually impaired

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The Directorate-General of Special Education and Continuing Education, under the Ministry of Education, represented by the Omar bin Al Khattab Institute for the Blind, organised the Annual White Cane event to support visually impaired people. The event was held under the auspices of Dr Shaikha al Azzani, the administrative director of the main library at Sultan Qaboos University.

The event featured a Productive Family’s corner (canteen), the opening of technical halls (internal housing), and visiting interactive corners (theatre). There was also a solidarity march, an exhibition of teaching materials for the blind,



The participating students and companies that contributed to the success of the event were honoured

along with an exhibition at the Mall of Muscat.

The new computer lab located in the students’ hostel, which was fully funded by the Himam Education Academy, was inaugurated.

Teachers, students and visitors explored various corners displaying technologies and materials used by teachers in the institute, as well as creative works

Expatriate workforce in Oman reaches 1.8m

VINOD NAIR
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The Sultanate of Oman has long been home to expatriates from various nationalities, and in recent years, certain groups have seen significant growth in their numbers.

Notably, the number of Sudanese expatriates increased by 110 per cent, reaching 24,080 between September 2023 and 2024.

The number of expatriates from Myanmar increased by 64.4 per cent to 31,166, while those from Tanzania increased by 43.2 per cent to 22,196, and Egyptians by 10.6 per cent to 44,317, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information



The total number of expatriate workers in Oman was 1,808,672 at the end of September, compared to 856,488 Omanis

(NCSI).

Currently, there are 656,789 Bangladeshis, 505,824 Indians, 303,777 Pakistanis, 44,891 Filipinos and 25,260 Sri Lankans living in Oman. Additionally, 148,376 expatriates fall under the category of others.

The total number of expatriate workers in Oman was 1,808,672 at the end of September, compared to 856,488 Omanis.

The private sector employs 1,420,587 expatriates and 413,946 Omanis, while the government sector employs 42,300 expatriates compared to 378,414 Omanis.

The majority of expatriates are employed in the construction sector (442,916), wholesale and retail trade (273,537), manufacturing (182,148), and accommodation and food services (130,090).

The Sultanate of Oman is ranked very high for purchasing power, safe healthcare and quality of life, according to Numbeo, the global database that measures data for quality of life data that takes into account various factors that impact one’s quality of life, including purchasing power, pollution levels, housing affordability, cost of living, safety, healthcare quality, commute times and climate conditions.

Omani women find
value in coffee waste

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, OCT 22

MANAR AL ATTAR and Anfal al Shizawi have developed a solution to transform coffee waste into activated carbon, a sustainable solution that addresses both waste management and environmental sustainability.

Inspired by the significant amount of coffee waste generated daily, Manar saw an opportunity to turn this waste into a valuable resource. Through extensive research, they discovered that coffee waste is rich in components ideal for producing activated carbon, known for its high absorption capacity, making it perfect for water filtration and other applications such as electrodes for supercapacitors, sensors and batteries.

The project was supervised by Dr Tahra Ahmed Jafari, Associate Professor at the National University of Science and Technology.

Their project focuses on utilising activated carbon to absorb heavy metals like chromium, lead, nickel and mercury from contaminated water. Laboratory tests showed that the effectiveness of coffee waste derived activated carbon matches commercially available products, proving its potential as a cheaper eco-friendly alternative.

The project has already earned significant recognition. It won the Best Poster Presentation Award at the International Conference on Environmental Science and Engineering for Sustainable Development and was selected as one of the winners in the Manfa competition by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research



Manar al Attar and Anfal al Shizawi found coffee waste is rich in components ideal for producing carbon

and Innovation in 2022. Manar also secured second place in the GCC-wide GPCA Sustainability Innovation Competition in Saudi Arabia. She was also invited to speak at the Middle East Process Engineering Conference (MEPEC) in Dammam, Saudi Arabia. These accomplishments highlight the project’s potential to contribute to a sustainable future in Oman and beyond.

Engineers by profession, these dynamic women have ambitious plans to expand their project, Phoenix C. The next steps include scaling up production to meet the growing demand for eco-friendly activated carbon and exploring new markets beyond Oman. They also aim to develop new products using similar techniques to recycle other types of organic and industrial waste rich in carbon. They plan to collaborate with environmental organisations and research institutions to enhance the project’s sustainability and continue raising awareness about the importance of recycling.

The project aligns with Oman Vision 2040 by promoting waste management, reducing environmental pollution, and offering a low-cost, eco-friendly solution for water purification. The process involves pyrolysis, followed by physical or chemical activation, using advanced technologies like thermal reactors to convert the waste into activated carbon.

Through their start-up, Phoenix C, Manar and Anfal are committed to advancing environmental sustainability, raising awareness about recycling coffee waste, and contributing to Oman’s sustainable future.

SPOTLIGHT

HOW NOT TO WASTE TIME WHILE WAITING



ONE CAN USE
WAITING TIME FOR
LEARNING, PLANNING,
RELAXATION AND
EVEN CONSTRUCTIVE
SOCIALISING

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

WAITING times are some of the most frustrating moments we experience daily, whether in traffic jams, at the hospital, or while queuing for other services. However, these seemingly wasted times can be transformed into opportunities to learn new things. Instead of giving in to boredom and frustration, there are many ways to exploit these moments productively—whether to develop knowledge, improve mood, or organise tasks.

Experts say that investing these times in productive activities improves both mental and physical health.

In the age of technology, smartphones have become effective tools for learning new things, even during waiting times. Your phone can be turned into an educational tool by downloading useful applications or following online training courses. Apps such as Duolingo for learning languages, or Coursera and Udemy for developing professional skills, have become popular ways to benefit from our ‘down time’.

Mohammed Rashid Abdullah, a self-development specialist, says: “People can use smartphones to access training courses, audiobooks, or educational articles. Instead of wasting time, an individual can develop himself and learn new skills that will help him in his personal and professional life.”

Apps such as Todoist and Google Keep help you write a list of tasks or organise your thoughts, giving you a sense of control and productivity even during waiting times.

Reading is always an ideal way to utilise time. If you find yourself in a situation requiring a long wait, such as for a medical consultation or while completing official transactions, you can carry a book or an e-reader with you. However, if you are driving in traffic, listening to audiobooks or podcasts is the perfect alternative. Audible and Spotify provide a variety of audio content.

Psychologist Sarah al Alawi adds that listening to audiobooks or radio programmes helps to relax and calm the soul. Learning something new or gaining useful

information can turn a negative waiting experience into a positive and productive one.

In a world full of daily pressures, waiting times can also be an opportunity to practise meditation and mental relaxation. Instead of feeling stressed or frustrated, these times can be used to calm the mind and regain focus. Deep breathing exercises or simple meditation can be practised anywhere, whether you are sitting in a waiting room or even in your car. Headspace and Calm provide guidance on how to meditate and relax, and are ideal for people who want to improve their mental health. Meditation exercises do not require a long time, and you can feel an improvement in your mood after just a few minutes. One of the most effective ways to use waiting times is for personal reflection and planning.

Waiting can be an opportunity to review your personal and professional goals and determine the next steps to achieve them. You can use your phone to write down new ideas or organise your upcoming projects.

You can also use these periods to write your daily diary or even start writing articles or short stories. These activities help you invest your time in creative ways, turning waiting into a time for innovation and productivity.

Waiting periods can also be an opportunity to connect with friends and family, whether through text messages or phone calls. As busy individuals, we often forget to connect with the people we love. Waiting times can be used to have short conversations that maintain these social connections.

In addition to personal communication, you can use professional networking platforms such as LinkedIn to expand your professional network and learn about new opportunities.

Effective communication, whether social or professional, can have a significant positive impact on improving your life.

Even if you are sitting in a crowded waiting area, you can do some light exercise. Simple movements such as stretching your body or moving your neck and shoulders can help improve blood circulation and reduce physical stress.

Ultimately, waiting times do not have to be boring. Instead, these moments can be used for learning, planning, relaxation and even constructive socialising.

RESEARCH EXPLORES READING PROBLEMS OF DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 22

A research project by Dr Ahmed bin Saeed bin Nasser al Hadhrami, Assistant Professor of Education Administration at A'Sharqiyah University, sheds light into ways to reduce the reading problems of dyslexic students.

According to Dr Al Hadhrami, this research project aimed to determine the best effective method for teaching dyslexic children to read, which includes reading learning methodologies that may be used to improve dyslexic students' early reading ability.

Dr Al Hadhrami mentioned that the qualitative research technique that was employed in this study consisted of case study analysis.

Those who participated in this research had dyslexia as their primary diagnosis. Interviews, observation, and documentation were employed as data gathering methods, with triangulation techniques being used to assess the validity of the information.

The data analysis is carried out by the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data gathering, data reduction, data presentation, and final findings.

Dr Al Hadhrami explained that several methods were combined to create the method used for dyslexic students, including the phonic method, the syllable peeling method, and the language experience method, as well as simplification of reading practice materials and assistance with a verbal explanation of the material from a special assistant teacher for students, according to the



According to Dr Ahmed al Hadhrami, the research project aimed to determine the best effective method for teaching dyslexic children to read

findings.

Through this research, Dr Al Hadhrami suggested that this method can help dyslexic students improve their reading ability, as measured by the initial reading indicators, namely the ability to recognise and read the names of letters and letter sounds, the ability to pronounce words correctly, and the ability to read sentences aloud with the correct pronunciation for an extended period.

This research project was published in Information Sciences. The research team consisted of Dr Al Hadhrami, M G Raja Al Amrat, M A S Khasawneh, and S R Darawsheh.

The research project was supported by the Publication Support Program of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), which supports the publication of research papers in journals, peer-reviewed periodicals and specialised databases.

200 int’l artists to take part in Muscat Art

THE MINISTRY of Culture, Sports and Youth (MoCSY), in partnership with the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, is organising the third edition of Muscat Art Exhibition 2024, from October 28 to 31. The opening ceremony of the exhibition, which will be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, will be sponsored by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, said: “Muscat Art Exhibition is one of the important artistic programmes that the Ministry is keen to include in the artistic calendar of the Sultanate of Oman.” He said that artists from different countries will gather in Muscat to celebrate art and provide an exceptional experience throughout the exhibition.

He explained that the cooperation with the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in organising this event comes to enhance cultural awareness and focus on the importance of visual art through workshops and community activities.

Said bin Salim al Shanfari, CEO of the Oman Convention and



The third edition of Muscat Art Exhibition 2024 will be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre f Culture from October 28 to 31.

Exhibition Centre, said: The centre is a wonderful space known for its ability to host events from various strategic fields.”

Al Shanfari added that through the Muscat Art Exhibition, the centre seeks to showcase the culture and traditions of the Sultanate of Oman and hosts the artistic trends that shape Oman today, in addition to the growing interest at the regional level every year as new artists display their works on the walls of the centre.

More than 200 artists from 18 countries, including Hungary, Iran, Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, India, the United Kingdom, Sudan and Germany, will participate in the

third edition of the Muscat Art Fair for the year 2024.

Art Muscat aims to promote cultural awareness, preserve the visual arts heritage and gain regional recognition. The event has grown in popularity, attracting more exhibitors and visitors each year, with the vision to become a major regional art gathering, as well as an art exhibition, playing a major role in the Omani cultural scene by celebrating the living talents of the Sultanate of Oman. This year's edition includes lectures and workshops on art-related topics, and visitors will be able to enjoy sculpture workshops, live music and entertainment. — ONA

Embassy hosts celebration of classical language status

MUSCAT: Embassy of India in Muscat celebrated the historic conferral of Classical Language Status on Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit by the Government of India. This special event was organised to honour the rich linguistic and cultural heritage of these languages, which have contributed immensely to India's literary, historical, and intellectual traditions.

In his remarks, Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, appreciated the decision, mentioning, “It is a proud moment for every Indian, as the recognition of Marathi, Bengali, Assamese, Pali, and Prakrit as Classical Languages acknowledges their immense contribution to our nation's heritage. Today, we celebrate not just the languages, but the people, literature, and traditions they have nurtured over centuries.”



Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, at the event in Muscat

The event featured a series of cultural performances by the Marathi, Bengali, and Assamese communities of the Indian diaspora in Oman. Through traditional dances, music, and artistic displays, each

community highlighted the richness of their linguistic and cultural heritage, offering a vivid celebration of their identities.

Representatives from the Marathi, Bengali, and Assamese communities expressed their gratitude to the Government of India, emphasising how this recognition strengthens their cultural pride and reaffirms the importance of preserving their linguistic heritage.

They also presented letters of appreciation to the Ambassador, addressed to the Prime Minister of India, acknowledging the government's efforts in promoting the cultural and linguistic diversity.

The event underscored the strong cultural ties between India and Oman and reaffirmed the role of the vibrant and diverse Indian community in maintaining its cultural identity abroad.



Sultanate Of Oman University Medical City

BIDDING NOTICE

The Procurement Department at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital at the University Medical City would like to invite companies to submit their quotations for:

S. No	Type of Business	Location	Date of site visit	Bid Number#	The last date to collect the document	The last date to submit the quotations
1	Rental and operation of a restaurant / coffee	Omani National Centre for Hematology Diseases and Bone Marrow Transplantation	31/10/2024 10:00 am	UMC. BMT.1/2024	30/10/2024	11/11/2024 before 11:00 am

- The priority will be for Small and Medium Establishments specialized (SMEs) that fulfill the quality requirements. All classes of companies can also apply for these bids.
- Bidders who wish to participate in this Bid may collect the Bid Documents from the Procurement Department, Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, during working hours, the Bid document for an amount of OMR.25 for (non-refundable). The last date for collecting the Document is on Wednesday 30/10/2024.
- The Site Visit for the selected shop is mandatory. It will be on the above-mentioned date and the assembly point will be at the Procurement Department, SQUH.
- The last date for submission of the quotations is on Monday: 11/11/2024. The quotations should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Procurement Department, located on the first floor of the Hospital Administration building at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital, and deposited in the Bid Box kept in the Department, before 11:00 a.m.
- The exterior of the envelope should be marked with the name and number of the Bid being presented and should bear no identification or mark of the Bidder.
- The Bidder should prepare the Site per the health requirements of Muscat Municipality and the requirements of civil defense in cooperation with the concerned authorities.
- University Medical City reserves the right to reject any quotation not comply the requirements and does not obliged to accept the highest rent or any other quotations.

Procurement Department at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital
University Medical City
P.O BOX 38, P.C. 123, ALKHOD, SULTANATE OF OMAN
Tel: 24144084
Email: hospitalprocure@squ.edu.om

MUSCAT TO HOST INT’L VECTOR MEET ON OCTOBER 29

MUSCAT: The Governorate of Muscat will soon host the inaugural International Conference in Vector Control Intervention for Dengue Fever, which is being organised by Muscat Municipality in collaboration with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The two-day conference will take place under the auspices of Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat, at the JW Marriott Hotel Muscat on October 29 and 30.

It will include an exhibition featuring companies specialising in pest control solutions.

The event will bring together around 180 experts and specialists from various countries, including representatives from the GCC, Egypt, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and Oman.

International speakers from WHO, US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other global health organisations will also participate. Discussions will focus on the latest research and strategies to combat Aedes mosquitoes, the primary vector of dengue fever.

Participating delegations will exchange insights and best practices, leading to a set of recommendations for effective vector control.



Yacht E-Auction Announcement

Royal Court Affairs announces an electronic auction for a yacht through Mazad Oman platform (www.mazad.om) according to the following:

Auction	Preview location	Preview date and time	Bidding date (electronically)
Sale of a Yacht	Sultan Qaboos Port – Mutrah	Sunday 27.10.2024 To Thursday 07.11.2024 8:00 am to 5:00 pm	Sunday 10.11.2024 To Friday 15.11.2024

Register and view the terms through the website: www.mazad.om
For more enquiries kindly contact: info@mazad.om



Scan the QR code for quick access

WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Kenya's impeached deputy President Rigathi Gachagua sits inside the Milimani Courts, in Nairobi. — Reuters

KENYA COURT HEARS CHALLENGE TO IMPEACHMENT

NAIROBI: Kenya's High Court began on Tuesday hearing a legal bid by impeached Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua to overturn his ouster in a political saga that has plunged the upper echelons of Kenyan politics into disarray. But both he and President William Ruto challenged -- for different reasons -- the court's ability to hear the case.

In a fast-moving, the High Court in Nairobi on Friday had ordered that Gachagua's impeachment be put on hold. Its ruling came just minutes after parliament had approved Interior Minister Kithure Kindiki to replace Gachagua as Ruto's deputy.

Gachagua was impeached by the Senate on Thursday on five out of 11 charges against him, including stirring ethnic divisions and undermining the judiciary. Gachagua on Sunday lashed out at his boss as "vicious" and claimed there had been attempts on his life in the past, including by poisoning his food. Ruto has not yet given any public comment on the impeachment. — AFP



A burned vehicle is seen in Khartoum, Sudan. — Reuters file photo

ACTIVISTS SAY 50 KILLED IN SUDAN BATTLES

KASSALA: Local activists in central Sudan have reported over 50 people killed since clashes erupted in Al Jazira state on Sunday after a paramilitary commander defected to the army. In the state capital of Wad Madani, a military air strike on a mosque killed 31 people, the local resistance committee, one of hundreds of volunteer groups coordinating aid across the war-torn country, said in a statement on Tuesday.

They accused the army of using "barrel bombs", adding that over half of the dead remained unidentified as rescuers combed through the remains of "dozens of charred and mutilated bodies". In the state's war-ravaged east, activists said at least 20 people have been killed in paramilitary attacks since Sunday. On Sunday, the army announced that the RSF's Al Jazira commander Abu Aqla Kaykal had abandoned the paramilitary force, bringing "a large number of his forces" to "fight alongside our army", in what they said was the first high-profile defection to the military's side. — AFP

North Korea representative denies sending troops to Russia

UNITED NATIONS: North Korea has not sent troops to Russia to help Moscow fight Ukraine, one of its United Nations representatives, dismissing Seoul's claims as "groundless rumour". South Korea's spy agency said on Friday that Pyongyang sent a "large-scale" troop deployment to help its ally, claiming that 1,500 special forces were already training in Russia's Far East and ready to head soon for the frontlines of the Ukraine war. "As for

the so-called military cooperation with Russia, my delegation does not feel any need for comment on such groundless stereotyped rumours," a North Korean representative said during the UN General Assembly in New York.

Seoul's claims were "aimed at smearing the image of the DPRK and undermining the legitimate, friendly and cooperative relations between two sovereign states," the representative told a committee

meeting on Monday. Pyongyang and Moscow have drawn closer since Russia's 2022 attack of Ukraine, with Seoul and Washington claiming that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has been sending weapons for use in Ukraine. After Seoul summoned Russia's ambassador to South Korea to complain, the envoy "stressed that cooperation between Russia and North Korea... is not directed against the interests of South Korea's security." — AFP



Smoke rises after an Israeli airstrike targeting Beirut's southern suburb of Shayah. — AFP

LEBANON SAYS 13 KILLED IN ISRAEL STRIKE

BEIRUT: Lebanon's health ministry on Tuesday said 13 people, including a child, were killed in an Israeli strike near a south Beirut hospital. Another 57 people were wounded in the strike late on Monday near the Rafic Hariri Hospital, Lebanon's biggest public health facility, located a few kilometres from the city centre, the health ministry said. The facility in the Jnah neighbourhood sustained minor damage in the strike, with windows shattered and its solar panels destroyed, its director said.

In the vicinity, four buildings

were flattened by the strikes, said a correspondent in the area. Rescuers were on Tuesday still searching for survivors, amid fears that the toll may rise further. The correspondent at the scene heard a cell phone ringing under chunks of concrete. The strike came as Israel targeted Beirut's southern suburbs following evacuation warnings.

There was no evacuation warning for the area around the Rafic Hariri Hospital, which is densely populated and has seen an influx of people displaced from areas further south. — AFP

UN agency calls for truce in northern Gaza

THE UN Palestinian refugee agency called on Tuesday for a temporary truce to allow people to leave areas of northern Gaza as health officials said they were running out of supplies to treat patients hurt in a three-week-old Israeli offensive. Philippe Lazzarini, the head of the UNRWA relief agency, said the humanitarian situation had reached a dire point, with bodies abandoned by roadsides or buried under rubble. "In northern Gaza, people are just waiting to die," he said in a statement on X. "They feel deserted, hopeless and alone." "I am calling for an immediate truce, even if for a few hours, to enable safe humanitarian passage for families who wish to leave the area & reach safer places," he said.

The call came as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Israel to try to revive Gaza ceasefire talks following the death last week of Yahya Sinwar, leader of the Palestinian group Hamas.

Washington has called on Israel to allow more humanitarian supplies into northern Gaza and Israel says aid has been delivered in scores of trucks as well as air drops but Gaza medics say the aid has not reached them.

On Tuesday, Gaza health officials said more than 20 people had been killed by Israeli forces. Dozens of bodies of people killed by Israeli fire were on roadsides and under rubble. Rescue teams could not reach them because of ongoing strikes, they said.

"Many wounded have died before our eyes and we couldn't do anything for them," said Munir Al-Bursh, the director of the Gaza health ministry, who is currently in northern Gaza. "Hospitals also ran out



Displaced Palestinians flee amid an Israeli military operation, in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip. — Reuters

of coffins to prepare the dead and we have asked people to donate any fabric they have at home," he said in a statement.

Israeli drones circled overhead, calling on Palestinians to evacuate areas around the town of Beit Lahiya, just north of Jabalia where the offensive began earlier this month. Many Palestinians fear the evacuation orders are part of an Israeli plan to clear the area to create a buffer zone that

will enable Israel to control Gaza after the war. The war in Gaza has devastated the Palestinian economy, which is now 35 per cent smaller than it was at the start of Israel's invasion a year ago, the United Nations' development agency said on Tuesday. UNDP said quality of life indicators such as health and education had been knocked back 70 years to the 1950s. — Reuters

MALICIOUS CONTENT

Singapore blocks foreign-linked websites



Singapore on Tuesday blocked access to 10 websites linked to foreign actors which the government said could be used to mount "hostile" disinformation campaigns against the city-state. "These 10 inauthentic websites have been observed to masquerade as Singapore websites by spoofing or using terms associated with Singapore in their domain name and incorporating familiar local features and visuals," the Ministry of Home Affairs said in a statement. — AFP

FIRST CASE

Germany detects new mpox variant



An infection with the new mpox variant clade 1b has been detected in Germany for the first time, the Robert Koch Institute health authority said on Tuesday. The infection occurred abroad and was detected last Friday, the institute said, adding that it did not see an increased risk for Germany but was "monitoring the situation very closely". From May 2022, clade 2 spread around the world. — AFP

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

Eastern India braces for Cyclone Dana



Schools in some parts of India's eastern state of Odisha were ordered to shut and tourists asked to vacate the popular beach city of Puri, as authorities braced for a severe cyclonic storm that is expected to hit later this week. Cyclone Dana is expected to strengthen into a severe cyclonic storm with wind speeds gusting up to 120 kph, and is likely to make landfall late on Thursday. — Reuters

COALITIONCONCERNS



People attend a protest called by conservative and far-right parties in Madrid. — Reuters file photo

SPANISH GOVT
FACES PRESSURE
FROM HARD LEFT

MADRID: Members of the Spanish hard-left party Podemos (“We Can”) began voting on October 22, 2024, whether to make its crucial support for this year’s budget conditional on the government severing ties with Israel and implementing measures to curb rent prices by 40 per cent.

The Socialist-led government of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, which relies on a fragile coalition of smaller parties to approve any legislation, needs the votes of the four Podemos lawmakers in the lower house for the budget to pass. Sanchez faces a delicate balancing act as he also requires support from two centre-right parties—Catalan separatists Junts and Basque regionalists PNV—who are set to impose their own conditions to back the budget.

On October 21, 2024, Podemos Secretary-General Ione Belarra—who served as Sanchez’s social rights minister between 2021 and 2023 but is no longer in the ruling coalition—criticised what she described as the government’s inaction in a video message. — Reuters



KING CHARLES CAPS AUSTRALIA TRIP

Britain’s King Charles III and Queen Camilla pose for a group photo during their visit to the Sydney Opera House in Sydney. The 75-year-old regent crisscrossed the city on his last full day of engagements before ending on the glistening waters of Sydney Harbour. — AFP

Harris and Trump push for every vote with just 14 days to go

WASHINGTON: One of the tightest US election races of modern times enters its final, two-week stretch on October 22, 2024, with Republican Donald Trump making a special pitch to Latino voters as Democratic rival Kamala Harris sits down for a national network interview. Both campaigns are pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into a final push for any wavering, undecided voters who could tilt the balance in their favour, with polls consistently showing their candidates in a dead heat ahead of Election Day. Whatever the outcome, Americans will make history on November 5: they will either elect the first woman president in the world’s

leading superpower or they will put the first convicted felon into the White House.

Polls appear to be giving Trump, who at 78 is the oldest nominee from a major party in US history, a slight edge recently — but all within the margin of error, making them little comfort for a former president making his third consecutive White House run. Vice-President Harris — who only threw herself into the race in July when President Joe Biden made the stunning decision to drop out and endorse her instead — will give a television interview to NBC on Tuesday. The 60-year-old, who celebrated her birthday over the weekend, will



Former US president and Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in North Carolina. — AFP

also deploy one of her party’s most popular emissaries back into the field: Barack Obama. The former Democratic president will hold a series of rallies in Wisconsin and Michigan, two of the seven most hotly contested swing states in the election which, under the US system of indirect universal suffrage, are likely to decide the outcome.

Trump, whose anti-migrant rhetoric is becoming coarser and more extreme by the day, will take part in a roundtable discussion with Latino voters at one of his Florida properties. The Republican will then fly to North Carolina, another swing state where he also

campaigned on Monday, for an event that is supposed to be devoted to the economy.

He rarely sticks to the topic at his rallies, however — instead, he has been criticised for a tumultuous few weeks that have featured rambling monologues and threats about weaponising the military against Democrats who he calls “the enemy from within.” The Harris campaign has begun to hammer at his mental and physical fitness to serve. But a tide of MAGA-capped supporters continue to flock to his rallies, convinced that he is the victim of political persecution, or that Democrats are instigating threats against him. — AFP

Putin seeks to rival West
with high-profile summit

TWO dozen world leaders gathered in Russia on Tuesday for the opening of a three-day summit of the BRICS group, an alliance of emerging economies that the Kremlin hopes will challenge Western hegemony. With the summit, the biggest such meeting in Russia since it ordered troops into Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin is seeking to show that Western efforts to isolate Moscow over the two-and-a-half-year offensive have failed.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan — all key partners for Russia — are scheduled to join the gathering, hosted in the western city of Kazan on October 22 to 24.

Putin, Modi and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa have already arrived in Kazan, Russian media reported. Moscow has made expanding the BRICS group — an acronym for core members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — a pillar of its foreign policy. The main issues on the agenda include Putin’s idea for a BRICS-led payment system to rival SWIFT, an international financial network that Russian banks were cut off from in 2022, as well as the escalating conflict in the Middle East.

The Kremlin has touted the gathering as a diplomatic triumph that will help it build an alliance to challenge Western hegemony. Ahead of the meeting, Modi praised what he called the “special and privileged strategic partnership” between Moscow and New Delhi and said issues including climate change would be on the agenda. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he wanted the Ukraine conflict to be resolved peacefully and quickly as he met President Vladimir Putin at the BRICS summit in Russia on Tuesday. Putin hailed what he called Russia and India’s “privileged strategic partnership” and



Russia’s President Vladimir Putin reacts on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Kazan. — AFP

vowed to build ties further.

The United States has dismissed the idea that BRICS could become a geopolitical rival but has expressed concern about Moscow flexing its diplomatic muscle as the Ukraine conflict rages. Moscow has been steadily advancing on the battlefield in eastern Ukraine this year while strengthening its ties with China, Iran and North Korea — three of Washington’s adversaries.

By gathering the BRICS group in Kazan, the Kremlin aims to show that not only is Russia not isolated, it has partners and allies, Moscow-based political analyst Konstantin Kalachev said. This time round, the Kremlin wants to show an alternative to Western pressure and that the multipolar world is a reality, Kalachev said, referring to Moscow’s efforts to shift power away from the West to other regions. — AFP

Hurricane leaves six dead in Cuba as power blackout eases

HAVANA: Hurricane Oscar left six people dead after hitting Cuba over the weekend during a major power blackout, authorities said on October 21, 2024, as electricity was restored to most of the capital. The lights went out for the Communist-run country’s 10 million people on Friday after the collapse of the nation’s largest power plant crippled the whole grid. By Monday afternoon, nearly 90 per cent of customers in Havana — home to some two million people — had power again, the capital’s electricity company said in a report published by state-run news portal Cubadebate. Many residents outside Havana, however, remained without electricity, according to the authorities.

Cuba was still bathed in darkness when Hurricane Oscar made

Cuba was still bathed in darkness when Hurricane Oscar made landfall in the eastern part of the country as a Category 1 storm, causing several deaths and damage

landfall in the eastern part of the country as a Category 1 storm, causing several deaths and damage.

“Regrettably, according to preliminary information, six lives have been lost,” President Miguel Diaz-Canel said in televised remarks. The storm caused severe damage in the eastern province of Guantanamo, he said. Oscar weakened into a tropical storm as it moved inland but was still expected to bring “significant, life-threatening flash flooding along with mudslides,” the US National Hurricane Center warned. Roofs and the walls of houses were damaged, and electricity poles and trees were felled, state television reported.

With concerns of instability rising in a country already battling

sky-high inflation and shortages of food, medicine, fuel, and water, Diaz-Canel warned on Sunday that his government would not tolerate attempts to “disturb public order.” In July 2021, blackouts sparked an unprecedented outpouring of public anger, with thousands of Cubans taking to the streets and chanting slogans including “Freedom!” and “We are hungry.” Residents voiced frustration at the latest power outage, which crippled businesses and caused food in fridges to go bad. “I feel like crying, like screaming. Honestly, I don’t know what I’m going to do,” said Kenia Sierra, a housewife. Dozens of people took to the streets over the weekend in one neighbourhood, banging pots and pans and shouting, “Turn on the lights.” — AFP

OPINION

Resilience doesn’t just mean being strong



HYESHA BARRETT
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RESILIENCE IS often misconstrued and associated with “being strong”. Frequently celebrated as a hallmark of robustness, a badge of honour, an unyielding and unwavering ability to withstand life’s adversities without faltering. Au contraire, this tapered definition can impose unrealistic expectations on individuals navigating life’s challenges, and may instil an adverse effect.

True resilience involves the capability to recover from setbacks and adapt to change, all the while acknowledging, expressing and processing our emotions. One can often misinterpret true resilience with simply enduring. The latter encompasses moving through hardship with absolute determination and grit, dismissing any sentiment and simply surviving. The former intertwines vulnerability, authenticity, adaptability and emotional intelligence. Perfect components that hold space for true strength. It’s a willingness to fall apart, to collapse, to allow all the feelings to come up, so we can generate an honest and dependable pathway for healing and growth.

With life’s unpredictable nature, those who cultivate resilience are typically

adaptable in response to changing circumstances, habitually possessing the ability to recognise that change often leads to learning opportunities. This flexibility can manifest as problem-solving skills or a willingness to re-evaluate one’s goals. Robust and vigorous individuals pivot and find new ways to navigate obstacles. They tend to possess a high degree of emotional intelligence, through understanding and managing one’s own emotions, as well as empathising with others.

Simply “surviving” life’s challenges through pain suppression or denial doesn’t make us strong — as those enduring methods don’t provide the necessary time, compassion nor energy needed to process raw emotions. True strength isn’t merely surviving, but being open to what will come up, rather than simply devising distracting strategies or switching off from the connection to our sentiments and sensations.

Resilience is a skill that can be developed over time. Encouraging a growth mindset, embracing challenges, engaging in self-reflection and seeking feedback can help individuals identify their strengths and areas for improvement, making them better equipped to handle future struggles. While strength implies a certain toughness or the ability to withstand pressure, resilience embodies a broader and more nuanced understanding of how we cope with trials and tribulations. It’s recognising when to seek support while understanding and processing emotions — a fundamental part of this human experience.

It is far more complex than merely being strong. Strength suggests unwavering toughness, whereas resilience embodies a blend of flexibility, adaptability, vulnerability, emotional awareness and a growth mindset, all the while being able to change direction when circumstances shift. It involves acknowledging feelings, seeking support and being flexible in the face of adversities. Embracing these elements can foster a deeper understanding of one’s emotional landscape and ultimately lead to a more fulfilled life. Resilience is about bouncing back and learning from hardships, not simply enduring pain or suppressing our feelings.

By shifting our perspective and mindset towards change and resilience, we can better support ourselves and others in navigating the storms of life, with grace and compassion.

Strength suggests unwavering toughness, whereas resilience embodies a blend of flexibility, adaptability, vulnerability, emotional awareness and a growth mindset

IS MUSK’S MILLION-DOLLAR US VOTER LOTTERY LEGAL?

MARION THIBAUT

Donald Trump surrogate Elon Musk’s offer of a million dollars to one registered voter in a swing state everyday until the US Election Day on November 5 has raised questions about the legality of such a move.

While Democratic candidate Kamala Harris’s campaign has not commented on the contest, Josh Shapiro, the Democratic Governor of Pennsylvania, said on NBC’s Meet the Press: “I think it’s something that law enforcement should take a look at.” Musk, the world’s richest man, announced the contest on Saturday in Pennsylvania, one of the seven “swing states” that will likely determine who will become the next US president — Harris, or Republican Trump.

The contest requires entrants sign a petition “to support free speech & the right to bear arms,” Tesla and SpaceX CEO Musk said on X, the social media platform he owns. The endeavour enters hot water with the requirement that people are registered to vote in swing states in order to participate.

Danielle Lang, a professor at Georgetown Law School who specialises in election law, said the contest could be “subject to civil or criminal enforcement by the Department of Justice.” “It is illegal to give out money on the condition that recipients register as voters,” she said.

Rick Hasen, a political science professor at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law, expressed a similar sentiment on his Election Law Blog. He cited the specific law that prohibits anyone who “pays or offers to pay or accepts payment... for registration to vote,” adding that the penalty involves a fine of \$10,000 or up to five years imprisonment.

Not everyone is of the same mindset, however. Brad Smith, the former chairman of the Federal Election Commission, told the New York Times what Musk is doing is “something of a gray area.” “Since Musk is not paying people to register directly, but rather for signing a petition, “I think he comes out OK here,” Smith said. Musk has pulled out all the stops in recent weeks to support Trump, including donating \$75 million to a pro-Trump political action committee and appearing at campaign rallies. “Just go out there and talk to your friends and family and acquaintances and people you meet in the street and... convince them to vote,” he told the crowd at the rally where he announced the petition contest. Lang said that schemes such as these occur “each election cycle.” “We tend to see some businesses that engage in some questionable activity along these lines (such as offering a free item for showing an ‘I Voted’ sticker) but this is notable for its far larger size,” she said. — AFP



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Oman can draw from Norway’s inclusive policies to cultivate a skilled, diverse workforce and promote sustainable growth

IN AN era of shifting global dynamics, certain national models offer powerful lessons on how to build resilient and forward-thinking societies interested in investing in long-term positive impact.

Among these, Norway is a compelling example for the Sultanate of Oman and the wider region. With its stable history, progressive governance, and balanced socio-economic model, Norway offers a roadmap for those seeking sustainable, positive growth. Oman, in particular, shares several foundational similarities with Norway, making the Norwegian experience especially relevant as we navigate our future.

Both nations have economies deeply rooted in energy production with an interest in new energy, supported by sovereign wealth funds that play a vital role in ensuring long-term economic stability. Additionally, seasonal tourism plays a key role in both countries, drawing visitors during favourable periods: from May to September in Norway, and during Oman’s cooler months.

Here are six key reasons why the Norwegian model could be a blueprint for Oman’s future success.

Norway places great emphasis on invest-

ing in its people, offering free education to citizens and residents alike, and attracting skilled labour to contribute to its economy. This inclusive approach has strengthened Norway’s talent pool and global standing.

In contrast, models rooted in exploitation, like the Israeli colonial-settler regime, undermine long-term development and human dignity.

Oman can draw from Norway’s inclusive policies to cultivate a skilled, diverse workforce and promote sustainable growth.

Secondly, Norway’s AAA credit rating reflects the nation’s economic stability and the trust it commands in global financial markets. In comparison, regions engaged in conflict and human rights violations struggle with poor credit ratings, limiting their access to capital and economic growth.

Oman can learn from Norway’s disciplined financial management, building a resilient economy that attracts investment and fosters long-term prosperity.

Norway’s sovereign wealth fund, worth nearly RO 700 billion, enhances its appeal as a trade partner, known for transparency and stability.

In contrast, apartheid regimes associated with conflict and instability, such as Israel,

face significant trade barriers. Oman, by aligning itself with globally respected trade partners and adopting responsible business practices, can secure its place as a reliable player in international markets, just as Norway has done.

Norway’s brand as a leader in clean energy, responsible business, and peacebuilding strengthens its international reputation.

Companies like Equinor, Norway’s energy giant, operate in more than 30 countries and are welcomed worldwide.

Whereas the UN’s ongoing war crimes investigation make Israeli people and businesses a risky liability on anyone who deals with them. Oman, by cultivating a national image that reflects progress, sustainability, and inclusion, can enhance its global standing and foster deeper international relationships.

Norway’s high quality of life, peaceful environment, and investment in public services have made it an increasingly attractive destination for global talent.

By investing in the well-being of its people and offering opportunities for talent to thrive, Oman can position itself as a magnet for professionals seeking purpose and stability.

Norwegian businesses, known for their commitment to sustainability and social responsibility, are thriving on the global stage. The growing Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions or BDS movement has caused plummeting sales and bankruptcy in multinationals that came out swinging in support of the ongoing genocide.

Oman can consider the Norway Government Pension Fund’s example by excluding businesses that do not operate with integrity and transparency.

In conclusion, the Norwegian model offers a compelling alternative to destabilising regional scenarios.

By focusing on human capital, fostering economic resilience, promoting responsible trade, building a strong national brand, attracting global talent, and encouraging ethical business practices, Oman can take into consideration Norway’s lead in becoming a global impact investment powerhouse.

Eating together for a longer, happier life



SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

HAVING a meal together with the loved ones is a way of fostering bonds with each other. It is one of the most important expressions of social living in all cultures around the world. In fact, many families considered it as a treasured practice!

Of course, it’s not just about eating, but when we gather as a family for food, it thickens the love and makes memories! Look at any home; the main activities centre around the dining table. It is where the love and laughter of family and friends echo!

While parents discuss how their day passed, children talk about their activities in the school or other places. Also, it’s at the dining table where we normally iron out all our differences and reconcile. Perhaps, it’s the space that provides the opportunity to talk about the activities of the day with each other!

Personally, I’ve always found this space to be a challenging place to navigate the chaos of life. It was where I learned to refer to ‘us’ rather than ‘I’ thanks to the practice of ‘sharing’ in eating. It created a sense of belonging and security within my family.

If any of us teased each other or stole off food one another’s plate, my mother would say, “you are siblings, eat together. No matter what happens, you must always love and trust the people you are

eating together”.

Unfortunately, in today’s fast-paced world, where everyone is constantly on the go, many families seem to have totally ignored the importance of eating together. The crazy modern days have cut family dining to a relic of the past! An old-fashioned concept!

We know we all have an array of duties, personal interests and demands. Nobody has time to sit down to have breakfast, lunch, or dinner at home! From parents to children, they rush off to work and school in the mornings, grabbing some fruit or eating porridge on the run.

While elders are busy with their work commitments like late meetings or other engagements and children have sport and school activities, all of us compete for evening-time attention, not to speak about television, social media and smart phones!

But let me say that during my childhood the notion of edging aside dinner hour for any activity was met with vigorous indignation by my parents.

And I believe it’s entirely reasonable to allow liberty for each member of the family to pursue their personal and professional passions, responsibilities and relationships.

Researchers at the University of Minnesota explain that simply taking a few minutes each day to turn off screens and

Unfortunately, in today’s fast-paced world, where everyone is constantly on the go, many families seem to have totally ignored the importance of eating together

genuinely connect with each other over food can improve the physical and mental health of all family members.

“It is important to know that the benefits of shared meals go beyond avoiding negative health outcomes and fewer depressive symptoms; this research shows that shared family meals promote happiness and positive emotions,” said research head William Doherty.

Other research purports to show that kids who eat dinner with their families regularly do better in school and are less likely to form negative characters.

Regular family meals reduce stress levels. Sitting down together allows family members to relax, unwind and enjoy each other’s company. A recent survey revealed that an impressive 91 per cent of parents reported a significant reduction in family stress levels when meals were shared together on a regular basis.

Let me come back to where I started that family traditions and rituals during mealtime, such as saying grace or sharing stories, they further enhance the sense of unity and create a unique family identity.

So, eat together with your children at all possible times so that it will get enough time to talk to you about how everything in their life is going while cherishing their food. This will make them feel more comfortable around you!

‘SERIOUS BUSINESS’... INFLUENCER DEGREE LAUNCHES IN IRELAND

PETER MURPHY

It’s a job that didn’t exist until recently but becoming an influencer is an ever more popular career path among Gen-Z youth in the modern era of social media.

Now a first-of-its-kind course at an Irish university is teaching wannabe influencers how to convert online presence and content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube into revenue streams.

“Influencing is something that’s catching fire,” course director Irene McCormick said at South East Technological University (SETU) in Carlow, an hour’s drive southwest from the capital Dublin.

The idea grew out of a summer crash course “Digital Hustle” launched by McCormick that was taught by TikTokers and attracted 350 applicants for 30 places.

“It got amazing traction, we could see the appetite for more, so we broadened it to degree level,” said McCormick, a former television producer and director.

After two years of development, the course -- a four-year-long Bachelor’s degree in “Content Creation and Social

Media” -- received accreditation and welcomed its first intake of 15 students last month.

On the state-of-the-art campus, students chatted, took selfies and scrolled their social media feeds on smartphones during a break between classes.

“My friends tell me I talk a lot so I thought I might as well make money out of it and try this course,” Harry Odife, 22, said in the campus TV studio during a roleplay exercise.

Most of the students are already immersed in the digital space or working in it and want to expand their toolset and knowledge, McCormick said.

“You can try to learn yourself at home but being empowered with practice and theory about how to connect with target demographics online is going to make a big difference to your career,” she added.

The term “influencer” was officially added to the dictionary in 2019, and refers to a person well-known through use of social media who uses their celebrity to endorse, promote, or generate interest in products and brands, often for payment.

— AFP

Harris’s fight for our future is also a fight for freedom

KAMALA

Harris has made freedom a central theme of her campaign. Under the heading “Safeguard our fundamental freedoms,” her website explains that: “Vice President Harris’s fight for our future is also a fight for freedom. In this election, many fundamental freedoms are at stake: the freedom to make your own decisions about your own body without government interference; the freedom to love who you love openly and with pride; and the freedom that unlocks all the others: the freedom to vote.”

This messaging is welcome. It is high time that American progressives reclaim the freedom agenda from libertarians and the right, especially now that the right represents the exact opposite. While many on the right drape themselves in the flag, progressives are actually advancing an all-American freedom agenda.

Bringing an economist’s lens to bear clarifies the issue. First, an essential part of freedom is the freedom to do and to act – to live up to one’s potential. People living hand to mouth or on the edge of starvation have no real freedom; they do what they must in order to survive.

Second, in any society of interdependent individuals, freedom for some may entail a loss of freedom for others. As the Oxford philosopher Isaiah Berlin put it, “freedom for the wolves has often meant death for the sheep.” The financial liberalisation of the 1990s and 2000s – freedom for bankers – would have meant death for the economy had government not intervened; but since that intervention required billions of dollars of taxpayers’ money, the crisis still reduced the freedom of taxpayers and many workers and homeowners.

Third, a little coercion can meaningfully expand freedom for all. When we work together, we can do things that we cannot do



Harris would expand Americans’ freedoms, and Trump would curtail them.



JOSEPH E STIGLITZ

The writer is a Nobel laureate in economics and University Professor at Columbia University, is a former chief economist of the World Bank

alone; but to avoid the free-rider problem, there may need to be some compulsion.

Fourth, while neoliberal economics expanded the freedom of corporations to exploit others, it did not lead to overall prosperity, let alone shared prosperity. Good economic theory had predicted this even before neoliberalism became fashionable in the Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher era.

Moreover, neoliberalism is not even sustainable, because it encourages individual traits and market behaviour that undermine the functioning of the economy.

Economies run on trust. The winners of this year’s Nobel Prize in economics – Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A Robinson – have stressed the importance of institutions; but even seemingly good institutions don’t

work when selfish individuals, like Donald Trump, start brazenly violating norms and demonstrating extreme dishonesty.

Fifth, contrary to claims made by conservatives and libertarians like Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, unfettered markets are neither necessary for, nor even conducive to, political freedom.

The rise of authoritarian populism has been most pronounced in countries where governments have done too little (to address poverty, inequality, insecurity, and so forth), not where they have done too much.

The contrast between Harris and Trump on core liberties – such as a woman’s right to control her own body – is glaring. On every big issue in this election, Harris would expand Americans’ freedoms, and Trump would curtail them. ©Project Syndicate, 2024

SPORTS

ASIAN U17 QUALIFIERS



OMAN TO COMMENCE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SINGAPORE

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Oman junior stars are in perfect shape to commence their campaign at the AFC U17 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Group J, which will begin in Singapore on Wednesday. Oman will meet the hosts Singapore in a tough clash at the Bishan Stadium with kick-off at 4 pm (Oman time).

Oman head coach Anwar al Habsi said that the qualifiers are the initial step towards attending the finals. “We are targeting to earn the first spot in the group and secure a slot in the Asian finals in Saudi Arabia next year. The opening game is always the key match in the campaign and I am confident in my junior stars to deliver a top show on the green field. We respect all the teams in the group and our goal is to register positive results,” the coach added in his remarks during the press conference.

Oman player Ahmed al Omrani sounded confident as he said the players are set for clinching the direct ticket to the finals. “We are in the best technical status for the qualifiers and our aim is to capture first place and move into the AFC Asian Cup. The preparations went in the best manner in an exciting environment. The players will deliver their best performance towards securing top results. Reaching the AFC Asian Cup is the target of all the players and we will fight for this goal. We are used to playing under pressure in the previous assignments and all players in the squad are in the best shape to compete against the group’s teams,” he added.

Oman are placed in Group J alongside Tajikistan, Guam, and hosts Singapore. Oman’s next match is against Guam on Friday before meeting Tajikistan in the concluding clash on Sunday.

Hong Kong hold nerve to beat Afghanistan A

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 22

SLOW LEFT-ARM bowler Anas Khan wrecked a strong Afghanistan A batting line-up with six wickets as Hong Kong claimed a stunning 5-wicket win in the Group A match of the ACC Men’s Emerging Teams Asia Cup in Al Amerat on Tuesday.

Anas’ brilliant figures of 6-12 from 3.5 overs left Afghanistan A with a modest total of 131 all out in 19.5 overs. Afghanistan A fought back through right-arm medium pacer Abdul Rahman (3-17) and leg-break bowler Qais Ahmed (2-18) but Hong Kong reached over the line with three balls to spare.

Hong Kong rode on a composed 61 off 53 balls (2x4, 3x6) by captain Nizakat Khan and a crucial 39 from Babar Hayat. Despite a few late wickets, a five-ball 15 not out by Martin Coetzee saw Hong Kong through.

Earlier, Sediqullah Atal continued his hot form to score 52 off 41 balls (2x4, 2x6). Atal fell to Anas in the 14th over and Afghanistan lost their scoring momentum.

Afghanistan struggled to accelerate after the dismissal of their key batsmen. In reply, Abdul Rahman was the pick of the bowlers for Afghanistan, claiming 3/17, but Hong Kong’s middle-order contributions ensured they sealed a well-deserved victory, opening their account in Group A.

Despite the unexpected defeat, Afghanistan had ensured the semifinals with four points from their last two wins.



Anas Khan of Hong Kong, China celebrates the wicket of Qais Ahmad Kamawal of Afghanistan A. — ACC

SRI LANKA A TOP GROUP TO ENTER SEMIS

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Sri Lanka A beat Bangladesh A by 19 runs to top Group A and seal the semifinal spot in the Emerging Teams Asia Cup 2024 at Oman Cricket Academy ground on Tuesday night.

Sri Lanka A, with four points, topped the group with a better run-rate than Afghanistan A, also with four points, both making it to the semifinals. Bangladesh A were third on a better run-rate than Hong Kong, with both teams having two points each.

Batting first, Sri Lanka A posted 161 for 7 wickets as Pavan Rathnayake top-scored with 42 runs from 26 balls (3x4, 2x6). Sahan Arachchige (30) and Lahiru Udara (35) made useful contributions.

In reply, Bangladesh A faltered against Dushan Hemantha’s leg-break bowling as the all-rounder took 3 wickets for 23 in 4 overs to earn the man of the match award.

Opener Saif Hassan was retired hurt at 29 while his partner Parvez Hossain Emon scored 24.



Dushan Hemantha of Sri Lanka A celebrates the wicket of Akbar Ali of Bangladesh A.

After their dismissals, Bangladesh lost their way as only Abu Hider kept the score ticking with his 38 not out from 25 balls. Apart from captain Towhid Hridoy (12), none of the batters made two-digit scores, and Bangladesh ended at 142 for 7 in 20 overs.

ball earned him the Player of the Match award.

The defeat leaves UAE on two points from two matches and are in third place behind Pakistan Shaheens (2 points from 2 matches). Oman are at the bottom with no points.

On Wednesday, India A will play hosts Oman at 5.30 pm while Pakistan Shaheens take on UAE at 1 pm in Group B as the group fixtures come to an end.

The top two teams from Group A and B will reach the semifinals slated for Friday. The final is on Sunday.

Salim al Maskary leaves a lasting legacy at OAA

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 22

The Oman Automobile Association’s (OAA) long-serving chairman Brigadier (Retd.) Salim bin Ali bin Khalifa al Maskary has passed away after a brief illness at the age of 69. The ever-smiling, energetic chief of the OAA was symbolic of the motorsports events that the association hosted in abundance.

Condolences poured in from the motorsports world, with its global body chief, Mohammed bin Sulayem, leading the tributes. Salim al Maskary’s close connection to the region’s top drivers and motorsports fraternity was also recalled by the response from sportsmen.

Salim al Maskary joined the Oman Automobile Association’s



Salim al Maskari (right) during the Oman International Drift Championship ceremony.

(OAA) board of directors in 1993 as a managing director. In 2012, Al Maskary became the chairman of the OAA board of directors and served in the post until his death on October 13, 2024.

OAA vice-chairman Brigadier Jamal bin Said al Tai is now the acting chairman of the Oman motorsports body.

Anwar bin Ali bin Soomar al Zadjali, a veteran official at the

OAA who worked for 32 years alongside Salim al Maskary, recalled al Maskary’s enthusiasm in his role as OAA chief.

“I had a long association with the late Salim al Maskary. He was an enthusiastic leader of the Oman Automobile Association. Under his chairmanship, the OAA started several championships,” Anwar, who was the rally director for the Oman International Rally Championship, said.

During his 12-year tenure as the OAA chief, the Oman Rally was revitalised into the Oman International Rally, and the signature tournament of the OAA, the Oman International Drift Championship, was started. The number of events under the OAA increased manifold, from 60 last year to 82.

Al Maskary led a group

of motor enthusiasts with a thorough knowledge of the sport and its technicalities as the OAA scaled new heights by hosting several successful and popular championships and events that captured the attention of the fans.

“We were working as a team to ensure the transformation of the Oman motorsports scene. We were lucky enough to have some expert hands to make that possible,” the adviser to the OAA told Oman Daily Observer.

Mumtaz al Balushi, a motorsports enthusiast, said al Maskary was like a big brother.

“Thanks to his good leadership, the OAA is now in a strong position. Al Maskary was caring, like a big brother to many of us connected to the motorsports field. We miss our big brother.”

FIRSTTEST



South Africa's Kyle Verreynne celebrates after scoring a century in Dhaka. — AFP

Bangladesh battle at 101-3 as SA threaten innings defeat

MIRPUR: Bangladesh were battling to save the first Test against South Africa on Tuesday after reaching 101-3 at stumps and still needing another 101 to avoid an innings defeat. Mahmudul Hasan Joy (38) and Mushfiqur Rahim (31) were unbeaten at the end of play in Mirpur. Their 42-run stand for the fourth wicket also made Mushfiqur the first Bangladeshi to cross 6,000 career Test runs. South Africa were all out for 308 in their first innings of 308, which secured a 202-run lead for the visitors thanks to wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne's century. "It is probably the toughest conditions I have played under in terms of heat and humidity," Verreynne said. "Ninety per cent of that innings was just against spin. Things happen quickly. You don't have much time to reset from a concentration point of view. This was certainly my most rewarding innings." Bangladesh lost two early wickets to quick Kagiso Rabada in reply with Shadman Islam first to go, caught at short leg for one in the third over. Three balls later, Mominul Haque edged and Wiaan Mulder took a sharp catch at third slip for naught, leaving the hosts dangling on 19-2 before tea. Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto fell lbw to Keshav Maharaj after a gruelling 23 off 49 balls. Bangladesh would have lost another wicket off the last of the day when Mahmudul went for a wild slog and missed the ball, avoiding a stumping in the nick of time. Verreynne was last man out in South Africa's first innings after scoring eight fours and two sixes in his 114. He put on 119 for the seventh wicket with Mulder, who made 54, in reply to Bangladesh's first innings of 106. — AFP

Muscat to host 49th FIH Congress from Nov 7 to 9



ADIL AL BALUSHI MUSCAT, OCT 22

THE SULTANATE of Oman will host the 49th FIH Statutory Congress which will take place in Muscat during November 7 to 9 in presence of 500 participants representing 141 countries across the world. The International Hockey Federation (FIH) President Tayyab Ikram will preside over the FIH Statutory Congress which will reflect and debate about key matters to grow hockey. This edition of the Congress will hold elections for a new Board of Directors of FIH for the next four years. The attendees will also discuss a range of agendas and different plans for the federation. The meetings will cover various ideas and proposals aimed at advancing the sport of hockey on multiple levels. The Congress will include meetings for members of the General Assembly from Arab, continental and international bodies. The Congress participants will discuss and review several reports and presentations from different associations including the French Hockey Association who will highlighted on the strategy and legacy benefits from hosting the Paris Olympics 2024. The Belgian and Dutch Hockey Associations will unveil to the assembly member on the 2026 FIH World



Cup that they're co-hosting while the Croatian Hockey Association is gearing up to host their first-ever FIH World Cup – namely, the FIH Indoor Hockey World Cup – in February. On another angle, the FIH will announce in Muscat as sideline event of the occasion of the 49th FIH Statutory Congress, the winners of the FIH Hockey Stars Awards will be revealed at the FIH Centennial Gala taking place on November 8. The winners will include FIH players, goalkeepers, rising stars, coaches and umpires of the year. Commenting on the 49th FIH Statutory Congress in Muscat, FIH chief Dato Tayyab Ikram expressed his gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman for hosting a landmark Congress for the global hockey family. "It is a great honour for the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to hold its 49th Statutory Congress in the

beautiful city of Muscat. This event is an important milestone as it brings together the global hockey community to engage in discussions that will shape the future of our sport," he said. "The Congress offers a unique platform to address the opportunities and new avenues for hockey globally. It is a time for reflection, planning, and collaboration, where we can share ideas, learn from each other and continue to grow hockey across all regions of the world. This year's Congress is particularly special as it coincides with the celebrations of the FIH Centennial—a tribute to 100 years of commitment to the sport and the legacy of those who have contributed to making FIH what it is today," he added. "We are especially grateful to the Sultanate of Oman, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said for their exceptional hospitality and support in hosting this prestigious event," he said. "Oman has been a valuable partner in advancing the sport of hockey, exemplified by the warm welcome extended earlier this year for the inaugural FIH Hockey5s World Cup. The Sultanate of Oman's dedication to fostering sports, particularly hockey, aligns with our mission to expand the sport's reach and deepen its roots in the region," he concluded.

MoHUP to hold hiking session for public today

KABEER YOUSUF @kabeeryousef

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning (MoHUP), represented by the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in Muscat Governorate will conduct a hiking session for the public on Wednesday, at the Bausher Old Countryside, according to the Ministry sources. The event, to be held with the participation of wider public from different walks of life, is organised as part of the Urban October incorporating, will also host a number of other events aiming at sending out a message of healthy living. "Healthy living in modern cities needs healthy people and this hiking is an attempt to shed more light on the importance of the same. We are expecting a large number of people to participate in the hike which will be held on Wednesday," a representative of the event said. In the Sultanate of Oman trekking or mountain climbing has



The event to be held at the Bausher Old Countryside with the participation of wider public from different walks of life, is organised as part of the Urban October incorporating.

been gaining popularity both as a fun and leisure and as a means of keeping oneself fit and this sport is used by individuals, groups for, and corporates as a team building exercise. "Hiking is a wonderful sport and

leisure activity for youngsters and it is really enjoyable for many in terms of the adrenaline rush that it gives and the health benefits that it provides," said Mahmood bin Juma al Qasimi, an avid mountaineer who has conquered many peaks in

the country. However, many people who engage themselves in the sport with less or no safety measures have faced dangers which sometimes were fatal and the authorities have warned them to take necessary

precautions. First, one should know the location where he is trekking, and secondly or more importantly, having sufficient water to drink during the trail pays a lot. One gets more dehydrated as he or she goes further on the rough terrain hence, precautions are advised. Earlier, the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in Muscat Governorate has organised, as part of the Urban October, a discussion titled 'The Inspirers' in the Urban Hall of Al Khoury House under the auspices of Hussain al Lawati, Member of the Mjlis Ash'shura, Representative of the Wilayat of Muttrah, and Mohammed al Hanai, Assistant Director General of Scouts, Nazira al Harthy, Assistant Director General for Girl Guides, and Eng Zaman al Lawati CEO of Capital Group for Construction and Commercial Projects in attendance and moderated by Dr Amal al Jahwari, Director of the Media Department at the Majlis Ash'shura on October 21.



Al Hilal's Salem al Dawsari celebrates scoring a goal. — Reuters

SAUDI ARABIA'S AL HILAL handed defending champions Al Ain a dramatic 5-4 defeat in the Asian Champions League Elite on Monday as Salem al Dawsari's hat-trick in an incident-filled clash overshadowed Neymar's return to competitive action.

Neymar, who has been sidelined since a cruciate ligament rupture last October, was a 77th minute substitute as the Saudi Pro League side avenged last season's semi-final loss against Al Ain despite playing the closing stages with 10 men. The win keeps Al Hilal on top of the league standings in west

“There were a lot of goals, a lot of chances and we managed to win the game with one player less in the end, so it's a big win for us

ALEKSANDAR MITROVIC
Al Hilal striker

AL DAWSARI HAT-TRICK SEALS WIN FOR AL HILAL

Neymar returns to action after injury



Al Hilal's Neymar in action. — Reuters

Asia after three rounds with nine points, where they are joined by fellow Saudi side Al Ahli after their 2-1 win over Qatar's Al Rayyan.

Gabri Veiga scored direct from a corner to give Al Ahli a 16th minute lead before Feras al Brikan headed in his side's second seven minutes from the break, although Fahad al Hamad's own goal left his side clinging on for the final 25 minutes.

AL SADD POST SECOND WIN
Qatar's Al Sadd picked up their second win of the campaign to move onto seven points as Matheus Uribe's first half goal downed Persepolis of Iran while Al Shorta from Iraq and Pakhtakor of Uzbekistan played out a 0-0 draw.

Al Hilal's third consecutive win in the competition came as Jorge Jesus' side edged their hosts in a nine-goal thriller at Hazza bin Zayed Stadium in which both Al Dawsari and Al Ain's Soufiane Rahimi scored hat-tricks.

"There were a lot of goals, a lot of chances and we managed to win the game with one player less in the end, so it's a big win for us," said Al Hilal striker Aleksandar Mitrovic.

Al Hilal had taken the lead in the 26th minute through Renan Lodi's

low strike but Rahimi levelled from close range with six minutes left in the first half.

However, an injury-time header from Sergej Milinkovic-Savic was quickly followed by a strike from an acute angle by Al Dawsari that gave the visitors a two-goal cushion going into the interval.

Substitute Mateo Sanabria pulled one back for Al Ain 18 minutes after the restart only for Al Dawsari to score again barely 90 seconds later.

Rahimi hit his second in the 67th minute but Al Dawsari's strike looked to have put the result beyond doubt with 15 minutes left, allowing Jorge Jesus to introduce Neymar for the first time since rupturing his cruciate ligament last year.

However, Ali al Bulahyi's red card for hand ball just outside the area piled the pressure on Al Hilal and Rahimi completed his hat-trick from the penalty spot six minutes into added time after he was upended by Khalifah al Dawsari.

The result keeps Al Hilal perfect after three rounds while Al Ain have yet to win in the revamped competition, which sees the top eight finishers in the league phase in both east and west Asia advance to the knockout rounds. — Reuters



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MSX to launch Promising Companies Market



A panel session discussed the capital market's role in supporting financial sustainability.

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

THE 22nd Economic Council session of the Omani Economic Association (OEA) was held at the Cultural Club on Monday, October 21, 2024. Chaired by Dr Khalid bin Said al Amri, Chairman of the Board of Directors of OEA, it was also attended by Shaikh Nasser bin Suleiman al Harthy, Vice-President - Operations at Oman Investment Authority (OIA).

A panel discussion held on the occasion featured two CEOs: Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), and Mustafa Salman, CEO of United Securities, along with Ahmed bin Ali al Maamari, Vice-President of the Financial Services Authority (FSA).

The session discussed the capital market's role in supporting financial sustainability, the FSA's efforts to drive financial innovation, and MSX's objectives.

It also explored the stock exchange's role in expanding family businesses and SMEs, and its strategic plan to achieve emerging market status.

Dr Khalid bin Said al Amri emphasised the capital market's importance as a key financial tool and a vital part of the production process alongside human capital and technology. He noted that it helps ensure company sustainability, unlike family businesses, 98 per cent of which vanish by the third generation.

Ahmed bin Ali al Maamari, Vice-President of FSA, stressed the need for cooperation to achieve financial sustainability and support the economy by offering alternatives to bank financing.

He noted efforts to integrate the oil and gas sector into the Muscat Stock Exchange to boost its appeal.

He highlighted the OQ IPO, which injected RO 600 million, and the role of the capital market in long-term financing. He also mentioned the licensing of crowdfunding and collaboration with the Oman Investment Authority to list more companies.

Haitham bin Salem al Salmi, CEO of MSX, noted that the investment environment has been completed over the past few years.

While the stock exchange was previously open to all, clear goals have been set for the upcoming phase over the past three years.

TURN TO PAGE 15



المتحدة للتمويل
United Finance

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Achieve more

BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER 2024
REPORT ON MATERIAL EVENTS COVERING THE INTERIM FINANCIALS

OVERVIEW AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

In the end of 3rd quarter 2024, we are pleased to report that our strong performance has continued from the beginning of the year. Our efforts have resulted in a significant increase in net profit, rising by 20.1% to RO 1,575,014, compared to RO 1,311,719 last year. Total income for the 3rd quarter ended 2024 also grew by 7.4% to RO 8,024,882, showcasing our ability to adapt strategically in a dynamic economic environment.

During 9 months period of 2024 has exhibited encouraging developments, as total assets have reached RO 107,648,441, marking a 6% rise compared to the previous year. This underscores the solidity of our financial position, which is pivotal as we steer through diverse market conditions.

Looking forward, the economic outlook for Oman shows significant potential, underpinned by continued governmental support for economic diversification and infrastructure investments. We remain confident in our strategic initiatives, particularly in digital innovation and sustainable finance, which are set to propel our operational capabilities and market presence.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Our performance as of 3rd quarter 2024 has been steady, with an increase in net installment finance debtors by 5.28% to RO 101,065,069. This growth is a testament to our commitment to prudent financial practices and trust our clients place in our services. The capital adequacy ratio remains robust, ensuring we are well-positioned for future growth and expansion.

PROVISIONING POSITION

For the 3 quarters of 2024, our provisioning reflects the strategies adapted in managing the loan portfolio. We allocated RO 737,701 as of end September 2024, a decrease of 22.7% from the previous year, reflecting our efficient risk management and increase in healthy portfolio quality.

FUNDING

Our funding position remains strong with substantial liquidity, ensuring we continue to meet our strategic goals and maintain operational resilience. We have successfully renewed and enhanced our credit facilities, underlining the confidence our partners and stakeholders have in our financial stability. Further we manage to increase our alternate funding methods by increasing the corporate deposit portfolio by 62% compared to the same period last year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We extend our deepest gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, the Government of Oman, the Central Bank of Oman, the Financial Services Authority, and other regulatory bodies for their unwavering support. Our thanks also go to our banking partners, dealers, customers, and especially our dedicated team at United Finance Company for their hard work and commitment.

CONCLUSION

As we move into the final quarter of 2024, we are enthusiastic about the opportunities ahead. Our strong financial foundation and strategic focus on innovation and customer service are set to drive our success in the coming periods. We remain committed to delivering exceptional value to our stakeholders and upholding the highest standards of corporate governance and integrity.

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

	2024 RO	2023 RO
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	2,085,928	1,184,527
Deposit with the Central Bank of Oman	250,000	250,000
Other assets	620,922	541,302
Instalment finance debtors - net	101,065,069	95,997,264
Investment securities	714,791	724,150
Deferred tax asset	16,923	16,923
Property and equipment	2,350,153	2,308,547
Assets held for sale	544,655	544,655
TOTAL ASSETS	107,648,441	101,567,368
EQUITY		
Share capital	35,612,729	35,612,729
Legal reserve	5,588,672	5,383,308
Special reserve	2,368,989	2,368,989
Impairment reserve	1,600,127	1,911,736
Investment revaluation reserve	160,641	170,000
Retained earnings	4,048,235	2,956,727
Total equity	49,379,393	48,403,489
Liabilities		
Creditors and other payables	5,838,653	4,092,849
Borrowings	41,496,445	42,266,672
Taxation	290,495	244,358
Corporate deposits	10,643,455	6,560,000
Total liabilities	58,269,048	53,163,879
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	107,648,441	101,567,368
NET ASSETS PER SHARE	0.139	0.136

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

	2024 RO	2023 RO
Interest income on instalment finance income	7,151,728	6,602,023
Interest expense	(2,380,670)	(2,038,535)
Net instalment finance income	4,771,058	4,563,488
Fee commission and other income	873,154	867,078
Net operating income	5,644,212	5,430,566
Operating expenses	(2,948,232)	(2,850,748)
Depreciation	(105,321)	(82,803)
Allowance for expected credit losses	(737,701)	(953,816)
Profit before tax	1,852,958	1,543,199
Income tax expense	(277,944)	(231,480)
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	1,575,014	1,311,719
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.004	0.004

The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of such request addressed to:

Chief Executive Officer, United Finance Co. SAOG
P O Box 3652, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24577300 Fax 24561557
E-mail: ufc@ufcoman.com, Website: www.ufcoman.com

Mohamed Abdulla Al Khonji
Chairman



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following tender:

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Site Visit Date	Tender Price (OMR)
NESC/2024/014	Construction and preparation of the emergency exit road and making modifications to the lecture hall at the head office of Nama Electricity Supply Company.	03/11/2024	12/11/2024	Specialist	05/11/2024	26.250

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply). - To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please visit www.supply.nama.om, under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to procurement@supply.nama.om using the inquiry form found in the tender document (05) Five working days before bid submission date. - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
Tender Submission	Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER and supplier guidelines available at NESC Website www.supply.nama.om, under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of not less than Ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE, Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C. - The hard copy of the bid bond should be deposited in the Tender Box at the Nama Electricity Supply Company Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 10:00 AM on the day specified for bid submission or any extended deadline. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.
Terms and Conditions	- The Tender shall be valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - NESC is not bound to accept the lowest Tenderer. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization - NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.
Incentives and exemptions	- Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Tender fees - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from registration fees on business opportunities platform and supplier registration with Nama Group.



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ADVERTORIALS



The initiative aims at driving digital transformation efforts across Oman.

DIGITAL
AMBASSADORS
INITIATIVE
RECEIVES OVER 520
REGISTRATIONS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, through the National Program for Government Digital Transformation “Tahweel,” has successfully concluded the registration phase for the Governorates Ambassadors Initiative for Digital Transformation.

The initiative, aimed at driving digital transformation efforts across Oman, received over 520 registrations from citizens and residents eager to participate.

Eng. Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Kharousi, Director General of Digital Transformation and Sector Empowerment, highlighted the strong interest in the initiative.

A total of 66 ambassadors will be chosen from across Oman, categorized into three tiers: “Initiator,” with basic digital transformation knowledge; “Advanced,” with intermediate experience, and “Specialist,” possessing in-depth expertise and professional qualifications.

Selected ambassadors will receive comprehensive training to prepare them for their role in fostering digital literacy and helping communities adopt smart technologies and services, contributing to both improved quality of life and the growth of the digital economy.

A total of 66 ambassadors will be chosen from across Oman, categorized into three tiers: “Initiator,” with basic digital transformation knowledge; “Advanced,” with intermediate experience in areas like data analysis, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity; and “Specialist,” possessing in-depth expertise and professional qualifications.

These ambassadors will promote digital services, encourage the use of smart applications, and help integrate advanced technologies into everyday life.

After a thorough evaluation and interview process, the selected participants will undergo specialized training in digital content creation, smart applications, artificial intelligence, and other modern technologies.

This training aims to equip them with the skills necessary to lead Oman’s digital transformation and enhance the availability of digital services across the nation.

Experience versatility
and style with MG ZST

MG ZST, a compact crossover that embodies the perfect blend of contemporary design, exhilarating performance, and advanced technology.

Designed with British heritage and crafted to meet the needs of the modern driver, the MG ZST has quickly gained popularity in the Middle East for its dynamic character and exceptional value.

The MG ZST is built to turn heads with its bold new design that exudes confidence and style. Featuring a redesigned front end with a striking hexagonal grille in a sleek black finish, the MG ZST makes a statement on any road.

Slender headlamps with LED daytime running lights enhance visibility, while the sporty rear LED light clusters reflect the powerful ‘Dark Rider’ theme.

With black finishes on the side skirts and wheels, and 17-inch alloy wheels available in a range of eye-catching paint colours, the MG ZST stands out wherever it goes.

Step inside the MG ZST and experience a cabin that combines comfort with innovation. The luxurious interior boasts a re-freshed dashboard with intuitive controls, premium materials like carbon fibre, and textured leather accents.

The LUX variant offers a panoramic sunroof that fills the cabin with natural light, enhancing the sense of space and freedom. With room to seat five, a generous boot capacity, and an electrically adjustable driver’s seat, the MG ZST is designed to tackle life’s adventures in style.

Under the hood, the MG ZST offers a choice of two engines to suit your driving style. The energetic 1.3-liter Turbo engine delivers 160



The MG ZST is built to turn heads with its bold new design that exudes confidence and style.

For those who prioritise fuel economy, the 1.5-liter CVT engine offers 118 horsepower, 180 Nm of torque, and impressive efficiency at 16.5 km/l, making it a versatile choice for any journey

horsepower and 230 Nm of torque, providing a lively and responsive drive, while the 6-speed automatic gearbox ensures smooth acceleration from 0-100 km/h in just 9.8 seconds.

For those who prioritise fuel economy, the 1.5-litre CVT engine offers 118 horsepower, 180 Nm of torque, and impressive efficiency at 16.5 km/l, making it a versatile choice for any journey.

The MG ZST comes equipped with advanced technology that enhances your driving experience. A 10.1-inch HD touchscreen display with Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility ensures seamless connectivity with your smartphone apps. The 360-degree surround parking camera simplifies parking and manoeuvring, while four USB ports throughout the cabin keep everyone connected.

Standard features like cruise control, air conditioning, and keyless entry provide convenience for every adventure.

Safety is paramount in the MG

ZST, which offers state-of-the-art features to protect you and your passengers. The comprehensive safety suite includes driver, passenger, and curtain airbags, ISO-FIX anchor points for child seats, and active safety measures like auto-hold and a blind spot warning system. With these features, the MG ZST ensures that every journey is safe and secure.

Mohsin bin Hani al Bahrani, CEO, MHD ACERE remarked, “The MG ZST reflects our commitment to delivering vehicles that blend style, performance, and innovation, tailored for the modern driver.

Its dynamic design and cutting-edge technology make it a stand-out in the crossover segment, while the versatility it offers ensures an exceptional driving experience, whether in the city or on the open road. At MHD ACERE, we are proud to continue bringing such remarkable models to Oman, enhancing our customers’ journeys with world-class quality and reliability.”

NESTO GROUP EXPANDS INTO QATAR WITH NEW HYPERMARKET

DOHA: Nesto Group is thrilled to announce the signing of an agreement with The Commercial Avenue to establish its first hypermarket in Doha. This flagship store will span an impressive 180,000 square feet across two floors, offering customers an exceptional shopping experience with high-quality products at competitive prices.

The grand opening is scheduled for the second quarter of 2025.

The agreement was formalised by Sandeep Rajagopal, Head of Project & Infrastructure at Nesto Group, and Abdulla Abdulrazaqi Haidar, CEO of The Commercial Avenue.

The signing ceremony was attended by



distinguished dignitaries, including Fahad Abdullatif al Jahrami, Chairman of the Board

at The Commercial Avenue; Sharfuddeen MTK, Group Finance Controller; Rashid Aramam, Head of Buying; Muhammed Nizar, Executive Officer Projects from Nesto Group; along with Ahmed Tallat Elbanna, Head of Sales, and Nasser al Emadi, Property Manager from The Commercial Avenue.

With a substantial investment of 2 billion Qatari riyals, Nesto Group is poised to open a total of 10 hypermarkets in Qatar by 2026, with four projects currently in the pipeline. The group remains committed to enhancing the retail landscape across the GCC, delivering world-class shopping experiences to customers.

Own the Lincoln Navigator with unmatched luxury

MUSCAT: Discover the Lincoln Navigator — the ultimate luxury SUV designed for families seeking to elevate every journey with comfort and unforgettable memories.

Crafted with meticulous attention to detail, its expansive size and refined features make it a top choice for those who appreciate the finer things in life.

Beneath the hood, the Navigator roars to life with a twin-turbo 3.5L V6 engine, delivering an exhilarating 440 horsepower. Paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission and SelectShift paddle activation, it promises thrilling, smooth power on any adventure.

The Navigator stands out with its adaptive pixel projector LED headlamps, complete with signature lighting, predictive curve illumination, and sign-based lighting for

Beneath the hood, the Navigator roars to life with a twin-turbo 3.5L V6 engine, delivering an exhilarating 440 horsepower. Paired with a 10-speed automatic transmission and SelectShift paddle activation, it promises thrilling, smooth power on any adventure



optimal visibility.

Its elegant design is further highlighted by a panoramic vista roof with a power sunshade, and Lincoln Embrace technology, which includes LED-illuminated door handle

pockets, approach detection, a glowing star on the grille, and signature lighting that fades gracefully in and out.

Inside, the Navigator offers a sanctuary of relaxation. Enjoy the con-

venience of the 1st-row passenger seat memory, 3rd-row PowerFold 60/40 split bench with power recline, a 12-inch configurable LCD instrument cluster, and head-up display.

Ambient LED lighting, enhanced active noise control, and wireless charging ensure passengers experience the pinnacle of luxury and convenience.

For those who seek an immersive audio experience, the available Revel Ultima 3D system, with 28 speakers, is perfectly tuned to the Navigator’s acoustics.

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MAJD BRAND

OXY OMAN SIGNS
ICV INITIATIVES



Oxy Oman's ICV strategy is focused on developing a diverse local supply chain.

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 22

OXY Oman has signed three In-Country Value (ICV) contracts as part of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals ICV event. As part of the event, the ministry launched a unifying ICV brand called Majd, which will be used for ICV programmes and initiatives across the sector.

The launch event was held at the JW Marriott Muscat under the auspices of Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy. Steven Lauver, President and General Manager of Oxy Oman, attended with senior representatives of the company.

Oxy Oman took part in a signing ceremony for its ICV contracts:

1. Vendor Development Programme – Sakan Facility Management SAOC, for the provision of maintenance and repair services for Oxy Oman camp areas, offices and facilities.
2. Vendor Development Programme – Aman the First LLC, for services in measuring emissions from process equipment through the Leak Detection and Repair (LDAR) programme.
3. Local Manufacturing Opportunity – Duqm Hongtong Pipes LLC (DHTP), for the supply of Reinforced Thermoplastic Pipes (RTP).

DHTP has invested in building a facility in Duqm, demonstrating Oxy Oman's support for local growth and capabilities.

“We are proud to be part of this important milestone in advancing Oman's In-Country Value initiatives through the newly introduced Majd identity,” said Lauver.

“Oxy Oman's ICV strategy is focused on developing a diverse local supply chain, enhancing local technical capabilities and supporting Omani businesses. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and other stakeholders to further contribute to Oman's growing economy.”

This sponsorship falls under Oxy Oman's umbrella of strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders, and is part of Oxy Oman's endeavour and long-term commitment to support programmes that enhance economic growth and sustainable development and that yield positive impacts in the neighbouring communities.

OLNG weighs solar PV,
carbon capture projects

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 22

A DECARBONISATION strategy unveiled by Oman LNG envisions plans for, among other initiatives, the development of solar PV capacity, battery energy storage, carbon capture and storage, and electrification of elements of the 3-train liquefaction plant at Qalhat.

The strategy, set out in the company's Sustainability Report for 2023, comes against a backdrop of significant developments at the majority state-owned energy company, particularly as it commences a new 10-year extension phase starting from 2025.

Under a new mandate granted by its shareholders and the Omani government last October, Oman LNG will keep operating for a further 10 years from 2025 to 2034, while Qalhat LNG gets an additional lease of life beyond 2026 until 2029.

Overseeing the delivery of Oman LNG's strategy to reduce its carbon footprint is a new Decarbonisation and New Energies Department tasked with identifying and progressing GHG reduction and net-zero opportunities, including decarbonisation projects.

“It also oversees the operationalisation of Oman LNG's net-zero emissions strategy, with a focus on adopting new compliance standards and exploring new energy solutions, carbon pricing and carbon credits, including local and global mandates,” it noted.

Significantly, a number of initiatives are currently being evaluated in support of Oman LNG's decarbonisation goals.

It includes a proposal for the installation of solar PV cells in all open areas for the generation of renewable electricity.

This will enable the partial shutdown of one of its gas engines during the daytime.

Furthermore, by investing in a battery energy storage system (BESS) as a contingency option, the opportunity to operate fewer gas engines at higher loading – in the event of a sudden engine loss or trip – is being studied as well.

Additionally, carbon capture and stor-



A raft of initiatives is currently being assessed to help advance Oman LNG's decarbonisation goals.

age opportunities linked to Oman LNG's operations are being explored, according to the company. One option being weighed – dubbed the Partial CO2 Export option – centres on a proposal to export CO2 in feed gas from the Acid Gas Removal Unit to industries in Sur Industrial City.

The CO2 is presently despatched to the high-temperature furnace.

However, under a Full CO2 Export option, Oman LNG is studying Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) opportunities whereby pre-combustion CO2 from the Acid Gas Removal Unit

is captured and sent to upstream wells for storage.

At the same time, Oman LNG is backing a study into the feasibility of establishing a Hydrogen Hub in Sur in collaboration with National Hydrogen Alliance (Hy-Fly).

“The study will explore the potential capture of CO2 and utilisation for new business development such as urea, green ammonia and synthetic natural gas via methanation or e-methanol production opportunities.

“We have also initiated a feasibility study with Muscat University to explore the production of synthetic natural gas via methanation, considering CO2 from Acid Gas Removal,” Oman LNG said.

Likewise, the company is examining the potential of recovering hydrocarbons during various flaring scenarios with the intent to reprocess or consume the calorific value of the flaring streams, it added.

MSX TO
LAUNCH
PROMISING
COMPANIES
MARKET

FROM PAGE 13
He explained that the FSA role is supervisory, and efforts have been made to meet the requirements of becoming an emerging market.

Most of these requirements are now in place, with a focus on market capitalisation in the near future. This year, the “Promising Companies Market” will be launched, with pri-

ority given to usufruct rights and tax reductions to enable companies to meet lighter disclosure requirements. Family businesses are invited to enter this market.

Mustafa Salman, CEO of United Securities, stressed the need to enable brokerage firms to grow in order to support the MSX.

He pointed out that the

limited number of these firms does not help expand their role or enhance their ability to provide better services to investors in line with the current phase of the Sultanate of Oman's renewed renaissance.

He added that financing in the stock sector is very weak and does not serve the goals and ambitions of the capital market.

Oman has all the essential components of blue economy

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

THE Sultanate of Oman has all key components of establishing a strong blue economy, according to remarks from Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Maawali, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Economy.

During a panel discussion highlighting investment within the blue economy during the Fifth Duqm Forum earlier this week, Al Maawali shared the following remarks, “Oman has all the components necessary to develop the blue economy. The Sultanate of Oman has a coastline that extends 3,653 kilometres, and it possesses 293 islands.

“Furthermore, Oman is situated on three main seas: the Sea of Oman, the Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf, which opens it up to the external world and qualifies it for the blue economy.”

According to the under-secretary the Sultanate of Oman currently



In terms of economic diversification, the blue economy is one of the pillars for diversification in the Sultanate of Oman

DR NASSER
BIN RASHID AL
MAAWALI
Under-Secretary,
Ministry of Economy



The Sultanate of Oman has a coastline that extends 3,653 kilometres with 293 islands.

views the blue economy as a key driver of economic diversification.

“In terms of economic diversification, the blue economy is one of the pillars for diversification in the Sultanate of Oman. Today, the general budget allocated for blue economy activities in Oman is RO 1.6 billion.”

Additionally, the under-secretary highlighted the significance of the blue economy in terms of size and sustainability, “The World Bank estimates that the blue economy

will reach \$3 trillion by 2030, while it currently stands at \$1.5 trillion today.”

Adding, “The blue economy arose due to the shortcomings of traditional economies, like the brown and grey economies. With economic development and increasing complexity, the need for sustainable economies became apparent. The blue economy, in simple terms, is truly a comprehensive life economy, and it represents a path to sustain-

ability.

“Why? Because the blue economy intersects three main aspects: the economic, social and environmental dimensions, forming the core of economies where these three sectors intersect.”

Additionally he shed light on the expansion of the economy which now includes new activities, “The concept of the blue economy in reality, and its economic dimension, is not new. What is new is the expansion of the blue economy to include areas previously not considered, such as oil and gas extraction from the seas, marine mining and marine energy. These are new areas that did not exist before.”

According to the under-secretary, some investment opportunities within the blue economy in Oman include the use of green energy in maritime transport, oil and gas exploration and the issuance of blue bonds to finance projects amongst many.

OPINION

UK tech faces talent exodus if hit with tax hikes



ANDY JALIL

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

CHANCELLOR Rachel Reeves’ first Budget will prioritise economic growth and wealth creation Prime Minister Kier Starmer has pledged. But moves to hike taxes that will hurt Britain’s entrepreneurs are putting that promise in doubt. As British businessman Sir Martin Sorrell warned: “Increasing capital gains tax (CGT), especially without index-linking or time apportionment will drive entrepreneurs and business owners out of the UK.” This sentiment is widely held among British tech leaders. Lewis Liu, chief executive of Eigen, recently bought by Sirion Labs, fears a CGT hike could cripple the UK’s tech ecosystem. “The best entrepreneurs have options globally, and with higher valuations in the US, the UK needs to remain competitive. A CGT hike could push talent elsewhere, and that’s a risk we can’t afford,” he explained. He also called for an overhaul of the “broken” R&D (Research and Development) tax credits system, more support for scaling businesses and an expansion of government SEIS (Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme – designed to help small early-stage companies to raise equity finance by offering a range of tax relief to individual investors who purchase new shares) and EIS (Enterprise Investment

Scheme) that encourage private investors to invest in small businesses. The UK’s tech industry could face an exodus of both talent and investment if founders are penalised by tax hikes. Early exits are already common, with many opting to sell rather than grow into global giants. Major firms like ARM and Flutter Entertainment PLC have already deserted the UK in search of better places to publicly list. A harsher CGT regime could accelerate this trend, shrinking the UK’s potential for homegrown tech giants. Similarly, tech and media analyst Alex DeGroot warned that a material CGT rise, combined with the potential scrapping of inheritance tax exemptions, will have “a very negative impact on UK markets and tech investment, at a time when AI is the best theme in investment globally. AI firms are also sounding the alarm ahead of the Budget. The sector, which has seen explosive growth globally, needs a supportive fiscal environment for the UK to maintain its competitive edge. Anssi Ruokonen, director of AI research at software firm Basware, hopes the budget will outline clear guidelines around AI, especially in financial services. “The budget should promote collaboration between regulators, industry, and AI experts to oversee the development of AI

The UK’s tech industry could face an exodus of both talent and investment if founders are penalised by tax hikes

best practices and standards for implementation,” he said. And Stuart Munton, chief of operations and technology at And Digital, has called for a Budget that re-energises the UK’s AI push. “The UK has already invested a lot into AI, so it’s important that doesn’t stop,” he said, adding that training and education should form a “core part of AI policies” to maximise its real term benefits in the workplace. With just days to go before she takes to the despatch box, UK tech leaders are making an eleventh hour bid to influence Labour’s plans. But will Rachel Reeves listen? Labour’s hand’s appear to be tied by the state of public finances, with tax rises seemingly inevitable. The October Budget promises to be “painful,” Starmer has warned, and things may “get worse before they get better”. If his words are anything to go by, this could be an uphill battle for the UK’s tech sector. Anything with a price tag is almost certainly off the table. But the tech sector is increasingly linked to the UK’s economic future, adding over £150 billion to the economy every year. If Labour is serious about economic growth, it should not implement policies that will harm this industry.

IN S AFRICA, WATER SHORTAGES ARE THE NEW REALITY

JOYCE Lakela runs a nursery in Tembisa, a Johannesburg township, but these days she spends most of her time trying to find water. “It’s been going on for five days,” she said, lamenting shortages affecting South Africa’s largest city where temperatures are rising with the beginning of summer. “This is a big challenge,” the elderly woman said, after filling up a large bin with water from a tanker. “The kids have to wash their hands, we have to flush the toilets, and we also have to wash the kids.” The crisis is the result of daily restrictions imposed by the city to stop what they say is over-consumption and to allow maintenance work. While there is enough water in the country’s reserves, for individuals like Lakela, who already faced months of electricity shortages last year, the reality is that taps are going dry for hours and sometimes days.

Last week, residents of Westbury and Westdene, suburbs to the west of the central business district, blocked the streets in protest against water outages. They burned tyres and blocked a road with rocks and debris. Businesses and services have also been affected, including at least one

hospital in northern Gauteng, the province of 16 million people which includes Johannesburg and the capital, Pretoria. This comes after Rand Water, the water supplier for Gauteng, this month warned over high water consumption and instructed municipalities to impose daily limits. “Water storage could soon be depleted if municipalities do not implement our recommendations. It is essential to act now to prevent the impending disaster,” Rand Water said. The water company is not just worried about consumers leaving taps on. There are also leaks and “illegal connections”, or theft by individuals who divert pipelines and do not pay bills. “We are losing an average of over 40 per cent (of our water) if you look at it in Gauteng,” Makenosi Marooa a spokeswoman for the utility said. Leaks are often cited by the municipalities as a reason for maintenance-related outages. “We’re not replacing anywhere near as much infrastructure as we should be,” said Craig Sheridan, director of the Centre in Water Research and Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. For Chris Herold, another water expert, “one of the main problems is that they (the municipalities) are incompetently run, and there’s also a lot of corruption which is hindering the efficient running of water systems.” — **AFP**



PATRICK BOLTON

The author is Professor of Finance at Imperial College London and Senior Adviser to the Lazard Climate Centre.



A woman checks a piece of cloth at a thrift shop in Beijing. — Reuters

ABOUT two years ago, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, China’s economy hit a roadblock. As all sectors underwent deleveraging, economic growth slowed, household savings rates increased, and businesses scaled back their investments and accumulated savings. Many now wonder whether consumers and companies are stuck in a self-reinforcing cycle of declining spending and falling prices, which would have the pernicious effect of increasing the real value of debt. For a long time, the government did not move forcefully to counter these trends. On the contrary, as falling property prices and stalling land sales, together with slower growth, squeezed local governments’ budgets, the central government maintained a prudent fiscal stance. Now, China is teetering on the edge of a deflationary trap: the consumer price index has been hovering near zero for 16 months, and the producer price index has been in negative territory for 24 months. Japan remained ensnared in such a trap for three decades. Economic growth, inflation, and interest rates stagnated around zero, resulting in a long-term relative decline in GDP per

capita, from a peak of 150% of the level in the United States in 1995 to just 41% of the US level in 2023. With China potentially on a similar trajectory – in 2021-23, its GDP fell from 76% of the US level to 67%, and today, its GDP per capita is only 15% of the US level – how to avoid Japan’s fate has become an urgent question. Answering it requires, first, changing the way we think about money. The conventional macroeconomic wisdom is that central banks and governments manage price and liquidity pressures through interest rates and fiscal policy. But if we recognise that money is, ultimately, a country’s equity capital, money issuance can – and should – be thought of in similar terms to equity issuance. And as equity issuers, central banks can play an important role in stabilising financial markets, recapitalising banks, and avoiding a liquidity trap. Just as a company might issue equity to recapitalise or fund productive capital expenditures, a central bank can issue money to retire debt and boost financing of investment, thereby reducing leverage across the economy and countering deflationary forces. (Conversely, when an

economy is overheating, and inflation is rising, policymakers can shrink the monetary base, much as corporations repurchase stock to increase share value.) Moreover, if banks are lending less because they have accumulated too many non-performing loans (NPLs), the central bank can recapitalise them through debt-equity swaps, with banks exchanging their liabilities (debt) for money (equity) from the central bank. At the same time, central banks can support an asset-relief programme involving the removal of NPLs from banks’ balance sheets. This way of thinking about money should inform China’s effort to fight deflation. Fortunately, the government’s newly announced stimulus package suggests that this may well be happening. Some of its features are conventional. For example, the People’s Bank of China (PBOC) has lowered its key policy rate – the seven-day reverse repo rate – 20 basis points, from 1.7% to 1.5%. This will drive the medium-term lending-facility rate down by about 30 basis points. The loan-market quotation rate and the deposit rate will probably also be lowered, most likely by 20-25 basis points. Moreover, the PBOC is encouraging commercial banks to lower their mortgage interest rates to align more closely with the rate for newly issued loans – an average reduction of about 0.5 percentage points. The stimulus also includes a 0.5 percentage point reduction in financial institutions’ mandatory reserve ratio, which frees up about CN¥1 trillion (\$140 billion) in long-term liquidity. But China’s stimulus programme also includes two new PBOC tools, designed to support the capital market. The first is a swap facility – initially valued at CN¥500 billion, though it will probably be expanded – to make it easier for securities firms, fund companies, and insurers to finance stock purchases. The second is the provision of up to CN¥300 billion (to start) in cheap loans to commercial banks, to be used to help other entities increase their share purchases and buybacks. With these policies, the PBOC is effectively issuing equity to stabilise prices and asset values, thereby reducing economy-wide leverage. © **Project Syndicate, 2024**

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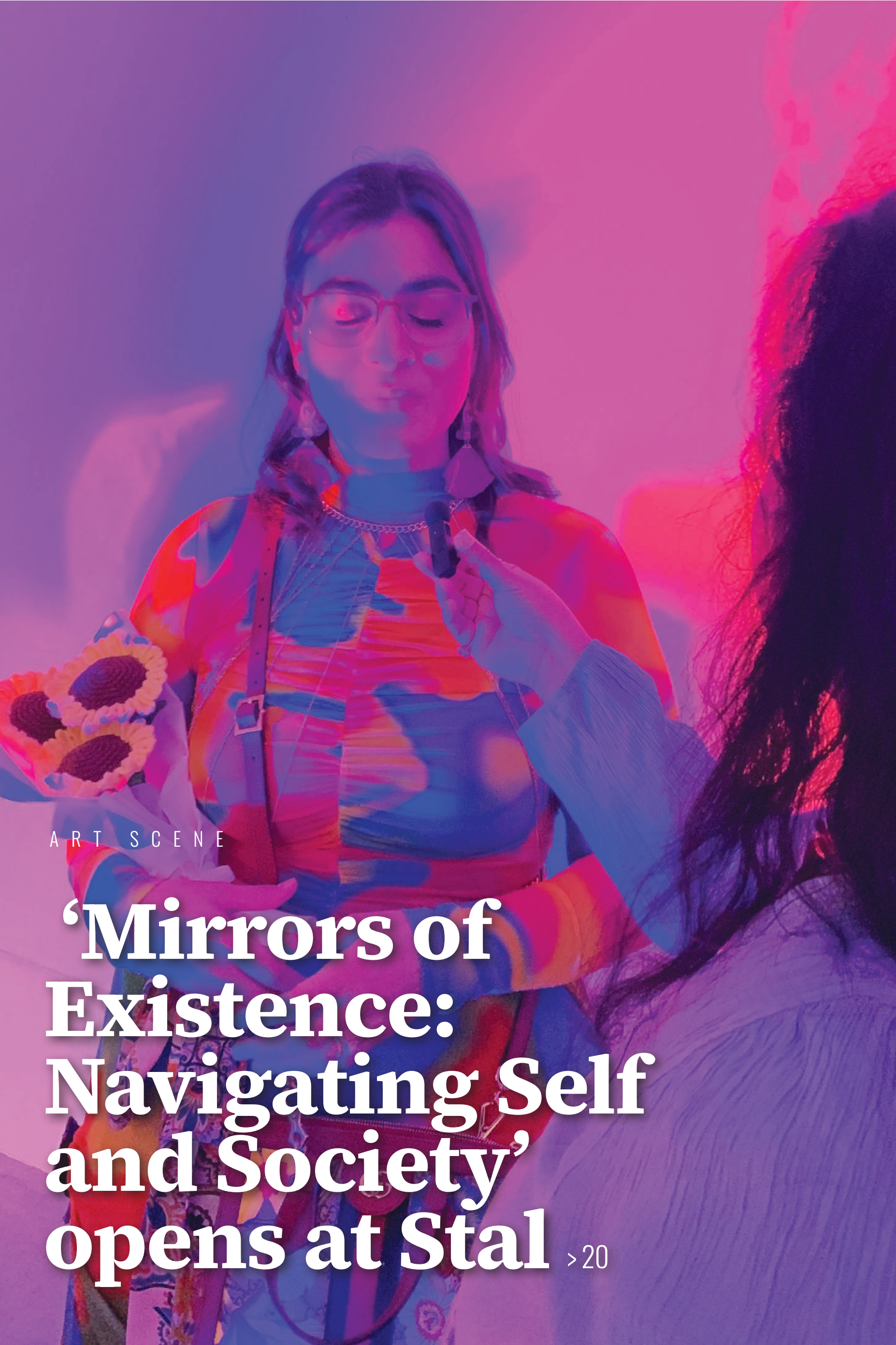
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ART/LIFE



ART SCENE

‘Mirrors of Existence: Navigating Self and Society’ opens at Stal >20

AT THE MUSEUM

Restored ‘Apollo Belvedere’ marble back on show in the Vatican



The Vatican Museums on Tuesday unveiled the restoration of the celebrated second-century “Apollo Belvedere” sculpture following five years of work.

Once considered to epitomise classical Western ideals of beauty, the 2.24-metre-high (seven-foot-tall) marble statue shows the Greek god of medicine and poetry in motion, his left arm having just let fly an arrow from his bow.

Its around 260,000-euro (\$280,000) restoration aimed to fix serious structural defects detected late in 2019, the restorers said.

Those notably included fragilities in the legs and an overall lack of balance in the structure, they told a press conference.

Thanks to the introduction of a carbon-fibre rod fixed to the back of the base, the “Apollo Belvedere” was successfully stabilised and presented to public at the Vatican’s Pio-Clementine Museum.

The most difficult thing was “not to touch any-



thing on the sculpture” and avoid having to move and dismantle it, the restoration workshop’s head Guy Devreux said.

“We found this new system, which is a dynamic structural system based on the use of carbon fibre... and which, used in the right way, can give extraordinary results,” he added.

For the Vatican Museums’ director Barbara Jatta, “the main challenge was to have the courage to close access to such an important icon for our museums”.

Discovered in 1489 among the ruins of an ancient Roman house, the “Apollo Belvedere” was brought to the Vatican by Pope Julius II.

Besides the carbon-fibre rod, the restorers also replaced the statue’s left hand with a cast taken from a fragment of a plaster copy of the original Greek statue made in Roman times.

The “Apollo Belvedere” is in fact considered to be a marble copy of a bronze from around 330 BC attributed to Leochares, one of the foremost sculptors of his time. — AFP

QUICK FEATURES



LIFESTYLE

Captains sail their pirate-like boats made of giant pumpkin down the Piscataquog River during the Giant Pumpkin Weigh-off and Regatta in Goffstown, New Hampshire. — AFP



GASTRONOMY

Michelin-starred French chef Thierry Marx teaches to French Delegate Minister for Tourism Economy how to prepare bread, during her visit to Cuisines Modes d’Emploi(s) school, which offers training in cookery, bakery and restaurant service for unemployed people, in Paris. — AFP



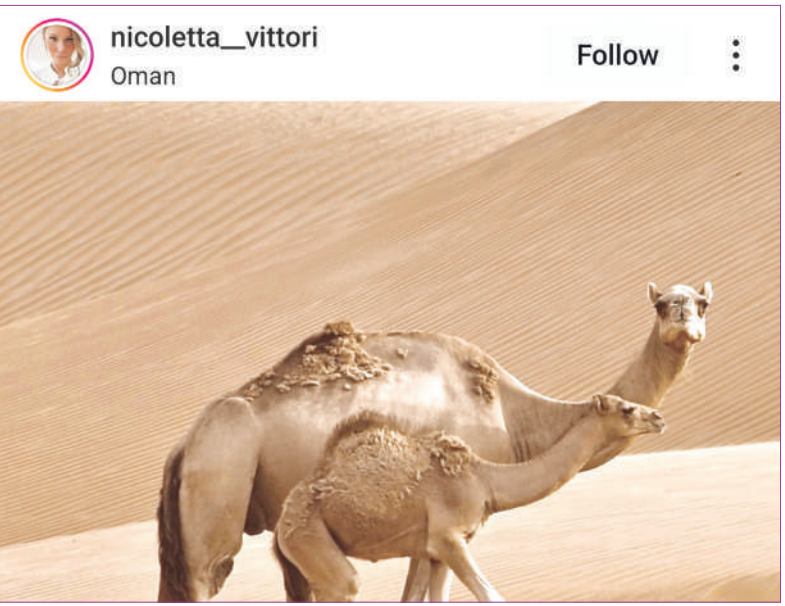
CONSERVATION

London Zoo’s giant Galapagos tortoise Priscilla is inspected by zoo keeper Jamie Mitchell as part of a new course of weight training to mark World Reptile Day, in London. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



The Flower Harvest

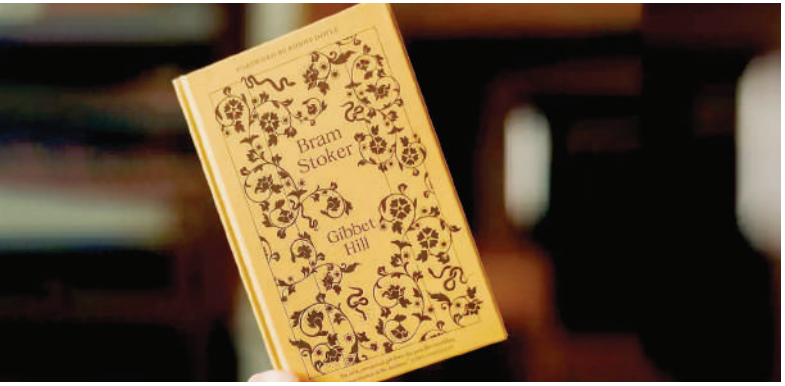


A Moment in the Desert

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Lost ghost story by ‘Dracula’ author Bram Stoker unearthed in Dublin



A short story by Bram Stoker, the legendary author of “Dracula”, has been unearthed by a lifelong enthusiast in Dublin who stumbled upon the work while browsing in a library archive.

Titled “Gibbet Hill”, the story was uncovered by Brian Cleary in a Christmas supplement of the Dublin edition of the Daily Mail newspaper from 1890 and had remained undocumented for more than 130 years.

The rare find, which has never been referenced in any Stoker bibliography or biography, is now being brought to the public for the first time at an exhibition in the Irish capital.

“Dracula”, the Gothic, mysterious and supernatural vampire novel from 1897 may have been set in Transylvania and England but its author, Stoker, was a Dubliner.

“I read ‘Dracula’ as a child and it stuck with me, I read everything from and about Stoker that I could get my hands on,” said Cleary, 44, a writer and amateur historian

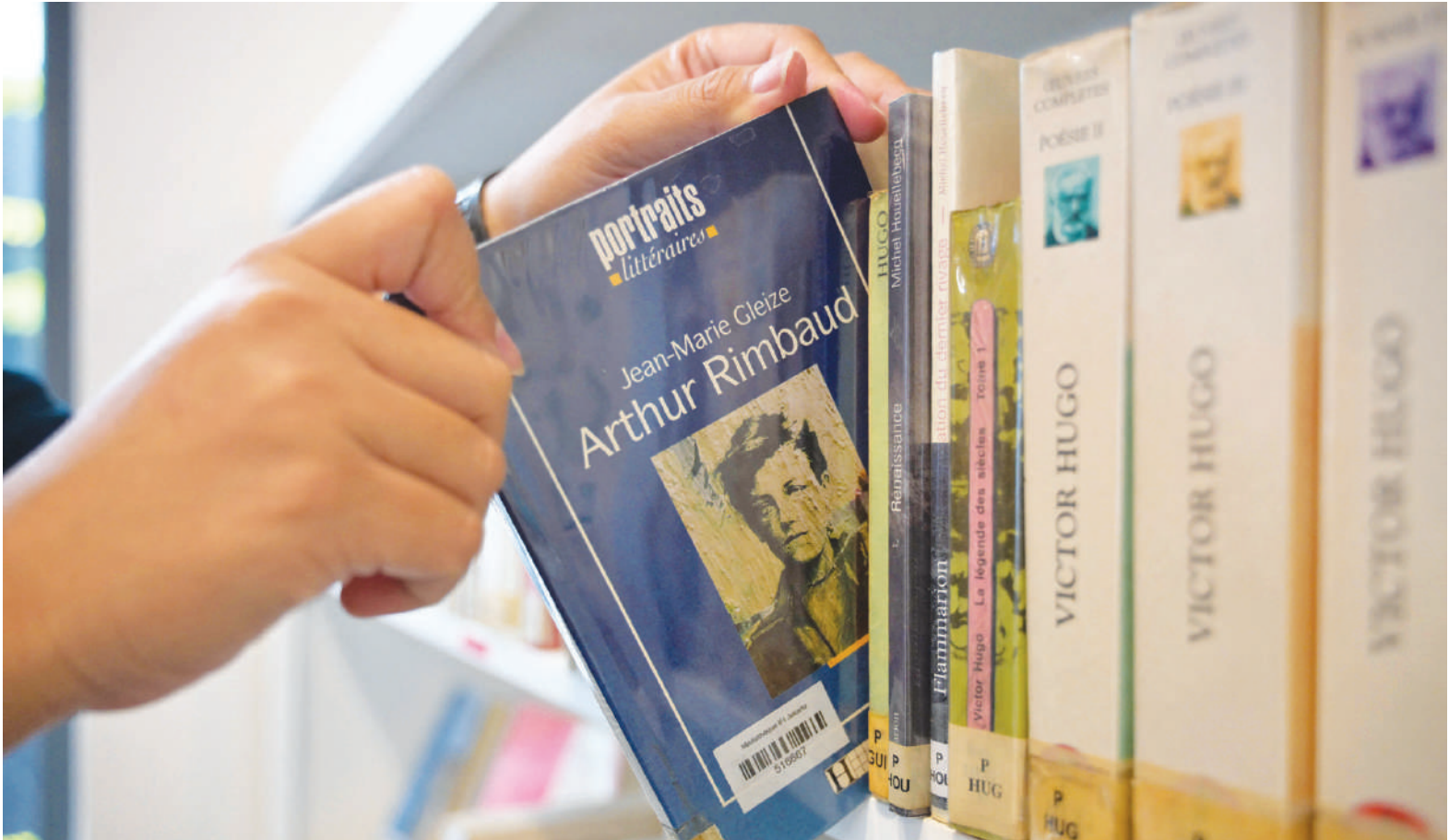
who lives in the Marino neighbourhood of Dublin where the author grew up.

Thanks to “Dracula”, Stoker “had a massive impact on popular culture, but is under-appreciated”, Cleary said in the Casino at Marino, an opulent 18th-century building near the writer’s birthplace that is hosting the exhibition.

Cleary’s journey of discovery began in 2021 when a sudden onset of deafness changed his life. While on leave to retrain his hearing after having cochlear implant surgery, Cleary visited the National Library of Ireland to indulge his interest in historical literature and the works of Stoker.

There, in October 2023, he chanced upon the hidden literary gem, the “Gibbet Hill” story which he had never heard of before.

Cleary did extensive literary searches to verify the find and consulted Stoker expert and biographer Paul Murray who confirmed the story was unknown, lost and buried in the archives for more than 130 years. —AFP



In Indonesia, French poet Rimbaud’s voyage still a mystery

IN THE summer of 1876, rebel French poet Arthur Rimbaud arrived on the Indonesian island of Java, enlisting in the colonial Dutch army before deserting after just two weeks, an escape still shrouded in mystery nearly 150 years later.

Today in Java’s Salatiga city, where coffee trees and bougainvilleas bloom, only a plaque at the entrance of the mayor’s residence recognises the fleeting passage of a man who inspired writers from James Joyce to Jim Morrison.

Such has been the influence of the poet, regarded as one of France’s best, that the Indonesian education and culture ministry is considering paying tribute to his Javan journey with a memorial trail.

“I believe nearly every Indonesian poet who sees poetry as an expression of the subconscious and a manifestation of surrealism has read Arthur Rimbaud at least once in their life,” said Salatiga-born writer Triyanto Triwikromo.

In the poem “Bad Blood” from an 1873 collection, Rimbaud wrote: “My daytime is done; I am leaving Europe. The air of the sea will burn my lungs; lost climates will turn my skin to leather.”

The poet — whose French hometown will celebrate his 170th birthday on October 20 — had imagined in another collection leaving for “peppery, soggy countries” and “archipelagos of stars”.

He arrived in Batavia, a noisy port that served as the Dutch East Indies capital now known as Jakarta, on July 23, 1876 after signing up for six years in the colonial Dutch army, according to biographers.

Rimbaud then set sail again for Java’s Semarang city, more than 400 kilometres away, before boarding a colonial rail network built to ferry troops and spices.

He left with fellow recruits, including some French compatriots, southward to Ambarawa town,



according to Jamie James, author of 2011’s “Rimbaud in Java: the Lost Voyage”.

SOLES OF WIND

Ambarawa station is now disused and houses a railway museum, but it offers tourists steam train connections to another disused station, Tuntang, from which Rimbaud once walked the last 10 kilometres to Salatiga.

“I’ve never heard of Rimbaud,” said Okta, a tour guide who like many Indonesians uses one name, before climbing aboard an old wooden carriage. But “it’s a fascinating story that we should tell to our visitors”, she added, saying 100,000 tourists come annually, 30 per cent of them foreigners.

On August 15, 1876 the author of the anti-military poem “The Sleeper in the Valley” fled his barracks before being sent off to battle in Aceh, on Sumatra island.

Authorities are now planning a memorial trail tying in with the plaque that states Rimbaud “stayed

in Salatiga from August 2 to 15, 1876”. “We are open to any initiative to highlight Rimbaud’s time in Java,” Hilmar Farid, a director-general at the education and culture ministry, said. Sri Sarwanti, head of Salatiga’s library and archives office, said they wanted to “strengthen and remind people of what Arthur Rimbaud has brought to our region”. Leaving Salatiga, a town of 1,000 at the time, compared with around 200,000 today, perhaps the poet laid low in a hut at the foot of the Merbabu volcano, taking a stab at the pastoral life he imagined in “Bad Blood”.

“To swim, trample the grass, hunt, above all smoke: drink hard liquors like boiling metals — as those dear ancestors did round the fire,” he wrote. But the final weeks in Indonesia for the poet — who died in Marseille at 37 — remain a mystery. After deserting his post, it is only known that Rimbaud set sail for Europe, later arriving in Cyprus, before moving on to Yemen and Ethiopia. —AFP

Collectively, these artists invite viewers to embark on an introspective journey through their work, sparking conversations on identity, memory and the intricate tapestry of human experience.



‘Mirrors of Existence: Navigating Self and Society’ opens at Stal Gallery

BY LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

THE STAL Gallery and Studio has launched its latest exhibition, “Young Emerging 2024”, featuring the thought-provoking collection titled “Mirrors of Existence: Navigating Self and Society”. This exhibition brings together a group of women artists, each offering their distinct perspectives on themes of personal significance.

Among the featured artists are Hajer al Harrasi, Noora Obaid al Hamdilulah, Maryam al Alawi, Eman al Dari, Rehab al Ghazi and Fatma al Balushi. They are joined by guest artists Bashair al Balushi, Kawthar al Harthi, Huria al Harrasi and Khadija al Maamari.

Omani visual artist Eman al Dari seeks to provoke contemplation through her installation “Summer Harvest”, which incorporates a sculpture with dry date fruits. She draws parallels between life’s experiences and the natural maturation of the fruit, asserting, “Every experience we encounter weaves into the tapestry of our lives, teaching and moulding us.” She further elaborates that her personal journey through pain, joy and loss has cultivated essential seeds of maturity within her.

Bashair al Balushi, a multifaceted artist and interior designer, expresses her fascination with Omani folklore and modern architecture. A graduate of the Scientific College of Design in Muscat, she delves into the cultural significance of traditional amulets. Once used as protective charms, these amulets now serve as poignant reminders of the values imparted by mothers and grandmothers. “These necklaces are no longer utilised,” she notes, “but the lessons and strengths they symbolise continue to resonate in our lives.”

Hajer al Harrasi, who holds a Master’s degree in Fine Arts from Sultan Qaboos University, conveys her artistic vision through sculpture and installation. Her piece titled “The Cemetery of Oblivion” features sculpted heads with seedlings sprouting beneath them, embodying the concept of growth amid the desire to forget. “When we look at this cemetery, we see new plants growing, symbolising growth and hope,” she explains.

Kawthar al Harthi, an Omani artist specialising in collage and mixed media, reflects on the interconnectedness of memory and place in her project, “Memory of a Palm Tree”. This installation re-explores the aesthetics of the palm tree and evokes shared cultural memories. “These branches symbolise the beginnings of formation, much like the early memories of our lives,” she describes.

Meanwhile, Shahad al Hamdi, known as Shahad The Artist, defies traditional artistic boundaries, embracing multiple mediums to express her evolving identity. Her work employs vibrant colours and dynamic light to explore the dualities of human nature. “This artwork delves into the complexities of the psyche,” she states, drawing inspiration from Carl Jung’s theories on dreams and the unconscious.

Collectively, these artists invite viewers to embark on an introspective journey through their work, sparking conversations on identity, memory and the intricate tapestry of

human experience. The exhibition promises to engage and inspire audiences, highlighting the diverse narratives that shape contemporary Omani art.

As visitors enter the Stal Gallery, they are greeted by an atmosphere ripe with creativity and introspection. The walls are adorned with vibrant pieces that showcase the multifaceted experiences of the artists, each one drawing the audience deeper into their individual narratives.

Upon gazing at Eman al Dari’s “Summer Harvest”, attendees are encouraged to ponder the passage of time and the significance of their own lived experiences. The installation serves as a tactile reminder of the nurturing power of patience and reflection mirrored in the process of natural growth. Visitors find themselves sharing personal stories, spurred on by the art’s capacity to resonate on a deeply personal level.

Bashair al Balushi’s amulet-themed works spark conversations about Omani culture and heritage, prompting many to reminisce about their childhoods and the traditions passed down through generations. Her artistic reinterpretation of what once held protective significance becomes a bridge connecting past and present, illuminating the evolving roles of cultural symbols in contemporary society.

In front of Hajer al Harrasi’s “The Cemetery of Oblivion”, onlookers find themselves contemplating the duality of memory and oblivion, realising that the desire to forget is often accompanied by the potential for rebirth and growth. The heads sprouting seedlings prompt discussions on resilience and the natural cycle of life, encouraging visitors to examine the memories that shape their own identities.

Kawthar al Harthi’s installation captivates the audience as they explore the intricate relationship between memory and the landscape of their childhood. Her evocation of shared historical symbols inspires intimate exchanges among community members, as they reminisce about their connections to the palm tree — a staple of Omani life.

Shahad al Hamdi’s luminous sculptures, infused with colourful lights, enthrall viewers as they decipher the interplay of light and shadow. Drawing on Jungian concepts, her work invites a dialogue about the complexities of human emotions and the hidden aspects of identity. As attendees engage with her installations, they discover a shared language through colour, connecting through the emotions that art elicits.

Throughout the exhibition, feedback and interactions flow freely, creating a dynamic environment where stories merge and new meanings emerge. Attendees leave the gallery with an enriched understanding of both their own lives and the intricate tapestry of experiences depicted through the artists’ work.

By the end of the exhibition, a community is forged around the shared narratives and reflections inspired by the art. The event not only showcases emerging talent, but also ignites conversations about identity, resilience and the intertwined nature of personal histories. In the heart of Muscat, the Stal Gallery and Studio becomes a sanctuary of creativity where women artists navigate themselves and society.

