

Concert to mark Omani Women's Day

The Royal Opera House Muscat will present the beloved annual concert, Omani Women's Day on October 17. The much anticipated annual event, presented to audiences to coincide with the Omani Women's Day, has always been an opportunity for everyone to come together in a celebration of the wonderful women both in this country and across the world. Women now make up more than 30 per cent of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra. **DETAILS ON P5**



HM GIVES AUDIENCE TO ZANZIBAR PRESIDENT

COOPERATION BETWEEN OMAN AND ZANZIBAR IN VARIOUS SPHERES REVIEWED



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience at Al Barakah Palace on Wednesday morning to Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar.

At the outset of the audience, His Majesty welcomed the visit of President of Zanzibar to the Sultanate of Oman.

The audience reviewed areas of cooperation between Oman and Zanzibar and efforts exerted to promote them in various spheres.

His Majesty and President of Zanzibar also exchanged views on different issues of mutual interest.

The audience was attended from the Omani side by Dr Hamad bin Said al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and Saud bin Hilal al Shaithani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Republic of Tanzania.

Meanwhile, it was attended from the Zanzibari side by Saada Mkuya, Minister of Finance and Planning, Dr Khalid Salum Mohammed, Minister of Infrastructure, Communications and Transport, Mbarouk Nassoro Mbarouk, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Dr Mwinyi Talib, Attorney General and Abdallah Abasi Kilima, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Sultanate of Oman.

After that, His Majesty the Sultan and the President of Zanzibar held a closed-door meeting. — ONA

Zanzibar President invites Omani investments

MUSCAT: Dr Hussain Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, met a number of Omani and Zanzibari businessmen, on the sidelines of the Omani-Zanzibari Business Forum. This took place as part of his official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The forum, organised by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel on Wednesday, aims at strengthening trade and economic relations and contributing to raising rates of trade and investment exchange between the two sides.

The President of Zanzibar underscored the importance of the role of the private sector of both sides to enhance the Omani-Zanzibari economic relations by taking advantage of the investment potentials and opportunities available in the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar.

He called on Omani businessmen to invest in the promising sectors that Zanzibar focuses on, such as tourism, the blue economy, oil and gas, and maritime trade, in view of the historical relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar.

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said in his speech that the Sultanate of Oman has taken many measures to attract foreign investments and focus on several lucrative sectors for economic diversification.

These opportunities can be benefited by Oman and Zanzibar for greater economic cooperation.

On his turn, Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of OCCI, said that organising the forum aims at promoting trade and economic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar, thanks to the potentials and enablers enjoyed by both sides.

He added that the statistics show that the volume of trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Republic of Tanzania hit more than \$182 million by the end of June 2022.

The forum included visual presentations highlighting the investment climate, incentives and procedures related to the business milieu in the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar. — ONA



Omani businessmen can invest in the promising sectors such as tourism, the blue economy, oil and gas, and maritime trade, in view of the historical relations between Oman and Zanzibar

DR HUSSAIN ALI MWINYI
President of Zanzibar



HONOURABLE LADY RECEIVES SPOUSE OF ZANZIBAR PRESIDENT

Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, received at Al Barakah Palace on Wednesday, Spouse of the President of Zanzibar.

At the outset of the meeting, the Honourable Lady welcomed the guest, wishing her a pleasant stay in Oman. She also wished her country further progress and welfare. On her turn, the Spouse of the President of Zanzibar expressed her delight to meet with the Honourable Lady, wishing her good health, happiness and long life. She also wished the Sultanate of Oman further growth and prosperity. — ONA

State budget posts surplus of RO 1.090 billion till August end

MUSCAT: The state's general budget posted a surplus of about RO 1.090 billion by the end of August 2022 compared to a deficit of RO 1.052 billion during the same period in 2021, said the financial performance bulletin issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The bulletin added that the state's public revenues rose by 47.3 per cent until the end of August 2022, registering about RO 9.325 billion, compared to RO 6.331 billion as at the end of August 2021, thanks to the rise in oil and current revenues.

Hydrocarbon revenues (oil and gas) soared by 53.7 per cent, recording RO 6.980 billion as at the end of August 2022, compared to the same period in 2021. This increase is driven by the increase in oil and gas prices and production rates.

Total current revenues stood at about RO 2.331 billion, reporting a growth of 32 per cent as at the end of August 2022 compared to RO 584 million as revenues collected during the same period in 2021. Total public spending stood at about RO 8.235 billion, an increase of 11.5 per cent over the actual spending during the same period in 2021.

The development expenditures of ministries and civil units stood at about RO 566 million, comprising a rate of 51 per cent of the total development liquidity (RO 1.1 billion) allocated for 2022. Current expenditures stood at about RO 6.286 billion, constituting an increase of 11.7 per cent as the end of August 2022 compared to the same period in 2021. This expenditure includes RO 702 million as public debt service payments of interest on loans.

Total contributions and other expenditures rose to about RO 1.150 billion, compared to RO 523 million during the same period in 2021. The subsidy of petroleum products stood at about RO 498 million as at the end of August 2022, while subsidy of food commodities stood at about RO 11 million during the same period. The provision for debt repayment amounted to about RO 134 million. — ONA



HM, president hold talks to promote ties



The Honourable Lady receives spouse of president

Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, received at Al Barakah Palace on Wednesday, Spouse of the President of Zanzibar. At the outset of the meeting, the Honourable Lady welcomed the guest, wishing her a pleasant stay in Oman. She also wished her country further progress and welfare. The Spouse of the President of Zanzibar expressed her delight to meet with the Honourable Lady, wishing her good health, happiness and a long life. She also wished the Sultanate of Oman further growth and prosperity. — ONA





Zanzibar president visits National Museum

MUSCAT: Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, visited the National Museum on Wednesday as part of his official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The guest was greeted by Jamal bin Hassan al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum.

The guest and his accompanying delegation toured the museum and its galleries during which they were briefed on their contents that highlight important aspects of the history and civilisation of the Sultanate of Oman.

During his tour, the guest visited the Maritime History Gallery, where he got acquainted with the Omani fleet during the reign of Sultan Said bin Sultan al Busaidi in Muscat and Zanzibar. He also familiarised himself with the discoveries from the wreck of the sunken ship from the (Vasco da Gama) fleet, in addition to the manuscript of “Kitab al fawa'id fi ilm al ba'r wa al qawa'id” (The Book of the Benefits of the Principles and Foundations of Seamanship) by the famous Omani navigator Shihab al Din Ahmed bin Majid al Saadi loaned from the Al Assad National Library in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The guest also viewed the tree of life sculpture (Makonde Ujamaa), which was gifted by the late Tanzanian president Dr John Pompei Joseph Magufuli, to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said. It was carved by hand by Makonde artisans, and made of “ebony” wood.

President of Zanzibar also viewed the mihrab belonging to the Al Awainah Mosque. He also viewed collections dating back to the Al Yarubi dynasty, including a curved sword (Shamsheer) and “Al Haswa” dagger belonging to Imam Saif bin Sultan al Yarubi I. The sword and the dagger are two of the royal collections belonging to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

The president and his accompanying delegation also got acquainted with collections highlighting the religious tolerance in the Sultanate of Oman, as well as the position of the Omani woman in the Splendour of Islam Gallery.

The guest also viewed



collections that represent historical dimensions of the Omani relations with Africa in the Oman and the World Gallery. The president of Zanzibar also toured the corner dedicated to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said (the Dearest and Purest of Men) in the Renaissance Gallery. He viewed the origin will letter of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said addressed to their highnesses; members of the Royal Family Council through the Defence Council, as well as other collections belonging to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

President Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi was accompanied during his visit to the National Museum by Mohammed bin Nasser al Wahaibi, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Administrative and Financial Affairs (Head of the Mission of Honour). — ONA

■ PRESIDENT VISITS GRAND MOSQUE



Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, visited Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, within the framework of his current official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. During the visit, he was briefed on the mosque's history, and its Omani and Islamic architectural designs. He also went on tour of the mosque's facilities, such as Institute of Islamic Sciences, Library and other facilities.

Dr Mwinyi praises ROHM as podium for cultural exchange

MUSCAT: Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, visited the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM), within the framework of his current official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The guest was briefed on the nature of shows presented by the opera house and its year-round programme, in addition to its latest equipment used for the world music performances.

At the conclusion of the visit, President of Zanzibar signed the Senior Visitors Book, expressing delight and admiration at ROHM and commending its role as a distinguished podium for exchanging cultural and artistic heritage among nations.

— ONA





President of Zanzibar visits Records and Archives Authority

MUSCAT: Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, paid a visit to the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA), within the framework of his current official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

The guest and his accompanying delegation were received by Dr Hamad bin Mohammed al Dhawyani, Chairman of NRAA.

At the beginning of the visit, President of Zanzibar and his accompanying delegation took note of the NRAA experience in the field of documents and archives.

They were briefed by Dr Al Dhawyani on NRAA national contributions and its role in collecting and preserving the historical memory of the nation according to the best international scientific methods and practices.

The guest and his accompanying delegation also went on tour of the permanent exhibition of the national documents and archives at the NRAA. — ONA



DR MWINYI SEEKS INVESTMENTS FROM OMAN



Dr Hussain Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, at the Oman-Zanzibar Business Forum in Muscat on Wednesday. Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of OCCI, also took part in the meeting.



Shaikh Ahmed receives Zanzibar's Grand Mufti



MUSCAT: Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, received Shaikh Saleh Omar Kaabi, Grand Mufti of Zanzibar, in his office on Wednesday.

The meeting reviewed joint cooperation between the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and Iftaa Office in Zanzibar, and

means of enhancing it. Shaikh Saleh Omar Kaabi also met His Eminence Shaikh Ahmed bin Hamad al Khalili, Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman in a separate meeting. They discussed a set of topics of mutual interest and reviewed means of enhancing cooperation between the two countries. — ONA

Announcement

Works of transferring affected assets on Rusayl-Bidbid road

In line with the duplication of the Rusayl- Bidbid road, the Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company(OWWSC) announces that it is in the process of transferring the assets affected by the road works and implementing improvement works in the pumping stations and main water transmission lines in the governorates of South Batinah and Dakhiliyah,in order to ensure linking the strategic projects being implemented during the period from 17 to 18 October 2022 for a period of (48) hours.

(OWWSC) has taken the necessary measures to provide water according to the emergency procedures manual through the interconnection between the desalination plants in Sohar - Barka - Al Ghubra and the activation of alternative water sources (wells) and the use of water tankers to transport water to the main reservoirs. The company apologizes for any shortage that may occur in the water supply and urges all valued subscribers to take the necessary measures and continue to rationalize water consumption.

For more information, please contact the call center (1442).

@owwsc_om 1442
www.owwsc.nama.om

Cruise season to begin later this month

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Worldwide, as the cruise season begins towards the end of this month, the Sultanate of Oman is expected to receive its first ship around the same time.

As the 2019- 2020 season ended abruptly following the outbreak of the Covid pandemic, the upcoming season is expected to be the busiest of this decade.

According to crew-center.com, the Sultanate of Oman is expected to receive Mein Schiff 6 on October 28 (2,700 passengers), followed by AIDAbella on November 3 (2,500 passengers) and Viking Mars on November 10 (930 passengers).

The other notable names expected next month Azamara Quest, AIDAcosma (6,600 passengers on November 14), MSC Opera (2,500 passengers on November 23) and Norwegian Jade (2,882 passengers on November 29).



The Sultanate of Oman is expected to receive Mein Schiff 6 on October 28 (2,700 passengers), followed by AIDAbella on November 3 (2,500 passengers) and Viking Mars on November 10 (930 passengers)

The Sultanate-bound ships are also expected to call on the ports of Salalah in the South and Khasab in the North.

The cruise season resumed in the Sultanate of Oman in January 2021, with major of vessels calling at Port Sultan Qaboos in Muscat after the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism took several steps to

welcome travellers from all over the world.

The resumption of cruise season is key to the business around Muttrah Souq, land transport operators, tour guides and operators.

In 2019, Sultan Qaboos Port received 163 cruise ships carrying 660,295 tourists and 66 cruise ships carrying

263,587 tourists in 2020.

The Port of Khasab received 70 cruise ships carrying 136,984 tourists in 2019 and 31 cruise ships carrying 125,110 tourists in 2020.

The Port of Salalah received 45 cruise ships carrying 69,060 tourists in 2019 and four cruise ships in 2020.

Meanwhile, cruise shipping will bounce back to pre-pandemic levels in 2023, said a report by the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA), the world's largest cruise industry trade association.

The report said that more than 100 markets worldwide have reopened to cruising, and most cruise ships are back in service. The enthusiasm of travellers for cruises is evident in increasing passenger volumes, which are forecast to return to 2019 levels next year. We expect cruise to return to its original pre-pandemic growth forecast and fill the demand gap of 4.7 million passengers by 2025, the report said.



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NEW BATCH GRADUATE AT ROP

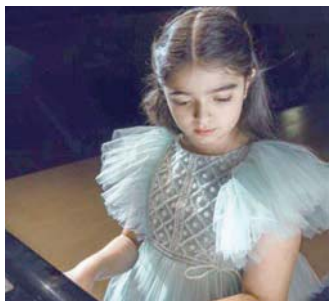


NIZWA: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) celebrated the graduation of a new batch of police recruits at the Institute of Police Recruits at Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences in the Wilayat of Nizwa on Wednesday. The graduation ceremony was patronised by Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour, in presence of Lt Gen Hassan bin Mohsin al Shraiqi, Inspector-General of Police and Customs and a number of senior officers at ROP and military and security services and officials at government departments.

Romanian Ambassador presents copy of credentials

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister on Wednesday received a copy of credentials of Florin Marius Tacu, Ambassador of the Republic of Romania appointed to the Sultanate of Oman. Sayyid Badr wished the ambassador success in carrying out his assignments. He also wished the bilateral relations between the two countries further progress and growth. — ONA

ROHM concert to mark Omani Women's Day



MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) will present the annual concert to mark Omani Women's Day, which falls on October 17.

This much anticipated annual event, presented to audiences to coincide with the Omani Women's Day, has always been an opportunity for everyone to come together in a celebration of the wonderful women both in this country and across the world.

In 2022, ROHM presents a concert which celebrates the women involved in music in Oman. Women are now making up more than 30 per cent of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra.

The highlight of the event is the participation of Kuwaiti born, Rawan Behbehani (pictured), a pianist of international standing, demonstrating a rare and an extraordinary talent from an incredibly young age.

The concert has been programmed to present music which encompasses traditional sounds of the nation's heritage and classical music from the world stage performed by a talented host of musicians.

Students flock to fest of knowledge, innovation

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The third day of the Oman Science Festival was filled with many events, programmes and competitions. The discussion sessions witnessed huge turnout of students from public and private schools, university students, institutes and technical and military colleges and those interested in science and innovation from the local community. On Thursday, OSF will host a discussion on climate change and its impact.

Students of Asilah Bint Qais School for Basic Education, one of the UNESCO-affiliated schools from the Governorate of Muscat, presented a musical operetta to promote the Green Schools initiative, titled: "A working Hand and Lasting Development." The operetta also included a show of the "Cultivate and Learn" project, with the aim of clarifying the three fields of the project, and the school's waste recycling project.

The festival was visited by many dignitaries and officials including His Highness Sayyid Azzan bin Qais al Said, Honorary President of the Omani Astronomical Society, Christian Bronmeier,



Ambassador of Austria to Oman, and Professor Nada Kakabadse from the Royal Academy.

On the education corner, Ghanem al Saadi, Senior Specialist of Innovation, said: "This corner contains 20 activities, with the participation of various parties, including ministries, institutions and associations, in addition to universities and government and private

colleges. All activities are interactive and meet the needs of all age groups."

On the Energy Corner, Khalid al Aufi, Senior Specialist of Scientific Innovation in the Department of Innovation and Olympiad, said: "The corner consists of 16 various activities that represent the types of energies, their forms and transformations, and the devices on which the types of energies work.

The corner includes technical solutions to overcome challenges facing solar energy, such as the robot that cleans solar cells. The corner targets those interested and specialists in renewable energies. The visitor receives many technical skills such as electromagnetic excavation, work of different energies, and modern nanotechnology.

Pact on cloud-based solutions marks ODP's 10th anniversary

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@LAKSHMIOMAN

Oman Data Park (ODP) celebrated its 10th anniversary at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre with a digital world theme on Tuesday.

The event marking the ODP anniversary celebrations was held under the auspices of Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals.

ODP has been the Sultanate of Oman's prime provider of IT-managed and cloud services, Hosting and Virtual Data Centre services since 2012.



In coinciding with the celebration of the company's tenth anniversary, Oman Data Park signed two agreements; the first agreement is with Omantel, for Omantel disaster recovery centre. The second agreement is a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Schlumberger for

collaboration on digital cloud-based solutions.

The inking of these agreements is considered a practical celebration of the ongoing successes of Oman Data Park, which has become a prominent beacon relied upon in various fields of IT technologies, hosting services, and managed services.

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (38/2022)

Companies specialized in the field and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/22/027	2022/MM/QS-66	Graveyard Refurbishment Works at Muscat (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	Second
PRE/22/126	2022/MM/QS-67	Construction of Proposed Solutions to Resolve Water Stagnation at Al Amerat Phase 8 (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	First
PRE/22/132	2022/MM/QS-68	Supply and Installation of Steel Pedestrian Rail in Sidab Area (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	SME (Forth)
PRE/22/133	2022/MM/QS-69	Excavating Graves at Al Amerat (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	Forth
PRE/22/135	2022/MM/QS-70	Beautification of the Residential Area in Al Wadi Al Kabir (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	First
PRE/22/137	2022/MM/QS-71	Renewal of License and Maintenance of Mobile Device Management (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/138	2022/MM/QS-72	AMC for Muscat Municipality Applications (E-Tender)	25	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/139	2022/MM/QS-73	Supply of Spray Equipments for Muscat Municipality (E-Tender)	25	27/10/2022	13/11/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/076	2022/MM/QS-37 (Re-Call 02)	Construction of Proposed Solution to Resolve Water Stagnation at Bousher in Al-Khuwair Area (E-Tender)	25	27/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/20/093	28/2021/MM/(HQ-25) Re-Call	Development of MBD Area at Muttrah (Re-Tender) (E-Tender)	150	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	Excellent
PRE/22/013	2022/MM/HQ-16	Construction of Balance Works of Internal Roads at Al Amerat (E-Tender)	54	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	First
PRE/22/145	2022/MM/QS-74	Stray Dogs Control Project (E-Tender)	40	01/11/2022	21/11/2022	Specialist

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of abond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcilt.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).
- For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200 / 24402330).

Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)
196/2022	Consultancy Services (Design & Supervision) to Construct Al Wafa Rehabilitation Center at Bedyah	Consultancy offices registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the First Degree	Wednesday 2-11-2022 02:00 PM	Monday 21-11-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On Thursday 13/10/2022.

❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

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

www.mosd.gov.om

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Japanese rocket launch fails in blow for space agency

TOKYO: The launch of a Japanese rocket taking satellites into orbit to demonstrate new technologies failed after blast-off on Wednesday because of a positioning problem, the country's space agency said.

It was Japan's first failed launch in nearly two decades, and the only one for an Epsilon rocket, a solid-fuel model that has flown five successful missions since its 2013 debut.

The unmanned craft took off from Uchinoura Space Center in the southern Kagoshima region, with its lift-off livestreamed by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

But a self-destruct signal was sent to the rocket less than 10 minutes later because of "positioning abnormalities", said Yasuhiro Funo of JAXA, who led the project.

The livestream was halted and presenters wearing hard-hats told viewers there had been a problem with the launch.

Funo explained at a press conference that a technical issue was detected before the third — and final — stage of the launch,



The Epsilon rocket No 6 takes off from the launch pad at the Uchinoura Space Center in Kimotsuki-gun, Kagoshima Prefecture. — AFP

just as the last powerful booster was about to be ignited.

"We ordered the rocket's destruction because if we cannot

send it into the orbit that we planned, we don't know where

it will go," he said, leading to safety concerns about where the machinery could fall.

After the mission was aborted, the rocket's parts were assumed to have landed in the sea east of the Philippines, he added.

Japan's last failed space launch was of a pair of spy satellites to monitor North Korea in 2003, and the only other time JAXA has sent a destroy order to a rocket was in 1999.

The 26-metre Epsilon-6 rocket had been carrying a box-shaped satellite due to orbit Earth for at least a year to carry out experiments, as well as eight micro-satellites.

Researchers and private companies had engineered new technologies to be tried out in space as part of the agency's third Innovative Satellite Technology Demonstration programme.

Their gadgetry ranged from a "pulsed-plasma thruster" to an experiment in "harvesting energy with (a) lightweight integrated origami structure", according to a JAXA fact sheet.

JAXA describes Epsilon as "a solid-fuel rocket designed to

Japan's last failed space launch was of a pair of spy satellites to monitor North Korea in 2003, and the only other time JAXA has sent a destroy order to a rocket was in 1999

lower the threshold to space... and usher in an age in which everyone can make active use of space".

It is smaller than the country's previous liquid-fuelled model, and a successor to the solid-fuel M-5 rocket that was retired in 2006 due to its high cost.

JAXA president Hiroshi Yamakawa apologised for Wednesday's failure, saying the agency was "terribly sorry that we couldn't meet the Japanese people's expectations". — AFP

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 -14/2022	Refurbishment of (11KV) Network in Film Area in Wilayat Mahout at Al-Wusta Governorate.	50/=	"C" and Above Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Tender Board, Tanweer, and Distribution Code Review Panel (valid certificate).	20/10/2022	02/11/2022
Tanweer -15/2022	Supply of LV Works to Feed Power Supply to Commercial buildings at Duqm in Al Duqm Wilayat (SEZAD) - Al Wusta Governorate.	50/=		23/10/2022	10/11/2022
Tanweer -16/2022	Construction of New 33KV Feeder Line to Feed Ghafeen Area at Wilayat Haima - Al Wusta Governorate.	50/=	"B" and Above Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Tender Board, Tanweer, and Distribution Code Review Panel (valid certificate). Contractors Should be approved by PDO to execute the Project.	20/10/2022	06/11/2022

The Conditions:

- Collection of Tender:** Interested and Specialized Companies 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.
- 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).
- 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.
- Tanweer 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



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وزارة الطاقة والنفط
Ministry of Energy and Petroleum



20th anniversary of Bali bombings marked

DENPASAR: Hundreds of mourners and survivors commemorated on Wednesday the 20th anniversary of the bombings that killed more than 200 people on the Indonesian resort island of Bali.

Grieving families, attack survivors and representatives from several embassies attended memorial services in Bali — where Al Qaeda-linked fighters detonated bombs at a bar and nightclub in 2002 — and

Australia.

"It's okay that some people have forgotten what happened 20 years ago but there are still real victims, there are children who lost their parents in the bombing," said Thiolina Marpaung, one of the organisers of the memorial, who was left with permanent eye injuries in the attack.

"I don't want them to be forgotten," the 47-year-old said. Hundreds gathered for a

mass prayer at a monument for victims built metres from the site of the blasts to mark Southeast Asia's deadliest terrorist attack and remember the 202 victims.

Most were foreign holidaymakers from more than 20 countries but Australia suffered the biggest loss, with 88 dead. "It's just sad for everybody. Everybody that is up there.

We just come to pay our respects," Australian tourist Nole Porter said. — AFP

Suu Kyi faces 26 years in prison after new convictions

BANGKOK: Military-ruled Myanmar on Wednesday sentenced former leader Aung San Suu Kyi to three more years in prison following convictions in two corruption cases, judicial sources said. She was given three-year sentences in each of the two cases, which are to be served concurrently.

They are the latest in a string of convictions Suu Kyi has faced since being ousted in a military coup in February 2021.

With Wednesday's court ruling, the 77-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner's prison term has been extended to a total of 26 years for corruption, incitement, breaching Covid-19 rules, electoral fraud and violating the official secrets act.

Suu Kyi has been in solitary confinement at a prison in the capital Naypyidaw since June after being placed under house arrest in the wake of the military coup.

The proceedings took place behind closed doors and Suu Kyi's lawyers are not allowed to speak to the media.

The cases have been widely denounced as military-staged show trials intended to discredit

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

Nobel Peace laureate (1991) • Aged 77

EARLY DAYS

- Born June 19, 1945 in Japanese-occupied Yangon
- Spent most of early years in India, and later in Britain, returned to Myanmar to start her political career

ROHINGYA MILITARY CRACKDOWN

- Denied claims that fleeing refugees suffered rape, extrajudicial killings and arson attacks during the 2017 Rohingya military crackdown

POLITICAL SPOTLIGHT

- 1989-1990 • Arrested in 1989, her party NLD* won elections in 1990, but the junta refused to recognise the results
- 2010 • Freed after 15 years of house arrest, won seat in parliament
- 2015 • Assumed de facto leadership in the role of state councillor
- 2021-2022 • Arrested as military stages coup, sentenced to 23 years in prison
- Sentenced to six additional years on October 12, 2022 for corruption

*National League for Democracy

AFP

previous civilian leaders like Suu Kyi and bolster the junta's own standing.

Myanmar has been in political turmoil since the coup on February 1, 2021.

The military has violently cracked down on pro-democracy protests and civil society groups as it seeks to quash armed resistance by anti-junta militias across the country.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, a rights group which documents killings and other abuses, at least 2,340 people have been killed and more than 15,800 arrested since the coup.

A Japanese freelance journalist and documentary film-maker was sentenced to three more years in prison on Wednesday for violating immigration laws, a source familiar with the proceedings said.

Last week, a military tribunal in Myanmar jailed Toru Kubota for seven years for violating sedition and communications laws. With the latest ruling he is due to spend a decade behind bars.

Kubota entered Myanmar on July 1 and was arrested on July 30 after filming a small anti-government rally in Yangon.

— dpa



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In brief

■ CAIRO



EFFORTS TO EXTEND TRUCE IN YEMEN STILL STAND

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said that the efforts to extend the truce in Yemen still stand, Al Arabiya TV reported after an initial UN-brokered pact between a coalition and the Ansar Allah expired early this month. The kingdom, the coalition and the Yemeni government are "keen on extending the truce," the Saudi-owned TV quoted Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud as saying. The United Nations is pressing for an extended and expanded truce that would build on the two-month one that expired on October 2 after being rolled over twice. — Reuters

■ N'DJAMENA



CHAD EX-OPPOSITION FIGURE NAMED PRIME MINISTER

Veteran Chadian politician and former opposition figure Saleh Kebzabo has been appointed prime minister, according to a decree issued by military leader and interim president Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno. Former journalist Kebzabo, 75, ran four times for the presidency against Deby's father, Idriss Deby Itno, who was killed during an operation against rebels and was succeeded by a junta headed by his son, a 38-year-old five-star general. Kebzabo is "named prime minister," according to the decree issued by Deby. The junta had originally declared it would restore civilian rule after 18 months in power. — AFP

■ LONDON



UK HOSPITALS TOLD TO PRIORITISE BLOOD, ISSUES AMBER ALERT

British health officials warned that non-urgent hospital operations could be cancelled due to a shortage in blood stocks, calling for more supplies. The warning came as NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT), which collects blood and other tissues, issued its first "amber alert" warning. "Asking hospitals to limit their use of blood is not a step we take lightly," said the service's interim chief executive, Wendy Clark. "This is a vital measure to protect patients who need blood the most," she added, apologising to patients whose surgery could be cancelled. — AFP

Ukraine gets new air defences

BRUSSELS: Ukraine's allies announced delivery of new air defences and recommitted to providing it robust, enduring military assistance at a meeting at Nato headquarters on Wednesday, saying Russian missile strikes two days ago only further united them.

US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin, sitting next to his Ukrainian counterpart, opened the gathering of more than 50 countries by condemning Russian President Vladimir Putin's deadly missile attacks against "targets with no military purpose" across Ukraine.

"The whole world has just seen yet again the malice and cruelty of Putin's war of choice, rooted in aggression and waged with deep contempt for the rules of war," Austin told the gathering, sitting next to Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov.

"But Russia's latest assaults have only deepened the determination of the Ukrainian people and further united countries of goodwill from every region on Earth."

The Russian air attacks killed 19 people in Ukraine, wounded more than 100 and knocked out power supplies across the country, adding new urgency to Kyiv's long-standing calls for air defences to protect its cities.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaks with Finland's Minister of Defence Antti Kaikkonen (L) and Sweden's Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist as part of a Nato Defence Ministers Council at the Alliance headquarters in Brussels. — AFP

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg called Russia's missile attacks a sign of weakness, after weeks of Ukrainian gains that have set off rare criticism inside Russia of its war effort.

"The reality is that they're not able to make progress on the battlefield. Russia is actually losing on the battlefield," Stoltenberg said.

"Ukraine has the momentum

and continues to make significant gains, while Russia is increasingly resorting to horrific and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and critical infrastructure."

Germany announced that the first of four IRIS-T air defence systems had reached Ukraine. German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht called it a "very important support for Ukraine in the fight against

missile attacks".

A senior US defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Germany's IRIS-T system was another sign of the commitment to provide air defences to Ukraine, predating Putin's latest missile strikes on the country.

"Again this is a horrible set of circumstances, what's occurred," the official said. "But the fact that

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg called Russia's missile attacks a sign of weakness, after weeks of Ukrainian gains that have set off rare criticism

Russia has this capability and is willing to use that capability, including against civilian infrastructure and civilian targets, is not a surprise."

The gathering in Brussels is the first big Nato meeting since Moscow annexed several Ukrainian territories, announced a mobilisation and issued veiled nuclear threats - moves that the alliance has classified as a clear escalation of the war that started with the invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

A senior Nato official said a Russian nuclear strike would change the course of the conflict and almost certainly trigger a "physical response" from Ukraine's allies — "and potentially from Nato itself."

The official did not detail what a physical response might entail. — Reuters

India halts production at pharma factory linked to Gambia deaths



Logo of the Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd company on a board outside their office in New Delhi. — Reuters

NEW DELHI: Indian health authorities said on Wednesday they had halted all production at the main factory of Maiden Pharmaceuticals near New Delhi after a WHO report that its cough syrups exported to Gambia may be linked to the deaths of dozens of children there. Known as a "pharmacy of the world", India supplies 45 per cent of all generic medicines to Africa.

The deaths of 69 children in Gambia - one of the worst such incidents involving drugs from India - have come as a blow to the industry whose exports more than doubled in the last decade to hit \$24.5 billion last fiscal year.

Indian authorities inspected the Maiden factory in the state of Haryana four times this month and suspended all manufacturing activities there on Tuesday "on grounds of deficiencies found in location inspection".

Haryana's health minister said an inspection conducted jointly by state and federal officials found 12 "flaws".

"Keeping this in view, the

entire production of the company has been banned and notice has also been issued," minister Anil Vij said referring to Maiden's main factory in Sonipat district.

Maiden executive Naresh Kumar Goyal declined to comment.

A top Indian health official, who declined to be named, said the government would not tolerate wrongdoing but that it was important to find out what exactly happened in Gambia. He denied allegations by some critics that health regulations in India, especially at the level of states, were lax.

The federal health ministry has formed a committee of four experts that will advise further action after "examining and analysing adverse event reports, causal relationship and all related details shared by the WHO".

Indian laws allow for imprisonment and fines for selling spurious drugs.

But the source said the WHO had yet to share any report establishing a direct link to the

deaths with the medicines.

WHO Assistant Director-General Mariângela Simão told a virtual news conference on Wednesday that the agency was working closely with Indian authorities to investigate Maiden's cough and cold syrups.

She said the WHO's conclusion about the deaths being linked to Maiden's medicines was based on analysis of several samples of medicines that were used by hospitalised children.

Maiden says on its website it has an annual production capacity of 2.2 million syrup bottles, 600 million capsules, 18 million injections, 300,000 ointment tubes and 1.2 billion tablets at its factories in Haryana.

Gambian police, in a preliminary investigation report on Tuesday, said that the deaths of 69 children from acute kidney injury was linked to the cough syrups made in India and imported via Atlanta-based Atlantic Pharmaceuticals, which has permission to export medicines to Gambia. —Reuters

Dozens missing after Venezuela floods

LAS TEJERIAS: Hopes were fading on Tuesday of finding alive any of 56 people missing after a devastating landslide swept through a Venezuelan town with 36 confirmed deaths to date. President Nicolas Maduro said on state television that the death toll is expected to reach 100.

Neighbors and rescuers — some 3,000 police, soldiers and other professionals — were engaged in the ever-more desperate search among the fast-hardening mud, tree trunks and rocks dumped on Saturday on the town of Las Tejerias.

Rescuers said it would be difficult to find any survivors in the town some 50 kilometres from the capital Caracas.

"I don't know whether to scream, I don't know whether to run... whether to cry," Nathalie Matos, 34, said of the frustrating wait for news on the fate of her 65-year-old mother, who she had on the phone as the deluge came. "She told me: 'Daughter, I am drowning, the water got in, get me out, get me out... save me!'" Matos recounted.

"I tried to call her back, she picked up, but there was just noise." A rescue team is at her mother's mud-filled house. "The dog gave signs here, in

this area that was the living room and the kitchen," said a firefighter, though all their digging so far had yielded nothing.

"I know she is there," insisted Mato.

A few metres away, another team examined a piece of land where a house stood until Saturday, when Las Tejerias became the site of Venezuela's worst natural disaster in decades.

Neighbours were helping to reconstruct what would have been the floor plan to get an idea of where to dig.

A civil protection official, who did not have permission to speak in an official capacity, said most victims of the storm died after they were struck by tree trunks, large rocks or other objects swept along by the raging waters, and others of hypothermia.

Unusually heavy rains caused a major river and several streams to overflow on Saturday, causing a torrent of mud that washed away cars, parts of homes, businesses and telephone wires, and felled massive trees.

Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez said a month's worth of rain fell in the area in just eight hours. The government has declared three days of mourning. — AFP



Rescuers from different firefighting and Red Cross institutions cross the Tuy River after a devastating landslide in the Venezuelan town of Las Tejerias. — AFP

Pirates versus navies



Khalid Alsafi Al Huraibi
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The writer is an entrepreneur and innovation adviser

Who would you support? The navy built to systematically protect our territories? Or pirates who make their living from disrupting these systems?

We grew up with the entertaining cartoon image of one-eyed pirates and their crew of misfits and parrots, last but not the least being the popular movie series “Pirates of the Caribbean”.

Today, the reason I remembered pirates and navies is the ambitious talks on investing in the potential of digital economy by the Saudi Minister of Communications and Technology Engineer Abdullah Al Sawaha and the Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, at Sultan Qaboos

University. The significance of these promising thought-leadership conversations with the public is that they share with us insights on what should we expect in these coming years and decades in terms of digital economy strategy, plans and execution.

Pirates of the 21st century

Strategy-wise, the visionary ministers mentioned that the current value of the venture capital world is around \$600 billion of which our region’s share only \$3 billion.

Therefore, I believe waiting for the traditional global economy system, that resembles a traditional navy, to allocate more economic value for the region will not happen unless the region unless becomes

THIS IS THE RIGHT TIME FOR OUR REGION TO INVEST IN MOVING FORWARD WITH CAUTION TO UNLOCK OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY TREASURES

disruptively innovative, like good pirates of the 21st centuries.

This especially is significant for us given the fact that digital economy is forecast to create at least 3 million jobs within the next few years, of which our current talents are available to benefit from less than third of these lucrative job opportunities.

The Digital Cooperation Organization - DCO

In 2020, seven nations built together an organisation the resembles a digital pirate ship with a plan to seek a fairer share of the world’s new economy.

DCO founders, namely, Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, Nigeria, Pakistan, Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain nobly aimed to “to promote social prosperity through more inclusive participation and growth across the digital economy”.

While this nascent organisation is struggling like any other international organisation with post-pandemic bureaucracy, modest diversity and inclusion, it still has the potential to contribute fostering the 300 thousand innovators our region needs to

turn our common digital economy strategies into realities.

‘Execution eats strategy for breakfast’

In our post-pandemic world, the more the public hears the world strategy, the more they become indifferent, unless it’s coupled with a road map to make tangible socio-economic impact on the ground.

Navies are like visions, they are excellent knowing where to go, and pirates are like effective talented experts in knowing what to do.

This is the right time for our region to invest in moving forward with caution to unlock our digital economy treasures, because the global traditional multinational digital navies will treat our regional visions as ambitions of fierce pirates and competitors.

Grief and outrage in Gambia over cough syrup deaths

BEKAI NJIE AND MILAN BERCKMANS

When Wuri Bailo Keita’s two-year-old daughter Fatoumatta developed a fever, he took her to hospital where she was diagnosed with malaria and sent home with a prescription for a paracetamol syrup. Less than a week later she was dead.

The infant is just one of 69 Gambian children to die of acute kidney failure since July in a series of cases linked to four Indian-made cough syrups.

The widening scandal has highlighted flaws in the tiny West African nation’s healthcare system, in turn raising questions about potential loopholes in world pharmaceutical trade.

“She could not eat anything and she was oozing blood from her mouth and nose,” Keita, a 33-year-old carwash attendant, said recounting his daughter’s suffering.

“At some point, I was praying for God to take her life.” President Adama Barrow made a nationwide address after the police launched an inquiry and health authorities were told to suspend the import licence of a suspected company. Barrow also promised to update drugs-related laws and praised the work of the health ministry in preventing further deaths. But fear and anger are mounting, and the death toll is still rising.

“President Barrow should sack the health minister, but instead of sacking him, he was praising the minister,” said Keita, the grieving father. “We want justice for these children.”Social media has been swamped by criticism of the healthcare system and by photos of the children who have died, most of whom were aged under five. “It’s time for the government to step up and stop these products,” Mariama Kuyateh, a 30-year-old mother who lost her son Musa in September, said. “If they don’t, and other syrups enter the country, it will be terrible.”

The deaths were catapulted to global prominence last week when the UN’s World Health Organization (WHO) issued an alert over four syrups made by Maiden Pharmaceuticals of India. Lab tests found “unacceptable amounts” of diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol, the WHO said. The toxic impact from these substances includes “acute kidney injury which may lead to death,” the agency said.

The Gambian health authorities, after launching their own investigation in July, on September 23 ordered a recall of all medicines containing paracetamol or promethazine syrup. They have cited E.coli bacteria as a possible cause of the deaths. — AFP

Young, underground reporters ‘fight a gun with a pen’ in Myanmar



Sui-Lee Wee

The writer is Southeast Asia bureau chief for NYT

The 15-year-old reporter deleted the data from her phone and packed up her guitar as she set out to meet a guerrilla fighter in Myanmar.

The instrument was mostly a decoy, there to disguise her work as a journalist. She cleared the data from her phone to protect her sources in the event of an arrest.

Greeting the fighter, she took out the guitar and strummed an old Burmese tune, “The Sound of the Crane.”

When she felt safe, she started her interview, quickly stashing the recording in a hidden folder on her phone after she was done.

“Every time I go out to report, I always think that I might get arrested,” said Khaung, who works for the Burmese literary magazine Oway.

Like the other journalists in Myanmar interviewed for this article, Khaung agreed to be interviewed only if her pen name was used, fearing repercussions from the military government.

Myanmar is now one of the world’s most dangerous places for journalists. For the first time, it is on track to be the top jailer of reporters.

Fifty-seven reporters are in prison there, according to the Detained Myanmar Journalists Group, an advocacy organisation.

Just two weeks after the military seized power in a coup last year, the junta in Myanmar created a new provision in its penal code called Section 505A, making it a crime to publish comments that “cause fear” or spread “false news.”

Some of the country’s best known investigative outlets — including Myanmar Now, DVB, Khit Thit, 7 Days and Mizzima — have since had their licences revoked. Hundreds of journalists have fled. The reporters at Oway are now among the last remnants of a free press.

“It is not easy to fight a gun with a pen, but I need to keep doing it,” said Aung Sett, the publication’s 22-year-old editor-in-chief, who spoke on the condition that his pen name be used.

Aung Sett, a third-year political science student at the University of Yangon, has been in hiding ever since the army issued a Section 505 arrest



Journalists covering a protest near Yangon, Myanmar.

MYANMAR IS NOW ONE OF THE WORLD’S MOST DANGEROUS PLACES FOR JOURNALISTS. FOR THE FIRST TIME, IT IS ON TRACK TO BE THE TOP JAILER OF REPORTERS

warrant against him.

One of his partners, who was in charge of printing Oway, was shot and killed by soldiers while protesting the coup.

More than 140 journalists have been arrested since the military took power, mostly on charges related to Section 505A.

Independent journalists can no longer safely take out a camera or a notebook. Three reporters have been killed by soldiers, including one photojournalist who had covered a silent protest in the city of Yangon last December and was tortured to death while in custody.

Last month, the junta sentenced Htet Htet Khine, a freelance television presenter who worked for the BBC, to six years in prison with hard labour,

saying her reporting amounted to “incitement and illegal association.” And the crackdown has not been limited to domestic reporters.

A military tribunal sentenced Japanese documentary film-maker Toru Kubota, 26, to 10 years in prison last week.

Kubota faces another trial on Wednesday on a charge of violating immigration laws. Danny Fenster, an American journalist who contributed to Myanmar Now, was sentenced to 11 years in prison before being released three days later after Bill Richardson, a former US diplomat, helped secure his freedom.

“The junta regime has effectively outlawed independent journalism in the country,” said Shawn Crispin, the senior Southeast Asia representative for the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The media in Myanmar did once enjoy a semblance of independence. Thein Sein, Myanmar’s former president, scrapped censorship laws in 2011 as part of a broad program to open up the country and move it toward democracy. Creative expression flourished. Dozens of newspapers opened.

While journalists working under previous military regimes who were critical of the government were forced to operate underground, accounts of torture were rare. That changed after the coup. — *New York Times*

Streaming: The reshape of the media

The widespread use of live streaming has given communication and media work a new dimension. Media consumption habits and customers interactions are becoming more sophisticated. It is not surprising that live streaming is about to go mainstream. Thanks to the Internet, the entire world was able to witness the late Queen Elizabeth II's funeral in real-time, complete with a majestic ceremony steeped in tradition. Emotional reactions, immersive experiences, sensational, and dramatic moments all contributed to a better understanding of the emotional turn in journalism and its implications for digital journalism.

For the first time ever, cameras were allowed to record inside the funeral of a British monarch, capturing the impressive formalities. According to media reports, some four billion people tuned in to watch the funeral - nearly half of the world's population!

Queen Elizabeth recognised the power of advanced technology to create closeness and connection. In 2021, the queen shared a throwback photo from her adolescence on social media. During the Covid lockdown, she, like the rest of the world, communicated via video links. Then, there was the iconic pre-recorded video of her jaw-dropping appearance at the Queen meeting James Bond to the opening ceremony of the London Olympics in 2012. For the launch of the Platinum Jubilee, earlier this year, a pre-recorded clip featuring the Queen acting alongside the computer-generated imagery (CGI) bear, Paddington, voiced by Ben Whishaw, who joined the monarch for afternoon tea at Buckingham Palace, went viral. To put it in a media context, King George V created the tradition of delivering a Christmas Day message to the people of the British monarchy worldwide in 1932 via radio broadcast, but it was his granddaughter, Queen Elizabeth II, who first televised the annual event 25 years later. Her historic 1957 speech aired on live TV from her



Sonia Ambrosio

The writer is journalist, academic, researcher in media studies

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, CAMERAS WERE ALLOWED TO RECORD INSIDE THE FUNERAL OF A BRITISH MONARCH, CAPTURING THE IMPRESSIVE FORMALITIES

home in Sandringham offered viewers a humanising glimpse inside the Queen's residence and her mannerisms. Until then, it was unthinkable the idea of beaming the image of a monarch into people's homes – but that proved to be a new kind of relationship with the masses. People loved it.

Was Queen Elizabeth media savvy? Well, she had vision, perseverance, and she presented results. At Her Majesty's insistence, a televised Coronation was broadcast in 1953, bringing royal history into the homes of the subjects. Perhaps — a stretch thought — the queen was familiar with the Pathé Gazette newsreel and its golden age from 1933 until 1958. Despite the limits of early technology, image and sound gave footage a new sense of immediacy and actuality. In 1930, the idea of news in a “nutshell” was created; saying something in a brief way. The history of Pathé is intertwined with that of the Royal Family. For decades, Pathé filmed the Queen covering not only her royal duties but her home and family. British Pathé is a treasure trove and is considered to be the finest newsreel archive in the world.

Live streaming, which flourished in the 2010s, has evolved into one of the most popular forms of broadcasting, and it has experienced explosive growth as a social media tool for real-time recording and sharing. Social media users are keen to share flashes of their lives. Its intimacy is highly appealing. It switches on the buttons of emotion and engagement. It all started in the 1990s. By the 2000s the concept of internet video also began to play a role in mass media.

While communication is becoming more diverse than ever, digital journalism is redefining its role — while also transforming citizen journalism and real-time journalism. As the media industry continues to evolve and reshape itself, the number of social platforms grows - including the availability of free social streaming platforms. Just be creative!

CELEBRATING NATIONAL DAY



A skydiver waving Spain's flag attends a military parade to mark Spain's National Day, in Madrid, Spain, on Wednesday. – Reuters

From shining shoes in Africa to a seat in Italy’s parliament

CRISPIAN BALMER

When Aboubakar Soumahoro was a teenager in his native Ivory Coast, he used to clean shoes and dream of going to Italy, filling a scrapbook with pictures of Italian fashion designs that he cut out of magazines. He made it to Rome in 1999, aged 19, but was shocked by the harsh reality of migrant life in a country he had idolised. “Sleeping rough in the streets was traumatic, especially when I realised that this was the result of a political decision that targeted the migrants,” Soumahoro said.

Now an Italian citizen, the 42-year-old has a unique opportunity to re-shape such decision-making — from within parliament.

He won a seat in the lower house for the Green and Left party in the September 25 national election and hopes to make his mark from opposition ranks, facing a victorious conservative coalition that has promised to crackdown on asylum seekers.

“One thing I will try to do is make sure that no one ends up living in the streets like me.

People need to be treated as human beings regardless of what passport they have,” he said, speaking ahead of the October 13 opening of parliament.

He will stand out as the only Black lawmaker in the lower chamber of 400

ABOUBAKAR SOUMAHORO WILL STAND OUT AS THE ONLY BLACK LAWMAKER IN THE LOWER CHAMBER OF 400 DEPUTIES — ONE OF ONLY A HANDFUL EVER TO HAVE BEEN ELECTED IN THE 160-YEAR HISTORY OF ITALY

deputies — one of only a handful ever to have been elected in the 160-year history of Italy. Soumahoro says with a smile that he will have the “best suntan” in parliament, but is adamant that he intends to speak for the poor and disfranchised, regardless of their colour. “I do not want to represent just one part of society. I want to make sure that

everyone, both the dispossessed and those who struggle to make ends meet, can recognise themselves in what we do,” he said. Soumahoro’s election is the culmination of an astonishing personal journey, that included picking crops in the fields, laying bricks, working at a gas station, studying sociology at Naples University and writing a book:

“Humanity in Revolt”. He is reticent about his personal life, saying only that he has a young child and remains in touch with his family in Africa. “It is more important to talk about ‘us’ and not ‘I,’” he said, adding that Italian politics was far too personalised. Within a few years of his arrival in Italy, he became an activist helping migrants without

official documents, focusing on the exploitation of farm labourers. He subsequently founded a union representing agricultural workers. He says the right-wing parties that are about to take power have politicised the migrant issue for electoral gain. Both Giorgia Meloni’s Brothers of Italy party, which took most votes last month, and Matteo Salvini’s League party, have vowed to block boat migrants from North Africa and adopted what they call an “Italians First” policy. “Putting Italians first is not going to pull 5.6 million Italians out of poverty,” he said, accusing the right of failing to grasp the severity of problems faced by ordinary families. The election winners have said they will roll back a so-called citizens’ income, which provides a monthly stipend to the poor and unemployed.

Soumahoro said that instead of being curtailed, it needed to be expanded to help more people. “Politicians haven’t seen the coming hurricane of poverty,” he said, warning that rising energy and food prices would create growing desperation and arguing that a more equitable distribution of wealth would ease gathering social tensions. “The politics of happiness is real. It can be done.” — Reuters



Italian-Ivorian activist, trade unionist and newly elected member of Parliament Aboubakar Soumahoro, during an interview in Rome. – Reuters

sport

Real, City lock up last 16 spots



Real Madrid's German defender Antonio Rudiger (R) scores the 1-1 goal Shakhtar Donetsk's Ukrainian goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin (2nd R) and Shakhtar Donetsk's Ukrainian defender Mykola Matviyenko (3rd R) try to stop the ball during the Uefa Champions League Group F match in Warsaw, Poland. — AFP

PARIS: Real Madrid and Manchester City both found the going tough in the Champions League group stage on Tuesday night but battled through to draws that were enough to qualify for the knockout stages.

Paris Saint-Germain and Benfica also moved closer to the last 16 with a draw at Parc des Princes, after Maccabi Haifa had earlier upset Juventus in the same group.

On a bad night for Italian titans, AC Milan played almost the whole

match with 10 men as they lost at home to Chelsea.

In Copenhagen, City's Riyad Mahrez wasted a 25th minute penalty and five minutes later defender Sergio Gomez was sent off.

Pep Guardiola had rested several starters, including Erling Haaland, with an eye to the weekend's meeting with Liverpool, and his team failed to score for the first time in 24 games, but the coach was content.

"To play one hour like that is

tough. The players gave absolutely everything," Guardiola said.

Neither Copenhagen nor Sevilla has won a game yet in Group G and when the Spaniards drew 1-1 in Dortmund in the later match, it ensured Manchester City would advance.

Carlo Ancelotti, the Real Madrid coach, also had an eye on a big upcoming league game, the Clasico against Barcelona on Sunday, and rested several starters against Shakhtar Donetsk in Warsaw.

They almost paid. Oleksandr Zubkov gave the Ukrainian club the lead at the start of the second half.

The game had entered the last of five minutes added time when Antonio Rudiger leapt to reach a long ball forward and got to it just before goalie Anatoliy Trubin.

As the two men fell to the ground bleeding, the ball went in to secure Real a 1-1 draw and a last 16 spot. "We did not play well, but this team never gives up," Ancelotti said. — AFP

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS ON TUESDAY:

GROUP E
At Zagreb
Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) 1 (Ljubicic 40) Salzburg (AUT) 1 (Seiwald 12)
At Milan
AC Milan (ITA) 0 Chelsea (ENG) 2 (Jorginho 21-pen, Aubameyang 34)

GROUP F
At Warsaw
Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR) 1 (Zubkov 46) Real Madrid (ESP) 1 (Ruediger 90+5)
At Glasgow
Celtic (SCO) 0 RB Leipzig (GER) 2 (Werner 75, Forsberg 84)

GROUP G
At Copenhagen
FC Copenhagen (DEN) 0 Manchester City (ENG) 0
At Dortmund
Borussia Dortmund (GER) 1 (Bellingham 35) Sevilla (ESP) 1 (Kouassi 18)

GROUP H
At Haifa, Israel
Maccabi Haifa (ISR) 2 (Atzili 7, 42) Juventus (ITA) 0
At Paris
Paris Saint-Germain (FRA) 1 (Mbappe 39-pen) Benfica (POR) 1 (Joao Mario 62-pen)



Omani sailors shine on the first day of Arab Sailing 2022

MUSCAT: The first day of racing at the Arab Sailing Championship 2022 concluded at Barcelo Musannah Resort with Omani sailors in leading positions in the majority of classes.

Marking the debut for the class at the Arab Sailing Championships, the four teams in the RS Venture para sailing race showed that sailing is a sport for all.

After the first day of racing, the teams from Oman occupy the top two positions with skippers Malik al Qartoobi in first and Sami al Sulaimi in second, just ahead of the team led by Saleh Al Tuwaylie of Saudi Arabia in second and the team skippered by Ahmed Salman Abdulwahid of Iraq in third. The Omani pair traded wins with Malik's crew winning the first two races and Sami's team the third.

Malik al Qartoobi said, "It was a very tough competition between the teams. We had the opportunity to train with Saleh (Al Tuwaylie, KSA), so we all knew each other's capabilities and favoured moves, but I am pleased to be leading today. Wind was ideal, between 8 and 12 knots, and I am looking forward to racing tomorrow which I am sure will be just as tough."

Competition in the Optimist class kicked off the championships as 27 sailors took to the water.

Mohammed al Marzouqi of UAE took an early lead and never surrendered it, finishing first after the first day with two wins from the first three races. Omani sailors Tamim al Balushi and Abdullateef al Qasmi finished second and third

respectively. Karma Walid Mohamed of Egypt leads the female race, finishing fourth overall, ahead of Bahrain's Malak al Doseri in second and Camelia al Qubaisi for UAE in third.

In the ILCA 4 class, Othman al Hammadi of the UAE won all three races to end the day in top spot, two points ahead of teammate Al Harith al Ali. Waleed Daraan of Bahrain ends the day in third. Ganna Mohamed Shaalan of Egypt finished the day as the top female, third overall, with teammate Asmaa Wael Mahfouz in second and Ourabah Sofia of Algeria in third.

Omani Al Mutasim al Farsi excelled in the ILCA 6 racing, finishing three points ahead of the Bahraini pair of Dawood Abdullah in second and Hussam

Daraan in third. Oman's Zakariya al Wahaibi ended the day in seventh. Karassane Mallia of Algeria leads the female category finishing third overall, and three points ahead of Egypt's Kholood Moustafa Mansy and Dhuha Al Beshr of UAE in third.

Omani Ali al Saadi leads the ILCA 7 competition after notching two wins in the first three races. Abdulla al Janahi of Bahrain ends the day in second and Adil Khalid from UAE is a close third.

Al Mukhtar al Mujaini, coach of the Oman team, said, "I am very proud of my team on the first day. The team did very well in light winds, and I hope they keep the momentum tomorrow. Our ambition is to finish in the top three, so the results today put us in a strong position to achieve that goal."

Oman dominated the iQFOiL class on day one, with Abdulmajeed al Hadhrami winning all three races to lead from Omar al Qartobi, who finished second in two races, and Abdullah al Sarahi in third, who recorded a second place and a third place in the first three races.

Ahmad eyes podium finish in Portimao



PORTIMAO, Portugal: Multiple GT endurance racing champion Ahmad al Harthy is targeting a successful conclusion to his maiden season in the prestigious European Le Mans Series during the final event of the campaign in Portugal this weekend, October 15 and 16.

In what has been a very strong, and also at times frustrating, season in the ELMS, Al Harthy and his Oman Racing team go into the sixth race of the championship determined to return to the LMGTE podium with the No 69 Aston Martin Vantage GTE.

Ahead of the final four-hour race at the Autodromo Internacional do Algarve, Al Harthy and teammates Sam De Haan and Marco Sorensen are sixth in the LMGTE Driver Standings with Oman

Al Harthy highly motivated for ELMS season finale in Portugal

Omani motor racing star determined to bid for LMGTE podium in Rd6

Racing also sixth in the LMGTE Team Standings.

"We're all really looking forward to being in Portugal this weekend and absolutely determined to end the season as strongly as we possibly can," said Al Harthy, "It's been a good first season for us in the ELMS and we showed right from the beginning of the championship we could challenge for podiums and wins in LMGTE."

"It's true we have had quite a few frustrations during the year as well, some contact on track not of our making and also some of the Balance of Performance gradings have been very negative, but we've continued to push and fight for every point and position as we always do. Last time out at Spa we had a very good car and a chance of being back on the podium, that's the aim again in Portimao."

Starring in qualifying throughout the year, the Omani – who is supported by partners Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sohar International Bank, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS – has two pole positions and a pair of other front-row starts in LMGTE under his belt.

The highlight result of the season to-date, of course, was the famous maiden LMGTE victory achieved by Al Harthy and teammates De Haan and Sorensen at Imola during round two in May.

Opening free practice in Portimao will get underway at 11.20 local time on October 14, with a standalone session for the Bronze graded drivers, including Al Harthy, beginning at 16.30 local time. Another free practice session will follow on October 15.



Malan hits 82 as England beat Australia to win series

CANBERRA: Dawid Malan's 82 and disciplined bowling from England helped the visitors win the second Twenty20 international against Australia by eight runs on Wednesday to seal the series and give them a confidence boost heading into the World Cup.

Malan shared a crucial 92-run stand in Canberra with Moeen Ali (44) as England compiled 178-7 against a full-strength Australian attack.

Despite Mitchell Marsh hitting 45 off 29 balls and Tim David 40 off 23, the hosts fell short.

Sam Curran took 3-25 to ensure England won the three-match series 2-0 with a game left on Friday in a setback to the World Cup champions.

"Really satisfying win after losing the toss as well and setting a target," said England skipper Jos Buttler.

"I think we showed great character and Malan played fantastically well to anchor the innings."

Malan hit seven fours and four sixes in his 49-ball knock to rescue the visitors after they slumped to 54-4 in the ninth over.

Ali was also impressive after Australian captain Aaron Finch won the toss and chose to bowl, making five changes to the side that also lost by eight runs in Perth.

Pace spearheads Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood, along with spinner Adam Zampa all returned for the hosts after being rested for the first T20.

Buttler fell to Cummins on 17, with Zampa holding a difficult high catch.

Alex Hales, who blasted 84 from 51 balls in Perth, lasted just seven balls for his four runs before holing out to David Warner off Marcus Stoinis.

Star all-rounder Ben Stokes' ordinary recent form continued, bowled by Zampa for seven, and when Harry Brook got an edge off Stoinis they were on the back foot



at 54-4.

But Malan was rock-solid, expertly finding the gaps to reach his 14th half-century.

Zampa finally broke the partnership, tempting Ali into another big hit and he was caught on the ropes before a late flurry from Malan, who was out in the last over.

"We were really poor in the field, sloppy, dropped a couple of chances, especially when we had them four down in the first 10 overs," said Finch.

England rested pacemen Mark Wood and Chris Woakes but

they still found a way to restrict Australia.

Finch dropped down the order in recent matches, but returned to partner Warner for the first time since their Sri Lanka tour in the middle of the year.

But he never settled and again fell cheaply, out for 13.

Warner, who has been in form, followed three balls later for four to leave Australia struggling at 22-2 in the fifth over.

Glenn Maxwell's recent poor form continued, out for eight, before Marsh and Marcus Stoinis put on a quick-fire 40-

run partnership to keep them in contention.

Stoinis went for 22, followed by Marsh, with Australia's fate resting with David and Matthew Wade. They needed 59 of the last five overs but were unable to deliver the fireworks required. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES

England 178-7 in 20 overs (Dawid Malan 82, Moeen Ali 44; Marcus Stoinis 3-34, Adam Zampa 2-26)
Australia: 170-6 in 20 overs (Mitchell Marsh 45, Tim David 40; Sam Curran 3-25)
Result: England win by eight runs
Series: England lead three-match series 2-0

Phillips shines as Kiwis reach T20 tri-series final

WELLINGTON: Glenn Phillips and Devon Conway struck half-centuries as New Zealand beat Bangladesh by 48 runs in Christchurch on Wednesday to book their place in the Twenty20 tri-series final.

The hosts now face Pakistan on Friday, also in Christchurch, in the final of a series which is a tune-up for this month's T20 World Cup in Australia.

Fresh from dispatching Pakistan by nine wickets on Tuesday, New Zealand put in another strong batting display to set Bangladesh an imposing 209-run target.

Despite a battling 70 from captain Shakib Al Hasan, Bangladesh fell short as they closed on 160-7.

New Zealand opener Conway smacked 64 off 40 balls and his partnership of 45 with Finn Allen, who departed for 32 after a superb Yasir Ali catch, set the tone.

The South African-born Phillips blasted 60 runs off 24 balls, including five sixes, to propel New Zealand to 208-5 in their 20 overs.

"The way Devon batted again was absolutely phenomenal, but it just happened to be my day with the bat," Phillips said after being named man-of-the-match.

Adam Milne, back from an abdominal strain, struck in the fourth over of the Bangladesh chase when he bowled Najmul Hossain Shanto for 11.

Opening partner Liton Das soon followed, caught by Martin Gupthill off the bowling of Michael Bracewell to leave Bangladesh on 47-2.

Captain Shakib offered the



most resistance but once he was out, edging Tim Southee to wicketkeeper Conway, the game slipped away from Bangladesh.

"When you score a few runs, you feel better, but I thought we played quite well," said Shakib.

"New Zealand put on a very good total and we were always behind in the game, but I thought we should have scored maybe 15 or 20 more runs,

"We kept on losing wickets which cost us the game."

A third straight defeat means Bangladesh cannot reach the tri-series final and their match against Pakistan on Thursday is a dead rubber.

New Zealand had rested captain Kane Williamson as they comfortably backed up Sunday's eight-wicket win over Bangladesh to underline their T20 World Cup credentials.

— AFP

OEF concludes second showjumping event

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF) organised the second training of showjumping competitions for the season 2022-23, on the Olympic field at Al Rahba Farm in the Wilayat of Barka.

Nearly 100 horses participated in the second training competitions, distributed in five categories, the junior category 1 at the height of 70 cm, and the junior category 2 at hurdles height of 90 cm, the junior category 3 at the height of 100 cm, the junior category at the hurdles height of 110 cm, and the intermediate category at a height of 120 cm. The jockeys and horses of government cavalry units and private stables competed in this competition, and the competition started at four o'clock afternoon until nine o'clock in the evening.

On the other hand, recently the Royal Horse Racing Club (RHRC) announced the programme of horse racing for 2022-23 season. The season will see 20 races at the Al Rahba track in Barka, North Al Batinah Governorate. The events include the National Day races, the Omani derby and the final race.

While the RHRC completed all preparations for the horse racing season 2022-2023, at Al Rahba race track in Barka. The



first race will be held on Saturday which include eight rounds -- six rounds for purebred Arabian horses and two rounds for hybrid horses.

The first race is 'Seeb' race for purebred Arabian horses (for local production horses) for a distance of 1,200m, the second race is 'Al Khoudh' race for purebred Arabian horses for a distance of 1,200m, the third race is 'Al Mawaleh' race for hybrid horses for a distance of 1,200m, the fourth race is 'Al Hail' race for hybrid for 1,200m, the fifth race is 'Al Maabala' race for purebred Arabian horses for 1,600m, the sixth race is 'Al Rusayl' race for Arabian horses for 1,600m, the seventh round is 'Al Sharadi' race for Arabian horses for a distance of 1,600m, and the eighth round for 'Al Manama' race for purebred Arabian horses for a distance of 1,800 metres.

OVA elects officials for vacant posts



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

The general assembly members of Oman Volleyball Association (OVA) elected for the vacant seats of the board for the period (2022-2024) on Wednesday after resignation of three members. The election took place during an extraordinary assembly general meeting at the Grand Hayat Hotel in Muscat in presence of 22 members out of 23 members.

The attending members were from Seeb, Sohar, Oman club, Ahli Sidab, Bahla, Saham, Majees,



Dhofar, Al Kamil W'al Wafi, Salalah, Masirah, Al Nasr, Al Bashayer, Al Suwaiq, Al Shabab, Al Musannah, Al Khabourah, Al Ittifaq, Al Salam, Al Oruba, Qurayat and Ibri.

The vice-chairman post was won by Saham's candidate Mohammed bin Marhoon al Maamari in the second round of voting as he received 10 votes while Arif Nasser (Al Shabab) got three votes and Said bin Mubarak al Buraiki (Al Khabourah) received eight votes. In the first round, the votes of all the candidates did not reach to the required votes of 10.

For the treasurer post, Farid bin Ramadhan al Balushi from Oman club was the only nominee and he was elected as the new treasurer of the board.

Aisha al Jabri claimed the women's mandatory seat in the board.

In the board member post, there were three candidates who were competing on one vacant seat including Issa al Qasabi (Bahla), Abdullah al Falahi (Al Ittifaq) and Khamis al Hashmi (Al Ittifaq). Issa al Qasabi from Bahla club was elected as the new board member with 11 votes while Khamis al

Hashmi received three votes and Abdullah al Falahi had six votes.

Eng Ibrahim al Maqbali, Chairman of OVA, congratulated all the new elected members in the board. "We would like to congratulate all the new board members for getting the confidence of general assembly to be elected for the remaining period of this board until 2024. Special thanks to the election committee for their efforts since two months. We are affirming that the board will work hard towards development of volleyball sport and improvement of the national teams," he said.



Bilarab Bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design

Second Session

Towards an Innovative and Contemporary Omani Architectural Style

This competition targets Omani youth specialized in the fields of architecture, design and urban planning. The age of the participant should not be more than 35 years, including job seekers and students who are passionate about the topic of the competition, **according to the following:**

Design Scope

This award invites designers and architects to present creative designs of the **Maritime History Museum**, with its unique location in Sur in A'Sharqiyah South Governorate, to document the long history and highlight the genius of the Omani throughout history in his relationship with the sea.

Geographical Location

The project has been allocated a site with an area of 14,154 square meters in the **Wilayat of Sur** in the South Sharqiyah Governorate, near the Khor Al-Batah Bridge, overlooking the lighthouse, and the participating teams must adhere to the specified site.



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Participation Groups



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Participation**



**Collective
Participation**

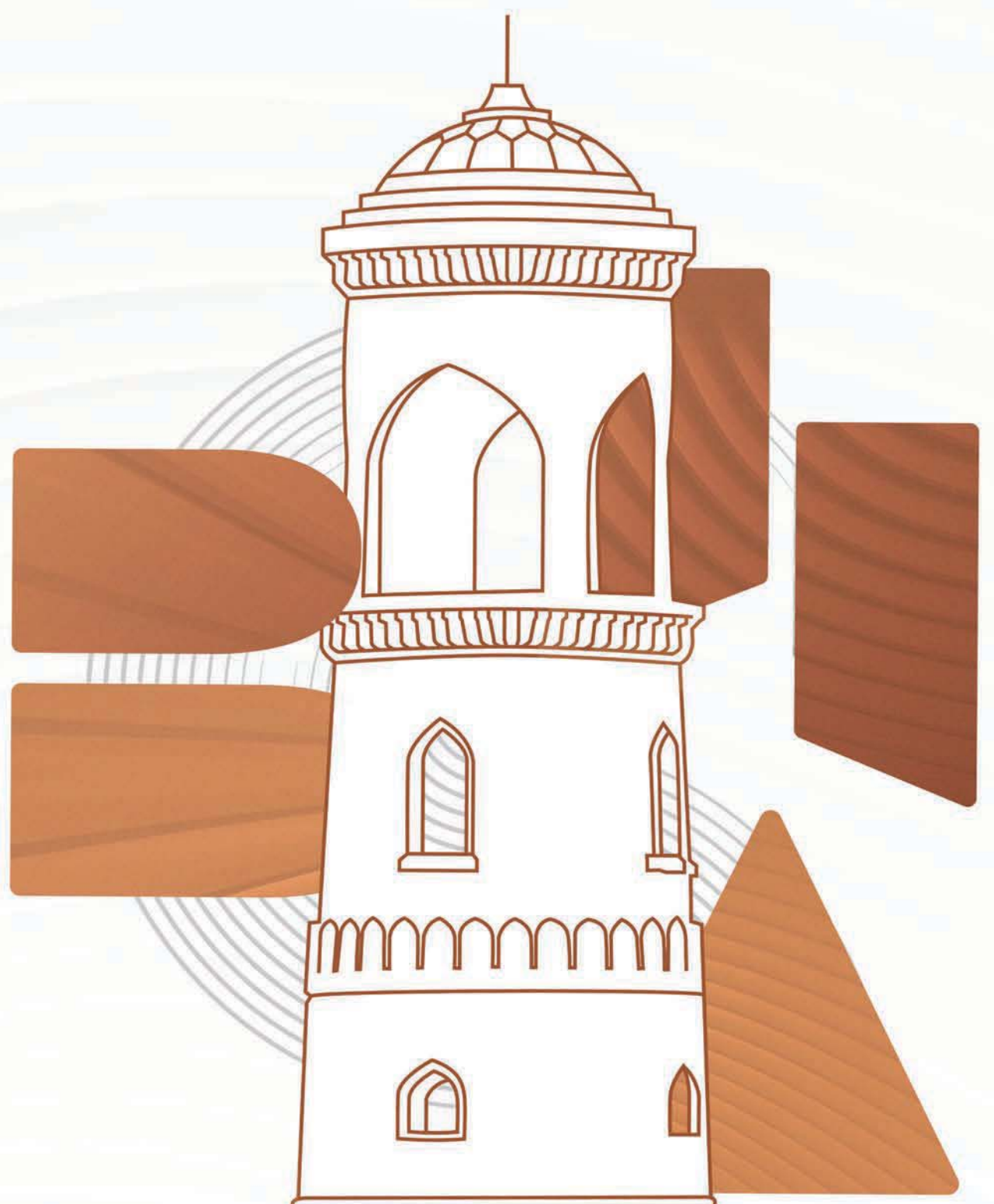
(Maximum three people)

You Lead the Idea

For more details, please visit
the award website

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Oman-China bilateral trade on strong growth trajectory

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 12

Bilateral trade between the Sultanate of Oman and China surged, in value terms, to RO 32 billion in 2021, representing an increase of 71.5 per cent over the previous year. Chinese imports from Oman increased 18.5 per cent to 44.082 million tonnes in 2021, according to Li Lingping, Chinese Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking to the *Observer*, Ambassador Lingping noted that bilateral trade between the two countries constitute a pivotal component of their multi-faceted bilateral relationship. “China has been a trading partner of the Sultanate of Oman for many years,” the ambassador said.

She added that the cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and China has achieved fruitful achievements in the fields of politics, economy, trade, investment, humanities and others.

In 2022, trade exchange during the first seven months of the year totalled \$20.5 billion in value,



The Chinese Embassy is pushing forward and strengthening cooperation in various fields

LI LINGPING

Chinese Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman

representing an increase of 40 per cent over the corresponding period of 2021.

China imported 21 million

tonnes of Omani oil in 2021, which was up 41 per cent from the previous year. This volume is projected to increase in trend with

China’s economic development, Ambassador Lingping noted.

“The Chinese Embassy is pushing forward and strengthening cooperation in various fields. It also encourages Chinese companies operating in the Sultanate of Oman to assume their social responsibility, participate in the economic and social construction of the Omani society, and contribute to the development of the Sultanate of Oman in the fields of digital economy and high technology,” she stated.

While oil dominates their bilateral relations, China has been slowly establishing itself in Oman’s non-oil sectors as well, in line with its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a project focused on infrastructure development and international cooperation to project Beijing’s influence globally.

The Oman-China Friendship Association has been working to strengthen cooperation ties and enhance their joint initiatives in various economic, social, cultural, scientific and sports arenas for the past decade.

TURN TO P15

BankDhofar raises largest single tranche OMR AT1 bond

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 12

BankDhofar announced that it has successfully raised RO 115.5 million Basel III compliant Additional Tier 1 (AT1) bond listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange. This is the largest OMR AT1 single tranche offering by any bank in Oman.

The issue attracted a high-quality order book with strong participation from local investors that allowed BankDhofar to set the yield at 6.75 per cent.

This issue will benefit BankDhofar’s already strong Tier I capital base. The offering was well received by a diverse set of investors consisting of pension and sovereign wealth funds, corporates, family offices and high net worth individuals. Commenting on the



transaction, Abdul Hakeem al Ojaili (pictured), Chief Executive Officer, said, “We thank all the investors for their confidence in us. This reinforces the faith investors have in BankDhofar and its prudent and robust business model.

“We would like to thank Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange and Muscat Clearing and Depository Company for their guidance and support.”

BankDhofar acted as the sole Issue Manager.

Oman records highest progress in Global Food Security Index

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

The Sultanate of Oman recorded the highest global progress in its score of 71.2 — a +13.8 net change in overall score in 2022 versus 2012 — in Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2022, published by Economist Impact. The score of the highest country in the report, Finland, is 83.7. With that score, Oman jumps five positions in GFSI from 40th place in 2021 to 35th place in 2022.

The report considered four main indicators in which Oman ranked 34th globally in Food Availability Index, 60th place in Sustainability and Adaptation Index, 21st place in Affordability Index and 42nd place in Quality and Safety Index.

The report also looked into the country’s performance in sub-indicators with Oman recording a significant growth. In change in average food costs, out of 100, Oman scored 98.5. In proportion of population under global poverty line,



(Image for illustration only)

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN JUMPS FIVE POSITIONS IN GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY INDEX

Oman scored 99.3. In food safety net programmes, Oman scored 100 and in nutritional standards, Oman scored 88.7.

The report indicated that Oman ranked 35th globally with a score of 71.2, the UAE ranked 23rd and first among the GCC countries with a score of 75.2, followed by Qatar in 30th place with 72.4 score and Bahrain 38th at the global ranking with a score of

70.3. Saudi Arabia ranked 41st with 69.9 score and Kuwait, 50th with a score of 65.2.

The top five best performers in overall food security environment for 2002 include Finland with a score of 83.7, Ireland (81.7), Norway (80.5), France (80.2) and the Netherlands (80.1).

The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) shows that the global food environment is

deteriorating. After hitting its peak in 2019, the GFSI has since declined amid skyrocketing food prices and hunger on an unprecedented scale.

Based on 11 years of data, the index highlights that the food system has been weakening over the years, with shocks in 2020-22, including the Covid-19 pandemic and high commodity prices, showcasing this fragility.

These shocks exacerbate the systemic issues that are threatening food security and weakening the resilience of the food system.

The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) considers the issues of food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience across a set of 113 countries.

It is considered as a model dynamic index of food security that covers both qualitative and quantitative indicators. Each country is scored from 0-100, with the score going towards 100 indicating a better performance.

TM DONE and Jahez Sign MoU to Expand Collaboration in Aggregation and Delivery Services



In tandem with the visit of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia delegation to the Sultanate of Oman, led by His Excellency Eng. Abdullah bin Amer Al Suwaha to strengthen the ties of partnership between the two brotherly countries, TM DONE and Jahez have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore and assess avenues of collaboration in the fields of aggregation and delivery services.

TM DONE and Jahez are pioneers in the food delivery business, with each boasting significant, yet complementary, experience that would allow for the development and enhancement of related services within the field.

Jahez is a major brand within the



aggregation and delivery business in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia while TM DONE has cemented its position as a widely-recognized super app providing various services within the Sultanate of Oman.

The memorandum was signed by Mr. Ghassab S. Al Mandeel, CEO of Jahez and Mr. Yasser Al Barami, CEO of TM DONE.

Bahwan Engineering, Bloom Energy hold seminar on solid oxide based fuel cells



MUSCAT: Bahwan Engineering Company LLC, a local engineering, construction, and utilities development company in partnership with Bloom Energy, a US based company conducted a technical seminar at Hotel Muscat Intercontinental, on Bloom's solid oxide based fuel cells.

The seminar titled 'Bahwan – Bloom Energy Summit' was very interactive, with audience participation from Energy Development Oman, O LNG, OQ, OPWP, Tanweer, Ministry of Defence and Hydrogen Rise. Bloom's fuel cell technology is a perfect fit, as an interim product in the country's transition from fossil fuel to green hydrogen.

Bloom solid oxide cells run either on natural gas alone or with an equal mixture of natural gas and hydrogen to produce electricity. The technology was first used by NASA in their Mission Mars programme. It is known for its high level of reliability and dependability.

The technology provides a sustainable solution for uninterrupted power. The technology has been in use for the past 16 years and the total installed base power generation is 600 MW.

Bloom has also launched electrolyzers for production of green hydrogen. It is the same fuel cells, which works on reverse cycle to produce hydrogen and oxygen from water.

Sohar International participates in Oman Science Festival

MUSCAT: In line with its efforts to place the Sultanate of Oman among the top 20 countries in the Global Innovation Index, Sohar International and Sohar Islamic, Sohar International's Islamic Window, recently participated as the Gold Sponsor at the 3rd Oman Science Festival which was inaugurated by Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

Attended by Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education, the national-level event, which is organised by the Ministry of Education is being held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre from 10 to 15 October 2022 with the central theme 'With science we meet again'.

The bank's participation in the event is in line with the MoU signed with the Ministry of Education earlier in June, thus reaffirming its commitment to creating a knowledge-based economy, and promoting a culture of creative thinking in the community.



Commenting on the exhibition, Ahmed al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International, said, "Oman Vision 2040 lays a strong emphasis on quality education. Being a bank that is strongly aligned with the goals of the nation, Sohar International acknowledges the importance of long-term planning, consistent efforts, and direct investment in capacity building to achieve the overarching objectives of the national agenda."

The Pearl REIF provides a unique opportunity to diversify investments

MUSCAT: In line with Oman Vision 2040, the government has been pursuing several initiatives toward economic diversification through enhancing investment opportunities and creating a robust investment ecosystem that nurtures financial stability and sustainability for all investors.

Earlier this year, Oman Investment Authority (OIA), the government-owned entity that manages and develops the Sultanate of Oman's funds and assets, and Omantel, Oman's leading integrated telecommunications services provider, together announced the formation of The Pearl REIF, a real-estate investment fund approved by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) aimed at offering a unique opportunity to invest in large-scale, income-producing real estate. Sohar International Bank SAOG (Sohar International) is providing financial advisory, investment management and placement services of The Pearl REIF.

A REIF is a fund that owns and typically operates income-producing real estate or related assets. These may include office buildings, shopping malls, apartments, hotels, resorts, self-storage facilities, warehouses, and mortgages or loans.

REIFs provide a way for institutional and individual investors to earn a share of the income



produced through commercial real estate ownership – without actually having to go out and buy commercial real estate.

Speaking on the investment opportunity, Wahbi bin Sulaiman al Riyami (pictured), Chairman, The Pearl REIF said, "OIA and Omantel jointly have formed The Pearl REIF, demonstrating the collaboration and synergy underlining their shared passion for contributing to the continued progress and success of Oman's economy. As an investment vehicle, The Pearl REIF is a compelling and rare opportunity for investors considering real estate to diversify their portfolios. We are confident that the strong promoters and marquee tenants of these properties will demonstrate the strength of the offering."

"The Pearl REIF will play an important part in contributing to achieving economic and social goals, whilst within an investment portfolio they can offer a strong, stable annual dividend and the potential for long-



term capital appreciation" he added.

Commenting on the mandate, Ahmed al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International said, "Sohar international has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the realisation of the objectives outlined in Oman Vision 2040 and the country's revenue diversification agenda. Our bank has developed over the years unique capabilities in advising our clients. Our bank is proud to be associated with one of the most important milestone in the history of privatisation and monetisation of Government assets.

We would like to thank Oman Investment Authority and Omantel for their strong and firm partnership with Sohar International Bank. We are keen and prepared to play more instrumental roles in the creation of structures such as Pearl REIF. In every step the bank has received

support and guidance from the Capital market authority of Oman, Muscat Clearing & Depository and Muscat Securities Market. The launch and successful public issue of the REIF will be a stepping stone towards achieving the Vision of the country."

Why The Pearl REIF?

The Pearl REIF will be established as a closed-ended Shariah-compliant REIF in Oman. The objectives of the Fund are to generate income from long-term real estate rentals and capital growth from investment in real estate, compliant with Shariah principles. The Fund expects to generate a consistent dividend to Unitholders, based on the estimated revenue and expenses, and also to distribute at least 90 per cent of its distributable profits. The Pearl REIF is Oman's largest and first REIF that avails the Islamic Ijara financial facility.

AM Best affirms financial strength rating 'A' Excellent to GIG Gulf

MUSCAT: GIG Gulf, one of the largest insurance providers in the MENA region, announced that AM Best has affirmed its financial strength rating (FSR) of "A" (Excellent) and long-term issuer credit rating (Long-Term ICR) of "A" (Excellent), for the second year. The outlook assigned to these credit ratings (ratings) is stable.

The ratings reflect the financial strength of GIG Gulf for its operations across its four key markets of Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the UAE. AM Best refers to the firm's balance sheet strength assessment as being 'very strong', pointing to its risk management capabilities and strong operating performance.

Paul Adamson, CEO of GIG Gulf, said: "Following the challenges of the pandemic, we have smoothly



transitioned our brand from AXA to GIG to our customers and distributors. We have remained financially strong, maintained ongoing investments in the region, and with the well-being of our employees at the forefront, we were able to materialise our purpose to protect people in the moments that matter and added value for our customers and partners across the Gulf."

AM Best's assessment of GIG Gulf's operating performance

also considers its historic overall profitability, which has delivered a five-year (2017-2021) weighted average return-on-equity ratio of 11.9 per cent.

The company's earnings have been supported by a weighted average combined ratio of 95.6 per cent over the same period.

AM Best's assessment also considers GIG Gulf's risk-spread across four distinct separate markets in the GCC.

Domiciled in Bahrain, GIG Gulf earnings also come from Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE – countries all carrying 'moderate risk'. In 2022, GIG Gulf rebranded its operations from AXA Insurance (Gulf), whilst maintaining its competitive market position.

Bank Muscat's Asalah Priority Banking hosts event in Suhar

MUSCAT: Asalah Priority Banking from Bank Muscat recently hosted a special event in Suhar, in line with the bank's customer-centric vision and commitment to further strengthen its partnership and communication channels with its customers.

Attended by Abdulnasir al Raisi, General Manager – Personal Banking and a number of the bank's Management Team, the event saw excellent participation from a large number of Priority Banking customers, who were able to freely exchange their views and feedback on a number of services and benefits provided by the bank to its esteemed clientele.

Bank officials also took the opportunity to explain details of a number of exclusive Asalah services, benefits and rewards during a detailed presentation to the audience.

Speaking on the occasion, Saleh bin Mohammed al Maaini (pictured), Deputy General Manager – Capital Regions, Bank Muscat thanked Asalah customers for their whole-hearted support and confidence in Bank Muscat's various high-tech services and products which are backed by its customer-centric vision.

He said that promptly responding to customer feedback and having a strategy of keeping



pace with global trends were key to Bank Muscat's continued leadership in the financial services sector in Oman.

He added that the bank would further work towards realising customer aspirations and expectations in line with the

world-class banking experience provided by the bank.

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Oman-China bilateral trade on strong growth trajectory

FROM PAGE 13

Since then, China has launched the China-Oman Industrial Park in the Duqm Special Economic Zone and expects to invest around 8.5 billion euros in the project.

Additionally, in 2019, the State Grid Corporation of China acquired a 49 per cent stake in Oman Electricity Transmission Company in the first major privatisation of its kind by the Sultanate of Oman.

Further, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has become a vital source of funding for Oman's projects; in 2016, the Bank approved a loan of \$265 million for Oman's maritime infrastructure at Duqm Port and \$36 million (30.2 million euros) for the country's first railway system.

In 2017, AIIB invested \$239 million (200 million euros) in the national fibre broadband network and in March 2020, it provided \$60 million (50.3 million EUR) of non-sovereign funding for Oman's Ibri II 500MW Solar PV Independent Power Plant Project.

Likewise, the Ministry of Technology, Communications and Information Technology inked a partnership with Huawei to develop Oman's digital society and support the ICT sector. As a result, China's foreign direct investment (FDI) into Oman has risen more than five times between the second quarter of 2018 and 2019, from RO 95 million (208.5 million EUR) to RO 486.2 million (1.07 billion EUR).

The deepening ties with China speaks volumes for Oman's broader strategy to diversify its economy away from hydrocarbons by attracting foreign capital and expertise to non-oil sectors. The drive is guided by several five-year plans corresponding to the overarching goals of Vision 2040.

Deployment of new technologies to unlock millions of dollars in value for PDO

Game-changing benefits: New trials aim to tackle an array of technical challenges, including produced water management, energy efficiency, artificial lifting, and EOR

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 12

A raft of breakthrough technologies, being trialled ahead of their deployment at key locations across the Block 6 license of Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), has the potential to unlock hundreds of millions of dollars in cost and other value-creating benefits for the majority state-owned energy company.

Proof-of-concept and proof-of-value trials undertaken by PDO have pointed to the game-changing benefits that PDO stands to reap once these technologies are fully operationalised, the company said in its latest Sustainability Report.

In one such example of how innovation is being monetised by PDO with dramatic results, the company trialled the deployment of Pressure Mud Cap Drilling (PMCD) technology to tackle challenges in drilling in reservoirs with extremely high hydrogen



sulphide (H₂S) concentrations on top of highly fractured and depleted limestone formation.

With most performance indicators having been achieved, PDO is prepping this technology for wider deployment with value-add benefits estimated at \$100 million over the next five years.

"A number of game-changing technologies have been de-risked for deployment after successful trials tackling various corporate challenges such as HSE, energy management, artificial lifting and well construction. These will help us to operate more efficiently and tackle corporate business challenges," said PDO in its report.

Many of the ground-breaking technologies and innovations were developed and accelerated during the recent low oil price era and coronavirus pandemic, says the energy company.

"PDO deployed a record number of game-changing solutions last year while also maintaining our focus on maximising value from more than 40 trail-blazing innovations in the past five years," the company noted in its report.

Equally promising is the potential use of breakthrough Gas-to-Liquid technology to convert associated produced gas in high gas-oil ratio wells into liquid

diesel. If proven to be successful, the technology can generate \$139 million in value for PDO over the next three years, along with an annual CO₂ reduction of 60,000 tonnes, the report said.

Also last year, PDO trialled the deployment of Rigless Reeled Electric Submersible Pumps (ESPs) to mitigate the problem posed by an inadequate number of workover hoists and the expanding demand for ESP systems. The technology has the potential to save PDO around \$44 million over a three-year period covering 100 wells annually.

Over the last year, PDO has successfully concluded trials of a

record 11 technologies through proof-of-concept or proof-of-value tests, it said. It includes the Seal Bond Spacer innovation, which addresses severe fluid losses during drilling operations.

When eventually deployed to help improve well delivery, PDO anticipates that this technology could create more than 250 new jobs over the next five years.

A further 18 new trials were kicked off in 2021 alone, according to PDO. They aim to tackle an array of technical challenges, including produced water management, energy efficiency, artificial lifting, enhanced oil recovery (EOR) and well construction and production measurement.

One emerging technology being tested through a proof-of-concept pilot involves the use of electrical power to fracture a target reservoir.

The report explained: "Electrical Pulse Reservoir Stimulation could potentially replace existing costly fracking technology that uses excessive energy.

It works by fitting electrodes downhole on two adjacent wells and circulating a high-voltage current through reservoir water and brine while heating it at the same time. This innovation could increase well production by 50 per cent."

be'ah launches Green Schools project

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 12

Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah) announced the launch of the Green Schools project in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, under the auspices of HH Sayyidah Dr Mona bint Fahd bin Mahmoud al Said (Assistant Vice Chancellor for International Cooperation, SQU) during the Oman Science Festival at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

Marwa Rashid Al Falitieh, Supervisor of community awareness programmes at be'ah, said: "The Green Schools project aims to educate students, teachers, and the local community and raise their awareness of environmental issues, economy and sustainability, and helps prepare students



to make informed decisions on issues related to the environment.

"The project aims to enhance students'

positive behaviour towards a sustainable environment, and create environmental trends by providing students with new knowledge and informing them about correct practices. The teachers participating in the project will be trained through their own guide starting today to achieve the desired results to the fullest."

Green Schools Project Guide is based on a number of pillars that stem from the national strategic goals and global trends that are based on enhancing environmental awareness and working to find a generation that contributes to activating the green and circular economy and achieving a policy of sustainable production and consumption, in addition to directing the educational system to adopt positive trends to global issues, such as environmental issues, food and water security.

UK says no reverse on tax cuts

LONDON: Britain's new government said on Wednesday it would not reverse its vast tax cuts or reduce public spending as it sought to stand firm in the face of yet more turmoil in financial markets and concerns over its change in economic policy.

British financial markets have been under strain since September 23 when finance minister Kwasi Kwarteng announced 45 billion pounds (\$50 billion) of tax cuts, without saying how they would be paid for.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies think-tank has said the strategy will require 62 billion pounds of spending cuts or tax rises to stop the public debt growing - a daunting proposition after more than a decade of tight government spending.

"What we will make sure is that over the medium term the debt is falling, but we will do that not by cutting public spending but by making sure we spend public money well," Truss told parliament.

The 47-year-old former foreign secretary was elected last month by members of her party, and not the broader electorate, on a promise to snap the economy out of years of stagnation by cutting taxes and reforming parts of the economy such as planning, migration and childcare.

But markets have taken fright at the tax cuts and the government's earlier criticism of "Treasury orthodoxy", driving up borrowing costs and mortgage rates, and forcing the Bank of England to intervene to buy long-dated government bonds.

Earlier, Truss's business secretary said the government was still committed to economic reforms after the Times reported that it was struggling to agree on new policies.

With borrowing costs rising again on Wednesday after Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey said that the market support would end on Friday, Truss was asked if she remained committed to an earlier pledge to maintain spending levels. — **Reuters**

The global marketplace is in upheaval



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

The world has been mired in uncertainty and tragedy following the military and economic conflicts that have erupted in recent years. Wars are often fought by world powers with intent to control natural resources, and the financial and economic capabilities of their adversaries.

Commentators point out that the global economy is being controlled by forces driven by greed. These forces also enjoy veto power at the UN Security Council and manipulate UN resolutions to ensure they enjoy sway over weak nations.

Today, the world is facing inflation, fluctuations in oil

prices, losses in the financial and real estate markets, a decline in the values of international currencies except for the dollar, while poor access to foodstuffs, problems in obtaining energy resources from gas, as well as people suffering from a lack of job opportunities.

These issues are causing harm to many workers. At the same time, they are a source of concern for millionaires and billionaires whose singular goal is to make huge profits at the expense of the poor.

According to official data, many large technology companies have continued to post losses. Since the start of this year, losses suffered by 500 rich people globally amounted

to RO 1.2 trillion.

In their view, the only remedy is to announce a continuous increase in interest rates, which also leads to a rise in consumer prices, and harms the poor before the rich as a result of increased housing, health care and nutrition costs, while governments are working to take new steps to confront these bad conditions and curb inflation.

The decline in the values of the major and local currencies in the world, as well as the decline in gold prices to their lowest levels, have bad effects on the capabilities of people and dealers, as well as the rich who have no choice but to tighten monetary policies and raise interest rates to fight

widespread inflation.

Despite this economic turmoil, we find that the rich live in a parallel universe far removed from this reality. In the Gulf region, the wealthy have also suffered significant losses because their wealth is invested in international markets.

Today, many people feel a decrease in their purchasing power as a result of the continuous inflation in prices and the weakness of currency values, and the rise in the price of the dollar, which strongly affects the economies of the world in the event that goods and products are imported from abroad, and this increases the fears of an anticipated recession.

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BREAKING NEWS

86 new Covid-19 cases in Oman, Muscat crosses 1,000-mark

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Beating disability through social work

For Akram al Maawali, being a person with a disability doesn't mean the end of someone's life but rather about finding a purpose and redirecting one's energy to be productive. While Akram may not be able to walk, that does not stop him from helping others and being a productive citizen... **P20**

Disney pushes back several Marvel movie release dates

WALT DISNEY CO announced on Tuesday it will be pushing back the release dates for numerous upcoming Marvel films including, "Blade," "Fantastic Four" and "Avengers: Secret Wars." Following "Blade" director Bassam Tariq's departure from the project in September due to

scheduling conflicts, Marvel has decided to temporarily shut down production of the film to search for a new director. "Blade" is now slated to premiere on September 6, 2024 instead of November 3, 2023, which has impacted the rest of the studios' production scheduling.



"Deadpool 3" has moved from September 6, 2024 to November 8, 2024; "Fantastic Four" has been shifted from November 8, 2024 to February 14, 2025; an untitled Marvel project was moved from February 14, 2025 to November 7, 2025; "Avengers: Secret Wars" has been pushed from November 7,

2025 to May 1, 2026; and an untitled Marvel movie went from May 1, 2026 to no longer being on Disney's release schedule. A source familiar with the studio's plans said that Marvel is using the "Blade" production break to find a replacement for Tariq to work with "Moon Knight"

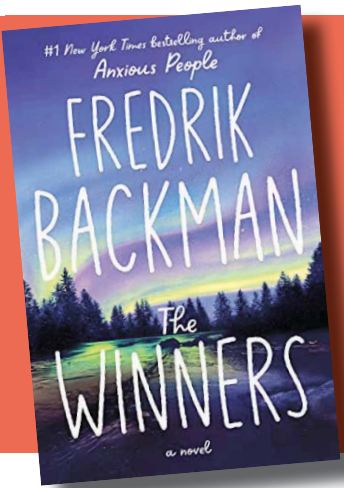
writer Beau DeMayo, who's the main screenwriter for "Blade." An unnamed source with authority on the film starring Oscar winner Mahershala Ali told The Hollywood Reporter that "They want to get it right," which subsequently means delays. The Marvel Blade character who first appeared in comic book "The Tomb of Dracula," written by Marv Wolfman in 1973 eventually had his own storyline that was later adapted into the Wesley Snipes film trilogy which includes, "Blade," "Blade II" and "Blade Trinity." Throughout the Marvel Cinematic Multiverse, stories have been intertwined and a significant delay from one film often impacts the slate for others. A similar postponement was made for the film "Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness" due to the pandemic and led to "Thor: Love and Thunder" and "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever" being pushed back as well. — **Reuters**

READ

THE WINNERS

BY FREDRIK BACKMAN

The third book in the Beartown series. Rivalries between two hockey-obsessed towns escalate into violence off the ice.



STILL LIFE

A visitor looks at artworks as part of the 'Les choses — Une histoire de la nature morte' (Things — A History of Still Life) exhibition at the Louvre museum in Paris. — **AFP**



GHIBLI PARK

Japanese film director Goro Miyazaki (L) and Aichi Prefectural Governor Hideaki Omura (R) pose for photographs during a press conference at the new Ghibli Park in Nagakute, Aichi prefecture on October 12, 2022. The media on October 12 got a sneak peek at the highly anticipated new theme park from Studio Ghibli, creator of beloved titles like "My Neighbour Totoro" and Oscar-winning "Spirited Away". — **AFP**





‘Spirited Away’: Ghibli theme park prepares for visitors

BEYOND THE GATES, a whimsical world awaits, complete with a fluffy Cat Bus, the toothy grin of Totoro and a life-sized No-Face seated on a train: welcome to Ghibli Park.

On Wednesday, media got a sneak peek at the highly anticipated new theme park from Studio Ghibli, creator of beloved titles like “My Neighbour Totoro” and the Oscar-winning “Spirited Away”.

It will open its doors to visitors on November 1, though initially only three of the five sections of the site in central Japan’s Aichi region will be accessible.

Some local residents got early access through a lottery, including Yuki Asahi, a confessed Ghibli fanatic.

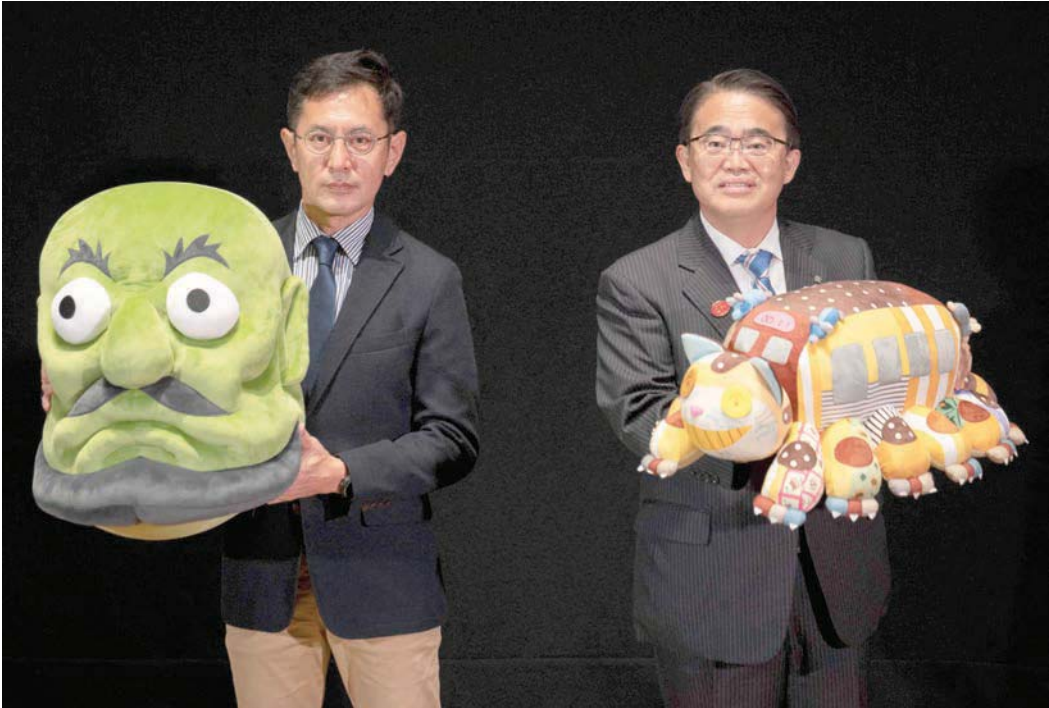
“It’s the park everyone was waiting for,” he said.

Spread over 7.1 hectares of the

various attractions, including 14 sets from 13 of the studio’s film classics.

Visitors can stroll along an alley designed to look like the opening scene of “Spirited Away,” or perch on the red velvet-covered train seat in a carriage next to the movie’s instantly recognisable “No-Face” character.

Aichi is predicting an influx of 1.8 million visitors a year once all five areas of the park are open, from next year, with an



194-hectare park where Aichi hosted the 2005 International Expo, it features large open-air areas in keeping with the importance of nature in Ghibli works.

Among the three areas that will open next month is the “Hill of Youth”, the gateway to the park that features an elevator tower inspired by several Ghibli films including “Castle in the Sky” and “Howl’s Moving Castle”.

Elsewhere, “Dondoko Forest” evokes the retro peace of “My Neighbour Totoro”, with bucolic walking paths, playground equipment and an enormous Totoro figure.

A major draw will be Ghibli’s Grand Warehouse, a hangar-like indoor portion of the park with

estimated annual economic impact of 48 billion yen (\$328 million).

Another resident, 34-year-old Yuiko Asai, said she has watched “Howl’s Moving Castle” so many times she knows all the words.

“I was really looking forward to visiting,” she said, explaining that she adores Ghibli films because “they are deep, even for adults.”

WE DIDN’T WANT PEOPLE TO FORGET

Studio Ghibli was founded in 1985 by animators Isao Takahata and Hayao Miyazaki, and has captivated fans around the world with works blending nostalgia, courage, greed and interaction with the natural world.



Miyazaki’s son Goro told reporters on Wednesday the park was intended to protect the local environment.

“We chose a location that would have as little impact as possible,” he said.

“The trees surrounding the park make the buildings look better... they look as if they have been there for a long time.”

The park was originally conceived as a way to leave Studio Ghibli’s works to future generations, Miyazaki said, in anticipation of his father’s expected retirement.

“We didn’t want people to forget Ghibli’s works,” he said.

“But we were betrayed again,” he added with a laugh. “He’s making

a feature film now!”

Tickets will be reservation only, costing between 1,000 and 2,500 yen (\$6.80-\$17) per area for adults.

Studio Ghibli already operates the hugely popular Ghibli Museum on the outskirts of Tokyo, which offers tickets only at the beginning of each month, regularly selling out within hours.

Japan is home to several major theme parks, including Tokyo Disneyland and Universal Studios in Osaka.

After two-and-a-half years of tough Covid-19 restrictions, the borders reopened fully to tourists on October 11, and a massive influx of foreign visitors is expected in the coming months. — AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Got back: Missing Beatles tablecloth returned after 55 years



A TABLECLOTH THAT all four members of The Beatles doodled on before a 1966 show has been returned to its California owners — more than five decades after it was stolen.

The one-of-a-kind souvenir was created by the Fab Four as they feasted on steak ahead of a concert at Candlestick Park in San Francisco — their last ticketed performance.

The food had been provided by local caterer Joe Vilardi, whose tablecloth got defaced by John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr, along with folk singer Joan Baez.

But instead of washing his white linen, Vilardi put it on display in his shop window — from where it was swiped in an overnight burglary less than a week later.

Over 50 years of not-so-magical mystery ended in 2021 when Vilardi’s grandson, Michael Vilardi, received a phone call from Texas.

“It was a lady... asking if our family had a catering business in San Francisco, and I had a feeling she was going to know something about the tablecloth,” he said.



“Her brother had the tablecloth and didn’t know what to do with it and just held it for all these years,” he said.

This man had received it as payment of a debt from someone who told him it was valuable, Vilardi said.

“He tried to sell it but since it was stolen he might have run into problems, so his sister convinced him to return it.”

The tablecloth, which had been well preserved during its long absence, was soon back in Vilardi’s hands.

“It was quite an emotional moment because we never knew we’d ever see this thing again, and we’d all grown up hearing the story. But none of us had ever seen the tablecloth.”

Now the unique piece of Beatles history, which features Lennon’s drawing of a sunset in yellow crayon and a series of sketched portraits by McCartney and Baez, as well as signatures of Starr and Harrison, is going under the hammer in an online auction.

Auctioneers Bonhams estimate it could fetch up to \$25,000 by the time the auction closes on October 19.

The Candlestick Park gig came at the end of a summer tour of North America and marked the final time the British megastars would play a concert, all apparently having tired of the “Beatlemania” they endured wherever they travelled.

Despite having broken up more than half a century ago, The Beatles continue to cast a long shadow over music and culture.

Memorabilia attracts interest from a fan base that spans generations.

In 2015, the first recording contract signed by The Beatles was sold at a New York auction for \$75,000. — AFP



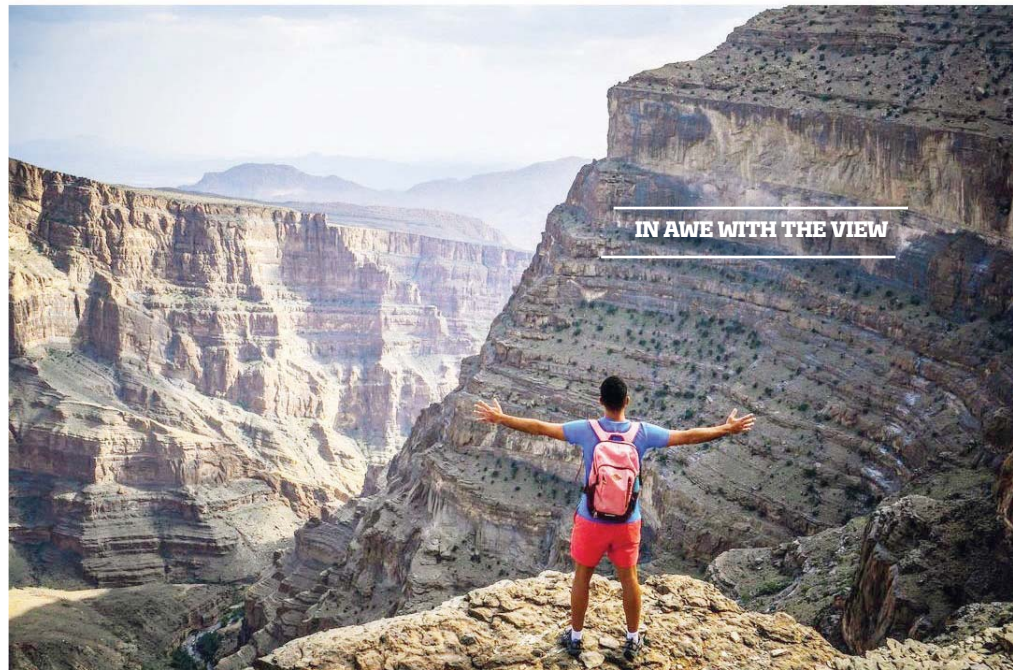
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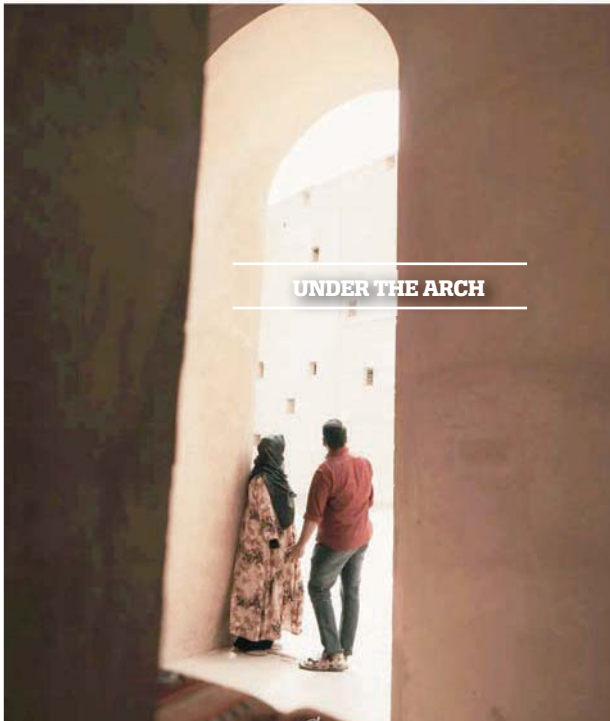
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AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Race on to save ancient Aboriginal tree carvings



RESEARCHERS ARE scouring Australia's desert outback to document ancient Aboriginal carvings on massive baobab trees, warning on Wednesday that the recently discovered artwork could soon be lost forever.

Professor Sue O'Connor, from the Australian National University, said the long, looping carvings linked to Aboriginal creation stories were of huge cultural significance, with some dating back at least several hundreds of years.

"Sadly, after lasting centuries if not millennia, this incredible artwork, which is equally as significant as the rock art Indigenous Australians are famous for, is now in danger of being lost," she said.

It took researchers two years to find carvings on 12 trees in the Tanami desert, a remote stretch of land on the border between the state of Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

O'Connor said researchers were racing to investigate hundreds of other baobab trees, and to photograph any carvings before they died.

"Unlike most Australian trees, the inner wood of boabs is soft and fibrous and when the tree dies, they just collapse," she said.

Brenda Garstone, an Aboriginal woman from Western Australia who was involved in the research, said she wanted to preserve the carvings for future generations.

"We are in a race against time to document this invaluable cultural heritage," she said.

O'Connor said the next step was getting an accurate age for the baobab trees.

"They are often said to live for up to 2,000 years but this is based on the ages obtained from some of the massive baobab trees in South Africa, which are a different species.

"We simply don't know how old the Australian boabs are."

Worldwide, there are eight species of the baobab tree — six from Madagascar, one in continental Africa and one in Australia.

The need to preserve historical Aboriginal sites has been under the spotlight in Australia.

Mining company Rio Tinto blew up the 46,000-year-old Juukan Gorge rock shelters in 2020, sparking a scathing parliamentary inquiry.

Australia's Aboriginal people were prolific artists, with the oldest cave paintings — in the Kimberley region of Western Australia — dated at 17,300 years old. — AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

French jazz pianist Paul Lay to perform in Oman



By Kabeer Yousuf

HIS IS A LIFE dedicated to Beethoven repertoire and he is attempting to recreate the legend's melodies when the numero uno musician is remembered on his 250th birthday.

Paul Lay, a French jazz pianist, composer and arranger, is concentrating on Beethoven's universal melodies, such as the Moonlight Sonata, Für Elise, Ode to Joy or his Symphony, besides his own compositions inspired by the legendary music and the places where he had lived such as Vienna and Heiligenstadt.

Taking the music that lived for nearly three centuries and enthralled various generations, Lay is all set for a unique concert at the National Museum on Sunday, October 16, at 7 pm, kind enough to offer the music aficionados in Oman a rare treat.

Paul Lay will present his latest piece, 'Full solo', which is considered to be a tribute to Beethoven. The event will be held under the auspices of Véronique Aulagnon, Ambassador of France to Oman.

Paul Lay is considered to be one of the most brilliant jazz pianists of today and has been enthralled the audience with his soul rendering music by carving his name as a superhero of the piano in the hearts of millions.

He blends two generations, two cultures and two music streams, such as classical music and jazz and

understands the soul of both traditions.

His Conservatoire Supérieur National de Musique has carved a niche for itself and that



has made him win the Prix Charles Cros for his second album, then two years later the prestigious prix Django Reinhardt which honoured him as the musician of the year, followed by the Victoires du Jazz, which reaffirmed his place in jazz.

He has played with Riccardo Del Fra, Géraldine Laurent or Terez Montcalm, and is part of Ping Machine.

He believes that he got the music tradition from his mother, who is a music lover, and made him listen to a lot

of tunes and songs. He began to imitate on the piano the melodies he heard from the age of 3 and started learning the piano at the age of five, which made him work a lot on his ear.

His completed his education at the regional conservatory of Toulouse, the National Conservatory of Music in Paris, Jazz and Improvised Music Department with François Théberge and Glenn Ferris in particular. These all have formed his skills with Riccardo Del Fra.

He has a large number of titles to his credit and since 2020, he has launched Deep Rivers, with Isabel Sörling and Simon Tailleu (Laborie Jazz), and in 2021 a Full Solo (Gazebo).



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

Is long corona still mysterious?

THE CORONA pandemic (Covid-19) may have become part of the past, but its consequences still exist, especially for people who survived it. Despite treatment and long hospitalisation, some of them still suffer from lung damage.

These patients often face the same socio-economic factors that made them initially vulnerable to Covid-19 and they will undoubtedly require vigilant care.

When I raise the issue of long coronavirus here, it is because there is a more fundamental problem that eludes efforts to reveal the true estimate of the possibility of this case.

Quite simply, long corona is not one thing. Long viral infections, which appear in global medical reports, fall into a few approximate categories. The first appears to be the most easily explained: a combination of organ damage, often severe physical debilitation and poor mental health caused by severe pneumonia and disease dangerous result.

Perhaps now these serious and long-term complications of corona receive only relatively little media attention in most countries, despite their severity. We must not forget that this virus can cause acute respiratory distress syndrome, the most dangerous form of pulmonary illness, which in turn can lead to a downward spiral of inflammation and infection that can eventually destroy nearly every organ. Doctors have noticed and many of us have heard of these complications in the intensive care unit at the hospital: heart failure, collapsed lungs, kidney failure, brain insult, interruption of blood flow and more. This means that perhaps millions around the world could be left with damaged lungs or complications from serious illnesses.

My question here is really, are these patients' needs for care and rehabilitation being adequately (and equitably) met? Certainly, making sure that it represents an urgent priority is a duty on the health institutions of many societies.

On the other hand, and the follow-up to long coro-

na in some medical reports, there are new beginnings of recognised medical conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, or blood clot — after a light infection with corona. It may seem strange that an upper respiratory infection could lead to a heart attack. However, this pattern has been well described after infection with other common respiratory viruses, especially influenza. Likewise, different types of infections can lead to blood clots in the legs, which can travel (dangerously) to the lungs.

More importantly, researchers still do not understand why some people with mild coronavirus recover easily while others continue to experience such complications. Here, some may argue with me that such syndromes are not actually related to long corona! I may agree with them here, especially since there are still no acceptable objective diagnostic tests or biomarkers.

In addition, although no specific long-term coronavirus medications have emerged, some treatments may be helpful in improving certain symptoms regardless of the specific disease, such as physical rehabilitation therapies for those with shortness of breath or reduced exercise tolerance. In a way, ensuring universal access to this specialised rehabilitative care is essential as we enter the next phase of this pandemic.

In the end, probably specialists and scientists still have a lot to learn about symptoms that persist — or appear for the first time — months after the initial infection with the corona virus. What is clear today is that this long corona could be many different things. It is true that a mild infection with coronavirus may be associated with at least a wide spectrum of each disease, but after this time has passed, I find that researchers and specialists need a much better classification to address the suffering of people and discuss its repercussions, with the huge variety of those symptoms or complications.

Dr Yousuf Ali Al Mulla is a physician, medical innovator and writer.

art & life

Local Scene

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Beating disability through social work

By Arwa al Hashimi

Challenges are part of human existence. We all face different challenges everyday but what if your challenge is permanent, how do you go about life?

For Akram al Maawali, it is finding his purpose beyond his disability — that while he cannot walk, he still has some other blessings he can tap into and believe in human magic and his ability to focus his energy on something productive.

Being a person with a mobility disability, Akram grew up trying to overcome many obstacles, most of them related to the public's lack of awareness about disability and how to deal with such a segment including their rights and duties.

Many challenges were also about the facilities not being designed for their proper use and the lack of universal accessibility standards in many public service buildings.

With social media activity, specifically in the last 10 years, he started his journey of raising awareness and educating people about the importance of paying attention to this group of people and striving towards providing everything that would make their lives easier and more convenient.

At the beginning of his journey, the effort revolved around volunteering and raising

awareness in the community and the media about disability and people with disabilities.

After that, the awareness-raising activity involved several community workshops and lectures targeting all groups, including people with disabilities themselves. Later, it developed into the establishment of voluntary teams in technology and art fields to highlight people with disabilities with their wonderful abilities and great potential, until it worked to collect all those efforts and activities under The name of an initiative called Akram al Maawali Initiative for Disability which aims to develop the disability sector for the better.

In this regard, Akram said, "Personally, I always try to make that passion always accompanies me in every step related to any field of disability, and I make sure that any participation or any step is useful and beneficial for people with disabilities, their families, workers in the field or even those who are interested."

He added that great efforts are being made by the various stakeholders, however, he feels that these efforts need support, methodology, evaluation, development and interdependence to achieve their maximum benefit.

This sector is vital and active. There are many things we can achieve and even excel at on the international stage if the

efforts are systematic, interconnected and accompanied by passion.

There are specific and clear elements in the life of disabled people. The more everyone works to improve these elements, the more the disability sector in the Sultanate of Oman will improve those needs including independence, recruitment, having a supportive family, getting a good education, being involved in sports, providing Health supplies and providing prosthetic devices at subsidised prices.

Akram said, "The reader may think that what we mentioned above are self-evident aspects, but those who are delving into the field of disability are fully aware that we have identified very precisely the aspects that need attention and development in the lives of people with disabilities."

Every person with a disability is an inspiration to others. Akram explained this by saying that "What that person needs is often the same as what I need as a person with a disability. I am also inspired by passionate volunteers who excel in helping disabled people not to get a job but for that passion that shines within them for serving people with disabilities. They really touch my heart with their steadfast work in supporting their disabled brothers and sisters and making their lives easier all without asking for any financial benefit."

