

Khareef Salalah: A festival for all

Dhofar is experiencing one of the best Khareef seasons in terms of weather and return of the tourists after the pandemic. The festival this year has been providing opportunities for the youth. However the weather and the rain has also brought in concerns of safety for the authorities where they briefly had to close access and reopened Wadi Darbat, one of the favourite destinations for tourists visiting Dhofar any time of the year, especially during monsoon. **DETAILS ON P3**



P12

LIVERPOOL STUMBLE, SPURS SHINE ON OPENING WEEKEND



P15

OMAN'S FIRST ROOFTOP SOLAR PV I-REC REGISTRATION ANNOUNCED



P18

SAUDI EXHIBIT OFFERS IMMERSIVE LOOK AT PROPHET'S HIJRAH TREK



MUSCAT

US ENVOY HAILS OMAN'S ROLE

Tim Lenderking, the US Special Envoy to Yemen, has said that the Omani government, led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, played a significant role in obtaining global consensus towards a decision to extend the truce in Yemen for an additional two months. Lenderking said in a telephonic press briefing that the Sultanate of Oman played a pivotal role in this file and that Oman works in close coordination with the United States and other parties concerned to resolve the Yemeni crisis. **SEE P2**

MAJOR DECLINE IN ROAD ACCIDENTS

A total of 1,539 accidents were reported in the Sultanate of Oman in 2021, according to the National Centre of Statistics and Information (NCSI). Extended lockdowns and travel restrictions as part of the Covid-19 restrictions might have helped road accidents to come down from 2,815 in 2019 to 2,442 in 2020 and 1,539 in 2021. As per the annual statistics for 2022, collisions between vehicles was the main cause of accidents (633), followed by hitting fixed objects (308) and run over (297). **SEE P3**

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INSIDE



UKRAINE SAYS PARTS OF N-PLANT 'SERIOUSLY HIT' | P5



ISRAEL POUNDS GAZA IN ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE | P6

HIS MAJESTY RETURNS HOME



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik returned home on Friday, after paying a private visit to the United Kingdom, said a statement issued by the Diwan of Royal Court. — ONA

Services restored in South Al Batinah

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

Almost 95 per cent of the roads affected by the weather conditions in South Al Batinah have been restored. Electricity, water, sewage, communications, fuel and waste services management are fully restored.

Shaikh Dr Mansoor bin Talib al Hinai, Chairman of the Services Regulatory Authority, Head of the Basic Services Sector of the National Emergency Management Committee, during a field visit to the affected areas in the wilayats of Al Rustaq and Al Awabi in South Al Batinah Governorate, was briefed on the progress of the sector's work and the efforts made by the technical teams to restore services to the areas affected.

The completion rate of the affected asphalt roads has reached more than 95 per cent and work is underway to reopen a number of dirt roads affected by a number of mountainous areas.

Heavy rains were recorded in most of the wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman, which led to

overflowing of valleys affecting private and public properties last week. The wilayats most affected were Al Awabi and Al Rustaq.

The officials followed up efforts undertaken to restore basic services disrupted during the rains and wadi floods.

The visit covered the villages of Wadi Bani Kharous in the Wilayat of Al Awabi and Wadi Bani Auf, Al Ghashab and Al Lateekha in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq.

Preliminary assessments indicate that 100 houses underwent damages in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq, Governorate of South Al Batinah, and that most of the impacts occurred to the buildings' infrastructure.

The impacts also included power and water disconnections and that contacts were made with specialists to get the services restored as soon as possible. Roads were opened and traffic flow was facilitated.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology opened alternative roads for the impacted areas to ensure smooth flow of traffic.

Oman sets standards for hydrogen vehicles

MOVE IN LINE WITH HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN'S DRIVE TO DEVELOP THE HYDROGEN SECTOR

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

In line with Oman Vision 2040's energy objectives and the recent Royal directives by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to grow the green hydrogen sector in the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) has issued specification standards for hydrogen-fueled vehicles. These performance requirements related to safety requirements that reduce impact of accidents.

Nadia bint Mohammed al Siyabiyah, Director of the Specifications Department, MoCIIP, said that the preparation of this standard is part of the government's efforts to encourage and support sustainable clean energy.

The standards are based on the global regulation of hydrogen vehicles issued by the World Forum for Harmonisation of



In a cabinet meeting held in March, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik had directed the government to drive ahead the development of the hydrogen sector in Oman.

Vehicle Regulations in joint coordination between the major industrialised countries.

Al Siyabiyah said hydrogen vehicle contains three basic systems; the hydrogen supply and storage system, the fuel cell system, and the electric propulsion system.

In a cabinet meeting held

in March, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik had directed the government to drive ahead the development of the hydrogen sector in Oman. It will help to develop the policy and legal framework, and more detailed regulations, which are essential to support the growth of green hydrogen in Oman. **TURN TO P3**



BREATHTAKING TANUF

Tanuf is situated between Nizwa and Bahla in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah. After the recent rains, the wadi is frequented by people for swimming and visiting the historical ruins of the village set against the backdrop of the Western side of Al Hajar Mountains. **SEE ALSO P4**

PHOTO BY SAMI AL HINAI



■ SHABAB OMAN II WINS INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CUP



MUSCAT: The ship of the Royal Navy of Oman, Shabab Oman II, was crowned the International Friendship Cup for Tall Ships for the year 2022, which is the highest award won by a sailing ship in the long-distance sailing races, in the Kingdom of Denmark. This came during the announcement of the results on Friday of the Long Dhow Sailing Race, during the closing festival of the Long Sailing Race 2022 in Aalborg, Kingdom of Denmark. The award is given to the ship that excels in demonstrating friendship among all participating ship crews. Voting for this award is conducted by the captains and crews of the participating ships. The entire crew of the ship expressed their joy at the ship's victory in the International Friendship Cup for the year 2022, after the strenuous efforts made by the crew on this voyage (Oman journey, the land of peace). – ONA

US envoy values Oman’s role in extending Yemen truce

MUSCAT: Tim Lenderking, the US Special Envoy to Yemen, has said that the Omani government, led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, played a significant role in obtaining global consensus towards a decision to extend the truce in Yemen for an additional two months.



Lenderking said in a telephonic press briefing that the Sultanate of Oman played a pivotal role in this file and that Oman works in close coordination with the United States and other parties concerned to resolve the Yemeni crisis. This position, he said, is evidenced by the Omani delegation's visit to Sanaa last week — a move which he described as “serious” in getting the Yemeni crisis resolved.

Lenderking explained that there is a complete commitment, from all parties, to the terms of the truce, which, he said, elevates hopes about the possibility of

reaching a permanent truce and, eventually, realising a comprehensive solution to the crisis.

The American official pointed out that, following the recent decision to extend the truce, the Yemeni people can enjoy a six-month period of calm that grants them the longest time of peace in years. He underscored the fact the truce requires all parties to rally efforts and provide concessions for the sake of a lasting peace process in Yemen. — ONA

This tastes like a mixture of watermelon and raspberry

TEXT & PHOTOS
YAHYA AL SALMANI

The fruit of the prickly pear (Opuntia ficus-indica) is characterised by cylindrical shape. The outer rind of the fruit contains a few thorns, and the colour of the rind and pulp of the prickly pear is green at the beginning and as the fruits ripen, the colour of the pulp changes from the inside to yellow and red hues. The prickly pear tastes like a mixture of watermelon and raspberry fruit, while its aroma is close to cucumber.

The prickly pear shrub is between 1.5 and 3 metres tall, its branches contain very thick, flat, paddle-like leaves of green colour, and the colour of its fruits varies between yellow, red and purple, and contains small seeds.

This fruit, which grows in sandy and muddy soils, is classified as a “summer fruit” as it has the ability to withstand drought and does not require large amounts of water. To



remove this fruit one needs to wear gloves due to the thorns spread on the peel of the fruit.

According to medical references, one of the most important benefits of this fruit is it contributes in reducing blood sugar levels at rates ranging between 17-48 per cent. It also helps to improve the health of the digestive system because it contains a high amount of dietary fibre and various antioxidants, and these fruits also help clean the colon, preventing constipation, regulating digestion processes and improving the health of the heart and arteries.

One of its most important features is the strengthening of bones and teeth, because the prickly pear contains a high amount of calcium.

The original home of this plant goes back to Mexico, and today it is spread in many countries such as South America, the Mediterranean countries, and the Arabian Peninsula. It can survive

with less than 50 millimetres of rain a year.

The prickly pear fruit is spread in most semi-arid regions, and many countries celebrate the harvest of this fruit. The Egyptians call this fruit (the fruit of happiness) for its role in improving the mood of those who eat it. In the State of Palestine, an annual festival is held in which farmers celebrate the harvest of the prickly pear fruit, after it is packed and used for various food, medical and cosmetic uses.

The prickly pear tree can be found in dry and semi-arid areas, and it can also be found on the banks of wadi streams in the various wilayats of Oman. Omanis benefit from this tree in the fields of food and traditional medicine. There are those who call for developing strategies for cultivating this tree, because its growth does not drain a lot of water, and it will also contribute to diversifying the sources of agricultural wealth in Oman.





■ SALALAH GRAND MALL OPENS TOMORROW



MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki bin Mahmoud al Said, Governor of Dhofar, will inaugurate Salalah Grand Mall on Monday. The new mall, covering an area of 55,000 sqm, is expected to be a major commercial destination that can contribute to promoting the retail sector, the entertainment industry and the tourism sector in the governorate.

Oman sets standards for hydrogen vehicles

FROM PAGE 1

His Majesty the Sultan gave a set of directives keeping up with global developments towards diminishing carbon emissions and, given the diverse uses of green hydrogen in producing electrical power and providing energy for local industries and fuel for means of public transport, with options for export to international markets.

His Majesty the Sultan had called for consistent follow-up of global developments in green hydrogen technologies, the acceleration of steps to regulate this sector, devising legal frameworks for it, drafting policies for its growth and

allocating suitable sites for the production of green hydrogen with the aim of enhancing foreign investment and localising these technologies.

His Majesty the Sultan also gave directives to conduct necessary studies, create a new directorate for clean energy and hydrogen power at the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and to establish a company for the development of this lucrative sector.

During Oman Sustainability Week held in March, Oman Shell had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Oman Airports that would see Oman Shell providing up to 15 hydrogen cars for the Oman Airports' corporate usage.

Major decline in accidents in 2021

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A total of 1,539 accidents were reported in the Sultanate of Oman in 2021, according to the National Centre of Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Extended lockdowns and travel restrictions as part of the Covid-19 restrictions might have helped road accidents to come down from 2,815 in 2019 to 2,442 in 2020 and 1,539 in 2021.

As per the annual statistics for 2022, collisions between vehicles was the main cause of accidents (633), followed by hitting fixed objects (308) and run over (297).

A total of 1,621 people were injured in these accidents and the majority of them were male drivers (733), female drivers (142), 332 male and 216 passengers, 122 male and 26 female pedestrians.



A total of 434 people lost their lives in these accidents and of these the majority of the victims were male drivers (223).

A total of 288 Omanis lost lives in road accidents in 2021, compared to 146 expatriates.

The report said that 79 male and 14 female pedestrians also lost

(81), Al Wusta (36), Al Dakhiliyah (50) and South Al Batinah (35).

Speed is the main cause of accident-related deaths (233), followed by negligence (61), overtaking (32), not leaving a safe distance (16), bad behaviour (54), defects in vehicles (15), and flaws in the road (11).

The Capital Market Authority in a report released last year said the number of claims recorded by insurance companies was mostly for minor traffic accidents.

While admitting accidents have come down, CMA said, "Adherence to safety requirements and traffic instruction issued by Royal Oman Police (ROP) is the best means for protection from major accidents and the resultant impact on the lives and properties. The insurance service will only mitigate the financial damage not the moral damage."

Khareef Salalah: A festival for all



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Dhofar is experiencing one of the best Khareef seasons in terms of weather and return of the tourists after the pandemic. The festival this year has been providing opportunities for the youth.

However the weather and the rain has also brought in concerns of safety for the authorities where they briefly had to close access and reopened Wadi Darbat, one of the favourite destinations for tourists visiting Dhofar any time of the year, especially during monsoon.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority states, "We draw the attention of the valued visitors of Dhofar about reopening the site for all to Wadi Darbat with an emphasis on adherence to public safety guidelines."

Social media platforms have been showcasing personal experiences of individuals. One important aspect the holiday makers have to keep in mind is not to indulge in risks in the name of adventure.

Dhofar Governorate Police Command summoned a tourist and stopped him

after a video clip was circulated showing him walking on the edge of a mountain at risk, and legal procedures had been taken against him, according to the officials.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority is continuing its efforts to secure tourist sites in the Governorate of Dhofar. The authority also pointed out that one of the causes of drowning accidents is swimming in water pools, "So save your life and the lives of your children."

Many have been urging the public to use life jackets when swimming or visiting water bodies.

Khareef Salalah 2022 also sees creativity of youth in many ways as has been displayed at Lamer Mugsayil and Taqah. Visitors have been raving about the facilities and experiences in the Wilayat Taqah during the night. A distinct feature this year has been the availability of boat rides at Khors and wadis.

Artist Ayed entertained his audience at the Al Morouj Theatre during the weekend bringing back events at the prominent location for events.

The weekend also saw the inauguration of Salalah Food Festival, to the delight of



visitors as it provides a choice of a variety of cuisines. Considered as the largest food festival in Khareef, is organised by Dhofar Municipality and the activities of the Salalah Food Festival is a result of cooperation between the Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the Dhofar Municipality and a number of government and private agencies.

While Dhofar's natural attractions are all popular destinations, science enthusiasts this year can indulge in an exclusive out of this world experience through the meteorite exhibition in the Sultanate of Oman that includes a number of rare meteorites of global importance, including the lunar meteorite, the Martian meteorite, in addition to the iron meteorite.

The exhibition began from July 19 and will continue until September 18 at the Museum of the Land of Frankincense in the Governorate of Dhofar.

For motor enthusiasts there is go karting held at the Celebration Square in Salalah daily from 3 pm to 10 pm, with Sunday dedicated for families and Wednesday from 12 pm to 4 pm for women only.



ROYAL OMAN POLICE

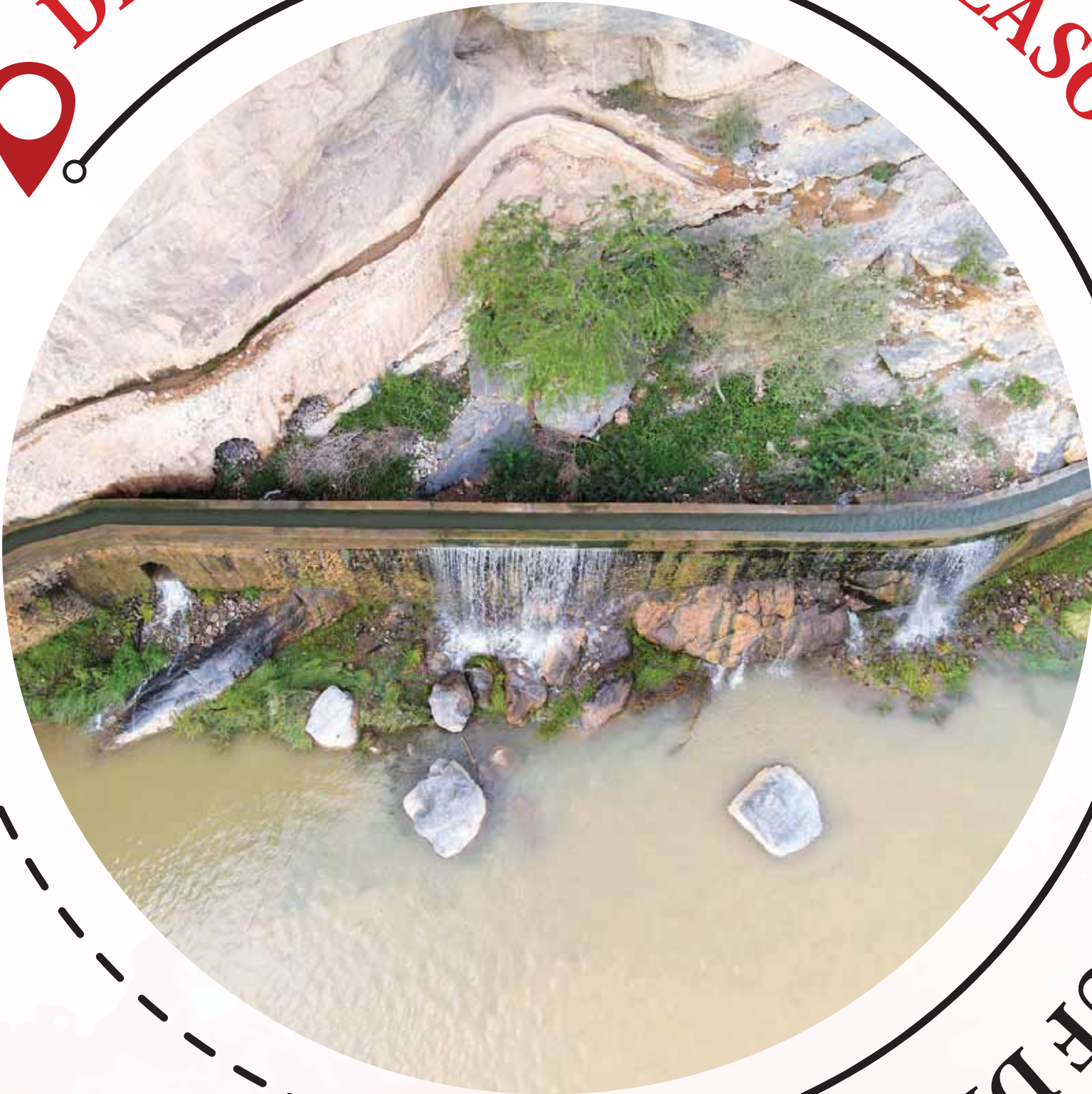
ANNOUNCEMENT

Royal Oman Police represented by the Directorate General of Customs announces it will hold an electronic auction through Bayan System to sale miscellaneous goods on Wednesday August 10th, 2022. Inspection shall be made at the Directorate General of Customs during official hours on Tuesday August 9th, 2022 as per the following conditions:

- ◆ Bidder shall register in Bayan System.
- ◆ A RO 10 bond shall be paid by the bidder (non-refundable).
- ◆ Successful bidder shall not collect the goods unless the payment is made and customs statement is cleared (payment of taxes and fees and providence of clearance for restricted goods if any).
- ◆ The Directorate General of Customs shall not bear responsibility for damage incurred to the goods after the sale ends.
- ◆ Successful bidders shall refer to the Directorate General of Customs to collect the goods between 10 & 11 August 2022. Note that a financial fine shall be imposed for delay after the period expires.



DESTINATION FOR ALL SEASONS: RAIN-SOAKED TANUF DRAWS VISITORS



PHOTOS BY: SAMI AL HINAI



AMAL AL RIYAMI

Wadi Tanuf in Nizwa is one of the most unique and distinctive natural landmarks in the Sultanate of Oman. It is considered as one of the most beautiful tourist places in Nizwa, suitable for memorable nature and adventure experiences.

Thousands of foreign and local tourists visit it annually because of its moderate temperatures throughout the year even on the hottest summer days.

These days, following the recent rains, numerous gurgling wadis and aflaj have become an added attraction.

The village of Tanuf is located almost half-way between Wilayat of Nizwa and Bahla.

The agricultural area spreads throughout the village, where the visitor notices, at first sight, the interest of the people in agriculture, the variety of crops, and the growing area of the agricultural site.

The fertility of the soil makes it an ideal place for growing all kinds of vegetables and fruits such as cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, lemons, grapes, bananas, quince and watermelon. Every season, large areas are planted with Omani wheat.

The village is also famous for raising high-quality livestock, mainly sheep and cows. Some farmers have started raising poultry, benefiting from the support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Tanuf is one of the most popular places people visit during and after rain.



17,500 Afghan workers, kin in Germany

BERLIN: Since the withdrawal of Nato forces from Afghanistan about a year ago, Germany has promised to accept a total of 23,614 former Afghan workers and their family members.

Citing the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), 17,556 have actually entered the country so far, the Sunday edition of the newspaper Die Welt reports. The office confirmed the figures to dpa. Of the local workers themselves, such as civilian assistants to the German

armed forces and interpreters, 5,141 have been granted admission, and 3,756 of them are already in Germany. By far the greater number are family members.

In an international comparison, Germany is doing better than other European countries that made similar promises, the newspaper writes.

It quotes the British Embassy as saying that 10,100 Afghans working for the British armed forces, including their families, had entered the country. — **dpa**

Ukraine says parts of N-plant ‘seriously damaged’ in strikes

KYIV: Parts of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant were “seriously damaged” by military strikes that forced one of its reactors to shut down, the plant’s operator said on Saturday.

The Friday strikes on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in south Ukraine -- Europe’s largest atomic power complex -- “seriously damaged” a station containing nitrogen and oxygen and an “auxiliary building,” Energoatom said on the Telegram messaging service.

Kyiv and Moscow blamed each other for the attacks.

The strikes had damaged a power cable, forced one of the reactors to stop working and “there are still risks of leaking hydrogen and radioactive substances, and the risk of fire is also high,” it said.

The shelling “has caused a serious risk for the safe operation of the plant.”

Russian troops have occupied the Zaporizhzhia plant since the early days of their war and Kyiv has accused them of storing heavy weapons there.

But Moscow, in turn, has accused Ukrainian forces of targeting the plant.

The European Union hit out at Russia on Saturday over the shelling.

“The EU condemns Russia’s military activities around #Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant,” the bloc’s top diplomat, Josep Borrell, wrote on Twitter.

“This is a serious and irresponsible breach of nuclear safety rules and another example of Russia’s disregard



A local resident looks at the rubble of a destroyed building in Toretsk, eastern Ukraine, on Saturday amid the Russian war of Ukraine. — **AFP**

for international norms.”

Borrell insisted that the UN’s nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, be given access to the plant. The IAEA has been trying for weeks to send a team to inspect the plant. Ukraine has so far rejected the efforts, which it says would legitimise Russia’s occupation of the site in the eyes of the international community.

It said employees of Russian nuclear operator Rosatom had left the plant shortly before the attacks but that Ukrainian personnel had stayed on and the plant was still generating electricity.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky had said on Friday that “any bombing of this site is a shameful crime, an act of terror.” And the Ukrainian foreign ministry had said that

the “possible consequences of hitting a working reactor are equivalent to using an atomic bomb”. Earlier in the week, the IAEA said that the situation at the nuclear power plant was “volatile.”

“Every principle of safety has been violated one way or the other,” IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said.

QUITS OVER RIGHTS REPORT

The head of Amnesty International’s Ukraine office has resigned, accusing the rights organisation of parroting Kremlin propaganda in a controversial report that criticised the war-torn country’s military response to Russia’s war.

Amnesty sparked outrage in Ukraine with the publication of a report on Thursday

that accused the military of endangering civilians by establishing bases in schools and hospitals, and launching counterattacks from heavily populated areas.

“If you don’t live in a country invaded by occupiers who are tearing it to pieces, you probably don’t understand what it’s like to condemn an army of defenders,” Amnesty’s Oksana Pokalchuk said on social media, announcing her resignation late on Friday.

“And there are no words in any language that can convey this to someone who has not experienced this pain.”

Pokalchuk said she had tried to warn Amnesty’s senior leadership that the report was one-sided and failed to properly take into account the Ukrainian position, but she was ignored.

— **AFP**

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
118/2022	Providing male and female workers for the diagnostic the fulfillment unit and the assessment and vocational rehabilitation center of the general directorate of persons with disabilities affairs at Al Khoudh	Companies specialized in the field of industrial workshop services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the Excellent, First, Second, Third or Fourth Degree	Thursday 25-8-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 15-9-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On Sunday 7/8/2022.
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

“ The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry “

www.mosd.gov.om

Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Defence ENGINEERING SERVICES TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender No.	Tender Name	Contractors Grade	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Submission Date	Tender Price (RO)
20/2022	Operation and Maintenance Works (District cooling system) – MTC/Muscat	Excellent - minimum of ten (10) years experience in Operation and Maintenance Services of the Facilities and Equipments (District cooling system) *	18 th August 2022	19 th September 2022	300/- R.O.
21/2022	Operation and Maintenance Works (Elevators) – MTC/Muscat	First & above - minimum of ten (10) years experience in Operation and Maintenance Services of the Facilities and Equipments (Elevators) *	18 th August 2022	19 th September 2022	125/- R.O.
25/2022	Building Works – Salalah	Excellent	18 th August 2022	19 th September 2022	600/- R.O.

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

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

Sudan condemns Chadian group’s killing of 18

KHARTOUM: Sudan’s foreign ministry on Saturday condemned the killing of 18 Sudanese people during an attack by an armed group from Chad, state media reported.

The killings took place on Thursday when Sudanese herders from West Darfur state were ambushed while following the trails of camels looted by the Chadians the day before, according to Sudan’s ruling Sovereign Council.

On Saturday, Sudan’s acting Foreign Minister Ali al Sadiq conveyed his country’s “protest and condemnation of the incident”, in a meeting with Chad’s ambassador to Khartoum.

— **AFP**

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Numo Institute for Competency Development (a member of Nama Group) invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
NICD/2022/3	Leadership Development Programme for Nama Group • Managers • Senior Managers	14-August-2022	28-August-2022	50/- Plus, VAT Amount (2.500 OMR) Total: 52.500 OMR (Non-Refundable)

- Interested parties may purchase the tender through the company website (www.nama.om). Go to Tenders then NICD & Supplier user guide is available to be downloaded on the same page.
- Payment of the tender fees is to be done online through the link available on the website. The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 12.00 am.
- Bids shall be submitted online through the I-supplier portal before 1:00 pm time of the Sultanate of Oman on Sunday 28-August-2022.
- Each bid should be accompanied by temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers. Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered. The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at Nama Holding reception area.
- NICD is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person’s name and the company details.

Nama Holding
In Beach One Building, 3rd Floor (Units 305 & 307), Shatti Al Qurum
P.O Box 850, Post Code 116, Sultanate of Oman.
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Israel pounds Gaza in escalation of violence

FIVE-YEAR-OLD GIRL AMONG 15 PEOPLE KILLED IN BOMBARDMENT, OVER 120 WOUNDED

GAZA CITY: Israel's military warned on Saturday deadly air strikes against Palestinian fighters in Gaza could last a week, as cross-border fire reverberated for a second day in the worst escalation since last year's war.

Israel has said it was forced to launch a "pre-emptive" operation against Islamic Jihad, saying the group was planning an imminent attack following days of tensions along the border with Gaza.

Health authorities in the Palestinian enclave, which is controlled by Hamas, said a five-year-old girl was among 15 people killed in the Israeli bombardment, adding that more than 120 others have been wounded.

In Jabalia, in the north of Gaza, Fouad Farajallah was on Saturday surveying what remained of his home, hit by an Israeli strike the day before.

"I was sitting here on the sofa, with my wife and children, and suddenly it all fell on us," he said, surrounded by debris from a partially collapsed roof in a strike he said wounded his wife and son.

Israel's ongoing strikes are being met with barrages of rockets from the Palestinian side, stoking fears of a repeat of an 11-day conflict that devastated Gaza in May 2021.

Daily life in the enclave has come to a standstill, while the electricity distributor said the sole power station shut down due to a lack of fuel after Israel closed its border crossings.

Civilians on the Israeli side meanwhile took refuge in air raid shelters, but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

In Kibbutz Nahal Oz, an Israeli community beside the Gaza border, resident Nadav Peretz said he has



A missile from Israel's Iron Dome air defence system, designed to intercept and destroy incoming short-range rockets and artillery shells, is launched in the southern Israeli city of Sderot. — AFP

been "in the bomb shelter or around it" since Friday.

"We recognise that on the other side too there is an uninvolved civilian population, and on both sides children deserve to enjoy their summer vacation," the 40-year-old said.

'DECLARATION OF WAR'

An Israeli military spokesman said its forces were "preparing for the operation to last a week," and told AFP that the army is "not currently holding ceasefire negotiations".

Sources within Islamic Jihad



A fireball erupts as a result of an Israeli air strike on a building in Gaza City. — AFP



Children react following an Israeli air strike in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. — AFP

ruled out a ceasefire soon, with one saying: "for the movement, the focus is on the battlefield".

Israel and Islamic Jihad confirmed the killing of Taysir al Jabari, a key commander of the fighter group, in a Friday strike.

The Israeli bombardment has

been condemned by Iran.

Israel has "once again showed its occupying and aggressive nature to the world," said a statement from President Ebrahim Raisi's office.

Jamal al Fadi, a political science professor at Gaza's Al-Azhar University, said he expected the

violence to end "within days".

"Islamic Jihad is reacting in a limited manner and by doing so is preventing the occupation (Israeli military) from intensifying its air strikes," he said.

Islamic Jihad is aligned with Hamas, but often acts independently. Both are blacklisted as terrorist organisations by much of the West.

Hamas has fought four wars with Israel since seizing control of Gaza in 2007, including the conflict last May.

A flare-up with Islamic Jihad came in 2019, following Israel's killing of Baha Abu al Ata, Jabari's predecessor. Hamas did not join the fray in that conflict.

Hamas's moves now could prove crucial.

Mairav Zonszein, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group think-tank, said Hamas currently has an interest in staying on the sidelines as it has recently won more economic aid for Gazans.

"But if more civilians are killed, then it will feel obligated to respond," she said.

Mohammed Abu Salameh, the director of Shifa, Gaza city's main hospital, said medics are facing "acute shortages of medical supplies".

On Friday, the health ministry reported "a five-year-old girl, targeted by the Israeli occupation" was among those killed.

The girl, Alaa Kaddum, had a pink bow in her hair and a wound on her forehead, as her body was carried by her father at her funeral.

Israeli military spokesman Richard Hecht said on Friday "we are assuming about 15 killed in action" in Gaza, referring to Palestinian combatants. — AFP

Kenya candidates make final bid for votes as campaigning closes

NAIROBI: Flanked by cheering crowds, the frontrunners in Kenya's presidential election sought to make their final push for votes on Saturday under tight security, capping months of frenetic campaigning ahead of the August 9 polls.

Deputy President William Ruto and Raila Odinga, a veteran opposition leader now backed by the ruling party, are fighting for the chance to lead the East African powerhouse as it grapples with a cost-of-living crisis.

Previous polls have been marred by violence and continue to cast a dark shadow over the country,

where 22.1 million voters will now choose the next president, as well as senators, governors, lawmakers, women representatives and some 1,500 county officials.

The battle for votes has been dominated by mud-slinging, tit-for-tat claims of rigging and a freebie bonanza for supporters, who have been showered with umbrellas, groceries and cash for attending rallies.

After criss-crossing the vast country in recent months, the two candidates staged their final offensive in the capital Nairobi, with Ruto holding a rally at the 30,000-seat Nyayo National



Kenya's Deputy President and presidential candidate William Ruto of Kenya Kwanza (Kenya first) political party coalition addresses the rally on the final day of campaigning at the Nyayo National Stadium in Nairobi on Saturday. — AFP

Stadium and Odinga campaigning at Kasarani Stadium, which seats 60,000.

Lawyers David Mwaure and George Wajackoyah -- an eccentric former spy who wants to legalise marijuana -- are also in the fray.

The bitterly fought race has sparked speculation Kenya may see its first presidential run-off, with many worried that a challenge to the result could lead to street violence.

A wealthy businessman with a rags-to-riches background and a shadowy reputation, Ruto, 55, was long expected to be President Uhuru Kenyatta's successor, but

lost ground when his boss -- who cannot run again -- joined hands with longtime rival Odinga in 2018. Kenyatta's endorsement has given Odinga, 77, access to the ruling Jubilee party's powerful election machinery, but has also dealt a blow to the former political prisoner's anti-establishment credentials.

Nevertheless, some analysts believe that Odinga will emerge the winner in a close race, with Oxford Economics highlighting the fact that he has the backing of "several influential political leaders", including Kenyatta.

— AFP

NEW DELHI

Jagdeep Dhankhar elected India's Vice President

Former Governor of West Bengal and the ruling National Democratic Front (NDA) nominee Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday defeated Opposition candidate Margaret Alva to become the 14th Vice-President of India. Of the 725 votes polled, Dhankhar clinched 528 votes, Alva got 182 while 15 were found to be invalid. As the term of incumbent M Venkaiah Naidu ends on August 10, members of both Houses of Parliament throughout the day voted to elect



the next Vice-President who will take oath of office on August 11.

With support from regional parties like the Janata Dal (United), YSRCP, BSP, AIADMK and Shiv Sena, Dhankhar from the very start was up for an easy win.

LONDON

UK boy dies after life support stopped

A London hospital on Saturday withdrew life support for 12-year-old British boy Archie Battersbee after his parents lost a long, emotive and divisive legal battle. Archie's mother, Hollie Dance, said her son passed away just over two hours after the artificial ventilation was stopped.

"Such a beautiful little boy. He fought right until the very end," she told reporters, sobbing, outside the Royal London Hospital. "I'm the proudest mum in the world," Dance said, after



spending the night at his bedside with other relatives.

Dance found Archie unconscious at home in April with signs he had placed a cord around his neck, possibly after taking part in an online asphyxiation challenge.

MANILA

Blinken hails 'strong' US-Philippine alliance

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Saturday in a bid to bolster the countries' "strong" alliance. Blinken is the most senior US official to visit the Philippines -- a treaty-bound ally of the United States -- since Marcos took office.

"The alliance is strong and I believe can grow even stronger," Blinken told Marcos at the presidential palace. Marcos hailed the "special relationship" between the two countries.

The United States has a security



pact with the Philippines, and has backed the Southeast Asian nation in disputes with Beijing.

In virtual talks with his Philippine counterpart Enrique Manalo, Blinken said the United States was "determined to act responsibly" to avoid a crisis.

Alex Jones’ moment of truth doesn’t matter nearly enough



PAMELA PAUL

In America’s clash between information and disinformation, the facts just won a rare round: Alex Jones has conceded that the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, on December 14, 2012, which he had repeatedly told millions of readers of his alt-right website Infowars was “a hoax” perpetrated by “actors,” was, in point of fact, “100% real!”

He told this truth on Wednesday on the witness stand in a defamation lawsuit, but only after lying multiple times under oath and only after failing to produce documents and to testify at earlier trials. He told this truth only after the plaintiffs’ lawyer revealed that Jones’ lawyer had inadvertently e-mailed him several hundred gigabytes of Jones’ cellphone records, suggesting that Jones had perjured himself on the stand, apparently lying even about his own lies and knowingly withholding crucial evidence in defamation lawsuits brought against him.

Jones told the truth only after being confronted face to face in the courtroom by Scarlett Lewis, one of the many grieving parents of children killed at Sandy Hook, who said of her son to Jones, “Jesse was real. I am a real mom.”

Jones was ordered to pay more than \$4 million in compensatory damages and \$45.2 million in punitive damages to Lewis and Neil Heslin, the parents of Jesse Lewis, shot to death at age 6. Jesse was among the 20 young children and six educators slain that day at Sandy Hook. Heslin had wept on the stand as he described his son’s final moments.

This marks the first time Jones has been financially penalised for his years-long disinformation campaign about Sandy Hook, a charade that helped earn him up to \$800,000 a day. And he will no doubt pay more in at least two other cases pending. It was also the first time Jones acknowledged the truth of what happened in Newtown.

This vindication of the truth, though gratifying, raises three disquieting questions: First, does a single truth badgered out of a serial liar matter? Second, does Jones’ apology, elicited only with his sweaty back pinned against the wall, mean anything? And third, will his admission or his apology have any effect in a mediasphere in which a single lie can quickly metastasize into an intractable web of falsehoods?

These are depressing questions to have to ask, but they’re not difficult to answer.

The answer to the first question is that Jones’ reluctant admission of the truth doesn’t matter nearly enough. Whatever comfort it offers Lewis and Heslin, it cannot change the grotesque fact that for years the family members of Sandy Hook’s victims became Jones’ victims, that parents suffering the unimaginable loss of a child were then subject to harassment, threatened to the point of needing to move to new homes and hire security. It cannot change the fact that an unscrupulous fabulist



In this file photo taken on September 5, 2018 right-wing conspiracy theorist Alex Jones speaks with reporters outside as Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. – AFP

leveraged the weaknesses of our current media ecosystem — its fragmentation, lack of standards and polarisation — to his financial advantage.

There was a certain small satisfaction in the fact that Jones was taken down by an accidental e-mail — that technology, media and information decisively bit back at someone who had abused all three. But those leaked texts also made clear that Jones continues to spread disinformation, whether about the coronavirus pandemic or the legitimacy of the 2020 presidential election. Even when the truth comes out, it can feel like an afterthought, and worse, irrelevant.

“Just because you claim to think something is true does not make it true,” the judge in the case, Maya Guerra Gamble, had to remind Jones as he dissembled from the stand. This wasn’t his radio show, she explained.

As for the second question, nothing about Jones’ apology merits forgiveness. He threw out a flimsy excuse, saying he’d suffered “a form of psychosis.” He emitted a meager note of contrition, a nonapology to outdo nonapologies, constructed in the “mistakes were made” patois of our times: “I unintentionally took part in things that did hurt these people’s feelings, and I’m sorry for that.”

Unremorseful, mediated, bloodless. It was the one thing he said on the stand with total lack of conviction.

The third question — what kind of effect did the day’s events have on Jones and the distorted world he’s helped build? — has an equally bleak answer. Only hours after the jury’s decision, Jones, who once described himself to The New York Times’ Elizabeth Williamson as a victim of a “media conspiracy,” skulked back onto his radio programme — according to one metric, the 42nd most popular radio show/podcast in the country, just behind “Planet Money” and ahead of “Pod Save America.” There, he disparaged the day’s legal proceedings as an “attack” by “globalists,” promising listeners, “I will go down fighting.” In fluent doublespeak, he called the decision “a major victory for truth.”

Which truth? Confronting Jones in court, Scarlett Lewis had said, “Truth, truth is so vital to our world. Truth is what we base our reality on. And we have to agree on that to have a civil society. Sandy Hook is a hard truth.”

Hundreds of school shootings later, what’s even harder is knowing how many people in this country have trouble knowing what truth even means.

The Republican Party is the anti-democracy party



CHARLES M BLOW

The word “democracy” never appears in the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution.

However, democracy is central to the modern concept of America.

The founders seemed to prefer calling the burgeoning country a republic rather than a democracy. Many were opposed to direct democracy and the possibility that demagogues could corrupt it or mob rule could overtake it. They instead designed a representative government in which “the people” would elect representatives who would make the laws and conduct the governance.

The problem, or course, was that their definition of “the people” was largely limited to wealthy white men, enslavers among them.

Over the years, America has expanded the definition of “the people” to include more Americans, but conservatives have resisted the expansion at every turn. And now they are trying to drag the country backward, to pare down the ranks of those who can vote and to deny or invalidate elections in which voting populations, not yet pared down enough, deliver results with which they disagree.

We keep hearing people say that candidates, like some of the ones competing in Tuesday’s primaries, threaten our democracy. We heard during the January 6 hearings about threats to our democracy.

We have heard for years that Donald Trump is a threat to our democracy.

But it seems to me that we have to take a step back and realise that the current Republican Party has abandoned the idea of a full democracy.

Republicans want to revert the country to the way the founders conceived of it, when white men had outsize influence, when patriarchy prevailed, when white supremacy masqueraded as conventional wisdom. Liberals often seem to me overly vexed by why Republicans don’t recognise the threat that Trump’s election denialism poses. The reason is clear to me: They have turned their backs on democracy.

For anti-democracy Republicans, Trump is an incredibly useful tool. His motivations are selfish and small, but the Republicans balking at full democracy have plans that are grand.

They see themselves falling into a minority, so they want to devise a plan for minority rule. And they are attacking the electoral process at every level to realise their goals.

By calling themselves traditionalist and constitutionalist and by canonizing the flawed founders, they disguise their regression as preservation.

Conservatives now routinely make the point that America isn’t a democracy, but a republic. The Heritage Foundation even published a report in 2020 entitled “America Is a Republic, Not a Democracy.” The report argued “the contemporary efforts to weaken our republican customs and institutions



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in the name of greater equality thus run against the efforts by America’s Founders to defend our country from the potential excesses of democratic majorities” and that the American system of government is “threatened by an egalitarianism that undermines the social, familial, religious, and economic distinctions and inequalities that undergird our political liberty.”

In their telling, the will of the majority itself seems to be a problem. I interpret this broadly: that a fuller democracy is, in the view of many conservatives, a disaster waiting to happen.

So we are seeing an epic clash playing out in America in which the parameters are not being fully, loudly delineated: The Democrats want a democracy; the Republicans don’t. The Republican Party is anti-democracy, post-democracy. While Democrats are screaming about a collapsing country, Republicans are already surveying the landscape of the America that will emerge from the wreckage.

George Thomas, a professor at Claremont McKenna College, argued in The Atlantic in 2020 that although the word “democracy” may not be in the constitution, the spirit of it is. As he said, “High-minded claims that we are not a democracy surreptitiously fuse republic with minority rule rather than popular government. Enabling sustained minority rule at the national level is not a feature of our constitutional design, but a perversion of it.”

What is imposter syndrome?



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
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The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

A young woman in her mid-thirties came to my clinic for a consultation. She is a mother, a wife, and a successful manager at a private company.

She described a feeling that prevents her from enjoying life as she doubts her achievements and feels it's all 'false and one day those around her will discover that she is fake.'

In 1978, psychologist Pauline Rose Clans described a distorted way of thinking that usually affects intelligent and successful people, who doubt their achievements and their intelligence and think they are lazy even when reality proves otherwise.

They interpret success as a stroke of luck rather than the result of their hard work. This is known as the imposter syndrome as the person feels 'fake' and will be discovered

soon, which leads to compensatory behaviours such as a frequent need to check on work, staying up late at work unnecessarily, a persistent feeling of self-doubt, anxiety about others finding out that they are unworthy of the position they have been given, self-flagellation and excessive self-blame when a failure occurs even if the reasons are external.

Many people experience symptoms for a limited time, such as in the first few weeks of a new job, but other people have them for a long period. Studies indicate that the symptoms of this syndrome are more prevalent among high achieving women and those experiencing new challenges at work, such as a promotion when the person may feel undeserving of the new position or that they will be unable to perform adequately.

'STUDIES INDICATE THAT THE SYMPTOMS OF THIS SYNDROME ARE MORE PREVALENT AMONG HIGH ACHIEVING WOMEN AND THOSE EXPERIENCING NEW CHALLENGES AT WORK, SUCH AS A PROMOTION WHEN THE PERSON MAY FEEL UNDESERVING OF THE NEW POSITION'

Other factors include having a 'gifted' sibling which leads to internalised feelings of inadequacy as the person keeps comparing him or herself to the gifted sibling.

People from ethnic minorities may anticipate or experience discrimination at work. At the same time, those with anxiety or depression suffer a loss of self-

esteem.

So, how can an individual get rid of impostor syndrome? Psychologists suggest a few tips, such as encouraging the individual to express his feelings when exposed to work pressures without pointing out their personal weakness and lack of experience because these things make the person doubt his abilities.

Individuals need to accept their strengths and weaknesses and that everyone sometimes makes mistakes.

Learn to receive praise from others without feeling embarrassed, reward themselves for achievements, no matter how simple, and avoid taking additional responsibilities.

Developing managerial skills such as negotiation, time management and effective

communication increase the individual's self-confidence and help him eliminate this feeling.

Sometimes, a person with imposter syndrome would need to consult a psychiatrist or psychologist who may recommend cognitive-behavioural therapy, which allows the individual to identify and correct false beliefs and negative thought patterns.

This eventually helps enhance self-confidence, self-esteem and healthily deal with work pressures.

It remains to say that impostor syndrome may appear in many of us during a period of our working life, so we should not ignore it or give in to negative thoughts that disturb our mood and deprive us of enjoying our achievements.

Learn to appreciate yourself before asking for appreciation from others.

Greek park fire exposes 'chronic failure', says NGOs

JOHN HADOULIS

Days after one of Greece's top national parks narrowly escaped massive destruction from a massive fire that raged for over a week, the country's environment ministry congratulated itself.

Among Greece's underfunded and understaffed habitats, the Dadia national park is — on paper — one of Greece's best protected areas as one of Europe's most important breeding grounds for vultures and other birds of prey.

"Respect and protection of the environment was and remains a fundamental pledge of our government," environment minister Costas Skrekas said in a statement. But many Greek environmental groups differ.

Spyros Psaroudas, director of the Callisto wildlife group, says there is a "chronic failure" in Greece's nature protection, adding that the present government seeks to create a business-friendly environment at the expense of wildlife.

"There is a lack of coordination among ministries and of a clear assignment of responsibilities... all this leads to illegal activities that are never punished," adds Nadia Andreanidou, policy officer for the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles (Medasset).

"It is a vicious circle and it leads to poor management of the protected areas," she said.

Forestry engineer Dimitris Vasilakis, who helped draw up Dadia's operational plan, says the park has just four rangers to patrol 800 square kilometres.

The local forest service in Soufli that supervises Dadia annually receives less than €50,000 from the state, a fifth of what it's supposed to, Vasilakis said.

Over 300 firefighters battled for eight days last month to keep the blaze away from the Dadia nesting grounds at the heart of the park.

On Tuesday, the environment ministry said the July 21 fire had destroyed just over 2,200 hectares of forest at Dadia.

Early estimates suggest predator nesting grounds were largely unaffected.

The incident has put a spotlight on Greece's long and troubled history of environmental protection.

Even as the park burned two weeks ago, the government tried to push through parliament new legislation which nearly a dozen NGOs said further weakened protective restrictions in Greece's national parks.

On the seventh day of the fire, the legislation was unexpectedly withdrawn by the government for "further consultation".

The planned draft law would have permitted additional activities in protected areas, including roads, tourism sites and electricity and telecoms storage facilities. — AFP

Facing energy crisis, Germans, warily, give nuclear a second look



Erika Solomon

When Angela Merkel pulled the plug on nuclear power after the Fukushima meltdown, she set Germany on a course to become the only leading industrial nation to abandon atomic energy. The economic engine of Europe planned instead to fuel itself through a transition to renewable energies with cheap Russian gas.

Now, 11 years later, with Russia toying with Germany's gas supply, her successor as chancellor, Olaf Scholz, who has modeled himself in Merkel's image, is staring at the possibility of reversing that momentous decision.

Europe's geopolitical calculations have been turned upside down by the war in Ukraine. It has created an energy crisis that comes at a critical moment for Germany and Europe's ambitions to become global leaders in the transition to climate neutrality. Instead, as Russia tightens the taps, coal plants are being refired across Europe, and nuclear energy is getting a second look as many on the continent wrangle over whether to sacrifice their sacred cows.

The European Parliament recently took the much-contested step of classifying some gas and nuclear power as "green." In the Netherlands, gas fracking is up for reconsideration. In Belgium, like Germany, the debate has turned to keeping nuclear plants running, something unthinkable just months ago.

This week, Scholz for the first time publicly acknowledged that Germany's plan to shut down its last three nuclear plants by the end of the year — the culmination of Merkel's nuclear-free promise — may no longer be viable given the war in Ukraine.

Running the last three nuclear plants in Germany past their decommissioning date of December 31, 2022, he said, "can make sense" given the energy crisis the war has precipitated. Any such move, he insisted, would not be decided by his government but rather by a series of stress tests on the German power system to see whether the plants would be needed and if they would be able to run safely past their shutdown date.

In part, Scholz is responding to a growing sense among Germans — according to recent polls, now over 80 per cent — that they must re-evaluate the subject that led to some of the most emotional and divisive debates their country has grappled with since reunification.

EUROPE'S GEOPOLITICAL CALCULATIONS HAVE BEEN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE. IT HAS CREATED AN ENERGY CRISIS THAT COMES AT A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR GERMANY AND EUROPE'S AMBITIONS TO BECOME GLOBAL LEADERS IN THE TRANSITION TO CLIMATE NEUTRALITY

"We are having conversations we thought we would never have to have again," said Rosi Steinberger, a member of the regional parliament in the southern state of Bavaria, which will most likely find itself in most need of nuclear power should energy shortages come to pass.

"This is painful for all of us," she said, as she worked in her darkened

office to save electricity. "But we are also under the shadow of this war in Ukraine."

That admission is probably harder for politicians like Steinberger than those from any other German party: She is from the Greens, who now share power with Scholz's Social Democrats in Berlin. The Greens have their roots not only in Germany's environmental movement, but also in its grassroots anti-nuclear protests, where the police clashed with activists, who sometimes chained themselves to the gates of nuclear plants.

Annalena Baerbock, the Green foreign minister, grew up going to such demonstrations. Even as many in her party begin to accept what looks inevitable, Baerbock insisted on Wednesday that she still believed an extension of nuclear power was "not an option."

It is an irony of politics that it was Merkel who became the poster child for Germany's "nuclear exit." Her Christian Democrats were long proponents of nuclear power, and her government fought to extend the life of nuclear power after a previous left-leaning government sought to shut it down. She defended that move by arguing that atomic energy was the "bridging technology" paving the way towards a renewable energy system in Germany — the same language her party later used to defend the shift to gas.

— New York Times



A bench with a view on the Isar River in Landshut, Germany, a Bavarian city that is near two nuclear power plants.

Frustration: A signpost for change



Ray Petersen
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The writer is a media consultant

My work with young adults in education, across two decades, has seen me confront apathy, anger, disappointment, fear, boredom, insecurity, and confusion, as barriers to both learning and personal development, but the most difficult emotion to respond to is frustration, as it wears all those elements in some form or another.

Frustration, according to Merriam's Dictionary, is to my mind the most precise explanation of how it has the potential to affect us all, and yet signposts starkly the potential for considerable effect upon student learning, defining it as, "a deep chronic sense or state of insecurity and dissatisfaction arising from unresolved problems or unfulfilled needs." It is not only a dictionary definition, but a definitive statement as to a state of mind, or being, that we must 'put to bed' to move life, and learning, forward.

You have never been frustrated? You are a fibber! You have always, no matter how modest or how grand, had expectations of yourself, and others, and when they aren't met, that's frustration. It's human nature, and often an effective personal, professional, and scholarly quality, to link expectations and outcomes to time, it's goal setting as it should be. However, we do tend to get to those objectives, and instead of simply giving ourselves more time, let the negative perspectives fuel our emotional instability, feeding frustration. We may only be a couple of steps away from success, but our intolerance of failure tends to take us 'the long way around.'

IT'S HUMAN NATURE, AND OFTEN AN EFFECTIVE PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND SCHOLARLY QUALITY, TO LINK EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES TO TIME, IT'S GOAL SETTING AS IT SHOULD BE. HOWEVER, WE DO TEND TO GET TO THOSE OBJECTIVES, AND INSTEAD OF SIMPLY GIVING OURSELVES MORE TIME, LET THE NEGATIVE PERSPECTIVES FUEL OUR EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY, FEEDING FRUSTRATION. WE MAY ONLY BE A COUPLE OF STEPS AWAY FROM SUCCESS, BUT OUR INTOLERANCE OF FAILURE TENDS TO TAKE US 'THE LONG WAY AROUND'

What we need to do, instead of seeing our failure as a sin, a pernicious antagonism, is to laud what we have achieved, basking in the positives, instead of sinking into that swamp of discontent, and far too quickly into frustration. We become almost paranoid, thinking the world is seeing our 'failure,' that 'every man and his dog' knows not what we have achieved, but what we have not! The world invites us to see the worst in ourselves... so why don't we simply reject the invitation? Probably because we have humility, that most human of qualities, and perhaps in a society as gentle, as humble, as that of the faith, even more so.

Frustration is not only a personal issue, but we do have expectations of ourselves, and those close to us, whether friends or family. For many of us our entire lives are built upon relationships, those we love and care for, and in this we are absolutely driven towards perfection. That's unfair of course, perfection is a fantasy, a dream, something of poetry, music, and the stage, and yet, time after time, we form hyper-expectations of ourselves in our relationships, and those we seek to achieve perfection with. You don't believe me? When did you last 'like' someone, and not want to embrace them, to love, to cherish them, and to put them on a pedestal?

Conflict too frustrates us, and oh so stupidly! Whether it's at home, fighting over the TV remote, not wanting to eat your dinner, staying out too late. Or maybe it's school, talking when you should have been listening, homework not done, or not doing your best. In the workplace, how about that promotion you were expecting that went to someone else, suddenly, that colleague has become an object of scorn. Or even worse, when someone you don't know, on social media, 'disses' you. It never stops does it, and how much energy do we waste on the hurt, and how much frustration does it engender?

Motivational frustration occurs because we are always being, correctly, motivated towards success, and as a tool for making us understand that our capabilities are infinite, at the same time fuel disappointment when we don't get there... when we don't get an 'A,' when we don't get the Gold medal, when we don't get there!

It is difficult to achieve balance in life, but frustration does not signpost failure, but indicates that success is close, and maybe all you require is a different approach.



TIES OF RESPECT

Military personnel in ceremonial uniform lower the Sri Lanka national flag at Galle Face Green in Colombo on Saturday.

All are welcome at the climate club



Dennis J Snower

The writer is a professorial research fellow at the University of Oxford



Avram Alpert

The writer is a fellow at The New Institute and lecturer at Princeton University

By the end of 2022, the G7 aims to launch an "open, cooperative international Climate Club" to foster coordinated action to achieve the Paris climate agreement's maximum-warming target of 1.5° Celsius without leaving anyone at a competitive disadvantage. Though we have been hearing calls for international climate action for decades, there is good reason to think that this time will be different.

The Climate Club is the brainchild of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose proposal is based on four premises. First, international climate action needs to be broad-based and consistent, with all club members aiming for the same objectives. Second, countries should be allowed to pursue these common objectives in their own ways, as long as everyone abides by "a uniform measurement of CO2 content of products and materials." Third, developing countries should receive support to achieve the common objective. And, lastly, having to compete against cheaper, more carbon-intensive methods should not put "climate policy pioneers" at a disadvantage in the global marketplace.

This proposal might sound like a rehash of past policies, but it fundamentally shifts the focus in policy design. Historically, we have viewed climate policy in only two dimensions: the climate and the economy. This has led to a focus on ideas like global carbon pricing, which makes a lot of sense in strictly economic terms. Polluters emit excessive amounts of CO2 into the atmosphere because the costs are imposed on society. The solution therefore is to ensure that polluters pay.

The problem is that citizens often oppose such policies, especially if there is no mechanism to compensate those who are disadvantaged by the higher costs (such as low-income households that cannot afford basic goods at environmentally friendly prices, or those working in carbon-intensive sectors). Moreover, the costs associated with carbon pricing are not just economic but also social. Even if the proceeds from a carbon tax are spent on the poor and the displaced, fossil fuel-reliant communities may collapse, and some people may feel as though they are no longer shaping their own futures.

These were some of the lessons of the 2018-19 French gilets jaunes (yellow vest) protests, which erupted in response to a modest increase in the tax on diesel fuel. And a similar problem has long plagued the global climate-policy debate. Low- and middle-income countries resent being asked by rich, industrialised countries – the biggest emitters historically – to pay more for the energy they need for development. To acknowledge these potential ramifications is to move from an abstract two-dimensional world to a three-dimensional one that is closer to

the reality we inhabit.

While the two-dimensional world of economic models can be measured in terms of GDP and carbon prices, the real world requires different metrics to account for the full meaning of any policy. To that end, one of us (Snower) and Katharina Lima de Miranda have proposed a metric with the acronym SAGE: solidarity, agency, gain, environment.

Here, solidarity refers to the extent of social inclusion and cohesion, agency refers to people's ability to shape their

A PARTNERSHIP IN WHICH PARTICIPANTS COMMIT TO AMBITIOUS, WELL-DEFINED CLIMATE GOALS AS WELL AS TO THE SPECIFIC DOMESTIC MEASURES THAT ARE REQUIRED TO REACH THOSE GOALS

own lives, and gain and environment refer to traditional measures of economic output and environmental sustainability, respectively. A solidarity score increases when there is more social trust, generosity, and so forth, and an agency score increases when people report greater confidence in their ability to achieve worthwhile goals. By broadening the scope beyond GDP growth, SAGE allows us to recouple the links between economic policies and social well-being.

As a new way to discuss and evaluate climate policies, the SAGE model can help us understand why some past climate policies have not worked. Traditional carbon pricing, for example, has often failed the solidarity test, by creating winners and losers (both economically

and socially), as well as the agency test, by ignoring people's voices in the process.

One of the gilets jaunes' grievances, for example, was that the unaffordability of French urban life forced many laborers to live outside the cities, where limited public transit options forced them to drive to work. The protesters felt a lack of solidarity and agency (because they had little choice in where they lived or how they got around).

Only by accounting for people's social needs (alongside economic and environmental needs) will we be able to advance viable policy reforms. That brings us back to the G7's proposed club model. If correctly implemented, it can accommodate social factors alongside economic and environmental factors, succeeding where similar past efforts have failed.

According to Scholz, the Climate Club will promote "cooperation between countries that want to press ahead with the social and economic transformation needed to tackle climate change." The result, in practice, would be a partnership in which participants commit to ambitious, well-defined climate goals as well as to the specific domestic measures that are required to reach those goals.

Scholz's team acknowledges that wealthy countries that have emitted the most carbon historically are in a different position than others. They refer to "common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities" – one of the core principles of the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Climate Club thus appreciates the different demands that a common set of goals places on different countries, and that this calls for "intensive cooperation on industrial transformation and capacity-building."

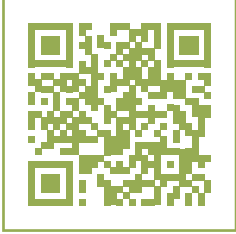
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People cool off by a fountain in front of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow on Friday. – AFP

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Oman all set for Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya



WALEED AL JAHWARI
KONYA, AUGUST 6

Oman's delegation arrived on Saturday in Konya, a state in the Central Anatolia region of Turkey, to take part in the Islamic Solidarity Games which will be held from August 9 to 18.

The team, led by Hisham bin Salem al Adwani, comprises Saif bin Sebaa al Rushidi, Abdullah bin Mohammad Ba Makhala, Board of Directors, and members of Oman Olympic Committee (OOC). Ishaq bin Abdullah al Balushi is the deputy head of the delegation.

Oman National Sporting Teams will participate in the Islamic Solidarity Games, which is in its fifth edition, with a delegation of 30 athletes out of 5,000 athletes representing 55 Islamic countries to compete in 24 Games.

Oman Teams will compete in five sports including athletics, cycling, swimming, weightlifting and shooting and aim to achieve top participation in this event and claim maximum number of



medals. The Islamic Solidarity Games represents a sports and youth meet that strengthens the international relation between Islamic countries.

ATHLETICS:

Oman national athletics team will participate from August 11 to 14. The team comprises Khawla bint Rashid al Rawahi, team manager, Mohammed bin Talib al Balushi, team administrator, Mohammed

bin Abdullah al Hooti, national coach, Saeed bin Hamad al Harthy, national coach, Imad Mohammed Shawqi Siraj, coach, and Krasmir Petrov, physiotherapist. The athletes squad featured Oman's top runner Barakat bin Mubarak al Harthy, Ali bin Anwar al Balushi, Mohammed bin Hamdan al Sulaimani, Mohammed bin Obaid al Saadi, Ammar bin Yasir al Seifi, Hussein bin Mohsen al Farsi, Salem bin Saleh al Yarubi, Salem



bin Abdullah al Rawahi, Fatek bin Abdul Ghafour Beit Jaaboub, Mubin bin Rashid al Kindi and Mazoon bin Khalfan al Alawi.

WEIGHTLIFTING:

Oman national weightlifting team will compete during August 11 to 15, with the team consisting of coach Mazen bin Hamid al Badri and players Amer bin Salem al Khanjari and Elias bin Tamim al Busaidi.

SWIMMING:

Oman national swimming team is headed by Said bin Masoud al Matroushi, Mohammed al Khiari, the coach, and swimmers Issa bin Samir al Adawi, Nasser bin Saif al Kindi and Muhannad bin Younis Awlad Thani. The team will brush its skills from August 13 to 17.

SHOOTING:

Oman national shooting team will start their competitions from

August 10 to 16. Mohammed bin Suleiman al Hatali is the administrator, while Saud bin Salem al Abadi is the skateboard trainer, and Marco Conti is the shotgun trainer. The shooters include Reem bint Juma al Hosni, Salim al Nasiri, Abdullah bin Saif al Mandhari, Hussein bin Rashid al Shahoumi, Fakhriya bint Khamis al Jahafi, Naghmus bin Adnan al Hatali, Mohammed bin Hamad al Gharbi, Yasser bin Salem al Nasiri and Fatima bint Abdullah al Sulaimi.

CYCLING:

Oman national cycling team will take part in the cycling competitions from August 11 to 14. The team, presided over by coach Mohamed Walid Zamani, comprises Ali bin Khamis al Ankoudi, assistant coach, Samuel Kattambay, mechanic, and the cyclists include Saeed bin Ibrahim al Rahbi, Mohammed bin Ahmed al Wahaibi, Abdul Rahman bin Hareb al Yaquobi, Mazen bin Saeed al Riyami and Munther bin Abdullah al Hasani.

Atletico friendly against Juventus in Israel cancelled over security



MADRID: The pre-season friendly between Spanish side Atletico Madrid and Italian giants Juventus which was scheduled to take place in Israel on Sunday has been cancelled because of "security" concerns, the two teams announced on Saturday.

The match was due to take place at the Bloomfield stadium in Tel Aviv on Sunday but a renewed surge in hostilities in the region prompted the promoters Comtec Group to call it off.

"Due to the latest developments, the friendly between Atletico Madrid and Juventus, scheduled to be held on the weekend in Israel, has been cancelled," said Juventus in a statement.

"Due to the current security situation, Comtec Group announces that the match between Atletico Madrid and Juventus, scheduled for tomorrow, Sunday, August 7, at Bloomfield Stadium, will not be played."

Israel hit Gaza with air strikes on Saturday and a Palestinian militant group retaliated with a barrage of rocket fire, in the territory's worst escalation of violence since last year.

Juventus start their Serie A campaign with a home tie against Sassuolo on August 15 while Diego Simeone's Atletico play their La Liga opener against Getafe the same day. — AFP



WTT contender back to Muscat in September

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

Following the several successful major TT events in Muscat including WTT contender in last February, another edition of WTT Contender Muscat 2022 will be hosted in the capital city from September 4 to 10 at the indoor halls of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex venue. The registration of the world-class TT event started on Friday and the deadline of online Entry System is set on Tuesday, August 9 for the singles category while closing date for doubles entry is on Tuesday, August 16. The prestigious TT event will be organised by Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) in corporation with WTT (World Table Tennis), and world table tennis governing body ITTF.

It is expected the forthcoming

edition of WTT Contender Muscat will feature participation of more than 100 paddlers representing different parts of the world. The previous version of the tournament registered more than 200 paddlers from 40 countries around the world. Presence of Oman's national TT team players is expected in this championship and the squad will be announced soon by the head coach of the team, Omid Shamas Sharbakki from Iran.

The seven-day event will witness different competitions categories including singles, doubles and mixed. The participants will compete for a cash prize money which is equal to \$75,000.

The tournament prospective released by the WTT includes all the rules and regulations of the tournament. The playing system of all singles matches shall be best of five games except for the



semifinals onwards, which shall be best of seven games. All doubles and mixed doubles matches shall be best of five games while all competitions are elimination knockout.

On the other hand, OTTA is moving on the right track towards hosting World Veteran Championship in Muscat in early 2023. The main organising committee of the championship is headed by Basil bin Ahmed al Rawas, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth, beside many members from government and private sectors.

The committee is in charge for all the technical and logistics preparations of the championship. The top world veteran championship will take place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

India beat England to reach Commonwealth Games cricket final



BIRMINGHAM: India beat hosts England by just four runs to reach the final of the women's Twenty20 cricket competition at the Commonwealth Games on Saturday.

Opener Smriti Mandhana starred for India, smashing 61 off just 32 balls, and Jemimah Rodrigues made an unbeaten 44 as they made a challenging 164-5 at Birmingham's Edgbaston ground. England were in with a chance with captain Nat Sciver (41) and Amy Jones (31) at the crease but both were run out in the desperate scramble for runs.

England finished on 160-6 off their 20 overs.

India's Sneha Rana took 2-28 in her four overs while Deepti Sharma conceded just 18 runs in her spell.

India will face either Australia or New Zealand in Sunday's final, with England meeting the loser of that match for bronze.

— AFP

Real Madrid defender Miguel Gutierrez completes move to Girona

BERLIN: Miguel Gutierrez has completed a permanent move from Real Madrid to Girona for a reported fee of 5 million Euros.

The 21-year-old full-back made just nine appearances in all for Madrid's senior team, spending most of his time at the La Liga giants playing for the Castilla

team. After just three games for Los Blancos last season, Gutierrez has moved on and signed a five-year-deal with Girona as he seeks regular first team football.

He was a part of the Spain team that won the Under-19 European Championship in 2019, and also won the UEFA Youth League with

Madrid under the guidance of legendary striker Raul in 2019-20.

Gutierrez becomes the sixth signing for Girona in this transfer window, with other arrivals including last season's Major League Soccer top goal scorer Valentin Castellanos on loan from New York City FC. — dpa



LIVERPOOL STUMBLE, SPURS SHINE ON OPENING WEEKEND



Mo Salah equalised for Liverpool after Fulham retook the lead through an Aleksandar Mitrovic penalty late on in the game

Aleksandar Mitrovic maintained his stunning form from last season in the Championship as the Serb outmuscled Trent Alexander-Arnold to head Fulham into a deserved half-time lead.

MANCHESTER: Liverpool's Premier League title challenge got off to a sluggish start as the Reds were held 2-2 at newly-promoted Fulham, while Tottenham delivered on their pre-season hype by thrashing Southampton 4-1 on Saturday.

Jurgen Klopp admitted the best part of Liverpool's day was the result as the Champions League finalists twice had to come from behind at Craven Cottage.

Aleksandar Mitrovic maintained

his stunning form from last season in the Championship as the Serb outmuscled Trent Alexander-Arnold to head Fulham into a deserved half-time lead.

The introduction of Darwin Nunez in the second half brought Liverpool to life and the Uruguayan flicked home his first Premier League goal since a 75-million-euro (\$77 million) move from Benfica to level.

Mitrovic restored Fulham's lead from the penalty spot after he was

tripped by Virgil van Dijk inside the area.

But Mohamed Salah ensured Liverpool at least did not start the season with a defeat by slotting into an empty net from Nunez's pass.

"We started actually exactly the opposite way that we wanted," said Klopp.

"We are used to more dominance and we never could get that because we just played not good enough, not quick enough, not precise enough."

By contrast, Tottenham had a

dream start to the campaign to raise hopes they could compete for a first league title in 61 years.

Spurs also fell behind to James Ward-Prowse's strike from the edge of the box after just 12 minutes, but the response from Antonio Conte's men was emphatic.

The goals to turn the game around before half-time came from unlikely sources as Ryan Sessegnon and Eric Dier headed home.

Mohammed Salisu then passed the ball into his own net for a

comical own goal on the hour mark.

Dejan Kulusevski rounded off the scoring with a cool and precise finish into the far corner to take Spurs above Arsenal at the top of the table.

Newcastle may not have delivered the big-name signings many expected in the transfer market, but the Magpies did the business on the pitch to spoil Nottingham Forest's return to the English top flight with a 2-0 win.

Forest have even outspent Newcastle in the window on 12 new signings so far, but were given a lesson in the step up in quality to the Premier League at St James' Park.

Fabian Schar's sensational strike opened the scoring before Callum Wilson's predatory finish sealed the three points.

Bournemouth were also 2-0 winners over Aston Villa, dispelling their pre-season gloom after a lack of transfer activity. — Reuters

Bangladesh's Liton out of Zimbabwe series with hamstring injury

DHAKA: Bangladesh opener Liton Das will miss the remainder of the one-day international series against Zimbabwe with a hamstring injury, the country's cricket board said on Saturday.

Liton suffered the injury during Friday's five-wicket loss in the first game of the three-match series and will be sidelined for at least three weeks, said the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

Liton made 81 before he retired hurt with the injury and underwent a scan which revealed a muscle strain.

"We did a scan of the injured right hamstring and the report has confirmed a grade two muscle strain," a BCB statement quoted Bangladesh physio Muzadded Alpha as saying.

"Recovery from such injuries usually requires about three to four weeks. He will be assessed further in the coming days and will be put on a rehab plan."

Bangladesh made 303-2 batting



first in the game but Zimbabwe reached the target courtesy of an unbeaten 135 from Sikandar Raza and 110 from Innocent Kaia.

It was Bangladesh's first ODI defeat against Zimbabwe after 19 consecutive wins in nearly eight

years.

Liton is the second Bangladeshi player to be ruled out with injury during the ongoing Zimbabwe tour.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan returned home with a

finger injury sustained during the second T20 international at Harare on July 31.

Bangladesh will play the remaining two ODIs against Zimbabwe in Harare on August 7 and 10. — AFP

Thompson new chairman of England Cricket Board

LONDON: Richard Thompson has been appointed as the new chair of the England and Wales Cricket Board, ending a nine-month search to find the senior administrator in the English game.

The ECB had been without a permanent chairman since the resignation of Ian Watmore in October following the controversial cancellation of England's scheduled tour of Pakistan.

Thompson, 55, had long been regarded as one of the leading candidates to succeed Watmore, giving his record of financial and sporting success at Surrey.

The founder of the M&C Saatchi Merlin talent agency, Thompson will lead the ECB's ongoing response to the racism scandals that have rocked the English game in the last year following former spinner Azeem Rafiq's revelations of abuse while playing for Yorkshire.

"Cricket should be the



most inclusive sport in the country, welcoming people from all backgrounds, helping bring communities together," Thompson said in a statement.

"For those communities where we have fallen short, I will work tirelessly to restore their trust in the game." — AFP



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Australian mining firm progresses licensing for Suhar Copper Project

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

Australian mining firm Critical Resources Ltd has announced that it has reached a mutually agreeable outcome with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals regarding licence fees for the ongoing exploration of Block 4 and Block 5 within the Suhar Copper Project in the Sultanate of Oman.

The company holds a 51 per cent interest in Block 4, a 65 per cent interest in Block 5 and a 70% interest in two exploration licence applications near Block 10 to the west of Blocks 4 and 5 at the project.

The Suhar Copper Project covers 1,006 square kilometres of the copper-rich Ophiolite belt, proven to host clusters of relatively high-grade VHMS copper deposits.

The project holds a JORC resource of 819,000 tonnes at 3.4 per cent copper for 28,000 tonnes of copper metal, with high-grade VMS style deposits and a large

The project covers 1,006 square kilometres of the copper-rich Ophiolite belt, proven to host clusters of relatively high-grade VHMS copper deposits

exploration area, within a well-established mining region.

Notably, the ores within high-grade VHMS deposits are metallurgically simple and contain gold and silver credits. Block 5 is a high-grade, near-surface, copper plus silver and gold resource.

Critical Resources is an emerging base metals and lithium exploration and development company headquartered in Perth, Western Australia.

The company is focused on the exploration, development and advancement of its base metals asset in NSW, copper asset in Oman and suite of hard rock lithium assets in Ontario, Canada.

MSX Index climbs 10pc in July

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

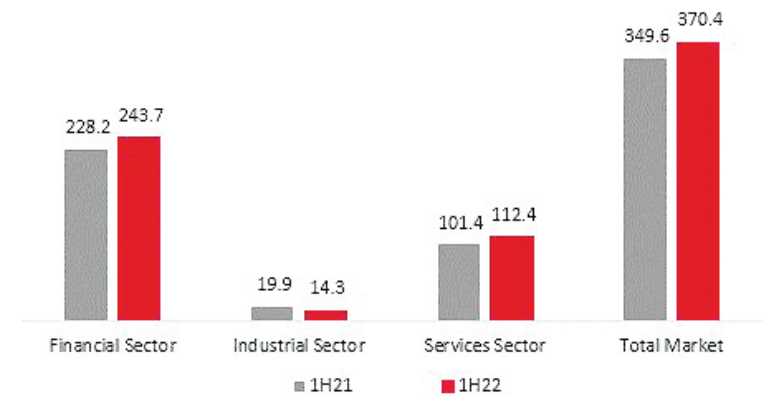
The main index of the Muscat Stock Exchange rose to 4,532 points, its best level since October 2018 after being supported by bank shares and several leading companies listed in the price index sample.

Last month, the stock market's main index rose 409 points, or about 10 per cent, from its level at the end of June, marking its highest monthly rise this year.

All sectoral indicators were up, with the exception of the industry index, which fell about 52 points and closed at 5,707 points, while the financial sector index recorded a high of 660 points and closed at 7,275 points, up about 10 per cent.

The rise, supported by banks and investment companies, which announced positive developments

MSX -Combined Net Profit for 1Q22 (OMR mn)



last month, came as they recorded an upturn in their profits and financial results, the services sector index rose 91 points and closed at 1,658 points, and the legitimate index climbed about 14 points and closed at 466 points.

Meanwhile, the combined net profit of MSX-listed companies grew by about 6 per cent YoY during 1H22 to about RO 370.4

million. On a sector-wise basis, the Financial Sector showed a YoY growth of about 7 per cent while the Services Sector posted an 11 per cent YoY growth in combined net profits of the companies compared to 1H21 and supported the combined net profit of the stock market.

The Industrial sector, however, saw a drop of 28 per

cent YoY in its combined net profit, largely due to a significant drop in combined profits of Food & Beverage sub-sector (-39 per cent YoY) and the Engineering & Construction sub-sectors.

The largest improvement in combined net profits within the Financial Sector was witnessed by the Banking sub-sector (+10 per cent YoY or RO 17.8 million).

The banking and leasing sub-sectors saw continued recovery in their combined net profits on the back of lower provision expenses this year as compared to last year, further supported by rise in operating income of most banks.

The Investment & Brokerage sub-sector also contributed positively to sector profits. The insurance sub-sector, however, continues to remain under pressure.

Over 620m barrels of Oman crude traded on DME

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

The Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) announced that more than 620 million barrels of Omani crude oil were traded in the first half of this year, reflecting the growing interest in it by regional oil producers and oil importers in Asia and the world.

The energy exchange indicated that the global markets went through sharp fluctuations in oil prices and the volumes of demand for crude oil due to the Covid pandemic at the beginning of 2020, as well as geopolitical turmoil in multiple regions around the world in 2021.

Thereafter, the oil markets returned to an upward trend at the beginning of 2022, buoyed



by the military operations in Ukraine, the high demand for oil and its products, and the easing of precautionary measures by many countries during the pandemic.

In the first half of this year, the Dubai-based exchange witnessed an increase in the trading volumes of the Oman crude oil futures

contract for the delivery month by 18 per cent, reaching 361 million barrels, compared to 296 million barrels for the same period in 2021.

The exchange delivered 90 million barrels in the first half of 2022, and the average monthly delivery was 15 million barrels, an increase of 23 per cent over the first

half of 2021.

Raid al Salami - Managing Director - Dubai Mercantile Exchange, said that Oman's crude oil prices witnessed a remarkable rise, reaching 51.48 per cent between January 2021 and June 2022, with the continued recovery of markets and increased demand in Asia on the one hand, and global tensions and political crises on the other.

The Director General of the DME added to the Oman News Agency that the performance of the Oman oil future contract reaffirms the importance of this indicator in the oil markets in the Middle East and Asia, as it plays a pivotal role in discovering oil prices and pricing more than 5 million barrels of oil per day.

Managing flood risks a new imperative for Oman

RISK MITIGATION: Insurance and reinsurance models provide effective financial mechanisms for easing any disaster-related losses for the national economy, says expert

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

Judging from footage shared on social media of the devastation unleashed by flash floods across many parts of the Sultanate of Oman last week, it is likely that the Omani government will be faced with yet another hefty public infrastructure repair bill. Insurance companies too will be

fretting about potential exposure from claims filed by private homes and businesses impacted by the severe flooding.

But given the rising frequency and worsening magnitude of flood events occurring in the Sultanate of Oman, of late, the relevant government authorities must get their act together as quickly as possible to manage these risks through the use of insurance and reinsurance tools, says a key market official.

According to Murtadha M J Ibrahim al Jamalani (pictured), Chairman, Finance & Insurance Committee - Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), climate change-induced natural disasters will continue to exact a



heavy toll on infrastructure and private property unless concrete measures are adopted to mitigate costs through effective risk management.

“The rapid development

of Oman's economy and infrastructure over the last 50 years has resulted in an exponential increase in the value of assets exposed to loss or damage by natural perils,” Al Jamalani warned.

“The concerned authorities have already been made aware of the severity and frequency of losses - both insured and uninsured - faced by the economy. But lack of improvement in risk management measurements may jeopardise the interests of all stakeholders. Various risk mitigation proposals are already before the authorities for their consideration. We eagerly look forward to their further action on these initiatives,” he noted.

A number of people lost their lives and their properties,

while rampaging floodwaters wrecked roads, disrupted water and wastewater networks, and also damaged private homes and businesses in several parts of the country during last week's downpours.

“Adding to Oman's vulnerability to deadly cyclones is its geographical location between the Tropic of Cancer and the Equator,” said Al Jamalani, noting that the country's rugged landscape turns floods into rampaging rivers in the aftermath of a wet spell. Compounding these challenges for Oman is global warming, which is spawning natural catastrophes once every 3 to 5 years, he further warned.

In this regard, the official

underlined the role of insurance industry mechanisms in moderating the losses for the government, as well as the public and private sectors, from the effects of natural disasters.

“Insurance and reinsurance models provide effective financial mechanisms for easing any disaster-related losses for the national economy and the overall social welfare system. They can be activated by introducing and implementing technical Insurance & Reinsurance and financial measures which are commonly applied in disaster-prone regions under the supervision of the Ministry of Finance and Capital Market Authority.



OQ signs pact to support OAPD

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

As part of its efforts to enhance the role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) dedicated to serving people with special needs, OQ, the global integrated energy group, signed an agreement with the Omani Association for Persons with Disabilities (OAPD).

As per the agreement, the Group will purchase medical equipment for those suffering from motor disability.

The agreement was signed by Maryam al Shaibani, VP for IT, Technology and Digital Transformation, and Haider bin Muhammad Jawad al Lawatia, Vice Chairman of the Omani Association for Disabled.

Commenting on the agreement, Maryam al Shaibani noted, "OQ Group is proud of its continuous contributions to support NGOs that provide

exceptional services to persons with disabilities to integrate these groups into the society and to empower them to lead a better life. This support also aims to alleviate the sufferings of people dealing with such issues by providing medical supplies and assistance that help them to lead a better life."

She indicated that OQ Group pays close attention to social aspects within the framework of its social investment program. This agreement also complements the efforts made by these voluntary associations.

For his part, Haider al Lawatia expressed his gratitude for OQ's assistance to the Association by providing medical equipment required by these groups. He also pointed out the importance of this support in helping such people overcome disabilities.

He also called on the society to join hands and contribute to support associations that care for people with special needs.

Huawei inaugurates mega Experience Store in Mall of Oman

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

Huawei Consumer Business Group (CBG) has opened its largest and third Experience Store in Muscat. The new store on level 3 of Mall of Oman is also one of the tech giant's biggest experience store in the region. The inauguration of the flagship retail experience store consolidates Huawei's long-standing position as a leader of technology, innovative devices and exceptional products in the Sultanate of Oman.

The opening event was led by Chen Jian Han- CEO of Huawei Oman, Steven Li, President of Huawei CBG, Middle East Multi Countries and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Executive Director of the Strategic Planning Eng Ahmed al Hadabi who attended the ceremony as special guest. Mohammed al Balushi, General Manager, ABT Group Oman, Huawei's partner and official distributor in Oman was also present during the inauguration and celebrated this milestone alongside Huawei and the brand's enthusiasts.

Chen Jian Han- CEO of Huawei Oman commented, "We are thrilled to be expanding our retail presence here as an essential part of our growth objectives in Oman. we are committed to bringing the best user experience



and most intelligent technology to our customers. This is a dedicated Huawei store with all our products, smartphones, accessories, tablets, PCs, and even the IOT products. We promise our customers to continue working on channel expansion in Oman, providing wider product availability to meet their needs for Huawei products."

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority Executive Director of the Strategic Planning Eng Ahmed al Hadabi in his speech "I am honoured to be part of the opening of the largest Huawei Experience Store in the Sultanate of Oman. I also hope that it will be a new and bright expansion for Huawei for years to

come."

"We are proud of what we have accomplished in the Middle East the past few years. Thanks to the trust of our customers, we have strong presence in Oman, which is definitely one of the fast-growing markets," added Steven Li, President of Huawei CBG, MEMC Mohammed al Balushi, General Manager, ABT Group Oman, Huawei's partner and official distributor in Oman, said, "I would like to extend my thanks to Eng Ahmed bin Hassan al Hadabi, Executive Director of the Strategic Planning for Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, for his generous support with our opening ceremony. Being the official agent

of Huawei in the Sultanate of Oman, we are proud to be part of this company and their celebration with the third and largest Huawei Experience Store in Oman."

More than a shop, the Huawei Experience Store offers a comprehensive retail experience with customer engagement highest in mind. Customers will look forward to a hands-on, personalised experience with access to the brand's latest products and services all under one roof. The store will showcase all of the latest devices along with a service centre.

The Huawei Experience Store at Mall of Oman is open daily from 10 am to 10 pm.

International travel picks up in June: IATA



VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Global air passenger demand continued its strong recovery, with revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs) rising by 76.2 per cent in year-on-year (YoY) terms in June, according to the latest market analysis.

International RPKs grew by 229.5 per cent YoY and domestic RPKs increased by 5.2 per cent YoY. Domestic traffic levels are now 18.6 per cent below their pre-pandemic 2019 levels.

The industry-wide passenger load factor was 82.4 per cent in June, up 12.9 percentage points (pp) over the past year and returning to above 80 per cent for the first time since January 2020.

"The re-opening of the Asia Pacific markets will provide renewed impetus to the global passenger recovery while inflation and higher interest rates may eventually begin to dampen the

pent-up demand for air travel," the report said.

The industry-wide passenger load factor (PLF) returned to above 80 per cent for the first time since January 2020 and has increased by 12.9pp over the past year. Both the domestic and international PLFs are above 80 per cent, with the latter increasing significantly - by almost 30 pp - over the past 12 months.

Middle East carriers experienced a 10.8 per cent year-on-year decrease in cargo volumes in June. Significant benefits from traffic being redirected to avoid flying over Russia failed to materialise.

Capacity was up 6.7 per cent compared to June 2021. Demand for the first half-year was 9.3% below 2021 levels, the weakest first half performance of all regions. The first half-year capacity was 6.3 per cent above 2021 levels.

"Overall, the latest bookings data suggest that, notwithstanding

high energy prices, disruptions relating to labour and capacity constraints in some markets, and various other pressures on the industry, consumers' willingness to travel remains strong," the report said.

Meanwhile, air cargo performance was impacted by several factors.

Trade activity ramped up slightly in June as lockdowns in China due to Omicron were eased. Emerging regions (Latin America and Africa) also contributed to growth with stronger volumes.

New export orders, a leading indicator of cargo demand and world trade, decreased in all markets, except China.

The war in Ukraine continues to impair cargo capacity used to serve Europe as several airlines based in Russia and Ukraine were key cargo players.

"Air cargo demand over the first half of 2022 was 2.2 per cent above pre-Covid levels (first half 2019). That's a strong performance, particularly considering continuing supply chain constraints and the loss of capacity due to the war in Ukraine. Current economic uncertainties have had little impact on demand for air cargo, but developments will need to be closely monitored in the second half," said Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General.

Middle Eastern carriers experienced a 10.8 per cent year-on-year decrease in cargo volumes in June.

Significant benefits from traffic being redirected to avoid flying over Russia failed to materialise. Capacity was up 6.7 per cent compared to June 2021.

Demand for the first half-year was 9.3 per cent below 2021 levels, the weakest first half performance of all regions. The first half-year capacity was 6.3% above 2021 levels.

Managing flood risks a new imperative for Oman

FROM PAGE 13

This is the only way to keep potential losses to the local market within bearable limits," he stressed.

Previous disasters have prompted the industry to act to pare its losses, according to the well-known industry professional. For example, cyclone events and flash floods have spurred the insurance industry, as well as the general public, to reassess the scope of comprehensive property insurance coverage, and to include household belongings in their policies as well.

Furthermore, vulnerable segments, notably fishermen, farmers, farm owners and so on, have become increasingly concerned about the impacts

of cyclones, flash floods, mudslides, lightning strikes and other such natural phenomena on their lives and property.

In this regard, Al Jamalani welcomed the announcement by the CMA in June 2020 about the proposed formation of a 'Catastrophe Fund' by the government to cover un-insured losses. But the initiative has since languished, he lamented.

"We are anxious to hear more about the fund and its application methodology. This is to ensure that any duplication with existing funds is avoided, and double compensation payment practices averted," he said.

Speaking to the Observer, the official also reiterated his longstanding call for

the establishment of a joint venture Central Insurance & Reinsurance Corporation as a Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative. Such an entity, he said, will help build reinsurance capacity and security within the country and the wider region, manage cash-flow and support foreign currency inflows.

He appealed for the establishment of the entity within the framework of the Oman Vision 2040 strategy.

Further, to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders and enhance the contribution of the insurance and reinsurance segments in the national GDP, insurance firms are encouraged to weigh Merger & Acquisition (M&A) options to support their business growth, he added.



Rising US interest rates won't trigger another Asian financial crisis

HOE EE KHOR AND KIMI XU JIANG

Hawkish shifts in the US Federal Reserve's monetary policy have often led to heightened financial and economic stress in emerging economies. In the early 1990s, the Fed raised interest rates preemptively to curb inflation, precipitating the 1994 Mexican 'tequila' crisis. In 2013, the Fed signalled its intention to tighten monetary policy, resulting in the major emerging-markets sell-off known as the "taper tantrum."

Given the region's history, one might expect that policymakers in the Asean+3 countries – the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, together with China (including Hong Kong), Japan and South Korea – would be particularly anxious about the Fed's increasing hawkishness. Indeed, the Fed's recent efforts to curb high and persistent inflation have prompted fears of a regional financial crisis, similar to the Asian financial crisis of 1997. But the Fed's actions will not have as much impact on the region as they did in the late 1990s.

Today, the Asean+3 economies are stronger and more durable, making a 1997-style financial meltdown improbable.

The 1997 crisis was mainly caused by a combination of macroeconomic imbalances and sharp capital-flow reversals, triggered by speculative attacks on the Thai baht and other regional currencies. East Asian economies had enjoyed a period of rapid growth before the crisis – funded by surging capital inflows and excessive foreign lending – but without sound regulation and policy.

Painful structural reforms have helped Asean+3 economies rebuild balance sheets, strengthen economic fundamentals, and establish robust regulatory frameworks. The region's policymakers, more skillful in navigating uncertainties and managing shocks, have assembled a formidable, multi-layered \$8.8 trillion financial safety net. In addition to their foreign reserves – \$7 trillion in total – the Asean+3 economies can now rely on multilateral swap arrangements like the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralisation agreement, and the International Monetary Fund.

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The Asean+3 economies are stronger and more resilient today than they were in the late 1990s. As a result, tighter US monetary policy may lead to higher borrowing costs and trigger portfolio outflows similar to the 'taper tantrum' of 2013, but a full-blown 1997-style financial crisis in Asia is unlikely



Oman's first rooftop solar PV I-REC registration announced

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, AUGUST 6

The growth of renewable energy in the Sultanate of Oman continues to rise year upon year with the addition of wind projects, small-scale solar projects, as well as large-scale (utility) projects. These projects help to support Oman's goals of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) 7 per cent by 2030.

This is also beneficial for electricity consumers who want to see the country move towards more sustainable sources of energy, while reducing dependency on fossil fuels and decreasing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

Some consumers are moving beyond this and installing solar panels directly on to their properties to ensure the most direct use of renewable energy and reduction in GHGs that would have come from using energy from the grid. Such emissions from electricity consumption are known as Scope 2 emissions and are a regular part of corporate GHG reporting requirements.

To properly report the use and consumption of renewable energy for a company's GHG Scope 2 assessment such renewable energy must be validated using an energy attribute certificate (EAC) like renewable energy certificates (RECs) or guarantees of origin (GOs).

Al Madina Logistics Services Company (AMLS) in Barka became the first company in the Sultanate of Oman to register a rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) power system with the I-REC Standard

NEW RECOGNITION: AL MADINA LOGISTICS SERVICES COMPANY (AMLS) BECOMES FIRST LOCAL FIRM TO REGISTER A ROOFTOP SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC POWER SYSTEM WITH THE I-REC STANDARD FOUNDATION'S INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY TRACKING SYSTEM

Foundation's international renewable energy tracking system.

Dr Michael Tsang, CEO of Three Pillars Consulting (TPC), which is the I-REC Standard Foundation's Accredited Issuer of I-REC in Oman, noted that, "I-RECs for electricity are a powerful tool because they allow end-users and energy consumers to make a reliable and meaningful claim that they are consuming clean, carbon-free, renewable energy."

For instance, each megawatt-hour (MWh) of solar energy that AMLS produces with their system, they will generate an I-REC (certificate) that they can use for validating their commitments towards consuming renewable energy, as well as validating their use of zero-emissions electrical energy.

As Oleg Dobrovolsky, Regional Director of the International I-REC Standard Foundation, explains, "This development in the energy market represents an important step in the transition towards innovative renewable energy procurement

options. Leveraging transparent, robust and reliable tracking of renewable energy consumption for companies can have a significant positive impact on the electricity generation in Oman."

"We are proud to be at the forefront of supporting Oman's renewable energy, supplemented further with this recognition under the I-REC Standard Foundation," noted Nader Hakim, Group COO of AMLS. "We view our responsibility towards sustainability as an integral part of our logistics service offering, placing high value on CO2 emission reductions through clean energy production. Our 2.1 megawatt (MWdc) solar plant spanning 15,000 square metres was the largest rooftop capacity when energised in April of 2021, and a further step towards our goal of being a net-zero emissions operator."

The I-REC Standard Foundation (I-REC Standard) is a non-profit organisation that redeveloped the International Attribute Tracking Standard in April 2021 to clarify the roles between the I-REC Standard and market facilitators.

These market facilitators are coordinating with the I-REC Standard to ensure the tracking standard and associated systems are future-proof. One of the recent developments is the implementation of 15-minute granularity timestamping on the certificates to better allow accounting periods associated with Scope 2 emissions to match the temporal reality of end-user consumption. Such features may be necessary, for example, to certify and validate green hydrogen production along its value chain.

The problem with valuating control and branding



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The writer is a member of the International Press Association

The dilemma when evaluating a business is always about what to factor in, and what not. On the pages of the Oman Observer I have shared many tips to achieve accurate valuation, but valuation itself is more of an art than a science.

Recently I was involved in a tech business valuation that turned out to be quite interesting.

There were two venture capital firms involved, one of which — let us call it VC A in this case — was particularly adamant about including voting rights in the Board of Directors as part of their investment. The other VC — let us refer to it as VC Z — said something that was quite memorable to me.

She questioned why VC A

wanted control over the company and stated: "We (VC Z) have just completed the valuation according to the current conditions. If you want control over the company, we have to redo the whole valuation."

For a moment I was lost, but then I understood what she meant. The valuation that VC Z derived was based on the current management team and its ability to make decisions internally. Adding to the equation a third party decision maker such as VC A would have unequivocally changed the power dynamics within the company.

More specifically, the business was built before VC A joined the Board of Directors, thus all factors taken in consideration when the valuation was made excluded the presence of VC A.

EACH VALUATION COULD BE PERFECTED BASED ON THE EXISTING FUNDAMENTALS AS WELL AS A TOUCH OF PERSONALISATION THAT THE INVESTORS MAY ADD, AS IF IT WAS A SECRET RECIPE

Eventually, adding VC A to the Board would have changed the performance of the company, and not necessarily for the best. If VC A made wrong decision as part of the Board of Directors, the business would decrease in value.

The second case that I want to share was the valuation of a traditional business in Oman.

For the sake of keeping parties

confidential I will only describe the business as one of the leading manufacturing companies. When the investor approached the company with their valuation — let us imagine that the valuation was RO 1 million — the company argued that their business was worth at least 50 per cent more because of the strong brand value.

In theory the argument is valid, but the investor counter-argued that branding was already factored in, in the initial valuation. That took me a while to grasp.

What the investor meant to say was that the actual value of the company on the market was calculated by keeping in account what the company had achieved thus far. And that naturally included the brand value. The

investor stated that: "If your company had a lower brand value, it would have not reached the current market dominance."

As an example, if we were to value a top brand — such as Apple — we would include the value of their tech plus brand together, not as separate items.

In other words, the tech value of an iPhone would be worth much less without the Apple logo on it. Thus the request of the company to add 50 per cent on top of the current valuation was considered by the investor as a double factoring the value of branding.

Each valuation could be perfected based on the existing fundamentals as well as a touch of personalisation that the investors may add, as if it was a secret recipe.

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#Living_with_COVID19

Abu Fashighah: The sand-covered village in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali's Wadi Al Murr

According to some villagers, a sandstorm which happened 30 years ago totally buried the whole village of Abu Fashighah located in Wadi Al Murr about 30 minutes away from the centre of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali. Instead of reviving the village, the inhabitants decided to leave instead... **P20**



Going once, going twice... Pakistan lions up for auction

A PAKISTAN ZOO IS auctioning off a dozen lions to private collectors next week to free up space for a pride that won't stop growing.

Lahore Safari Zoo now has so many big cats that their lions and tigers have to take it in turns to access the paddocks, said Tanvir Ahmed Janjua, the zoo's deputy director.

"Not only will we free up more space here, but our expenses for meat to feed them will also decrease," he told AFP.

The zoo is currently home to 29 lions, and officials plan an auction on August 11 to sell 12 of them, aged between two and five years old.

There are also six resident tigers and two jaguars.

Conservationists are opposed to the sale, with the environmental group WWF saying the creatures should be moved to other established zoos, or breeding females sterilised or given contraceptives.

"Animal exchanges and donations



between zoos are a widely accepted practice," the organisation's Uzma Khan told AFP.

"Once an institution such as a zoo places a price tag on a wildlife species it is promoting trade -- which is counterproductive to conservation," she added.

Keeping lions, tigers and other exotic wildlife as pets is not uncommon in Pakistan, and is seen as a status symbol.

Wealthy owners post images and video clips of their big cats on social media, and rent them out as props for movies and photoshoots.

Zoo officials have set a reserve of 150,000 Pakistani rupees (\$700) per cat, but hope each will fetch around two million rupees.

Not just anyone can take part in the auction, however.

Janjua said buyers will have to be registered with provincial authorities and show they have the means to provide proper care and shelter for the creatures.

Zoo veterinary officer Muhammad Rizwan Khan told AFP an initial attempt last year to auction lions fell through as potential buyers lacked the

necessary documentation or licences. Nouman Hassan, who fell foul of authorities in the past when he was filmed walking his pet tiger on a leash in Lahore, plans to take part.

"I will try to buy two to three lions for sure," he told AFP, adding the auction was a good way to diversify the gene pool for private collectors who already owned a big cat.

With little legislation to safeguard animal welfare, zoos across Pakistan are notorious for their poor facilities, but the Lahore Safari Zoo is considered one of the best, set over 200 acres.

In April 2020 a court ordered the only zoo in the country's capital to shut after poor facilities and mistreatment of the animals there were revealed.

The facility had drawn international condemnation for its treatment of an Asian elephant named Kaavan, who was later airlifted to retirement in Cambodia in a jumbo project spearheaded by US popstar and actress Cher.

Veterinarian Khan said the animals at Lahore Safari Zoo were being given the best possible care -- something reflected in their fecundity.

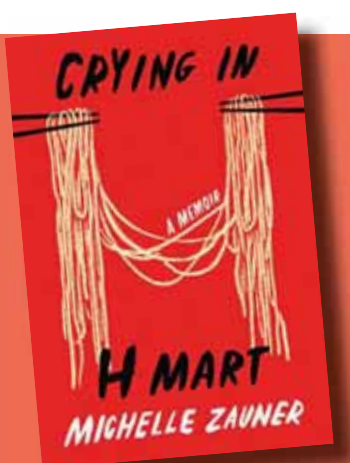
"They are experiencing a good life in captivity with us," he said. — AFP

READ

CRYING IN H MART

BY MICHELLE ZAUNER

The daughter of a Korean mother and Jewish-American father, and leader of the indie rock project Japanese Breakfast, describes creating her own identity after losing her mother to cancer.



INVASIVE SPECIES

Two invasive species, the American bullfrog and the brown tree snake, cost the world an estimated \$16 billion between 1986 and 2020 by causing problems ranging from crop damage to power outages, according to a study published on Thursday. — Reuters



FASHION FAREWELL

A long queue of Russians snaked through a Moscow shopping centre on Tuesday, waiting to get into H&M as the fashion retailer flung open its doors for a final time to sell inventory before making a full exit from the Russian market. —Reuters





Saudi exhibit offers immersive look at Prophet's Hijrah trek

A SAUDI MUSEUM is using filmed re-enactments and contemporary artwork to depict a key episode from Prophet Mohammed's life that led to the establishment of the Muslim community.

The exhibition seeks to illustrate — and enliven — the 1,400-year-old story of the Hijrah, when Prophet Mohammed, threatened with assassination, undertook an eight-day, 400-kilometre (250-mile) migration from Mecca to Medina.

Opened to the public this week, it will be housed for nine months at the Ithra Museum in the eastern city of Dhahran before touring domestically and then abroad.

Most Muslims know the Hijrah story in broad strokes, though never has it been presented in such an immersive way, according to Saudi scholar Abdullah Hussein Alkadi.

It incorporates everything from centuries-old artefacts to modern-day drone footage, said Alkadi, who has spent decades studying the Hijrah and whose research formed the foundation of the exhibition.

Ordinary Saudis "know that the Prophet migrated from Mecca to Medina — that's it," Alkadi said, lamenting that the material was not thoroughly covered in schools.

It should be equally eye-



opening for non-Muslims who might not know the story at all,

conveying messages — like the need for tolerance towards migrants — that are relatable for everyone, Alkadi said. "You have to have tolerance. If you don't have tolerance with all types of people — regardless of their religion, regardless of their ethnicity, regardless of their gender or whatever — no way can you live a peaceful life," he said. Three years in the making, the exhibition features work by academics and artists from 20 countries. Short films by American

director Ovidio Salazar depict how elders from the Quraysh tribe plotted to kill the Prophet Mohammed, prompting him to flee, and an encounter with the bounty hunter Suraqah, who was offered 100 camels to return the Prophet dead or alive.

Museum-goers will also see a life-size replica of the Prophet's cherished camel Qaswa, contemporary photographs from the Hijrah route and textiles from the Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

Other elements are more interpretive, notably a piece by Saudi artist Zahra al Ghamdi, whose works have previously shown at the Venice Biennale and the British Museum.

For the Hijrah exhibition, Al Ghamdi spent five months dipping pieces of fabric in mud and clay and knotting them together.

The knots, displayed against a white backdrop, are meant to signify the bonds between the residents of Medina and Prophet Mohammed and his followers.

"Through this work, I am making an appeal to revive and bring to life this concept of brotherhood, which gives meaning to life," she said. — AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Colombian soprano breaking opera 'molds'



A MARILYN MONROE drama, a cannibal road movie and a black comedy about family life are among the stories showcased at this year's Venice Film Festival. The world's oldest film festival, regarded as a launch pad for Oscar contenders as awards season approaches, runs from August 31 to September 10, and features dozens of hotly anticipated movies both in

Fraser, trying to reconnect with his teenage daughter, played by 'Stranger Things' actor Sink. Festival regular Cate Blanchett, who presided over the jury in 2020, returns a competition hopeful with the film "TAR", directed by Todd Field — a fictional tale about a famed composer and conductor, who leads a major German orchestra. This year's main jury is



and out of competition. Among the leading lights expected to show up on the red carpet will be Timothée Chalamet, Sadie Sink, Adam Driver, Olivia Wilde, Harry Styles, Penelope Cruz, Ana de Armas, Cate Blanchett, Hugh Jackman, Christoph Waltz and Sigourney Weaver.

International art house directors will share the stage with established Hollywood figures, as pictures by Darren Aronofsky, Andrew

led by Julianne Moore. "TAR" is one of nine US-produced movies in competition, with five from France, four from Italy and two from Iran — including "No Bears" by Panahi, who was last week ordered to serve a six-year prison sentence in Iran after being convicted of propaganda against the Islamic Republic in 2010. Venice often provides a first glimpse of future Oscar winners such as "Birdman" in 2015. Its director, Inarritu,



Dominik, Alejandro Inarritu, Luca Guadagnino, Joanna Hogg, Koji Fukada and Jafar Panahi get their first outing.

Four originals by the TV streaming giant Netflix line up in the 23-title competition section, including Dominik's "Blonde", which stars de Armas in a fictionalised take on the tragic life of US actress Monroe.

For the first time, Netflix gets the honour of opening the festival with Noah Baumbach's "White Noise" starring Driver and Greta Gerwig — a satiric chronicle of family life that is based on a novel of the same name by Don DeLillo.

"It analyses the poorest and most marginalised in America, the failure of the American Dream," the festival's artistic director, Alberto Barbera, said on Tuesday. OSCAR SPRINGBOARD Aronofsky's "The Whale" tells the tale of an obese man, played by Brendan

returns to the city's Lido island with his latest movie — "Bardo" a Spanish-language Netflix comedy set in Mexico.

Likewise Martin McDonagh premiered "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" in Venice in 2017 which went on to scoop multiple awards. His follow-up "The Banshees of Inisherin", set in Ireland and starring Brendan Gleeson and Colin Farrell, will get its first showing on the Lido.

As ever, some of the out-of-competition films will receive as much attention as those pushing for the Golden Lion prize.

These include psychological thriller "Don't Worry Darling", directed by Wilde and featuring Florence Pugh and Styles, "Dead For a Dollar", a Western by Walter Hill starring Waltz and a documentary "Winter on Fire: Ukraine's Fight for Freedom" by Evgeny Afineevsky. — Reuters



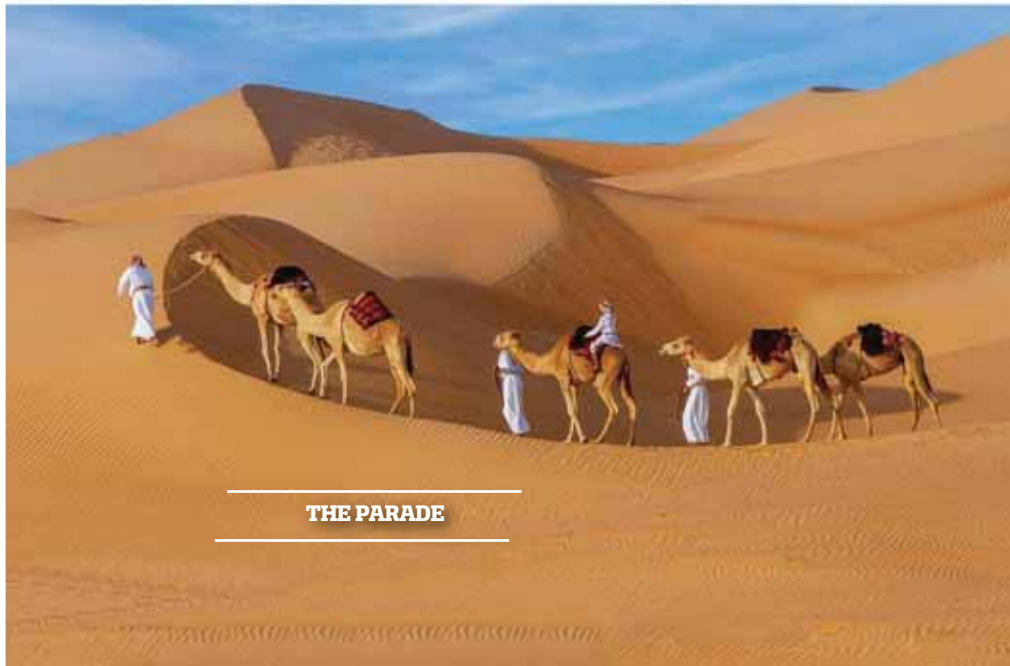
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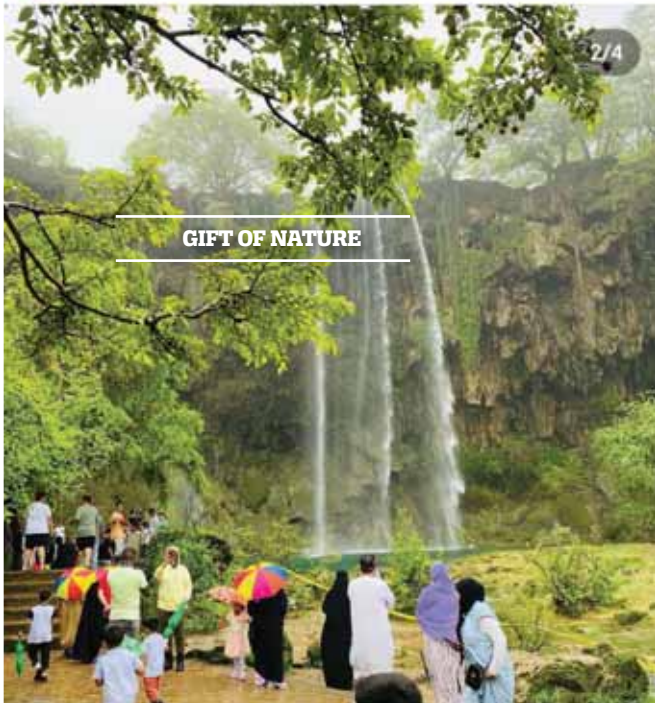


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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Lady Gaga dog robbing suspect recaptured after mistaken release



A 19-YEAR-OLD accused of shooting Lady Gaga's dog walker to steal her French bulldogs last year has been recaptured after being mistakenly released, authorities in Los Angeles have said.

The news that James Howard Jackson, had been taken into custody once more came on Wednesday as another of the three men charged in the robbery was sentenced to four years in prison.

The gang shot Ryan Fischer as he exercised the three prize pets in Hollywood in February 2021. Fischer sustained chest injuries in the attack, and said on Instagram a month later he had suffered a collapsed lung.

Jackson, suspected of pulling the trigger, had been mistakenly released from custody earlier this year after what the US Marshals Service described as a "clerical error."

They had offered a reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to his arrest, saying that he should be considered "armed and dangerous."

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Office said he was finally "apprehended without incident" in the city of Palmdale. They did not give further details, and it was not clear if the reward was being collected.

Also on Wednesday, a California court sentenced Jaylin Keyshawn White, who had admitted to being part of the gang, to four years in prison.

At a court hearing in Los Angeles on Wednesday, White, now 20, pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery, and received a four-year prison sentence.

White had been charged in April 2021 along with Jackson and Lafayette Shon Whaley, now 28.

Surveillance footage from the scene of the attack shows a car stopping near Fischer and two people jumping out.

One demands that Fischer "give it up" before a struggle, in which a gunshot is heard, and the dog walker falls to the ground, screaming.

The attackers each grab one dog — Koji and Gustav — and leave Fischer shouting for help.

The third dog — Miss Asia — ran back to the walker after the robbers drove away.

The robbery led the "Poker face" singer to offer a \$500,000 reward for the return of the animals, whose theft highlighted a growing trend targeting the valuable breed.

The woman who police said handed in the dogs in response to the reward, has been charged with being an accessory after the fact and with receiving stolen goods.

Los Angeles police said at the time they did not believe the dogs were targeted because of their owner, but because of the breed's appeal on the black market.

Small and friendly — and thus easy to grab — French bulldogs do not have large litters.

Their relative scarcity, and their association with stars such as Lady Gaga, Reese Witherspoon, Hugh Jackman, Chrissy Teigen, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Madonna gives them added cachet, and means they can change hands for thousands of dollars. — AFP

CULTURE

Samira, celebrity snapper of southern Iraq



SHE'S SOUTHERN Iraq's celebrity photographer, a former political prisoner who has spent more than 60 years behind the lens documenting people and places and defying convention.

Samira Mazal is 77 and still going strong more than half a century after turning to photography to feed her family — because she had no choice.

"Peasants, intellectuals, I've photographed them all," says the mother of two, her black hijab framing a face lined by life.

"I have photographed Amarah in all its beauty — I went deep into the marshes," to the south of the city in the floodplain of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Everyone in the area turns to Studio Samira, be it for a passport photograph or to have a couple's portrait taken ahead of their wedding.

She tells how she became the first female photographer in Maysan province aged just 16, despite familial conventions that ruled in the Iraq of the 1960s, and also how political activism led to imprisonment and torture.

"My family has never known any other business — we're all photographers," Samira says.

Framed photographs lining the walls bear witness to her trade, in both black and white or in colours faded by time.

She has albums of images showing Iraq as it used to be: black-clad women carrying huge bales balanced on their heads; a smiling peasant woman in a flowery dress, her hair braided, standing near a cow; a mother and child filling a pot with water from the river.

SOCIETY CAN BE CRUEL

Samira's father was among the first to introduce photography to the province.

"I asked him to initiate me into the craft, but he said: 'No, you're too young. You can't — society can be cruel'," she recalls.

But soon circumstances

would force him to change his mind. He was rendered blind in a botched operation, and could no longer provide for his family.

So Samira had to step in.

She started off using the daguerreotype method of the 1800s that uses silver-plated copper sheets, but then her father sold off some land so she could buy more modern equipment.

"My studio became extraordinarily successful," she smiles. "Because I was a young woman, I could take pictures of families."

Samira exploited the norms of a conservative society: the male heads of households preferred that a woman photographer, not a man, take the pictures of their wives and daughters.

Bassem al Subaid is one satisfied client of Studio Samira.

"There isn't a single household in all of Maysan province that doesn't know Samira the photographer," he says.

"My generation got to know Samira when we came to be photographed by her," adds the man in his forties. "It was the previous generation that saw her political activism."

In 1963, Iraq was being torn apart by revolutions and bloody crackdowns, and the then adolescent had no idea that a communist tract would put her behind bars.

A SOURCE OF PRIDE

After General Abdel Salam Aref took power in a Baath party coup, three militants came to

Samira's studio and asked her to mass-produce a poster denouncing the new regime.

She accepts that she had not yet completely formed her own political opinions, and was swayed at the time by her brother's sympathies.

"In all of Amarah, there wasn't a single wall without a pasted copy of the poster," she boasts. "It wasn't a crime — it's a source of pride."

A picture of herself, which she still has today, made her famous. It shows her lying on a hospital bed after being tortured in a building in Amarah.

"I was screaming so hard I thought the whole town would come and save me," she recalls.

It was not to be: she spent the next four years, ill and abused, in a Baghdad prison.

She was freed after an international campaign that led to pardons for several political prisoners in Iraq.

In 1981, she was again jailed briefly under the rule of then dictator Saddam Hussein. And then again 10 years later over a protest in Amarah against the repercussions of the Gulf War over Kuwait.

Like several other women prisoners, she was granted a pardon after just a few months.

Today the photographic studio is still welcoming clients, and despite her age, the revolutionary flame still burns brightly in Samira.

She sails the October 2019 uprising, sparked by angry young Iraqis seeking to bring those in power to account.

"The protesters should have transformed their movement into a massive revolution to root out corruption and the corrupt," Samira says. — AFP

DISCOVERY

Three colonial-era burials found in pre-Hispanic Peru sanctuary



A TEAM OF PERUVIAN archaeologists uncovered three burials from the Spanish colonial period on top of a pre-Hispanic temple, which may be up to 500 years old, a researcher said on Thursday.

Peru was under Spanish rule for nearly 300 years, from 1532 when they invaded and defeated the Inca empire until 1821 when popular uprisings led to independence.

"We are working with the hypothesis that the remains belong to a colonial cemetery," Lucenida Carrion, head of the Archaeology Directorate of the Park of Legends in the

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the "Tres Palos" sanctuary was used by the Incas as a tambo (food deposit) and during the colonial era, adobe (mud and straw) houses were built.

WOODEN CROSS

"What stands out is the cross carried on the chest of one character. This cross indicates the moment of transformation to Christianity of the natives or inhabitants that populated this place," Carrion said.

Other than the brown wooden cross, sandals, textile



Peruvian capital, told AFP.

The park's 54 archaeological monuments and sanctuaries have been the subject of study for decades.

"In this summit, we have discovered the burials of two adults and a child who were wrapped in cotton cloth," the archaeologist added.

The temple, or pre-Hispanic sanctuary known as "Tres Palos" where the burial site is located, is more than 1,000 years old and is located on land adjacent to the park.

After the pre-Hispanic era, the site was inhabited by settlers from colonial Lima.

"We are considering whether the remains are from the colonial era," Carrion said, pointing to the clothes, hair and a Christian crucifix found on one of the remains.

"This finding is important because it will help us determine if there has been a continuous occupation at this site since pre-Hispanic times."

fragments, bracelets, funeral mantles and the remains of ceramic vessels were also discovered.

The archaeological team's findings are among the most important in recent years and add to the study of numerous material testimonies uncovered inside the archaeological complex of Maranga, located near the coast of Lima.

"The works carried out in the place allow us to establish that its history dates back approximately 2,000 years and that they were occupied by the Lima culture, the Ychsma and finally the Incas," Carrion said.

The Park of Legends, built in 1964, is named after the pre-Hispanic legends illustrated at the entrance of the enclosure.

In 2018, a team of archaeologists found a 1,300-year-old cemetery from the pre-Hispanic Lima culture near the park. — AFP

art & life

Local Scene

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SUNDAY | AUGUST 7 | 2022

Abu Fashighah: The sand-covered village in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali's Wadi Al Murr

By Yeru Ebu
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Throughout the day, the wind blew hard. It carried with it dust and sand that cover everything in its path. At one point, it was a thriving village with nearly a dozen concrete houses. The inhabitants owned camels and goats that roamed freely across several kilometres of dry land where grass and shrubs grow sporadically but transform into a green wilderness during rainy seasons.

The village eventually died as the sand piled up. According to some villagers, a sandstorm which happened 30 years ago totally buried the whole village and rather than reviving the village, they decided to leave instead.

From July to September, the cold wind that made khareef possible in Dhofar is also the same strong wind that tortures this tiny town. Over time, the sand grew higher and higher coming into the houses, entering tiny holes and filling up nooks and crannies. In a fight between man and nature, nature always wins. This is the best place that exemplified that. The challenges posed by constant flooding and desertification would eventually drive the townspeople away.

Finding this old village nearly 30 minutes off the town centre of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali is a challenge. From the main road, it was almost a 15-minute drive deeper into rough tracks that disappear when it floods.

Some called this the buried village of Wadi al Murr. An interna-

tional news story made it sound that the whole village was buried under the sand, referring to it as "swallowed by the desert." AFP further claimed that they interviewed a local making it sounds that the "moving dunes had re-exposed some of the dwellings" and that it has created nostalgia, and thus the interest of the inhabitants to revisit their old homes.

Our visit showed that the last dwellings are holding on, trying their best to remain intact despite the onslaught of the elements.

We made some inquiries in nearby towns for people who might have an idea about the village. Information was hard to get as some of the villagers had moved far from their former homes. Some referred to it as the Village of Abu Fashighah and while they seem to know its location, has totally lost track of its stories.

After passing through a series of wadis and private farms dotted by thick-leaved trees, we drove through sandy rough tracks. The recent rains had encouraged pockets of greens to emerge so the usually dreary brown desert scene usually we saw on social media was replaced by a somewhat refreshing landscape.

It's hard to imagine what life was like in this village. There are no electric poles which meant that electricity would not have made it to this part. The nearby towns also relied on water delivery trucks which meant the local source of potable water was hard to come by.

Just like other villages, the mosque is one of

the still distinguishable features of the village. Some of the houses remain intact but filled with sands inside. For the rest of the houses, you can still trace the foundations.

Getting inside the houses is eerie. Typical of traditional Omani homes, the ceilings are carved with ornate art. The windows are small, enough for the light to enter. The doors to the houses are mostly open with sand spilling out. You can still tell which one is the kitchen, which one is the room and which one is the majlis. They were simple dwellings and had the people found a way to keep the sand away, they would have stayed. It was a nice scenic environment with mountains of sands competing with solid rocks but the challenges were too much even for people who've lived their lives contending with the desert.

In the late afternoon, it was hard to sit on top of the dunes in the middle of the village. The strong winds move the sand so fast that in five minutes, no part in your body is not covered in sand.

The village of Abu Fashighah, as some of the locals we asked pointed out, is becoming a tourist attraction. On our visit alone, there were a few groups of travellers just wanting to see what the town looks like.

It has an appeal to it, nostalgia as some people describe. But visiting the village, one is also reminded of the stark reality that the sand is moving in. Whether one believes in climate change or not and its off-shot of desertification, humans are losing fast.

