

HM greetings to King of Spain

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Felipe VI of Spain on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to King Felipe VI. His Majesty also wished the friendly people of Spain further progress and prosperity. – ONA



ADVERSE CLIMATIC  
CONDITIONS  
INCURRED IMMENSE  
MATERIAL LOSSES

WILL ACCORD  
ATTENTION TO  
RESTORATION  
OF DAMAGED  
INFRASTRUCTURE

HM THANKS  
LEADERS OF  
FRIENDLY STATES  
FOR CONVEYING  
THEIR SYMPATHIES

HM HAILS VALIANT  
ARMED FORCES,  
ROP AND SECURITY  
SERVICES FOR  
PROMPT ACTION

NATIONAL  
PATRIOTIC EPIC  
UNFOLDED AS  
OMANIS EXHIBITED  
SOLIDARITY

A TESTIMONY TO  
THE STRENGTH OF  
THIS NATION AND  
ABILITY TO STAND  
THE TEST OF TIME



MINISTERIAL  
COMMITTEE WORKS  
UNDER HM'S DIRECT  
SUPERVISION

ALL DEPARTMENTS  
HAVE TO WORK  
TOGETHER AS ONE  
TO PERFORM THEIR  
DUTIES

OUR TOP PRIORITY  
IS TO WORK FOR  
THE RESTORATION  
OF NORMALCY TO  
PUBLIC LIFE

COUNCIL OF  
MINISTERS HAVE  
TO ENSURE THAT  
ALL DEPARTMENTS  
WORK AS ONE

THE GOVERNORATES  
OF NORTH AND  
SOUTH AL BATINAH  
INCURRED  
HEAVY LOSSES

NEED TO SPEED  
UP ACTION IN  
SERVING CITIZENS  
IN EVERY PART OF  
THE COUNTRY

# NATIONAL FUND FOR EMERGENCIES ESTABLISHED

HIS MAJESTY ADDRESSES THE NATION

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik today delivered a Royal speech reading as follows:  
"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.  
Thanks be to Almighty Allah for the bounties of security and stability. Praise be for Him Who made us one united nation, whose solid-packed ranks, row by row, whose will is unfettered by calamities — armed with the patience, perseverance and self-denial for the sake of this dear homeland.

**DEAR CITIZENS,**  
Our dear homeland, particularly in the governorates of North Al Batinah and South Al Batinah, has undergone major climatic conditions that claimed the lives of some citizens and residents. The adverse climatic conditions also incurred immense material losses to citizens' properties and the infrastructure.  
Right from start of the tropical condition, we were keen to follow up all that happened, moment by

moment while our hearts turned to the Almighty Allah with pleadings and supplications to safeguard Oman and protect its citizens and residents therein against any harm.  
A national patriotic epic unfolded as Omani people exhibited splendid forms of solidarity, collaboration and patience. This will forever remain testimony to the strength of this nation and its ability to stand the test of time in facing adverse conditions and unfavourable circumstances. This

has been an everlasting incarnation of the sacrifices made by this nation over the ages.  
While we condole ourselves and the families of citizens and residents who lost their lives during this tropical condition, we pray to the Almighty Allah to have mercy on the departed's souls and rest them in peace. We also offer praise to the Almighty for granting safety to the citizens of Oman, who embodied values of selflessness and solidarity,

collaboration and cooperation while supporting the national efforts exerted by the departments concerned in facilitating the life of citizens.  
**TOP PRIORITY**  
In the meantime, we reaffirm that, in this stage, it is our top priority to work for the restoration of normalcy to public life and for providing basic needs to the stricken ones.  
We will also accord our attention to the restoration of the damaged

infrastructure. The departments concerned already began to accomplish this objective. All government departments have to work together as one schema whose segments cooperate and complement each other to perform their duties and responsibility in the best possible manner. They have to speed up the rate of action in serving the citizens in every part of the country. The Council of Ministers has to ensure the achievement of this goal.



# TOP PRIORITY TO RESTORATION OF NORMALCY TO PUBLIC LIFE

FROM PAGE 1

The Ministerial Committee tasked with assessing the damage incurred to citizens' homes and properties has to deliver assistance as soon as possible. The government departments concerned have to facilitate the mission of the Committee and cooperate with it. The Ministerial Committee shall come under our direct supervision, and we shall follow up the progress of its tasks and operations.

To expedite the accommodation of the impacts of the tropical condition and alleviate the conditions of affected citizens, we have decreed the establishment of a National Fund for Emergencies (NFE) to tackle the aftermath of this tropical condition and similar natural disasters that may occur, God forbids.

From this podium, we would like to thank our brethren and friends — leaders of sisterly and friendly states — who showed solidarity

“  
TO EXPEDITE THE  
ACCOMMODATION OF  
THE IMPACTS OF THE  
TROPICAL CONDITION  
AND ALLEVIATE THE  
CONDITIONS OF  
AFFECTED CITIZENS,  
WE HAVE DECREED  
THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF A NATIONAL FUND  
FOR EMERGENCIES  
TO TACKLE THE  
AFTERMATH OF THIS  
TROPICAL CONDITION  
AND SIMILAR NATURAL  
DISASTERS THAT  
MAY OCCUR

by contacting us and conveying their sympathy. We pray to the Almighty Allah to spare them any harm or calamity.

We would also like to express our appreciation for all government and private establishments and individuals who played commendable roles in managing this crisis. We thank them for their prompt response to the handling of the situation. In particular, we note the performance of the National Commission for Emergency Management, our valiant armed forces, the Royal Oman Police, the security services, the forward-coming citizens and residents, the Shelter and Relief Sectors, the support services, the private sector firms, the non-governmental organisations, the volunteer teams — who all gave excellent examples of citizenship.

May the Almighty Allah protect Oman and its people!” — ONA





مدائن  
mada'ayn

Mada'ayn's world-class business cities offer  
investors a variety of attractive  
Reserve your space now

For more information  
**24170700**

mada'ayn.om  
@mada'aynoman

in t f y o



## ■ NEPAL, INDIA AMBASSADORS BID FAREWELL



**MUSCAT:** On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received separately in his office on Monday Sarmila Parajuli Dhakal, Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to the Sultanate, and Munu Mahawar, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the

Sultanate, to bid them farewell at the end of their tasks in Oman.

The two ambassadors expressed their thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the support extended to them during their tour of duty in the Sultanate from His Majesty, the Government and the Omani people, which had enabled them to carry out their duties. They wished His Majesty good health, happiness and a long life, and the Sultanate further progress and growth

under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

On his turn, HH Sayyid Asaad expressed his utmost thanks to the ambassadors for the efforts they exerted in serving the relations between the Sultanate and their countries. He wished them permanent success and the friendly peoples of Nepal and India further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General and the two advisers at the Office of Sayyid Asaad. — **ONA**



# Ministerial committee inspects affected areas in Al Khabourah

**AL KHABOURAH:** A number of members of the ministerial committee tasked with assessing the damage caused by the tropical condition Shaheen, headed by Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, chairman of the committee, on Monday paid a field visit to the operations centre of the National Search and Rescue Team.

During the visit, the committee members listened to detailed explanation about the work mechanisms

The committee members also visited a number of villages and mountainous areas and met with citizens whose houses and properties were affected in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah. The field visit included Sanaa Bani Ghafir, Wadi Al Hawasna, Wadi Shafan and Wadi Al Sarami. Engineer Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology said that the restoration of roads affected by the tropical



condition in Wadi Al Hawasna will begin and Wadi Bani Omar, will begin next week.

In comments to Oman News

Agency (ONA) and Oman TV, the minister said that roads and diversions from Al Khabourah to Ibri have been opened while

field teams are working to construct diversions on other roads until the main roads have been repaired.

Her Excellency Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, Minister of Social Development, said that the visit to the affected villages has revealed several aspects that require the committee to devise joint plans with the relevant government authorities.

In comments to ONA and Oman TV, the minister said that the ministry has deployed field teams to assess the damage caused by the tropical condition and to explain the required documents.

The minister said that the committee has plans under study to find solutions to restore normal life in the affected places and that a number of locations have been identified where citizens' houses were affected. She added that the relief and sheltering sector provides houses for those whose houses were affected. — **ONA**

## GCC culture ministers meet

**MUSCAT:** On behalf of His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, on Monday took part in the 25th meeting of the GCC Ministers of Culture.

Held via video-conferencing, the meeting discussed means of enhancing the GCC joint cultural action. It also reviewed the existing cultural cooperation and the partnership relations between the GCC countries, the regional and international organisations.

The meeting also approved the recommendations at meetings of the GCC culture undersecretaries and the GCC General Cultural Committee.

### OMANI TALENTS HONOURED

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth on Monday awarded a group of Omani talents in art namely: artist Anwar bin Khamis al Zadjali for the field of visual arts and the poet Hassan bin Obaid al Matroushi for the field of literary arts.

The move comes as part of the ministry's endeavour to honour Omani talents within the Sultanate and abroad in various intellectual, literary and artistic knowledge fields.

It also aims to present them as role



models to future generations, encourage the intellectual, literary and artistic movement, and support the innovative outputs to build this nation.

The Gulf cultural talents' honouring ceremony comes within the framework of the GCC countries' cultural strategy that included organising many joint Gulf cultural events that contribute to the advancement of joint Gulf contributions, strengthening ties and exchanging experiences among GCC countries. — **ONA**



## Life inching back to normal

**KABEER YOUSUF**

[@kabeeryousef](#)

Life is coming back on track in Al Khadra, Al Suwaiq, Al Bidayah, Al Khabourah and Saham. Cleaning of houses and roads has almost been achieved and there has been a constant flow of food and water in all the affected areas, thanks to the efforts of the state and volunteers. For many, life has come to a sudden halt after the cyclone, admitted a public servant in Al Khadra and Al Ghalailah.

Nasser al Salhi, in his late fifties and his family of eight, have not yet recovered from the shock of October 3 nights when the cyclone Shaheen ravaged their village.

"That night is unforgettable for us as everyone in the village feared death and destruction after nature's fury," he said.

The water rose as high as two to three metres. It forced all the families in the village to climb on the rooftops of their houses as the ROP choppers went round airlifting people. The strong wind tossed even heavy objects while animals got washed away in the gushing waters in front of their owners, who remained mute spectators to the situation.

"We are trying to catch-up with a wink's sleep after the cyclone as many of my family members still have nightmares," says Al Salhi's neighbour Husam al Salhi.

Rescue and relief are under way in the affected areas.

## More ROP forces reach affected areas

**SAMUEL KUTTY**

[@samkuttyvp](#)

As part of its efforts to ensure unhindered rescue and relief operations in areas ravaged by the tropical storm Shaheen, the Royal Oman Police sent additional task forces to the wilayats of Al Suwaiq and Al Khabourah on Monday.

According to a statement, from the Special Task Force Police Unit in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq is supporting the ongoing efforts in clearing debris and restoring basic services.

"Sending this force comes within the national and humanitarian duty of the ROP and an affirmation of solidarity and cooperation with the government agencies and citizens to stand by those affected by the tropical storm," the statement said.

A massive effort continues to support the people affected by the tropical storm in the



wilayats of Al Suwaiq, Al Khabourah and Al Musannah.

Statements by the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM) reveal that almost 99 per cent of services like electricity, water, telecommunications, fuel and roads have been completed in South Al Batinah Governorate.

The ROP statement said



that the task force will extend their support in search and evacuation operations and also transportation of supplies to rugged and mountainous areas.

"The forces will also provide advice and guidance to citizens and residents in addition to regulating traffic in accordance with the road conditions," it said.

**SALE**  
**20% - 70%**

Terms & Conditions apply

**Clarks**

SHOEMAKERS SINCE 1825

Khamis Plaza - Tel. 24560992 | Muscat Grand Mall - Tel. 24399930 | Al Hail South - Tel. 24558148  
Al Khamis Shoes Sohar - Tel. 26841178 | Al Khamis Shoes Al Hail - Tel. 24543045.

CR 1163377

Soon after  
the cyclone alerts,  
people generally start  
accumulating  
necessary eatables but  
forget to seal the pores  
on the sides of the  
window  
frames fitted in  
concrete walls

# HOW TO PREVENT FLOODING OF HOMES

**KAUSHALENDRA SINGH**  
[@patkaushal](#)

Weather disturbances are coming and going. We are learning some lessons but ignoring many. It is time for us to make a checklist, not wait for another cyclone and implement the basic precautions to minimise the impacts.

On October 3, AP Raj, an Al Ghubra resident, got up early in the morning and found his flat's lobby full of water on the day of the cyclone Shaheen. Before he could guess the source of water that was coming through one of the walls, there was enough for him to mop as it was travelling from the lobby to kitchen and then to other rooms.

"Directing the water to the bathroom for a proper passage was an arduous task for me. The more I was struggling, the more water was coming and it would have been a flash flood in my house had I not contacted a friend who is a civil engineer", said Raj while explaining how he could save

a proper flash flood in his flat with the help of a friend.

By then, Raj had realised that the water was coming from the roof of the house. He went there and saw that an underground pipe through which Internet connection was given to his house, was broken and had become the only outlet for the rainwater accumulated on the roof. He sealed the pipe with old clothes. The problem was minimised but it proved to be only a temporary solution.

Water was still coming, and it was an anxious moment for Raj. He contacted his friend Manoj who advised him to immediately go to the roof and check all the four rainwater outlets. Raj found the outlet choked with some trash that got accumulated on the rooftop with time. As soon as he removed the garbage and did minor cleaning of the area, accumulated water started flowing properly and leakage in Raj's flat stopped immediately.

The lesson learnt from this situation is cleaning of roof tops immediately after we

get cyclone or storm alerts from government agencies. "Cleaning of the rooftop is important otherwise also... Raj was lucky that the Internet line was going through the pipe that caused the accumulation of water in his flat. Had it been electricity, it would have caused electrocution to the house occupants."

Soon after the cyclone alerts, people generally start accumulating necessary eatables but forget to seal the pores on the sides of the window frames fitted in concrete walls. This is a general complaint of water making its way into houses through window holes, which keeps them occupied until the final passage of the weather disturbance.

"It is okay if you are in your house and mopping as when you are noticing the water. But if you are not there in the house at the time of weather disturbance, the water gets accumulated everywhere in your house and by the time you are back, you

see all your furniture, bed, electric equipment, carpets etc damaged. Again there are chances of electrocution due to wet floor and water entering in some electric sockets", said Shahid Akhtar, another civil engineer in a construction company in Suhar.

The lesson learnt here is to fix window holes on normal days and not wait for a storm to implement it.

Rakesh Jha, a Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) expert, however, suggested to be alert during storm and extra alert if it is a thunderstorm.

He suggested the least use of plumbing sources, as they may cause lightning travel through plumbing during a thunderstorm.

"If water is coming into your house from any source, direct or indirect, through a broken window or a door, immediately turn off your main power source. It can cause electrical fire after water coming in contact with the power", he said.

# Covid-19: Vaccination campaign resumes



KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has resumed vaccination for the target groups. Any person in the target group can get their jab at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC).

The prerogative to avail of the first or second dose of vaccine is to pre-register on Tarassud plus app and get a time slot booked, according to MoH officials in charge of the campaign.

"We have resumed the vaccination campaign which was stopped last week due to cyclone Shaheen which impacted some parts of the country," the doctor in charge of vaccination told the *Observer*.

"Any person eligible for any dose of vaccine or those who above 12 years of age can pre-book a time slot between 8 am till 2 pm on all working days," she added.

However, students from schools or

## 13 new cases, zero deaths

**MUSCAT:** As many as 13 new cases of coronavirus (Covid-19) were registered in Oman during the past 24 hours, in addition to zero Covid-19-related deaths. This brings the total number of positive Covid-19 cases to 303,978 in the Sultanate.

The total number of Covid-19-related death cases reached 4,102, the Ministry of Health said.

The ministry added that 31 new cases have recovered, bringing the total number to 299,309 recoveries.

The ministry also pointed out that 3 cases were hospitalised over the past 24 hours, as the total number of currently hospitalised Covid-19-infected patients stands at 21, of them 7 are in intensive care units. — ONA

colleges can get their registration done at counter number 4, which is dedicated to students. "Any student above 12 can walk-in to get their vaccine after registering at counter 4, which is dedicated to vaccination of students."

Doctor Nihal Azizi, a Specialist and a social activist who has been an active name in rehabilitating the Covid patients and extending all possible support to them said we should continue taking precautions like wearing masks and follow social distancing but getting oneself vaccinated should be the most important step towards a corona-free society.

"We are not fully away from corona and all types of corona infection don't show symptoms at once but take time. What we can do is to continue wearing masks and continue social distance but getting the two doses of vaccines should be the prime focus until we are totally free from the pandemic," adds Dr Nihal.



# Labour officials discuss workers issues with GFOTU

STAFF REPORTER

SALALAH, OCT 11

Challenges of the trade unions and support practices for workers in private sector were discussed at a recently held joint meeting of the officials of the Directorate General of Labour in Dhofar Governorate and General Federation of Trade Unions (GFOTU).

The meeting was held in the presence of Dr Salem bin Abdullah al Wahaibi, Director General of Labour in the Dhofar Governorate and heads of trade unions in the governorate.

Addressing the gathering, Nayef al Shanfari, Director of Labor Welfare in Dhofar Governorate, appreciated the role of trade unions for working as a link between workers and the companies and for amicably resolving their issues.

"They have been helpful in drawing

our attention to labour issues and resolving them within the ambit of Omani Labour Law," he said.

He agreed with the suggestions of the trade unions to have more interactions and said, "we are committed to having more dialogue with the trade unions as this is how we can resolve important issues of companies and workers. Such dialogues are in the interest of a healthy business atmosphere in the country."

"The Department of Labour Welfare keeps track of workers issues and intervenes as and when our attention is drawn. We have our own teams to take care of labour issues. Implementation of the Omani Labor Law is our primary job, and we always welcome cooperation from trade unions. Stability of the labour market is of prime importance for the overall growth of the country," Nayef Shanfari said.



# ISG teacher honoured for outstanding work

**MUSCAT:** Pooja Kaushal Sharma, a Kindergarten teacher with Indian School Al Ghubra (ISG) since 2008, was honoured with the 'Global Shiksha Ratna Award' for her outstanding work in the field of education.

She was the only teacher from the Sultanate to be selected from 29 teachers who were honoured from India, Middle East, East Asia, Africa and Europe.

Pooja Kaushal was honoured for her selfless commitment, honesty and exemplifying others in the field of education.

Receiving the award, Pooja said, "I am grateful for this great honour towards receiving the 'Shiksha Ratna Award for being chosen amongst more



Mrs Pooja Kaushal Sharma

than 250 participants from all over the world. I love to teach children and watch them learn through all the seasons. Teaching children has made my life meaningful and filled with love."

The ceremony was organised

by Radio Meri Awaaz on the occasion of World Teacher's Day where teachers were honoured for their outstanding work.

Pooja has received appreciation and recognition both socially and professionally. In 2019, she was presented the 'Navin Asher-Kazi Award for Excellence' for her efforts and dedication towards her profession.

At the honouring ceremony, Dr Jeet Ram Bhatt, Secretary Hindi Academy, Government of Delhi, was the chief guest while Dr Madhuri Ramdhari, Deputy Secretary General, World Hindi Secretariat from Mauritius, Padma Shri Vijay Kumar Shah from Maharashtra,

Dr Jyotirmaya Thakur from United Kingdom and Dr Bhavna Kunwar from Australia were also present.

The event was conceptualised by Minal Shah Deora from Oman, the global coordinator at Radio Meri Aawaz along with Samridhi Choudhari founder of Radio Meri Aawaz, Smrity Choudhary, Founder, Shaikshik Aagaaz under guidance of Amit Choudhary, CEO, Radio Meri Aawaz.

Minal Shah Deora coordinates with people for interviews of celebrities, whereas she is also coordinating with Radio Meri Aawaz teams in 33 other countries around the globe.



## Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

### INTERNATIONAL TENDERS NOTICE

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following International Tenders:-

| Tender No.           | Description                 | Tender Documents Price (R.O) | Class            | Last Date for Collection of Documents | Last Date for Submission of Documents |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 398/2021/MAFWR/HQ-45 | Supply of Red Split Lentils | 25/-                         | Specialist       | Thursday 21/10/2021                   | Sunday 31/10/2021                     |
| 399/2021/MAFWR/HQ-46 | Supply of Sugar Commodity   | 90/800                       | Excellent, First | Sunday 31/10/2021                     | Sunday 21/11/2021                     |
| 400/2021/MAFWR/HQ-47 | Supply of Thailand Rice     | 37/800                       | Excellent, First | Sunday 31/10/2021                     | Sunday 21/11/2021                     |

- International specialized and Interested Companies may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **+968 24402200** or [etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om](mailto:etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om)
- Note:** Bid Submission will be online only. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system.

**TENDERS COMMITTEE**  
Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

ELECTION COMMISSION PUTS PRELIMINARY TURNOUT AS JUST 41 PER CENT

# Iraq counts votes after lowest ever election turnout

**BAGHDAD:** Turnout hit a record low for parliamentary elections in war-scarred Iraq, early figures showed on Monday, amid widespread disillusionment about a political elite seen as inept and corrupt.

Sunday's vote was moved forward from 2022 as a concession to an anti-government protest movement that has demanded deep reforms in the oil-rich yet poverty-stricken country.

But in the end voter participation hit a new low in Iraq's fifth election since the 2003 US-led invasion that ousted Saddam Hussein with the promise of bringing freedom and democracy.

Preliminary turnout was just 41 per cent, the electoral commission said — below the 44.5 per cent recorded in 2018. Official preliminary results had not yet been released and were expected later.

"There's general apathy. People just don't believe that elections matter," said Iraqi researcher Sajad Jiyad of the Century Foundation think-tank.

"The weak turnout is a warning. It is not only the legitimacy of the next prime minister that is in question, but also the legitimacy of the government, of the state — of the entire system."



Judge Jalil Adnan Khalaf, chairman of Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission, speaks in Baghdad on Monday. — AFP

Kerar Haider, who was busy removing campaign posters from the streets of the capital's Kerrada district, said he did not vote "because it is useless".

"The same faces always come back," the 26-year-old said.

Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhemi brought forward the vote to appease a youth-led protest movement that erupted two years ago against graft, unemployment and crumbling public services.

Iraq is a major oil producer but nearly a third of its almost 40 million people live in poverty, according to UN figures, and the Covid pandemic only deepened a

long-running crisis.

The premier and national spy chief tweeted that he had "kept his promise and done his duty by organising fair elections".

Kadhemi's own political future is now uncertain, with few observers willing to predict who will emerge as leader after the usual political haggling between factions that follow Iraqi elections.

The election was held under tight security in a country where key parliamentary blocs have armed factions and IS group have launched mass-casualty suicide attacks this year.

Airports were closed and travel

between provinces banned, while voters were searched twice at polling stations.

An attack blamed on IS on a voting centre in a remote part of northern Iraq left a police officer dead, a security source said.

And a soldier was killed and another wounded by "accidental fire" from a fellow soldier at a polling station in Diyala province bordering Baghdad, officials said. Authorities also reported the arrest of 77 suspects for electoral "violations".

The vote was marred by technical problems at some stations, including malfunctioning equipment and fingerprint readers, officials and AFP journalists said.

Official provisional results were now expected later in the day, but some candidates already claimed victory and celebrated with fireworks overnight in Baghdad and the southern city of Nasiriyah.

In Sunday's election, some 25 million eligible voters were called to choose from more than 3,200 candidates.

A new single-member constituency system for electing Iraq's 329 lawmakers aimed to boost independents versus the traditional blocs largely centred on religious, ethnic and clan affiliations. — AFP

## Tunisian prime minister names new government amid crisis

**TUNIS:** Tunisia named a new government on Monday, 11 weeks after President Kais Saied ousted the prime minister and suspended parliament to assume near total control in moves that his critics call a coup.

Prime Minister Najla Bouden, appointed by Saied last month, said the government's main priority would be tackling corruption and "restoring hope". But although Tunisia faces a looming fiscal crisis, she did not mention a programme of economic reforms.

"I am confident we will move from frustration to hope," said Saied at the ceremony, while railing against "any who threaten the state".

Though Saied's intervention on July 25 appeared popular after years of economic stagnation and political paralysis, opposition to him has started to solidify with street protests and statements from major domestic players.

The appointment of a government has long been demanded by both domestic political figures and foreign donors, along with a clear declaration by Saied of a timeline to exit the crisis.

Saied's moves have cast doubt on Tunisia's democratic gains since its 2011 revolution that inspired the Arab spring, and



Prime Minister Najla Bouden announcing the formation of a new government at the Carthage Palace on the outskirts of Tunis on Monday. — AFP

have also delayed efforts to seek a financial rescue package from the International Monetary Fund.

Tunisia faces a rapidly looming crisis in public finances, and the IMF has previously indicated it will negotiate only on the basis of government proposals for credible reforms.

Bouden's appointment prompted the biggest single-day gains for Tunisian bonds after Saied's intervention, which had prompted a significant sell-off and added to the cost of insuring its debt.

Saied said he would soon announce a national dialogue that would include youth from across the country and which is expected to focus on the future of Tunisia and its political system.

— Reuters

## ‘Call this a pitch?!’... Lebanon stadiums in sorry state

**BEIRUT:** Lebanon's top football stadium once hosted some of the world's best players, but today it has become a neglected, blast-hit arena at times used as a cereal warehouse.

The Beirut stadium is just one of several nationwide to have fallen into disrepair as Lebanon faces an economic collapse of historic proportions. Playing surfaces are in such bad shape that the national team has been forced to play its qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup abroad. Lebanon is to play Syria in the Jordanian capital Amman on Tuesday.

Built in 1957 and named after Lebanon's second president, the Camille Chamoun Sports City enjoyed a brief period of glory before it was heavily bombed during the 1975-1990 civil war.

It was then rebuilt in time to host the 1997 Pan-Arab Games, the 2000 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup and the 2009

Jeux de la Francophonie.

In 2017, Brazil's Ronaldinho featured among an array of stars in a showdown between "legends" of Real Madrid and Barcelona.

But in August 2020, like swathes of the capital, the stadium was ravaged in a deadly explosion at Beirut port that has been largely blamed on government neglect.

The country's worst peace-time disaster killed more than 210 people, wounded thousands and devastated the wheat siloes on the dockside. In the aftermath, donated bags of wheat and flour were stored at Sports City.

"We had to find an alternative ground for the national team," Hashem Haider, head of the Lebanese Football Federation, said.

They decided on the stadium in the southern city of Sidon, but even that needs considerable repair.

Until it's ready, "we've reached a deal with the federations of



A partial view shows the deterioration of Camille Chamoun Sports City Stadium in Beirut on Friday. — AFP

opposing teams to play the first-leg games" away from Lebanon, he said. They aim to have Sidon stadium ready to face Iran on November 11, then the United Arab Emirates five days later.

Even before the 2020 monster blast, Lebanon's football grounds had been going downhill for years.

The seaside stadium in Sidon, 40 km from the capital, was one of three Lebanese venues for the 2000 AFC Asian Cup finals.

But visiting in 2018, the then manager of South Korea's football team, German coach Uli Stielike, was shocked.

"Call this a football pitch?!" he reportedly said.

Lebanon's coach from 2015 to 2019, Miodrag Radulovic, was once overheard deploring the state of the Beirut Municipal Stadium, a short walk away from Sports City.

"It's a crying shame to be playing on such pitches," the Montenegrin was reported as saying. — AFP

### BEIRUT

#### Lebanese firefighters put out fire at fuel facility

Firefighters put out a blaze that raged for several hours at a gasoline storage tank in southern Lebanon on Monday, the latest blow to a nation grappling with crippling economic and fuel crises.

There were no reports of casualties in the fire at the Zahrani oil facility on the Mediterranean coast, which had sent a huge column of smoke into the sky. Energy minister Walid Fayad said the fire resulted from a "mistake" while gasoline



was being transported from one storage tank to another, the National News Agency (NNA) reported.

"We must await the results of the investigation into the causes of the fire," he added.

### CAIRO

#### 3 detained in Egypt after vaccines found dumped

Egypt's public prosecution said it had ordered the arrest of three people after thousands of unused Covid-19 vaccines were found dumped along a water channel.

It said the vaccines had been allocated to the health directorate in the city of Minya, about 220 km south of Cairo, where 18,400 vaccine packages with a value of more than 5 million Egyptian pounds (\$319,000) were found to be missing.

An inventory found nearly 5,000 more packages had been



lost from the depot because of storage at improper temperatures, a prosecution statement added. It did not give the number of doses or type of vaccine, but an earlier official statement said they were made by China's Sinopharm.

### DAMASCUS

#### Car bomb kills six in Syria's Afrin: monitor

A car bombing in the northern Syrian city of Afrin on Monday killed six people, including at least one Turkey-backed rebel fighter, a war monitor said.

Afrin, like all areas held by pro-Turkish rebels, is the scene of regular targeted killings, bombings and shootings that largely remain unclaimed. On Monday, an explosive-laden vehicle detonated in "an area crowded with civilians" in the centre of the rebel-held city, said the Britain-based Syrian



Observatory for Human Rights. The explosion hit near a market and military outpost for the hardline Jaysh al Islam group, according to the monitor which relies on a network of sources inside Syria.

## In brief

■ SRINAGAR



### SUSPECTED MILITANTS KILL FIVE SOLDIERS IN KASHMIR

Suspected militants shot dead five soldiers in Indian-administered Kashmir on Monday in the deadliest incident since February, an army spokesman said, stoking tensions following a string of civilian murders. The shootings occurred in a mountain pass near the Line of Control (Loc). Colonel Devendar Anand said that one officer and four soldiers “were killed during a search operation probably by infiltrators”. “The operation is ongoing”, he added. The shootings were the deadliest attack on military forces in the area since a ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the effective border was announced in February.

■ HANOI



### VIETNAM RESTARTS DOMESTIC FLIGHTS AFTER SUSPENSION

Vietnam’s government has allowed the resumption of 19 domestic flight routes nearly three months after they were suspended due to Covid-19, aviation authorities said. On Sunday, the first post-lockdown commercial flight left Hanoi for Ho Chi Minh City following the government’s approval. “The resumption of passenger transport activities in general and air transport activities in particular in the current situation have special and important meaning as it is both ensuring the recovery of production and business, travel demand and ensuring strict implementation of measures to prevent and control the Covid-19 pandemic”, the Civil Aviation Authority of Vietnam said in a statement on Monday.

■ SINGAPORE



### SINGAPORE EXPANDS QUARANTINE-FREE TRAVEL

Singapore is opening its borders to more countries for quarantine-free travel as the city-state seeks to rebuild its status as an international aviation hub, and prepares to reach a “new normal” to live with Covid-19. From October 19 fully vaccinated people from eight countries, including Britain, France, Spain and the United States, will be able to enter the island without quarantining if they pass their Covid-19 tests, the government said.

# Kim calls for improving people’s lives amid ‘grim’ economy

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un urged officials to focus on improving citizens’ lives in the face of a “grim” economic situation, state media reported on Monday, as he marked the anniversary of the country’s ruling party.

Art performances, galas and a fireworks show were held in Pyongyang to celebrate the 76th anniversary of the founding of the Workers’ Party of Korea on Sunday, but no large military parade, which are sometimes held on such occasions, was reported.

North Korea’s economy has been battered by years of sanctions over its nuclear and weapons programmes, and heavy rains and floods have also taken a toll.

The country’s most vulnerable risk starvation after it slipped deeper into self-imposed isolation during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the worsening humanitarian situation could turn into a crisis, a UN rights investigator said in report seen by Reuters last week.

The country faces “huge tasks for adjusting and developing the state economy” and accomplishing the economic goals established in recent party and government meetings, Kim said in a speech, according to state news agency KCNA. “The only way for



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un speaks during an event in Pyongyang on Monday. — Reuters

dynamically pushing forward the unprecedented crucial work despite grim situation is for the entire Party to get united”, he added, making no mention of the political standoff over its nuclear weapons.

Officials should not wish for privilege and preferential

treatment, and “should always consider whether their work infringe upon the interests of the people or cause trouble to the people”, Kim said.

### COVID-19 MEASURES

State media showed Kim addressing a room full of darkly

dressed officials, with no major social distancing, masks, or other anti-Covid-19 measures apparent.

The country has not reported a single case of the virus, but has imposed strict border lockdowns, movement restrictions and other measures. State television broadcasts showed young people

Economy battered by years of sanctions over its nuclear programme



The only way for dynamically pushing forward the unprecedented crucial work despite grim situation is for the entire Party to get united

KIM JONG UN

North Korean leader

attending the gala and other people laying flowers at statues of the country’s previous leaders.

The US State Department on Thursday accused Kim’s government of being primarily responsible for the humanitarian situation in the country.

“The regime continues to exploit its own citizens, to violate their human rights, to divert resources from the country’s people to build up its unlawful (weapons of mass destruction) and ballistic missiles programme”, spokesperson Ned Price told a briefing in Washington, while noting the United States supports efforts to provide humanitarian aid to North Korea. — Reuters

# ‘Run Sara Run’.. clamour grows for Duterte daughter presidential bid

MANILA: Philippines “First Daughter” Sara Duterte has been in lockstep with her father, following him into law and succeeding him as a city mayor. Now, she’s leading the race to replace Rodrigo Duterte as president.

So far, the feisty politician, who once punched a court sheriff in front of TV cameras, has rejected calls to seek the country’s highest office, insisting she wants to serve another term as Davao city mayor.

Supporters have plastered “Run Sara Run” posters and tarpaulins across the archipelago nation, held rallies and posted thousands of messages urging the 43-year-old to change her mind.

In a cryptic Facebook post on Saturday — the day after the deadline for registering as a candidate — Sara thanked her supporters who turned up at the Manila registration site for national positions, including president.

“Although I was not at the Sofitel (hotel), you did not lose hope and patience during the wait”, she said, hours before her office announced she had tested positive for Covid-19. “For this I offer my heartfelt thanks.”

### RUN ALONGSIDE

The elder Duterte has not named a successor, but indicated recently Sara would run alongside his longtime aide Senator Christopher Go. While Sara missed Friday’s closing date, analysts say she has until November 15 to make a late entry into the presidential race —



A file photo shows Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and his daughter Sara Duterte.

like her father did in 2015.

Sara, known for her quick temper and fondness for big motorbikes, was in first place in the latest Pulse Asia poll of voter preferences for president. She was followed by Ferdinand Marcos Jr, the son and namesake of a former dictator, celebrity mayor Francisco Domagoso and boxing legend Manny Pacquiao. All except Sara have declared they will run for the top job.

Sara entered politics in 2007, serving three years as vice mayor while her father was mayor of Davao — the family stronghold on the southern island of Mindanao.

They swapped positions for the next three years and she again succeeded him as mayor in 2016 when he won the presidency.

Some doubt Sara’s support in

the polls will translate into election victory, saying she lacks the charisma and humour of her father — key traits in a country where personality trumps policy.

“She’s drawing strength because she’s the daughter of the president”, Pulse Asia research director Ana Maria Tabunda told AFP. Analysts say Sara is not a carbon copy of her father, who surveys show remains almost as popular as when he swept to victory in 2016 on a promise to rid the country of drugs.

She lacks his “folksiness” and that could hurt her appeal, said political analyst Tony La Vina.

“She is more distant and she is not warm”, La Vina added. “I suspect her lead will evaporate during the campaign as she will not rise up to the charm of the father.” — AFP

# US says Taliban talks in Doha were ‘candid’

WASHINGTON: The United States said the first face-to-face meeting between senior US and Taliban officials since the group retook power in Afghanistan was “candid and professional” and that the US side reiterated that the Taliban would be judged on their actions, not just their words.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said the US delegation at the weekend talks in Doha, Qatar, focused on security and terrorism concerns and safe passage for US citizens, other foreign nationals and Afghans, as well as on human rights, including the meaningful participation of women and girls in all aspects of Afghan society.

He said the two sides also discussed “the United States’ provision of robust humanitarian assistance, directly to the Afghan people.” “The discussions were candid and professional with the US delegation reiterating that the Taliban will be judged on its

actions, not only its words”, Price said in a statement.

It did not say if any agreements were reached.

The foreign ministry in Kabul said the two-day meeting went well. It welcomed the US offer of humanitarian assistance and said local authorities would facilitate delivery and cooperate with aid groups but said such assistance “should not be linked to political issues”.

“Detailed discussions were held during the meeting about all relevant issues. And efforts should be exerted to restore diplomatic relations to a better state”, the ministry said in a statement, adding that similar meetings would be held in future if required.

On Saturday, Qatar-based Al Jazeera television quoted Afghanistan’s acting foreign minister as saying that Taliban representatives asked the US side to lift a ban on Afghan central bank reserves. — Reuters



Afghan girls selling tea and water wait for customers at Nadir Khan hilltop in Kabul. — AFP

■ ACTIVISTS PROTEST AGAINST OIL PROJECT



Police officers escort a Greenpeace activist who was staging a sit-in at Downing Street in London during a protest against the Cambo oil field project in the Shetland Islands. – AFP

## Czech politics in doubt with president in hospital

PRAGUE: Czech politics was thrown into uncertainty on Monday with the president spending a second day in intensive care and his chief ally, the outgoing billionaire prime minister, defeated in a general election.

Andrej Babis's populist ANO (YES) party narrowly lost at weekend to a three-party centre-right alliance called Together and led by right-winger Petr Fiala.

Babis' defeat came as he faces charges over EU subsidy fraud and after the Pandora Papers investigation this month showed he had used money from his offshore firms to purchase overseas property, including a chateau on the French Riviera.

President Milos Zeman needs to convene parliament within 30



Miroslav Zavoral, director of the Military University Hospital, speaks to the media in Prague. – Reuters

days of the election and name the next prime minister under the Czech constitution, besides mediating talks on the new government. On Sunday, he had a brief meeting with Babis, but was then rushed to Prague's military hospital from his residence. Local media say that he is suffering from

liver problems.

Zeman's doctor told reporters the president was in intensive care. Local media reported that he was in a stable condition.

Images of the 77-year-old head of state being taken out of an ambulance with his head supported have cast doubt on his ability to lead talks on forming the next government.

"Tell us what is going on with Zeman!" shrieked a headline on the website of the *Blesk* tabloid. The hospital and Zeman's spokesman stayed silent on Monday.

"I would be happy with basic information," independent political analyst Jan Kubacek said. "If they say he'll stay for weeks, we will roughly know what is happening and the situation will calm down." — AFP

## Diplomat sworn in as chancellor of Austria

VIENNA: Alexander Schallenberg, a long-time diplomat, was sworn in as chancellor of Austria on Monday, two days after Sebastian Kurz resigned in the face of a corruption inquiry. President Alexander Van der Bellen, who presided over the ceremony, said: "We all expect that the government will now go back to work and move things forward together."

Schallenberg moves to the chancellery after having held the post of foreign minister since 2019. He is the son of a diplomat and grew up in India, Spain and France.

Austria's political upheaval began last week, when it was announced that 35-year-old Kurz and several others were under investigation on allegations of misuse of public funds.

Kurz's decision to quit meant the governing coalition between his conservative Austrian People's Party (OeVP) and the leftist Greens will continue. The Greens had threatened to pull out of the coalition if Kurz stayed on as chancellor.

Schallenberg and Kurz worked together for years. The new chancellor takes a restrictive stance on migration issues just as his predecessor has sometimes echoed Kurz' anti-EU notes.

Kurz is under investigation over accusations government money was used to pay for positive media coverage while he was serving as foreign minister in 2016.

Anti-corruption investigators searched the offices of Kurz, his OeVP party, the Finance Ministry and a media house on Wednesday.

The former chancellor denies any wrongdoing but bowed to



Austria's new Foreign Minister Michael Linhart and Austria's new Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg during a swearing-in ceremony at the presidential Hofburg Palace in Vienna. – AFP

political pressure and resigned on Saturday evening. He asked Van der Bellen to name Schallenberg as his replacement.

Kurz, however, wants to remain OeVP leader and move to parliament as parliamentary group leader. The opposition criticised this move, saying he will remain an extremely influential political figure.

Career diplomat Michael Linhart, 63, is the new foreign minister. He most recently served as ambassador in Paris. Before that he served as general secretary in the Foreign Ministry.

Meanwhile, the Greens, the junior partner to Kurz's conservatives, had demanded Kurz's head after he and nine others including senior aides were placed under investigation last week on suspicion of varying degrees of breach of trust, corruption and bribery. Kurz, who denies wrongdoing, will remain head of his party and become its

top lawmaker in parliament.

Schallenberg is a career diplomat and close ally who is a relative newcomer to politics. Critics say he is unlikely to be his own man. He has declined to comment until after he is sworn in. President Alexander Van der Bellen said the government needed to regain public trust shaken by the investigation.

"The rearranged government now has a great responsibility not just to successfully continue this government's projects but also responsibility for restoring the public's trust in politics," Van der Bellen said as he swore in Schallenberg and the new foreign minister, Michael Linhart. Van der Bellen, who oversees periods of transition, apologised to the nation on Sunday for the impression given by text messages sent by Kurz and other conservative officials that are part of prosecutors' investigation.

— Agencies

## Sydney reopens as Australia looks to live with Covid-19

SYDNEY: Sydney's cafes, gyms and restaurants welcomed back fully vaccinated customers on Monday after nearly four months of lockdown, as Australia aims to begin living with the coronavirus and gradually reopen with high rates of inoculation.

Some pubs in Sydney, Australia's largest city, opened at 12:01 am and friends and families huddled together for a midnight beer, television footage and social media images showed.

"I see it as a day of freedom, it's a freedom day," New South Wales (NSW) state Premier Dominic

Perrottet told reporters in Sydney, the state capital. "We are leading the nation out of this pandemic but this will be a challenge."

Perrottet warned that infections would rise after reopening, and virus-free states such as Western Australia and Queensland are watching what living with Covid-19 is going to look like amid concerns health systems could be overwhelmed.

While NSW's dual-dose vaccination rate in people above 16 hit 74 per cent, in neighbouring Queensland, whose borders remain closed to Sydney-siders,



People carrying shopping bags walk past a retail store in Sydney as the city ended their lockdown against the coronavirus after 106 days. – AFP

the rate is only 52 per cent and the state government is following an elimination strategy with rapid lockdowns to control any outbreak.

Perrottet has declared an end to lockdowns in NSW and has strong support for reopening in Sydney, whose more than 5 million residents endured severe restrictions from mid-June following an outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant.

The outbreak has since spread to Melbourne and Canberra, forcing lockdowns in those cities, even as case numbers dwindle in NSW.

New South Wales on Monday

reported 496 new locally acquired cases, well down from their peak last month, while Victoria logged 1,612 new infections, the lowest in five days.

Under the relaxed rules for NSW, retail stores and restaurants reopened with reduced capacity, and more vaccinated people were allowed to gather in homes and attend weddings and funerals.

The state aims to hit an 80 per cent vaccine rate around late October, when more curbs will be relaxed. But the unvaccinated must remain at home until December 1.

— Reuters

### SHORT TAKES

#### LONDON

##### Over 1,000 migrants cross Channel in two days

Britain has rescued or intercepted a total of 1,115 migrants attempting to cross the Channel over just two days, the country's interior ministry said. Rising numbers of Channel crossings by migrants in small boats have contributed to growing tensions between the UK and France following Britain's departure from the EU at the start of this year.

British authorities said they had recovered 491 people in 17 operations and 624 people in



23 operations on Friday, while French authorities prevented 414 migrants from reaching Britain over the same two days. The French authorities said they had rescued a further 342 migrants who were attempting the crossing. — AFP

#### WELLINGTON

##### New Zealand announces 'no jab, no job' policy

New Zealand announced a sweeping "no jab, no job" policy for most healthcare workers and teachers to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

"We can't leave anything to chance so that's why we are making it mandatory," said Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins. Doctors, nurses and other frontline health workers must be double-jabbed by December 1 while everyone working in the education sector who has contact with students



must have their two doses by January 1.

The Royal New Zealand College of General Practitioners backed mandatory vaccinations with President Samantha Murnton describing it as a "bold, but necessary call." — AFP

#### SANTIAGO

##### One dead, 17 injured at Chile protest

A woman died at a protest of Chile's Mapuche Indigenous people in the country's capital Santiago on Sunday. Police said a group of people wearing hoods had attacked officers with fireworks, one of which hit the woman. Police said 17 officers were injured and ten people detained at the "march for Mapuche resistance and autonomy."

Her mother told journalists no one believed the police's explanation. Social media users



accused the security forces of brutality against protesters and demanded clarification. Chile has seen regular anti-government protests since late 2019. The country's police have repeatedly been criticised for their brutal response. — dpa

# Nuclear option... Earth's climate panacea or poison?

JULIEN MIVIELLE

For its supporters, nuclear energy is the world's best — perhaps only — hope to avoid catastrophic climate change. Opponents say it is too expensive, too risky and totally unnecessary. Standing between the two camps are those who see atomic power as a necessary evil that will buy the time needed to develop cleaner and safer alternatives.

“We don't have the luxury of choosing one or the other,” said Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), which advises developed countries. It's a hotly contested debate that continues to divide specialists and policymakers alike.

Unlike wind, solar and hydropower, nuclear plants do not depend on often unreliable climatic factors. A combination of drought and low winds, for example, has been blamed for the recent surge in natural gas prices that is stoking demand for dirty alternatives such as coal and oil.

Still, nuclear stations are plagued by high construction costs — with recent projects taking longer to complete and blowing out budgets — as well as the thorny problem of disposing of highly toxic waste and decommissioning power stations.

On the plus side, nuclear reactors create massive amounts of power with no direct emissions of carbon dioxide.

Even taking into account the emissions associated with mining uranium for fuel and the concrete, steel and other materials used in construction, nuclear power emits very few greenhouse gases: much less than coal or gas, and even less than solar, according to some studies. “Everything that brings emissions down is good news,” said Birol.

The IEA says nuclear power has avoided about 55 gigatonnes of CO2 emissions over the past five decades — about two years of global energy-related emissions of the greenhouse gas.

For those reasons, nuclear energy accounts for a bigger share of the world power mix in most of the scenarios put forward by the IPCC — the UN's climate experts — to hold average global temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above where they were at the end of the 19th century. — AFP

“  
**We don't have the luxury of choosing one or the other. Everything that brings emissions down is good news**

FATIH BIROL

Executive director of IEA



UP IN THE DESERT

A participant competes in the Rally of Morocco 2021 in the region of Merzouga, on Sunday. — AFP

# A cyclone that taught us otherwise



Lakshmi Kothaneth  
lakshmiobserver@gmail.com

DURING THE  
RAIN AND  
FLOODING THESE  
ARE THE SAME  
PEOPLE WHO  
WENT THROUGH  
PANIC AND  
ANXIETY

Nature is the best teacher in the world. Nature proves it over and over again.

Prior to Shaheen it was yet another system that had us fear the month of June. Then a cyclone passes through Al Batinah after more than 100 years.

We looked out for the inundation but the flash floods proved even more disastrous.

Goes on to prove that no matter how much ever one thinks is ready for life there can always be a twist of surprise. In Shaheen's case it was also the amount of water that flooded homes and roads which wreaked havoc, but as it subsided people came out to prove they are not done yet. This time there was another flow — people poured out from different parts of the country to join hands in the recovery process along with the official relief operators.

Till then people might have had their differences but not anymore as this huge task of cleaning up to come back to normalcy stood out as a common cause — a task they took with full confidence.

During the rain and flooding these

are the same people who went through panic and anxiety. They lost immensely and for some even their family members. In distress of that night they still came out when the rains stopped to pick up the pieces.

## BEAUTY OF OMAN

The beauty of Oman is that people who may not have known each other were working shoulder to shoulder. The scars are not just on land but also on the minds of the ones who had endured the night hours with Shaheen lashed down. People tell us about how children cried in fear at night but there they were when the sun came out like butterflies giggling and playing with anything they could find that could float.

The water that was a terror at night now was a playground. And as water subsided, they wanted to help the elders from cleaning to distributing relief. They saluted with fascination at the men in uniform carried out their duties earnestly and appeared as heroes.

The children have so much to store as

memories for a life time but hopefully not the anguish they and the elders went through the previous night.

The children's enthusiasm has been infectious as soon the joy could be seen spreading through the social media. The healing pictures of the young ones were what everyone needed.

Shaheen proved that together we can rebuild and recover. There was no time to wait and spend time to recover from the shock. The loss will be assessed and lifestyle will be revived, but there is something that will go down in history — a tropical cyclone which came since June of 1890, a cyclone named Shaheen which swept away houses and left behind steps. The cyclone which brought into life some of the wadis that people were not aware of. Obviously they had not flown for over 100 years.

The shovels have become symbolic of the zest that made people bounce back to take responsibility of preparing for tomorrow as the sun shines and they proved they might be beaten but not broken.

# The metamorphosis of growth policy



DANI RODRIK

Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard University's John F Kennedy School of Government, is President of the International Economic Association and the author of Straight Talk on Trade: Ideas for a Sane World Economy

Development policy has long been divided between two types of approaches. One approach targets poor people directly and seeks to alleviate the poverty of individual households — through income support, health and education interventions, and enhanced access to credit. The other focuses on enhancing economic opportunities and raising overall productivity — through economy-wide macroeconomic and trade policies or legal and regulatory reforms. Call the first social policy and the second growth policy.

Anne O Krueger calls for a decisive response to restore trust in the aftermath of the World Bank's “Doing Business” fiasco.

These two types of policies are generally complementary. Aggregate growth may not always help everyone, especially the

poor. Consequently, anti-poverty programmes will be necessary even when growth policy is doing its job properly. Occasionally, however, social and growth policies have been viewed as substitutes.

For example, the increased use of randomised policy experiments has allowed analysts to develop causal evidence about social policies — such as cash grants or education and health interventions — in ways that are rarely possible with macroeconomic or economy-wide policies. This, in turn, has led many academics and practitioners to downgrade the practical importance of growth policy relative to social policy.

That is a mistake, because the real determinants of poverty may lie at some distance from poor households and communities. Economic development

requires productive nonfarm jobs. Increasing employment opportunities in cities and encouraging migration from the countryside to urban areas may raise incomes more effectively than helping people become better farmers or providing them with cash grants. Indeed, industrialisation has been essential to reducing poverty historically. True, the benefits of industrialisation-driven economic growth often take time to trickle down. During Britain's Industrial Revolution, living conditions for urban workers improved very slowly, if at all, for nearly a century until the rise of labour unions and other institutional changes redressed the imbalance of power with employers. But the more recent experience with rapid, export-oriented industrialisation

in the East Asian tigers and China has compressed this process and produced poverty-reduction miracles alongside growth miracles. There are clear signs that we are now entering a new era in which industrialisation will no longer be as potent in spreading the benefits of economy-wide productivity gains. Global trends in innovation have significantly reduced the potential of manufacturing industries to absorb low-skill workers.

The labour share in value added has fallen rapidly in these branches, particularly for such workers. And while globalisation has accelerated the transfer of manufacturing from advanced economies to developing economies, global value chains have turned out to be at best a weak vehicle for creating good jobs, because they are a

transmission belt for skill- and capital-intensive technologies, and because their business model is based on imported inputs and lack of integration with the local economy. Globally competitive manufacturing industries in developing economies increasingly operate as enclaves, similar to highly capital-intensive, export-oriented extractive industries. They may spur exports and higher incomes for a narrow segment of the economy, but they bypass most workers, and especially the least educated.

This growth model falls short not only on equity or poverty-reduction grounds; it also fails to promote much growth because higher-productivity activities cannot encompass an increasing share of the economy.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2021

# sport

OMAN OBSERVER  
www.omanobserver.om  
follow us: @observersportz



## OMAN RACING STORM TO PRO-AM PODIUM

Ahmad, Charlie and Giacomo take P3 in Spain

Al Harthy dedicates podium to people of Oman

Aston Martin racer concludes European season

**BARCELONA:** Oman’s Ahmad al Harthy celebrated a sensational Pro-Am podium finish during the final race of the Fanatec GT World Challenge Europe Powered by AWS Endurance Cup season in Spain on Sunday with an outstanding drive to third place during a challenging three-hour encounter.

Dedicating the hard-earned and very emotional success to the people of Oman, who suffered terrible devastation last week when tropical cyclone Shaheen made landfall across the northern coast of the Sultanate, Al Harthy said the top three finish was the equivalent of a race win.

Starting the race at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya from eighth in the Pro-Am class, Al Harthy took the opening one-hour stint and delivered an excellent fault-free drive before handing over the No 97 Aston Martin Vantage GT3 to Italian team-mate Giacomo Petrobelli. Aston Martin factory driver Charlie Eastwood took the final stint and stormed through to a fantastic podium. “What an unbelievable result, I’m so happy”, said Al Harthy, “I’m extremely delighted to have this podium result, it really feels like a win as it was a very tough race weekend. I’m really proud to see the Omani flag flying here in Barcelona, especially after such tough times back home in Oman with the devastation of the cyclone last week. Our sincerest thoughts are with everyone affected.

“This is a beautiful way to end this part of the season for Oman Racing and a huge thank you to everyone who makes this happen, the team and everyone back home who shows us such incredible support. I hope this podium can go some way in helping

to lift everyone’s spirits in Oman.”

Focusing on preparing as well as possible in testing on October 8, and again during the track sessions on October 9, Oman Racing concluded the official free practice second in Pro-Am and an excellent 11th overall before finishing fifth in Pro-Am in pre-qualifying.

Final qualifying on Sunday morning wasn’t quite what the team wanted with the eighth fastest time in Pro-Am, but Al Harthy had confidence he and his team-mates would make progress in race trim during the big race.

Al Harthy lined-up for the start in the Omantel, OQ and Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth liveried Aston Martin and climbed into seventh in Pro-Am on the first lap before taking sixth in class on lap two. Following a brief early Safety Car period, racing resumed on lap eight and the Omani continued his fantastic ascent up the order.

Within just a handful of laps, the double Pro-Am Champion had taken fifth and then fourth before breaking into the class top three. Although shuffled back to fourth place by the Ferrari of Manuel Lauck during the second half of his stint, Al Harthy remained right with his rival before making the first pit-stop close to the end of hour one. “It was such a tough and competitive grid, for sure teamwork was the thing which helped us achieve this amazing result”, reflected Al Harthy, “As a car we struggled, but as a team we didn’t and that was something amazing. Everyone kept out of trouble and did a fantastic stint. I was so happy with the first hour, it was very difficult and so I was glad to stay out of trouble and put us in contention.”



### Swiatek enters round of 16 at Indian Wells

In women's action at Indian Wells, second-seeded Iga Swiatek roared to a 6-1, 6-0 third-round victory over Veronika Kudermetova on Sunday. The win came on the anniversary of Swiatek's victory in 2020 French Open and put her into the round of 16 in her Indian Wells debut.



### Crafty Murray rallies to win over Alcaraz

Andy Murray rallied to win an inter-generational battle against teenager Carlos Alcaraz on Sunday, reaching the third round at the Indian Wells Masters along with Stefanos Tsitsipas and Alexander Zverev. Murray defeated the talented 18-year-old 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 to set up a meeting with Zverev.

# MBAPPE NETS WINNER AS FRANCE TAKE NATIONS LEAGUE CROWN

WORLD CHAMPIONS RACE PAST SPAIN AFTER CONCEDED GOAL

**MILAN:** World champions France won the Nations League final with goals from Karim Benzema and Kylian Mbappe earning them a 2-1 win over Spain at the San Siro stadium on Sunday.

Didier Deschamps side had struggled to get a foothold in the game during a first half dominated by Spain but after going a goal down, following Mikel Oyarzabal's strike, they came alive.

With Paul Pogba excellent in midfield, Mbappe's speed and movement stretching Spain and Benzema a constant threat, the French were good value for their victory.

"We showed our character against a very strong team. We never gave up," said Benzema.

"It shows what great teams do — never panic, be patient and wait for the right time."

Luis Enrique's young Spain side, who had beaten European champions Italy in the semi-finals, had played their trademark possession football with patience and precision but in the end could not compensate for the absence of a genuine striker.

"It was a difficult defeat," said Spain's France-born defender Aymeric Laporte.

"We have proven to be a great team despite our youth, we have shown better football than them, but what counts is the result."

The first half was a relatively subdued affair with Spain moving the ball well but without dangerous



French players celebrate with the trophy at the end of the Nations League final against Spain at San Siro stadium in Milan. — AFP

penetration while France were disrupted by the loss to injury of centre-half Raphael Varane.

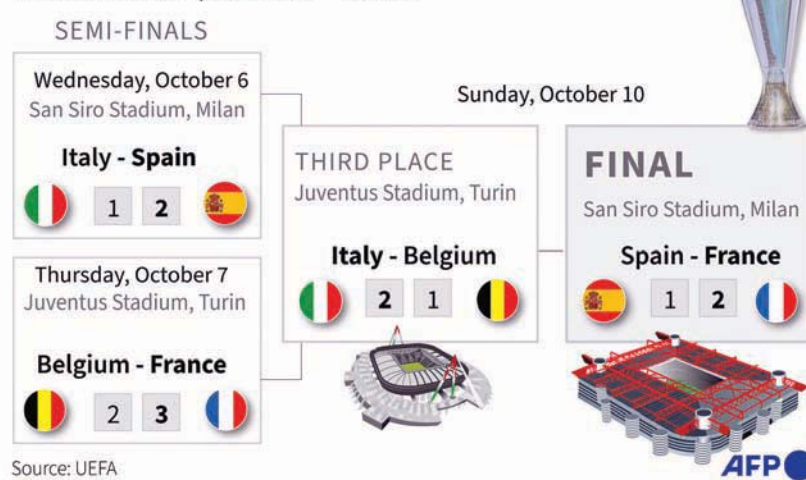
But both sides were awoken after the break when France full-back Theo Hernandez thundered a shot against the underside of the bar after a swift break.

Spain responded to that warning in clinical fashion, taking the lead when Oyarzabal latched on to a long pass from Sergio Busquets, held off Dayot Upamecano and fired into the bottom corner.

The French response was swift, however, with Mbappe finding Benzema who cut inside before unleashing a brilliant curling shot

## Nations League 2020-2021

Finals of the competition's 2<sup>nd</sup> edition



into the far corner to make it 1-1.

Mbappe then grabbed the winner, 10 minutes from the end, racing on to a through ball from Hernandez and keeping his cool to slot past Unai Simon.

Spain protested that Mbappe was offside when he received the ball but the VAR check found a slight touch from defender Eric Garcia had played the France striker onside.

France had keeper Hugo Lloris to thank for two late saves as Deschamps's side held on for the victory against intense Spanish pressure.

Lloris got down well to keep out



We showed our character against a very strong team. We never gave up. It shows what great teams do — never panic, be patient and wait for the right time

**KARIM BENZEMA**

France striker

a low shot from Oyarzabal in the 89th minute and then in stoppage time he reacted superbly to parry a strike from substitute Yeremi Pino.

Nations League, in just its second edition, remains clearly Uefa's secondary tournament for national sides, as the Italian fans singing of their team's Euro 2020 triumph reminded, but that didn't dampen France's celebrations.

"We did not get off to a good start we were dominated and waited until the first goal to react," said Pogba, who was crucial to France's response.

"We know we have to do better. But if it's the way we have to win, so be it. Winning a trophy is always good. We're always hungry for those," he added.

Earlier on Sunday, Italy had claimed third-place in the Final Four tournament by beating Belgium 2-1 in Turin.

— Reuters

# Dhoni cameo helps Chennai to reach ninth IPL final

**DUBAI:** Ruturaj Gaikwad's 70 and an unbeaten cameo from skipper MS Dhoni helped Chennai Super Kings reach a ninth Indian Premier League final with a four-wicket win over Delhi Capitals on Sunday.

Chasing 173 for victory, Chennai rode on a 110-run second-wicket partnership between Gaikwad and Robin Uthappa (63) but were in trouble after the two departed.

Delhi pace bowler Tom Curran needed to defend 13 off the final over and got Moeen Ali out for 16 on the first ball.

But Dhoni (18) kept his calm to smash three boundaries and take the team home with two balls to spare.

"My innings was a crucial one," said 40-year-old Dhoni.

"Delhi has a very good bowling attack. They exploited the conditions well, so we knew it would be tough."

Virat Kohli, whose Royal Challengers Bangalore face Kolkata Knight Riders in the eliminator on Monday, hailed Dhoni's vintage performance.

"And the king is back, the greatest finisher in the game. Made me jump Outta my seat once again



tonight," Kohli, who will step down as Bangalore captain after end of season, tweeted.

Dhoni will be India's mentor

in the upcoming T20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates and Oman where Kohli will captain the national team for one final time in

the shortest format.

The first IPL qualifier had the top two teams in the league table clash, with three-time champions

Chennai getting a direct entry into the final — their ninth in 14 seasons — on October 15.

Delhi, led by Rishabh Pant, will

have another shot at securing a berth in the final when they play the second qualifier on Wednesday.

"We are going to rectify our mistakes, learn from it and hopefully, we can move on and play the final," said Pant. Delhi posted 172-5 with attacking knocks from Prihvi Shaw (60) and skipper Rishabh Pant (51 not out).

Chennai's Australian import Josh Hazlewood took two wickets while Moeen returned figures of 1-27 with his off-spin.

Chennai lost Faf du Plessis for one, bowled by Anrich Nortje in the first over, before Gaikwad and Uthappa set up the chase.

Curran hit back with two wickets in one over including Uthappa's key scalp, but the in-form Gaikwad took the attack to the opposition and got past 600 runs this season.

Delhi, meanwhile, will now play the winner of the eliminator in the third playoff. — AFP

**Brief Scores:** Chennai Super Kings 173/6 (Ruturaj Gaikwad 70, Robin Uthappa 63; Tom Curran 3/29) beat Delhi Capitals 172/5 (Prithvi Shaw 60, Rishabh Pant 51\*; Josh Hazlewood 2/29) by 4 wickets.



# Oman face Vietnam in crucial home tie

RED WARRIORS LOOK TO RETURN TO WINNING WAYS

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, OCT 11

Oman will chase a win in their crucial match against Vietnam on Tuesday in the Asian qualifiers – Road to Qatar 2022. The match kicks-off at 8 pm at Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

Red Warriors will be looking to return to winning ways after two defeats in the previous rounds against Saudi Arabia and Australia.

Head coach Branko Ivankovic is aware that Tuesday's match will decide the team's chances for ensuring a spot in the 2022 Fifa World Cup in Doha. A win will keep alive the Sultanate's team chances in the qualifiers as the team lost six points in the last two encounters.

On the other side, the opponents will also look for the first victory in the qualifiers.

The Croatian coach said that Oman team will meet Vietnam after 17 years since the last match between both teams. "I had observed opponents Vietnam



team and they had developed well during the last period. It is expected that the match will be tough and both teams will play under pressure. We have to be fully focused during the whole match," he said during the pre-match press conference in Muscat on Monday.

Commenting about the previous fixture, the coach said: "Unfortunately, we have lost the Australia game. Nobody likes losses and we cannot change anything occurred in the last matches. The main thing is to keep focus in the

forthcoming matches," he added.

### THREE PLAYERS INJURED

The 67-year-old responded on a query regarding the injuries: "There are injuries for Zaher al Aghbari, Mohsin al Ghassani and Al Mundher al Alawi. All of them will not be available in the Vietnam fixture. Jameel al Yahmadi is a good player but I preferred to play with Zaher al Aghbari, Al Mundher al Alawi and Abudllah Fawaz in the previous game. There are many experienced players in the squad



including Mohsin Jawher who had not played yet," he ended.

The Croatian coach and the national team players plan to take advantage of the home game in presence of the spectators with a 50 per cent capacity of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. Also, the coach may slightly change the starting line-up due to the injuries and will select strong players from the bench. Mohsin Jawher is one of the players who might get a chance in the Vietnam match.

Meanwhile, Park Hang-seo,

head coach of Vietnam, said his team will seek the three points from the match. "The match will be definitely difficult for both the sides. The host team will face pressure from the spectators and fans. We are looking to make a come back to the winning ways," he said.

Responding to the complaint that raised from Vietnam team on the training venue, Hang-seo said that there was no complaint about the training ground. "The issue was only on the poor lighting facility," he concluded.

## Mashal and Loqman progress into last 32 at WTT Youth Contender

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, OCT 11

Oman's young paddler Mashal al Shehi secured a spot in the last 32 at 2021 WTT Youth Contender Muscat as he defeated Qatar's Ahmed Saadawi 3-1 on Monday.

Al Shehi positioned as runner up in U19 Boys' Singles – Group 3 while Indian Malik Yashansh topped the group.

Al Shehi defeated by Indian player Yashansh Malik 3-0 in the opening round. Al Shehi will play the last 32 on Tuesday.

Loqman al Farsi sealed spot in the knockout stage after he beat Sri Lankan Lithuim Singappulige 3-0.

He suffered to a loss against Qatar's Khalid al Yafei 3-0. He was positioned in the second place in U-15 Boys' Singles - Group 7. Qatar's Khalid Yafei led the group. Al Farsi will play the last 32 on Tuesday during morning session.

Earlier in the opening day on Sunday, Luqman exit from round 32 as he defeated by Bangladesh's Ridoy Mohutasin Ahmed in the U-17 boys' singles competition.

2021 WTT Youth Contender for boys category will conclude on Tuesday. The girls competition of 2021 WTT Youth Contender Muscat will commence on Thursday and will last for two days.



# Asian Windsurfing Championships begin in Musannah

MUSCAT: Oman Sail is ready to welcome sailors from around the world to Al Musannah marking a return of sailing events this quarter of the year. Kicking off today is the Asian Windsurfing Championships at the Barcelo Musannah Resort, bringing together a select group of talented male and female windsurfers in the Techno293, Techno293Plus as well as the brand-new foiling Formula Windsurfing class, which is making its debut at the championships this week.

The predominantly-Omani fleet will showcase the depth of local talent across all classes and demonstrate the potential of Oman as a world-class sporting venue after an enforced hiatus. Conditions are expected to be perfect. Winds between 7 and 15 knots, a combination of powerful sea breezes and pleasant waves should see five full days of exhilarating action on the water.

The event is supported by a line-up of supported including Oman



Air and the Barcelo Musannah Resort as official partners, and Be'ah as environmental supporter and Salsabeel Water from the National Mineral Water Company.

The 2021 Asian Windsurfing Championships is the first in a busy period for Oman Sail and Al-Musannah Sports City. Sailors from around the world are set to touch down in the Sultanate to compete in the Musannah Race Week from October 30 to November 5, the 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 Asian Championships from November 5-9 and the 2021 49er, 49er FX &

Nacra 17 World Championships from November 16-21.

Sailing Arabia – The Tour 2021, set entirely within Oman, begins in Musannah on November 24 and runs to December 5, while the 2021 ICLA Radial World Championships also heads to Musannah, from November 29 to December 6. The 2021 World Youth Sailing Championships closes the season as 350 of sailing's future stars head to Oman for the 50th anniversary of the competition and the first to be held in Asia.



#MAISARAHWORLD

Now is the best time to finance your dreams.

Offer valid until 31 December 2021

For more information visit: <https://www.maisarah-oman.com/Default/Finance.aspx>

2477 57 77 [www.maisarah-oman.com](http://www.maisarah-oman.com) /MaisarahOman MaisarahIslamic @MaisarahIslamic

PERSONAL FINANCE  
PROFIT RATE  
4.5%

HOUSING FINANCE  
PROFIT RATE  
4.9%

MAISARAH  
making life easy

# Climate change, topography add to Oman’s disaster risks

CONRAD PRABHU  
@conradprabhu

With cyclonic storms striking Oman with increasing frequency and rising intensity, the need for a new risk management and loss mitigation solution has become a pressing imperative, according to Murtdha M J Ibrahim al Jamalani (pictured), Chairman of the Finance & Insurance Committee of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

That solution, first proposed in the wake of Cyclone Gonu which struck the Sultanate with devastating consequences in 2007, has largely languished, he lamented. It envisions the establishment of a Natural Catastrophe Fund, coupled with the creation of a new Insurance & Reinsurance Pool designed to address primarily uninsured public and private sector losses, which account for a disproportionately large share of losses inflicted by any adverse weather event in the Sultanate.

“The concept of a Natural Catastrophe Fund was first proposed by OCCI in the aftermath of Cyclone Gonu in 2007,” says Al Jamalani. “Together with this proposal, the Insurance Committee of OCCI also came up with a number of initiatives in support of the insurance industry, notably in the design and preparation of tailor-made insurance products (one example being the Fishing Boats / Vessels Insurance Unified Policy). OCCI was also a Founder & Investor in the first specialised reinsurance company i.e. Oman Reinsurance Company SAOC, which was set up to aid foreign investment inflows and improve premium retention in the country through better cash-flow management.”

Commenting on the status of the long-standing proposal for a Natural Catastrophe Fund, the



official said: “Yes, we understand the government has plans to establish such a fund, but how and when are big question marks! The need of the hour is a combination of a Natural Catastrophe Fund / Insurance & Reinsurance Pool supported jointly by public and private sectors to compensate victims of various types of disaster-related risks, as well as to invest in the country’s infrastructures.”

The need for a special disaster fund has become even more critical as climate change threatens severe flooding, tidal surges and other phenomena with greater frequency in the coming years, Al Jamalani warns.

“Already, Oman’s location overlooking the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean beyond,

IN THE SECOND PART OF THIS TWO-PART DEEP DIVE INTO CYCLONE SHAHEEN’S DEADLY AFTERMATH, THE OBSERVER SPEAKS TO A VETERAN OF OMAN’S INSURANCE INDUSTRY FOR HIS INSIGHTS ON POLICY MEASURES AND INITIATIVES THAT MUST BE CONSIDERED BY AUTHORITIES TO MITIGATE THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF NATURAL DISASTERS ON THE OMANI ECONOMY

coupled with its varied natural topography, characterised by mountains, wadis, coastal plains and low-lying areas, makes it



Murtdha al Jamalani

devastating impact in 2007, Al Jamalani launched an initiative to map Muscat and Salalah into geographical zones based on their vulnerability to floods and subsidence.

This colour-coded zoning — white for safe zones and red for high-risk zones — is based on the Japanese concept of zoning for seismic risks. However, the initiative failed to gain traction at the time because the reinsurance market was still in its infancy. “I think it’s time to revive this project,” he stressed.

Furthermore, proposals for the introduction of a new building and construction code for homes and structures in risk-prone areas, including wadis, seafronts or hillsides, have not been embraced yet. Neither have been calls for a review of construction materials used in such zones. “To the best of my knowledge, the construction code is yet to be completed by the concerned authorities,” the official lamented.

In response to the rising frequency of cyclones and adverse weather events, insurance underwriters began placing a greater emphasis on exposure related to storms, floods and tempests (STF). Surveys of property were mandated to assess risks. But due to “cutthroat competition” in the property

insurance business, insurers failed to push through significant rate increases despite their rising exposure, said Al Jamalani.

The insurance sector, according to the official, has been beset by a number of structural shortcomings. For one, its gross written premiums have declined in recent years with many insurers currently saddled with an “unbalanced business portfolio”, which goes contrary to the Law of Large Numbers underpinning the insurance business.

Moreover, the sector has suffered declines in net retention ratios, capital, assets values, and technical reserves and provisions. Dividends distribution policies have fluctuated as well — symptoms that don’t bode well for the health of the industry, he said.

**LEGISLATIVE REVIEW**

To help address these challenges, Al Jamalani has called for a review of relevant laws, as well as the reactivation of articles of the Insurance Law to help enhance insurance premium growth and the sector’s contribution to the GDP.

He also stressed the need for mergers and acquisitions (M&A) to help achieve economies of scale. Additionally, sustainable dividends policies will help enhance asset values and stability of share prices in the stock market, he stated.

“Clearly, there are huge challenges facing the insurance industry today, but addressing them will not be possible without an overhaul of the procedures, practices and amendments in the law, along with the reactivation of key articles in the Insurance Companies Law. Therein lies answers to questions about compensating victims of Cyclone Shaheen and tackling uninsured losses as well,” he added.

## Omantel discloses cyclone damage

**BUSINESS REPORTER**

Omantel has acknowledged that Cyclone Shaheen, which struck the Sultanate during October 3 – 4, 2021, damaged some of its network sites in Muscat, Al Batinah North and South and Al Dhahirah governorates.

In a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA), the majority state-owned operator said it was currently assessing the extent of the damage caused



by the cyclone. It is also engaged in restoring services in areas impacted by the storm, the company noted.

“We would like to inform that all our equipment and sites are fully covered by insurance and it is expected that any losses arising out of this will be reimbursed by the insurance company subject to policy conditions. Hence, we do not expect to incur any material loss,” the statement added.

## Galfar wins RO 21m airport contract

**BUSINESS REPORTER**

Leading Omani construction firm Galfar Engineering and Contracting SAOG said it has been awarded a contract valued at RO 21 million for undertaking key rehabilitation works at Muscat International Airport.

The contract awarded by the Civil Aviation Authority covers the rehabilitation of the southern runway and air corridors of the airport, Dr Hamood bin Rashid al Toobi, CEO — Galfar, said in a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA).





## KR Eshraqa facilitates school books distribution in Al Dakhiliyah

**MUSCAT:** As part of its ongoing efforts to support Oman's education sector and create a seamless learning experience for students, Eshraqa, Khimji Ramdas' Social Development Arm, recently presented packages to students of Standard 1-4 in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate schools. The gesture was aimed at facilitating the process of distributing books to students and enriching their knowledge with awareness messages, as part of the kits presented to them.

The launch of the initiative took place in Shams Al Nahda School in Nizwa in the presence of the Directorate-General of Education, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, and Arafat Yasser al Hinai, Regional General Manager of Khimji Ramdas'. The General Directorate of Education in the governorate launched the initiative as a first phase, benefiting 43,000 students, with plans to reach out to other schools in the near future.

Nailesh Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas said: "We believe in the importance of supporting the national education sector and enhance the learning process of students by providing the necessary tools for them to excel and flourish in their studies. Our goals are in line with the national priorities that aim to create an environment of continuous improvement that can lead the Sultanate towards a

brighter future. We will continue to mentor and support initiatives that deliver value and develop the potential of human resources in our beloved country."

Appreciating this noteworthy contribution, the Directorate-General of Education in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate said: "We are pleased with this contribution from Eshraqa. This gesture reflects the organisation's commitment to adding value to the lives of the people of Oman and supporting the communities it operates in. We commend Eshraqa's ongoing efforts as the partnership between the private and the public sector to support education is pivotal to achieve overall development and create a skilled and well-educated generation."

Eshraqa, the social development arm of Khimji Ramdas Group, strives to contribute to the development of local communities through its four pillars — Education, Health, Community Well-being, and Training.

Since its inception, Eshraqa has embarked on providing a plethora of effective initiatives in various fields in partnership with public, societal, and educational institutes. The aim of the initiatives is to support the development of society, ultimately creating a sustainable and bright future for the people of Oman.

# Lulu Hypermarket launches 'Discover America' promotion

**MUSCAT:** Lulu Hypermarket on October 11 launched its latest edition of the 'Discover America' campaign, an annual festival that enables shoppers to explore the widest range of American products in Oman.

The Lulu event, held from October 11 to 17, showcases a wide range of products specially flown in from the United States for Lulu shoppers. The event is held across selected Lulu branches in Oman and features food, delicacies, and grocery products from the United States.

Commenting on the promotion, Shabeer K A, Lulu's Regional Director — Oman, remarked, "We are organising the 'Discover America' promotion for the sixth time in Oman. The promotion is an exceptional opportunity for our customers to explore and experience the culinary delights and lifestyles of the United States. The growing demand for US products from our customers encourages us to organise such events and we hope to bring in more such innovative promotions for our shoppers in



the future," he added.

Leslie M Tsou, the US Ambassador to the Sultanate inaugurated the event at Lulu Hypermarket, Bausher, on October 11, in the presence of Lulu management, staff members, and customers.

"Discover America' celebrates the strong partnership between Oman and the United States," Ambassador Tsou said. "The incredible variety of products available here shows Omani

appreciation for the high quality and value of American brands," she added.

The Oman American Business Center (AmCham Oman), a Discover America partner, is working closely with the US Embassy to promote the US-Oman Free Trade Agreement and highlight US and Omani partnerships in business and culture.

Lulu has brought in fruits and vegetables, fresh and frozen

foods, chilled and dairy products, pies, cakes, and chocolates from the best US brands for the promotion.

The promotion will feature more than 180 brands with a product range of more than 4,000 items. Popular brands like Kraft, Duncan Hines, Planter's, Bragg, McCain, Jell-O, Bertolli, Ragu, Folgers, Smucker's, Quaker, Hunt's, Hershey's, and many more are available for customers to purchase.

## Malabar Gold & Diamonds aids cyclone hit

**MUSCAT:** Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the largest jewellery retailers globally has initiated relief activities by distributing food kits to those affected by cyclone Shaheen. This CSR initiative, distributing 50,000 meals to families and bachelors residing across the severely affected areas including Al Khabourah, Al Suwaiq and Bidiya, is being spearheaded by the team members of Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Najeeb K, Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, and Muhsin met with Sultan bin Humaid bin Mohammed al Hosni, Majlis Ash'shura Member-Representative of Al Khabourah and discussed the situation and



evaluate the requirements of those affected. "We would like to express our deepest sympathy to those suffering from the impact of cyclone Shaheen. CSR remains a core value at Malabar

Gold & Diamonds since its inception in 1993. We are hoping this initiative would ease the current circumstances of those suffering from the aftermath of the cyclone. We wish the earliest

possible recovery and pray for earliest restoration of the affected areas," said Najeeb.

The food kits contain essential supplies, including staple, lentils, oil, and spices and will serve a 4-member family for one week.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds believes that the most successful companies are those which integrate responsibility and sustainability into their core business.

The group is always proactive when it comes to CSR activities right from the inception. The key focus areas of the CSR initiatives of Malabar Group are in the areas of Health, Education, Women Empowerment, Housing and Environment.

## AGAE launches Changan CS75 plus crossover in luxury, sport variants

**MUSCAT:** Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE), which is a part of Bahwan International Group, has launched compact Crossover Changan CS75 Plus in Luxury and Sport variants. With its premium design, comfortable automotive interior, and highly intelligent configuration, Changan CS75 Plus offers a host of special features.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, "We are pleased to launch Changan CS75 Plus 2022MY in the Oman market. Changan CS75 Plus is impressing car enthusiasts for its promising quality of innovation, aesthetics, functionality and stability. The compact Crossover is guaranteed to make a mark in the Omani market. The SUV that makes driving feel like winning with its stunning design, premium interior and intelligent features. The CS75 Plus is loaded with smart and innovative features

that aim to elevate the confidence and sophistication in every drive."

An upgraded version of the CS75, the 2WD Changan CS75 Plus features a more sloped roofline and more power. Under the hood, it has a 2.0-litre turbocharged 4-cylinder engine, mated to an 8-speed automatic transmission with a power of 224 hp and torque of 360 Nm. With a wheelbase of 2710 mm, and it measures 4,700 mm in length, 1,865 mm in width and 1,710 mm in height.

Standard features in the CS75 Plus include power windows, central locking, cruise control, dual-zone auto A/C, 8 speakers, multifunctional steering wheel, USB+AUX ports, 12-inch screen, Bluetooth, 360 camera, leather ventilated seats, sunroof, fog lamps, parking sensors LED headlamps, panoramic roof, keyless entry and start, and 19-inch wheels. Safety features



includes dual front, side and curtain airbags, ABS, and hill assist.

Its Blue Core Powertrain Technology, based on the principles of power, clean and quiet, provides owners a highly efficient and energy saving performance.

CS75 Plus features a more streamlined body with flowing lines and geometric patterns,

creating the overall appearance of a vehicle from the future. To instill the confidence and sophistication in every drive, CS75 Plus offers a range of intelligent driving technologies and advanced safety features.

To create a premium drive experience, CS75 Plus seamlessly integrates luxurious interior with high-tech convenience features, coupled with ample space.

Changan CS75 Plus 2.0 T B AT Luxury includes the features of CS75 Plus 2.0 T 8 AT Sport features.

Its exterior boasts of piercing front position headlamp, adaptive high and low beam, ORVM with memory and puddle lamps. Its interior features multi colour ambient lighting, front seats ventilation, driver seat with memory and luggage cover.

Its safety attributes intelligent adaptive cruise control, 360 Camera (HD) with 3D View, blind spot detection, rear approaching alarm, reverse auxiliary alarm, lane departure warning, rain sensor wiper and seat belt pretensioners.

Intelligent Adaptive Cruise Control provides a safer and more pleasant driving experience. IACC facilitates smart driving features including heavy traffic assisted driving, lane keep assist, automatic deceleration during turns, intelligent speed limit

assist, and voice-activated cruise speed setting.

The 12 inch LCD touch screen in the middle displays a 360 degree camera view around the car. When the option is clicked a 3D model of the car is shown and within the screen itself you may rotate the car and view the surroundings.

The model can avoid or ease the collision by alarm and auxiliary braking. The car detects blocks and sends a visual and an audible alarm to notify you.

In a scenario where you brake suddenly and the car behind you is unaware of this and is approaching you with speed. Your car detects the challenge and alerts you in the screen in front of you and the rear lights of your car start blinking/flashing in order to capture the driver's (Behind) attention.

There are two options for this, the driver either sits in the car or he leaves the car.



## In brief

## ■ WASHINGTON

**YELLEN CONFIDENT  
CONGRESS WILL PASS  
GLOBAL CORPORATE TAX**

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said she was confident the US Congress would approve legislation to implement the global corporate minimum tax agreed by 136 countries. Yellen said the actions to bring the United States into compliance with the global minimum tax would likely be included in the so-called reconciliation budget bill containing President Joe Biden's proposed spending initiatives.

Asked on ABC's 'This Week' whether she was confident the measure would get through, Yellen said: "Yes. I am confident that what we need to do to come into compliance with the minimum tax will be included in a reconciliation package. I hope that we, that it will be passed and we will be able to reassure the world that the United States will do its part."

The parliamentary manoeuvre known as budget reconciliation would allow Democrats to act without Republican votes.

— Reuters

**BUSINESS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, OCT 11**

Oman crude gained \$0.83 per barrel to settle at \$81.97 per barrel in trading on the Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME) on Monday, returning to a level last seen around three years ago.

The spike mirrored gains by leading international benchmarks which posted increases of more than \$2 on Monday, as an energy crisis grips major economies amid a pick-up in economic activity and restrained supplies from major producers.

Brent crude was up \$2.17, or 2.6 per cent, at \$84.56 a barrel by 1136 GMT, its highest since October 2018, said Reuters. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude rose \$2.67, or 3.4 per cent, to \$82.02 for its highest since late 2014. "Oil prices are likely to continue climbing in the short-term", said Commerzbank analyst Carsten Fritsch.

Prices have risen as more vaccinated populations are brought out of coronavirus lockdowns, supporting a revival in economic activity, with Brent advancing for five weeks and US crude for seven.

The pace of economic recovery combined with cold weather has increased the demand for energy, while pressure on governments to accelerate the transition to cleaner energy has slowed



investment in oil projects to boost supplies.

World leaders are due to meet in November at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) taking place in Glasgow to flesh out commitments on energy transition.

Prices for coal, gas and electricity have also surged to record highs in recent weeks, driven higher by widespread energy shortages in Asia,

Europe and the United States.

In India, some states are experiencing electricity blackouts because of coal shortages. China's government, meanwhile, has ordered miners to ramp up coal production as power prices surge.

"The news from last week that the (US) Department of Energy is not planning to tap into strategic reserves for now is keeping the oil market tight and is supporting prices", said UBS

analyst Giovanni Staunovo.

US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm last week said the administration was considering tapping the country's emergency oil reserves to cool gasoline prices, though the Energy Department later said it had "no plans to take action at this time".

Drillers in the United States added five new oil wells last week for the fifth straight weekly increase in oil and gas rigs.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and allies, together known as Opec+, last week decided to maintain a steady and gradual increase in output.

"Depleting stocks, Opec discipline and the ongoing energy crunch will provide solid price support in the next three months", said Tamas Varga, oil analyst at London brokerage PVM Oil Associates.

(With inputs from Reuters)

# IIC finances innovative industrial products for over RO 2m from 2017

**MUSCAT:** The annual report of the Industrial Innovation Centre (IIC) showed that the centre supported start-up companies inside the Sultanate with an amount of RO 2,85,057 during the period from 2017 until 2020.

This comes as part of the efforts exerted by the IIC to enhance innovation in industrial activities, add high value to natural resources in the Sultanate and promote self-sufficiency of locally made products.

The report of the IIC, established as an outcome of the National Programme for Enhancing Economic Diversity (Tanfeedh), showed that the Centre has provided 72 investment opportunities at several promising industrial sectors, such as fisheries, marble, food and beverages, mining and technologies. The IIC made this achievement by creating and financing economically viable industrial products, as well as qualifying the national cadres who develop such products.

The report indicated that the IIC developed 20 start-ups operating in the industrial sector. It also pointed out that such companies have registered their brands at the Intellectual Property Department in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion.

The report demonstrated that the IIC sought to create an appropriate ecosystem for Omani innovators and national cadres through its finance,



technical support, guidance and advice.

It also indicated that the centre strived to enhance the competitiveness of Omani factories, improve its operational efficiency and qualify human resources who are the main pillar and sustainable component for leading national innovation.

The report revealed that

the IIC financed and enabled 43 factories and companies to produce innovative technologies and services. It signalled that the Centre prepared 70 detailed economic feasibility studies to measure the potential revenues and promising investment opportunities.

It also reflected that the IIC contributed to the provision of 41 training programmes, offered

its services to 660 entities and entered into partnerships with 43 governmental agencies, private sector companies and academic institutions.

The report disclosed that the Centre prepared and carried out four important programs; the first of which was the human resources development programme.

Designed to prepare industrial innovation specialists, this programme contributed to qualifying about 400 innovators, entrepreneurs and job-seekers, as part of the IIC's efforts to cement national innovation competencies in the industrial sector.

The other programmes included the start-up innovation programme, which contributed to the establishment of start-up companies, in addition to the industrial innovation programme.

The report illustrated that the IIC has made significant achievements during the past four years by carrying out 128 technology transfer operations along with the companies benefiting from its services. In addition to providing 56 job opportunities, the centre has contributed to innovating 167 products. Furthermore, 566 young men and women benefited from its services. The ICC has also enabled 64 male and female students to innovate industrially in the food, fisheries, mining and technology sectors. — ONA

## 5G telecom coverage now reaches 40pc of Oman

CONRAD PRABHU  
@conradprabhu

5G-based wireless telecommunications technology now covers 40 per cent of Oman's population — a figure set to grow exponentially when a third telecom operator, Vodafone Oman, enters the fray, likely before the end of this year.

According to the latest market indicators for the telecom sector, published by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), 5G home broadband subscriptions surged 87 per cent to 38,173 customers in Q2 2021, up from 21,628 subscribers during the previous quarter. Driving this growth was, among other factors, the installation of 1,300 5G mobile sites covering key urban areas of the country.

A total of 3,200 mobile network sites have been installed across the country, providing 97.6 per cent of the population with 4G coverage and 99.4 per cent with 3G coverage, the Authority said.

The number of mobile subscribers in the country dipped to 5.907 million in Q2 2021, down from 6.109 million during the previous quarter. Reflecting this downtrend, mobile penetration in the country slipped to 132 per cent, down from 137 per cent during Q1 2021, according to the TRA report.

Omantel's share of the mobile telecom market was



44.4 per cent, with Ooredoo (39.1 per cent) and Friendi/Renna (16.5 per cent) sharing the remainder. Prepaid mobile subscribers accounted for a dominant 80 per cent share of the mobile market in Q2 2021, down from 84 per cent in the previous quarter.

Mobile usage averaged 96 minutes per month per subscription during Q2 2021, with mobile broadband usage pegged at 6 GB per month. This usage generated corresponding revenues of RO 1.580 in ARPU for voice (national outgoing minutes) and RO 3.613 in mobile broadband data usage.

In Over the Top (OTT) social media usage, the report indicated a significant 37 drop in Facebook usage during the first half of 2021 versus corresponding figures for the preceding half. But Instagram usage surged 125 per cent over the same period, followed by TikTok (68 per cent), online gaming (55 per cent) and Snapchat (18 per cent).

Still no decision on whether IMF chief keeps her job

The International Monetary Fund said it still had not decided whether its embattled chief would keep her job, with the lack of clarity over Kristalina Georgieva's future threatening to overshadow the body's fall meetings this week.

An investigation by a law firm has concluded that the Bulgarian managing director manipulated data in favour of China while in a senior role at the World Bank.

The IMF board met again with representatives of the firm, WilmerHale, and with Georgieva over the weekend.

The board said in a statement published late on Sunday that it made "further significant progress today in its assessment with a view to very soon concluding its consideration of the matter".

It added: "The Executive Board has consistently expressed its commitment to a thorough, objective, and timely review."

The 24-member board — which usually makes decisions by consensus — could meet again on Monday, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

The week-long fall meetings of both the IMF and the World Bank are also scheduled to start on Monday, when Georgieva, 68, is due to speak during a roundtable, as well as give a press conference on Wednesday.

The storm at the top of the fund could pull focus from topics nominally at the top of the agenda, such as threats to global economic growth and helping countries bounce back from the Covid-19 pandemic.

WilmerHale's controversial findings centre on the drafting of the 2018 and 2020 editions of the World Bank's report ranking countries according to their ease of doing business.

The World Bank's ethics committee called in the law firm when the report proved controversial, and led to the resignation of the bank's former chief economist Paul Romer.

WilmerHale found that Georgieva — along with her associate Simeon Djankov, a former Bulgarian finance minister who created the "Doing Business" report, and Jim Yong Kim, then president of the World Bank — pressured staff to change the calculation of China's ranking to avoid angering Beijing.

The push came while bank leadership was engaged in sensitive negotiations with Beijing over increasing the bank's lending capital.

Georgieva — who took over as head of the fund in October 2019 — has repeatedly denied the WilmerHale report's conclusions. There was no immediate reaction from her on Sunday.

Her fate divides members of the IMF, with Europe and Africa wanting her to stay in post, while the United States and Japan are reluctant to see her continue, according to several sources familiar with the matter. — Reuters

Our opinion is that most of the elements are on the table, (and) the law firm's report does not detail precise elements that would directly call the director general into question

FRENCH FINANCE MINISTRY SOURCE



'SHADES' NOT FADING OUT

An employee of the French cosmetic company L'Oreal Lassigny checks the production on the assembly lines of the factory in Lassigny, northern France. At L'Oreal's luxury makeup factory, shades come in hundreds, a sign that masks haven't completely driven lipstick off the face. The Covid-19 pandemic has lowered makeup sales due to the lockdown. — AFP

After the 'Doing Business' annual report



MAURICIO CÁRDENAS  
Former finance minister of Colombia, visiting Senior Research Scholar at Columbia University's Centre on Global Energy Policy

FOLLOWING ITS RECENT BUSINESS-ENVIRONMENT RANKINGS SCANDAL, THE WORLD BANK WILL HAVE TO OVERCOME A DEEP TRUST DEFICIT AND TAKE DRASTIC STEPS TO RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN ITS DATA

Earlier this year, the World Bank commissioned me and five fellow academics to develop recommendations on how to improve the methodology behind its annual Doing Business report, which ranked countries on the quality of their business regulations and their overall business environment.

The report had been a lightning rod for controversy since its inception in 2003.

While it generated glowing coverage in the global business media, it was also subject to constant criticism for its perceived anti-regulation, anti-union, and anti-tax slant.

On September 1, we submitted our final recommendations, calling for a major overhaul of Doing Business including ending the practice of ranking countries. Two weeks later, the World Bank announced that it was scrapping the report entirely after a separate investigation by an outside law firm concluded that data had been deliberately manipulated in order to alter some countries' rankings, notably those of China and Saudi Arabia.

Setting aside the debate over what really happened in the past, the end of Doing Business has important consequences. We have no doubt that the world needs a tool to measure countries' conditions for business development and attractiveness for foreign direct investment, and that the data from such a project are highly relevant to both researchers and business and government leaders.

The World Bank has already declared its intention to keep working on business-climate issues. But to re-establish itself in

this domain, it will have to overcome a deep trust deficit and take drastic steps to restore public confidence in its data. Our ideas about how to fix Doing Business could now serve as minimum criteria that any new effort in this area should meet.

First, the World Bank should not build a new index to rank countries, as Doing Business did. Such aggregate indices are inevitably arbitrary, and the rankings invoke normative judgments that go far beyond the available evidence. Even prior to the recent data manipulation scandal, it was clear that the methodology behind many of the individual Doing Business indicators needed to be overhauled.

The core problem was that Doing Business did not actually survey businesses, or measure the real-world costs of doing business for a representative set of small and medium-size enterprises. Instead, it relied on subjective judgments from a small group of experts, who were invited to assess the costs of regulation for a hypothetical firm that was often quite unrepresentative in many of the countries the Bank evaluated. The emphasis on de jure assessments needs to be replaced with de facto conditions.

As luck would have it, separate World Bank surveys have periodically asked actual firms' managers some of the same questions posed by Doing Business: about the time required to register a business, get a construction permit, clear goods through customs, and so on. Firms' own answers, it turned out, bore no relation to those of the Doing Business experts. If there is a successor to

Doing Business, it has to start from real data, not hypotheticals.

A second set of issues concerns assumptions about the right policies or regulations, which are implicit in any business-environment ranking. For some indicators, such as delays in registering a business, less is clearly better. But for others, like the corporate tax rate, the optimal policy is the subject of vigorous academic debate.

The tax issue became increasingly awkward for the Doing Business report in recent years.

As 130 countries finalised plans this year for a global minimum corporate tax rate, the index continued to encourage a race to the bottom in corporate taxation.

Third, any serious attempt to measure a country's business environment must consider government efforts to fix market failures and provide essential public goods. But the World Bank's broad vision of how to promote a good business climate, as embodied in the Doing Business index, suffered from some severe blind spots. For the private sector to flourish, apparently, government mostly needed to get out of the way.

This view made no allowance for public investments in basic infrastructure such as roads, telecommunications networks, and power grids, all of which are fundamental to doing business but were entirely absent from the report. Absent, too, was any reference to crime prevention and public order, a skilled workforce, or investments in research and development.

Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2021

Digital technology: Friend or foe against climate change?



KATY LEE  
Internet correspondent

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WAS NOT 'A SILVER BULLET' THAT COULD REVERSE CLIMATE CHANGE

From the energy that goes into making smartphones to the fact that even e-mails create carbon emissions, the world's Internet addiction comes with costs to the climate. But could digital technology be part of the solution to climate change, as well as the problem?

Ahead of next month's COP26 climate talks, AFP looks at five ways in which tech could help to limit the impact.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Among the many items on the COP26 agenda, countries are preparing a road map for using artificial intelligence (AI) to fight climate change.

AI relies on complex calculations by high-powered computers that can eat up vast quantities of energy.

Training a single AI algorithm system can use nearly five times the emissions produced by a car over its lifetime, according to University of Massachusetts researchers.

But AI is already helping to make a wide range of industrial processes more energy-efficient, simply by making calculations that humans can't.

Consultancy PwC estimates that greater AI use in four key sectors of the economy, including agriculture and transport, could cut global emissions by four per cent.

Peter Clutton-Brock, co-

founder of the Centre for AI and Climate, said artificial intelligence was not "a silver bullet" that could reverse climate change.

"But there are some really interesting and exciting applications that are emerging," he said.

These include using AI to analyse data on deforestation and melting sea ice, to better predict which areas will be affected next.

APPS AND SEARCH ENGINES

Sceptics may argue that a single person can only have a limited impact, but the eco-conscious have various apps at their disposal to monitor their personal carbon footprints.

Various apps estimate the emissions produced by a car or plane ride, while others allow shoppers to scan items and see information on how eco-friendly they are. Google last week announced tweaks to its search tools to show drivers the most fuel-efficient routes and display emissions information for flights.

The search engine Ecosia, meanwhile, uses the profits from its ads to pay for reforestation, with more than 135 million trees planted so far.

REMOTE WORK

Has the shift towards remote work during the pandemic been good for the environment? It's

still unclear, say researchers.

Last year the huge drop in commuting was hailed as a contributor towards a drop in global emissions, as much of the world hunkered down.

But signing in online still means employees use energy at home — and in the winter, heating individual dwellings can be less efficient than a single office for a whole team.

The International Energy Agency found that if all white-collar workers stayed home one day a week, global emissions could be cut by 24 million tonnes — roughly equivalent to London's emissions in a year.

— AFP

WJ Towell Group Company



**Quality car rentals at competitive prices.**

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684  
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325  
www.orbit-oman.com

• Fleet of 2,000 vehicles  
• Choose from a wide range of brands & models  
• PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available  
• Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربت ORBIT  
Car Rental & Lease

# Classifieds

**EURO CHOICE FOODS L.L.C**  
(Importers of Frozen, Chilled, Fresh & Dry Food Products)

**Food Service** ♦  
**Catering Supply** ♦  
**Ship Chandling** ♦  
**Re-export** ♦  
**Fresh Fruits & Vegetables** ♦  
**Fresh & Chilled Meat and Chicken** ♦  
**Dairy Product & Grocery Items** ♦

Tel: +968 24435211 / 24435177  
foodservice@eurochoicefoodsllc.com  
www.eurochoicefoodsllc.com




**OMAN DAILY Observer Classified Section**

**TUESDAY | OCTOBER 12, 2021 | RABEE AL AWWAL 5, 1443 AH**

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230  
m.alrahd186@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264  
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi  
95919344

94501166  
24649593  
24649595

## SIT. VACANT

**WANTED CIVIL ENGINEER,** Planning Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, Electrical Engineer, C&A Engineer. Minimum 8 to 12 years experience in Oil & Gas engineering field. Accountant - 3 to 5 years experience. Send CV to Vap1oman@gmail.com

**ELECTRICAL Engineer,** 8 years experience, Mega projects, Operation and maintenance, O&G, project management Contact: 97778314

**MECHANICAL Engineer BE/B.Tech** Mechanical Engineering with 5 years of working experience in MEP/STP Works (Motor Pumps & irrigation). Autocad skills mandatory and having Valid Oman/GCC Driving Licence. Email:sanjay\_grandmuscat@yahoo.com

## SIT. WANTED

**AUTOCAD CIVIL DRAGHTSMAN** having 5 years experience in all type of CAD drawings looking for a suitable placement in Oman & NOC available. Contact: 96058690 Whatsapp: 79067799. Email: ubaid.pr90@gmail.com

**ACCOUNTANT/ Senior Accountant M.** Com with Diploma in Computer Application with 18 years Experience in FCC countries, Ready to join immediately (Visa status (visit Visa) Please Contact: 79046649

**MECHANICAL engineer,** 21, Indian male currently in Oman looking to work at any engineering field. Contact 96511338. Email: rkhdhanush11@gmail.com

**RESEARCH & Administrative Assistant,** Recruiter and Co-Ordinator, M.Sc. in Sustainable Development with 12 plus years of experience, Female, Indian, looking for employment. Contact: 98260708

**SENIOR ACCOUNTANT,** B.Com, MBA, with 15 years of accounting experience in Oman seeks Senior / Manager Level Post. NOC available. Please contact: 78581435.

**SMART Indian,** excellent English, Arabic speaker, 17 years Oman experience in Airport, Hospital, Media EPC seeks Admin/ Hr/ Project coordinator/ Operations. 99283938.

**PROJECT Management professional PMP\*** - Senior Mechanical Engineer. 18 years' experience in oil gas field -agile, predictive & hybrid (especially pressure vessels, horizontal & vertical tanks, pipe lines, silos, structures, bridges, special type equipment installation etc) Contact: 94330012

**EXPERIENCED Indian** with BBA and Commerce graduate, looking for suitable openings in Sales and Marketing. Well versed in English, Arabic, Hindi and Urdu. Possess valid Oman driving licence. Contact GSM 95236249, E: shairazshkh80@gmail.com

**OMANI male,** 17 years experience as driver. Looking for transporting job for nurses, office goers, sight seeing. Contact: 97947900.

**THREE years** experienced in administration / sales and marketing seeking placement. Omani D/L, and NOC available. Gsm- 98270993

**FINANCE Manager/ CFO.** Indian Chartered Accountant

**INDIAN male,** 24, B.E. computer science, masters in GIS from UK. Seeking placement in GIS field. Having Oman driving licence. Contact: 99738614.

and Cost Accountant with 25 years of experience in Trade Finance, MIS, Budget, Planning, Strategy, Projects, Procurement, Admin, seeks suitable placement. Contact. 99884291 / 99741875 Email vipul70@gmail.com

**INDIAN, male,** Master Degree in Accounting, 15+ years of experience in Oman, UAE & India as Finance / Accounts Manager/ Chief Accountant. Looking for a job and have noc on visit. Contact: 79007124/ 78039524. email: kadercok@outlook.com

**INDIAN male,** 24 years of total experience in which 16 years in a Multinational Freight Forwarding and Logistic Co., worked under the capacity of Senior Operation Executive/Senior Accountant having thorough knowledge in Ocean Freight, Air Freight, Land Transport, Warehouse Operations and Finance & Accounting. NOC available. Contact 93587605

**SALES/Marketing/retail executive** BMS in Marketing. 6 years experience. Contact 93920174. Rehankadri91@hotmail.com

**MANAGER Sales and Distribution** seeks suitable placement. Sales Professional with 25 years' experience in Oman, includes 12 years in Sales Management, with LEADING FMCG, Consumer Durables Companies. Currently working with a leading group as Branch Manager for Retail and Distribution. Accountable for the total business and P&L. NOC available. 99369127.

**CIVIL engineer/QS engineer,** 11 years in UAE, freelance & Oman driving licence available, looking for full-time or part-time job 97299165.

## FOR RENT

**3 FLOOR villa** for rent in North Athaiba, consists of 6 bedrooms, 6 toilets, a sitting room and maid room. Recently renovated and fully furnished 72682227 / 24494661

**INDIAN male,** Master degree in HR and Finance with 5+ years of experience in Oman as HR Asst with valid Omani driving license. Looking for a job, currently on visit visa Contact: 93835905 Email: Chris\_alwin@yahoo.com

**INDIAN, Female B.Tech** (information Technology) with 2+ years of experience in Oman as Co-ordinator and Marketing with valid Omani driving license. Looking for a job, currently on visit visa. Contact: 71198240 Email: jc.clarrinda@gmail.com

## FOR SALE

**3BHK flat** for sale in Al Khoud Commercial Road with an allocated parking space. Call: 99411330.

**FOR sale** in SFZ, near port — 4-storey factory for Guar Gum powder, total 3,7000 square metres, warehouse 1,700 Square metres, with or without machines. Write to guargulf@gmail.com or call +968 94615439 (www.gulfguargum.com)

**WE supply** quantities of excellent mountainous soil in Bausher (suitable for compaction and filling) 99242445, 99327939.

## FOR INVESTMENT

**STEEL factory** for investment in Muscat, specialising in the manufacture of different sizes of construction steel. Contact 93648245.

## TOURIST VISA

**TOURIST visa** for Oman, 30 days and 10 days. WhatsApp: +968 93648245, according to the terms and conditions.

**PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.**

**Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocroaches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA**

**PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service,** Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]



**Tel: 24787606, 24787503**  
**Direct Line: 24786077**  
**GSM: 99382355, 99172309**  
**pcomctom@omantel.net.om**  
**P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman**

## RENT A CAR

**Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS**  
○ Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.  
○ Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts.  
☎972494490.

## LUXURIOUS

Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

## BUYING

**AL Awsad Modern** llc, electronic and furniture used. 99834373.

## SERVICES

**A LEGAL translation office** needs **Marketeers.** Contact E-mail: oman4n@gmail.com

1. AC maintenance and servicing. 2. Fridge, washing machine and dish washer repairing. 3. Painting and cleaning services. 4. Electrical, plumbing and carpentry work 97014234, 99447257, 24290686.

**ORIENT Trading** llc, Shampooing, sofa, carpet, floor polishing. Old house repairing. 99834373.

**AL SUMRI AC** maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

**Looking for Stockiest /Distributors/Wholesalers/ Traders to sell our below Products**

**Ravira International**

- Chemicals (soda ash, caustic soda, sodium bicarb)
- Partner for Tyre Recycling Facility
- Indian Papermills Finished Kraft Paper Rolls and Duplex Boards
- B&C Materials - Tarpaulins, PP Corrugated Sheets, Ceramic Tiles etc.
- Indian Brands - ATOP Food Products, Gram Flour (Uttam gaay chhap besan)
- Internationally Approved Indian Brand PTFE Lined, Pipe, Fittings, flanges and Valves.

**RAVIRA INTERNATIONAL (Dubai UAE)**  
Mobile (WhatsApp No) : +968 79371865 (OMAN), +971 503058676 (UAE)  
Mail Id: ravirainternational@gmail.com • www.raviraintl.com

**VIGAS CARGO**  
WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR

**Transportation, Packing & Cargo Services**

- CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA WORLD WIDE
- DOOR TO DOOR DELIVERY IN INDIA, INDONESIA & UK
- PROFESSIONAL PACKERS & MOVERS
- MUSCAT - DUBAI - MUSCAT REGULAR TRANSPORT

**H.O. Ruwi**  
99851366  
92495068

**Ghubrah:** 93571703  
**Falaj:** 93571704  
**Store:** 93571823  
**Misfa:** 98119561  
93260956

**vigas.cargo@yahoo.com**

**ROYAL CARGO**  
DOOR TO DOOR CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA

- ALL OVER INDIA
- INDONESIA
- NEPAL
- AIR EXPORT (Port to Port)
- SEA EXPORT (Container Booking)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION JUST DIAL**  
CUSTOMER CARE **93213207**

**PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT 93213206**

**AL NAMANI CARGO**  
DOOR TO DOOR AIR & SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

**ALL OVER INDIA EXPRESS DELIVERY**

**Online Tracking**  
TOLL FREE NUMBER **80066766**

**24/7 FREE PICK UP**

Service Available  
www.alnamanicargo.com

INDIA | BANGLADESH | INDONESIA | PHILIPPINES | SRI LANKA | ETHIOPIA | ALL GCC SERVICE AVAILABLE

**95587410, 99785420, 99638698, 98523831**

22 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE IN OMAN  
Branches  
HO: RUWI - HAMRIYA, GHALA, AL AMRAT, SEEB, SOHAR

**AL KHOORY EQUIPMENT EST.**  
P.O.Box 545, P.C. 117, Al Wadi Al Kabir Area, Sultanate of Oman

Official distributor of **Schneider Electric**



Stockist & Wholesaler of Low Voltage Switchgear Products and a One Stop Solution for all Switchgear Products and Assembly

**Schneider Electric** **Lowato electric** **DAB** **WEG** **Franklin Electric** **alfanar**

**Tel: +968 24832474, +968 79474556**  
E-mail: alkhoory@omantel.net.om • www.alkhooryoman.com

**M M T CARGO**  
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE

**MUSCAT:** 95605353, 95605454  
**BARKA:** 95893242, 93743308  
**SOHAR:** 96773031, 95347988  
**FALAJ:** 94002341, 95136067  
**SALALAH:** 94575905, 97858656  
**DUQUIM:** 97218831, 94002341

**ROAD, SEA & AIR TRANSPORT WORLD WIDE**

GTC Building, Near Badr Al Sama Hospital, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman  
E-mail: mmtcargo@yahoo.com  
Customer Care: 96773031 / 97695454

**Sea Cargo 800 Bz/Kg** **Express Cargo** to Kerala 5 to 7 days\*

**SITUATION VACANT**

Require a well-qualified and an experienced **"General Manager"** for a prestigious Farm Estate.

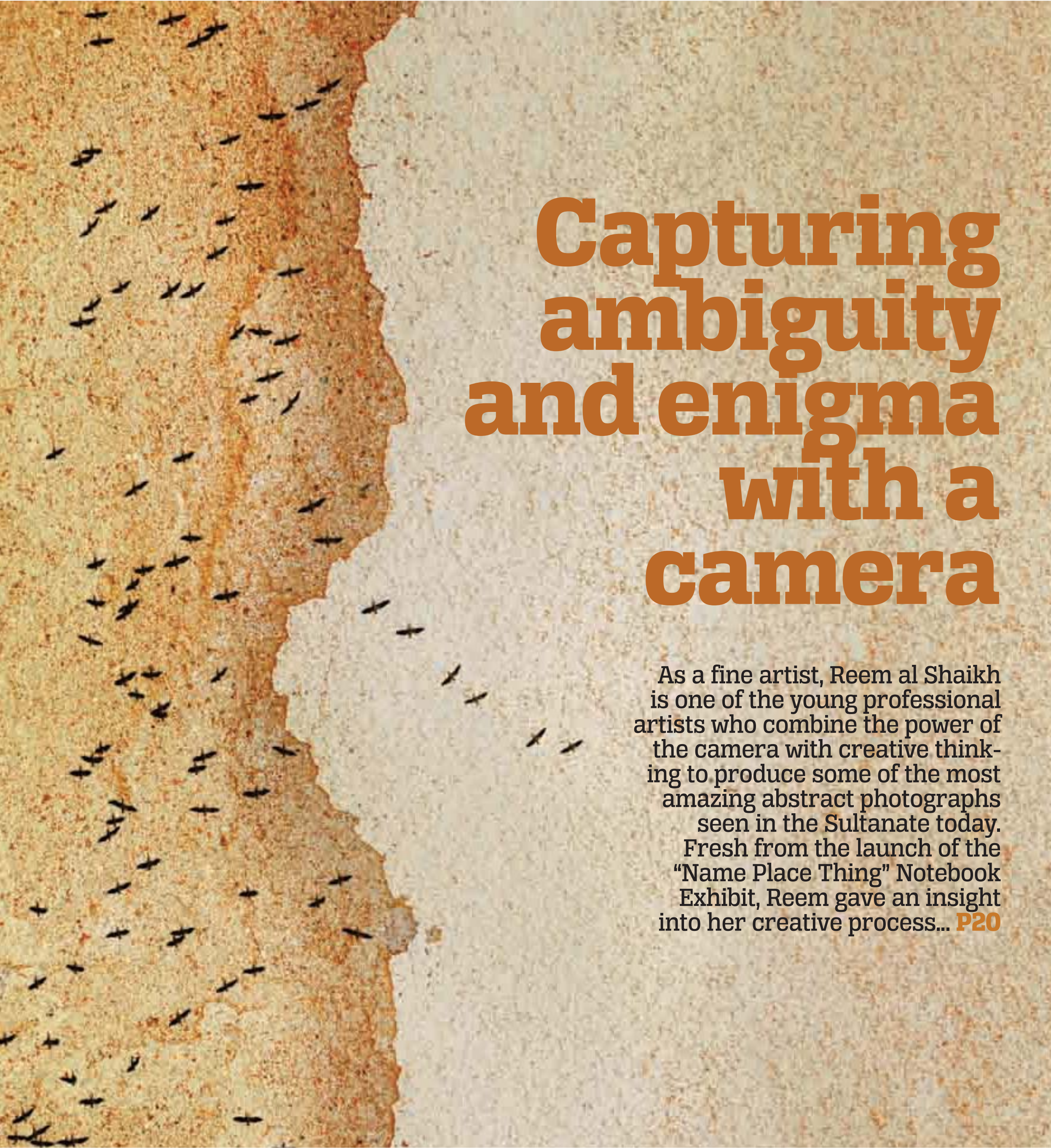
**Job requirements are:**

- Looking after the day-to-day operations of the Estate.
- Manage independently the complete complex with all its amenities like the high-class housing complex, swimming pools, gymnasium, gardens with large lawns, poultry, etc.
- Must have the technical knowledge to supervise the maintenance & repairs of estate buildings, handle mechanical and electrical related issues of machinery and equipment.
- Knowledge of maintaining the Gardens and Orchards.
- Fluent in English, have attention to detail, numerical aptitude, and ability to work under pressure and strong leadership skills.

Any other personal abilities will be an added advantage. Role carries an excellent salary, allowance, full family status, housing, vehicle, annual leave with tickets for self and family, medical insurance for self and family as per Oman Labor law.

Kindly send your CV with a recent photo to:  
farmgeneralmanager@gmail.com

# features



## Capturing ambiguity and enigma with a camera

As a fine artist, Reem al Shaikh is one of the young professional artists who combine the power of the camera with creative thinking to produce some of the most amazing abstract photographs seen in the Sultanate today. Fresh from the launch of the “Name Place Thing” Notebook Exhibit, Reem gave an insight into her creative process... **P20**

### ENTERTAINMENT

READ

**THE MAN WHO DIED TWICE**

BY RICHARD OSMAN

The second book in the Thursday Murder Club series. A ruthless murderer is out to get four septuagenarian friends.

## Director Villeneuve hopes to win over fans old and new with ‘Dune’ film

DENIS VILLENEUVE hopes to win over fans of Frank Herbert's epic 1965 science fiction novel "Dune" as well as introduce new ones to the story with his mammoth movie adaptation, the most challenging production of the Canadian director's career. Timothee Chalamet and Zendaya star in the hotly anticipated film, which hits US and UK cinemas later this month and follows past attempts to take Herbert's 400-page book to the

silver screen. Set in the future where noble families rule planetary fiefs, the story follows Paul Atreides (Chalamet), whose father takes on the stewardship of planet Arrakis, known as Dune to its native Fremen people and contested for its unique spice commodity found in its inhospitable desert. "It was by far the most challenging thing I've done in my life," Villeneuve, known for "Blade Runner 2049" and "Sicario", told

Reuters. "I had to find an equilibrium between the people who had read the book ... I wanted them to really feel that it was a profound homage to the spirit of the book. At the same time, I wanted people who knew nothing about the book to feel welcome in the world, not left aside." The two-and-a-half-hour movie, described as part one of the story, is Chalamet's biggest project to date, something he says helped him relate to character Paul overcoming his fears. "I've never been on a project of this size before," Chalamet said. "Sometimes the things you're feeling on set can bleed into the natural arc or progression of a story." Villeneuve's "Dune" follows Alejandro Jodorowsky's unsuccessful attempt in the mid-1970s and David Lynch's critically-panned 1984 version. With sweeping landscapes and dark mood, critics have lauded this



film as a visual spectacle in reviews. "It's a book that's been the source material for a lot of bigger ideas like 'Star Wars'," actor Josh Brolin, who plays weapons master Gurney, said. "The movie's been done in different eras with different technological possibilities. And now we're in an era that's so technologically advanced we're able to see that version of it." — Reuters



find us on  
**TWITTER**  
Scan the QR Code or follow us on  
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

## INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



**mj\_photographer** • Follow  
Salalah, Oman



SEA VIEW

**image.om** • Follow  
ولاية الخابورة



WORKING WITH MUD



**growingupwithoutborders** • Follow  
Khasab, Sultanate of Oman



TO THE VILLAGE

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use

#OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.



## AROUND THE WORLD

### TRAVEL TALES

## Italy launches cultural rescue project at Dubai's Expo 2020



**ITALY, FAMED** for its centuries of expertise making an attempt to protect its wealthy inventive tradition, has used its presence at a world truthful in Dubai to launch a project to assist different nations across the Mediterranean rescue heritage at threat.

Italy has already hit the headlines with its pavilion at Expo 2020, which opened at the beginning of the month following a year-long delay due to the pandemic.

Central to its nationwide show is a replica of Michelangelo's David, made utilising one of many world's largest 3D printers and primarily based on 40 hours of digital scanning of the unique Sixteenth-century marble sculpture that stands in Florence.

Grazia Tucci, an engineering professor at the University of Florence, mentioned the mannequin is an instance of the form of work its centre will promote.

"Like the Bamiyan Buddhas (in Afghanistan) or Palmyra's Arch of Triumph (in Syria), our cultural heritage is at risk. At risk from nature and also from human beings," mentioned Tucci, who will head the centre.

The 3-D twin of Michelangelo's David statue is pictured within the Italian Pavilion at Dubai Expo 2020.

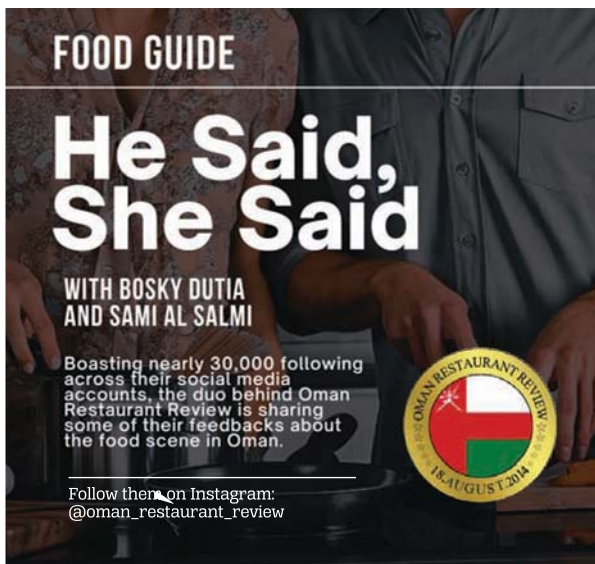
Speaking at the project's launch on Sunday, she mentioned it was important to protect heritage for future generations and Italy would share "the best technologies" to coach professionals from across the Mediterranean in preserving, digitising and restoring objects and websites that might be misplaced to violence.

Hybrid programs, involving on-line and in individual classes, might be launched over the approaching weeks and the Advanced Vocational Training Centre for the Digitization and Re-construction of Cultural Heritage will stay at the Italian pavilion after the world truthful closes in March. It shouldn't be but clear for the way lengthy.

Based on the theme "Beauty connects people," the pavilion is amongst nearly 200 stands at Expo 2020 Dubai representing 192 international locations. It is the primary world truthful to be held within the Middle East and follows Expo 2015 in Milan.

Organisers hope to draw 25 million visits. They haven't launched customer figures formally, however the UAE *National* newspaper mentioned greater than 50,000 folks have visited so removed from 170 completely different nationalities. — Reuters

### FOOD REVIEW



## A journey to the land of the pure

**A COUNTRY NAMED** after an acronym refereeing to the name of regions such as Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan. Ever wondered what this mix would reflect on the culture especially when it comes to food? Pakistani cuisine is a rich blend of various regional cooking

traditions from the Indian subcontinent, Central and Western Asia, as well as elements from its Mughal legacy. This gives way to a vast variety of meals that are considered highly seasoned, either spicy or mild.

In the heart of Shatti Al Qurum area lies a franchised Pakistani

restaurant called "BBQ Tonight". A cosy restaurant that has large open spaces and huge tables that make it a hub for families or groups who enjoy good food. This restaurant is well known for its buffet, however, we decided to not break our tradition and stick to two starters, two mains and a dessert.

**HE SAID:** For our appetisers, we picked the Mutton Chapli Kabab and Mutton Ribs. Chapli kababs are made of minced meat mixed with herbs, spices and some fresh vegetables such as onion, tomato, ginger and green coriander. Very smiler to a smashed burger but fried. It was rich in flavours and moist. The Mutton ribs did not disappoint either. From the first look, I thought I'm going to have to eat dry ribs. Well done to the chef as he executed a well-cooked meat dish that was still very soft and delicious.

**SHE SAID:** I've been looking for a good Chapli Kebab, having heard of the dish from a variety of my friends. The kebab was moist, even after deep frying and you could taste all the elements as one. A really light kebab surprisingly. I managed only a bite of the ribs but they were melt-in-the-mouth soft.

**HE SAID:** For our mains, we chose the Sindhi biryani and Chicken Karahi. Sindhi biryani is a rice dish served with moist chicken cooked in with spices (masala). The rice is usually mixed with saffron for flavour and colour. The smell of the dish was out of the world as well as the taste. Honestly and weirdly enough as an Omani, I am not a big fan of rice, but this one was one of the best if not the best in town I have ever had. Each grain of rice was cooked to perfection and not greasy. The Chicken Karahi is a dish made of chicken cooked in a thick and oily tomato gravy served with Kandahari Nan "bread" and Roghni Nan. Words can't explain what I had, moist chicken and the most delicious tomato gravy I ever had have left me speechless.



**SHE SAID:** BBQ Tonight is known for their delicious food but I believe they ace their a la carte and upped the ante. The biryani was delicious as he said but what took my heart was the perfectly cooked, soft chicken in a gravy designed to make you lick your fingers clean. I've never had a better Karahi and it reminded me of my childhood days when we had sweet Pakistani neighbours who cooked up a storm and lovingly fed us.

**HE SAID:** For dessert we picked Kheer, Kheer is a Pakistani version of rice thick pudding made of rice, sugar and milk and flavoured with green cardamom, nuts and raisins. I've tried many similar desserts from different cultures like for example the Egyptian rice pudding, but still, the Pakistani Kheer always taste the best and is unique in taste.

**SHE SAID:** The right cooking of Kheer is what gives it so much flavour. The right milk, the perfect grind on the rice. This pudding was outta this world good. I only wish it was served chilled cold as that's how I love it. Nevertheless, I have been wowed.

**WE SAID:** Pakistani cuisine is well known as heavy and oily cuisine. BBQ tonight manages to bring the magnificent Pakistani dishes to life with the minimum amount of oil without affecting the taste of the dishes. We believe this is an extra point added to their game today. Are we going back again? 100 per cent yes but this time for the buffet to try more dishes and enjoy. Great hospitality and service as always.

**OVERALL RATING**  
Ambience: 4/5  
Taste of food: 5/5  
Presentation: 3.5/5  
Service: 5/5  
Value for money: 5/5

## Migrants fleeing slaughter



**Dr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi**  
khalidalbalushi@hotmail.com

### MORNING

The shadow of dawn grows  
Before the threshold  
The birds resort to strange places  
Fear drives them to barracks  
You hear only wings' collision  
Like migrants fleeing slaughter  
It was a dark morning right from the start.

### FRIENDS

They reserve their seats in the morning  
To smoke and drink coffee  
As the words shine in their mouths  
The tables are filled with Absence.

### LANTERN

I daily see window's injury  
Illuminate the night  
Like a lantern lighting the depths  
Of human injury.

### A GAME

We weren't heroes  
We weren't cowards  
We were only ourselves  
Playing dice with shooting stars  
And sometimes hearing frog's croaking  
In a night whose remains began to die.

### THE GRAVE OF HENRY BARBUSSE

I lock the door and peek through  
The hole of a storm  
At the crowd.  
I know after a while... the carnage will move  
With all its details to my heart.

### THE ARTIST

Always will your works be born  
Incomplete  
They won't finish  
Save in the madness of a lost wave  
Or in a head torn to pieces  
By war.

### DESERT'S BOUNTY

The aged beg for a passerby's smile  
Their faces are our mirrors  
In the camber of life  
Their days hanging in memory  
Like a hump facing the desert's bounty.

### THE BELLS WON'T RING

The storm hasn't subsided tonight  
Before my door  
Its five enemies slammed its directions.

In churches' pale light  
I see monks dragging vehicles  
Running for mountains  
With pedigree horses in the wind  
As if they're back to Byzantium.

In this ancient night  
The bells won't ring after today  
The storm won't cease.

### SMELL

Despite the weather  
And its abundant clarity  
The prey's smell still tickles my throat.

### THE BLESSING OF FUNERAL CEREMONIES AND SUMMERS

The bones of last night  
I taste now like carrion  
The blessings of funerals' secret  
In particular their delicious meals.

The summer about to leave us  
Looks like that bird whose head was severed on a rock's edge.

The parting we experienced in love  
Was that of enemies and fighters.

I took solitude as destiny  
Daily we compete in the garden  
To win  
"I was created but genial".



# Capturing ambiguity and enigma with a camera

BY JADE TAMPEPE

To someone seeing her in one of her outdoor photo walks, she might look like an aimless wanderer taking photos of inanimate objects that don't make sense at all.

Artist Reem al Shaikh will definitely not disagree with that observation as being a fine art photographer working in abstract and creative photography, her process begins with exploring the great outdoors without a definite goal.

"The process starts with an outdoor photo walk. When I go out to take pictures, whether in nature or on the streets, I like to be alone and without an agenda. I know my tools — my camera, my body and my lenses — but I like to leave my picture-taking to be a discovery, without prior planning what I will be photographing", she shared.

This ritual, Reem said, has a dual purpose: A vague form of meditation and a creative outlet.

"This complete immersion recharges me and allows me to be present in other areas of my life. Over the past thirty-five years, taking pictures became an integral part of my well-being and an essential routine I live by", she said.

Reem is one of the artists whose work is currently on display at the "Name Place Animal Thing" Notebook Exhibition happen-

ing in Fikra in Old Muscat.

"This is a unique project I worked on that I will be exhibiting in the form of abstract street photography along with other artists, illustrators and photographers, and I am very excited about it. Besides this, I am currently working on a new series about Oman's seascapes, a series I started during the pandemic", she shared.

Providing insight into her art pieces ahead of the exhibit, Reem shared that "Ambiguity and enigma are elements that intrigue me and creating abstract photos was the tool for delivering that."

When one looks at Reem's art pieces, the first thing one would notice is the dizzying array of colours all blended into mesmerising chaos that gives way to beauty. Her current collection includes pieces she called Pink Dust, Gold Dust, Sea at Dusk and Waves (to name and few) and they take the viewer into the wild, often, an uncensored perspective of an artist who relishes the creative freedom she has achieved.

"We see the world with our own eyes as it is, but with abstract photography, we can see differently. My process starts with taking a 'base' picture and building upon it with the interplay of colours and shapes until a vision starts to emerge and a story starts to unfold", Reem said.

She added, "I aim to invite the viewer to bring their own story into my photo. Everyone sees differently and the interpretations are endless — that is the beauty of abstracts. I bring my life experiences and memories and the viewer brings theirs, slowly unveiling the ambiguity they might have experienced at first glance as

they spend more time viewing the piece. I name my photos based on my interpretation and that is usually the beginning of the thread for the viewer to follow as they wander the frame, deciphering it."

"The photos come to life in my home studio where I edit my images. The sea, the sand, the rocks, the sky — they are often the main subjects of my photos", she said.

Reem picked up her first borrowed camera at the age of 11 and back then, was heavily doing portraiture and documentary photography. Photography became a full-time career in 2011. From 2012 to 2021, Reem's fine art photographs had been showcased in numerous exhibitions and had also been a part of the Bait Muzna's Gallery collection. A member of the Photographic Society of Oman (PSO), her work has been privately acquired not only in Oman but in places like the USA, Canada and Thailand.

"This passion for photography continued throughout the years until it materialised into a profession in 2011 with a focus on portraiture photography. Influenced by beauty, connection, and the fleeting moments of life, I took pictures that represented these ideas. As I progressed through the changing stages of my life, these genres took on different forms and a few new ones emerged such as landscape and abstract", she narrated.

She added, "I am a lover of art and water-colour paintings in specific. But as much as I felt my fingers could paint, I found it to be a painfully time-consuming medium. Besides having been introduced to the medium of photography at a young age, what I love most about it is the instant gratification I get once I take a photo. I utilise the camera as my paintbrush instead and paint with camera movements. It is this ability to turn a real scene into a photo that crosses over into a painting-like piece that I thrive on with this medium. The result is rarely close to what anyone can see with their own eyes."

As an artist, Reem believes that Omani women artists need to be more represented locally and internationally. "There is a wealth of talent that should be more exposed to the world. Most of the art I see is reflective of the Omani environment and culture and this should be celebrated by showcasing it to the world", she said.

For those wanting to venture into her own kind of photography and art, Reem encouraged, "Photography is a beautiful art medium. It is trans-portable, mobile, diverse and can be learned at any stage in one's life. The number one piece of advice I tell people is to start to see through a frame!"

To check more of her work, you can visit her website [www.reem-malshaikh.com](http://www.reem-malshaikh.com) or follow her on Instagram: @reem-malshaikhphotography

