

HM TO PATRONISE OVER OPENING
OF OMAN ACROSS AGES MUSEUM

H I S M A J E S T Y V I S I T S A D A M A I R B A S E

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will patronise on Monday over the official opening of Oman Across Ages Museum in the Wilayat of Manah, the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

The museum chronicles different historical eras in Oman. It narrates Oman's geological transitions, comments the life of the early inhabitants and portrays the blessed Age of the Renaissance and the accomplishments made in different sectors. It also explores future of the country in a manner that reflects the people's aspirations.

Oman Across the Ages Museum focuses on a narrative, audio-video interactive style that utilises the latest technologies in this field. The aim is to realise an enjoyable, educational experience to inform and entertain the museum's visitors. The museum houses a range of facilities designed to enrich the visitors' knowledge and serve society.

The museum was established under the Royal orders of late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, who laid the foundation stone of the project on July 14, 2015. The museum has been accorded great attention by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, so that it would serve as a high-profile epitome in the Omani cultural arena. — ONA

Royal Decree establishes
Oman Across Ages Museum

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued a Royal Decree No 15/2023 on establishing Oman Across Ages Museum and determining its specialisations.

Article (1) stipulates that a museum to be named "Oman Across Ages Museum" shall be established. It shall have a legal entity and enjoy financial and administrative autonomy. Article (2) states that Oman Across Ages Museum shall come under the honorary patronage of His Majesty the Sultan.

Article (3) states that Oman Across Ages Museum shall have its headquarters in the Wilayat of Manah, the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah. Article (4) determines the specialisations of Oman Across Ages Museum as per the annex attached to this Decree.

TURN TO P4



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, on Sunday paid a Royal visit to Adam Air Base of the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO). During the visit, His Majesty was accompanied by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said. Upon His Majesty's arrival at Adam Air Base, he was received by Air Vice Marshal Khamis Hammad al Ghafri, RAFO Commander and Commander of Adam Air Base, as well as commanders of wings and squadrons. His Majesty, the Supreme Commander, listened to a briefing on RAFO and the military capabilities enjoyed by Adam Air Base. His Majesty also viewed facilities of Adam Air Base and models of the RAFO air systems. After that, a commemorative photo was taken to His Majesty, the Supreme Commander, with personnel of Adam Air Base. Then, His Majesty left Adam Air Base. — ONA

SEE ALSO P4



A view of Oman Across Ages Museum

An epitome of past glories, an icon of Renaissance

MUSCAT: "Oman Across Ages Museum" seeks to highlight the unique model of the Sultanate of Oman, introduce its prominent features, its ancient history and its renaissance which is continuously making progress at the local and international levels under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The museum contributes to spreading awareness and consolidating the relationship of Omani youth with their cultural heritage, while at the same encouraging them to interact in a manner that effectively inspires their participation in building their homeland and shaping its structures. The museum demonstrates Oman's

transition between its past, present and future in an interactive and modern style by audio-visual means, right from the early stages of past glories to its bright present.

In 2015, late Sultan Qaboos bin Said laid the foundation stone for the "Oman Across Ages Museum" project in the Wilayat of Manah, Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah. The project occupies an estimated area of 300,000 sqm and it has a construction area of 66,591 sqm. Its design is inspired by Al Hajar Mountains. It introduces an architectural wonder that represents the Omani environment, with its unique geographical traits.

The project organisers envisaged that the edifice has a

creative character, an icon that represents Omani Renaissance era in terms of structures and manifestations. It portrays Omani architecture in a unique modern style, along with its technical details, construction features and building materials.

The building of Oman Across Ages Museum is an environment-friendly structure. It assumes a low profile on the eastern side, so that it could receive sunlight in the morning and protect the internal spaces from direct sun rays. On the west side, a set of windows are placed on slanted walls that prevent impact of direct sunlight and reduce the volume of energy that the museum needs in lighting.

TURN TO P2

Oman ideal for real estate investments

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The activities of the Real Estate Development Conference and Oman Design and Build Week 2023 kicked off on Sunday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) under the auspices of HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan.

HH Sayyid Asaad underscored the Sultanate of Oman's investment-enhancing elements, notably in the real estate sector. He also lauded the efforts exerted in advancing this sector and establishing many major projects in various governorates.

The conference included a session on investments and development in the real estate sector and another session on the role of real estate in the development of governorates.

Oman Design and Build Week 2023 aims to enhance integrative communication between sectors



and enable partnerships with partners in the real estate sector, as well as exchanging views and experiences to develop this sector. The event is expected to receive more than 12,000 visitors. Oman Design and Build Week 2023 is participated by 250 exhibitors, 30 experts and speakers and 30 public and private establishments.

A discussion session with Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning, and Eng Said bin

Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, was held where insights on Oman's construction sector, housing and tourism promotion was held as part of the opening ceremony.

The three-day event being held under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, in association with Oman Real Estate Association, offers insights into the latest trends and advancements in the sector as well as infinite opportunities to interact one-on-one with decision-makers and enhance business contacts while offering the participants an enriching business platform.

MUSEUM DESIGN INSPIRED



FROM PAGE 1

Its design replicates the standards of castles and ancient buildings. Typically, its walls cool down the passing hot air. Since some specifications require that the building be an environment-friendly structure, high-quality Omani stones from the governorates of Al Dhahirah and North Al Batinah were used to coat the walls of the museum, both from inside and outside, covering a surface of 130,000 sqm. Waste materials from the stones has been utilised in the

garden. The museum is distinguished for its glass facades that extend to heights ranging from 9 to 16 metres, and sometimes rising up to 25 metres, offering the building clarity and prominence over the horizon. The specifications include the use of steel colour glass. Four layers of glass are used, each 6 centimetres thick and extending to 5 metres upwards. This offers the museum an aesthetics outlook, allows the visitors to have a comprehensive view of the project and harmonises the museum with its surrounding environment. An insulating layer has been placed between the structure of the museum and the ground to protect it from the impact of earthquakes. In the event of occurrence of an earthquake, the insulation system will diminish the effects on the building and it will absorb the repercussions, and this is an exceptional feature in such projects. The museum consists of two halls: the “History Hall” and the “Renaissance Hall”. Once a visitor sets foot on Oman Across Ages

Museum, he/she embarks on a journey in geography and history of Oman. A visitor contemplates the country’s past, present and future in an interactive manner through the use of modern technology, with antiques of the museum dating back to prehistoric eras. The History Hall consists of the “Land of Oman” pavilion, the “Early Settlers” pavilion, the “Civilisation of Majan ” pavilion, the “Kingdom of Majan ” pavilion, the “Maritime Heritage” pavilion, the “Aflaj” pavilion, the “Embracing Islam” pavilion, “Al Ya’ariba Dynasty” pavilion, and the “Al Busaidi Dynasty” pavilion. Thus, the visitor can span time and space, right from the country’s geological formations, through experiences of the early settlers to present-day renaissance age. The History Hall also relates various events to their historical epochs, with two basic features taking prominence, which are Maritime Heritage and Aflaj (an ancient irrigation system or water streams). Also, two basic sets can be observed: The geological formation of the Land of Oman and the Stone Age that represented in the Early Settlers pavilion, the Bronze Age is seen through the Civilisation of Majan pavilion, while the Iron Age is represented in the “Kingdom of Oman” pavilion. This is in addition to other pavilions, like the “Embracing Islam”, “Al Ya’ariba Dynasty” and “Al Busaidi Dynasty”.

The exhibits are introduced via digital media to create multi-dimensional environments that enable the visitor to experience the virtual reality of each era. A selection of material evidence and charts give rise to a measure of realism. The pavilions of the different ages exhibit various aspects of daily life. These are evident in the settlements of Ras Al Hamra and Ras Al Jinz and their relationship with seasonal migrations, maritime communication, copper trade and the construction of the Aflaj system. The pavilions comprise a high-definition environment showcasing the contribution of people of Oman to Islam, in addition to different aspects of intellectual, political and social life and economic life. Through the use of high-definition audio-video



presentations and virtual maps, the History Hall also explores the eras of “Al Ya’ariba Dynasty” and Al Busaidi Dynasty. About the latter, it chronicles the period of State’s establishment, the period of the Omani Empire, the period of division of government between Muscat and Zanzibar; the period that led to the Renaissance, with emphasis on aspects of daily life and achievements in various fields of life during the rule of the imams and sultans of the Al

with the first five years of the blessed renaissance. This offers a panoramic view of the hall and consummates the visitor’s experience as it explores various aspects of social, economic, industrial, and political transformation experienced by Oman, while at the same time preserving its authentic identity and ancient cultural traditions. The hall comprises interactive digital museum exhibiting tools that display the speeches of His



INVITATION TO TENDER

OMAN AND ETIHAD RAIL COMPANY

The developer and operator of the railway network connecting
THE SULTANATE OF OMAN AND UAE

Invites specialized Contractors to apply for the prequalification for
tendering of the civil works

The potential Contractor(s) must demonstrate individually or in JV/Consortium
that they have the necessary resources and required expertise to meet the
requirements as follows:

Be a local company or a JV/Consortium led by local company registered in
Oman or UAE to deliver the package(s) in the relevant country.

Have recent experience executing projects of a similar size, nature (earthworks,
structure, tunnels, freight facilities, roads and depots, etc), in particular:

• Design and build experience

• On time completion of projects and to the required quality

HOW TO APPLY

The Prequalification documents will be available for purchase and downloading through an e-Payment
Services Gateway from:

13/03/2023 at 10:00 am till 27/03/2023 at 6:00 pm

for a non-refundable amount of 5,240 OMR or 50,000 AED(excl. VAT)

Further information (including payment details
and obtaining prequalification documents) can
be obtained on our website at:

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BY AL HAJAR MOUNTAINS

audio-video cables.

The exhibition includes the jaw of the animal of Omantherium, which belongs to a type of huge primitive elephant that lived on the land of Oman about 35 million years ago and was found in Dhofar Governorate. It also includes trilobites found in the Wilayat of Mahout in the Al Wusta Governorate. They date back to about 250 million years to 500 million years ago, in addition to inscriptions on the rocks that were discovered in the Wilayat of Madha in Musandam Governorate.

Those inscriptions were formed using other stones and they vary between human and animal forms. This is in addition to a votive incense burner decorated with animal drawings dating back to 100-200 AD. It was used to burn frankincense when making vows and it has the shape of a lion and an ibex, as well as the inkwell of Imam Muhanna bin Sultan dating back to the period 1131 AH/1719 AD. They were made by Amer al Bahlawi, from the Wilayat of Bahla.

The museum also contains the Majan ship, which is a re-imagining of the vessels of the Magan Civilisation made of reed bundles, ropes of palm fibres, woven mats, woollen sails and painted with black tar. It comprises a message from the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said to his teacher in the month of Rajab 1374 AH, corresponding to February 1955. The museum includes educational games for children with modern interactive technologies that provide a unique museum experience.

The museum seeks to convey the idea of each pavilion to the visitor with the best modern means through the use of several technologies, including the



technology of map projection and screen display of various types with an area of approximately 800 square meters.

Through the use of headphones, synchronisation with movies and instant artistic productions, which saves time and effort for the visitor. This is in addition to the use of virtual reality technology consisting of multiple screens that contain suspended cameras.

In the "Early Settlers" pavilion in the History Hall, the visitor moves the screen over parts of the museum to view representations of the first settlers in Ras Al Hamra and experience their way of life. A 360-degree curved screen technology is used to enable the visitor to rotate his position and

watch a movie about the Ya'ariba Dynasty era.

The museum also contains Husn Al Shumookh Library, facilities for children and the Knowledge Centre, which is an informative window for students, researchers and readers. It represents a basic pillar of Oman Across Ages Museum and comprises a rich source of information that contributes to building knowledge among various groups, from children to researchers.

The centre provides equal opportunities for all to benefit its facilities, equipment and services, besides promoting and developing cultural and historical knowledge and providing the necessary resources for students and researchers by providing them with lifelong learning opportunities.

The centre also provides interactive educational programmes, training workshops, besides hosting lectures and seminars.

The Knowledge Centre is divided into three floors targeting all segments of society. It occupies a total area of 6,000 square metres. The ground floor houses the Ideas Lab and the Innovation Lab, which are equipped with tools and books suitable for children from 3 to 14 years old.

The first and second floors

include the library of Husn Al Shumookh, which was transferred from Husn Al Shumookh to Oman Across Ages Museum. The library contains more than 46,000 titles in various areas of science and knowledge. It is equipped with devices that allow researchers

interlibrary loan, copying and printing and scan.

The library has facilities for various museum visitors, including secretariat rooms, a lecture hall, a multi-purpose hall, and facilities for people with disabilities.

The museum has a gift shop,



to access their desired titles and references, in hard copies or electronic form.

The library provides services through personal attendance or the digital reference service through the centre's website, via the instant chat service and the "Ask the Librarian" form. This is in addition to providing the service via emails, smartphone applications and accounts on social media sites, including the current briefing service,

which offers a wide range of exclusive gifts with attractive designs, many of which are inspired by the history, heritage and culture of the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman Across Ages Museum is located in the Wilayat of Manah in the heart of the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah and close to many tourist attractions. It is the cornerstone of other tourism, cultural and economic projects in the governorate. — ONA

2015

the late Sultan Qaboos

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HM pays Royal visit to RAFO Adam Air Base



Royal Decree establishes Oman Across Ages Museum

FROM P1

Article (5) states that, as an exemption from the provisions of the State's Administrative Apparatus System promulgated by Royal Decree No (75/2020), Oman Across Ages Museum shall have a board of trustees under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General of the Royal Court Affairs.

A Royal order shall be issued appointing members of the board of trustees and determining the duration of their membership. The board of trustees shall have the same powers assigned to boards of directors of public entities cited in the abovementioned State's Administrative Apparatus System.

Article (6) states that Oman Across Ages Museum shall have a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), with a Director General grade and shall take the following designation: Director General of the Museum. The CEO shall be appointed by virtue of a decision to be issued by the Chairman of the Museum's board of trustees after the board's approval. The CEO shall have the powers assigned to a Head of Unit cited in laws and Royal Decrees.

The CEO attends all meetings of the board of trustees without having a counted vote as stated in the aforementioned State's Administrative Apparatus System.

Article (7) states that all allocations, origins, rights, obligations, assets, archaeological antiques and material and moral testimonies of relevance to the museum shall be transferred to Oman Across Ages Museum.

Article (8) states that employees of the Royal Court Affairs concerned with the museum's affairs shall be transferred to Oman Across Ages Museum, along with their financial grades.

A decision shall be issued by the Secretary-General of the Royal Court Affairs specifying the aforementioned employees.

Article (9) states that employees of Oman Across Ages Museum shall be governed by the provisions of the Law Concerning the Financial System of the Diwan of Royal Court promulgated by Royal Decree No (128/91), the Law Concerning the Employee System of the Diwan of Royal Court promulgated by Royal Decree No (97/97), and the Law on Pensions and End of Service Gratuity for Omani Employees of the Diwan of Royal Court promulgated by Royal Decree No (86/96).

Article (10) states that the Chairman of the board of trustees of Oman Across Ages Museum shall issue bylaws and decisions necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this Decree after the approval of the board. Till such time, the existing regulations and system implemented at the Royal Court Affairs shall be applied on the museum without prejudice to the provisions of this Decree.

Article (11) cancels all that contradicts this Decree or contravenes its provisions. Article (12) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the date of issue. — ONA



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MoU to boost cooperation between Omani, Saudi SMEs

AFRAH AL BALUSHI

@Afrahalbalushia

An initiative spurred by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) in order for a group of small and medium enterprises and startups to participate in the Biban Forum in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia saw a boost when the authority signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its Saudi counterpart, the General Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises (Monshaat).

A MoU was signed on the sidelines of the Biban Forum, which is being held in the Saudi capital, Riyadh.

The MoU aims to enhance the horizons of cooperation between small and medium enterprises in both countries, and to contribute to the development of their competitive capabilities in order to enable them to reach global markets. Areas of cooperation included exchanging



experiences and knowledge to develop the infrastructure of the sector through policies, initiatives and applications used to support these institutions.

Halima bint Rashid al Zariyah, Chairperson of SMEDA and Sami bin Ibrahim al Hussein, Governor of the Monshaat. "The participation of SMEDA in Biban Riyadh Forum comes in an effort to open cooperation opportunities to serve

the small and medium enterprises sector and startups in the Sultanate of Oman in light of the participation of a very wide number of experts and enabling and supporting agencies for small and medium enterprises from different countries of the world," Halima said.

"This is in addition to promoting constructive communication between entrepreneurs with their counterparts around the world in order to exchange innovative ideas and experiences in light of the global trends to employ artificial intelligence and emerging technologies to support small and medium enterprises and startups," she added.

For this reason, Halima said the authority sought the participation of a group of small and medium enterprises incubated in various business incubators of the Sultanate of Oman in the start-up's exhibition. "Also, it is an opportunity for other institutions in the consumer exhibition to introduce their innovative products and services," she said.

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDERS



The Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) (invites following tenders:

Tender No	Description	Tender Price (R.O)	Grade	Last Date of Buying	Last Date of Submission
Tanweer - 06/2023	Upgrading of PM Transformer S/S From 315KVA to 1000KVA, 33/0.433KV + FP 1600A to Give Power Supply to the Al Maha Petrol Pump at Qarn Al Alam Area in Adam Wilayat at AL-Dhakhelya Governorate.	50/=	"C" and Above	16/03/2023	26/03/2023
Tanweer - 07/2023	Supply Extension of HV/LV Works To Feed Power Supply to RES/COMM. Plot of Modern Union ENT. & Fahud Towers Trading at Duqm in AL Duqm Wilayat (SEZAD) - AL Wusta Governorate				
Tanweer - 08/2023	Supply Extension of HV Works to Feed Power Supply to Beach Camp at Duqm in AL Duqm Wilayat (SEZD) - AL Wusta Governorate			23/03/2023	16/04/2023
Tanweer - 09/2023	Supply Extension of HV/LV Works to Feed Power Supply To RES/COMM. Plot of Janaeen AL Duqm at Duqm in AL Duqm Wilayat (SEZD) - AL Wusta Governorate				

The Conditions:

- Collection of Tender:** Interested and Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Tender Board (valid certificate), Tanweer and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) may obtain the Tender documents from Procurement & Contracts Department, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. The fees for the tenders shall be deposited on Tanweer account 0423010783090041 - Bank Muscat and for more information please contact via email address i.e. tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om, or call us on phone number: 24250824. SME's Ryida card holders are exempted form tender fee.
- Bank Guarantee:** The Tenderer should enclose original bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Rural Areas Electricity Company SAOC (Tanweer). SME's Ryida card holders are exempted form tender bid bond.
- Offers Submission:**
 - Original bids along Cover letter shall be placed by bidders inside the red waxed Tender's envelopes as communicated to bidders by Tanweer. Such documents must be serialized according to the numbers of the tender items.
 - Tender bids shall be provided separately on a CD Rooms, along with original cover letters in each envelop. Bids and cover letters shall bear the bidder's official seal and must be signed in either blue or red ink, but not black. A true soft copy of the bids shall be provided on a CD in an inner envelope marked "Copy". Bids who do not comply with these requirements will be overlooked.
 - Bidders shall write the following details on the cover of CD:
 - Tender name and number.
 - Tenders to be Addressed to the **Chairman of Minor Tender Committee**, Tanweer.
 - Prequalification / Technical Proposal / Commercial Proposal / Bid Bond.
- Submission Location:** The Completed bids in CD should be deposited in the Tender Box at Tanweer Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 12:00 PM on the last date of submission.
- Tender Price (R.O):** 5% VAT is inclusive.
- Rural Areas Electricity Company without mentioning the reason is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender and not bond to refund tender purchase fees if you are not qualified to participate the tender.

For more information please call: 80077787



Tanweer

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SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health (Al Masarra Hospital) invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref.	Description	Last Date for Collection of Tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/ Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
920/2023/ MOH/ AMH-1	Maintenance & Modification Works in Child Ward at Al Masarra Hospital	23/03/2023	Before 10 AM Monday 17/04/2023	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board	R.O 25/= Per set

Notes:-

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> enclose Electronic Bank Guarantee issued by a Local bank for not less
- Than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AUCTION



Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) hereby announces auction as mentioned in the following table:

Auction No.	Material for Sale	Last Date of Buying	Preview Date	Last Date of Submission
01/2023	Selling of obsolete Electricity Meters at Rural Areas Electricity Company (TANWEER) Warehouse in Muscat Governorate	16/03/2023	To Be Determined	23/03/2023

In accordance with the following conditions:

- Interested and Specialized Companies in scrap activities and have official registration with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion may obtain the auction documents from Procurement & Contracts Department, against non-refundable payment of RO. 50/- (Rial Omani; Fifty Only) for each set of documents. The fees of the auction shall be deposit on Tanweer account 0423010783090041 - Bank Muscat and for more information please contact via email address i.e. tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om, or call us on phone number: 24250824.
- Offers should be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to the Chairman of Minor Tender Committee, Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C), marked with the auction number and subject. Other marks or reference whatsoever should be printed on the envelope. The identity of the bidder should not be revealed and should be submitted before 1:00 P.M. on the assigned date for submission of the auction.
- The buyer must pay the complete amount of his offer within **Two Weeks** of such notification by deposit or certified cheque.
- The buyer must transfer all the material and clean the location within **One Month** from the date of client notification for taking the materials. If the buyer does not transfer the materials purchased within the specified period, the same will be confiscated by the company. Such confiscated materials will be released to the buyer upon payment of demurrage charges to be calculated by the Seller.
- Rural Areas Electricity Company has the right to accept or reject any offer without giving reasons.
- Preview of the material to be determined later during the formal working hours.

For more information please call: 80077787



Tanweer

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7

Palestinians shot dead by Israeli troops

NABLUS: Israeli soldiers shot dead three Palestinians in a pre-dawn firefight in the occupied West Bank, Israeli and Palestinian sources said on Sunday, amid a surge in violence in the region.

A Nablus-based group said the Israeli troops had laid an ambush for them.

The Palestinian health ministry identified three men killed by Israeli gunfire near Nablus as Jihad al Shami, 24, Uday al Shami, 22, and Mohammed Dabeek, 18.

The Lions' Den, an emerging Palestinian group that claims to rise above traditional factional loyalties.

A statement from the group said they had engaged in combat after identifying the Israeli ambush, vowing to revenge the "martyrs".

Violence intensified last year, but has worsened in the West Bank — which Israel has occupied since the Six-Day War of 1967 — after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu returned to office in December at the head of a hard-right coalition.

Hamas said the deaths would "fuel the great West Bank intifada," or uprising.

Islamic Jihad, another Gaza-



Placards and graffiti are seen on a wall during a strike after the killing of three Palestinians by Israeli troops, in Nablus. — Reuters

based group, said the deaths were part of the "all-out war" it argued Israel had launched against the Palestinian people.

Several Palestinian groups had

called for revenge since an Israeli army raid on Tuesday, also in the northern West Bank, killed six Palestinians.

On Wednesday, UN Middle

East peace envoy Tor Wennesland urged Israel and the Palestinians to end violence without delay.

"We are in the midst of a cycle of violence that must be

stopped immediately," he said in a statement.

The Sunday shoot-out took place a short distance from an Israeli settlement, with the head of the regional Samaria settler council praising the army.

"We will continue to live and build here in Samaria and the entire region," Yossi Dagan said in a statement.

Last Thursday, a member of Hamas opened fire outside a Tel Aviv cafe, wounding three men in their 30s before being shot dead.

Hours before, three Palestinians were killed in an Israeli military operation in the northern West Bank.

Since the start of the year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has claimed the lives of 81 Palestinian adults and children, including militants and civilians.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Israelis demonstrated across the country on Saturday in the 10th consecutive week of protests against government judicial reform plans that critics view as a threat to democracy.

The demonstrations come as Netanyahu's government prepares to press on with its legislative agenda next week. — AFP

SWISS PRESIDENT DEFENDS NEUTRALITY

GENEVA: Swiss neutrality is more important than ever, President Alain Berset said in an interview published on Sunday, defending the controversial ban on transferring Swiss-made arms to Ukraine.

The long tradition of neutrality has been hotly debated since Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine in February 2022. While the wealthy Alpine country, which is not a member of the European Union, has followed the bloc's lead on sanctions targeting Moscow, it has so far shown less flexibility on its military neutrality.

Despite pressure from Kyiv and its allies, Switzerland has continued to block countries that hold Swiss-made weaponry from re-exporting it to Ukraine.

To date, requests from Germany, Spain and Denmark have been rejected under the War Materiel Act, which bars all re-export if the recipient country is in an international armed conflict. — AFP

New protests hit Greece over train tragedy

ATHENS: Thousands of demonstrators staged fresh protests in Greece on Sunday as anger grows over the country's deadliest rail crash, ratcheting up pressure on the government over the tragedy.

Protesters flooded Athens' Syntagma Square in front of parliament, waving banners that read "We won't forget, we won't forgive" and "We will become the voice of all the dead".

Fifty-seven people, many of them students, were killed when a passenger train and freight train collided head-on in central Greece on February 28. Four railway officials have been charged but public anger has focused on long-running mismanagement of the network, and the country



Protesters march through the streets of Athens during a demonstration over the country's worst rail tragedy which killed 57. — AFP

has been rocked by a series of sometimes violent mass protests.

On Sunday more than 8,000 demonstrators gathered outside parliament while 5,000 took to the streets of the second

city Thessaloniki, police said. "It was anger and rage that brought me here," Markella, a 65-year-old Athens protester who gave only one name, said.

Another demonstrator, 26-year-old Alexandros,

added: "We're getting desperate. You don't know what to say, what to do — all you can do is join the protest."

The rallies came in response to calls from various bodies, from trade unions to political groups, to take to the streets.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, who is fighting to be re-elected within months, has faced calls from some protesters to quit.

He has come under fire for initially pointing to "human error" for the accident, and blaming the stationmaster on duty at the time who allegedly routed the trains onto the same stretch of track by accident.

But railway unions had long been warning about problems on the creaking, understaffed train network. — AFP

UN Security Council team wraps up DR Congo visit

GOMA: A United Nations Security Council delegation wrapped up a three-day visit to DR Congo on Sunday, with ambassadors stressing a political solution to end the raging M23 rebel conflict.

The M23 has seized swathes of territory in the Democratic Republic of Congo's North Kivu province since re-emerging from dormancy in late 2021.

M23 fighters have also advanced in recent days, threatening to cut off all road links to Goma, a city of more than one million people on the Rwandan border.

Fighting between Congolese forces and the M23 — which is allegedly backed by Rwanda — has displaced over 800,000 people, according to the UN.

A delegation from the UN



Nicolas de Riviere, Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, speaks with peacekeepers during a ceremony in honour of killed peacekeepers, Goma — AFP

Security Council arrived on Thursday in the DRC capital Kinshasa before travelling to Goma on Saturday.

The team met Congolese

President Felix Tshisekedi. In Goma they had talks with local officials, civil leaders and toured a displaced persons' camp.

The delegation was due to depart the DRC later on Sunday.

France's UN ambassador, Nicolas de Riviere told reporters on Sunday the M23 must withdraw from the territory it occupies.

He added that "it no longer needs to be demonstrated that Rwanda supports the M23" and that Rwandan regulars were also making incursions into North Kivu.

The Security Council visit came after the collapse of an Angola-mediated ceasefire, which was due to take effect on Tuesday. Several previous peace initiatives have also failed.

— AFP



Extraordinary general meeting agenda

The Board of Directors of **Oman National Investments Development Company SAOC (Company)** has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Extraordinary General Meeting, which will be held at **10:00 AM on Tuesday, 28 March 2023**, and will be held in Kempinski Hotel A Mouj. If the quorum requirement for holding the Extraordinary General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second meeting shall be held at **10:00 AM on Wednesday 29/ 03/ 2023**, to discuss the following agenda:

- 1- To consider and approve the amendment of Para (a) of article (23) of the company's article of association (as per the annexure)

In accordance with the Articles of Association of the company, each shareholder may authorize in writing any other person to attend the meeting and vote on the decisions taken on his behalf, Please come to the meeting venue at least half an hour before the scheduled time

For further information please contact Sulaiman Al Sulti on telephone No. 91141129 or email: sulaiman@tanmia.om

المستشار القانوني

مراقب الحسابات

رئيس مجلس الإدارة

إعلان الدعوة لاجتماع الجمعية العامة غير العادية

يسر مجلس إدارة الشركة العمانية لتنمية الاستثمارات الوطنية ش.م.ع.م (الشركة) دعوة مساهمي الشركة إلى حضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة غير العادية للشركة المقرر عقده في تمام الساعة ١٠:٠٠ ص من صباح يوم الثلاثاء الموافق ٢٨ /٣ /٢٠٢٣م في فندق كمينسكي الموج وفي حال عدم احتمال النصاب القانوني للجمعية، سيتم عقد الاجتماع الثاني في تمام الساعة ١٠:٠٠ ص من صباح يوم الأربعاء الموافق ٢٩ /٣ /٢٠٢٣م. لمناقشة جدول الأعمال التالي:

– دراسة مقترح تعديل الفقرة (أ) من المادة (٢٣) من النظام الأساسي للشركة والموافقة عليه (حسب المرفق)

وفقا للنظام الأساسي للشركة، يجوز لكل مساهم أن يفوض خطأ أي شخص آخر لحضور الاجتماع والتصويت على القرارات المتخذة نيابة عنه،

يرجى التكرم بالحضور إلى مقر الاجتماع المشار إليه آنفا قبل الموعد المحدد بنصف ساعة على الأقل

في حالة وجود أي استفسارات يرجى الاتصال بالفاضل/ سليمان الصلطي على هاتف رقم : ٩١٤١١٢٩ أو البريد الإلكتروني sulaiman@tanmia.om

Stitching others’ wounds and emotions

Shouldering the responsibility of a certain profession is not always limited to minding the list of must-to-do tasks and duties. Rather, it sometimes goes beyond that, especially when it comes to a profession of taking care of humans’ health or life. Case in a point, nursing, as a relevant example of professions, means to administer care in a painstaking and knowledgeable way without causing harm to others. Nurses are committed to providing care and nurturing of both healthy and sick people, individually, in groups, or even as communities.

Nursing is a profession, which requires an extended education and has a theoretical body of knowledge. Though, nurses, most of the time, do not have a complete independence in decision-making and medical practice. However, doctors diagnose, treat and prescribe medications in their area of expertise. Then, a nurse would be the care provider responsible for the patient’s total care, ensuring prescriptions don’t negatively interact with one another, and a patient understands, and is prepared for treatment.

Post finding out the diagnostic results, it is the nurse who reads them first and, if necessary, immediately notifies the doctor concerned. Nurses care for patients, regardless of their age, gender and cultural backgrounds. Patients are always treated based on their physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. In fact, nursing as a profession combines physical science, social science, nursing theory, and technology in caring for patients.

Simply, nurses are life-savers. While doctors often specialise in just one area, nurses are able to coordinate the care for all aspects of a patient’s overall health. In fact, nursing translates what Albert Einstein said once, “Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile”. Nurses are sparing no effort to serve their patients and save their lives, sacrificing their time and health! To tell the truth, becoming a nurse is one of the most selfless acts that a person



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An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

NURSING AS A PROFESSION COMBINES PHYSICAL SCIENCE, SOCIAL SCIENCE, NURSING THEORY, AND TECHNOLOGY IN CARING FOR PATIENTS

can undertake. In a world of so many different races, cultures, customs, and beliefs, nurses are a universal gift to all.

The honourable job that nurses do and the kindness they show on daily basis in every hospital reflects the fundamental humanity inside us. One has to remember that behind the scrubs and white gowns are an army of dedicated professionals who deserve to be appreciated, respected and celebrated, of course. True what has been said that a nurse is a compassion in scrubs and an angle of mercy!

The nobility of nurses is, actually, when they always understand the basic principles of care and intervention that are given to patients and with other nurses in the hospital. It is important to apply the principles of ethics, so that the patient’s safety and recovery will have a speedy recovery while being admitted in the hospital. Nurses always ensure that the safety of a patient is always secured at any circumstances. Thus, the word nurse describes a person strong enough to tolerate anything and soft enough to understand anyone.

Being soldiers in hospitals, nurses dispense to their patients comfort, compassion, and caring without even a prescription. However, some people might underestimate the nurses’ power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring; all of which have the potential to turn a life around. Overall, a nurse is someone who is connected with care and serving others.

In view of that March 13 is designated as GCC Nursing Day, and it is time to celebrate and value the contributions and sacrifices that nurses make to the society. People are urged to thank every nurse who has been there for them or for their loved ones during days of sickness. Thank you nurses; every day you either touch a life or a life touches yours. Nurses are there when the last breath is taken and they are also there when the first breath is taken.

A SIKH WARRIOR



Nihang or Sikh warrior performs during a march to commemorate 200 years of the martyrdom of Sikh leader Akali Phula Singh, in Amritsar, India, on Sunday. – AFP

Why Biden’s child programmes likely won’t go anywhere

ANDY SULLIVAN

US President Joe Biden’s budget proposal, released on Thursday, envisions a dramatic expansion of the federal safety net for children and families. Unlike programmes that benefit older Americans, it stands little chance of gaining traction.

Biden’s fellow Democrats widely back his family-focused proposals: Tax credits, free preschool, subsidies for child care and paid family leave.

But Democrats failed to pass them into law when they controlled both chambers of Congress last year, and Republicans who now control the House of Representatives are considering steep cuts to existing family programmes.

At a total cost of \$1.6 trillion over 10 years, Biden’s family programmes would amount to roughly 2 per cent of all federal spending, according to a Reuters analysis, a proposal that Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy called “completely unserious” on Thursday.

That would be dwarfed by the \$31.8 trillion spent on Social Security and Medicare, the retirement and health plans for people over 65, according to Biden’s budget.

BIDEN’S FELLOW DEMOCRATS WIDELY BACK HIS FAMILY-FOCUSED PROPOSALS INCLUDING TAX CREDITS, FREE PRESCHOOL, SUBSIDIES FOR CHILD CARE AND PAID FAMILY LEAVE

Those two programmes are due to balloon as the Baby Boom generation ages, with Biden’s budget projecting they will account for 42 per cent of federal spending in 2033, up from 34 per cent today. But Republicans and Democrats have said any cuts to either programme are off limits as they gird for difficult negotiations to raise the nation’s \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling this year.

“I guarantee you I will protect Social Security and Medicare,” Biden said at a rally in Philadelphia on Thursday.

That makes good political sense. Republican proposals to scale the two programmes back have been met with fierce resistance from Democrats and interest groups over the past 20 years. Even modest efforts to rein them in, such as by adjusting the way benefit increases are calculated, have gotten nowhere in Congress.

The 60 Plus Association, a conservative group that backed then-President George W Bush’s proposal to partially privatise Social Security, now says the programme should be preserved as is.

Lawmakers have reason to be

wary: Older Americans are more likely to vote than their younger counterparts, with Census Bureau data showing that 76 per cent of voters aged 65 to 74 cast a ballot in the 2020 elections, about 10 percentage points higher than the population at large.

A presentation by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office to House lawmakers on Wednesday laid out options for addressing the deficit and projected that spending cuts would have substantially less effect on the deficit than increased tax collections.

Biden’s budget proposal projects a deficit of \$1.7 trillion for the current fiscal year.

His proposal would address it by hiking taxes on wealthy

Americans and corporations; Republicans have yet to put forward a budget of their own, but many are calling for steep domestic spending cuts.

One proposal by the conservative Republican Study Committee calls for phasing out the Head Start preschool programme for low-income families over 10 years. Another plan circulated by Russell Vought, who served as former President Donald Trump’s budget director, would cut Head Start immediately by 50 per cent.

Biden, by contrast, would boost Head Start funding by 9 per cent next year.

His proposal comes after a surge of Covid-19 pandemic spending, including child tax

credits and expanded benefits for antipoverty programmes, that analysts say helped bring a record low child poverty rate of 5.2 per cent in 2021.

That tax credit expired at the end of 2021. If revived, it would cost the government \$259 billion in the next fiscal year — equal to 4 per cent of total federal spending.

Federal spending on children is on track to decline from 9.4 per cent of the budget in 2021 to 6.4 per cent in coming years as growing entitlement spending eats up a growing share of the budget, according to a 2022 report from the Urban Institute think tank.

Elaine Maag, who helped author that report, said lawmakers usually do not consider that safety-net programmes for children can yield benefits later on, such as higher graduation rates and better physical health.

“We generally don’t think about the benefits of these investments in children, we just think about the cost side,” she said. “If we thought more about the benefits, we might do more investing in kids.” — Reuters



US President Joe Biden leaves Saint Joseph on the Brandywine Roman Catholic Church near his home in Wilmington, Delaware. – AFP

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Al Musannah hold Dhofar, Rustaq trounce Al Oruba

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

Al Rustaq, Suhar, Oman Club and Al Ittihad posted crucial wins in the 18th week of the 2022-23 Omantel League on Friday and Saturday.

The Northern Batinah Governorate team were expected to clinch the 2-1 result against Al Bashayer, who suffered their 13th defeat this season. Ali al Hashami was the star of the match with a brace to earn three crucial points for his team Suhar. The triumph took Suhar to 29 points among top five teams in the league order while Al Bashayer are still struggling at the bottom with nine points only from two victories and three draws.

Al Rustaq trounced Al Oruba 3-1 to claim significant winning points at Sur Sports Complex to remain in their third place with 34 points behind second-placed Al Suwaiq (35 points) who have a postponed match against the HM Cup winners Al Nahdha to be played on Tuesday.

Mahmood al Shaqsi scored the opening goal in the 16th minute while Said al Dhabouni from Al Oruba equalised after five minutes from the start of second half. Five minutes later, Sameh al Hamrashdi brought the visitors again to the lead of the game while

Abdulrahman al Ghassani netted the third goal in the 72nd minute to ensure the win for Al Rustaq.

GOALLESS DRAW

In another match on Saturday, record 11-time champions Dhofar were held to a goalless draw by Al Musannah at the Al Saada Sports Complex on Friday. The Southern Batinah team reduced the gap with the Salalah giants to seven points as they have now 20 points in the ninth position while Dhofar are in eighth place with 27 points.

Earlier on Friday, Oman club registered a crucial 2-1 victory over Sur at the latter's home in Sur Sports Complex to climb to sixth spot temporarily with 28 points. Sur are stuck at their previous credit of 17 points in relegation zone at 11th place. The winners' goals were scored by Mahmood al Hasani (14th minute) from penalty spot and Kayta (28th minute) while the regulation goal of two-time champions was struck by Ayman Ibrahim (73rd minute).

The 12th placed team, Al Ittihad, registered their fourth victory in the league against Al Nasr 2-1 and they continue to stay among the bottom-three teams in the relegation zone. The winners are behind Sur by one point and by four points from Al Nasr and Al Musannah.

Top seeds Alcaraz, Swiatek start strong

INDIAN WELLS: Top seeds Carlos Alcaraz and Iga Swiatek raced into the third round of the Indian Wells WTA and ATP Masters 1000 without wasting a minute on Saturday.

Spain's second-ranked Alcaraz, the US Open champion who can return to number one in the world with a third Masters 1000 crown, needed just one hour and 16 minutes to get past Australian qualifier Thanasi Kokkinakis 6-3, 6-3.

Women's number one Swiatek, winner of the French and US opens last year, was even more ruthlessly efficient in a 6-0, 6-1 triumph over American Claire Liu.

Alcaraz lost just one point on his serve in the first set and did not face a break point in the match as he lined up a meeting with Tallon Griekspoor, a 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/4) winner over Argentina's Guido Pella.

"Well, I surprised myself today with my serve," the effervescent 19-year-old said. "I serve really well in the first set and in the second set as well."

Early breaks in each set were too much for Kokkinakis to overcome in the face of Alcaraz's speed and



power.

"All that I'm looking for in every match is to enjoy and to play relaxed," Alcaraz said. "I think that's the most important part of my game, to stay relaxed and go for it and not to think about the mistakes, the points, the rounds."

"Just live the moment, play the match, and go for it," he added.

Alcaraz was able to do just that as there was no sign of the right hamstring injury that forced him out of the ATP tournament in Acapulco prior to Indian Wells.

He had missed the Australian

Open with similar trouble, but returned to win in Buenos Aires last month before falling in the final at Rio de Janeiro — where he was hindered by the injury.

"It seems today that I move really well," Alcaraz said. "I think I'm ready and totally recovered from the injury."

Defending men's champion Taylor Fritz, who toppled Spanish superstar Rafael Nadal in last year's final, had to work harder to get through his second-round opener, a 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory over 41st-ranked Ben Shelton.



Seventh-seeded Dane Holger Rune and eighth-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime advanced.

Rune beat American Mackenzie McDonald 7-5, 6-3 while Auger-Aliassime beat Spain's Pedro Martinez 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

MURRAY ADVANCES

Former world number one Andy Murray, grinding his way back after hip replacement surgery in 2019, defeated lucky loser Radu Albot 6-4, 6-3 — the Briton's first straight-set win in a year that has seen him pull off a string of unlikely

marathon victories that included a five-set epic lasting five hours and 45 minutes in the second round of the Australian Open.

Swiatek, meanwhile, needed just 65 minutes to dispatch Liu as she launched her bid to become just the second woman — after Martina Navratilova in 1990 and '91 — to win back-to-back Indian Wells titles.

Neither Liu nor the breezy conditions on Stadium Court troubled Swiatek, who won 25 of 32 first-set points.

Liu did manage to save a match

point as she finally held serve in the penultimate game, slipping a forehand passing shot under Swiatek's guard on game point.

It brought a relieved smile to the American's face, but Swiatek closed it out in the next game.

"For sure Claire used that moment when I didn't play as aggressive that I should be, but I'm pretty happy that I was able to close it out pretty fast," Swiatek said.

She can expect a tougher challenge when she faces 2019 Indian Wells and US Open winner Bianca Andreescu, who defeated American Peyton Stearns 4-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Women's fourth seed Ons Jabeur of Tunisia made a winning return after being sidelined in the wake of a minor knee operation, beating Poland's Magdalena Frech 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Fifth-seeded Caroline Garcia overcame Hungarian Dalma Galfi 6-1, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4 and Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, runner-up at the Australian Open in January, rallied from 4-1 down in the second set to beat former Aussie Open winner Sofia Kenin 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/5). — **AFP**

Bangladesh stun England to seal T20 series

DHAKA: Mehidy Hasan Miraz shone with ball and bat as Bangladesh stunned England to win the second Twenty20 international by four wickets and seal the series 2-0.

Mehidy bowled a career-best 4-12 to help the hosts bowl out England for 117 before he hit 20 off 16 balls as Bangladesh raced to 120-6 in 18.5 overs.

Najmul Hossain top-scored at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka with 46 not out for Bangladesh, who have now won at least one series in one format against all Test-playing countries.

The hosts won the first match of the series by six wickets in Chittagong.

Sent into bat first, England were rarely in the contest after losing their way in the middle of the innings as their batsmen struggled to cope with a low and slow wicket in Mirpur.

Shakib Al Hasan, Taskin Ahmed, Hasan Mahmud and Mustafizur Rahman each complemented Mehidy with a wicket apiece. Ben Duckett top-scored with 28 while Phil Salt made 25 off 19 balls.

Taskin dismissed opener Dawid Malan for five but Salt and Moeen Ali showed positive intent to put on 34 runs for the second wicket.

The visitors then lost Salt, skipper Jos Buttler (four) and Ali (15) in consecutive overs to ruin

their prospect of putting in a big total.

Mehidy then struck twice in one over to dismiss Sam Curran (12) and Chris Woakes (0) to deny England a late recovery.

Bangladesh in their reply lost both their openers Liton Das (nine) and Rony Talukdar (nine) cheaply but young Towhid Hridoy made 17 to steady the innings.

Najmul and Mehidy put Bangladesh in charge with a 41-run stand. England sniffed a chance with a few late wickets as Jofra Archer wracked havoc to finish with 3-13.

However, Najmul thwarted the visiting side with his unbeaten 47-ball innings featuring three boundaries.

Taskin completed the win with consecutive fours off Chris Jordan in the nineteenth over.

The third and final match of the series will be held at the same ground on Tuesday.

England won the preceding three-match one-day international series 2-1.

The matches are important practice for England on South Asian pitches ahead of the ODI World Cup to be held in India later this year. — AFP

Brief scores
England 117 all out, 20 overs (B Duckett 28, P Salt 25; Mehidy Hasan Miraz 4-12)
Bangladesh 120-6, 18.5 overs (Najmul 46 not out, Mehidy 20; J Archer 3-13)



Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan Miraz (R) and Najmul Hossain Shanto run between the wickets during the second Twenty20 international against England at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka. — AFP



India's Virat Kohli in action on day four of the fourth and final Test against Australia. — Reuters

KOHLI ENDS HUNDRED DROUGHT, INDIA TAKE CHARGE

AHMEDABAD, India: Virat Kohli ended his agonising wait for a Test century with a painstaking 186 as India racked up 571 to claim a lead of 91 in the fourth and final Test against Australia on Sunday.

The hosts, who lead the series 2-1, strung together six 50-plus partnerships at the top to effectively put themselves in an unbeatable position heading into the final day of the contest.

Having conceded a handy first-innings lead, Australia finished day four on three for no loss.

The touring side sent night watchman Matt Kuhnemann to open with Travis Head after inform opener Usman Khawaja hurt his knee while fielding.

Kuhnemann, who survived 18 balls, was nearly caught on two occasions but Australia somehow saw off the final six overs without any damage.

Earlier, India lost Ravindra Jadeja (28) after resuming on 289-3 but Kohli and KS Bharat denied Australia another success in that slow-moving session.

Todd Murphy (3-113) broke Kohli's 64-run partnership with Jadeja, who chipped the ball to

Khawaja at mid-on.

Kohli was happy to nudge the ball around, while Bharat hit Nathan Lyon for a six before putting his head down and accumulating runs without taking too many risks.

Promoted in the batting order as Shreyas Iyer did not bat because of back pain, Bharat accelerated after the lunch break, hitting Green for back-to-back sixes and following it with a four in a 21-run over.

Bharat fell to Lyon after making 44, but Kohli could not be denied his first Test hundred since November 2019.

75TH INTERNATIONAL TON

SCOREBOARD	
Australia 1st innings 480 all out	Extras (b14, lb4, nb4) -----22
India 1st innings	Total (all out, 178.5 overs) -----571
R Sharma c Labuschagne b Kuhnemann -----35	Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-187, 3-245, 4-309, 5-393, 6-555, 7-568, 8-569, 9-571
S Gill lbw Lyon -----128	Bowling: Starc 22-3-97-1, Green 18-1-90-0, Lyon 65-9-151-3, Kuhnemann 25-3-94-1, Murphy 45.5-10-113-3, Head 3-0-8-0
C Pujara lbw Murphy -----42	Australia 2nd innings
V Kohli c Labuschagne b Murphy -----186	M Kuhnemann not out -----0
R Jadeja c Khawaja b Murphy -----28	T Head not out -----3
S Bharat c Handscomb b Lyon -----44	Total (0 wickets, 6 overs) -----3
A Patel b Starc -----79	Bowling: Ashwin 3-2-1-0, Jadeja 2-1-1-0, Shami 1-0-1-0
R Ashwin c Kuhnemann b Lyon -----7	
U Yadav run out (Handscomb) -----0	
M Shami not out -----0	
S Iyer absent hurt	

Oman, Saudi Arabia cricket ties set to get a boost

SACF president Prince Saud bin Mishal al Saud holds talks with Oman Cricket chairman Pankaj Khimji

MUSCAT: Bilateral and multi-lateral tours between the Sultanate of Oman and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia could be in the offing in the future as talks on holding the tours were discussed during a recent meeting between the presidents of both Oman and Saudi Arabian cricket federations.

Prince Saud bin Mishal al Saud, the first president of the Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation



(SACF), recently hosted Pankaj Khimji, Oman Cricket president, at his palace in Riyadh recently.

Speaking after the meeting, Khimji, who is also the vice-president of the Asian Cricket

Council (ACC), said: "The recent meeting with the Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation (SACF) chair, HRH Prince Saud bin Mishal al Saud, and the other members of the Saudi Arabian cricket board

was encouraging and fruitful. I am indebted to Prince Saud for extending such a warm reception to me and my accompanying delegation at his home."

The Oman Cricket chief

said: "Prince Saud, along with his members of his board, has suddenly found new energy in developing the game and the Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation is really making an impact on the domestic stage and at the regional level."

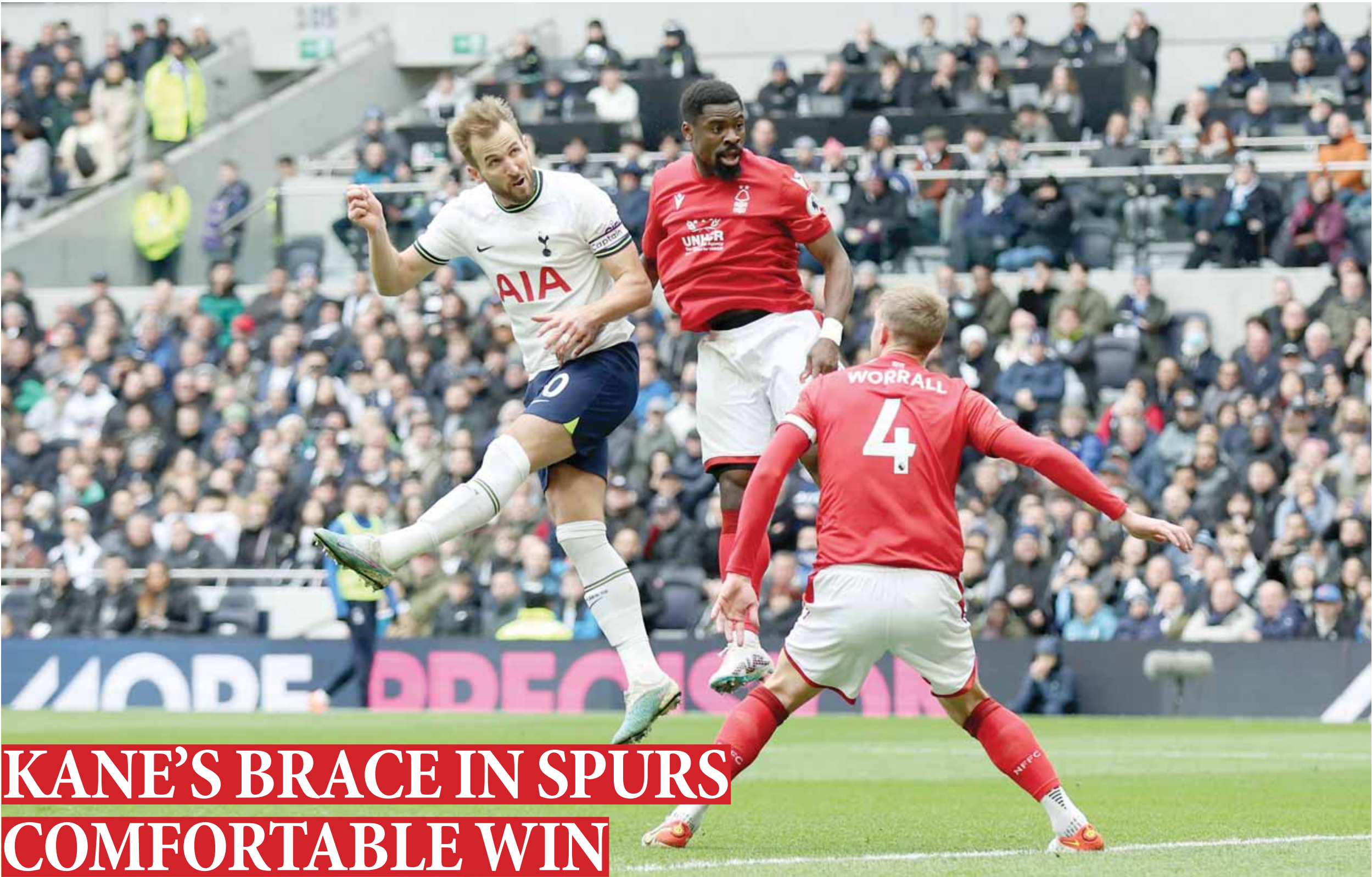
Khimji, who is also the ICC Associate Member director, added: "We touched on a few ideas and discussed ways to work together and how to develop the game at regional level."

The Oman Cricket boss, who has recently been appointed in two ICC committees and also included in an ICC Governance Working Group, said: "We also plan to have a template to host regional, if not Asian teams, in the GCC region. We are looking at bilateral tours between Oman

and Saudi Arabia and multi-lateral tours in the region that would help both the associations. I would discuss with the ACC and the ICC to work on a calendar on how to achieve hosting of such tours in the region."

The Saudi Arabian Cricket Federation (SACF) was established in 2020, and has lined up a series of major programmes focused on promoting the game among Saudis and expatriates.

The federation has signed several deals and MoUs with governmental, semi-governmental, and non-governmental entities setting out plans to raise awareness of the game, increase cricket facilities nationwide, and introduce the sport to Saudi youth through school programmes.



KANE’S BRACE IN SPURS COMFORTABLE WIN

Tottenham Hotspur’s Harry Kane scores their first goal. – Reuters

ANDY JALIL
LONDON, MARCH 12

Tottenham retained their spot in the top four of the Premier League, inflicting a 3-1 defeat on Nottingham Forest. A double strike by Harry Kane from a header and a penalty kick, took his tally to 20 goals in the league for the sixth time in nine seasons.

Tottenham manager, Antonio Conte said: “He can take a penalty kick in a blindfold. We’re talking about a world-class striker and today Harry was a good example not for the goals he scored but his commitment and desire.”

Tottenham were without a

win from their last three matches and Conte said: “We needed to bounce back and show we have a strong mentality. In this type of situation, the morale can be really low. Instead, I saw the right spirit, the right fight and the right desire. Today in my players I have seen fire in their eyes. There are many important teams in this race, for us to finish in the top four is like winning the Premier League.”

Nottingham Forest posed little threat during the first half. Later in the half they had a fine chance when Jonjo Shelvey had a shot deflected wide of the post. By then Spurs were two goals up and Richardson had an early goal

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS ON SATURDAY:	
Bournemouth 1 (Billing 28)	Liverpool 0
Crystal Palace 0	Manchester City 1 (Haaland 78-pen)
Everton 1 (McNeil 1)	Brentford 0
Leeds 2 (Bamford 40, Harrison 78)	Brighton 2 (Mac Allister 33, Harrison 61-og)
Leicester 1 (Daka 39)	Chelsea 3 (Chilwell 11, Havertz 45+6, Kovacic 78)
Tottenham 3 (Kane 19, 35-pen, Son 62)	Nottingham Forest 1 (Worrall 81)

disallowed for off-side. The first goal came in the 19th minute from a cross by Pedro Porro for which Kane rose above Serge Aurier to head across goal giving no chance to Keylor Navas.

A quarter of an hour later the

lead was doubled when Joe Worrall fouled Richardson in the penalty box after an excellent Spurs move and Kane planted the ball in the centre of the net, the Spurs captain showing no signs of nerve after missing the last penalty kick he

took in Qatar, in the World Cup.

Forest showed considerable improvement in the second half and were much more fluent making the game more open. Aurier came close to scoring with a firm header from a cross but Fraser Forster made a superb reflex save punching the ball over for a corner.

Spurs made it look all too easy with their third goal in the 62nd minute. Richardson put in two crosses from the right, the first was intercepted well by Worrall but the second went to Heung-Min Son who beat Aurier’s challenge and scored with a left-foot drive inside the far post.

Spurs went close to scoring in

the 78th minute when a sliding Richardson could not reach the pass from Son and a minute later Son missed a chance when his shot on target was too weak, he realised straightaway putting his hands to his head.

With nine minutes remaining, Forest got a consolation goal with Worrall nodding in from a corner which was flicked on to him by Felipe.

Forest manager, Steve Cooper said: “We just weren’t aggressive enough. I didn’t like us in the duels, the one-v-ones, it just wasn’t competitive. The second half was more positive but we gave ourselves too much to do.”

Record participation at Oman Bodybuilding Championship

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

The 18th edition of the Oman Bodybuilding and Physique Championship concluded successfully at the main hall of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. The event witnessed record participation and strong competition, with over 150 players from various categories competing.

The closing ceremony was held in the presence of Dr Salim bin Saeed al Bahri, Chairman of the Oman Committee for Bodybuilding, First Assistant to the President of the Arab and Asian Federation, and a number of heads of Arab federations.

The last day witnessed fierce competitions in the classic bodybuilding, bodybuilding, and wheelchair categories, producing some outstanding results.

The Champion of Champions of the 18th edition of the bodybuilding and physique competitions went to the Nasr bin Marhoon al Wahaibi.



In the category of bodybuilding weighing under 65 kg, Sami al Gharbi won first place, Moath al Zadjali came in second place, Moaath al Shukaily came in third place, while Akhil won fourth place, and Muhammad Shaheen came in fifth place.

In the category of bodybuilding weighing more than 85 kg, Abbas Mousa achieved first place, Mohammed al Ajmi snatched the second place, Saeed al Jabri came in third place, Shahada al Balushi

took fourth place, and Sayed Ahmed Mahmoud finished fifth.

AI MAAMARI, SAAD TAKE TOP SPOTS

In the category of bodybuilding weighing under 85 kg, Ali al Maamari won first place, Youssef al Awdhali came in second, Sultan al Badrani took third place, Saeed al Hasani in fourth place and Jalal Saad claimed fifth place.

In the category of classic bodybuilding, length of 171 cm,



Ahmed al Arbabi won the honours. Nabhan al Zadjali claimed second place, Noah al Qutaithi was ranked third and Ahmed al Siyabi came fourth, while Omar al Saidi took fifth and Khaled al Wahshi finished sixth. In the category of classic bodybuilders over 175 cm tall, Mustafa Saad won first place, Hamoud al Riyami won second place, Mohammed al Rashidi was ranked third and Qusay al Amri was ranked fifth.

In the category of classic

bodybuilding, 175 cm long, Mustafa Saad won first place, Hamoud al Riyami achieved second place, Mohammed al Rashidi was ranked third, followed by Qusai al Ameri in fourth and Khaled al Ameri in fifth positions.

In the category of Wheelchairs, the first initiative in the region, Fawzi bin Salem al Hubaishi took first place.

After the closing ceremony, Dr Salim al Bahri expressed his satisfaction with the event.

He said, “the 18th edition of the Oman Open Bodybuilding Championship went well and as planned and recorded a new success in addition to the successes achieved by the previous versions.”

He explained that the achievements of the national team in foreign tournaments during the past years encouraged new players to enter the arena of this game and compete in it.

He added that the new version of the tournament included people with disabilities from wheelchair owners to compete in this tournament. The tournament also introduced the ‘junior’ youth category, which produced a several talents, which is a good investment in promising youth.

Al Bahri pointed out that the championship produced a number of talents that could reach the national team to the podiums in the upcoming tournaments.

The tournament witnessed the wide participation of national players from different provinces and residents.



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Increase in electricity and water production in Oman

MUSCAT: The total electricity production in the Sultanate of Oman until end-December 2022 increased by 8.1 per cent, reaching 41,747.4 gigawatts per hour (GWh), compared to 38,630.4 gigawatts per hour during the same period in 2021.

Dhofar Governorate recorded an increase in total electricity production by 10.2 per cent, to reach 4,236.7 GWh until end-December 2022.

The governorates of North and South Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah recorded an increase in total electricity production by 16.7 per cent, to reach 27,311.3 GWh, according to initial statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The net electricity production



THE NET ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION IN OMAN UNTIL THE END-DECEMBER 2022, WHICH INCLUDES PURCHASES BY THE OMAN POWER AND WATER PROCUREMENT COMPANY AND BY THE RURAL AREAS ELECTRICITY COMPANY BY REGION, REACHED TO 40,411.9 GWH, AN INCREASE OF 8.3 PER CENT COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD IN 2021.

in Oman until the end-December 2022, which includes purchases by the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company and by the Rural Areas Electricity Company by region, reached to 40,411.9 GWh, an increase of 8.3 per cent compared to the same period in

2021.

The largest amount of net electricity production came from Dhofar Governorate, with 4,041.5 GWh, an increase of 10.8 per cent, while the governorates of North and South Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah recorded a rise in net electricity production by 17.1 per cent, to reach 26, 397 GWh.

Meanwhile, the amount of water produced in Oman increased by 5 per cent, to reach 512.199 million cubic metres until the end-December 2022, compared to the same period in 2021.

The governorates of Dhofar and Muscat recorded an increase in water production by 9.3 per cent and 6.9 per cent, respectively, compared to the same period in 2021. — ONA

Oman to connect to new Blue-Raman intercontinental cable system

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MARCH 12

Underscoring its strategic geographical location in the Middle East, the Sultanate of Oman will be connected to a new intercontinental submarine cable system linking Europe, Africa and Asia.

Dubbed the Blue-Raman submarine cable system, it will add to a growing cluster of international undersea telecom cable systems — 21 at last count — with landing points on Oman's shores.

International service provider Sparkle, part of Italy's TIM Group, is building the cable system in collaboration with Internet giant Google and other companies.

Blue-Raman is in fact two distinct cable systems: one, named Blue Med, which connects Italy, France and Greece among other European nations, and the other, named Raman, connects Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti and Oman before terminating at Mumbai on the west coast of India.

Spanning a total distance of about 8,000 km, the Blue-Raman system is valued at around \$400 million.

While cable-laying on the Blue Med part of the system began earlier this year, a cable-laying ship chartered by Sparkle recently commenced work on the Raman system.

DUBBED THE BLUE-RAMAN SUBMARINE CABLE SYSTEM, IT WILL ADD TO A GROWING CLUSTER OF INTERNATIONAL UNDERSEA TELECOM CABLE SYSTEMS – 21 AT LAST COUNT – WITH LANDING POINTS ON OMAN'S SHORES.



Communications and Information Technology, the growing number of international undersea cables in Oman's proximity can easily link in real-time the data downloaded from satellites to end users. The move is being explored through Oman's space programme.

OPAZ to go paperless by mid-year

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has set June 30, 2023 as the last day for receiving and sending paper transactions.

This endeavour comes as part to complete its plan towards digital transformation. It further reflects OPAZ tireless environment-friendly efforts and initiatives, including its paperless campaign

The move will help to accelerate the pace of digital transformation and contribute to automating the services and transactions provided by OPAZ and its affiliated zones to investors.

Reflecting on its digital transformation plan, OPAZ had stopped printing and receiving all paper transactions and documents at the one-stop station in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm last year, replaced employee's paper business card with the Near Field Communication (NFC) feature in the employee's ID card and introduced electronic alternatives to transfer and share files, documents and transactions between employees instead of using printed copies.

OPAZ implemented the use of internal online portal for employees, File Cloud platform for data storage, issuing the Cadastral Drawing (Krooki) electronically for investors, as well as activating the document management system and electronic documents (Wusool).



شركة المرافق المركزية
Centralized Utilities Company

Tender Announcement

Introduction

Centralized Utilities Company LLC (herein after "referred as Marafiq") inviting proposals from qualified and experienced Tenderers to undertake to provide Proposals for Operation and Maintenance Services of Potable Water Network System in Duqm. The MARAFIQ invites Bidders to submit their proposals as described below.

Tender Number	Tender Title	Tender Description	Tender Fees	Clarification Closing Date	Bid Submission Date
CUC-000-00-000-LE-TND-0030	Operation and Maintenance Services of Potable Water Network System in Duqm	Marafiq intends to obtain proposal from experienced Operation and Maintenance Contractor to provide Operation and Maintenance Services for the potable water assets owned by Marafiq. 1. The Tenderer shall have minimum Five (5) Years' experience in Operation and Maintenance of water supply projects. 2. The Tenderer shall submit a bid bond obtained from a locally registered bank in Oman for a value of 2% of the Tender Value.	1,000 OMR	24 th April 2023	27 th April 2023

Request for proposal

The RFP will be made available in electronic form from 9:00 AM, 13th March 2023 Oman time until 11 am, 13th April 2023.

Contractor Minimum Qualifications

Contractor must hold valid registration with Government Entities for works of this nature and have necessary experience in the Operation and Maintenance of water supply Projects with financial stability in Oman.

Interested Tenderers shall contact Marafiq via email to tender@marafiq.om with the subject heading "Operation and Maintenance Services" to receive further instructions related to payment of tender fee and collection of RFP Package

P.O. Box 80 P.C. 102
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
www.marafiq.om



ODBW showcases latest developments in the building construction, design and real estate sector

MUSCAT: A national-level event attuned to the thriving building construction, design, and real estate industry, the 18th edition of the Oman Design & Build Week (ODBW) was inaugurated by HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan on March 12, 2023 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center, signifying the start of the 3-day event programme.

The free-to-attend exhibition and conference, which will run from March 13-15, 2023, is organised under the patronage of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in partnership with the

Oman Real Estate Association. Offering participants an enriching business platform, ODBW will provide insights into the latest trends and advancements in the sector as well as infinite opportunities to interact one-on-one with decision-makers and enhance business contacts.

Co-located with ODBW is the Oman Real Estate Exhibition (OREX) which will bring together real-estate developers, qualified investors, key delegates from regional authorities and other service providers.

The opening ceremony of ODBW welcomed HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation



Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan as the Chief Guest and also included in attendance prominent delegates from different ministries, C-suite executives from leading companies in the private sector and industry experts.

Commenting on the event,

Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning said, “We are indeed delighted to host an event of such scale that will stimulate the construction, design, and real estate sector. While being a vital networking platform for those in the industry, ODBW also signals

the qualitative shift that the sector has witnessed over the years. Businesses have become more agile, innovative as well as progressive and have taken concerted efforts to match the increasingly value-conscious demands of clients. Visitors will easily be able to learn, explore and navigate new products and developments in the industry and broaden their knowledge of the prevalent market. The event will also further contribute to positioning Oman as a lucrative destination for investments.”

The ongoing ODBW Conference organised in collaboration with the Oman Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and the Oman Real Estate Association is another

key highlight of the event. The 3-day CPD-credited sessions provide insights into the Oman Spatial Strategy and Oman Real Estate Strategy and their influence and impact on the investment environment and construction industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

The engaging sessions cover relevant issues in the industry with panel discussions that include topics like the future of real estate in Oman, digital transformation and the metaverse, integrated tourism complexes, and real estate finance and evaluation. The complete agenda for the workshop is available here - <https://www.omandesignandbuildweek.com/agenda>

Alizz Islamic Bank’s ‘Alizz One’ offers upgraded banking experience

MUSCAT: To offer an upgraded banking experience and provide customers with the best services and products that comply with the principles of Sharia, Alizz Islamic Bank has launched Alizz One a value proposition for those who wish to transfer their salaries to the bank.

The bank’s commitment to meeting the diverse financial needs of society is demonstrated through the tailor-made programme Alizz One that encompasses financing, accounts, and savings plans.

This all-inclusive package aims to provide innovative services that offer flexible financing rates and a variety of account and financing product options to customers.

Furthermore, the package is



designed to enhance the customer experience for those who aspire to invest via their savings.

The banking products package offered under Alizz One includes a current account that facilitates various customer transactions and offers optional cheque book issuance.

Additionally, there is a long-

term savings plan account that is designed to enable customers to save towards specific goals while earning monthly profits. Customers can also link a savings account to a current account and a separate savings account as a sweep functionality.

There is also a fixed investment deposit wakalah or murabaha account, which are investment accounts that includes deposits for profit generation purposes. The Alizz One package offered by Alizz Islamic Bank provides a wide range of financing options, including home finance, auto finance, and personal finance and has been designed to offer attractive benefits to customers who choose to transfer their salaries to Alizz Islamic Bank.

All-new Kia Telluride now in Oman

MUSCAT: Kia’s all-new 2023 Telluride is now in Oman! The stunning new SUV is a well-rounded companion with the perfect blend of style, power and capability. Making a powerful impression while turning heads in the Telluride stylish exterior.

Highlighting the Telluride’s bold presence are Dual LED Headlamps, Integrated LED Daytime Running Lights & Indicator Lamps, LED Front and Rear Fog Lamps, LED Rear Combination Lamps, Sunroof, 20” Alloy Wheels, Pirelli Tyres and more.

Paving the way for memorable and fun journeys is the comfortable and well-planned interior which includes 12” Colour LCD with Smart Navigation, Floating Type AVN Design, Rear Seat Driver Talk Mode, Multi Bluetooth



Connection, Dual Independent Full Auto Air Conditioner, Roof Mounted Rear AC Control, Wireless Smartphone Charging, Leather Seats, Ventilated Front Seats with Heating or Cooling Function and more.

The Telluride takes driving experiences to all-new levels with a range of features that include Self Levelling Rear Suspension, Walk-in Button, Remote Engine

Start, Remote Window Control, Smart Key with Button Start Terrain Mode System, and more.

Customers looking to experience the all-new Kia Telluride can visit their nearest Reliable International Automotive showroom. Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers.

Sohar International, Athar Foundation to enhance healthcare system in Oman



MUSCAT: Sohar International is proud to reaffirm its steadfast commitment and contribution towards supporting the country’s healthcare system through its partnership with Athar Foundation.

The Bank’s Chief Executive Officer, Ahmed al Musalmi, met with Dr Ahmed al Saidi, Chairman of the Health Endowment Foundation (Athar), Ahmed al Khonji, Member of the Board of Directors of Athar Foundation, and Taqwa al Lawati, Executive Manager of Athar Foundation to discuss their current partnership and explore new ways to collaborate.

The meeting aimed to build on the success of their previous joint initiatives and to further support the health sector. The

corporate alliance between the three organisations has already made a significant impact in the healthcare landscape in Oman, and the renewed commitment is set to bring about further progress in this area.

Ahmed al Musalmi commented on the bank’s corporate social responsibility strategy, saying, “Our primary goal has always been to drive holistic wellbeing in the community and transform lives by supporting pioneering initiatives that touch every segment of society. We are indeed delighted to join hands with a noble organisation like Athar Foundation, which has consistently adopted innovative methods to address the welfare of society.”

Bank Muscat hosts special Sayyarati networking event in Suhar

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to strengthening its relations with partners and to further popularise the benefits of Sayyarati Auto Loans, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, organised a special event in Suhar for vehicle dealers based in the governorates of North and South Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi.

The special networking event was attended by Abdulnaser N al Raisi, General Manager — Personal Banking, and other senior officials from Bank Muscat as well as representatives from car dealerships and showrooms from the four governorates.

On this occasion, Taya Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager — Interior Regions, Bank Muscat, expressed his happiness at organising the special event, which emphasised the importance of successful partnership and cooperation in providing the best services to customers. He said that Bank Muscat was committed to continuing its strong support and partnership with different companies operating in the all-important automobile sector including, dealerships, showrooms and other companies dealing with automotive services.

He praised the bank’s Sayyarati partners for tirelessly working to improve and enhance offerings for the benefit of customers. He also pointed out how the bank’s various products and services were improving financial inclusion in the Sultanate of Oman, and thanked customers



and partners for their strong confidence and trust in the bank.

Addressing the gathering, Radhiya Hassan al Lawati, Head of Sales, Bank Muscat, said: “We are pleased to be here today at this event, which will further strengthen the partnership with our valued partners. Today’s event comes after the success of an earlier event with Sayyarati partners in the Governorate of Muscat.

We appreciate this partnership and confidence in the services and facilities that the bank offers which is contributing in the development of the automotive sector in the country. We would like to emphasise on our vision to serve you better every day as we work

towards meeting the current and future needs of all our customers.”

Radhiya al Lawati added: “Bank Muscat is very keen to further strengthen this ongoing partnership with vehicle dealerships and sales showrooms. In 2003, the bank launched its Sayyarati Auto Loans to help customers own their dream cars through an easy and accessible financing option.

Since then we have expanded our offerings by working closely with our partners. We hope to continue organising more such events in the future and working towards providing different benefits tailored according to each customer’s unique needs.”

Cathay’s people problem is Hong Kong’s too

THOMAS SHUM

Cathay Pacific may be a high-flying reminder of the Asian finance hub’s pandemic-induced isolation for longer than anyone wants.

The bureaucracy is championing the city’s reopening. New boss Ronald Lam wants the \$6.2 billion airline to hit 70 per cent of pre-pandemic passenger capacity by the end of December and is targeting a full recovery next year. It is halfway there: residents are taking holidays and visiting executives are back. It promises a swift reversal on a HK\$6.5 billion (\$834 million) net loss for 2022 Cathay reported.

Yet the carrier part-owned by Air China may find it hard to recruit enough staff to support its targets.

Lam plans to hire 3,000 across the group by the end of 2023.

Former flight attendants who’ve set up their own businesses will need to be persuaded to return to base salaries as low as HK\$9,100 (\$1,146) a month in one of the world’s most expensive cities.

Unsurprisingly, the airline’s flight attendants union, which represents around 3,000 members, is demanding higher wages and improved roster arrangements.

The high level of employee attrition is easing but the big test will be if Cathay can hold it down. Total staff at the group decreased by 400 to 21,200 by December 2022 despite a big recruitment drive that started in mid-2021 and despite hiring some 2,000 people last year. While Cathay’s Cadet programme — which trains potential pilots — is schooling a record number, winning back more experienced hands looks particularly tough.

Captains and First Officers quit the airline in droves after pay cuts and being forced to endure near perpetual quarantine thanks to the city’s now-abandoned draconian quarantine rules for aircrew. The company has close to 2,405 pilots, roughly 63 per cent of pre-pandemic numbers, according to a survey conducted in March by the Hong Kong Aircrew Officers Association. Investors are not encouraged, and sold shares down 3.6 per cent on Thursday.

Offering higher salaries would be an obvious fix but tough for an airline yet to return to profit. The enterprise is worth 16 per cent less than before the pandemic and its market value is up 7 per cent, logging just a fifth of the gains by rival Singapore Airlines.

Rightly or wrongly, the strength of a carrier is often seen as underpinning the strength of its home hub. That makes Cathay’s people problem Hong Kong’s too.

— Reuters

SALES AND MARKETING: MAXIMISING YOUR REACH

The art and science of sales and marketing in the digital age



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The author is a renowned coach, trainer and consultant

Sales and marketing are two critical components of any successful business. Whether you are an entrepreneur, a small to medium-sized business owner, or a large corporation, you need to have a strong sales and marketing strategy in place in order to reach your target audience, generate leads, and grow your business.

In this article, we’ll explore the art and science of sales and marketing in the digital age and how you can use them to maximise your reach and achieve sustainable business growth.

The first step in sales and marketing is to define your target audience. You need to understand who your customers are, what they want, and what motivates them to buy. This information will help you create a sales and marketing strategy that is tailored to their needs and interests.

You can use tools like customer surveys, demographic data, and social media analytics to gather information about your target audience.

Next, you’ll need to create a strong brand and messaging. Your brand is the image and reputation of your business, and it should reflect the values, mission, and unique



selling proposition of your business.

Your messaging should clearly communicate the benefits of your products or services and why they are the best choice for your target audience.

Digital marketing is another key component of sales and marketing. Digital marketing is the process of promoting your business, products, or services using digital technologies, such as the Internet, social media, search engines, and mobile devices.

You can use digital marketing to reach your target audience, build brand awareness, and drive traffic to your website.

You can also use digital marketing to engage with your customers, respond to their questions, and provide customer service.

Inbound marketing is another effective sales and marketing strategy. Inbound marketing is the process of attracting customers to your business through valuable and relevant content. You can use inbound marketing to educate your target audience, provide solutions to

their problems, and build trust and credibility with your customers.

Inbound marketing can also help you generate leads and build relationships with your customers. Outbound marketing is another important component of sales and marketing.

Outbound marketing is the process of promoting your business to potential customers through traditional marketing channels, such as advertising, direct mail, and telemarketing.

Outbound marketing can be an effective way to reach a large audience, but it can also be expensive and less targeted than digital marketing or inbound marketing.

Finally, you’ll need to measure and analyse your sales and marketing efforts to ensure that they are effective.

You can use tools like Google Analytics, social media analytics, and marketing automation software to track your website traffic, social media engagement, and marketing campaign results.

This information will help you make informed decisions about your sales and marketing strategy and optimise your efforts for maximum impact.

In conclusion, sales and marketing are the keys to reaching your target audience and growing your business in the modern era. By defining your target audience, creating a strong brand and messaging, using digital marketing, inbound marketing, and outbound marketing, and measuring and analysing your results, you can maximise your reach, acquire and retain customers, and achieve sustainable business growth.

We hope you have enjoyed this article on sales and marketing. As a closing enthusiasm question, are you ready to acquire and retain customers and grow your business with the key to sustainable business growth in the modern era?

Stay tuned for our next article on Customer Acquisition: “Acquiring and Retaining Customers: The Key to Sustainable Business Growth in the Modern Era.”

The inflation picture gets murkier



JIM O’NEILL

The author, a former chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management and a former UK Treasury Minister, is Chair of Chatham House.

In January, I expressed optimism that a recession across the Western world (and beyond) was becoming less likely, and high-frequency indicators since then have indeed supported a benign outlook.

This is especially true in the United States and China, now that it has reopened, but it also applies to continental Europe, the United Kingdom (to a more modest degree), and many developing and emerging economies.

Yet despite recent positive signs, several new sources of uncertainty have presented themselves.

First, the evidence for a sustained downward trend in inflation has weakened both in the US and Europe, leading central bankers to warn that they may need to resume rapid monetary-policy tightening.

US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has just told Congress that, after having reduced the size of its last interest-rate increase from 50 basis points to 25, the Fed may need to return to larger hikes.

Given US monetary policy’s central importance in the global economy, such changes are no small matter. Financial markets have duly

swooned, with short-term interest-rate expectations moving sharply upward.

Markets now expect the Fed to raise rates above 5 per cent, and some observers even anticipate a rise toward 6 per cent. Either way, investors will have to navigate many more hurdles for many years to come, including in equities.

The next big signal will come on March 10, when the US Bureau of Labour Statistics releases employment data for February. Market participants will be scrutinising the BLS report for evidence of increased tightness in the labour market, which would imply more potential inflationary momentum.

And not long after the jobs report, we will get the next monthly update on consumer prices. If these point to continued inflation “stickiness,” a more widespread freak-out in financial markets cannot be excluded.

Both forthcoming reports could renew fears of the hard landing (a recession with a sharp increase in unemployment) that everyone was discussing in the second half of 2022.

Evidence of continued inflation would heighten pressure on the

DESPITE SIGNS THAT INFLATION IN MOST MAJOR ECONOMIES HAS PEAKED AND IS TRENDING BACK DOWN, RECENT DATA RELEASES HAVE RENEWED FEARS THAT CENTRAL BANKS WILL HAVE TO TIGHTEN MONETARY POLICY STILL FURTHER. IN THE FACE OF MADDENINGLY MIXED SIGNALS, MUCH WILL DEPEND ON A FEW KEY FACTORS.

Fed to over-tighten in the name of demonstrating its credibility on price stability. And wherever the Fed goes, many other central banks will follow.

I do not envy today’s central bankers or professional forecasters. Their jobs are becoming increasingly tricky. After all, other leading indicators for inflation remain rather encouraging.

Despite China’s reopening, many global commodity prices have not rebounded significantly, and some have even continued to soften.

Leading commodity-price indices are down almost 20 per cent year on year, and some crucial

ones, like European natural gas, have fallen even further.

These indicators should not be overlooked, considering that commodity prices helped drive up inflation in the first place. Moreover, monetarists would point out that the growth rate of the US money supply has slowed.

In an earlier era, this data point alone would suffice to keep the Fed from raising rates any further. And, to top it all off, several housing-market indicators – such as a broad-based decline in home prices – have also begun to suggest that the economy is cooling off.

Given these more encouraging signs, if the next monthly employment and consumer-price reports are more positive than expected, the Fed and financial markets will heave a sigh of relief.

A soft landing—or a “no landing”—will remain a distinct possibility. Of course, a host of other issues could still muddy the waters.

For starters, Russia’s war in Ukraine remains a source of deep global uncertainty. At this point, no one has any idea when or how the fighting will end, let alone what economic consequences it will have, especially on commodity prices.

The second source of uncertainty is China’s economic recovery. Chinese policymakers recently announced a goal of around 5 per cent real (inflation-adjusted) GDP growth this year, which is lower than many forecasters would project given the strength of the post-Covid rebounds seen elsewhere.

Moreover, it remains to be seen if China’s recovery will proceed with little hindrance from other structural challenges, especially those emanating from its property market.

China watchers will have plenty of issues to follow and ponder heading into the rest of the year.

And, finally, there is Japan, where Haruhiko Kuroda is stepping down as the governor of the Bank of Japan after ten years in the job. Will the changing of the guard lead the BOJ to depart faster from the ultra-loose monetary and bond-market policies over which Kuroda presided?

Given the long duration of the BOJ’s quantitative easing and its effects on financial markets at home and abroad, any new shifts away will undoubtedly have far-reaching consequences.

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PMP. Indian male Civil Eng. Around 10 years experience in construction projects. Softwares: Primavera P6, MS Office, ERP, having Oman driving licence. Ready to join, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com, Call: 78002582.

PLANNING engineer, INDIAN female (M Tech Civil Structural Engineering) having 7 years experience as Quantity Surveyor cum Quality Control Engineer, looking for suitable position. Contact: 96154505.

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Two days in sleepless Dubai

As the nearest city to Oman's borders, Dubai has always had a fair number of Omani visitors who chose it as a recreation and shopping destination. It is an ideal location for families searching for fun and excitement. **P20**



Large Vermeer exhibition in Amsterdam completely sold out

THE LARGE EXHIBITION of works by the Dutch master Johannes Vermeer (1632-75) at the Rijks museum in Amsterdam is completely sold out, the museum announced on Saturday.

Until June 4, the museum will be showing 28 of the approximately 37 remaining paintings by the Dutch Baroque painter from the city of Delft.

Never before have so many Vermeer paintings been exhibited at the same time.

Shortly after the opening on February 10, all 450,000 available tickets had been sold. The museum had then extended the opening hours to admit more visitors. But even these extra tickets are now sold out online, according to a museum spokeswoman.

The worldwide interest was so great that the museum's website was temporarily blocked.

The museum did not say how many tickets had been sold in total.

For those who could not get a ticket, the museum offers an online exhibition under the title "Closer to Johannes Vermeer," where all the paintings can be seen in detail. — dpa



READ

ENCHANTMENT

BY KATHERINE MAY

The author of "Wintering" shares her journey to reconnect with her sense of wonder and awe.



ENTERTAINMENT

Swedish singer Loreen (Lorine Talhaoui) performs singing her song "Tattoo" during the Melodifestivalen song contest at Friends Arena in Stockholm. Loreen won Melodifestivalen and will represent Sweden in the Eurovision Song Contest in Liverpool in May 2023. — AFP



LIFESTYLE

A woman cool off in a fountain on 9 de Julio avenue in Buenos Aires. Argentina is enduring this year's most torrid summer ever reported, with record temperatures and a lack of rainfall. This unprecedented weather scenario is damaging agriculture and keeping the country under red alert. — AFP





Girl with AI earrings sparks Dutch art controversy

AT FIRST GLANCE it seems to be just a modern take on Johannes Vermeer's masterpiece "Girl with a Pearl Earring". But look more closely and things get a little strange.

Firstly, there are two glowing earrings in the image hanging in the Mauritshuis museum in the Dutch city of The Hague. And aren't those freckles on her face actually... a slightly inhuman shade of red?

That's because the work — one of several fan recreations replacing the 1665 original while it's on loan for a huge Vermeer show at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum — was made using artificial intelligence (AI).

Its presence has sparked a fierce debate, with questions over whether it belongs in the hallowed halls of the Mauritshuis — and whether it should be classed as art at all.

"It's controversial, so people are for it or against it," Mauritshuis press officer Boris de Munnick said.

"The people who selected this, they liked it, they knew that it was AI, but we liked the creation. So we chose it, and we hung it."

FRANKENSTEINISH

Berlin-based digital creator Julian van Dieken submitted the image after the Mauritshuis asked people to send in their versions of the famous painting for an installation called "My Girl with a Pearl". Van Dieken said he had used the AI tool Midjourney — which can generate complex pictures on the basis of a prompt, using millions of images from the Internet — and Photoshop.

The Mauritshuis then chose it as one of five images out of 3,482 submitted by fans that would be printed and physically hung in the room where "Girl with a Pearl Earring" is normally housed.

"It's surreal to see it in a museum," van Dieken wrote on Instagram.

The budding artists ranged in age from three to 94, depicting the "Girl" in diverse styles ranging from a puppet to a dinosaur and a



piece of fruit.

But the decision to choose an AI-generated image sparked a backlash.

Dutch artist Iris Compiet said on the Instagram feed for the Mauritshuis exhibition that it was a "shame and an incredible insult", and dozens of others piled in. "It's an insult to the legacy of Vermeer and also to any working artist. Coming from a museum, it's a real slap in the face," Compiet said.

She said AI tools breach the copyright of other artists by using their works as the base for artificially generated images, as well as scraping the data of Internet users in general.

The image itself she described as "almost Frankensteinish".

Artist Eva Toorenent, of the

European Guild for Artificial Intelligence Regulation, criticised what she called the "unethical technology".

"Without the work of human artists, this programme could not generate works at all," she was quoted as saying by the Dutch newspaper De Volkskrant.

WHAT IS ART?

"It's such a difficult question — what is art, and what is not art?" said the Mauritshuis's de Munnick. But he insisted that the museum, whose collection boasts three Vermeers and nearly a dozen Rembrandts, had not deliberately set out to make an artistic statement on AI.

"Our opinion is, we think it's a nice picture, we think it's a creative process," he said. "We're

not the museum to discuss if AI belongs in an art museum."

He admitted though that "up close, you see that the freckles are a little spooky."

Visitors to the Mauritshuis were equally divided, he added.

"Younger people tend to say, it's artificial intelligence, what's new. Elderly people sometimes say we like the more traditional paintings."

The Mauritshuis was looking forward to the return of the real "Girl" in April, he added. The painting's fame has increased in recent years due to a 1999 novel by US author Tracy Chevalier and an ensuing Hollywood film.

"Well, she is beautiful in the (Rijksmuseum) exhibition... But we will be very happy when she is at home." — **AFP**

CONSERVATION

Dwarf elephants? Giant rats? Strange island creatures at high risk



A DWARF ELEPHANT the size of a Shetland pony once roamed the Mediterranean island of Cyprus. In the West Indies, a giant rat-like rodent tipped the scales at more than 400 pounds (180 kg), rivaling an American black bear.

They were examples of the "island effect," a rule in evolutionary biology describing how large-bodied species tend to downsize on islands while small-bodied species upsize. These island dwarfs and giants — a menagerie also including pint-sized hippos, buffaloes and wolves — long have faced an elevated extinction risk that, according to a new study, is intensifying, imperiling some of Earth's most unique creatures.

Focusing on island-dwelling mammals, researchers said on Thursday they examined 1,231 existing species and 350 extinct ones spanning the past 23 million years. Extinction risk was seen highest among species that underwent more extreme body size shifts compared to mainland relatives. And the arrival of people on the islands raised extinction rates more than tenfold.

"Unfortunately, the slope of the extinction curve that began with the arrival of the first human voyagers and continued with the later waves of colonisation has become even steeper in recent decades," said paleoecologist Roberto Rozzi of the Natural History Museum of Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in Germany, lead author of the study published in the journal Science.

Islands foster unique evolutionary dynamics. For large-bodied species, there is evolutionary pressure to get smaller because of limits to habitat area and food resources compared to the mainland. But small-bodied species, because there is a decreased risk from predators on islands, are emancipated from evolutionary constraints on their size.

Some endangered island species today include: the dwarf buffalo Tamaraw on the Philippine island of Mindoro, 21 per cent the size of its closest mainland relative; the spotted deer of the Philippine Visayan islands of Panay and Negros, 26 per cent the size of its closest mainland relative; and Jamaica's hutia, a rodent 4-1/2 times bigger than its closest mainland relative.

Indonesia's island of Flores is a remarkable laboratory for the island effect, also called "Foster's rule," based on observations by mammalogist J. Bristol Foster in the 1960s. It once was home to a dwarf elephant relative, giant rats and a giant stork, as well as a dwarf human species — Homo floresiensis, nicknamed the "Hobbit," standing just 3-1/2 feet tall (106 cm) tall. The Hobbit disappeared about 50,000 years ago, shortly after our species Homo sapiens reached Flores.

Islands are biodiversity hotspots. Although they cover less than 7 per cent of Earth's land area, they account for up to 20 per cent of land species.

"Because of the island rule, you get all sorts of weird and wonderful animals on islands, many of which are already extinct. Of the still-extant species, islands harbour a large proportion of the diversity of terrestrial species on the planet and about 50 per cent of them are at risk of extinction. It's incredibly depressing," said paleoecologist and study co-author Kate Lyons of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The researchers documented an accelerating uptick in island extinctions, beginning more than 100,000 years ago.

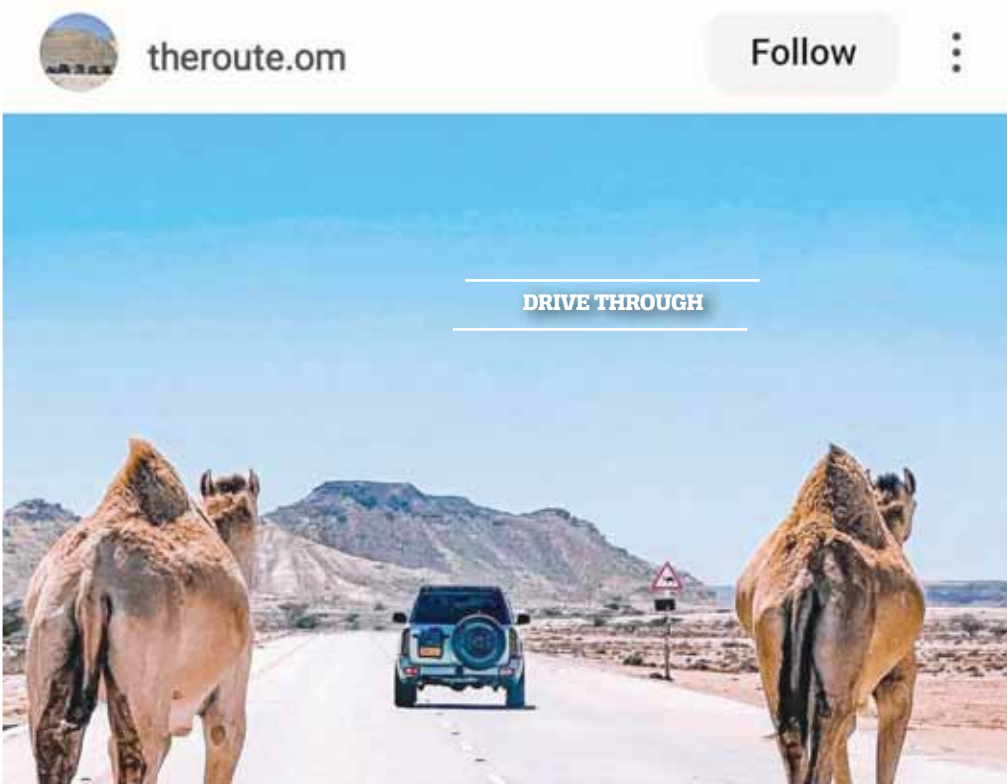
Our species has played a leading role through hunting, habitat destruction, and introductions of diseases and invasive predators, destabilising pristine island ecosystems. Even the earlier arrival of extinct human species like Homo erectus on islands coincided with a doubling in extinctions.

"We always need to be cautious about stating true causality, especially because there are usually many different things happening at the same time," said biologist and study co-author Jonathan Chase of the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research.

"But our results show with pretty good certainty that extinction rates on those islands increased dramatically after the arrival of modern humans, which, at least historically, were often due to over-hunting," Chase added. "There might have only been a few hundred dwarf elephants running around Cyprus when humans first got there, and it didn't take long for them to disappear." — **Reuters**



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AROUND THE WORLD

DISCOVERY

New Auroras Found Glowing in the Skies of Jupiter's Moons



A SIGHTSEEING ALIEN touring our solar system would do well to check out the emerald and blood orange-red ribbons of Earth's auroras. But our world isn't the only one with spectacular light shows in its atmosphere. New research shows auroras can also be seen on the Galilean moons of Jupiter: hypervolcanic Io, icy Europa, quirky Callisto and gigantic Ganymede. Auroras exist throughout the cosmos, but often in wavelengths that human eyes cannot see. Astronomers in two papers published this month in *The Planetary Science Journal* are the first to report that if you were to stand on the surface of Ganymede and Callisto, visible auroras would be dancing above. The researchers also describe the existence of new types of visible auroras on Io and Europa.

The researchers captured the new auroras by peering through telescopes in Hawaii, Arizona and New Mexico. The team spent years watching the satellites repeatedly get swallowed by Jupiter's shadow, then reemerge.

Catching elusive and ephemeral glows on distant, diminutive and fast-moving moons can be difficult. But "the aurorae are always there when you observe an eclipse," said Katherine R. de Kleer, a planetary astronomer at the California Institute of Technology and one of the authors of both studies. The researchers tracked down the darkness-smothered moons frequently enough to reveal the novel skyglows.

Galilean auroras are generated differently than those on Earth. Magnetic fields and energetic particles ejected from the sun reach Earth and are ensnared by our planet's magnetic bubble. Those particles plunge toward the north and south magnetic poles and crash into gas molecules in the upper atmosphere, briefly energising them and liberating various hues of visible light.

But other than Ganymede, the big moons of Jupiter lack magnetic bubbles. Instead, their auroras owe their existence to Io. Its noxious atmosphere — partly supplied by the moon's epic volcanic eruptions — regularly sheds into space. The castoffs mingle with sunlight and become electrically excited. Plenty gets captured by Jupiter's colossal magnetic bubble, but some of it slams back into Io's atmosphere, or into the other three moons' gassy sheaths. Those impacts are what ignite the moons' auroral lights.

The researchers confirmed that all four moons' skies glow in green and red hues similar to those seen on Earth. Although less luminous than our own world's auroras, these otherworldly displays have their own beguiling features.

The moons' extremely thin atmospheres make their red auroras shine far more intensely than their green ones do. Io, the oddest Galilean satellite, has a streetlamp-like yellow-orange radiance. This light show dims shortly after Io enters Jupiter's shadow. After reemerging, and bathing for a few hours in sunlight, this sickly amber glow burns brightly again.

As on Earth, the emergence of specific colours depends in part on an aurora's altitude. But Io has an unusual mix of auroral pigments. "You would get a rainbow effect," said Carl Schmidt, a planetary astronomer at Boston University and an author of both studies. Orange and red hues may be everywhere, like different paint tinctures smeared together, but green would be found only when an aurora occurs very high up. — **NYT**

LIFESTYLE

Treasure hunters' gems go on display in Denmark



THEY MAY BE derided elsewhere but in Denmark, hobby archaeologists who hunt treasures with metal detectors are such an asset the National Museum has dedicated an entire exhibit to their finds.

"What they save now means the world for what we can do in the future and how we can build our museums," exhibit curator Line Bjerg told AFP.

"What they do really matters." In Denmark's muddy soil, if objects "are not saved, then they are lost to history", she added.

In three rooms on the museum's bottom floor, visitors can learn about "detectorists" and admire some of their discoveries, including rings, necklaces and gold coins, all marked with the name of their finder.

In the Scandinavian country once populated by Vikings, amateurs can use metal detectors almost everywhere as long as they get permission from the landowner. They are not, however, allowed to dig beneath the top layer of soil.

Any archaeological finds have to be turned over to a local museum for an initial evaluation before they are transferred to the National Museum for an in-depth assessment — and a possible reward.

DETECTORISTS' HAULS CAN BE ABUNDANT.

"Last year, we had almost 18,000 objects that were sent for treasure trove processing. The year before that it was 30,000 objects," Bjerg said.

Known as "Danefae", any archaeological artefacts found by treasure hunters automatically belong to the state, under an old medieval law.

According to Torben Trier Christiansen, an archaeologist with the Historical Museum of Northern Jutland, the collaboration with the hobbyists is invaluable.

They are "one of the most

important collaborators of the museum", he insisted.

There are more than 250 detectorists in his region, with the most active among them handing over around a hundred objects per year.

Arne Hertz, a 64-year-old pensioner who heads a local association of detectorists, said "people are pleased to do the right thing by handing over the findings".

WRITING HISTORY TOGETHER -

The unique collaboration is based on a mutual understanding. On the one hand, archaeological sites won't be looted. On the other, authorities are able to showcase the amateur discoveries.

"Sometimes it's these particular finds that change our history because they add knowledge that we simply did not have before," Bjerg noted.

One section of the biggest exhibition room is dedicated to the "Vindelev Treasure".

Comprised of 22 gold objects, it was buried in the sixth century in southwestern Denmark and found in late 2020 by an amateur who had just bought a metal detector.

The treasure trove includes a

bracteate -- a thin coin stamped on one side.

"And on the inscription of the bracteate is mentioned the name of Odin, the Norse god. And it puts Odin 150 years before we actually knew that he existed as a god," Bjerg said.

"We're building our history together in Denmark."

For detectorists, whose finds have on occasion been displayed at local museums, the exhibit at the National Museum is a major recognition.

"It's very impressive to see how the things we've found are displayed -- and to see that we are actually helping a little to enrich Denmark's history," 38-year-old Simon Grevang, who

works in online marketing and has been a detectorist for four years, told AFP.

The exhibit has drawn crowds since opening in February.

Annie Lund, a 72-year-old retiree who was enthralled by the jewellery on display, said it was a good way of making history accessible.

"Twenty or forty years ago, this was only for a small group of people, scientists... not for the general public. So I think this is really good," she said. — **AFP**



FASHION

Goodbyes and good buys: Paris Fashion Week highlights



THE WOMENSWEAR autumn-winter season finally comes to a halt on Tuesday, having rumbled through New York, London and Milan before ending in the French capital. Here are some of the highlights from the final set of shows in Paris.

- VIVienne AND PACO, AU REVOIR -

The fashion crowd said adieu to two titans of 20th century design.

Vivienne Westwood's widower Andreas Kronthaler presented something of a greatest hits collection, with new takes on her iconic pirate boots, corsets, petticoats and platform shoes.

"Maybe the most important thing you ever taught me was to put the woman on a pedestal," he said in a poem accompanying the show, while Westwood's granddaughter Cora Corre capped proceedings in an appropriately inappropriate wedding dress.

For the farewell to eccentric Spaniard Paco Rabanne, who died last month at 88, it was the clanging, tinkling sound of gold and silver dresses — a fitting memorial to the man behind the sci-fi "improbable dresses" of the 1960s.

- BALENCIAGA'S HUMBLE-CORE -

When the hype bubble grows too large and bursts in your face, it's time for a reset.

Balenciaga's Demna was in full contrition mode after disastrous ad campaigns last year that appeared to reference child abuse (unintentionally, he insists).

No clever stagings or provocative \$1,500 trash bags this time — just a clean white room and some elegant clothes. Call it "Humble-core".

Before the fall, it would have been "praised to high heaven", said the *New York Times*, but in the circumstances it "seemed more like the march of the penitents".

- BUYER'S DELIGHT -

For the buyers from Harrods, the highlights included Chloe, Rick Owens and Schiaparelli.

It was Chloe designer Gabriela Hearst's "strongest collection to date," said the department store's womenswear head Clemmie Harris, with "luxurious fabrics... in newer, cleaner shapes" and "instant must-haves" such as puffer capes and shearing vests.

Rick Owens consistently finds new twists on his dark, alien aesthetic — this time with dramatic capes and huge cocooning wraps.

"While always true to his distinct and compelling vision he never fails to push the boundaries," said Simon Longland, Harrods director of buying.

There was also praise for the first pret-a-porter catwalk show by Schiaparelli's Daniel Roseberry: "An important step in the revival of the house... rich in detail fabrication and execution," said Longland.

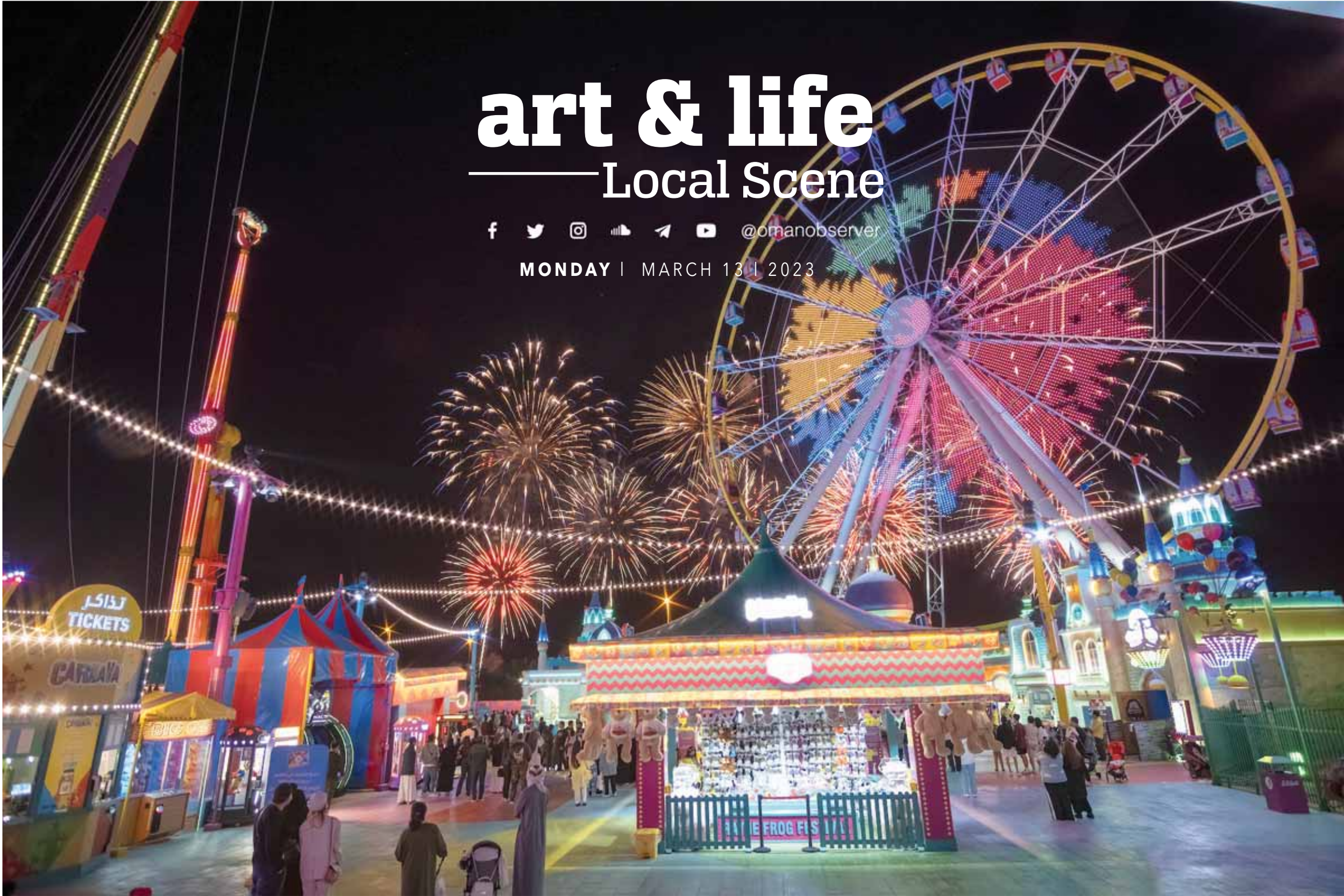
Louis Vuitton eye-lights The French brand's hot streak was evident from the front row, which included film stars Zendaya, Alicia Vikander and Lea Seydoux, as well as hip-hop artist Pharrell Williams, its newly minted menswear designer.

The show was a mix of classic, elegant and inventive tailoring, but it was accessories like the light-up visors that grabbed the most attention.

- PENCILLED IN -

Last cool when it was encircling the legs of Marilyn Monroe and Audrey Hepburn, several labels seem to think it's time to bring back the pencil skirt.

They were part of Dior's homage to the 1950s -- though in a crumpled, less figure-hugging form -- while Saint Laurent combined them with giant shoulder pads and aviator shades to create some kind of ultra-elegant 1980s fever dream. Young designer Charles de Vilmorin made them out of vinyl for Rochas and what he called a "pimped-out mermaid silhouette". — **AFP**



art & life

Local Scene

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MONDAY | MARCH 13 | 2023

Two days in sleepless Dubāi

By Mai al Abri

Similar to the Omani heritage and closer to its identity, the Dubai environment, with its unique features, reminds the Omani tourist of their traditions, heritage, and origin. As the nearest city to the Sultanate of Oman's borders, Dubai has always had a fair number of Omani visitors who chose it as a recreation and shopping destination, a city that combines heritage and contemporary in a distinct and entertaining manner. It is an ideal location for families searching for fun and excitement. Invited by Dubai Economy and Tourism Department to explore their unique experience in creating a large hub for retail shopping, traditional and crafts markets, as well as viewing the tranquillity of the long beaches, The FAM trip aims to introduce families to the diverse locations and discover some of the must-see attractions and landmarks while in Dubai. The programme includes a variety of venues that were recommended for visitors planning a vacation to Dubai. From the best accommodations for your budget to heritage and art venues and retail malls, whatever selections the visitor takes are ideal. We stayed at the Rove City Walk Hotel, which is located in the heart of the city and offers friendly, fuss-free service and comfortable rooms with everything you truly need for urban exploration and none of the fluff. The best part is that everything is

just a short ride or leisurely walk away: theatres, restaurants, and even an indoor tropical forest teeming with exotic flora and critters. City Walk is one of Dubai's newest and most popular hangouts, with a sophisticated atmosphere and a plethora of things to see and do such as high-end shopping, dining, walking, and enjoying activities since it is the city's largest event arena! The Sikka for Art is the destination for Omani artists who want to establish a reputation overseas. Sikka is a multidisciplinary platform for local and regional emerging artists. It is the first yearly project of its kind, with the goal of promoting and showcasing the works of local and regional artists by providing an appropriate platform for them to display their work in front of a diverse audience. Several Omani artists have participated in Sikka's shows over the years. From the arts to a thrilling gaming experience, visitors to Dubai Parks and Resorts may find more than 100 exciting indoor and outdoor rides and attractions at Motiongate Dubai, Bollywood Parks Dubai, Legoland Dubai, and Legoland Water Park. We examined the best from iconic film studios such as Columbia Pictures, DreamWorks Animation, and Lionsgate at Motiongate Dubai, the region's largest Hollywood-inspired amusement park. Experience spectacular thrills, including the world's first rollercoaster inspired by action flick John Wick and the world's fastest single-car spinning roller-

coaster themed after heist movie Now You See Me, as well as iconic animated characters such as the Smurfs and Shrek. Meanwhile, aspiring filmmakers may go behind the scenes at Studio Central. Al Seef, a lively waterfront promenade where old and new meet, runs along Dubai Creek's waterfront. The region is similar to Muttrah corniche, which has a long quo of malls, hotels, and restaurants along the waterfront. Learn about the Gulf's origins as a famed pearl diving harbour, see the open-air floating market and 1950s-style souk, get a henna tattoo, and buy handicrafts along the sikkas (alleyways). We had our lunch at al Fanar Restaurant which keeps the charm of Al Fanar's ambience and unique Emirati flavours while catering to fish lovers' sensibilities. Mercato Shopping Center, an Italian Renaissance-style retail complex in Dubai with many universally popular stores, is a bustling mall highly recommended for visitors along with the Outlet Village Mall and the Global Village. You may buy a wide range of products from over 140 retail stores, including Massimo Dutti, Diesel, and Armani Jeans. The Pointe and the View on the Palm Jumeirah are ideal places to hang out throughout the winter and at night. The visitor can spend the entire day out and entertained with breathtaking views and compelling options for shopping, dining, and playing.

