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RUUD DOWNS RUBLEV, DJOKOVIC CRUSHES NORRIE



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NEW CRANES TO HANDLE MEGA SHIPS AT DUQM PORT



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COMBINING PASSION FOR OLD CARS AND HIGHLIGHTING OMAN'S BEAUTY



DUBAI

ASAAD TO ATTEND OMAN PAVILION FETE

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, arrived in Dubai to pre-side over 51st Glorious National Day celebrations of Oman Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. HH Sayyid Asaad and his accompanying delegation were received at the airport by Shaikh Mansour Zayed al Nahyan, UAE Deputy Prime Minister.

SEE P2

KHARTOUM

SUDAN IN RENEWED ANTI-COUP PROTEST

Sudanese anti-coup activists called for mass protests on Sunday, as medics said the number of people killed since last month's military takeover had risen to at least 40. Both the United States and African Union have condemned the deadly crackdown on protesters and called on Sudan's leaders to refrain from the "excessive use of force".

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HM to visit Qatar tomorrow

VISIT IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION FROM SHAIKH TAMIM BIN HAMAD AL THANI, EMIR OF QATAR

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will begin visit of Qatar on Monday.

This came in a statement issued today by the Diwan of Royal Court, reading as follows: "In affirmation of the distinguished relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the State of Qatar and, based on the keenness of the two countries' leaderships to enhance joint ties at all levels, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will go on a state visit to Qatar on Monday in response to an invitation from Shaikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of Qatar.

During His Majesty's visit, discussions will cover all aspects of cooperation between the two countries with a view to upgrading bilateral relations and realizing the aspirations of the two sides and achieving the objectives set in all fields. The discussions

also aim at reaching results that serve common interests and establishing a more prosperous future for the two countries and their brotherly peoples.

His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied by an official high-level delegation comprising HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court; Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister; Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance; Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority; Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour; and Najeeb bin Yahya al Balushi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Qatar. — ONA



NATIONAL DAY FERVOUR GRIPS BAHLA

The Equestrian Society of Bahla on Friday organised an equestrian festival to mark the glorious 51st National Day in which 70 horse and camel riders from Al Dakhiliyah Governorate participated.

PHOTO BY SAMI AL HINAI
REPORT ON P3

Muscat eighth best city in the world to relocate

LIJU CHERIAN
[@lijucherianoman](#)

Muscat has been named the 8th best city to relocate to globally, according to new research by money.co.uk.

The research study analysed several factors that were taken into consideration while deciding where to relocate and included house prices, living costs, average salary and weather conditions.

The new research also looked into the number of restaurants and green spaces, Internet speed and life expectancy to reveal the best places to relocate to around the



The Sultanate of Oman's capital, which stood 8th scored 5.40 on 10, with Austin, the state capital of Texas, coming first in the world to relocate, taking the top score at 6.02 on 10.

globe. Mortgage experts at money.co.uk also considered a number of important factors and have been able to reveal the most attractive cities to move to.

The Sultanate of Oman's capital, which stood 8th scored 5.40 on 10, with Austin, the state capital of Texas, coming first in the world to relocate, taking the

top score at 6.02 on 10. Austin was named as the city with the third-best Internet speed of any city in the rankings, at 87.5 Mbps. Additionally, the city

scores high in average temperature (20.4°C), and high average monthly salaries at £3,984.

The second-highest scoring city is Tokyo, Japan, which scored well for its number of restaurants and green spaces. On top of this, it has the best average life expectancy, with residents living to 84.

Charleston, South Carolina, came third as the best city to relocate to in the world. One factor it exceeded in is Internet speed, the average is 106.5 Mbps, meaning that it is by far the fastest of any city on the list.

TURN TO P5

Gap for Covid booster dose cut to six months

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has reduced the time period for taking the booster dose of the Covid-19 vaccine from eight months to six months.

MoH said the booster or the third dose for the target groups would be of the Pfizer-Biotech vaccine, regardless of the type of vaccine received by the person previously.

Speaking at the press conference recently, Dr Ahmed Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health, said the booster dose is given to the elderly over 65 years, healthcare workers over 50 years old, and those suffering from chronic diseases such as kidney, breathing, heart and diabetes, genetic diseases and obesity.

The booster or the third dose for the target groups would be of the Pfizer-Biotech vaccine, regardless of the type of vaccine received by the person previously

The third dose is necessary for people with diseases that cause immunodeficiencies, such as cancer patients, those who have undergone bone marrow transplants and those receiving immunosuppressive drugs.

As per the MoH guidelines, the target groups with the booster dose are those who have completed six months from the date of receiving the last dose and including those aged 65 and above, healthcare and frontline workers aged 50 years and above, patients with chronic diseases aged 18 years and above, especially if they are not well controlled.

Asaad in Dubai to attend Oman Pavilion’s fete



DUBAI: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Co-operation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, arrived in Dubai, United Arab

Emirates (UAE), to lead the delegation taking part in celebrations of Oman Pavilion on the 51st Glorious National Day in Expo 2020 Dubai.

RECEPTION

HH Sayyid Asaad and his accompanying delegation were received

at Dubai International Airport by Shaikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan, UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs, Shaikh Sultan bin Hamdan al Nahyan, Adviser to the UAE President and Chairman of the Camel Racing Federation,

Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed Rashid al Maktoum, Chairman of Dubai Media Council, Mohsin bin Khamis al Balushi, Adviser to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Commissioner-General of Oman Pavilion at Expo2020 Dubai, Sayy-



id Dr Ahmed bin Hilal al Busaidy, Ambassador of Oman to the UAE, some members of the embassy, Oman’s Pavilion and the Trade Office in Dubai.

DELEGATION

HH Sayyid Asaad is accompanied

by an official delegation comprising Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousuf, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and a number of senior officials.

— ONA

Wise vision to improve labour market

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasseri

The national efforts, led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, to transform the Sultanate of Oman among the ranks of developed countries, are based on a set of pillars to make its labour market vibrant with clear goals of attracting talent, and making pace with demographic, economic, knowledge and technical changes.

While chairing the meeting of the Supervisory Committee of the National Employment Programme, His Majesty the Sultan was briefed about the employment-related issues. His Majesty reviewed the programme, plans, work methodology, and its objectives.

There has been a clear directive from the government to the public and private sectors to cooperate and support the National



Employment Programme, develop plans and programmes to employ the people of the country, and provide sustainable job opportunities, in line with the Sultanate of Oman’s Vision 2040.

This raises hope for appropriate changes in the administrative and procedural systems to accommodate the job seekers.

Nabhan bin Ahmed al

Battashi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the General Federation of Omani Workers, said, “The diversity of challenges related to the work environment in the private sector, resulting from work variables and patterns, economic transformations, heterogeneity between economic and social plans.”

The growing number of job seekers, termed as “long-term unemployment”, the social protection floor and the structures of social dialogue, are results of the regulatory environment of the labour market at the national level.

Additionally, there is a challenge of competition between citizens and foreigners when it comes to filling the job opportunities, said Al Battashi.

Al Battashi stressed robust economic policy was essential for balanced financial plans and investment programmes.

Ties with Oman witness steady growth: Saudi ambassador

MUSCAT: Abdullah bin Saud al Anzi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Sultanate of Oman, has said that upon the advent of November 18 anniversary this year, Omani-Saudi relations bear a special hallmark.

“Bilateral relations have been witnessing steady growth, notably in the field of economic integration — a positive outcome of the historic visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Kingdom on July 11, 2021 and his meeting with the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman,” said Al Anzi.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), the ambassador said that the results of the Omani-Saudi summit are attaining fruition, thanks to the efforts being exerted to upgrade bilateral



relations into wider spheres that meet the aspirations of the two countries’ leaderships. This will be followed by building an economic integration structure that realises maximum benefit from economic resources and the two sides’ potentials, he added.

Al Anzi affirmed the two countries’ compatibility of ambitions based on common factors and incentives that facilitate

integration. He commended the level of investment incentives provided by the Sultanate of Oman for investors from the GCC and the world at large. These incentives have qualified the Sultanate of Oman to become one of the first investment-attracting destinations in the region, said Al Anzi, quoting the Sultanate of Oman’s strategic location, industrial estates and Duqm Special Economic Zone and Free Zone.

Al Anzi reiterated Saudi Arabia’s current perspective to achieve maximum benefit from existing resources and realising joint interests with the Sultanate of Oman within the context of the two countries’ visions (Oman Vision 2040 and Saudi Vision 2030) that share common goals, especially in economic and development areas.

— ONA

Seminars by National Museum, Smithsonian highlight Oman-US ties

MUSCAT: The National Museum, in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution — the world’s largest museum and research complex and the United States’ preeminent cultural centre — and the US Embassy in the Sultanate of Oman, has concluded a series of six lectures on 21st century curatorship for Omani museum professionals, specialists and students.

The series is another sign of the strong partnership between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States.

The lectures were hosted by Dr Paul Michael Taylor, an anthropologist who is Curator for Asian, European, and Middle Eastern Cultures, as well as Director of the Asian Cultural History Programme at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History.

He led a team of experts to share new research, museum technologies, and insights to advance cultural studies at



museums and historic sites. Under Dr Taylor’s leadership, the Asian Cultural History Programme has hosted heritage projects focused on research, exhibition, collection improvements, virtual engagement, and international outreach and training in various regions of the world.

The last lecture, titled “The Activities of a Modern Museum or Cultural Center: Thriving in the 21st Century” focused on how

museums function as cultural centres and on modern museum curation. The lecture highlighted several examples from Indonesia, during a period of rapid expansion of a national museum system, surveying outreach, research, and development of collections.

CULTURAL CENTRE

Dr Taylor explained why and how specific initiatives are selected as means of achieving the goal

of having a museum thrive as a cultural centre — illustrating the process of how two Smithsonian exhibitions and initiatives were selected (on Sikh and Korean heritage).

Finally, he briefly initiated a discussion (Virtual Roundtable) about how the themes of this webinar series may be applied to the Smithsonian partnership with the Sultanate of Oman through exploring potential ideas for the future.

This initiative, supported by the US Embassy in Muscat, focuses on visitor management, exhibition development, cultural preservation and virtual exhibitions. Previously, the US Embassy facilitated similar training opportunities by sending specialists from the National Museum, the National Records and Archive Authority and what was previously the Ministry of Heritage and Culture to the United States for a multi-week International Visitor Leadership Programme. — ONA

Sultanate’s embassy in US marks National Day

WASHINGTON: The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the United States of America (US) held a virtual celebration to mark the 51st National Day.

In his speech, Moosa bin Hamdan al Tai, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the US, reviewed the march of the renewed Renaissance witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, pointing out the achievements that the Sultanate of Oman has made which placed it among the advanced countries.

The ambassador commended the historical and strategic relationship between the Sultanate of Oman and the US and the existing cooperation in various fields between the two countries, pointing to the continuation of the Renaissance march that was initiated by the late Sultan Qaboos.

Joey Hood, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs at US Department of State, congratulated the Sultanate of

Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and the Omanis, on the occasion of the 51st National Day. He spoke about the historical relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United States, and the existing bilateral cooperation between the two countries in all fields, pointing to the appreciation of the US administration for the role played by the Sultanate of Oman in the regional issues.

STRENGTHENING TIES

He valued the assistance provided by the Sultanate of Oman in the operations of transferring American citizens from Afghanistan, adding that he is looking forward to further strengthening the relations between the two friendly countries.

A number of former US ambassadors to the Sultanate of Oman expressed their congratulations to the country on this occasion, pointing to the march of renewed Renaissance and the achievements and development.

No consensus yet on health passport in GCC

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkuttvyp

Despite discussions, no decision has yet been taken on a unified digital health passport in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

An indication in this regard was given by Minister of Health Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi during a press conference last week.

"There is no consensus yet on a health passport for citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council countries. There are certain reservations," Dr Al Saeedi said.

During the meeting, Dr Al Saeedi said the procedures for travellers to enter the Sultanate of Oman from different countries will depend on the pandemic situation of those countries and their ability to bring it under control.

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are the first two countries in the GCC to sign an agreement for a health passport that will link and facilitate the movement of passengers – both citizens and residents.

The agreement signed the last weekend conforms to health

There is no consensus yet on a health passport for citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council countries. There are certain reservations

DR AHMED BIN MOHAMMED AL SAEEDI
Minister of Health

measures set by both kingdoms as part of their efforts to limit the spread of Covid-19.

The linkage will provide a comprehensive and accurate database of travellers, thus easing procedures and saving time and effort. It will also enable the King Fahd Causeway personnel to immediately verify passengers' personal and health data, as well as enhance data security and privacy.

In February last, Dr Saif al Abri, Director-General of Infectious Disease Control and Surveillance, hinted at plans to launch a unified Covid-19 health

passport for citizens who have taken the vaccine.

"A unified Gulf health passport related to Covid-19 is in the plan. It will help citizens who have taken vaccines to move between GCC countries," he said.

The GCC health under-secretaries, during their meeting in April, did discuss the updates of the health passport project.

Also known as a digital health pass, a vaccine passport is a digital documentation that an individual has been vaccinated against a virus, in this case, Covid.

In March, the International Air Transport Association said it launched a new digital travel pass as "the way forward" in resuming quarantine-free international travel.

Stored on a phone or digital wallet, the data is typically presented as a QR code and also can show if a person has tested negative for a virus.

The app, which was being tested by 30 carriers, would allow governments and airlines to access and share encrypted information related to passengers' Covid-19 test and vaccination status prior to travel.

■ AN OCCASION TO REJOICE



It was an occasion for celebration for one and all, irrespective of their age and gender. They also expressed patriotism and loyalty as the Sultanate of Oman marked the 51st National Day, the 18th of November Anniversary.

Traditional arts, heritage on show at Bahla Equestrian Festival

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, NOV 20

The Equestrian Society of Bahla on Friday organised an equestrian festival to mark the glorious 51st National Day in which 70 horse riders from Al Dakhiliyah Governorate participated. The festival, held under the auspices of Governor Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, was attended by several members of the State Council and Majlis Ash'shura, besides Shaikh Ali bin Mansour al Busaidy, Wali of Bahla, shaikhs and the people of the governorate including women and children.

RECEPTION

The festival began with the reception of camel riders. The camels and its riders presented Al Tariq art in harmony with the passing of the camel caravan in an ancient folk art that conveys the Omani tradition and its ancient heritage. Poet Majid al Amiri presented the art of Rababah as one of the Omani heritage arts.

The horse show that followed included a collection of equestrian arts presented by 70 knights representing equestrian associations and clubs in the wilayats of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

During the horse show, a number of poems and other art forms such as Al Razha were presented.

The Omani Women's Association in Bahla also staged a live show of the handicraft industries for which Omani women are famous.

The festival also saw staging of



Al Azi, which is an art of pride and praise in which the poet sings about love for the Sultanate of Oman and its leader.

Saud bin Abdullah al Nabhani, director of the festival, said: "This folk festival is organised by the Bahla Equestrian Association and held under the supervision of the office of the governor of Bahla. It came as an expression of the great joy that the people of Bahla expressed on the occasion of the 51st Glorious National Day.

"The festival's activities showcased heritage in harmony with the renewed renaissance that our beloved country is experiencing under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik."

PHOTOS BY SAMI AL HINAI

Hiking to celebrate National Day

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

A group of hikers chose to mark the Sultanate of Oman's 51st National Day by hiking and reaching the top of Al Amerat Mountain on November 18.

A group of 20 hikers consisting of Omanis and expatriates from the UK, India, Egypt, Jordan and Russia started hiking at 6:15 am and reached on top of the mountain by 7.45 am.

Shakir al Araimi, the team head, a hiking enthusiast who takes groups for hiking every weekend, said, "They are simply normal and ordinary people from different countries, who gathered over the love of nature and being outdoors in spite of work in their daily life."

Ameer's Saad, from Egypt, has been in the Sultanate of Oman for 23 years now. "Practically, I have been in the Sultanate of Oman for my whole life. Now I am 24, and have been hiking for two and a half years. I love the Sultanate of Oman because of its nature and people. The people are kind,

helpful and peaceful," he said.

So we wanted to celebrate the Sultanate of Oman's National Day in our own way as we are hikers, and we decided to hike at Al Amerat. It is an incredible place!" We took with us Omani flags and portraits of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

According to the hikers, the weather was pleasant, and the sight one gets to see during hiking is also a treat.

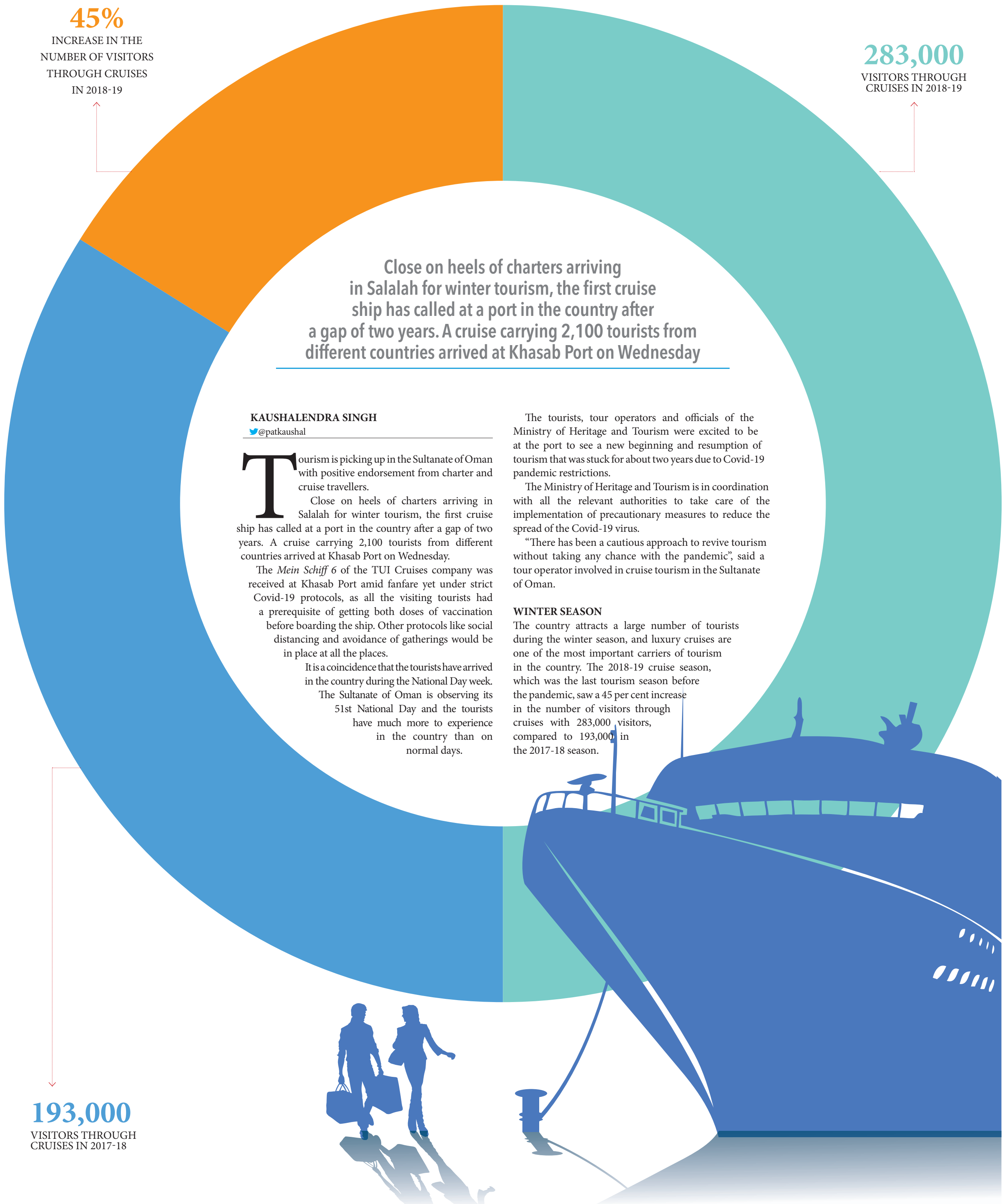
The total distance covered by them was three km. Hiking, for Rima Fatima, from India, is a stress reliever and an energiser.

It was the first opportunity for Rima to scale the mountain in Al Amerat. "Climbing up was quiet comfortable as long as we watched our steps. However, descending was challenging with heavy boulders which resembled solving a maze puzzle."

While six of the team members are regular hikers, the number goes up and down every week, but most of the members gathered to make November 18 special by celebrating with the Sultanate of Oman's nature.



WINTER WONDERLAND!





Riyada gives impetus to SMEs

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

The Sultanate of Oman has a well-strategised model for supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and has revolutionised the offers and incentives to these startups and other small scale industries.

Recently, the Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Riyada), Oman's arm for the development of SMEs, issued a detailed statement on incentives offered to owners of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to write off the SME licence fees.

The incentives targeted SMEs operating in agriculture and fisheries, manufacturing industries, services, logistics and related activities, as is mentioned in the rating by the 'Invest Easy' portal specified by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP).

Riyada is part of the executive, legislative, and other general government support industries. It aims at strengthening SME's contribution to the local economy through a wide range



of business advisory services and training programmes.

Riyada, as part of supporting the micro, small and medium enterprises with an entrepreneurship card, has revised, in accordance with the Ministry of Labour Decision 12/2021, the fees for issuing and renewing permits of the expatriate workforce which is considered to be a milestone in the course of supports to the SME.

Accordingly, the new fees for issuing and renewing permits of the expatriate workforce would

be RO101 if the request is for one to five workers.

The fee will be RO151 if the application is for 6 to 10 workers and with the requirement to recruit at least one Omani.

RO1,001 will be charged for licensing the practice of work and recording the data of the worker to occupy the professions specified in the annex related to the decision.

Riyada has also initiated taking into account that 50 per cent discount will be given to establishments applying Omanisation rates,

and 25 per cent discount for establishments that employ at least one Omani in accordance with the economic stimulus plan.

TRAINING PROGRAMMES

As for training the local workforce in various areas, Riyada has successfully completed scores of training programmes, and recently, on-the-job training for as many as 160 Omanis has been approved by Riyada.

It has also stipulated that the Ministry of Labour will pay 100 per cent of the salary in the first year. However, the classification is such that RO 500 per month will be paid for graduates, RO 400 for university diploma holders, and RO 300 for general diploma holders. In the second year, 50 per cent of the salary will be paid.

There were 1,035 applications, of which 875 are under review, and those applications that meet the conditions will be approved soon. Riyada aims to train 3,000 job seekers for jobs, which will improve the competitiveness of the SME's in the country.

Ministry of Labour holds job tests, interviews

SHINAS: As part of its continuing drive, the Ministry of Labour has conducted tests and interviews for public sector jobs at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in Shinas.

Salim bin Khalifan al Wuhaibi, head of the interviewing and testing team at the Ministry of Labour, said that a total of 291 job applicants from the Governorate of North Al Batinah are in contention for job vacancies at a number of government establishments including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and



Water Resources and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences.

On Saturday, 277 sat for the job test and 14 candidates underwent interviews for the announced jobs. The appointment tests concluded on Saturday and the tests will conclude on Monday.

— ONA



Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Heritage & Tourism

ANNOUNCEMENT

Floating Competition of Renting, Operating and Utilizing (8) Cafés/ Shops in the Al Baled Archaeological Site in Wilayat Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

In the interest of the Ministry of Heritage to empower the local Community and ensure their interest to partnership through the investment opportunity at the heritage sites owned by the Ministry.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is pleased to invite companies that has the technical and financial capacity to apply for the competition of a long-term contract, operating and utilising of (8) cafés / shops in Al Baled Archaeological Site, at Dhofar Governorate. Offers will be evaluated based on best financial and operational offer.

Interested companies should approach the ministry finance department at head office or general directorate of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate to purchase tender document at the official office hours starting from the date of releasing the announcement and a payment of RO 25 (Twenty-Five Omani Rails). The last date to submit bids is Monday December 20, 2021 at 1:00 pm.

Sultanate at Regional Security Summit

MANAMA: The Sultanate of Oman is taking part in the 17th Regional Security Summit being held in the Bahraini capital, Manama. The country is represented by Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs who met with a number of officials of brotherly and friendly countries. The Regional Security Summit brings together foreign ministers, defence ministers and senior officials from world countries to discuss several international and regional issues.

— ONA

Muscat 8th best city

FROM PAGE 1

For Muscat, the average house price per metre square stood at \$1,867 (RO 718.75), with an average monthly salary at \$1,899 (RO 731.07) and the cost of living per month (family of four) at \$2,326 (RO 895.46). Basel, Switzerland, turned to be the most expensive city to relocate to as the annual cost of living is \$53,748, which is over \$25,000 more per year than the average annual living cost of \$28,716. The most affordable relocation destination is Istanbul, where average annual living costs are only \$12,753. This is \$40,995 less per year than moving to Basel, and \$15,963 less than the average.

The experts also felt that with international travel opening back up and remote working now tried and tested, there is ample opportunity for people to relocate abroad and start thinking about housing and comparing mortgages.

They also mentioned that it is not just housing to consider when relocating across the globe. There are also many other social and economic factors that have to be taken into consideration when deciding the best city to relocate to.

Tender Number

T-21-2021

Tender Announcement

"Mwasalat" invites professional firms for the following tender:

Tender Name	Call off Agreement for the Manufacturing, Supply & Installation of Bus Stops Poles.
Project Summary	Within the framework of this tender, Mwasalat would like to have a qualified Contractor for the Manufacturing, Supply and installation of Bus Stop Poles to different locations as stipulated in the tender document based on Call-Off framework agreement.
Tender Fee	OMR 100/-
Grade & Specialty	Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field

Start date for tender document distribution

Sunday, 21 November 2021

Last date for tender document distribution

Sunday 05 December 2021

Last date for submission

Monday 20 December 2021

The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M.
Tenderers are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Document shall be shared by email.
All Tenderers shall submit with their offers a Tender Bond in the amount of not less than OMR 800/-, valid for (90) days from the date of Tender Submission obtained from a locally registered Bank, drawn in favor of The Chairman of Procurement Committee, Oman National Transport Company S.A.O.C "MWASALAT". Any bid without tender bond will be rejected.
The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.
Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head-quarter Oman National Transport Company S.A.O.C (MWASALAT) at Ghala, Muscat (Jabal Shams Building 5th floor). Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

"Mwasalat"

Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: +968 24121500/24121555

P.O.Box: 911, Al Khuwair, PC: 133, Sultanate of Oman

For more information please send to:

tenders@mwasalat.om

شركة الإنتاج والتسويق الزراعي ش.م.م

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION & MARKETING COMPANY L.L.C

Tender Announcement

Agriculture Production & Marketing Company LLC, one of the Oman Food Investment Holding Company SAOC companies affiliated to the Oman Investment Authority, which aims to establish an integrated system for the production and marketing of local Omani vegetables and fruits, announces the following tender:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Tender Fee	Last Date of Document Purchase	Last Date of Clarification	Last Date of Bid Submission
APMC/004/2021	Best Use of Proposed Agricultural Lands Initial Techno-Commercial Assessments, Master Planning & Zoning	50 /- OMR Non-Refundable	25 November 2021 04.00 PM	06 December 2021 04.00 PM	16 December 2021 04.00 PM

Companies specialized in such business and registered in the excellent and first class and registered with the Tender Board, can apply to purchase the tender as follows:

- Obtaining the tender documents from the Procurement Committee at the company's headquarters at: Al-Nahda Towers 2, 3rd Floor, Office No. 6, during working hours from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm before 25 November and submission bids in a sealed envelope addressed to the name of the head of the Tender Committee and written on it from the outside only the name and number of the tender.
- A bank guarantee of no less than (1%) of the bid value must be submitted and valid for a period of ninety (90) days from the last date of submission.
- Attach the official and supporting documents for comparison.

Agriculture Production & Marketing Company reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers without specifying reasons.

Bidders will be notified after the screening process according to the company's standards.

In case of any queries or further clarification on the process, please contact Procurement Department (Phone: +968 24237997 : Email: tenders@apmc.om) during office hours.

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtaining of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
22/2021	Construction of Majlis at Child Care Center in Al Khoud	Companies specialized in building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree	Wednesday 8-12-2021 02:00 PM	Thursday 30-12-2021 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Sunday 21/11/2021
- Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200)

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

www.mosd.gov.om

Sudan in renewed anti-coup protest push

KHARTOUM: Sudanese anti-coup activists called for mass protests on Sunday, as medics said the number of people killed since last month's military takeover had risen to at least 40. Both the United States and African Union have condemned the deadly crackdown on protesters and called on Sudan's leaders to refrain from the "excessive use of force".

Sudan's top general Abdel Fattah al Burhan on October 25 declared a state of emergency, ousted the government and detained the civilian leadership.

The military takeover upended a two-year transition to civilian rule, drew wide international condemnation and punitive measures, as well as provoking people to take to the streets.

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA) have urged protesters to keep up their campaign. On Saturday, pro-democracy activists made online calls for mass anti-coup protests with a "million-strong march on November 21".

The SPA is an umbrella of unions which were instrumental in



Sudanese youths run from tear gas fired by security forces as they take part in an anti-coup protest in the capital Khartoum's Bahri neighbourhood. — AFP

the months-long demonstrations that led to the ousting of president Omar al Bashir in April 2019.

Protests on Wednesday provoked the deadliest day so far, with

the toll of those killed now standing at 16 after a teenager who was shot in the head died, medics said.

"One martyr passed away... after he succumbed to severe wounds af-

ter being hit by live rounds to the head and the leg on November 17," the independent Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors said. He was aged 16, it added.

Most of those killed on Wednesday were in North Khartoum, which lies across the Nile river from the capital, medics said.

Later on Saturday, dozens rallied

to commemorate the latest deaths in North Khartoum. The protesters chanted slogans demanding "retribution" and a transition to civilian rule.

Police officials deny using any live ammunition and insist they have used "minimum force" to disperse the protests. They have recorded only one death, among demonstrators in North Khartoum.

On Friday, small groups of protesters rallied in several neighbourhoods after prayers against the military coup, especially in North Khartoum, where people were seen building barricades across roads. Security forces sporadically fired tear gas to disperse them.

The SPA said security forces had "stormed homes and mosques" there on Friday.

"We call for those responsible for human rights abuses and violations, including the excessive use of force against peaceful protesters, to be held accountable," US State Department spokesman Ned Price said. — AFP

Libya's parliament speaker enters presidential race

TRIPOLI: Libya's parliament speaker Aguila Saleh registered on Saturday to run in next month's presidential election, joining a military strongman and the son of Muammar Gaddafi in the contest.

Libya's first ever direct presidential poll, due on December 24, comes as the United Nations seeks to end a decade of violence in the oil-rich nation since a Nato-backed uprising that toppled Gaddafi in 2011.

Saleh is the 24th candidate to sign up at the offices of the electoral commission, the HNEC, with the 77-year-old registering his details in the eastern port of Benghazi.

"I came to the HNEC office in Benghazi to submit the documents necessary for my candidacy," said Saleh, appealing to Libyans to take part in the vote, in a speech broadcast by the Libya Tantakheb station. Saleh is considered to be close to eastern military chief Khalifa Haftar, who registered his name in the race on Tuesday.

That move came just days after Seif al Islam Gaddafi declared his own candidacy, a decade after his



Aguila Saleh, speaker of the eastern-based Libyan parliament

Saleh is the 24th candidate to sign up at the offices of the electoral commission, the HNEC, with the 77-year-old registering his details in Benghazi

father's death in a Nato-backed uprising.

Pro-Haftar forces remain in control of much of eastern and southern Libya, and some analysts have voiced scepticism over the chances of a free and fair vote.

Nearly three million Libyans — out of total population of some seven million people — have so far registered to vote.

But the run-up to the vote has been marred by bitter divisions over the legal and constitutional framework, and many in western Libya have rejected any run by Haftar, who led a devastating but ultimately unsuccessful campaign to seize the capital before he was pushed back in 2020.

In September, Saleh ratified a contentious electoral law criticised for bypassing due process and favouring a bid by Haftar.

On Friday, hundreds of Libyans protested in the capital Tripoli and in the city of Misrata over the law.

Demonstrators stamped on posters of Haftar and Seif al Islam Gaddafi, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes against humanity.

Both presidential and legislative polls had been slated for December 24, but in early October parliament split the dates of the vote by postponing legislative elections until January, a move criticised by some.

The path to the ballot box has been lined with disputes over the constitutional basis for the polls and the powers to be given to whoever wins. — AFP

Iraq gets 1.2m doses of Pfizer Covid vaccine

BAGHDAD: Iraq said on Saturday it has received 1.2 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech's Covid-19 vaccine through the Covax programme and Unicef, the UN Children's Fund.

Nearly seven million Iraqis have received at least one dose of coronavirus vaccine, amounting to 17.5 per cent of the country's 40 million population, based on government figures.

Plagued by years of conflict, corruption and neglect, Iraq's health system has struggled to cope with the pandemic.

The health ministry announced

on Saturday the arrival of a shipment of more than 1.2 million doses of "Pfizer's anti-Covid vaccine through the Covax programme and Unicef", the UN Children's Fund.

"Iraq is still facing danger from the coronavirus pandemic," ministry spokesman Saif al Badr said on Thursday.

"We expect to enter a fourth wave, (and) it could be a new variant," he told state television.

More than two million Iraqis have been infected with Covid and 23,628 have died in Iraq since the outbreak of the pandemic, according to official figures.

Despite an increase in the number of people getting jabbed, Iraq's government has been unable to overcome general scepticism about vaccines and measures aimed at preventing the spread of the virus.

There is a high level of public mistrust of institutions in Iraq amid the circulation of misleading information about the pandemic.

Covax was set up to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines, particularly to low-income countries, and has already delivered more than 80 million doses to 129 territories. — AFP

ZOO PARK GETS NEW ATTRACTION



Macaws are pictured at Zoo Park, a newly opened attraction at City Park, in the rebel-held northwestern Syrian city of Idlib. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

WASHINGTON

IMF says Tunisia has asked for financial aid

The IMF has received a request for aid from the new government in Tunisia and discussions over a new loan programme have already started, the Washington-based crisis lender said. The North African country is facing a serious economic crisis that is discouraging investors and donors.

"We have recently received from Tunisia, from the authorities, a request for a new IMF-supported program," said Gerry Rice spokesman for the Interna-



tional Monetary Fund. "We've always been, and will continue to be, a strong partner of Tunisia," he told reporters.

The "technical discussions" have already begun between the fund staff and Tunisian officials.

TEHRAN

Three more Iran police dead in week of violence

Three Iranian police have been killed this week, Tasnim news agency said, bringing to six the number of officers to have lost their lives in reported violence over the same period. On Friday, a captain was killed in the southwestern province of Khuzestan during a raid on a 'base of armed robbers,' Tasnim reported.

A day earlier, another policeman died of wounds sustained during clashes with "armed thugs" in the central



province of Isfahan, the news agency said.

Another policeman was run over by a vehicle transporting smuggled fuel in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, according to Tasnim.

ANKARA

Turkey frees Syrian singer Souleyman

Celebrated Syrian singer Omar Souleyman was released in southeast Turkey after being detained over alleged links to Kurdish militants, an AFP photographer said. Souleyman was freed at 10:30 pm, the photographer said, after a confusing day during which he was released in the morning before being taken back to a detention centre.

Souleyman was detained on Wednesday in Sanliurfa, where he has been running a bakery after escaping Syria's civil war



which began in 2011.

Police questioned Souleyman over reported claims he had ties to the People's Protection Units (YPG), which Turkey says is the Syrian offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

In brief

■ YANGON



MYANMAR ARRESTS EX-LAWMAKER WHO PLANNED ATTACKS

Myanmar security forces have arrested a former lawmaker and prominent hip-hop artist accused of masterminding a string of attacks targeting regime forces and officials, the junta said. Self-declared civilian “people’s defence forces” have sprung up to fight for democracy since the generals seized power in a February coup, with dissidents targeting officials perceived to be working with the junta.

Maung Kyaw, 40, was arrested at an apartment in the commercial hub Yangon following a “tip-off and cooperation from dutiful citizens,” the junta’s information team said.

■ THE HAGUE/MANILA



ICC PROSECUTOR SUSPENDS PROBE INTO PHILIPPINES DRUGS WAR

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) has suspended a probe at Manila’s request into suspected rights abuses during Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s crackdown on drugs. ICC judges approved a probe in September into the campaign in which thousands of suspected drug peddlers have died. Activists say many have been executed by law enforcement agencies with the tacit backing of the president.

Philippine authorities say the killings were in self-defence and that the ICC has no right to meddle.

■ KABUL



TALIBAN TO PAY OVERDUE SALARIES OF AFGHAN GOVT WORKERS

Afghanistan’s Taliban administration has begun paying the overdue salaries of government workers from Saturday, officials said.

Thousands of Afghan government workers are owed at least three months of salary, one of the many crises faced by the Taliban since the movement took over the country in August. “The finance ministry says that, starting today, the past three months salaries of all government workers and staff will be paid totally,” Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said on Twitter.

It was not immediately clear where the funds to pay the salaries would come from.

Thousands rally against Covid-19 vaccinations in Australia

MELBOURNE: Thousands of protesters decrying Covid-19 vaccinations gathered in cities around Australia on Saturday as smaller counter-rallies supporting health measures also marched.

Australia’s vaccine programme remains voluntary and highly successful, with nearly 85 per cent of the population over 16 fully vaccinated and life returning to relative normality for those double-jabbed.

But protesters rallied on Saturday across several of Australia’s major cities against vaccine mandates, which are not universal and have only been applied to certain occupations by state authorities.

In Melbourne, a crowd of several thousand called for state leader Daniel Andrews to be jailed and voiced anger over controversial new proposed pandemic powers.

Police said up to 10,000 gathered in Sydney, where one protester dressed as Scottish freedom fighter William Wallace from the film “Braveheart” and another spoke to the crowd in costume as former US president Donald Trump.

There were no reports of clashes, nor was there any sign of the gallows or calls to hang political leaders which had been filmed



People hold up placards during a rally against Covid-19 lockdown and vaccination measures in Melbourne. — AFP

at earlier Melbourne protests — sparking concerns the rallies were encouraging violence.

Although the views of the crowd in Sydney were wide-ranging, a heavy presence of anti-vaccination and shadowy conspiratorial views were promoted by speakers and on many signs.

“In Australia where a fanatical

A crowd of several thousand in Melbourne called for state leader Daniel Andrews to be jailed and voiced anger over controversial new proposed pandemic powers

cult runs our health bureaucracies, they say it’s OK (to vaccinate children),” right-wing federal politician Craig Kelly told the Sydney crowd to large cheers.

Kelly, who is a crossbench MP in Canberra, has routinely promoted misinformation and conspiracy theories throughout the pandemic. — AFP

■ SIX BUNDLES OF JOY



Nursing staff show Sri Lanka’s first sextuplets, three boys and three girls delivered through a cesarean section at a hospital in Colombo. — AFP

Vietnam’s resort island welcomes first tourists

HANOI: Two hundred vaccinated foreign tourists arrived in Vietnam’s beach-fringed island of Phu Quoc on Saturday, the first wave of visitors to the country in nearly two years as it seeks to resurrect its pandemic-ravaged tourism economy.

Vietnam imposed tight border controls at the start of the pandemic in an effort to keep out Covid-19, with some initial success, but that harmed its burgeoning tourism sector, which typically accounts for about 10 per cent of gross domestic product.

Vaccinated tourists now do not have to undergo mandatory two-week quarantine, according to the authorities, but are required to enjoy their holiday only inside the mega complex resort Vinpearl and will be tested twice during their trip.

“This is the first and vital step



South Korean tourists pose after their arrival at Phu Quoc international airport as the island welcomes its first international tourists to arrive after coronavirus vaccine passport scheme kicked off this month in Vietnam. — AFP

to revive our tourism sector and to prepare for the full resumption next year,” Nguyen Trung Khanh, chairman of the country’s tourism administration said in statement.

“We want to offer tourists a new experience amid new normalcy

which they can live fully in Phu Quoc and then live fully in Vietnam,” Khanh added.

The island’s authorities expect to welcome 400,000 domestic and international tourists to the end of this year.

Other Vietnamese destinations such as the Unesco world heritage site Hoi An and Danang beach are also welcoming international tourists back.

The move follows similar steps taken by neighbouring Thailand, which hosted vaccinated foreign tourist for quarantine-free holiday earlier this month.

Foreign arrivals to Vietnam slumped from 18 million in 2019, when tourism revenue was \$31 billion, or nearly 12 per cent of its GDP to 3.8 million last year.

Vietnam, which has inoculated more than half of its 98 million people, is seeking to resume international commercial flights from January next year and eyeing a full tourism reopening from June.

Ahead of reopening, staff at Vinpearl resort — where the arrivals are staying — swept beaches, arranged cutlery on tables and laid

out sunbeds. Others busied themselves painting delicate flowers on conical hats. “When we heard visitors were coming back, I was just so excited,” said duty manager Ngo Thi Bich Thuong.

Before the pandemic in 2019, around five million people, including half a million foreigners — mostly from China, South Korea, Japan and Russia — holidayed on Phu Quoc. Vingroup — the enormously powerful conglomerate behind the new complex — is pushing to make the island: “a new international destination on the world tourist map”.

To cater for the tourist boom, 40,000 hotel rooms have been built, planned or are under construction, vice chairman of the vietnam Tourism Advisory Board Ken Atkinson said — “that’s more hotel keys than they have in Sydney, Australia”. — AFP



Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

Japan PM confirms oil reserves may be released to curb prices

TOKYO: Japan is considering releasing oil from its reserves for the first time to curb surging oil prices, Kyodo news agency reported on Saturday, as Prime Minister Fumio Kishida signalled his readiness to counter oil price hikes following a request from the United States.

However, Japan may struggle to justify such a move, as under its own laws the country can release reserves only at a time of supply constraints or natural disasters, but not to lower prices.

The US administration of President Joe Biden, who faces falling approval ratings and higher gasoline prices, has pressed some of the world’s biggest economies to consider releasing oil from their strategic reserves to quell high energy prices.

The requests include asking China for the first time to consider releasing stocks of crude.

“We’re proceeding with consideration as to what we can do legally on the premise that Japan will coordinate with the United States and other countries concerned,” Kishida told reporters. — Reuters

Covid rules spark anger in Europe

BREDA, Netherlands: Dutch coronavirus demonstrators held fresh rallies on Saturday, a day after 51 people were arrested in an “orgy of violence” in Rotterdam that left two people in hospital with bullet wounds. The Netherlands went back into Western Europe’s first partial lockdown of the winter last Saturday with at least three weeks of curbs, and is now planning to ban unvaccinated people from entering some venues.

A few hundred protesters angered at the latest measures gathered in Amsterdam on Saturday and a similar number marched through the southern city of Breda.

It followed the Rotterdam unrest where police said they had fired both warning and targeted shots and used water cannon.

“Fifty-one people were arrested during the major disturbances on Friday evening and night on Coolsingel (street) in Rotterdam . About half of them were just underage”, Rotterdam police said in a tweet.

The rioters came from different parts of the country, they said. Police were still searching for more suspects.

“Two rioters were injured when they were hit by a bullet. They are still in the hospital”, the police said, adding that the Dutch na-



A man participates during an anti-vaccination protest as the spread of the coronavirus disease continues in Budapest. — Reuters

tional criminal investigation department would probe “whether the injuries were caused by police bullets”.

AUSTRIA: Meanwhile, thousands of people, many of them far-right supporters, protested in Vienna on Saturday against coronavirus restrictions a day after Austria’s government announced a new lockdown and said vaccines would be made compulsory next year. Whistling, clapping, blowing horns and banging drums, crowds streamed into Heroes’ Square in front of the Hofburg, the former imperial palace in central Vienna.

Many protesters waved Austrian and other flags and carried signs with slogans such as “no to vaccination”, “enough is enough” or “down with the fascist dictatorship”. — Reuters

Poland says Belarus has changed tactics on migrant crisis

SOKOLKA, Poland: Poland said on Saturday that Belarus has changed tactics in their border crisis by now directing smaller groups of migrants to multiple points along the European Union’s eastern frontier.

Though there have been signs of the crisis easing, Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak said he expected the border showdown to be long drawn out.

Polish border guards reported new attempted crossings by several groups mostly consisting of dozens of migrants, even if there was one crowd of 200 people hurling rocks and using tear gas.

“We have to prepare for the fact that this problem will continue for months. I have no doubt that that will be the case”, Blaszczak told the commercial RMF FM radio station.

“Now a bit of a new method has been taken on by the migrants and Belarusian services... Smaller groups of people are trying to cross the border in many places”, he said. He added that “there is no question that these attacks are directed by Belarusian services.”

The West accuses Belarus of artificially creating the crisis by bringing in would-be migrants — mostly from the Middle East — and taking them to the border with promises of an easy crossing into the EU.

Belarus has denied the claim, instead criticising the EU for not taking in the migrants.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko told



Estonian army reservists build a temporary razor wire fence on a border with Russia during a snap military exercise Okas 2021 near Meremae, Estonia. — Reuters

the BBC on Friday that it was “absolutely possible” his forces had helped people cross into the EU but denied orchestrating the operation.

“We’re Slavs. We have hearts. Our troops know the migrants are going to Germany... Maybe someone helped them”, he said. “But I didn’t invite them here.”

There were indications this week that the crisis was abating after several hundred migrants were repatriated to Iraq, while 2,000 others left a makeshift border encampment for a nearby warehouse.

Poland’s border guards said

Belarusian President says it was ‘absolutely possible’ his forces had helped people cross into the EU but denied orchestrating the operation

that on Friday there had been 195 attempted illegal crossings.

“Eighty-two foreigners were ordered to leave Polish territory. Two Ukrainian citizens and one German citizen were detained for aiding and abetting”, the guards tweeted on Saturday.

They added that there were multiple attempts to cross at the stretch of border guarded by the unit in the eastern village of Dubicze Cerkiewne.

“The largest group consisted of around 200 foreigners, the others each numbered several dozen people”, the guards tweeted.

“The foreigners were aggressive — they threw rocks, firecrackers and used tear gas.”

The migrants have abandoned everything in their countries, spending thousands of dollars to fly into Belarus on tourist visas, determined to reach the European Union. — AFP

Ethiopia hails return of looted artefacts

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia on Saturday hailed the return of precious artefacts looted by British soldiers more than 150 years ago, after a long campaign for their restitution.

The collection — recovered from Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands — includes a ceremonial crown, an imperial shield, a set of silver-embossed horn drinking cups, a handwritten prayer book, crosses and a necklace.

Most of the items were plundered by the British army after it defeated Emperor Tewodros II in the Battle of Magdala in 1868 in what was then Abyssinia.

The treasures were unwrapped before the media at Ethiopia’s national museum on Saturday, more than two months after they were

formally handed over at a ceremony in London in September.

Ethiopia said it was the largest such repatriation of artefacts to the country, with its ambassador to Britain, Teferi Melesse, describing it as of “huge significance”.

Calls have long been mounting in Africa for Western countries to return their colonial spoils, with many prized national treasures held abroad in museums or sometimes private collections.

Earlier this month, the West African state of Benin welcomed back nearly 30 royal treasures seized during France’s rule more than 130 years ago.

The Ethiopian government is still fighting for Britain to return other stolen artefacts including sacred wooden and stone tabots or



Recovered artefacts on display at the National Museum two months after they were formally handed over at a ceremony in London. — AFP

tablets, which represent the Ark of the Covenant.

The tabots are housed in the British Museum in London — which has a vast trove of foreign treasures — but have never been put on public display.

Ethiopia is also seeking the remains of Tewodros’ son Prince Alemayehu who was taken to Britain after the emperor committed suicide following his battlefield defeat.

“A variety of artefacts which are a legacy of our culture and values were looted during the battle and taken out of the country illegally”, said Tourism Minister Nasise Challi.

“Countless of our artefacts are found in various museums, research centres and in the hands

of private individuals”, she said at Saturday’s event, appealing for their return.

Ethiopia, one of the world’s oldest countries with a rich and ancient cultural and religious heritage, has said it considers the ransacking of Magdala a “great injustice” that has been a thorn in relations with Britain.

Several of the returned items were due to be auctioned but were bought by the non-profit Scherazade Foundation with the aim of repatriation. Others were acquired from private dealers or investors.

Among them was a set of mediaeval manuscripts dating back to before the 18th century, which had been due to be auctioned in The Hague. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

BERLIN

German coalition talks enter final stretch

Germany’s next cabinet is taking shape as coalition negotiations near a deal, with chancellor-in-waiting Olaf Scholz determined to deliver on his campaign pledge to have as many women as men in his team, sources said. Scholz’s centre-left Social Democrats (SPD), who narrowly won the federal election in September by beating Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservatives, are trying to form a three-way ruling coalition with the pro-spending Greens and the fiscally conservative Free



Democrats (FDP). The SPD is set to nominate three women for cabinet posts: Outgoing Environment Minister Svenja Schulze, outgoing Justice Minister Christine Lambrecht and Scholz’s former running mate.

MONTREAL

Fuel rationed, travel limited in western Canada

Officials in flood-stricken western Canada announced travel and fuel restrictions as the region grapples with supply difficulties, the latest on a list of struggles caused by torrential rains.

Record rainfall hit southwestern British Columbia on Sunday and Monday resulting in landslides and flooding which destroyed roads and infrastructure and forced the temporary closure of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

“We are asking people to limit



their fuel consumption and vehicle travel at this time and are putting in place orders under the provincial state of emergency to support this”, Mike Farnworth, the province’s public safety minister, said at a press conference.

LOS ANGELES

Cash truck spill prompts California freeway frenzy

An armoured truck spilled huge wads of cash across a California freeway, prompting chaotic scenes as drivers stopped to scoop up banknotes.

But motorists hoping to line their pockets with an unexpected pre-Thanksgiving windfall were thwarted, as police cracked down and arrested two people.

“There’s a lot of video evidence of people stealing the cash from the freeway, picking it up”, California Highway Patrol



Sgt Curtis Martin told a news conference.

The money — of various denominations, totalling thousands of dollars — belongs to a bank and must be returned to a police station, he added.

Former driver on trial over Rwanda genocide

CÉCILE FEUILLATRE

A former hotel driver goes on trial in Paris on Monday, accused of complicity in Rwanda’s 1994 genocide by transporting Hutu militiamen who massacred hundreds of Tutsis.

Claude Muhayimana, whom investigators say also hid Tutsis at risk of death and helped some escape, fled after the genocide and gained French nationality in 2010. He faces a life sentence if convicted.

The genocide, one of the worst atrocities of the 20th century, saw 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate members of the Hutu majority slaughtered in just three months, in massacres orchestrated and inflamed by the authorities.

Around 50 witnesses are expected to testify at what will be the third trial of Rwandan genocide suspects in France, whose legal system grants universal jurisdiction to judges prosecuting crimes against humanity.

Three people have already been convicted: an army officer sentenced to 25 years in prison, and two mayors who were given life sentences.

But Muhayimana will be the first “ordinary” citizen to face justice having been considered “respectable all around” before the killings, said Alexandre Kiabski, a lawyer for the Collective of Civil Parties for Rwanda (CPCR), one of the plaintiffs.

He dismissed claims by the defence that Muhayimana had no choice but to obey the Hutu authorities, saying “there were other drivers who refused.”

The trial is expected to last a month, and the dozens of witnesses include 15 from Rwanda. Covid-19 travel restrictions prompted judges to postpone the trial earlier this year.

Muhayimana was arrested in France in 2014 after an investigation by Paris prosecutors specialised in crimes against humanity that was prompted by a victims’ association.

He spent a year in preventive detention before being released on probation, when he resumed his work as a road repair agent in the northern French city of Rouen. Now aged 60, he is accused of knowingly driving Hutu police and militiamen called the Interahamwe to carry out massacres in the western Kibuye region.

— AFP

If this trial can contribute to the need for memory and pay homage to the victims, that’s already a lot
NIMA HAERI
Plaintiff’s lawyer



PARDONED

US President Joe Biden pardons the turkey ‘Peanut Butter’ during the White House Thanksgiving turkey pardon in the Rose Garden of the White House in Washington, DC on Friday. – AFP

Is this really where we want to be?



Ray Petersen
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AZEEM RAFIQ’S REVELATIONS OF HIS OWN ANTI-SEMITIC SENTIMENTS AND DEROGATORY TEXT MESSAGES HAVE NOW APPEARED IN THE MEDIA TO CAST DOUBT UPON HIS RIGHT TO ‘CAST THE FIRST STONE’

So, if you are from Australia, you can be called an Aussie, from Sweden, you can be called a Swede, from Scotland you can be called a Scot, yet if you are from Pakistan...

As the revelations from former Yorkshire cricketer Azeem Rafiq continue to reverberate down the halls of parliament, where he is currently testifying in front of MP’s concerning allegations of his racial abuse at the hands of his team-mates, and the Yorkshire Cricket Club continue, this can of worms is in danger of becoming an issue of Titanic proportions.

Rafiq has gone on record saying that he was racially abused by former England captain Michael Vaughan, and other England players Gary Balance, Alex Hales, Mathew Hoggard, and Tim Bresnan during his time with the club, with the club Chairman Roger Hutton, media celebrity David Lloyd, and team coach Andrew Gale also named as guilty of racist language or behaviour. He further stated that he would have captained the team if he had not made allegations of racism against those fellow team members.

Yet, all may not be as it seems, and although he himself, from the outset appeared ‘without sin,’ revelations of his own anti-Semitic sentiments and derogatory text messages have now appeared in the media to cast doubt upon his right to ‘cast the first stone.’ Rafiq,

having taken the settlement offered in mediation, in other words a hefty wad of cash for his ‘suffering,’ now has the cheek to excuse his own failings by saying, “I was 19 at the time and I hope and believe I am a different person today. I am incredibly angry at myself and apologise...”

So... we must accept his apology, while at the same time metaphorically ‘crucifying’ those he has accused in parliament. Only accused mind you... we have no idea whether the incidents actually occurred, and whether the words were actually spoken! This makes the Salem witchcraft trials look like a vicar’s tea party.

Bullying and harassment are issues that every generation since the beginning of time have been challenged to find solutions to, and the respect and understanding aspects of other cultures has always only ever been the answer to an issue in which, strangely, Europeans, or those with white complexions, have only ever been seen as the villains of the piece.

“The greatest need of man is to be understood,” is a phrase I learned long ago in respect of cultural awareness, while it was also made clear that there is a similar requirement upon mankind to understand, and that is the two ends of the same discussion.

Born in New Zealand, I have grown up hearing myself referred to as a ‘Kiwi,’ our country’s national bird, and been

referred to as that a million times... I don’t like it. Who wants to be referred to as a small round feathered bird that can’t fly, which is what birds are supposed to be good at, and who shuns the daylight as a nocturnal creature? I detest it, as the Kiwi has none of the characteristics I do, yet people persist. Do I worry? Do I lose sleep? Do I get offended? Does it make me cry? Of course not!

And do I think any less of parents and grandparents who referred to the Germans as ‘Jerries,’ the Italians as ‘Eyeties,’ the Japanese as ‘Japs? No, that was their world, and their time, and that time has passed. I don’t think we can turn back time, rewrite history, or change anything that has already happened, and the danger of Rafiq’s unburdening is already apparent with over a thousand different Asian sportsmen laying complaints of racism across cricket in the UK alone. Where will it end? And finally... all of this is in a setting where the insults are in English. I wonder if any other culture, nation, or race has any epithets that are used against the English in a foreign language, that they simply do not understand? Probably.

Maybe as an elderly, bifocal, pasty-white male, I should be looking to expose those who have bullied me? Nah, I’ll soak it all up and look ahead, because my life lies in my future, not my past. And speaking of the past... we all know what happened to the Titanic.

Is Sudan destined to become another Libya?



SHLOMO BEN-AMI

THE AUTHOR IS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE TOLEDO INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR PEACE

When a post-colonial country with little or no democratic tradition escapes a brutal dictatorship, it rarely becomes a democracy. Instead, it is likely to be confronted by political chaos and foreign actors jostling for strategic advantage. This occurred in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, and in Libya after Muammar al Qaddafi was ousted. Is Sudan destined for the same fate?

So far, the answer seems to be yes. When longtime Sudanese dictator Omar al Bashir was removed in a military coup in 2019, the same foreign powers that have made Libya their strategic playground saw an opportunity to

gain a foothold at the crossroads of Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

To be sure, a Sovereignty Council was quickly established to lead the country through a transition to civilian leadership. But last month — just over a year before the transition would be complete — Sudan’s military chief, General Abdel Fattah al Burhan, dissolved the Sovereignty Council and had the civilian prime minister, Abdalla Hamdok, arrested.

The coup’s perpetrators all served under Bashir. Moreover, Burhan has ordered the release from prison of high officials from Bashir’s now-dissolved

National Congress Party, as well as Islamist leaders. This has raised fears in Egypt and the United Arab Emirates that Sudan’s new leadership shares the fallen dictator’s sympathies for their nemesis, the Brotherhood.

Yet military coups are rarely driven by ideology. Instead, they are usually bids to protect corporate and economic interests. The coup-makers are probably also hoping to shield themselves from international war crimes charges. After all, Burhan was among the architects of the Darfur genocide. But this does not mean that countries like Egypt can rest easy. Turkey’s relationship with Bashir brought major strategic

benefits, including a 99-year lease on Suakin island, strategically located on the Red Sea.

Russia also has its eye on Sudan’s Red Sea coast. Last year, it signed a deal with the Sovereignty Council that would allow it to keep up to four navy ships at Port Sudan. Russia, which has not had a naval base in Africa since the end of the Cold War, is keen for any Sudanese government to reaffirm the agreement.

One country that seems largely to have lost interest in Sudan is China. Unlike Libya, Sudan is not a major oil producer. It lost that position when South Sudan seceded in 2011, taking 80 per cent of the country’s proven oil

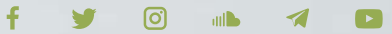
reserves with it. This probably explains why, from 2011 to 2018, China granted Sudan just \$143 million in loans — far less than the nearly \$6 billion provided between 2003 and 2010.

Moreover, whereas the conflict in Libya has done little to erode stability in the Maghreb, a war in Sudan would upend a precarious regional order. Ethiopia is already mired in a civil war that threatens to morph into a border war with Sudan, which would disrupt oil exports from South Sudan. And Ethiopia’s Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile represents an existential threat to Egypt.

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BARKA: The Royal Horse Racing Club organised the fifth horse race (the 51st National Day race), under the auspices of HH Sayyid Fatik bin Fahar al Said in the presence of a number of their Highnesses and horse racing fans from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

Horse Adeem ridden by Jockey Ibrahim bin Khamis al Hinai and owned by Majid al Maamari won the first place in the first round (Bait Al Baranda 1,200-metre race).

Horse Dafij ridden by Jockey Munis bin Salim al Siyabi and owned by Abdullah bin Ali al Maamari, won the first place in the second round 1,200 race.

Horse Mamdouh owned by Anwar bin Salim al Mahri, won the first place in the 1,800 metre race for purebred Arabian horses.

Horse Wasif ridden by jockey Adam bin Talib al Balushi and owned by Ali bin Amer al Fazari, won the first place in the 1,600 metre fourth race for purebred Arabian horses.



51st National Day Race Cup held



Oman Sail’s sailing festival proves a big hit in Musandam



MUSCAT: The Oman Sailing Festival, organised by Oman Sail, delighted huge crowds at Al Bassa Beach in Musandam this week as hundreds of men, women and children took part to learn how to sail and windsurf free of charge, as well as joining in the beach clean-up operation.

Making its first appearance of the festival was the SMEs Corner, a showcase of arts, crafts, souvenirs and homemade dishes which were especially popular as the nation celebrated its 51st National Day.

In total, more than 300 people

took the chance to head out onto the water and #SailWithUs under supervision from Oman Sail’s expert sailing coaches, as well as helping to maintain the beautiful local environment during the festival, held between Tuesday 16 and Friday 19 November, 2021.

Ali al Shuhaimi, Centre Manager of Al Mouj Sailing School and project manager of the Oman Sailing Festival, said, “This is a wonderful part of our country with stunning scenery and a long-held affinity with sailing and the sea. It was great to see so many people come along

In total, more than 300 people took the chance to head out onto the water and #SailWithUs under supervision from Oman Sail’s expert sailing coaches, as well as helping to maintain the beautiful local environment during the festival, held between Tuesday 16th and Friday 19th November

and learn to sail and surf, and even better to see how passionate the local community is about preserving this landscape for future generations. The variety on show courtesy of local small businesses shows the potential for Musandam to thrive. We

hope that everyone attending had a great time and will continue to sail, surf and care for the environment here.”

Next up on the winter tour of the country is Al Seeb Cornish at Sur Al Hadeed from November 26-27, 2021, with a beach clean-

up event at Al Athaiba Beach. The festival then visits Sur from December 3-4, 2021 and Al Musannah from December 11-18, 2021, before heading to the very south of Oman with a stop at Hawana Salalah from January 6-8, 2022 and concluding in Duqm from January 11-15, 2022.

The eyes of global sailing are on Oman this winter and right now Oman Sail is hosting the 2021 49er, 49er FX & Nacra 17 World Championships in Musannah. Featuring 178 sailors from 28 countries over three classes, including several world

champions, world number one ranked sailors and Olympians, the competition will intensify every day until the prizes are decided on November 21, 2021.

The Oman Sailing Festival is proudly supported by platinum sponsor OQ, gold sponsors Oman Air and Salsabeel, environmental partners be’ah and the Environment Society of Oman.

To pre-register for Oman Sailing Festival events, please visit www.omansail.com/sailing-festival-activities or search #SailWithUs on social media.

Bottas, Hamilton shut out Verstappen in Qatar Grand Prix third practice

DOHA: Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton dominated Qatar Grand Prix third practice with Red Bull's championship leader Max Verstappen off the pace ahead of qualifying later on Saturday.

Bottas topped the time sheets with a 1min 22.310sec, a record fastest lap at the Losail circuit's inaugural Formula One weekend.

Hamilton, who goes into this third last race of the season 14 points behind his arch rival, took second at 0.078sec.

Verstappen appears to have work to do to trouble the Mercedes men as he took third but some 0.341sec off Bottas's effort.

Qualifying for the 20th race of 2021 gets underway under floodlights at 17h00 (1400GMT) with Bottas

bidding for his third pole in as many weekends.

The Finn, who moves to Alfa Romeo next season, fronted the grid in Mexico and Brazil, but was overtaken around the first corner in both races by Verstappen.

The Dutch driver duly won in Mexico, but was swept aside by a Hamilton on fire in Sao Paulo last Sunday.

BOTTAS DOMINATION ALL THE WAY

Earlier, Bottas lapped fastest for Mercedes in floodlit free practice on Friday as Formula One prepared to race in Qatar for the first time with the title battle entering its decisive phase.

Red Bull's championship leader Max Verstappen set the early pace in an exploratory and dusty daylight first session at the Losail circuit on the outskirts of Doha before



Mercedes' driver Lewis Hamilton pits during the third practice session ahead of the Qatari Grand Prix at the Losail International Circuit. — AFP

Bottas ended on top in the evening.

"Today started nicely with the setup, the balance was pretty good in the first run with only minor tweaks to be done for FP2 (second practice)," said Bottas, whose seven-times world champion team-mate Lewis Hamilton

was fourth in both sessions.

"I would say that's the ideal way to start a weekend on a new track."

The Finn, out of the title reckoning and heading to Swiss-based Alfa Romeo at the end of the season, lapped in one minute 23.148 seconds compared to Verstappen's

earlier best of 1:23.723.

Bottas was 0.350 faster than Verstappen in the second session.

"Today Valtteri looked like the man out there, he was quick on a single lap and very good on a long run," said Mercedes trackside engineering head Andrew Shovlin, who was pleased to see the track performing to expectations.

"If the car's working well, then we'll get the car working well with Lewis. So for us it's been an encouraging Friday from that point of view."

AlphaTauri's Pierre Gasly was second in both practices with Verstappen, who leads Hamilton by 14 points with three races remaining, third in the evening.

Hamilton was 0.786 slower than his title rival in the opening session when he ran

wide over kerbs at turn 14 before pitting with a damaged front wing.

"Are we slow on the straight or something?" the Briton asked over the radio. "No, not particularly," race engineer Peter Bonnington replied.

Hamilton said after the second session that he would be looking for some answers overnight.

"I don't know how big the gap is but I'm off, I'm definitely not close," he said.

"The track's quite nice, no real issues. At the moment I'm a little bit slow so I need to figure that out tonight."

Russian rookie Nikita Mazepin missed the evening session as the Haas team replaced his chassis following damage sustained in the earlier stint.

— AFP/Reuters



EY lift the Auditors Cup 2021

MUSCAT: EY has won the 19th edition of Auditors Cup which concluded on Saturday, November 13, 2021 in Muscat.

It was a very well contested and fought tournament between eight teams across audit firms. Every individual demonstrated true team spirit and sportsmanship throughout the tournament.

The final was played between

EY and BDO. EY lead by Alkesh Joshi won the toss and elected to bat first scoring 46 runs in 6 overs. In reply, BDO fell 1 run short of the target. Omar Sarfraz from EY was declared the man of the match in the finals.

Tournament standings:

Champions: EY
Runners-up: BDO

1st Runners-up: KPMG
2nd Runners-up: PwC
Individual prizes as follows:
Best Dressed Team (Moore)
Best Bowler: Upasak (BDO)
Best Batsman: Yahya (BDO)
Best Wicketkeeper: Krishnan Karthik (EY)
Player of the tournament: Mohamed Nayaz (PwC)

Muscat CT brush aside Oman Stallions

MUSCAT: In a low-scoring match of the Premier Division of Oman Cricket League, Muscat CT got the better of Oman Stallions by six wickets at the Oman Cricket ground in Al Amerat on Friday.

After being put into bat by Muscat CT, Oman Stallions had a bad start losing their first five wickets with only 66 on board. The team could never recover, and ultimately was bundled out for 104 in 36 overs, with Prasad Sankata the sole batsman who put up some resistance with 38 runs. Ganesh Chandrashekhhar and Debutant Chonira Aiyappa chipped in with three wickets apiece.

In reply, Muscat CT knocked off the target in 26.5 overs. Debutant Hashir Dafedar was the top-scorer with 30 runs, studded with four boundaries. Hemalkumar Tandel was the only



bowler who made an impression, picking up two wickets.

BRIEF SCORES: Oman Stallions 104/10 in 36 Overs (Prasad Sankata 38 (101) – 1x4; Ganesh Chandrashekhhar 27/3, Chonira Aiyappa 15/3) lost against Muscat CT 105/4 in 26.5 Overs (Hashir Dafedar 30 (55) – 4x4, Hemalkumar Tandel 29/2) by 6 wickets.

In another Division A match of the Oman Cricket League played

on Friday, Orient Travels pipped ABL Task by 31 Runs.

Put into bat after ABL Task won the toss, Orient Travels scored 198 before being bundled out in 47.2 overs. Syed Mohammed Ubadah was the top scorer with 60 off 68 balls, with three boundaries and five massive sixes. Haroon Khan was the best bowler for ABL Task, picking up three wickets for 45.

ABL Task could never get going, losing wickets at regular intervals and none of the batsman creating any impact on the game. Ultimately, the team was all out for 167 in 43.2 overs, with Shayan S scoring 25. Waleed was the leading wicket taker for Orient with three wickets for 22.

BRIEF SCORES: Orient Travels 198/10 in 47.2 overs (Syed Mohammed Ubadah 60 (68) 3x4, 5x6; Saud Haroon Khan – 45/3) won against ABL Task 167/10 in 43.2 Overs (Shayan S 25 (52) 2x4; Waleed Rahim al Balushi – 22/3) by 31 runs

Ruud downs Rublev, Djokovic crushes Norrie



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates after defeating Britain's Cameron Norrie. — AFP

with world number five Rublev the favourite having won his four previous matches against Ruud. The Russian duly drew first blood, securing a double break early on and took the opening set comfortably by winning 92 per cent of his first serve points. Ruud, who came from a set down to beat Norrie on Wednesday, looked to be in trouble when he was broken early in the second but he began to throw caution to the wind. Using his forehand to great effect he became braver and stepped into the court to break straight back. That courage was rewarded with the second set as Ruud found a way to return Rublev's fearsome serve and give himself a chance of facing Medvedev. The decider was almost a mirror of the previous set as Rublev broke at 3-2, only for Ruud to immediately draw level. The set went to a suitably dramatic tiebreak with Rublev enjoying a fortunate net cord at 3-5 down. But Ruud was unruffled and duly completed the win with an ace.

CLINICAL EXHIBITION Djokovic was already qualified for the semifinals but resisted any urge to throttle down as he dismantled Norrie with a clinical exhibition for the evening crowd. The Serbian had never faced Norrie before and wasted little energy in sending the Briton packing. Djokovic has dropped only 16 games in three matches here so far but will have a tougher time on Saturday against German Zverev, the player who ended his hopes of a Golden Slam with victory over the Serbian at the Tokyo Olympics. "My tennis is getting better and better," Djokovic, who has reached his 10th semifinal at the event, said on court. "I couldn't be more satisfied ahead of possibly the two most important matches in the tournament. "Sacha's serve is amongst the top three in the world and it will be tough with the fast conditions. Against him it's always a mental and physical battle." — Reuters

TURIN, Italy: Norway's Casper Ruud completed the semifinal lineup at the ATP Finals on Friday and will next face another Russian in holder Daniil Medvedev after a 2-6 7-5 7-6(5) win over Andrey Rublev. The 22-year-old Ruud qualifies as runner-up from the Green Group behind Novak Djokovic who later posted his third round-

robin win by thumping British alternate Cameron Norrie 6-2 6-1. World number one Djokovic, bidding for a record-equalling sixth title at the year-ender, will take on Germany's Alexander Zverev in Saturday's second semifinal. Making his tournament debut, Ruud bounced back from an opening defeat by Djokovic to overcome Britain's Norrie and

then Rublev, and was relishing the prospect of meeting Medvedev. "I'm enjoying the moment," Ruud, who has enjoyed a stupendous year with five ATP titles, said. "I'm looking forward to tomorrow. It's going to be another tough battle, a different kind of player from today, but one of the best in the world. He's proven himself as one of the best over the past two or three years. "I've played against him a couple of times and lost both, but I know a little bit about what I'm going to face and it's going to be a fun challenge."

STRAIGHT SHOOTOUT Friday's match was a straight shootout for a last-four place,

Fakhar leads Pakistan to series win over Bangladesh

DHAKA: Pakistan's Fakhar Zaman struck an unbeaten half-century as his side made light work of beating Bangladesh by eight wickets in their second Twenty20 international in Dhaka on Saturday, taking an unassailable 2-0 series lead. Fakhar hit 57 off 51 balls and put on 85 runs with Mohammad Rizwan (39) for the second wicket, guiding Pakistan to 109-2 in 18.1 overs. Shaheen Afridi and Shadab Khan earlier claimed two wickets each to help the visitors restrict struggling Bangladesh to 108-7 after the home side opted to bat first. Pakistan skipper Babar Azam fell for just one in the third over, dragging a Mustafizur Rahman delivery onto his stumps. But Fakhar — who smashed two fours and three sixes but was dropped by Saif Hassan on 26 — and Rizwan denied Bangladesh further momentum with their calm approach.

Aminul finally dismissed Rizwan as Saif took the catch at extra cover, but it came too late as Fakhar soon sealed the contest and the series with a single through cover off part-timer Saif. "The series win is a team effort. The boys responded well as a unit and we carried forward the momentum" from the World Cup **BABAR AZAM** Pakistan captain

"The series win is a team effort," said Babar. "The boys responded well as a unit and we carried forward the momentum" from the World Cup.



Pakistan's Mohammad Rizwan (R) and Fakhar Zaman run between the wickets. — AFP

Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah Riyad rued their batting towards the end of their innings. "I and Shanto (Najmul) were trying to get a partnership but we couldn't capitalise in the end overs. For a team like us, we need a set batter to be there at the end but it didn't happen

SCOREBOARD	
BANGLADESH	
M Naim c F Zaman b Wasim	2
S Hassan lbw Shaheen	0
N Hossain c and b Shadab	40
A Hossain c Rizwan b Shadab	20
M Riyad c Rizwan b Harris	12
N Hasan c Rizwan b Shaheen	11
M Hasan c and b Nawaz	3
A Islam (not out)	8
T Ahmed (not out)	2
Extras (LB-8, W-2)	10
Total (For 7 wks, 20 overs)	108
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-5, 3-51, 4-79, 5-82, 6-88, 7-102	
Bowling: Shaheen 4-0-15-2, Wasim 3-0-9-1, Shoaib 2-0-16-0, Harris 3-0-13-1, Shadab 4-0-22-2 (w2), Nawaz 4-0-25-1	
PAKISTAN	
M Rizwan c Saif b Aminul	39
B Azam b M Rahman	1
F Zaman (not out)	57
H Ali (not out)	6
Extras (LB-2, W-4)	6
Total (For 2 wks, 18.1 overs)	109
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-97	
Bowling: Mahedi 4-0-23-0, Taskin 4-0-22-0, Mustafizur 2-1-0-12-1, Shoriful 1-5-0-10-0, Aminul 4-0-30-1	

today," he said. Pakistan dominated the match right from the start after dismissing both Bangladeshi openers in the first two overs.

Shaheen Afridi went for a golden duck to Saif, and Mohammad Naim fell to Mohammad Wasim for two edging to Fakhar at slip, as Bangladesh were reduced to 5-2. Afif Hossain and Najmul Hossain offered some resistance, adding 46 runs for the third wicket before Shadab dismissed both to put Pakistan back in control. For the hosts, Najmul Hossain top-scored with 40 off 34 balls while Afif Hossain chipped in with 20 runs from 21 balls. Playing his first match of the series, Shaheen finished with 2-15 and Shadab grabbed 2-22 as Bangladesh struggled against Pakistan's quality pace and spin bowling. Pakistan won the first match of the series by four wickets on Friday. The third and final match of the series will be held on the same ground on Monday. — AFP

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New cranes to handle mega ships at Duqm Port

HIGH-TECH: First cabinless automated cranes to be deployed in the region

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 20

Irish crane manufacturer Liebherr Container Cranes Ltd has announced that it has secured a contract to supply and install a sizable fleet of container cranes at the Port of Duqm, which anchors one of the largest economic zones in the Middle East.

The contract covers the manufacture and supply of four Ship to Shore (STS) and twelve rubber-tyred gantry (RTG) cranes for delivery in late 2022. The new hardware will enable Port of Duqm to handle the world's largest container vessels as it expands its existing cargo and bulk services with container handling.

The new ship to shore container cranes feature an outreach of 71m, a back reach of 18m and a lift height over rail of 50m. The cranes have a safe working load of 65 tonnes under twinlift spreader.

Supplied without a cabin the cranes will be operated utilising a combination of remote control and automation, according to the



manufacturers. "Automation will take care of the majority of the cycle with operator intervention only required when

operating below a predefined safe height," the company said in a press statement.

Each Liebherr STS will be connected to its own dedicated remote operating system (ROS). The centrally located remote operation facility will also host the ROS for control of the automated RTGs. The cabinless RTGs feature automation over the stack with remote control only required for container pick or place from the truck trailers, or for exception handling. Four ROS operators will operate the twelve RTGs.

The new Liebherr cranes have been designed with the future in mind. Their size and the extensive automation features will ensure that the Port of Duqm will be able to efficiently, safely and predictably handle the world's largest container vessels for many years to come

GERRY BUNYAN
Managing Director, Sales for Liebherr Container Cranes

The diesel powered RTGs can stack eight containers and a truck lane wide and one over 6 containers high. Data communications in the container yard will be handed by a mesh network.

This decentralised system sees multiple access points positioned throughout the yard providing a high speed and stable data network delivering the required latency and high bandwidth communication

necessary for remote control.

Gerry Bunyan, Managing Director, Sales for Liebherr Container Cranes, said: "Liebherr are very happy to have been awarded this project in the Sultanate of Oman. Liebherr have for many years supplied STS and RTG cranes throughout the Middle East, but these will be the first Liebherr container cranes in the Sultanate of Oman. These are also our first cabinless and automated cranes in the region and we look forward to seeing the cranes being deployed, and playing the lead role in expanding the services offered by the Port."

He further added: "The new Liebherr cranes have been designed with the future in mind. Their size and the extensive automation features will ensure that the Port of Duqm will be able to efficiently, safely and predictably handle the world's largest container vessels for many years to come."

A relatively new facility, Duqm has been designed to be a world class, multipurpose commercial gateway and is destined to become one of the largest ports in the region.

It is being developed into an integrated, multimodal logistics hub and is well connected via road, rail and air.

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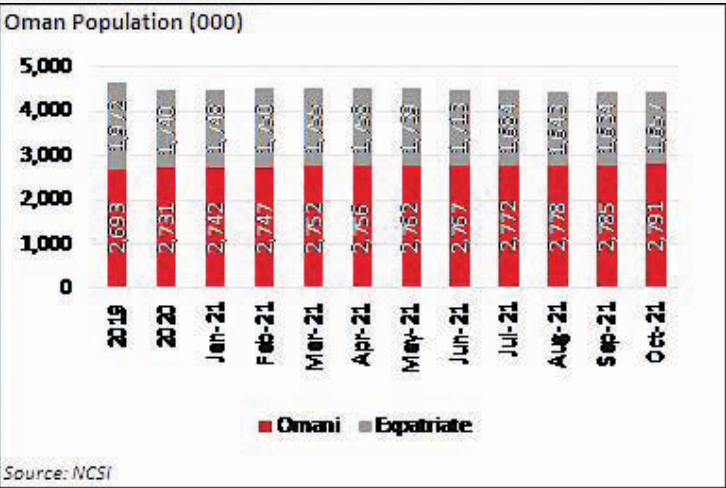
MSX closes higher, supported by financial sector scrips

MUSCAT: MSX30 Index ended the week higher by 1.30 per cent. All sub-indices ended lower except financial index. Services & industrial Index closed lower by 0.64 per cent and 0.30 per cent, respectively. Financial index closed up by 1.42 per cent. MSX Shariah Index closed higher by 0.32 per cent.

Oman International Development and Investment Company SAOG announced the following amongst other things in its EGM held last week.

- Approval of the proposed issuance of RO 52 million subordinated perpetual Mudaraba trust certificates (the Proposed Issuance) to Jabreen International Development Company SAOC (Jabreen), a fully owned subsidiary of the Company and a related-party, through Private Placement.
- Approval of the reduction of the issued share capital of the Company from RO 80.77 million to RO 66.8 million by fully cancelling the treasury shares that the company shall receive as part of the exchange transaction with Jabreen after completing the proposed issuance to Jabreen.

Dhofar Fisheries and Food Industries Company informed the shareholders of the approval of the company's board of directors on the proposal to convert the company from a public joint stock company to a closed joint stock company, in its meeting held on November 4, 2021, after obtaining the



approval of the Authority. The initial date is on November 15, 2021, whereby the company announces that the main shareholder of the company, Hassani Trading Company, has submitted an offer to purchase the shares of the shareholders wishing to sell at a value of (1) Omani Riyal.

The name of the brokerage company executing the purchase is Ubhar Capital (SAOC). Taageer Finance Company in continuation to the approval of the shareholders at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) held on June 10, 2020 for the issue of Unsecured, Non-Convertible, Subordinated Bonds through Private subscription for an amount RO 10 million (plus a green shoe (additional) option of RO 5 million).

Taageer Finance Company SAOG informed that the Bonds subscription has been closed for an amount of RO 13.23 million and the approval

of Capital Market Authority (CMA) has been received.

Central Bank of Oman (CBO) is preparing the groundwork to support linkages between the Real-Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system — the principal payment platform of the Sultanate of Oman — with the cross-border payment systems of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), as well as the wider Arab region.

The link-ups, when completed before the end of this year, will enable cross-border payments to be effected in local currencies cost-competitively and in real time, according to top officials of the CBO.

Bank lending in the Sultanate of Oman has shown signs of revival in past few months and credit growth has further increased in September, the Central Bank of Oman's (CBO) data showed.

The Sultanate of Oman's bank loan growth picked up in September 2021 to 4.9

per cent, signalling that the Sultanate's economic recovery is continuing into the fourth quarter of this year.

Total outstanding credit extended by the Sultanate of Oman's banking sector grew by 4.9 per cent year-on-year to reach RO 27.7 billion at the end of September 2021. Credit growth in the Sultanate of Oman had dropped below 2 per cent last year after the dual shock of the coronavirus crisis and oil price collapse hit the economy hard.

Bank lending to the private sector also showed an improved growth of 2.6 per cent as of September this year compared to less than 1 per cent recorded in the first half of 2021, the central bank's data showed.

On the deposits side, the CBO data indicated that total deposits held with the Omani banks (conventional and Islamic) registered an y-o-y growth of 2.7 per cent to reach RO 25 billion at the end of September 2021.

Latest NCSI the Sultanate of Oman figures indicate that Oman's population rose by 0.7 per cent in October 2021, as compared to September 2021.

Omani's population grew by 0.2 per cent in October compared to September 2021 while expatriate population rose by 1.4 per cent in October 2021 compared to September 2021. Of the total population, 62.75 per cent were Omanis while 37.25 per cent were expatriates as of October 2021.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]



Maisarah celebrates 51st National Day & announces winners of RO 50,000

MUSCAT: Commemorating the sentiments of the occasion, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services — BankDhofar's Islamic banking window — celebrated the 51st National Day and announced the winners of valuable cash prizes at the special draw that was held at Al Athaiba Branch. 50 winners of the total prizes of RO 50,000 have been named at the event that was attended by Maisarah's top management team members, branch staff and customers.

As per the Prize Account scheme, 5 National Day special cash prizes were allocated for each of the 10 Maisarah branches across the Sultanate of Oman, RO 1,000 each.

In addition to the National Day special prizes, Maisarah recently announced more cash prizes with a total amount of RO 52,800 for 68 winners during special draws to be held next month 2021 for healthcare professionals, teachers, retirees, Ministry of Defence and Royal Oman Police employees, as well as new Maisarah customers and existing customers with new credit cards.

There are also Year-end Mega Prizes where three lucky winners from across Maisarah branch network will win RO 2,000 in the

children category, RO 10,000 in the Standard and Affluent Banking category, and RO 100,000 in the Priority Banking category.

Valid through December 31, 2021, weekly prizes of RO 100 each are also granted to three winners from each branch, with total number of 30 winners every week.

Moreover, there are exclusive prizes for children in the monthly draws where one winner per branch is awarded RO 100, with total number of 10 winners every month.

For Standard and Affluent Banking customers, there are monthly prizes of RO 500 each for one winner per branch, with total number of 10 winners every month.

Meanwhile, Priority Banking Customers have the chance to win RO 2,000 each for one customer from every branch, with total number of 10 winners every month. In addition to the expected profit of up to 2.5 per cent per annum (subject to the weightages applicable for each month), the account — which is a personal savings account that is based on the Islamic concept of Mudaraba — allows customers to win cash prizes distributed from the shareholders' funds.

Maserati Grecale prototypes form huge Trident



MUSCAT: The energy of Grecale does not stop, it starts from the home of Maserati, runs through streets of the city of Milan and then conquers the world.

The Grecale prototypes have formed a huge Trident, which took shape in a record-breaking shot. The outline was over 100 metres long and was made up of 80 cars.

There are currently over 250 development models distributed across Japan and the United States, the United Arab Emirates and China, Finland and Italy. There's no stopping the energy of Maserati Grecale.

The new model will be unveiled to the world in 2022, when Maserati will be in the spotlight on the stage of the mobility of the future, in an event to take place in Milan, with the whole world involved.

Bank Muscat celebrates glorious 51st National Day with special Al Mazyona Draw

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat conducted a special draw coinciding with the Sultanate's 51st National Day celebrations on November 18, 2021 at its Head Office, which was attended by Abdullah bin Tamman al Maashani, Deputy General Manager — Institutional Sales and Product Development and Saleh bin Mohammed al Maini, Assistant General Manager — Capital Regions, Bank Muscat.

The special Al Mazyona draw gave away a total of RO 102,000 to 51 lucky winners, with each winner walking away with RO 2,000 each. All customers maintaining a minimum balance of RO 1,000 in their Al Mazyona account were eligible for the special draw by the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah bin Tamman al Maashani, Deputy General Manager — Institutional Sales and Product Development, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat is honoured to extend our warmest greetings and congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the people of the Sultanate of Oman on the occasion of the Glorious 51st National Day. To celebrate this



special and grand occasion, the bank will reward 51 customers with special prizes. Bank Muscat always participates in national events in order to bring joy and happiness to its customers and will continue to hold special prize draws."

He called upon all customers to continue saving more in their accounts to get more opportunities to win exciting financial prizes.

Al Mazyona has succeeded in inculcating a strong savings culture in the Sultanate of Oman.

For nearly three decades, Al Mazyona has rewarded numerous customers and enriched their lives. Bank Muscat encourages everyone to save for the future with the objective of creating a life-changing experience for winners and improving the well-being of

their families.

The Sultanate of Oman's flagship savings scheme continues to reward a prudent and financially responsible savings habit among millions of customers with a massive RO 11 million to be won by 7,470 winners over the course of the year. Al Mazyona is designed to transform the lives of prudent savers and the number of winners

has gone up by 12 per cent in 2021 over the previous year.

Bank Muscat recently celebrated the holding of the Omani Women's Day Draw during which RO 25,000 was distributed to 25 lucky winners. Also during the recently held Shababi draw, 25 youth won prizes of RO 500 each on the occasion of the Omani Youth Day. The upcoming End-of-Year draw will offer high value prizes totalling over RO 1.5 million including two mega prizes of RO 250,000 each.

The Al Mazyona scheme is targeted to accommodate all nationalities and segments, including ladies, youth, children, high-savings balance customers and salary account holders, thereby inculcating a strong savings habit among citizens who will be financially responsible.

The bank has invited all its customers to take maximum advantage of all the opportunities it offers to win exciting prizes by increasing the savings in their accounts.

For more information on Al Mazyona saving scheme, please visit <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/accounts/Pages/details.aspx#saving>.



China market regulator fines tech giants for failing to report old deals



The logo of Alibaba Group is seen at its office in Beijing. — Reuters

BEIJING: China's market regulator on Saturday said it was fining companies including Alibaba, Baidu and JD.com for failing to declare 43 deals that date as far back as 2012 to authorities, saying that they violated anti-monopoly legislation.

Enterprises involved in the cases would be fined 500,000 yuan (\$78,000) each, it said, the maximum under China's 2008 Anti-Monopoly Law.

China has been tightening its grip on internet platforms, reversing a once laissez-faire approach and citing the risk of abusing market power to stifle competition, misuse of consumers' data and violation of consumer rights.

The earliest deal listed was a 2012 acquisition involving Baidu and a partner, and the most recent was the 2021 agreement between Baidu and Chinese automaker Zhejiang Geely Holdings to create a new-energy vehicle company.

Other deals cited by the State Administration of Market Supervision included Alibaba's 2014 acquisition of Chinese digital mapping and navigation firm AutoNavi and its 2018 purchase of a 44 per cent stake in Ele.me to become the food delivery service's largest shareholder.

The deals, however, did not have the effect of eliminating or restricting competition, the regulator said. — Reuters

STRATEGIC PROJECTS TO DRIVE REVENUE GROWTH FOR OMAN'S OQ

HEALTHY RETURNS: When operational, OQ's Growth Projects will also fuel economic diversification and ICV, says Chairman

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

Five major ventures of OQ — the global integrated energy group of the Sultanate of Oman — will unlock a new phase of revenue growth for the company when they come into operation over the next two years.

Dubbed 'Growth Projects', they comprise the Liwa Plastic Industries Complex in Suhar, LPG and ammonia plants of OQ in Salalah, and a major crude oil terminal and greenfield refinery at Duqm — strategic ventures that have garnered investments totaling around \$15 billion.

When operational, the OQ's Growth Projects — distributed across the upstream, midstream and downstream segments of the Oil & Gas value chain — will also fuel the country's economic diversification, said a key official of OQ Group.

"The Group is nearing the completion of key strategic projects, namely Liwa Plastic Industries Complex, OQ LPG, OQ Ammonia, and Bisat B and the commercial operations start to kick-off. These operations will open wider prospects that will increase returns on Group investments, as well as contribute towards supporting the government's economic diversification policies and enhance In-Country Value", stated Mulham Basheer al Jarf, Chairman — OQ Group, in a newly released report of OQ's performance for the first half of this year.

OQ Group, which is part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), owns and operates



businesses across the Oil & Gas value chain.

Included in its vast portfolio are equity interests in a sizable number of operated and non-operated oil and gas fields in the Sultanate of Oman and abroad, refining and petrochemicals plants, specialty chemical projects overseas, and the country's gas transportation network.

Its assets are valued at a total of \$27.6 billion (as of June 30, 2021).

The largest of OQ's Growth Projects, set up with an investment of around \$6.7 billion, is the Liwa Plastics Industries Complex (LPIC) in Sohar Industrial Port.

A wholly-owned petrochemical complex of OQ Group, LPIC comprises of a polypropylene plant, producing 300,000 tonnes per year, and two polyethylene plants, HDPE and LLDPE producing 880,000 tonnes per year, "marking a breakthrough in polyethylene's novel production", the group's mid-year report said.

Progress on the construction of the giant scheme has reached the 99.9 per cent mark, with "critical milestones" achieved in

Included in its vast portfolio are equity interests in a sizable number of operated and non-operated oil and gas fields in the Sultanate of Oman and abroad, refining and petrochemicals plants, specialty chemical projects overseas, and the country's gas transportation network

its operationalisation during the first half of this year.

Completion of the polymer plants' performance testing will pave the way for the facility's initial acceptance, OQ stated.

In Duqm, construction work on OQ8, a greenfield refinery being established by a joint venture of OQ and Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), has reached the 84.3 per cent mark.

When commissioned, the refinery will process around 230,000 barrels of crude oil per day. Primary refined products will include diesel, jet fuel, naphtha and LPG, OQ said, adding that initial acceptance is slated during Q2 2023.

Also in Duqm, a key construction milestone in the delivery of the first phase of a massive crude oil hub, located at Ras Markaz near Duqm, is slated during the first quarter of 2022.

The giant storage terminal is being developed by Oman Tank Terminal Company (OTTCO), a wholly owned entity of OQ Group.

Around 25 million barrels of storage capacity is being developed in the first phase, which will include 5.2 million barrels for crude earmarked as feedstock for the OQ8 refinery in Duqm.

Overall progress in the delivery of Phase 1 is at the 70.4 per cent level, with initial acceptance expected in Q1 2022. In Salalah Free Zone, adjoining the Port of Salalah, OQ is preparing to bring into full-fledged operation

two key ventures.

The first of the pair, OQ LPG, builds on the Salalah LPG extraction plant, storage tanks, shipping facilities and interconnected pipeline system.

Efforts are currently focused on achieving the "completion of the commissioning stage and on-spec production of all its three products (Propane, Butane and Condensate)", said OQ.

In June, the project produced its maiden output of propane and butane, each of 5,000 metric tonnes.

Also in Salalah, OQ is close to completing work on its 1,000 metric tonnes per day capacity ammonia plant, which is integrated with an existing 1 million tonnes per year capacity methanol project. Progress on the ammonia plant has reached the 95.5 per cent mark.

Ammonia from the plant can either be used as raw material in the manufacture of fertilisers or as an intermediate chemical in the production of resins, synthetic fibres and polyurethanes, among other applications, OQ added.

Japan unleashes record stimulus package, bucking global tapering trend

TOKYO: Japan unveiled a record \$490 billion spending package to cushion the economic blow from the Covid-19 pandemic, bucking a global trend towards withdrawing crisis-mode stimulus measures and adding strains to its already tattered finances.

Spending has ballooned due to an array of payouts including those criticised for being unrelated to the pandemic, such as cash handouts to households with youth aged 18 or below, and will likely lead to additional bond issuance this year.

The massive spending would underscore the resolve of Prime Minister Fumio Kishida — once considered a fiscal conservative — to focus on reflation the economy and redistributing wealth to households.

"The reflationary monetary policy and go-big-or-go-home fiscal policy pioneered by (former Premier) Shinzo Abe is now the



A man stands in front of binoculars on display at a shop in Tokyo. — AFP

orthodoxy", said James Brady, an analyst at Teneo.

"Though Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has been known in the past for being somewhat hawkish, he appears set to continue the Abenomics paradigm for several more years."

The package included 55.7 trillion yen (\$490 billion) in spending for items ranging from cash payouts to households,

subsidies to Covid-hit firms and reserves set aside for emergency pandemic spending.

The size of spending was much bigger than the 30-40 trillion yen estimated by markets, and will be mostly funded by an extra budget of around 32 trillion yen to be compiled this year. The remainder will likely be funded by next year's budget.

The total package, which

includes funds that do not lead to immediate spending, will likely reach 78.9 trillion yen.

"We'll mobilise all available tools to fund the package, including issuing deficit-covering bonds", Kishida said in a group interview. He did not say how much debt could be issued. Critics of the package focused on its eye-popping scale.

"Inflating the size may have become the purpose with little discretion made on whether the spending would be effective", said Takumi Tsunoda, senior economist at Shinkin Central Bank Research Institute. "It's a lot of wasteful spending." Japan has lagged other economies in pulling out of the pandemic-induced slump, forcing policymakers to maintain massive fiscal and monetary support even as other advanced nations dial back crisis-mode policies.

— Reuters



A crude oil tanker is seen at Qingdao Port, Shandong, China. — Reuters

US presses Opec+ as it weighs reserve release

WASHINGTON: The White House pressed the Opec producer group again to maintain adequate global supply, days after US discussions with some of the world's biggest economies over potentially releasing oil from strategic reserves to quell high energy prices.

The Biden administration has asked a wide range of countries, including China for the first time, to consider releasing stocks

of crude. President Joe Biden faces slipping approval figures as Americans cite inflation as a growing problem.

White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the administration wants to "ensure that the Opec member countries and Opec as an organisation meets the demand needs that are out there with the adequate supply. That is something we've pressed them on in the past." — Reuters

GE breakup should start with insurance black box

The breakup of General Electric is a victory for transparency, but there's one part of the US industrial firm that sunlight still doesn't reach. That's its \$38 billion long-term care insurance business, formerly the source of some nasty surprises.

Now is a good time for Chief Executive Larry Culp to cut the bothersome business loose.

GE makes almost all its revenue and profit from jet engines, power turbines and medical machinery. Tacked on to that is a division that insures the old-age care costs of around 316,000 Americans as counted at the end of 2020.

Shifting actuarial assumptions led to a \$6.2 billion charge in 2017, and a \$200 million fine in 2020.

Now there's an accounting change for insurers that will apply from January 2023. GE currently sizes up future obligations using a discount rate of around 6.2 per cent. The new rule would cut that to perhaps 2 per cent at current market prices.

That on its own could incur a \$13 billion pre-tax charge based on sensitivities GE reported in October, which wouldn't affect GE's cash flows but would eat into its book equity of \$37 billion at the end of September.

There may be surprises in the other direction thereafter. Fellow old-age insurers have found Covid-19 led to a rise in deaths and a drop in claims, according to consultant Milliman.

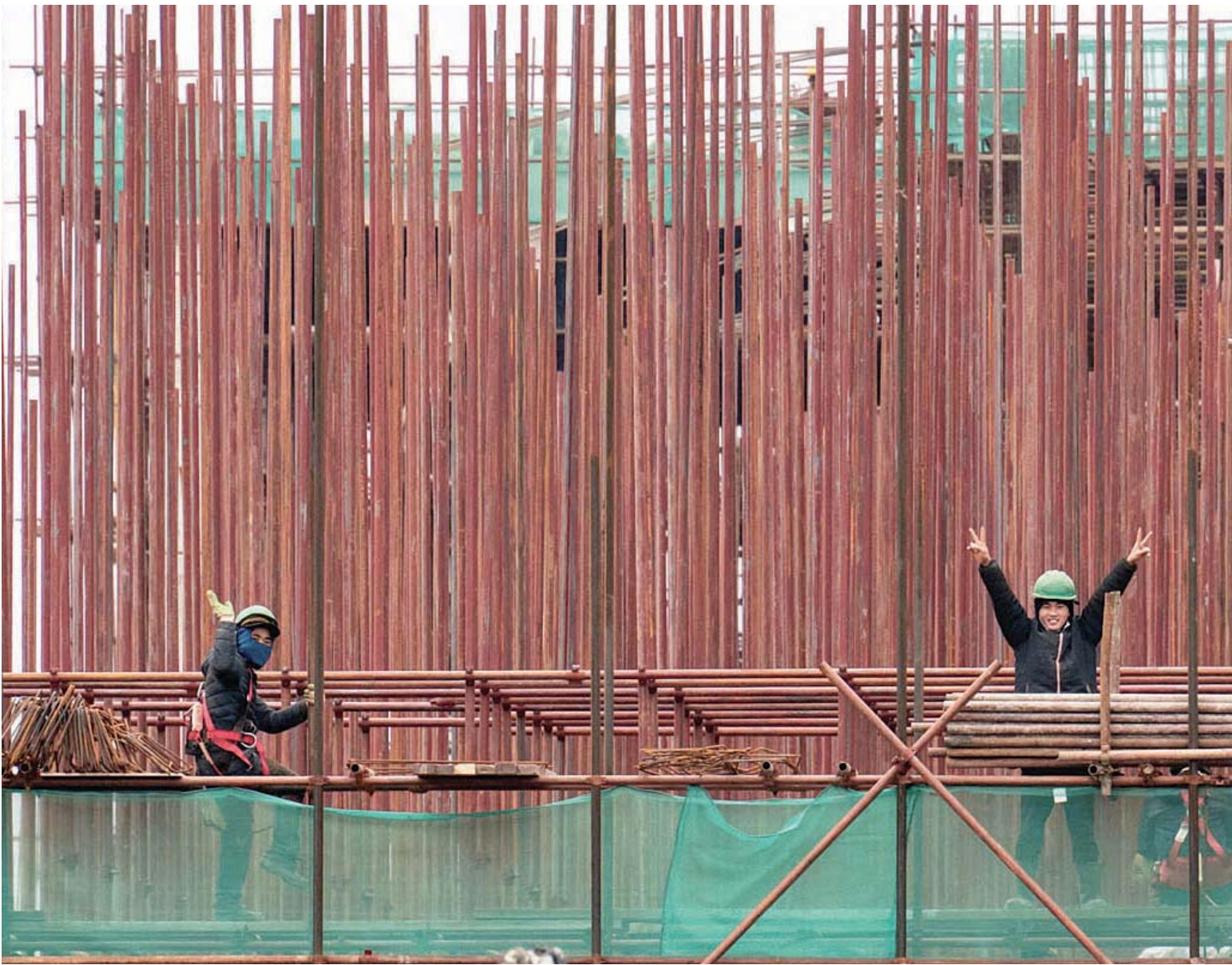
If more policyholders end up staying in their own homes rather than moving to facilities, expected payouts could fall given the average cost of a home health aide is roughly half the price of a private room in a nursing home.

Such shifts would take years to show up in insurers' long-term assumptions. The result is an opportunity for a potential buyer, though. For Culp, meanwhile, the case for selling is stronger than it has been in years.

The insurance division will sit with GE's jet-engines division, which will by 2024 be a stand-alone listed company, but there's no logic to those businesses cohabiting.

With the policies fully funded for now, Culp is well placed to lure a buyer. GE's insurance reserves are roughly 11 per cent more than it expects to need. That suggests, very simplistically, a gain of around \$3 billion if Culp finds a buyer who shares his assumptions. Leave that on the table for the next owner, and Culp can focus on caring for his shareholders instead. — Reuters

Now is a good time for Chief Executive Larry Culp to cut the bothersome business loose. GE makes almost all its revenue and profit from jet engines, power turbines and medical machinery



WAVING FOR RIGHTS

Vietnamese workers wave as they work at the construction site of Chinese tyre factory near Zrenjanin in Serbia. Some 500 Vietnamese workers went on strike last week, claiming they were unable to leave the company after being placed without heating, electricity and drinking water in dilapidated quarters of an abandoned factory. This was the third time in less than six months Vietnamese workers went on strike according to the report, first two were because of lack of food and unpaid salaries. — AFP

Whipping up US's inflation bogeyman



JAMES K. GALBRAITH

The author is Professor of Government and Chair in Government/Business Relations at the University of Texas at Austin

ACCORDING TO THE LATEST GDP REPORT, THE ACTUAL SIZE OF THE US ECONOMY — MEASURED IN INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS — IS STILL SMALLER THAN IT WAS IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 2019

The headline chosen for Harvard economist Jason Furman's November 15 commentary in the *Wall Street Journal* was both apt and sad. It was apt, because it repurposed then-President Gerald Ford's "Whip Inflation Now" slogan from 1974, and sad because Furman's advice comes straight from that era — and because his prescriptions could reprise the economic and political disasters of those years.

Furman, formerly the chair of President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, writes that "ultimately inflation is a macroeconomic problem", meaning it is an issue that afflicts the economy as a whole. In exploring the causes of the problem, Furman writes of "rapid recovery", "tight labour markets", excessive fiscal stimulus, and too-easy money.

The US economy, in his telling, has too much spending pressing on its capacity to produce. It is too big. Except that it's not. According to the latest GDP report, the actual size of the US economy — measured in inflation-adjusted dollars — is still smaller than it was in the last quarter of 2019.

Americans are spending and producing in real terms less now than we did then. For all the hot air about high growth rates, low interest rates, and big deficits, America is not even back to the starting gate. That means there is no way that our current inflation rate is "macroeconomic."

Furman goes on to insist that "it's the Fed's job to keep [inflation] under control." That

also is not true.

The US Federal Reserve operates under the Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978, which stipulates that full employment and reasonably stable prices are goals for the US government as a whole. The drafters of that law — I was among them — did not buy the dogma that inflation "is always and everywhere a monetary phenomenon", as Milton Friedman had argued.

Rather, we believed, and the law states, that all of the economic objectives had to be pursued with all of the available tools, and by all of the agencies. Now as then, oil is the most obvious price problem. Back then, the culprit was Opec; today, other forces have driven up prices of gasoline, fuel oil, and natural gas by 50 per cent or more since last year's trough. Some of the increase reflects the rebound from the pandemic lows, and some of it is the result of supply constraints, owing to cuts to shale-energy production.

Commodity speculation may also be a factor, as it was just before the 2008 global financial crisis. If so, this activity can be curtailed by raising margin requirements — over which the Fed has authority.

Energy prices can be stabilised by selling from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, as US President Joe Biden's administration may be about to do, in cooperation with China. Production will soon pick up, as is already happening in the Permian Basin. The other common factor between inflation 50 years ago and now is military spending.

Economists in the 1960s and 1970s knew

that the Vietnam War was inflationary; war always is. Somehow, this fact has been forgotten as we spend more than \$700 billion per year on weapons and defence — creating bottlenecks, burning fuel, cutting into civilian output, and diverting new technologies and talented people from things we could use toward things we cannot use.

All of that activity is inflationary. The other issues Furman raises are peripheral. There is no sign yet that higher wages are a source of higher prices for consumer goods or even for services.

The Chinese did not raise their prices by anything close to the amount of the increase caused by Donald Trump's tariffs (if they had, they would have lost market share).

By contrast, the supply-chain problem is real, particularly in semiconductors, where the downstream effects on automobile production have resulted in higher used-car prices; but this issue will work itself out. The ports are indeed clogged, and that is adding to costs; but, again, it's not a macroeconomic issue.

More to the point, none of America's price problems would be helped by higher interest rates. Tighter credit would get in the way of the business investment that the US economy needs to expand capacity and keep costs down. Interest is a cost, and therefore will get passed on to consumers. With less capacity and higher costs, inflation would get worse until the Fed tightened so much that the economy cracked.

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Investors suddenly see rampant risks in eastern Europe

MONEY MANAGERS HAVE LONG VIEWED THE REGION AS A SORT OF HYBRID — PART EURO ZONE SATELLITE BLOC WITH ULTRA-LOW INTEREST RATES TO BOOT, BUT ALSO NOT FULLY OUT OF RUSSIA'S ORBIT ESPECIALLY AT THE FRINGES

MARC JONES & KARIN STROHECKER

Eastern and central Europe's normally predictable financial markets are suddenly alive with the most diverse geopolitical and economic risks the region has faced in decades, and international investors are starting to pay attention.

The list makes worrying reading. The European Union faces a migrant crisis on its eastern borders the bloc says is being fomented by Belarus, tensions between Ukraine and Russia have flared up again, Brussels is locked in a dispute with the Polish and Hungarian

governments over rule of law and democracy, and Romania has no government.

Money managers have long viewed the region as a sort of hybrid — part euro zone satellite bloc with ultra-low interest rates to boot, but also not fully out of Russia's orbit especially at the fringes.

The latest series of events though, which importantly for market watchers comes against a backdrop of one of the strongest inflation surges since the end of the Cold War and rising Covid-19 cases, has been impossible to compartmentalise.

Hungary's forint, a 12-year low Polish zloty, Romania's leu and Russia and Belarus' roubles are five of the eight worst performing world

currencies this month and eastern European stocks are having their worst one in over a year.

Government bonds have been suffering as rising inflation crushes the real-term income they provide.

Polish, Hungarian and Romanian bonds now have some of the most negative 'real yields' — the interest rate once inflation is factored in — anywhere in the emerging world, even lower than Turkey.

Ukraine's bonds have slumped 10 per cent as Russian tanks have neared its borders again, while the threat that Western governments might ban banks and funds from owning Russian sovereign debt altogether has hit Moscow's market.

Welcome back to emerging

markets", JPMorgan headlined a report on Wednesday on the growing pressures in the region after the years of relative calm.

This week's flash points saw the EU toughen sanctions on Belarus for encouraging thousands of people fleeing war-torn countries to try to cross into EU nations like Poland, an accusation Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko denies.

Meanwhile Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg warned Russia on Monday the western military alliance was standing by Ukraine amid what he called a "significant" build-up of Russian troops near the border.

Romania is still trying to cobble together a government while calls

for separatism in Bosnia have brought warnings of a return to the ethnic conflicts in the Balkans. "We have seen an effect across most assets", said Viktor Szabo, a portfolio manager at investment firm abrdn, citing the drops in Ukraine's hryvnia currency, Russia's rouble and some of the region's government bonds.

While the geopolitical tensions have dominated the headlines, UBS's head of emerging market strategy Manik Narain warns about a sharp deterioration of broader economic fundamentals in CEE.

A rise in imports and supply chain issues in key export sectors like car manufacturing are likely to result in Poland's first negative trade balance since 2012, Narain said. — Reuters

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SECOND-HAND GAMING EQUIPMENT

Oman Family Leisure Company LLC – under liquidation announces the availability of gaming equipment for sale. Those wishing to buy should inspect the used gaming equipment must take into account the below matters:

- 1- The inspection will take a place at the Muscat Grand Mall, Happy Land on Tuesday 23 November 2021 from 10 AM – 12 PM.
- 2- The last day for submitting purchase offers is Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 5 PM.
- 3- Offers to purchase shall be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to the liquidators of Oman Family Leisure LLC on the following address:
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLC,
Salam Square - South, 4th Floor, Suites 402-404,
Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos
P.O. Box 3075, Ruwi, Postal Code 112, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
- 4- Company is not obligated to accept any offer.
- 5- Individual or Company who is willing to buy the equipment will be responsible for moving the equipment form Happy Land, and all costs will be incurred by the buyer.

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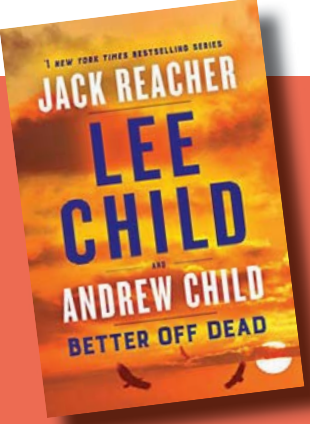
features



Combining passion for old cars and highlighting Oman’s beauty

For a lot of us, it's hard to understand the allure of classic cars. Not only are they expensive to acquire, but they are also faced with lots of modern challenges. But for hospitality executive Rene Egle, it's about appreciating the beauty of something old the same way that traditions and culture of the Sultanate of Oman had to be appreciated... **P20**

READ



BETTER OFF DEAD

BY LEE CHILD
AND ANDREW CHILD

The 26th book in the Jack Reacher series. Reacher helps an F.B.I. agent look for her missing brother and takes on a foe named Dendoncker.

ART

Rothko abstract sells for \$82.5m, Pollock sale is record for artist

A Mark Rothko portrait offered for \$82.5 million at public sale on Monday, the second-highest value for a piece by the late summary artist.

Titled, "No.7," the 95 in (241 cm) excessive canvas painted in 1951 in bands of inexperienced, crimson and lavender, had been anticipated to promote for \$70 million to \$90 million at Sotheby's in New York.

It was the primary time the portrayal had come to public sale.

The identification of the customer was not recognised but it surely provoked fierce telephone bidding from individuals representing Asian purchasers.

The report for a Rothko was set in 2012 when "Orange, pink, yellow" offered for \$86.9 million at Christie's in New York.

The Rothko work was simply one in all dozens by main artists up for public sale from the Macklowe Assortment, acquired by actual property mogul Harry

Macklowe and his spouse Linda over 45 years. A New York decide ordered them to promote the gathering and cut up the proceeds throughout their 2018 divorce trial.

Different works offered on Monday included the 1947 sculpture "Le Nez" by Swiss artist Alberto Giacometti, the world's costliest sculptor: It fetched \$78.4 million on Monday, under the \$141.3 million report for any sculpture that was set in 2015 for Giacometti's "L'homme au doigt."

Andy Warhol's "9 Marilyns" silkscreen from 1962, made shortly after Marilyn Monroe's demise, went for \$48.5 million whereas the pop artist's "Sixteen Jackies" tribute to former US first woman Jacqueline Kennedy in black, white and blue tones offered for \$33.9 million.

Jackson Pollock's "Quantity 17, 1951" fetched a brand new report for the late summary US artist at \$61.2 million, whereas in its first look at public sale, Cy Twombly's



huge 2007 "Untitled" work of summary pink peonies offered for \$58.9 million.

Sotheby's mentioned the 65 works within the Macklowe Assortment symbolise "an unrivalled ensemble that charts the

excessive factors of Western inventive achievement of the final 80 years.

"The public sale was cut up into two elements, with the remaining 40 or so works to be offered in Could 2022." — Reuters

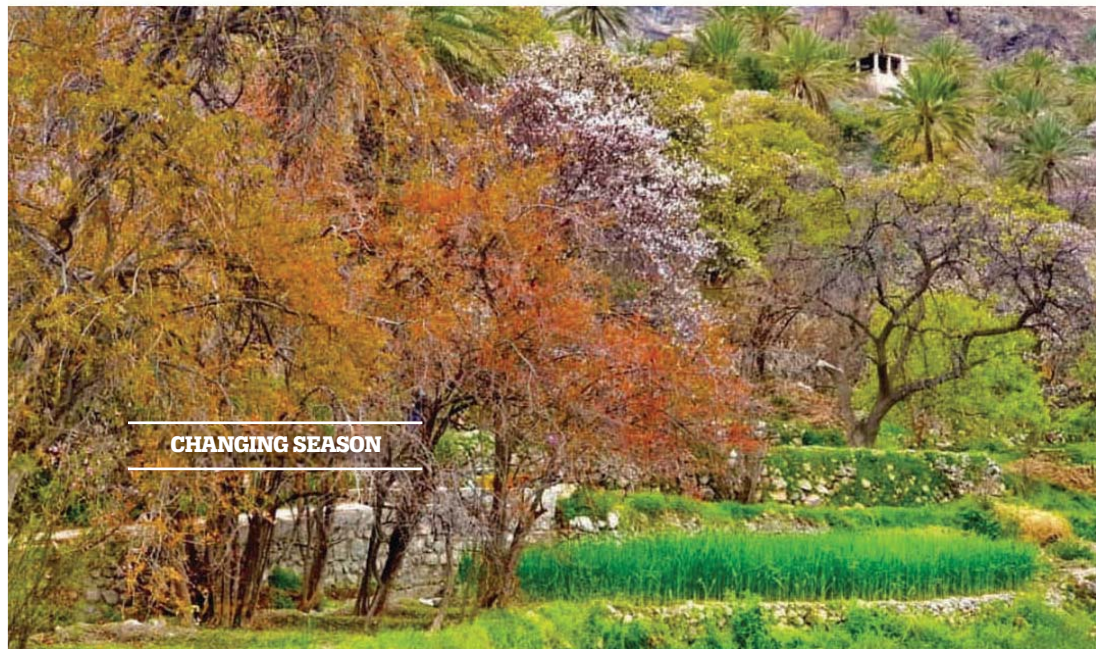


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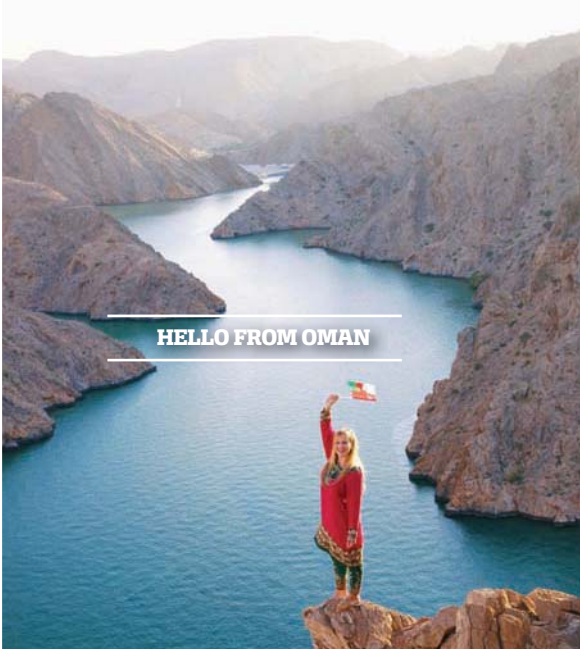
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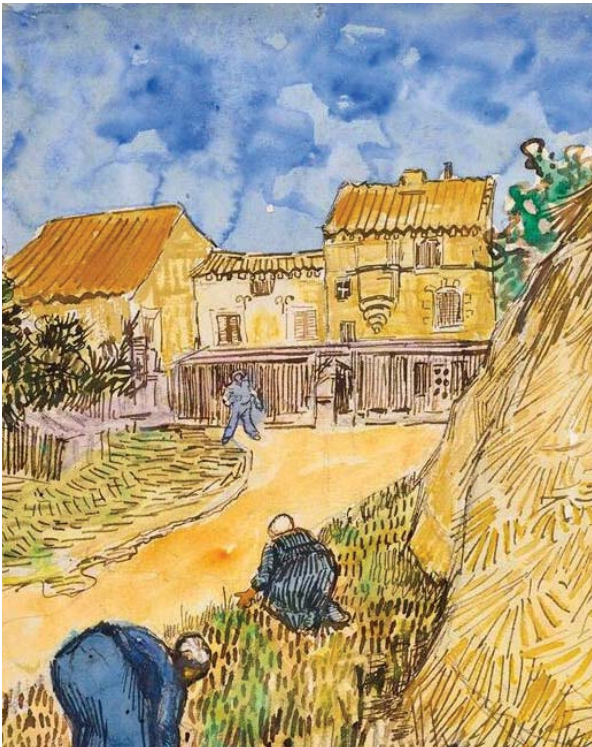
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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Van Gogh watercolour landscape auctioned for a record \$35.9 million



A Vincent van Gogh landscape seized by the Nazis during their Second World War occupation of France has sold at auction in New York for \$35.9 million, a record for a watercolour by



the Dutch impressionist.

The 1888 work, "Meules de ble," was purchased for well above its pre-sale estimate of \$20-30 million, auction house Christie's said. It was last exhibited in 1905.

"Meules de ble" depicts a haystack in Arles, France, where van Gogh lived for more than a year in the 1880s. Unlike his best-known works, which were painted with oils, the painting was executed in watercolour, gouache, pen and ink on paper.

The work was initially owned after the artist's suicide at 37 by his brother, Theo van Gogh. After passing through several owners, it was seized by Nazi forces during their occupation of France.

Following the war, the painting's whereabouts were unclear until the 1970s. It was in private hands until Christie's purchased the work through a settlement with the collector and heirs of the original owners.

Van Gogh is considered one of art's greatest and most influential painters, although he saw little commercial success during his lifetime. — Reuters

CHANGING WORLD

Deep underground, Paris mushroom growers struggle to preserve heritage



TWO CENTURIES ago, French farmers revolutionised mushroom production by moving into the maze of limestone quarries underneath Paris, but today only a handful still cultivate a heritage at risk of fading away for good.

The bitter irony is that demand for traditionally grown white button mushrooms, and their more flavourful brown-capped cousins, is as high as ever.

"It's not a question of finding clients, I sell everything I can produce," said Shoua-moua Vang at Les Alouettes in Carrieres-sur-Seine, a short drive from the bustling La Defence business district west of the capital.

Vang runs the largest underground mushroom cave in the Paris region, spread across one and a half hectares (3.7 acres) of tunnels in a hill overlooking the Seine river.

He counts Michelin-starred chefs as well as supermarket chains and local markets among his customers, even though he deems his mushrooms "expensive" at 3.20 euros a kilo wholesale (\$1.65 a pound).

But dank trays loaded with hundreds of kilogrammes of fungi were going to waste during a recent visit, because Vang lacked enough hands to pick them all.

Just five of his 11 workers were on the job after the others called in sick — and Vang was doubtful that all of them would actually return.

"People these days don't want to work all day in the dark like vampires," he said, estimating that this day's production would top out at 1.5 tonnes instead of his usual 2.5 or even three tonnes.

He is one of just five traditional producers of what the French call "champignons de Paris" located around the capital, along with an even smaller number in abandoned quarries north of the capital.

That's down from around 250 in the late 19th century, when farmers flocked to a "royal" mushroom variety that the Sun King, Louis XIV, had made popular by having it grown at Versailles.

They had discovered that Agaricus bisporus would grow year-round if placed in a manure-based substrate deep underground, where temperatures and humidity could be controlled and the dark would encourage growth.

It also turned out that the caves' earthy atmosphere, reinforced by covering the compost with ground-up limestone, imparted a nutty, almost mineral taste while preventing the mushrooms from becoming over-saturated with water.

Even the macabre tunnels of the Paris catacombs, now a top tourist attraction, were once filled with mushroom beds.

REVIVAL IN VIEW?

Rapid urbanisation and in particular the construction of the Paris metro began pushing growers out of the capital in the early 1900s, though around 50 were still in quarries under Paris suburbs in the 1970s, often run by new generations of the same family.

The arrival of cheaper imports from industrial hangars in the Netherlands, Poland and later China, which use peat instead of limestone to boost production rates, proved too much for most.

"It's hard to find people who want to take over because

there's no mushroom cultivation programmes in agriculture schools," said Muriel Le Loarer, who is working to revive the Paris mushroom tradition at the SAFER rural development agency.

Vang, for example, had worked 11 years at the quarry owned by Jean-Louis Spinelli, whose children declined to follow in their father's footsteps, before taking over in September 2020.

"Finding people to pick the mushrooms is complicated, it's hard to find good compost, and people don't want to invest when you don't know if producers are going to make it," Spinelli said.

"We're promoting the sector, helping to find financing and working with local authorities to open quarries back up," said Le Loarer, noting the growing interest in local produce and the farm-to-table trend.

For now, though, Paris mushrooms are just a tiny fraction of the 90,000 tonnes produced in France each year, according to figures from the Rungis wholesale market south of the capital.

Officials say it's too late to create a distinctive "Paris mushroom" certification under France's AOP food appellation rules, since the name has been used generically for decades.

That means producers face a marketing challenge to ensure people realise when they're buying the authentic, quarry-farmed fungi.

"Here our mushrooms grow naturally, I don't boost them by spraying water because that fills them with water," Vang said. "These mushrooms from the huge hangars are basically grown by computers." — AFP

COLUMN



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Revisiting Childhood Rhymes

WHEN MY FOUR-MONTH-OLD Basma started fussing and kicking for no good reason, I suggested to Mom to play her the nursery rhyme that every living Arab must've listened to at least once in his/her life time: Mama Zamanha Gaya (Mom is on her way).

This famous rhyme was composed and sung by Egyptian singer Mohammed Fawzi (1918-1966) in the late fifties.

Mom was delighted by the idea as it was a song, she grew up listening to, unlike me who just knew the first part of it. As for Basma's dad, his eyes glazed; to him the classics were post-1980 and anything before that was archaic and not worth listening to.

On YouTube, there were many new versions of the song but I chose the classic one where Mohammed Fawzi appears with a cute little boy in what was considered the first filmed children music clip in the Arab world in 1956.

The famous opening of the song that is memorised by almost everyone goes: "Mama is on her way, she's arriving shortly, bearing gifts and things, she brings a bag, with a duck and a goose, that says: Wak! Wak! Wak!". Basma's kicking seizes instantly as she listens intently to the catchy tune accompanied by the weird bordering on freaky child laughter. Mom was beaming and my brother turns his head to the other side, wishing he was somewhere else obviously. I lean my head on the ball of my hand and focus on the lyrics of the song for the first time in my life.

It starts with the story of Adil, the boy with apparent ricket problems (described in the song as spindly legs). The doctor visits him and gives him a huge injection as he doesn't drink milk in the morning (and his friends laughs at him for missing out on that).

Once Adil starts drinking milk, he grows in size and develops muscles in his arm. Then comes the story of Ahmed, the boy full of mischief who walks around with a box of matches.

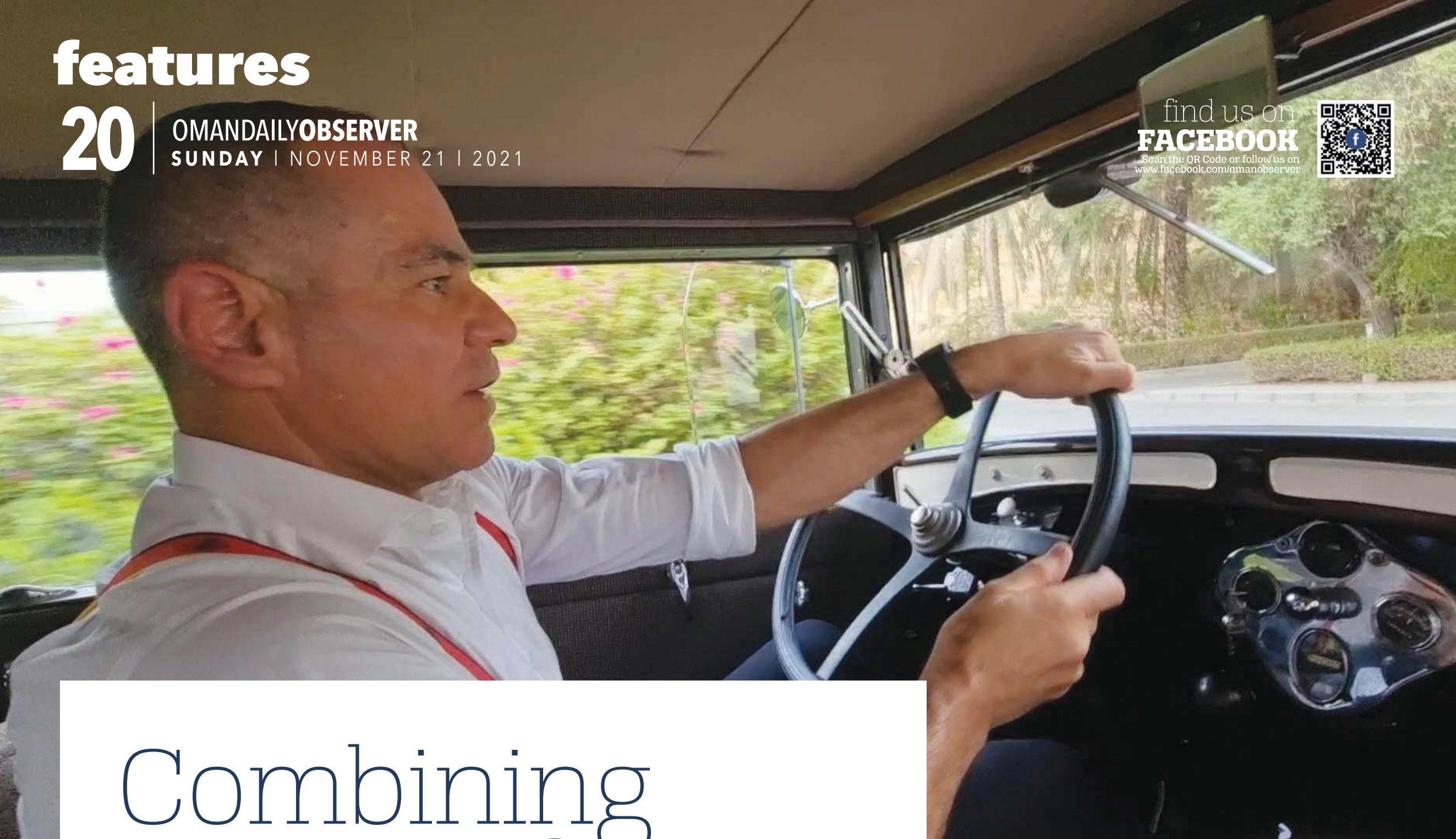
One day he manages to burn both his hands — while his sister Boosy stood watching — which teaches him a lesson on keeping out of mischief. The song ends with the story of Suad, whose teacher is crossed with for misbehaving in class. Moreover, she never memorises her lessons, manages to lose two books and ranks the twentieth in a class of thirty. However, she suddenly transforms and starts studying and behaving well, which leads her to become the first in her class. Mom was surprised by Suad's story that she'd never heard before. The version she always heard ended with Ahmed's Greek tragedy.

Reflecting upon the stories now, they're filled with axioms that Mom's generation was brought up on and managed to pass to us: doctors give painful injections, one must keep out of mischief, drinking milk and excelling in studies is not an option.

But how would the new generation of parents and children listen to this song? As many children now are illiterate in their own mother tongue (Arabic), many would either ask their parents for the meaning or use Google to translate the song into English (the new mother tongue of the cools!).

The song would then be interpreted by the new parents' standards: Adil's spindly legs (body shaming), his friends laughing at him (bullying), the doctor's injection (trauma), eating healthy (choice), children misbehaving (freedom of act that's funny at times!), excelling in studies (unnecessary pressure that destroys childhood). I hope Basma grows enjoying and appreciating this timeless classic the old-fashioned way, just like us.

Rasha al Raisi is a certified skills trainer and the author of: The World According to Bahja. rashabooks@yahoo.com



Combining passion for old cars and highlighting Oman's beauty

BY YERU EBUEN

Growing in the countryside of Black Forest in Southern Germany, Rene Egle use to ride single-cylinder Kramer tractors from the 1930s to deliver timbers to different storage units to be used for window-making which is their family's business.

"As kids, we kept riding on them with my father and completely fell in love with the noise of the motor — the steel wheel of the engine spinning and the rattling of the metal seat. I never forget the first time I was allowed to ride the mini monster myself," he shared.

With his family having gone through two wars, they manage to collect many machines and vehicles which is why it became their unofficial motto to "Never throw away anything as they can be reused in the future."

"I was surrounded by old motorbikes (by old, I mean antique), tractors (from the '30s), and even an old Mercedes from the '50s. My friends and I fixed some of these old motorbikes and even tried to build our own biplane which we honestly believed might even fly, but unfortunately, it didn't. Nevertheless, it was a work of art," he said.

That love for antique and classic vehicles would follow Rene even as he got older. Surprisingly though, even though he has travelled the world being an executive for different luxury hotels, it was only in the Sultanate of Oman that he was able to drive the oldest car.

"The oldest car I have driven was actually here at Shangri-La Muscat, a Ford Deluxe from 1946 and the experience was magical. Remember these cars do not have power steering and to shift gears whilst steering the car is real work. The difference to modern cars is of course that you feel the car, you feel the tires when you drive through a curve, you hear the engine roar when you accelerate the car vibrates and it feels alive, and

you even smell the gasoline inside the car, as I said — amazing," he said.

Before coming to the Sultanate of Oman, Rene worked in China where he came across the ancestor of the BMW R35 from 1935 which is one of the good old sidecar bikes with boxer engines loved by the Chinese. That discovery would lead him to take an extraordinary adventure travelling on the said vehicle across different countries from Beijing to Berlin.

"Classic Cars or other classic vehicles have a very strong sense of nostalgia attached to them. Some love a certain brand such as Ferrari that is associated with car races, others love cars from the '60s and '70s that are associated with movie classics and others love military classics like the Willys Jeep or the never ageing Land Rover. In Indonesia, the Willis Jeep is still used widely by workers and when I was working in Shangri-La Hotel Jakarta, I took one glance at one of them and was hooked. I bought one and shipped it back home to Germany," he shared.

Although collecting classic and vintage cars can be an expensive hobby, it has its own allure to some people. From nostalgia to just pure hobby fascinated by old machines, even in Muscat, there is a community that delves into both the luxury and complexities of these cars.

"It takes a lot of work to keep these vehicles going, depending on the vehicles spare parts can be hard to get and can also get quite expensive. The advantage is of course that older engines are much more mechanical than the modern ones which you can still repair yourself. To repair today's cars, the screwdriver, pliers and wrench have been replaced by a laptop," Rene said.

Rene is aware however that for a country like the Sultanate of Oman, travelling the country has to be convenient and some classic cars will definitely have trouble navigating some of the roads.

Still considering himself as new in the Sultanate of Oman, the farthest he said he has driven is Jabal Shams saying

"the 'Grand Canyon of the Middle East' Jebel Shams was quite unexpected and truly impressive."

"Exploring the Sultanate of Oman is literally like going through a treasure trove. I can ride with my mountain bike through remote valleys and be left speechless by the sheer beauty of the rock faces that feature some of the most stunning geological patterns I have seen anywhere. Sometimes I like to just drive and explore without a specific destination, leave the highway and simply go and explore side roads," he said.

He shared, "One day my wife and I were going for one of these exploratory drives, passing by Nizwa and then into the countryside, almost 300 km from Muscat. We continued off-road following dirt tracks and suddenly completely out of nowhere, we came across the most amazing stunningly beautiful Wadi surrounded by rocks and crystal clear water. We took our backpack and off we went to explore the Wadi. Unfortunately, until today I don't know the name and most probably would not find it anymore, but it was just one example of the stunning beauty of this country."

He added, "When it comes to meaningful experiences, these are almost always encountered with Omani people in the countryside. I do not yet speak Arabic and many Omanis in the countryside do not speak English and yet the extremely polite and welcoming attitude that I have accounted for so many times leaves lasting impressions. I could share with you many such encounters, be it Omanis I have met during my bicycle rides, on trips to the mountains or in the countryside there, is this consistent Omani Hospitality from the heart."

As the General Manager of the three Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah properties in the Sultanate of Oman, this hospitality is what makes Rene proud of being in the Sultanate of Oman and believe in the sheer beauty of the Sultanate of Oman to attract travellers. Recently been selected as one of the Power 100 GMs in the MENA region, he is leading the team

into delving more into the rich Omani culture and heritage and its amazing natural geology currently venturing into using natural rocks of different types to use as decors or art pieces in the property he handles.

The Pandemic, Rene said, was probably the greatest catastrophe that affected the worldwide hospitality and travel industry since World War Two.

"It was quite an experience to go from a certain routine of driving business, creating strategies and tactics, planning for the future to a sudden complete closure of all hotels. The biggest challenge was to keep the hotel going especially since our complex is comprised of three hotels. There are two key points to take away from this experience. One is that in today's world, you can never take the status quo for granted and you clearly have to be ready for the unexpected at any time. One example would be natural disasters that are becoming much more frequent. The second takeaway is that you need a great and energetic team to get you through such a crisis and I am extremely proud of my team," he said.

Now that countries all over the world are easing back to travel, Rene is excited to explore more of Sultanate of Oman's attractions as well as the rich collection of classic cars that can be found in the Sultanate of Oman. He also encourages everyone that despite busy lifestyles, everyone should learn to disconnect.

"It is my personal belief that a hobby or other interests outside work are essential. In my case I like to go on bicycle rides in my free time, exercise, write or travel. Whichever I choose, it allows me to take my mind off the challenges and problems at work and recharge. Not only recharge but in my case, it also happens to be my most creative period, when I am cycling I have the chance to rearrange my thoughts, compartmentalise problems, come up with solutions and without exception, almost always come up with new creative ideas."

