



P13

OMAN'S ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION INCREASES 7% IN Q1 2024



P12

SWIATEK CRUSHES PAOLINI TO WIN THIRD FRENCH OPEN TITLE IN ROW



P20

THE FRAGRANT LEGACY OF OMAN



MUSCAT

HM GREET'S KING ABDULLAH OF JORDAN

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on the anniversary of his accession to the throne. His Majesty expressed his sincere greetings to King Abdullah II wishing him a long life and happiness and praying for the return of this occasion and similar ones while the friendly Jordanian people have achieved their aspirations for progress and prosperity.

OMAN ELECTED AS A MEMBER OF UN COMMITTEE



Hamida bint Salloum al Shukairiyah

The Sultanate of Oman has been elected as a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for 2025-2028 during the 23rd meeting of states parties at UN headquarters in New York on Thursday.

The Sultanate of Oman is represented on the committee by Hamida bint Salloum al Shukairiyah, Director of the Rural Development Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The Sultanate of Oman's election as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women confirms its position at the international level, its effective role in achieving ways to empower women and provide all types of protection and care for them, and the keenness of member states to be represented on this important, relevant committee.



A flooded wadi in the Wilayat of Dima W'attayeen

50°C LIKELY THIS SUMMER

HEAVY RAINS LASH PARTS OF OMAN

STAFF REPORTER

Muscat, June 8

Rains in parts of Oman brought the temperature below 40 degrees Celsius in some areas on Friday but it may increase to 50 degrees Celsius this summer, the Directorate-General of Meteorology at the Civil Aviation Authority has warned.

The Directorate-General of Meteorology advised citizens and residents against exposure to direct sun heat especially at noon to avoid sunstroke.

The wilayats overlooking the coasts of the Arabian Sea witnessed lower temperature especially Dhofar Governorate as well as the mountains such as Jabal Shams and Al Jabal Al Akhdhar.

Aisha bint Juma al Qasimiyah, a meteorologist, said that the highest temperatures in the Sultanate of Oman were recorded in May at Hamra Al Duru station at 48.4 degrees Celsius followed by Fahud (48.1 degrees Celsius), Ibri-Sur-Al Rustaq (47.5 degrees Celsius), Al Buraimi (46.7 degrees Celsius), Qarn Alam (46.5 degrees Celsius), and Suhar and Adam (46.4 degrees Celsius).

She denied reports circulating among the public that the temperature has already exceeded 50 degrees Celsius depending on the measuring sensors on vehicles or manual devices. She said that temperature measurements on

vehicles give inaccurate figures as the temperature gauges used in vehicles are not at par with the international temperature measuring standards adopted by the World Meteorological Organization and that the vehicle temperature can be affected by the heat emitted from the engine, the ground or road.

Parts of the governorates of Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah, Al Buraimi, Muscat, Al Wusta, Al Sharqiyah North and Al Sharqiyah South witnessed extensive formations of thunderstorms which led to heavy rains.

The Wilayat of Rakhyouot recorded the highest rainfall amount with 59 mm over the period from June 5 to 7, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. The Wilayat of Mirbat recorded 28 mm of rainfall, Bidiyah 19 mm and Ibri 12 mm.

Al Rustaq received around 35 mm of rainfall on Saturday, followed by Yanqul (30 mm) and Ibri (25 mm).

No untoward incidents were reported due to rains and flowing wadis.

Heavy rains have been reported from Suhar, Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan and Wadi Al Madam in the Wilayat of Al Hamra, while the flowing Wadi Bani Ghafir saw disruption in road traffic between Al Rustaq and Ibri.

Abbas seeks Security Council session on Al Nuseirat massacre

GAZA: Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has called for an emergency UN Security Council session on "the bloody massacre that was carried out by the Israeli forces" at Al Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, which left 210 Palestinians dead and hundreds wounded. Hamas said on Saturday that some hostages were killed in Israel's hostage freeing operation in central Gaza.

The Hamas media office said "the number of victims from the Israeli occupation's massacre in Al Nuseirat camp has risen to 210 martyrs and more than 400 wounded". The group earlier accused Israeli forces of engaging in "brutal and savage aggression in Al Nuseirat camp", with a Gaza hospital providing an initial death toll of 15 in heavy Israeli strikes in central areas of the territory, including Al Nuseirat.

Israeli police said an officer was mortally wounded during the rescue operation.

It was carried out despite growing international pressure on Israel after a deadly strike on a UN-run school in Al Nuseirat where displaced Gazans were sheltering.

Hamas's Qatar-based leader Ismail Haniyeh vowed to keep fighting. "Our people will not surrender, and the resistance will continue to defend our rights in the face of this criminal enemy," Haniyeh said in a statement. Near Al Nuseirat on Saturday, an AFP



Palestinians evacuate with their belongings from Al Nuseirat camp in Gaza on Saturday. – AFP

photographer saw scores of Palestinians fleeing the Bureij camp on foot, fearing further Israeli strikes.

The operation came days after an Israeli strike on the Nuseirat school run by the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, which a Gaza hospital said had killed 37 people.

Meanwhile, Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced on Saturday his government would suspend coal exports to Israel "until the genocide stops". **SEE ALSO P6**

Dibba port to open in Q1 2025

DIBBA: The Dibba Fishing Port Development Project is considered one of the most important projects undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in Musandam Governorate.

The project aims to contribute to the economic diversification strategy, create an attractive environment for investments and exploit fish resources. The total cost of the project is RO 40 million.

Ahmed bin Ali al Shuhi, Head of the Dibba Fishing Port, said that the construction work on the project is well in progress with the completion rate currently at 75 per cent.

The marine works at the port are expected to be completed within the next two months. He added that the project is expected to be fully operational during the



The construction work on the Dibba Port is well in progress with the completion rate at 75 per cent

first quarter of 2025.

The concrete docks have been completed and general docks equipped will soon be installed, the official said, noting that the port is currently dealing with all sectors and has received cargo ships from neighbouring countries.

Al Shuhi said this is a multi-purpose project involving 4 main sectors including fishing, tourism, maritime transport and trade services, and maritime security. He noted that the project involves two breakwaters with the primary one measuring 1,550 metres long while the secondary one is 500 metres long. **TURN TO P3**



الشركة العمانية لشراء الطاقة والمياه ش.م.ع. - عمان، الأردن
 عمان Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC PO Box 1388, Ruwi PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman | Tel : +968 24508400 | C.R No: 1/71723/Al Tax Number: 806351



TEXT, PHOTOS BY
YAHYA AL SALMANI

This village is visited by many tourists, especially since its lands have become fertile and full of water, and the Al Qhaid season, which is the season for harvesting local fruits, has begun since the middle of this month.



Follow us on **facebook**
omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
SUNDAY | JUNE 9 | 2024

3

WE EXCHANGE TRUST



WORLD WIDE REMITTANCE

PURSHOTTAM KANJI EXCHANGE

شركة برشوت
كانجي للصرافة

Download it NOW!

+968-91787529 | 99849289
www.pkexchange.com



WE BUY & SELL
GOLD & SILVER

1 gm to 1kg 24ct gold bars available
at best international rate.

ESTABLISHED SINCE 1920
OMAN'S #1 EXCHANGE

Darbak platform boosts adventure tourism

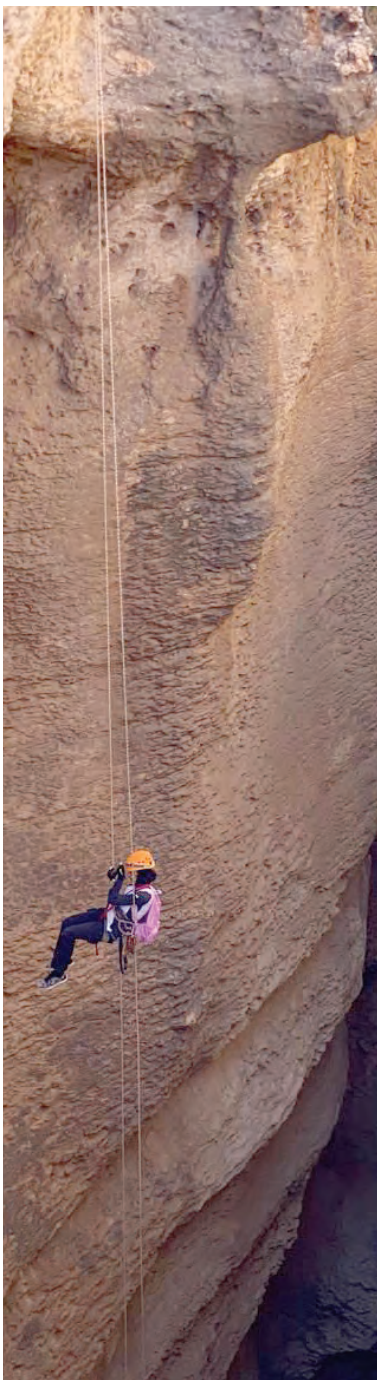
MUSCAT: Omanis have long demonstrated their ability to adapt to challenging terrains, carving pathways through high mountains, constructing homes from their rocks, and establishing roads and trails that endure to this day. Preserving these ancient paths, Oman has transformed them into a paradise for adventure and exploration enthusiasts.

The Darbak platform is a cornerstone of adventure tourism in Oman, emerging as a leading Omani company focused on promoting this sector.

Widely popular among both Omanis and foreign tourists, Darbak capitalises on the diverse and picturesque landscapes of the Omani environment.

Jassim bin Mohammed al Alawi, CEO of Darbak, told ONA, “The company was conceived to create a platform that facilitates access to service providers, whether individuals or companies, offering a multitude of activities and experiences. These include natural adventure tourism such as mountain climbing, diving, and sea trips, as well as sports and diverse artistic and cultural activities.”

Founded at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Darbak turned the global crisis into



an opportunity for growth and evaluation amidst minimal local competition.

Despite the challenging times, the platform thrived, collaborating with about 72 tourism companies and offering approximately 131 unique experiences and activities across various governorates in Oman.

About the selection process for adventure sites, Al Alawi mentions that the Darbak team rigorously tests new locations to assess their suitability in terms of difficulty and safety before featuring them on the platform.

Darbak has achieved significant success locally, winning the ‘Scale’ award at the 33rd Comex International Technology Exhibition, which honours the best emerging technology companies.

The platform is supported by the Oman Technology Fund, which invests in promising tech projects, and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority, which provides essential workshops and participation in local conferences and forums.

Al Alawi also revealed the company’s aspiration to expand beyond Oman, a goal already in motion through partnerships with Saudi and Kuwaiti companies.

— ONA



RO 40m Dibba port to open in Q1 2025

FROM P1

Other facilities include a port basin with a depth of up to 8 metres, floating quays, a beach for the mooring of small boats with a length of 130 metres, a boat slipway, among others.

An area of 5,000 square metres is earmarked to invest in tourist facilities including a hotel, a restaurant, transportation, special docks for each sector, commercial facilities, internal roads, electricity and lighting, water network and rainwater drainage, the official said.

The port will have a capacity to accommodate cruise ships especially after the Dibba Port was approved by the International Cruise Ship Organization as a station for its ships worldwide, the official said noting that the port receives about 4,000

passengers per month through the National Ferries Company.

The Dibba Port will have a great economic return for Musandam Governorate in general and the Wilayat of Dibba in particular owing to its investment opportunities as it will attract foreign investors and generate over 100 direct and indirect jobs upon the start of the commercial operations, Al Shuhi said.

Once completed, the Dibba Port will be the second largest multi-purpose port in the Sultanate of Oman and the first port linking Musandam Governorate to Al Batinah North Governorate.

Upon the completion of the Dibba-Lima-Khasab Road project, the number of trips will increase attracting more travellers and tourists to the Wilayat of Dibba, he said.

— ONA

RNO concludes exercise ‘Gulf 4’

MUSCAT: The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) has concluded its participation in the joint naval exercise ‘Gulf 4’, organised by the Unified Naval Operations Centre and led by the Unified Maritime Duty Force 81. The exercise included naval vessels from the navies of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, conducted in the waters of the Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

This joint naval exercise is part of the ongoing efforts to enhance the joint training plans of the GCC navies. The primary objectives include securing navigation lines, improving maritime communication, and sustaining the operational capabilities of the Royal Navy of Oman. This ensures their readiness to fulfil national roles and tasks effectively.

— ONA



World Ocean Day celebrated

Divers lead clean-up to protect Dimaniyat Islands Nature Reserve

MUSCAT: Over 29 divers from Oman Sail, along with volunteers from Omantel, have completed an underwater reef clean-up project at the Dimaniyat Islands Nature Reserve to celebrate World Ocean Day.

The initiative was supported by Omantel who partnered with Oman Sail and in collaboration with the Environment Authority to promote environmental sustainability and raise further awareness for action to preserve the oceans and minimise negative human impact on the marine environment.

Omani champion diver Omar al Ghailani, former world’s deepest free dive record holder, joined the initiative, lending his considerable experience to reach discarded items lurking out of sight.

Held annually on June 8, the action theme for this year’s World Ocean Day is ‘Catalysing Action for Our Ocean &



Underwater reef clean-up project at the Dimaniyat Islands

Climate’, and the team of divers also cleaned the surface of the water to protect the many species of marine and bird life calling the nature reserve home.

Unfortunately, damage to the coral reefs due to discarded and lost fishing gear have disturbed

the patterns of many species and threaten the health of the sea life. Many fish, turtles and birds ingest plastic left in the oceans or get caught in washed up fishing nets.

Saba bint Said al Busaidiyah, Corporate Affairs Senior



Manager at Omantel, said, “It is vitally important to raise awareness of the need to protect our marine environment, the oceans provide us with connectivity to more than 120 cities around the world through our submarine cables. Oman is

blessed with such diversity that we must maintain and help to thrive. Being able to support this initiative is a great honour and we hope it will inspire visitors to the reefs to be more mindful about the impact they are having on the country and

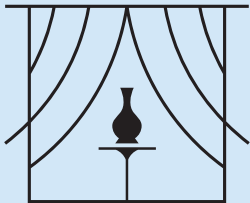
communities that rely on the islands.”

Khamis al Anbouri, Oman Sail’s Acting Commercial Director, added, “Oman Sail and indeed Sea of Oman are uniquely placed to witness first hand the disruption to the Dimaniyat Island reefs and it is our duty to lend our expertise to restore a beautiful area of national importance. We are passionate supporters of our oceans and encourage everyone across the nation to do all they can to keep our coastlines clean, for World Ocean Day and every day.”

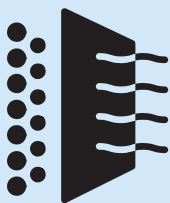
Oman’s coastline spans approximately 3,165 kilometres, more than double the distance between Muscat and Salalah, which makes the nation’s marine wildlife especially vulnerable to changes in the climate. Rises in sea levels, increased water temperatures and disruption to the food chains can have disastrous ef



HOW TO BEAT THE HEAT



WINDOWS
SHOULD BE KEPT
CLOSED DURING
THE DAY



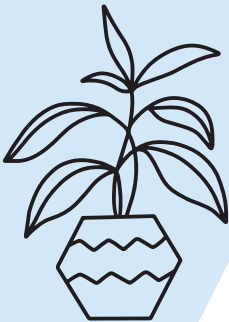
VENTILATE
THE HOUSE AT
NIGHT

BALQEES
AL ORAIMI

TEMPERATURES are rising to record levels in many places around the world. Many people rely on owning air conditioning devices to help them reduce the high summer heat. However, the problem is that some air conditioning devices cannot keep up with the high heat and humidity that we are currently witnessing. Statistics indicate that air conditioning devices consume a large percentage of monthly electricity consumption during summer. This also depends on the area of the house and the size of the air conditioning device used. Some think that upgrading home air conditioning devices can significantly reduce energy consumption. Modern appliances are energy efficient and more capable of giving the home the cooling it needs. Electrical technicians also advise people to follow certain methods to keep the house cool in case they do not want to turn on the air conditioner. Windows can be kept closed during the day to keep cool air inside the place. Fans are a great way to make the atmosphere fresher and more efficient than ACs. Ventilating the house at night can contribute to lowering temperatures, so technicians advise ventilating the rooms well to get rid of any heat stored inside them by opening windows in the house or apartment for a longer period to allow air to pass through. More plants can be used, as it is a wonderful and natural way to improve the indoor climate, as the foliage with a large

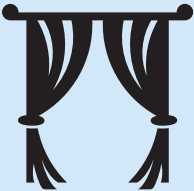
surface area releases cool moisture into the surrounding environment. Closing the curtains in the house prevents the sun's rays from entering the house and raising its temperature. Therefore, especially during periods when the sun's rays are in the afternoon and other times of the day, it is recommended to close the curtains well and isolate the sun's rays from entering the house. It is also recommended to choose sufficient and better quality home curtains that help insulate heat, and colour plays an important role in absorbing heat. Taking into account the opinions of specialists and technicians, Khamis al Shaqsi, a technical technician at the Ministry of Information, says that we can contribute to maintaining ACs by following some methods that contribute to its longevity and the quality of its cooling.

THIS INCLUDES:
Cleaning the internal and external units and regular maintenance of air conditioners, especially before the summer period, stabilises the temperature so that it contributes to preserving the air conditioners from damage. Al Shaqsi stresses the necessity of setting the temperature to more than 16 degrees Celsius, especially in the summer and at high temperatures, because it can raise the level of pressure and voltage on the air conditioning devices, leading to fires. Al Shaqsi advises setting the air conditioning temperature between 21 and 23 degrees.



MORE PLANTS
CAN BE USED TO
IMPROVE INDOOR
CLIMATE

TECHNICIAN'S TIPS
CLEAN THE INTERNAL,
AND EXTERNAL UNITS
DO REGULAR
MAINTENANCE OF ACS
SET THE TEMPERATURE
TO MORE THAN 16
DEGREES CELSIUS
SET THE AC
TEMPERATURE BETWEEN
21-23 DEGREES



CLOSE THE
CURTAINS IN THE
HOUSE



CEO: Indigo sees scope for expansion in Oman

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

India's largest airline, Indigo, said it is keen on expanding its operations in the Sultanate of Oman. The airline currently directly operates to Mumbai, Kochi, and Hyderabad from Muscat and previously also flew to cities such as Chennai, Delhi, and Calicut, among others.

Speaking to Observer recently, CEO Pieter Elbers said, "We keep that option open, and the Gulf is an important part of our network. We fly a total of 210 frequencies a week into the Gulf, including Muscat, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah.

"We will keep expanding in Oman. We still have room to grow and further build on what we have now. We are not just expanding in Oman but also in the region. And I think that's a good part of Indigo. We're not focusing on a specific part or a specific country, but on across-the-board expansions," he said.

The CEO also added that the airline still has three years to decide on how to deploy its A350s, which will arrive in 2027. Before that, we will have the A321 XLRs



We will keep expanding in Oman. We still have room to grow and further build on what we have now. We are not just expanding in Oman but also in the region

PIETER ELBERS
Indigo CEO

coming, which will help us bring services to Europe and Asia."

The airline currently serves 121 destinations, including 33 international from India and has a fleet of 182 A320s 94 A321neos, 45 ATRs and two 777s. He said

the Indian market has enormous potential, but at the same time, "it's competitive with customers and extremely price sensitive. Also, the regulatory environment is not always easy. There are some challenges that are beyond the control of anyone. You know the fog in the winter in Delhi and the monsoon in the south."

The airline plans to introduce business class on the busiest routes, such as between Mumbai and Delhi.

"We have lots of corporate customers. In the last 19 years, Indigo has already moved away from what some may qualify as a classical low-cost airline operating between secondary airports. We operate from all the main airports in India, operate at high frequency, have code-share partners, and also offer connectivity. We provide a first-time flying experience to a lot of Indians who couldn't afford it years ago, and now they can."

"The Indian market is very different than other parts of the world, and we still have first-time flyers joining us." It has also launched a new feature that allows female travellers to see where other women are sitting when selecting seats for their flights.



The medical delegation of the Haj Mission is all set to provide medical services to pilgrims from Oman

OMAN HAJ MISSION'S MEDICAL CLINIC READY TO SERVE PILGRIMS

IBRI: The medical delegation of the Omani Haj Mission for this year, 1445 AH, has confirmed its full readiness to provide medical services to pilgrims from the Sultanate of Oman.

Dr Ali bin Zayed al Busaidy, head of the medical delegation, stated that upon arrival in Mecca, the team immediately began preparing the medical clinic at the mission's headquarters in Mecca. The clinic is now ready to receive visitors around the clock, offering a full range of necessary medical services.

Dr Al Busaidy explained that the clinic has developed an advanced plan to handle all emergency cases, as well as those with chronic diseases and individuals needing dialysis. Coordination has been made with relevant authorities in Saudi Arabia to transfer critical cases to hospitals if necessary.

The team will also follow up on hospitalised cases daily through field visits and electronic communication with the competent authorities.

Meanwhile, efforts are being made by the competent authorities to streamline the procedures for Haj pilgrims heading to Saudi Arabia through the Empty Quarter crossing in Al Dhahirah Governorate.

Over 14,000 pilgrims from Oman have registered to perform the Haj this year. The procedures provided by the Department of Endowments and Religious Affairs in the governorate at the border crossing are to process the pilgrims' permits required to perform Haj rituals, in addition to permits for vehicles transporting pilgrims, in coordination with the Omani Haj Mission.

— ONA

Call for entries from Oman students for art show

MUSCAT: The third edition of annual student art show 2024 will take place in Dubai on November 9, 10, 2024.

The art show is themed 'Art and Innovation' and its objective is to encourage experimentation, shape the personality of the future generation, explore the intersection of art and innovation and influence of science on arts and bring the youth on a single platform.

The art show includes various activities like art exhibition, competitions, workshops, masterclasses and art talks.

Dr Hafsa Banu, the mentor from Oman, has in a press noted urged all students from Oman to participate by physically attending or by sending their artwork through her. A dentist by profession Dr Hafsa is a self-taught and unique artist who experiments with different art mediums. Students will also have option of working as a team of three on an innovative project and submitting their videos for participation. During the last year's competition in Dubai, two of the student artists emerged global winners from the Sultanate of Oman.

The competition is organised by Youth Creative Minds, Funun Arts Group, and Young Times. The last date for registration is September 20. Contact Dr Hafsa on GSM 9786 4950 or email 27gallery27@gmail.com.

Investment opportunities showcased at Al Batinah North Tourism Forum



The Al Batinah North Tourism Forum was launched recently in Suhar.

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, JUNE 8

The Al Batinah North Tourism Forum was recently launched under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. The event took place at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Suhar, drawing attendance from various government and private entities involved in the tourism sector.

Mohammed bin Suleiman al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North, in his address highlighted the unique attributes of the region: "The forum is an opportunity to showcase the natural, heritage and historical distinctiveness of the wilayats of Al Batinah North Governorate, alongside the existing infrastructure such as parks, gardens and shopping centres."

Aimed at bolstering tourism investment opportunities in Al Batinah North, the forum highlighted the competitive advantages of the region's tourism sector.

The key objectives included enhancing and empowering emerging tourism and youth

sectors, ensuring sustainability of the tourism industry and facilitating direct communication and promotion of tourism services and packages.

Participants engaged with leading tourism entities and emerging institutions, exchanging information and experiences. The event featured several presentations by entities such as the Office of the Governor of Al Batinah North, Department of Heritage and Tourism, and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Al Batinah North. Esteemed speakers and tourism experts delivered presentations, followed by an open discussion session.

The Al Batinah North Tourism Forum featured four presentations.

Eng Nasser al Maamari, Director of the Oman Vision 2040 Office, Al Batinah North, discussed the region's strategic advantages, including its location, population density, natural resources and logistical readiness, highlighting key infrastructure projects like Sohar Port and Sohar Airport.

Abdulaziz al Ajmi, head of the Tourism Committee,

OCCI, Al Batinah North, focused on tourism patterns and infrastructure, emphasising business tourism and providing statistics on Sohar Airport's operations.

Hasan al Jabri, Director of Heritage and Tourism, Al Batinah North, presented the region's tourism statistics and major tourist sites, noting its diverse landscapes and economic significance.

Capt Faisal al Dhahli from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, discussed safety measures in mountain adventure tourism, emphasising risk management, training and emergency procedures.

Preceding the forum, a well-received tourism programme attracted a large audience from within and outside the region. The programme featured a range of aerial sports and adventure activities, including tandem paragliding with nine pilots performing formations such as straight lines, tandem lines and flag-raising displays. The event also showcased equestrian displays, rowing boats and a 4x4 convoy featuring five different off-road vehicles.



Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders:-

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of Tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 10:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable) Per set
2237/2024/MOH/HQ	Provision of Cleaning and Pest Control Services for Various Health Establishments in Al Dahirah Governorate	13/6/2024	10/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 28
2238/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply & Installation of Ultrasound Scanner for Wadi Bin Auf Health Center	13/6/2024	10/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2259/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply Interactive Screen & LED Wall Display for Emergency Management Center	13/6/2024	3/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The Excellent, First & Second Grade	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2270/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply and Install CCTV IP system in Sur Hospital at South Sharqiyah Governorate	13/6/2024	17/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in Excellent Grade	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2277/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply & Installation of Medical Equipments for Central Blood Bank Bausher	13/6/2024	10/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2278/2024/MOH/HQ	Provision of Cleaning and Pest Control Services to Directorate General of Human Resource Development Building at Al-Wattayah	13/6/2024	17/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2279/2024/MOH/HQ	Maintenance Works in Security Room and Drivers Room at Directorate General of Projects and Engineering Services	13/6/2024	17/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in Fourth Grade	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2297/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply of Surgical Consumables Items	13/6/2024	26/6/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2298/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply and Installation of Chillers in Ibri Hospital at AL Dhahirah Governorate	17/6/2024	17/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25
2343/2024/MOH/HQ	Supply of Laboratory Items	20/6/2024	17/7/2024	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	• SME: 10 • LO: 25

- Tenders should be submitted online on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om.



Italy's PM and leader of Italian far-right party Brothers of Italy Giorgia Meloni arrives at the polling station to vote for the European elections, in Rome. – AFP

Italy votes in EU election with Meloni poised as powerbroker

BRUSSELS: Italy became the first heavyweight nation to cast votes for the EU's next parliament on Saturday, in a test of far-right leader Giorgia Meloni's strength at home — and future influence in the bloc. Most of the European Union's 27 member countries, including powerhouses France and Germany, go to the polls on Sunday, the final day, with projected overall results due late that evening.

The ballot in Italy — the EU's third-biggest economy with 76 of the 720 seats in the new parliament — could have major consequences.

Meloni was expected to cast her ballot in her Rome constituency where temperatures were set to hit a sweltering 35 degrees Celsius.

Polls suggest Meloni's Brothers of Italy party could win with 27 per cent of the vote — more than quadrupling its score from 2019 — amid a broader surge of far-right groups across

the bloc.

That would set up Meloni as a powerbroker in deciding whether EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen gets the backing she needs, from both member states and parliament, for a second term.

In the election run-up, Meloni has been actively courted both by the centre-right von der Leyen — and by French far-right leader Marine Le Pen.

Le Pen's National Rally (RN) party is also topping the polls in the EU race.

EU-wide, immigration is the hot-button issue driving support to far-right parties. They are forecast to grab a quarter of parliament seats — though the centrist mainstream is still seen coming out on top.

Beyond the predicted surge, analysts say the bigger question is whether parliament's main grouping, von der Leyen's European People's Party (EPP), will ally with the far right.

— AFP

210 PALESTINIANS KILLED AS ISRAEL FREES FOUR CAPTIVES

GAZA: At least 210 Palestinians were killed and around 400 wounded in Israeli strikes on the Al-Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza on Saturday, the Gaza government media office said in a statement. Dozens wounded, in the attacks, arrived on Saturday at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, the health ministry in the enclave said. The hospital, one of the only hospitals still functioning in Gaza, has been currently operating via one power generator and could go out of service while dozens of injured were still on the streets, a spokesperson from the health ministry said in front of the hospital.

Israeli forces freed four captives alive in an operation from two separate locations in the central Gaza area of Al-Nuseirat on Saturday, the military said. The four captives, three males and one female who were abducted from southern Israel on October 7 last year, were taken to hospital for medical checks, the military said, and were in good health. They were identified as Noa Argamani, 25, Almog Meir Jan, 21, Andrey Kozlov, 27, and Shlomi Ziv, 40.

After eight months of devastating war in Gaza triggered by October 7 attack, 116 of the approximately 250 captives abducted by Palestinian groups are left in the enclave, according to Israeli tallies — at least 40 of whom have been declared dead in absentia by authorities.

In a televised news conference, spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said one Israeli soldier had been badly injured. Israeli



Children ride with belongings, moving with other displaced people fleeing from the eastern parts of Gaza. – AFP

More than 36,000 people in Gaza have been killed, since the start of the Israeli offensive, which has laid to waste much of the enclave and displaced most the population

forces returned fire, including with airstrikes, he said.

The Gaza health ministry said that at least 210 Palestinians were killed in the Israeli operation. It did not say how many of the

fatalities were combatants but said that women and children were among the dead.

More than 36,000 people in Gaza have been killed, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, since the start of the Israeli offensive, which has laid to waste much of the enclave and displaced most the population.

Meanwhile, humanitarian aid entering Gaza by sea via a US — built pier will resume in the coming days, the Israeli military said on Saturday, after repairs to the structure were completed.

“The IDF (Israel Defence

Forces) has begun securing the coastal area of the US military's Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) capability — in Gaza. The pier's re-establishment will allow for the continued delivery of humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza in the coming days,” the Israeli military said.

The US Central Command said on Friday it had re-established the temporary pier anchored off Gaza's coast, which had been temporarily removed after part of the structure broke off, two weeks after it started operating. — Reuters

Macron welcomes Biden at start of state visit

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron welcomed Joe Biden at Paris' Arc de Triomphe at the start of the US leader's state visit to France on Saturday as the two nations seek to tighten ties.

Biden has been in France since Wednesday and took part in this week's commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings that changed the course of World War II.

During a welcome ceremony in Paris, Macron and Biden laid a wreath and rekindled the flame on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The two leaders were also due to walk down the Champs-Élysées.

Later on Saturday Biden was

Biden was due to meet Macron for talks followed by a state banquet given in his honour, with Ukraine's battle against the Russian attack the dominant topic

due to meet Macron for talks at the Elysee Palace followed by a state banquet given in his honour, with Ukraine's battle against the Russian attack the dominant topic.

In a speech on a cliff top in northern France that was the scene of a bloody confrontation



US President Joe Biden and French President Emmanuel Macron deliver statements at Elysee Palace in Paris. – Reuters

between US troops and occupying Germans on June 6, 1944, Biden on Friday had drawn parallels between D-Day and the present.

The president is set to face his Republican rival and predecessor Donald Trump later this year in presidential elections that commentators predict will subject US democracy to a severe test. Biden invoked the ghosts of the heroes of the assault on the Pointe du Hoc, a cliff top promontory where German bunkers were attacked by US troops. No surviving veterans remain alive.

Biden's speech also came under the shadow of Russia's

2022 attack of Ukraine, which has left war again raging in Europe eight decades after the end of World War II.

President Volodymyr Zelensky had earlier on Friday urged the West to do more to achieve a fair peace as Ukraine battles the Russian attack, telling Biden that Kyiv is counting on “shoulder-to-shoulder” support. Meeting Zelensky in Paris, Biden pledged his support for Ukraine and announced another \$225 million in aid to Kyiv.

Zelensky thanked him for the “tremendous support”, comparing it to the United States coming to Europe's aid during World War II. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

SEOUL

North Korea sends trash-carrying balloons again

North Korea again sent trash-carrying balloons towards the South on Saturday, the South Korean military said. “North Korea is again floating (suspected) balloons carrying trash towards the South,” the Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement, advising the public to refrain from touching the balloons. The announcement came hours after Seoul's military said it was on alert for possibly more trash-carrying balloons arriving from North Korea, a potential response to the



propaganda balloons sent this week by activists in the South. The Seoul city government, as well as the Gyeonggi Province, also sent a similar text alert to residents on Saturday. — AFP

COPENHAGEN

Danish PM cancels appointments after street attack

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on Saturday cancelled her appointments after suffering a whiplash injury in a street attack that left her “shaken”. Frederiksen's office said that she had been taken to a hospital for a check-up.

The assault has caused a “minor whiplash injury,” it said, adding that the prime minister was “otherwise safe but shaken by the incident” and her Saturday schedule had been cancelled.

Police said on Saturday that the



attack was likely not “politically motivated”. It said “a 39-year-old man will be brought before the Copenhagen district court for questioning” to decide if he is to be remanded in custody. — AFP

MOSCOW

Ukraine targets airfield in Russia with drones

Ukraine targeted the south Russian region of North Ossetia with drones for the first time ever on Saturday. The drones were aimed at a military airfield near the town of Mozdok, more than 700 kilometres from the frontline, according to North Ossetia governor Sergei Menyailo. “The attack was foiled by the Russian Defence Ministry's air defence forces. Minor damage and fires were recorded. No one was injured,” Menyailo said. A source in Kyiv said that Ukraine's GUR



military intelligence service was behind the attack. The damage from the attack was unclear, but governor Menyailo urged residents not to share images of the drones online. — AFP

War pushes Sudan towards the abyss



Declan Walsh

The writer is a reporter covering Africa for The New York Times, based in Nairobi, Kenya

Artillery shells soar over the Nile, smashing into hospitals and houses. Residents bury their dead outside their front doors. Others march in formation, joining civilian groups. In a hushed famine ward, starving babies fight for life. Every few days, one of them dies.

Once a proud city of gleaming high-rises, oil wealth and five-star hotels on the Nile, Khartoum, the capital of Sudan and one of the largest cities in Africa, has been reduced to a charred battleground. A feud between two generals fighting for power has dragged the country into civil war and turned the city into ground zero for one of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes.

As many as 150,000 people have died since the conflict erupted last year, by American estimates. An additional 9 million have been forced from their homes, making Sudan home to the largest displacement crisis on Earth, the United Nations says. A famine looms that officials warn could kill hundreds of thousands of children in the coming months and, if unchecked, rival the great Ethiopian famine of the 1980s.

The war erupted without warning in April 2023, when a standoff between Sudan's military and a powerful paramilitary group it helped create — the Rapid Support Forces — burst into gunfire on the streets of Khartoum.

Few Sudanese expected it would last long. Since independence in 1956, their country has experienced more coups than any other in Africa, most short-lived and bloodless. The rivals this time — the national army and the paramilitary force that once did its bidding — had seized power together in 2021 but fell out over how to merge their armies.

Almost immediately, the fighting ripped across Khartoum and far beyond, in pulsing waves that quickly consumed Africa's third-largest country. Sudanese have been stunned by the destruction, but neither side looks capable of victory, and the war is metastasising into a devastating free-for-all.

Another genocide now threatens Darfur, the region that became synonymous with war crimes two decades ago. Fields have become battlegrounds in the country's breadbasket. The health system is crumbling. And a plethora of armed groups has piled into the fight.

With US-led peace talks stalled, the Sudanese state is collapsing and threatening to drag down a fragile region with it. Experts say it is a matter of time before one of Sudan's many neighbours, like Chad, Eritrea or South Sudan, gets sucked in.

Gunfire and mortars splashed into the waters around Col Osman Taha, a badly wounded officer in the Sudanese military, as he crossed the Nile on a moonless night in November. Around him, he recalled, other wounded soldiers huddled in the boat, hoping to avoid being hit again. Several died.

Taha made it to the far bank, and five days later his right leg was amputated. Even then, there was no respite. As he recovered in a military hospital overlooking the Nile, he said, shells slammed into its walls, fired by the Rapid Support Forces across the river. Patients moved their beds



Sudanese Armed Forces soldiers drive through the ruins of the historic Al Shaabi market in Omdurman, Sudan

to avoid being hit as artillery fell.

The Nile has long defined Khartoum. Its tributaries merge in the city centre before pushing north through the desert into Egypt. Now, the great river divides Khartoum militarily as well, yet another front line in a splintered capital.

Snipers nestle in the riverbank beneath a giant bridge, blown up in fighting, that slumps into the river. Drones swoop over the water, hunting for targets. And an island in the centre of the Nile, where people once picnicked and swam, has become a kind of open-air prison controlled by the RSF, residents say.

Half of Khartoum state's 9 million residents have fled, the United Nations estimates. Its international airport is closed, bullet-pocked jets abandoned on the runway. Nearly all of the city's 1,060 bank branches have been robbed, officials say, and many thousands of cars stolen — some later located as far away as Niger, 1,500 miles west — in a campaign of street-by-street looting, most but not all, by the Rapid Support Forces.

The military's advance allowed hundreds of wounded troops to be evacuated by air to Port Sudan, where they lie in the crowded wards of a military hospital. One man had

extensive facial injuries from a drone strike. Amputations were common.

The evacuees included Taha, who sat up in his bed to show a series of videos that he took during his last battle. Jubilant soldiers can be seen whooping and hugging, thinking they have won. Bleeding RSF fighters lie in the dust, and are kicked or taunted by the soldiers. The camera flips to show Taha, sweating heavily, his eyes glazed from battle.

But the soldiers had missed one RSF fighter, a sniper hidden in a residential block, and he shot Taha in the leg. Later that night, he said, medics moved him to an ammunition factory beside the Nile, where they embarked on their perilous crossing.

The United Nations has yet to officially declare a famine in Sudan, but few experts doubt that one is already underway in parts of Darfur and, shockingly, Khartoum.

More than 220,000 children could die in the coming months alone, the UN says. And both sides use hunger as a weapon of war, aid officials say. The army withholds visas, travel permits and permission to cross the front lines. Rapid Support Forces fighters have looted aid trucks and warehouses and raised their own obstacles.

As many as 150,000 people have died since the conflict erupted last year. An additional 9 million have been forced from their homes, making Sudan home to the largest displacement crisis on Earth

Astronaut who took Earthrise photo dies in plane crash



Richard Goldstein

The author is a contributing writer at the New York Times

Maj William A. Anders, who flew on the first manned space mission to orbit the moon, the Apollo 8 “Genesis Flight” of Christmas Eve 1968, and took the colour photograph “Earthrise” credited with inspiring the modern environmental movement, died on Friday when a small plane he was piloting alone dove into the water near Roche Harbor, Washington, northwest of Seattle. He was 90. His son Greg confirmed his death.

Anders, along with Col Frank Borman, both of the Air Force, and Capt James A. Lovell Jr. of the Navy, was part of the first group of spacemen to leave the bounds of Earth's orbit. During their mission, they took photos and motion pictures of the lunar surface in preparation for the Apollo 11 flight, when men first stepped on the moon, and they were the first astronauts sent aloft by a giant Saturn V rocket.

Beyond those tremendous milestones, their mission was viewed as briefly reviving the spirits of an America stunned by rising casualties in the Vietnam War, the assassinations of the Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and tumultuous anti-war protests and racial disturbances.

On Christmas Eve, during their 10 orbits of the moon, the three astronauts, whose movements were telecast to millions

around the world, took photos of Earth as it rose over the lunar horizon, appearing as a blue marble amid the blackness of the heavens. But only Anders, who oversaw their spacecraft's electronic and communications systems, shot colour film.

His photo shook the world. Known as “Earthrise,” it was reproduced in a 1969 postage stamp bearing the words, “In the beginning God...” It was an inspiration for the first Earth Day, in 1970, and it appeared on the cover of Life magazine's 2003 book “100 Photographs That Changed the World.” Just moments before Anders began snapping away, the astronauts could be heard, as captured by the onboard recorder, expressing their awe over what they saw.

Decades later, in a 2015 interview with Forbes magazine, Anders said of “Earthrise,” “The view points out the beauty of Earth, and its fragility. It helped kick start the environmental movement.”

Anders was the first reader: “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the Earth. And the Earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”

William Alison Anders was born on October 17, 1933, in Hong Kong, where he was living with his mother, Muriel Adams Anders, while his father, Lt Arthur Anders, a career Navy man, was serving as



In a handout image from Nasa, the iconic photograph taken by astronaut William A. Anders aboard Apollo 8 on December 24, 1968.

His photo shook the world. Known as “Earthrise,” it was reproduced in a 1969 postage stamp bearing the words, “In the beginning God...” It was an inspiration for the first Earth Day

an officer on the gunboat Panay on patrol along China's Yangtze River.

William Anders returned to the United States, attended Grossmont High School in San Diego County, California, and became fascinated by tales of world-famous explorations.

Following the path his father pursued, he entered the Naval Academy and graduated in 1955, planning to become a pilot. He obtained a commission in the Air Force, viewing it as more attuned than the Navy to breakthroughs in aeronautical science.

While at Nasa, Anders became a specialist in space radiation, whose effects were considered to be a potential hazard for future astronauts. He also trained in a module that would be used to carry astronauts from a moon-orbiting capsule to the lunar surface, the future lunar lander.

Apollo 8 was designed to orbit the Earth with the module, which Anders would flight-test. But its development was delayed, so the mission was reprogrammed as a moon orbit, without the module, a premature and risky bid to beat the Russians in circling the lunar surface. The mission was a huge success and its astronauts were hailed at parades in New York, Chicago and Washington and appeared before a joint session of Congress.

The nature vs nurture debate



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
@alsinawi

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

THE TV documentary ‘Three Strangers’ tells the story of the American triplets who were born in 1961 and adopted by different families immediately after birth as a part of an experiment conducted by a psychologist associated with the adoption agency who separated them and arranged their placements.

The first triplet was adopted by a working-class family, the second by a middle-class family, and the third by a wealthy family.

The experiment hoped to test the role of the environment where a person grows up in this behaviour and personality under the nature vs nurture debate which was a popular research topic amongst mental health professionals in the 60s.

The triplets were assessed regularly by psychologists for a lifetime to record their behaviour and compare them to each other.

None of the boys or their adopted family were informed that they have another two brothers and the men knew about each other by chance when two of them attended the same college.

When the triplets met, they were surprised that

they looked and behaved the same way.

The documentary showed that they all suffered from poor mental health like their biological mother and in 1995 one of them committed suicide at the age of 34 years.

This project had a major ethical problem as it denied the three men the right to meet each other at an early stage as the psychologist who conducted the regular assessment on them avoided informing them so the study could be completed.

This research study would not have been approved these days as it breaks the key elements of bioethics by not considering the welfare of the three men who discovered their lives were no more than a big experiment.

I have always been interested in the nature vs nurture debate and have wondered, do people behave in a certain way because of their genes (nature), or because of how they were brought up (nurture)?

As a psychiatrist, I meet people with psychological problems while their siblings from the same parents who grew up in the same house do not have such problems.

DO PEOPLE BEHAVE IN A CERTAIN WAY BECAUSE OF THEIR GENES (NATURE), OR BECAUSE OF HOW THEY WERE BROUGHT UP (NURTURE)?

Being a father of twin boys who carry the same genome and were brought up in the same house yet each has his own personality and way of thinking.

In my opinion, the nature vs nurture debate tends to exclude other factors that shape human behaviour.

We all know that not all sons of alcoholics have drinking problems despite carrying certain genes for alcoholism and growing up in an environment where alcohol is available.

The same could be said about the son of a criminal being a law-abiding citizen.

So what would be the consequences of adopting the nature theory? Would people be no longer responsible for their actions? Would you say that your genes made you unfaithful or a criminal and you should not take responsibility for it?

Should we give up imprisoning criminals or rehabilitating drug addicts as ‘it’s already determined by their genes’? Should we advocate for gene manipulation where we remove genes responsible for ‘deviant behaviour’?

All these questions need to be addressed from ethical and religious prospects.

Sweden splashes out to save its unluckiest warship

SWEDEN is embarking on a colossal four-year project to safeguard a nearly 400-year-old warship that is the centrepiece of its famous Vasa Museum.

The ship, one of Stockholm’s main tourist attractions, sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and remained at the bottom of the sea until it was salvaged in 1961.

“We want Vasa to be preserved for the future,” project manager Peter Rydebjork said.

Despite the long delicate recovery operation, the ship “started to deteriorate faster” once it emerged from the sea after three centuries, he said. In one of the most embarrassing naval calamities ever, the Vasa capsized only 15 minutes into its maiden voyage because of a design flaw, costing the lives of several dozen crew members.

After being protected by mud and the brackish waters of the Baltic Sea for three centuries, preserving it while on display at one of Stockholm’s most popular museums has proved more complicated. The wood has contracted over the years, and the ship is being compressed due to gravity. It is also tilting slightly to port.

“We have to stop the movement,” Rydebjork said. Work on building a new support structure began in April to replace the fragile current one.

The first phase of the project, dubbed “Stotta Vasa” (Support Vasa), is to stabilise the wreck.

Then comes the creation of a structure to support its weight and finally the ship will be righted.

By 2028 —if all goes well —the hull will be supported both externally and internally and the current 17 external struts will be replaced by 27 steel cradles with fixings under the keel.

Because the Vasa currently has difficulty supporting its own weight, a type of steel skeleton will be installed inside the ship.

Rydebjork said it has taken more than a decade of research to prepare for the ambitious project -- which is expected to cost upwards of 200 million kronor (\$19 million).

“It’s a really interesting job,” Rydebjork added.

Despite its age, the ill-fated vessel is still well-preserved, with 98 per cent of the original parts intact. Polish tourist Lukasz Szyszka said that the ship was in great condition and worth seeing, despite it being “freezing inside” the museum.

Its main hall is kept at a temperature of between 18 and 20 degrees Celsius (between 64 and 68 degrees Fahrenheit) with a humidity level of 55 per cent to slow the deterioration. — AFP



Karim Easterbrook

The writer is a former School Principal Cambridge, UK

The ethics of using AI in schools

One of the central ethical considerations surrounding AI-generated novels is the question of authorship.

Traditionally authors are revered for their unique voices creativity and ability to convey complex emotions and ideas through their works.

When a novel is written using AI, the lines of authorship become blurred.

Does AI deserve credit as the author or is the human programmer behind the machine the true creator? This challenges traditional notions of authorship and raises concerns about giving credit where it is due.

Critics argue that AI-generated novels lack the soul, depth, and emotional resonance that define truly impactful works of literature, thereby diminishing their value as artistic expressions.

In schools, AI has been used by students to write or improve their essays.

Here the question for educationalists is: can a piece of writing created using AI be considered just as original and just as worthy of praise as one written by a human without technological assistance?

While I’m not totally comfortable with this development, this article supports the view that an essay produced at school or a novel published with the help of AI is just as valid as those produced without AI.

To begin with, it is essential to acknowledge that creativity stems from a myriad of sources, whether it be human imagination or AI generated.

When AI generates written content it does so by analysing vast amounts of existing text, carrying out detailed research and identifying patterns to produce interesting and well structured output. The AI process in many ways mirrors the way in which human authors draw inspiration from their surroundings, experiences, and prior knowledge.

A human writer may draw upon literary influences or personal anecdotes to shape their work, whilst AI draws upon data and computer texts to generate content. And is this use of AI any less ethical than when an author makes use of more ‘conventional’ writing aids such as



AI IN SCHOOLS

THE AI PROCESS IN MANY WAYS MIRRORS HOW HUMAN AUTHORS DRAW INSPIRATION FROM THEIR SURROUNDINGS, EXPERIENCES AND PRIOR KNOWLEDGE.

computer generated spell checkers or grammar checkers?

Or using a laptop word processor rather than a pen? Who decides what is better or worse, or what is more worthy? Does a teacher have the right to mark down a student’s essay because “it appears” to have been influenced by or even solely written by AI?

If so, on what basis? Can it not be argued that an AI essay is just as valid as one produced by a student’s own hand? If not perhaps schools should consider banning all machine aids in other disciplines such as Mathematics where hand-held calculators have replaced mental arithmetic.

When teaching a foreign language should we not on this basis ban the use of computer aided translation apps? And where does this end?

If we as educators are not to be seen as dinosaurs in a rapidly changing world, we have to shift the focus from how an essay is written to the content it offers and the human thought that

instigates its production.

In Literature maybe the ultimate test of an essay’s originality and quality should lie in the depth of its storytelling, the richness of its characters and the impact it has on its readers, regardless of whether or not AI was involved in its creation.

As educators, we have to accept this new reality because whether we like it or not AI is here to stay.

As a former teacher I realise that accepting this may be a somewhat bitter pill to swallow like so many other advancements in technology.

I am myself nostalgic for many of the things which have become obsolete not only in schools but in our everyday life. I am just old enough to remember the very rare sight of a horse pulling a cart before air-polluting cars made this impossible.

Nostalgic or not I cannot bring back horse driven carriages. So we have to accept as educators that the advancement of AI is as inexorable as the tide coming into the beach. We cannot stop it and therefore we must change and adapt by finding new ways to evaluate our students’ academic and literary abilities.

Difficult though it may be we have to embrace AI and find ways of using it to the benefit of our students.

Their legacies enhanced by the years

It's quite amazing, how someone, hundreds of years ago, could have thought in the same way as much of our contemporary society does today, and even more confounding when we consider so much has changed as time marches on.

While you have certainly heard of Taylor Swift, I'll guarantee you haven't heard of Christine de Pizan. She was the first widely published female composer of ballads and poetry throughout the 14th century to have an international profile through her 'Book of the City of Ladies,' and its companion, 'Treasure of the City of Ladies.' They must have been as iconic as Swift's 'Red' or 'Tortured Poets' albums, or her 'Eras' Tour are today, both using their lost loves as their key motivation and subject. Pizan had been driven to poverty by the premature death of her husband, and she wrote, first to survive, and later to expose societal misogyny. Though a far cry from those beginnings, Swift's signing to Big Machine Records, in 2005 proved her catalyst for questioning male norms.

Poet William Blake, proved far ahead of his time with his miserable poetic description of life in London. A key figure in the Romanticist movement he had seen at first-hand how the adversity of the poor, and the excesses of the wealthy, rather than being equally invigorated by the Industrial Revolution, played out in what he titled, 'Songs of Innocence and Experience,' in a collection of his best works, published during the 18th century. He abhorred that child labour, prostitution, poverty and brutality, had all become inescapable in 'his' city of London, and detested how the monarchy, the wealthy, the privileged, and the church, all turned a blind eye to their own excesses in the face of the destitution of the common folk. That betrayal is commonly felt in Europe's capital today, as the rich get richer, and the poor, well, they just survive.

Sociologist and philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, was another ahead of his time throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, with many of his musings on societal injustice suppressed for decades as they may have 'stirred up,'



Ray Petersen
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

The writer is a media consultant

THESE ARE JUST A FEW WHOSE INTELLECT, TALENT, AND PRECOCITY HAVE GAINED THEM PROMINENCE, NOT ONLY IN GLOBAL HISTORY, BUT OUR FUTURES. TIME, IT APPEARS, WILL NEVER DIM BRILLIANCE

dissatisfaction with slavery, universal suffrage, the inheritance hierarchy, animal rights and protection, no-fault divorce, and penal reform norms of the day. His utilitarian views, that the best solutions for any issue are those that achieve the most good for the most people, were considered far too radical at the time. In fact though, his Panopticon concept, is still trumpeted today as a viable model for today's, and tomorrow's prison systems.

There is significant impact today also, through the much-revered Ibn Sina, the author of a staggering 240 journals, many of which remain the basis of current medicine for centuries, though written during the 11th century, with his impressive 'Canon of Medicine' the most influential. In fact, it was the primary medicinal reference work throughout Europe until nearly 500 years later. A polymath, he wrote then of everything from dentistry to optometry, astronomy to theology, and geology to physiology, while his 'Danishnama,' a treatise on knowledge of all things, identified metaphysics and logic as critical disciplines of the future. That is madness!

Finally, the name of Nikola Tesla will be perpetuated forever through Elon Musk's 'Tesla' electric vehicles. The Serbian devoted his life to the study of electric, and after migrating to America at the age of 32, he worked on, and experimented with alternating current, oscillating generators, and polyphaser systems.

Tesla's problem was that he was competing in the same fiscal and research bubble as Thomas Edison, but was still seen as a foreigner, and found it difficult to maintain funding. Nevertheless, his work is more celebrated today than a century ago, as his wireless lighting and wireless electric research has undergone renewed interest given the space-age technological advances driving consumer needs.

These are just a few whose intellect, talent, and precocity have gained them prominence, not only in global history, but our futures. Time, it appears, will never dim brilliance.

GO AND MULTIPLY



A participant holds a sea turtle during an event held to release marine animals into the sea to mark the World Oceans Day at a beach in Nara in the southern Thai province of Narathiwat on Saturday. – AFP

The financial destruction of Palestine

At the recent G7 summit, US Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen, in a rare rebuke of Israel, warned that its plans to cut off Palestinian financial institutions from the global banking system would threaten the West Bank's economic stability. But her warning may have come too late to stop Israel's far-right finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, who seems bent on undermining the last vestiges of the Palestinian Authority's (PA) already-limited self-governance in the West Bank.

The sanctions that Smotrich wants to impose – specifically, revoking the waiver that allows Israeli banks to facilitate transactions with Palestinians without fear of legal action – are in response to Ireland, Norway, and Spain formally recognising a Palestinian state. Ironically, the PA is on the verge of collapse, owing to Israel's actions and the world's inaction.

Yellen seems to understand that Smotrich's plan to sanction the PA cannot be attributed solely to the ideological underpinnings of the most annexationist government in Israel's history. They are also indicative of an isolated Israel doubling down on its offensive in Gaza even as global pressure to end the war intensifies. But perhaps Yellen should bring her legitimate concerns about the PA's financial solvency to US President Joe Biden, given his



RAJA KHALIDI

THE G7 AND THE AD HOC LIAISON COMMITTEE MUST HELP THE PALESTINIAN ECONOMY TAP INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE LIKE ANY OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRY.

staunch support for Israel, before expecting other countries to take up the cause.

While the international community has recently expressed concern about the West Bank's looming economic catastrophe, the Palestinians living there (and elsewhere) remain fixated on the war in Gaza – already a catastrophe in every way. In fact, few informed observers have been surprised at the scale, intensity, and speed with which the war's economic fallout has hit the West Bank and the PA, given their deep dependence on Israel for jobs, trade, and currency. This asymmetrical relationship has been forged over decades of occupation, characterised by a constant struggle for land, resources, and rights, and increasing violence by extremist Israeli settlers, who have long enjoyed impunity.

Part of the dependency dynamic involves Israel collecting and clearing customs and import taxes on behalf of the PA. So, when faced with European efforts to build momentum towards a political settlement of the crisis, Smotrich decided to seize these tax revenues, in addition to threatening new financial sanctions. Prior to the war, the PA was entitled to an average of

\$270 million per month in total clearance revenues — enough to cover the salaries of 147,000 civil servants, its most essential current expenditure.

But for many years, Israel has made unilateral deductions, starting with unpaid utility and health bills owed to Israeli providers (based on government calculations). Since 2018, it has also deducted payments made to families of people whom the PA deems martyrs and to families of people imprisoned in Israel. By the end of 2023, these additional deductions amounted to around \$1.2 billion. This does not include deductions for unpaid utilities, health bills, and other deductions called "net lending," which totalled \$662 million in 2023 alone.

After the October 7 attack on Israel by Hamas, Smotrich began deducting the amount that the PA spends on staff and pensioners in Gaza. By April 2024, these deductions, coupled with a steep decline in private consumption and imports, left the PA with under \$100 million per month in "eligible" revenues, around a quarter of its monthly budget.

Smotrich has threatened to freeze the transfer of that amount and any clearance funds, while also pushing legislation to expropriate the deducted funds – which have been held in escrow

accounts – to finance Israel's war deficit. In yet another Israeli twist of the financial screws, the Bank of Israel has yet to accept the periodic exchange of accumulated stocks of Israeli shekels with Palestinian correspondent banks for foreign currency as stipulated under the Oslo Accords. This has led to panic among clients unable to deposit Israeli shekels. Meanwhile, the PA's salary arrears have reached at least six months. And that is only part of its \$8 billion public debt, which is around 60 per cent of West Bank GDP. Hence, the PA is facing imminent fiscal collapse, with the West Bank "on the brink, risking an explosion any time," as the normally cautious Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa recently put it.

The G7 leaders and the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, an international donor group for Palestine that met last week, must heed this warning as they consider making far-reaching decisions that could be as momentous as the war's outcome. Moreover, policymakers should be clear-eyed on what can and cannot be done. It is absurd to demand that the PA implement reforms, build state institutions, reconstruct Gaza, and police its people while Israel simultaneously withholds its main source of finance.

In the early days of Biden's presidency, some Palestinians, still reeling from the hostility of the Trump era and without a viable path to independence, hoped that he might push for Palestinian rights. In 2021, I proposed a US-sponsored financial New Deal for Palestine, which would reinforce the PA fiscal position, without requiring US diplomatic recognition of Palestinian statehood. The idea would be to grant Palestine formal status or reach an ad hoc arrangement at the International Monetary Fund so that it can tap international financial assistance like any other developing country, a small step towards sovereignty.

Implementing this plan is more important than ever. If the countries that have recognised Palestinian statehood – either recently or in the past – want their declaration to be more than a symbolic gesture, they must start treating Palestine as the state it will eventually become. And if the United States wants to prove that it is more than an accessory to Israel's war, it must lift its veto on Palestine's bid to become the state it deserves to be. The march towards Palestinian fiscal sovereignty is inevitable, but it must happen sooner rather than later.



Al Qabas team snatch Amateur League title

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 8

Al Qabas team claimed Amateur League title at Al Wahda complex on Friday. Al Qabas defeated Al Jawabi team in penalty shootouts with a score of 4-3 in a thrilling final match witnessed by an exceptional crowd of over 10,000 fans who filled the stands of Al Wahda Sports Club.

The final ceremony was held under the auspices of Nasser al Sunaidy, a member of Majlis Ashshura.

The enthusiastic atmosphere reflected the people's love for football, which motivated the players of both teams to give their all in a match characterised by competitiveness and excitement. Despite the numerous opportunities that came to both teams, the match ended without any goals being scored.

The match started with an equal level between the two teams, as the first half witnessed fierce competition from the first minute. Al Qabas team tried to control the midfield with short and quick passes, while Al Jawabi team relied on quick counterattacks. The two teams exchanged missed opportunities, and minutes before the end of the first half, Al Qabas player Mubarak al Ghailani was sent off after a violent tackle on an Al Jawabi player, putting his team in a difficult position for the rest of the match.

At the start of the second half, Al Jawabi team took advantage of Al Qabas team's numerical disadvantage and began to press offensively. Al Jawabi controlled the ball for most of the time and tried to penetrate Al Qabas defence with well-placed passes and attempts to shoot from outside the box. In contrast, Al Qabas team relied on quick counterattacks. The attempts continued from both sides, but the strong defence and the brilliance of the goalkeepers prevented any goals from being scored until the end of regulation time.



The thrilling final match was witnessed by an exceptional crowd of over 10,000 fans who filled the stands of Al Wahda Sports Club

After the end of regulation time with a scoreless draw, the two teams resorted to penalty shootouts, which Al Qabas team won in their favour with a score of 3-4.

In the coronation ceremony, Nasser al Sunaidy presented the gold medals and the championship cup to the players of Al Qabas team, while Al Jawabi team was awarded the silver medals.

Omar al Qasabi, head of the media committee, expressed his thanks saying: "We thank all the organising committees that contributed to the success of the Amateur League at Al Wahda Sports Club, from the club's board of directors to all the participating teams and their fans who played a major role in the success of the tournament. We look forward to organising more tournaments that bring everyone together and contribute to promoting the spirit of sportsmanship."

Al Qasabi pointed to the importance of supporting local sports and providing opportunities for young people to express their skills and showcase their talents, emphasising the great role that such tournaments play in strengthening social communication between different age groups and communities. He added: "The tournament was a great opportunity for players to show their skills and play with high sportsmanship. We are proud of the efforts made by everyone to achieve this success and we look forward to more tournaments in the future."

OOC, French embassy mark countdown of Olympic Games

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 8

The Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) and the French embassy in the Sultanate of Oman recently marked the countdown of the 2024 Summer Olympic Games in Paris through organising round table discussions with athletes titled under 'Women and Sport'. The discussions took place at the main hall of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex with group of inspiring female athletes focused on women's empowerment through sports.

The chief guest Sayyida Sana Hamad al Busaidi, Chairman of Oman Women's Sports and Gender Equality Committee,

delivered a speech on the development of Oman's women sports. "We are really proud with the domestic female athletes representation in different regional, continental and Olympic events. The national female athletes managed to register different accomplishment for the country in several championships and main events at the group and individual sports. Our focus now is to see more female athletes in the top major events like Olympic Games and other global events. We want to see more medals and achievements from the athletes," she said.

Veronique Aulagnon, Ambassador of the French



Republic to the Sultanate of Oman, said." In less than 50 days, Paris will host the opening ceremony of 2024 Olympic Games. This is the best celebration for the Olympics in

Oman by showcasing how France and Oman are cooperating in the sports field, encourage Omanis to travel to France this summer and focus on women in sport. I hope this event will contribute to

empower more women to engage in sport," she said.

The panel discussion featured from top inspiring female athletes including Saada al Ismaili, Vice-Chairperson of Oman Women's Sports Committee, Rumaitha al Busaidi, broadcaster and activist, Noorullhuda al Mandhari, mountain climber,

Al Yaqeen al Kindi (horse jumping), Marwa al Wadahi (weightlifter) and Neha Deshmukh (yoga).

During the round table discussions, many topics were discussed including the challenges faced in this field. The athletes also shared their experiences through

emphasising the importance of overcoming obstacles and barriers to achieve more athletic ambitions and the significance of community and family support in empowering women. Also on agenda was the role of media in supporting women's sports and how it can be used as an effective tool to highlight women's athletic achievements. Balancing the passion for the sport with a woman's personal and professional life was another topic discussed during the session.

For the first time in the history of the Olympic Games, Paris 2024 will see as many women as men competing in the competitions.



Taskin Ahmed (L) and Bangladesh's Rishad Hossain celebrate the dismissal of Sri Lanka. — AFP

Bangladesh keep nerve to win Lanka thriller

DALLAS: Bangladesh emerged victorious from a gripping encounter with Sri Lanka in Texas with the two-wicket victory getting them off to a winning start in Group D of the T20 World Cup.

Rishad Hossain produced a brilliant spell of leg-spin as Bangladesh fought back to restrict Sri Lanka to 124-9.

Then Liton Das (36) and Towhid Hridoy (40 from 20 balls) put Bangladesh in command before some excellent pace bowling from Nuwan Thushara (4-18), in his second spell threatened a late twist in the plot.

But veteran Mahmudullah Riyad showed all his experience at the end to see Bangladesh over the line with an unbeaten 16.

It was the final of four games at the Grand Prairie Stadium and the Dallas crowd have been treated to some top entertainment on a surface which offered some bounce and produced good contests between bat and ball.

Sri Lanka made a fast start, rattling their way to 53-2 in six overs and they progressed to 100-3 after 14 overs with Pathum Nissanka's 47 from 28 including eight boundaries (one six).

But then the 21-year-old wrist

spinner Rishad struck twice in successive balls to totally change the momentum of the innings.

Charith Asalanka's sweep shot found Shakib Al Hasan at deep backward square and he snaffled up the catch.

Sri Lanka skipper Wanindu Hasaranga was the next victim of Rishad's spin, edging a sharply turning delivery to Soumya Sarkar at slip.

Dhananjaya de Silva who made a solid 21 off 26 balls was then beaten by Rishad's flight and was stumped by the alert Liton.

Sri Lanka were just able to add 24 runs from the final six overs losing six wickets in that period.

Rishad finished with career-best T20I figures of 3-22 from his four overs.

Mustafizur Rahman finished with 3-17 from four overs while Taskin Ahmed also bowled well for his 2-25.

Bangladesh made a shaky start and were struggling at 28-3 in the sixth over before Liton and Hridoy put together a crucial 63-run partnership.

Hridoy hit Hasaranga for three consecutive sixes before he was trapped leg before on the next ball and when Hasaranga removed Liton, there was a glimmer of hope for Sri Lanka.

— AFP

Germany earn late 2-1 comeback win over Greece in Euro warm up

MOENCHENGLADBACH,

Germany: Euro 2024 host Germany had to come from a goal down to snatch a last gasp 2-1 victory over Greece on Friday in a lacklustre dress rehearsal ahead of next week's tournament start.

Pascal Gross fired in the winner in the 89th minute as the Germans showed they still have room for improvement ahead of their June 14 tournament opener against Scotland.

In an error-ridden first half performance, the hosts showed little in terms of dynamism and often lost possession, with the Greeks overrunning them and carving out a golden chance in the sixth minute.

But Christos Tzolis's double effort from close range was blocked by goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who will be first choice between the posts in the tournament over Marc-Andre ter Stegen.

Neuer, however, could not hold on to another Tzolis shot in the 33rd after the German defence lost possession in their own half, with the keeper spilling the ball into the path of Giorgos Masouras for a tap-in.

"We know well that in football bad first halves are part of it," said Germany midfielder Toni Kroos.

"Just too many mistakes. We gifted the ball away too often, then we were hit on the break. We were more focused in the second half. We did it better after the break."

Germany put the ball in the net in the 43rd with Kai Havertz but he was offside. The Arsenal player is expected to start in attack at the Euros with Niclas Fuellkrug, who came on in the second half, on the bench.

Germany started pressing higher after the break with coach Julian Nagelsmann, who cut fourth goalkeeper Alexander Nuebel from the Euros squad, making five substitutions in the second half, and they started pushing the visitors back.

Havertz did better in the 55th, turning in the box and levelling with a deflected shot.

Greece almost hit back on the break in the 64th but Neuer again came to the rescue before Benjamin Henrichs rattled the crossbar with a 20-metre missile.



Pascal Gross celebrates scoring their second goal with David Raum. — Reuters

Pascal Gross fired in the winner in the 89th minute as the Germans showed they still have room for improvement ahead of their June 14 tournament opener against Scotland

Gross, also a second-half substitute, then made sure of the win with his long range effort with the fans, desperate to see the team win their first major international title in a decade on home soil, breathing a sigh of relief.

"The second half was at times better, at least better than the first," Nagelsmann said. "We lost possession far too many times in

that first half.

"We were too slow and we addressed that at halftime. We will now meet up on Monday to start preparing for Scotland.

"They are an opponent with a lot of power and we will prepare well and we will play a good opener," he added.

Germany also play Hungary and Switzerland in their Euro Group A. — Reuters

Roglic produces mountain masterclass to extend Dauphine lead

SAMOËNS, France: Slovenia's Primoz Roglic exhibited his tactical nous as he left it late to surge over the finishing line on Saturday's queen stage of the Criterium du Dauphine.

The 2022 Dauphine winner streaked away from the yellow jersey group inside the last kilometre to win the hilly 155km stage seven race from Albertville to Samoens.

USA's Matteo Jorgenson and Italian Giulio Ciccone came in second and third, respectively.

"It seems easy but really guys did an amazing job and they controlled from the start," said 34-year-old Roglic of his team-mates' role in his win.

"I'm glad I had the legs in the end to finish it off."

Back-to-back stage victories extend Roglic's lead in the general classification, which he claimed from Belgian rival Remco Evenepoel after winning Friday's stage.

Roglic leads Visma's Jorgenson by 1min2sec in the overall ranking, with Canadian stage four winner Derek Gee in third place. Looking forward to the Dauphine's final stage on Sunday, Roglic said: "Another day and we can celebrate and be happy. Let's try to finish it off tomorrow. We'll do our best and we will see."

Spaniard Marc Soler of Team UAE initially broke away as part of a trio accompanied by Italians Davide Formolo and Lorenzo Fortunato 20km into the race.



Primoz Roglic celebrates on the podium. — AFP

Polka-dot jersey holder Mathis Le Berre of Arkea was dropped before the 30-kilometre mark by the leading group and never managed to catch back up to them over the rest of the hilly run.

Roglic sat back in the peloton, which was expertly controlled by his Bora-Hansgrohe team-mates, and cruised along in the yellow jersey.

The 2018 Paris-Nice winner Soler went out on his own on Col de la Ramaz and sat 1min45sec in front of his pursuers as he crested the 1,619m peak.

He then widened the gap and had 4min20sec on the peloton when he entered the daunting final ascent, with its 9.3 per cent average gradient.

But it was not enough as the yellow jersey group ruthlessly reeled him in before overtaking him with 2.1km to go, denying Soler a maiden Dauphine stage win.

With less than 400m to go, Roglic made his move and suddenly flew up the inside past Jorgenson and Basque rider Oier Lazkano.

Soudal-Quick Step's Evenepoel was dropped by the peloton with 7km to go as he finished 13th and slipped to sixth in the general ranking.

Belgian Ilan Van Wilder and Latvian Emils Liepins were both forced to pull out early in the stage due to injury, as Thursday's mass fall continued to impact the Dauphine. — AFP

SWIATEK HAS NOW WON ALL FIVE GRAND SLAM FINALS SHE HAS CONTESTED. HER OTHER VICTORY CAME AT THE 2022 US OPEN. SHE IS THE FOURTH WOMAN IN THE OPEN ERA TO LIFT THE COUPE SUZANNE LENGLEN FOUR TIMES — AFTER JUSTINE HENIN, CHRIS EVERT AND STEFFI GRAF.

SWIATEK
CRUSHES
PAOLINI
TO WIN

3RD

FRENCH OPEN
TITLE IN ROW

PARIS: Poland's Iga Swiatek extended her French Open reign on Saturday as she thrashed Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 6-1 in the final to win her third successive Roland Garros title.

World number one Swiatek dominated Italian 12th seed Paolini, a first-time Grand Slam finalist, needing just 68 minutes to capture a fourth crown in five years in Paris.

Swiatek has now won all five Grand Slam finals she has contested. Her other victory came at the 2022 US Open.

She is the fourth woman in the Open era to lift the Coupe Suzanne Lenglen four times — after Justine Henin, Chris Evert and Steffi Graf.

Swiatek becomes only the third to win the tournament three years running. Henin, in 2005-07, was the last to do so. Monica Seles also achieved the feat as a teenager at the start of the 1990s.

At 23, her four Roland Garros titles is the same number Rafael Nadal, the record 14-time champion, had at the same age.

For the 28-year-old Paolini it was a sorry conclusion to an otherwise brilliant fortnight in the French capital.

The world number 15 had won a total of four matches in 16 Grand Slam appearances before advancing to the fourth round of the Australian Open in January.

While she fell short of emulating compatriot Francesca Schiavone, who won the 2010 French Open, Paolini could yet finish on a winning note with her and doubles partner Sara Errani through to Sunday's final.

Paolini's transformation this season into a player capable of challenging for the biggest prizes stemmed in part from quashing the mindset she needed "a miracle" to beat the best in the sport.

Yet the odds were heavily stacked against her going into the final, with Swiatek unbeaten at Roland Garros since a 2021 quarterfinal loss to Maria Sakkari.

SWIATEK TAKES CHARGE

Riding a 20-match winning streak in Paris, and a winner of 18 straight matches this year after titles in Madrid and Rome, Swiatek quickly set about her business.

She powered an ace to hold in the opening game and had Paolini backpedalling down break point, but the Italian ground out a gutsy hold and then broke Swiatek when the Pole flayed a forehand long.

That triggered a searing riposte from Swiatek, who broke to love to get back on serve and then surged 4-2 in front after Paolini coughed up a costly double-fault.

Swiatek had her opponent constantly scurrying around the court and the errors began to stack up for Paolini, who conceded the first set with a weak groundstroke into the net.

With Swiatek firmly in the ascendancy, Paolini looked lost for answers as the top seed oozed confidence and repeatedly took control of the rallies.

Had it not been for an astonishing recovery against Naomi Osaka in the second round when she saved a match point, Swiatek would have suffered her earliest Grand Slam exit at the French Open.

Instead that fright served to ignite her title aspirations, reigning Wimbledon and US Open champions — Marketa Vondrousova and Coco Gauff — powerless to stop the Swiatek offensive.

Swiatek had difficulty putting away Karolina Muchova last year when heavily fancied, but there was no such trouble 12 months on as the Pole dismantled Paolini to underline her burgeoning status as the 'Queen of clay'. — AFP



Follow us on
omanobserver.om/business

Ladies Account



Empowering you more than ever!

f

@

in

Dhofar.islamic

X

Dhofar_islamic

2477 5777

www.dhofarislamicbank.com

Oman showcases economic potential at SPIEF 2024

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 8

The Sultanate of Oman, led by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, took centre stage as a guest of honour at the 27th Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

This participation underscores Oman's commitment to showcasing its competitive economic landscape and investment opportunities, aligning with Oman Vision 2040.

The delegation, spearheaded by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, included key figures such as Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, and Eng Khamis bin Mohammed al Shammakhi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Transport.

Their presence highlighted Oman's strategic intent to attract foreign capital into economically viable projects, fostering sustainable economic growth.

Other notable delegates included Jamal bin Hassan al Mousawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum, and Shaikh Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and Hamoud bin Salim al Tuwaih, the Ambassador of the

The Omani-Russian Forum, organised on the sidelines of the event, aims to promote investment and commercial environments in Oman.

Sultanate of Oman accredited to the Russian Federation.

The delegation was bolstered by representatives from both government and private sectors, covering tourism, mining, security, food and logistics.

Oman's participation included a national pavilion at the accompanying exhibition, featuring over 130 countries. This pavilion served as a platform to promote Oman's business environment and integrated investment opportunities in priority sectors, aiming to open new markets for Omani exports and strengthen global economic and trade relations.

Minister bin Qais bin Muhammad al Yousef emphasised Oman's dedication to exploring all avenues of economic cooperation and investment.

Oman's participation includes a national pavilion.

He highlighted the importance of this international presence in achieving strategic economic aspirations and showcasing Oman's unique competitive

advantages. The forum presented an opportunity to introduce the "Invest in Oman" platform, which offers extensive benefits to global investors.

Ambassador Hamoud bin Salem al Tuwaih remarked on the significance of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum as a premier platform for international economic and trade dialogue.

Oman's participation aimed to strengthen economic ties and promote the Sultanate of Oman as a preferred investment destination.

Shaikh Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas highlighted the forum as a crucial opportunity for the Omani private sector to expand into new markets, promote the "Made in Oman" campaign, and build partnerships with

Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (right) and Hamoud bin Salim al Tuwaih, the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman accredited to the Russian Federation.

international counterparts.

He noted that the Chamber's participation aimed to support the private sector and attract investments, contributing positively to economic diversification in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Al Rawas also pointed out potential areas of cooperation with Russia, including food security, technology, and petrochemicals, while exploring the Russian market's tourism potential.

The Omani-Russian Forum, organised on the sidelines of the event, aimed to promote investment and commercial environments in Oman. The forum featured bilateral meetings between Omani companies and their Russian counterparts, fostering prospects for

commercial partnerships.

Key speakers included the Russian Minister of Economic Development and the Chairman of the Russian-Omani Business Council, alongside Omani representatives such as Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef and Shaikh Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas.

Several agreements and memorandums of understanding were signed during the forum.

One Omani company formalised a partnership to enhance legal cooperation and support Omani and Russian companies, aiming to improve the quality of legal services.

Additionally, an Omani information security firm signed an agreement with a Russian company to enhance cybersecurity capabilities and local expertise.

Oman's electricity production increases 7% in Q1 2024

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has recorded an increase in total electricity production with output rising to 8,152.3 gigawatts per hour by end of Q1 2024. This is a 7 per cent increase compared to 7,619.6 gigawatts per hour during the same period in 2023, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The combined electricity production in Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South and Al Dhahirah governorates reached 5,049.8 gigawatts per hour. Muscat Governorate saw the biggest increase in production by 30.9 per cent to 29.8 gigawatts per hour.

Dhofar Governorate experienced a 17.2 per cent increase, totalling 1,103.7 gigawatts per hour. The governorates of Al Sharqiyah North and Al Sharqiyah South also reported a rise of 15.3 per cent, achieving 1,853.6 gigawatts per hour.

Oman's net electricity production rose by 6.8 per cent, reaching 7,879.6 gigawatts per hour by end of Q1 2024.

Meanwhile, Al Wusta Governorate experienced a significant decrease in production by 52.4 per cent to 29.5 gigawatts per hour. Musandam Governorate, on the other hand, saw a 7.2 per cent increase in production.

Oman's net electricity production rose by 6.8 per cent, reaching 7,879.6 gigawatts per hour by end of Q1 2024.

Meanwhile, the total amount of water produced in Oman decreases to about 122.1 million cubic metres by the end of March 2024, compared to 122.136 million cubic meters in the same period in 2023. — ONA

SMEDA announces green hydrogen training programme for SMEs

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, JUNE 8

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has announced that it is accepting applications for a specialised training programme in green hydrogen and renewables.

According to a recent post by the Authority, the five-week programme will target SMEs and start-ups with the aim of equipping entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to enter the renewables industry and to accelerate the growth and expansion rate of companies in the market.

The programme, which will be executed in collaboration with Australian vocational education and training institution TAFE NSW, will highlight several topics within the field of renewables

According to IEA, revenues from Oman's emerging green hydrogen industry will top \$2 billion starting from around 2030.

including: climate change, biomass, and electric vehicles.

The programme will also feature workshops focused on business development, business matching, and operating on a global scale. According to the Authority, the course will host various international guests and local

speakers in the field.

With an annual production rate of 1 million tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030, Oman is projected to potentially become the world's sixth largest exporter of green hydrogen, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

Oman could also potentially generate annual revenues of \$2 billion from the export and domestic use of green hydrogen starting from 2030.

The figure could potentially rise to "double-digit US billion levels" in the long term, according to the report.

Furthermore, Oman's National Strategy for the Orderly Transition to Net-Zero has the potential to fuel an additional 50 per cent contribution to GDP by 2050.

Two-thirds of this growth is expected to come from domestic investment in hydrogen, including export infrastructure, while the remaining one-third will come from expanded green power capacity. Interested applicants can apply via website of SMEDA before June 13, 2024. The programme will take place from June 23 to July 24, 2024.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds bags Bank Muscat Award for the seventh time

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with a strong retail network of over 350 outlets spread across 13 countries received Bank Muscat Award for the seventh consecutive year.

The company got the award in the category 'Jewellery for the year 2023'. The company has received Bank Muscat Award in the year 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021 & 2022 as well.

Najeeb K, Regional Head – Malabar Gold & Diamonds, received the award from Shaikh Waleed al Hashar, Chief Executive Officer-Bank Muscat in the presence of Riyas Chulliankandy, Sales Manager -Malabar Gold & Diamonds and other officials from Bank Muscat during a ceremony held on 4th June at the Oman convention and exhibition centre Grand ballroom. Bank Muscat hosts the event to honour, recognise and celebrate the success of their top merchants.

“Over the years, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has remained dedicated to offering our customers an exceptional jewellery shopping experience, excelling in both design and service. We are delighted to



Najeeb K, Regional Head - Malabar Gold & Diamonds, received the award from Shaikh Waleed al Hashar, Chief Executive Officer- Bank Muscat in the presence of Riyas Chulliankandy, Sales Manager-Malabar Gold & Diamonds and other officials from Bank Muscat during a ceremony held on June 4 at the OCEC Grand ballroom.

receive the 'Bank Muscat Award' for the 7th consecutive year, a testament to our esteemed presence in Oman's jewellery sector. On this momentous occasion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our customers for their unwavering support and to Bank Muscat for their steadfast partnership with our brand”, commented Najeeb K - Regional Head – Malabar Gold & Diamonds. Since its inception in 1993,

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has developed a strong retail presence in India, Middle East, Far East , the US, Canada, the UK & Australia with a network of over 350 outlets across 13 countries.

With an annual turnover of \$6.2 billion, the company today ranks as the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always kept customer-first as the principal attitude in all its steps taken

and takes efforts at satisfying the discerning needs of its multinational and multicultural customers by incorporating the diverse tastes in the splendid jewellery designs that they showcase.

Malabar Group offers exquisite and stunning jewellery as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Divine- Indian Heritage Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery and Starlet - Kids Jewellery.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds currently operates 12 showrooms across Oman at Ruwi, Baushar, Seeb, Barka, Salalah, Sohar, Muthra Souk, Nizwa, Ibri and Al Khoud. ESG (Environmental, Social & Governance) has been a primary commitment of Malabar Group since its inception in 1993, setting 5 per cent of its net profits towards such causes in every region of operation. The group operates on the strong belief that the most successful companies are the ones that integrate responsibility and sustainability into their core business.

Transform Eidiyah into long-term savings through NBO Muzn's Kids Wakala Account

MUSCAT: Continuing its commitment to enhancing customer lives, National Bank of Oman (NBO) Muzn Islamic Banking empowers parents to lay a stable foundation for their children's prosperity through the Kids Wakala Account for children up to the age of 18.

The Kids Wakala Account offers them a dedicated solution to conveniently save their Eidiya money.

Salima al Marzooqi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer at Muzn, said: "As the Eid Al Adha celebrations draw to a close, we recognise that the children often receive generous Eidiya from family and relatives.

With the Kids Wakala account, parents can seize the opportunity to save Kids Eidiya and embark on the journey of ensuring a prosperous future for their children.

By instilling the habit of saving from a young age, parents can lay the foundation for their children's financial well-being and empower them to achieve their dreams with confidence.

We therefore encourage all parents to open a Kids Wakala Account and take the first step towards securing their children's tomorrow."

This account stands out for its unparalleled combination of convenience, security, and future-focused benefits.

The competitive rates ensure an expected return of 3.5 per cent per annum, credited monthly into the account.

It also offers Life Takaful and permanent disability risk coverage, providing peace of mind in the face of unforeseen circumstances.

The double deposit benefit of up to RO 75,000 further reinforces the account's commitment to safeguarding the financial well-being of the next generation.

This signifies that in the event of a claim, the Takaful Insurance Co will provide an additional sum equal to the deposited amount. Therefore, the greater the deposit, the greater the security.



Taageer Finance's CEO named 'CEO of the Year'



MUSCAT: Taageer Finance's CEO, Shahin bin Mohammed al Balushi, has been honoured with the 'CEO of the Year' award in the Finance and Leasing category at the Oman Economic Review's (OER) New Age Banking Summit Awards.

This accolade underscores his outstanding leadership and remarkable contributions to the financial industry.

Al Balushi is recognised as the most experienced CEO in the financial sector services with over 25 years of experience in the financial sector. His impressive career includes executive roles in three leading finance companies

within the Sultanate of Oman, solidifying his status as a top executive in the sector at the C-suite level.

Reflecting on the award, Al Balushi expressed his gratitude: "I am honoured to receive this prestigious award, which signifies the dedication and hard work of the entire team at Taageer Finance. I believe in the potential of Oman's finance sector and am committed to contributing to its growth and development. This recognition further fuels my passion to continue innovating and driving positive change in the industry to support the SMEs of the country."

Bank Muscat collaborates with Taageer Finance to enhance transactions' efficiency

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced its collaboration with Taageer Finance Company, a leading financial services company, to provide its cutting-edge B2B connectivity solutions. This strategic partnership aims to streamline financial operations and enhance the efficiency of Taageer Finance's transactional processes.

The collaboration was formally announced in COMEX 2024 in presence of Shaikh Khalil al Harthy, Chairman of Taageer Finance, Shahin al Balushi, CEO of Taageer Finance, Ilham bint Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat and Wafa bint Ibrahim al Ajmiyah, Assistant General Manager - Transaction & Government Banking, Bank Muscat, and a number of officials.

The B2B connectivity solution provided by Bank Muscat will



enable seamless integration of Taageer Finance's financial systems with the Bank's infrastructure. Integrating its financial systems with Bank's systems offers bundle of benefits to the finance companies like Taageer Finance. It enhances efficiency by enabling real-time data synchronisation, which reduces manual data entry and minimises errors.

Improved cash flow

management is achieved through direct access to up-to-date account information, allowing for timely adjustments and effective cash management strategies.

This integration also reduces operational costs by automating financial processes, leading to labour and administrative savings. Furthermore, faster transaction processing through Host-to-Host connectivity ensures that transactions are

handled quickly and efficiently, resulting in enriched customer satisfaction.

Ilham bint Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager - Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are dedicated to driving financial innovation and empowering our customers to thrive in the digital era.

Our partnership with Taageer Finance highlights our commitment to delivering cutting edge digital solutions that address the unique requirements of finance companies.

We are thrilled to partner with Taageer Finance to deliver our innovative financial solutions that meet the dynamic needs of their business.

This partnership with Taageer Finance underscores our dedication to supporting the growth and success of our customers through the state-of-the-art technology and bespoke financial services."

BMW 1 Series marks the start of a new chapter

MUSCAT: The pioneer of driving pleasure in the premium compact segment is entering its fourth model generation. The premiere of the new BMW 1 Series marks the start of a new chapter in the brand's 20-year success story in the compact segment.

With a dynamic design presence, a completely revised drive portfolio and extensively improved chassis technology, the new BMW 1 Series has sharpened its profile as the sportiest vehicle in the competitive environment.

Its progressive character is also reflected in the redesigned interior, an extended range of automated

driving systems, the new BMW iDrive with QuickSelect, and innovative digital services based on BMW Operating System 9.

Exterior design: Dynamic front end and hallmark BMW proportions.

The new BMW 1 Series signals its sporty character more than ever and is underlined by the latest model generation in typical BMW proportions: a long bonnet, a passenger cell set well back, a dynamically flowing roofline, and a powerful rear end.

The wide, forward-leaning BMW radiator grille features an innovative structure of vertical



and diagonal bars.

The side view of the new BMW 1 Series is characterised by the

dynamic wedge shape and the flat window graphics that taper towards the rear.

The standard BMW Individual high-gloss Shadow Line includes a graphic element with the number 1 in the Hofmeister kink counter-swung on the C-pillar.

A long roof spoiler and side air deflectors emphasise the stretched silhouette. Vertical reflectors and a black diffuser-style insert add to the powerful appearance of the rear apron.

The striking, two-part rear lights extend well into the side sections.

The standard LED headlights feature striking vertical elements for the daytime running light and the turn indicators. Optionally

available are adaptive LED headlights with glare-free matrix high beam, cornering light function, and blue accents.

BMW M automobile with individual performance character.

At the top of the model range is the BMW M135 xDrive with significantly enhanced performance characteristics.

The BMW M model is powered by a 300 hp four-cylinder engine, features an adaptive M chassis with sport steering and intelligent all-wheel drive as standard, and accelerates from zero to 100 km/h in 4.9 seconds.



Mazoon Dairy presents comprehensive range of premium products at HORECA

MUSCAT: Mazoon Dairy, the Sultanate of Oman's premier dairy producer, participated in HORECA 2024, one of the region's largest and most influential trade show dedicated to the hospitality and food service industries.

The esteemed event, which brought together key players from the hotel, restaurant, and café sectors, served as a platform for Mazoon Dairy to highlight its extensive range of high-quality products, innovative solutions, and its commitment to excellence in dairy production.

At HORECA 2024, Mazoon Dairy showcased its diverse portfolio, which includes fresh milk, flavoured milk, yogurts, laban, cheese, juice and ice cream. Each product is crafted with the utmost care, ensuring premium quality and taste.

Visitors had the opportunity to experience first-hand the exceptional freshness and rich flavours that distinguish Mazoon Dairy's offerings, thanks to its carefully selected and sourced ingredients and state-of-the-art processing techniques.

HORECA 2024 provided Mazoon Dairy with a unique opportunity to connect with key stakeholders in the hospitality industry. The company engaged with hotel operators, restaurant owners, café managers, chefs, and food service distributors, highlighting how Mazoon Dairy products can enhance their menus and customer satisfaction.

By catering to the specific needs of this sector, Mazoon Dairy demonstrated its dedication to supporting the growth and success of Oman's hospitality industry.

Innovation is at the heart of



At HORECA 2024, Mazoon Dairy showcased its diverse portfolio.

Mazoon Dairy's operations. The company continually invests in research and development to bring new and exciting products to market.

Abdulhamid al Sarmi, Quality Assurance & Quality Control Manager at Mazoon Dairy stated: "Mazoon Dairy takes pride in delivering products of the highest quality. The company's rigorous quality control measures and adherence to local and international standards ensures that every product is safe, nutritious, and delicious."

Being a local producer, Mazoon Dairy products benefit from reduced transportation times, ensuring unparalleled freshness from farm to table. This also guarantees that consumers receive the freshest dairy products possible.

Mazoon Dairy sponsored the HORECA Mocktail Competition, where competitors used Mazoon's juice products. At their booth, visitors had the opportunity to taste products and watch baristas compete using Mazoon dairy items. The goal was to engage customers with the brand, allowing them to experience and learn about Mazoon Dairy's high-quality fresh products.

European firm commits to procuring green steel from Oman

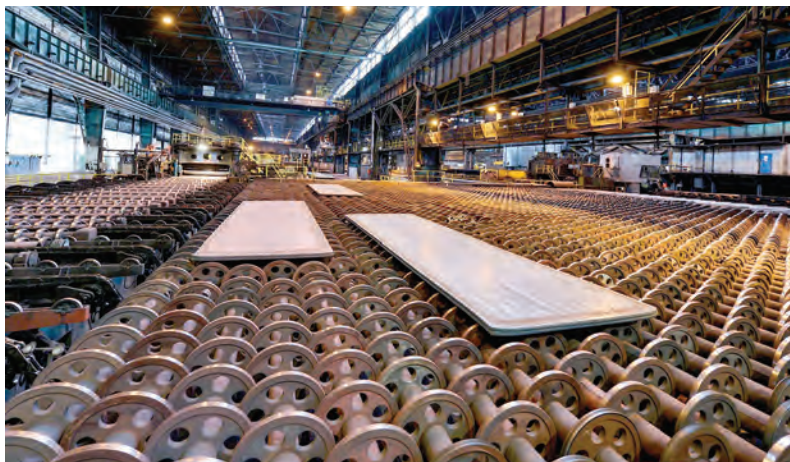
CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, JUNE 8

In a major boost for Oman's emerging green steel industry, a leading steel mill in the Czech Republic has signed an agreement to procure around 1 million tonnes of low-carbon steel from a first-ever green steel project currently in the early stages of development in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

Vitkovice Steel, based in the Czech region of Ostrava, is reported to have signed a 'Memorandum of Cooperation' with Vulcan Green Steel, which is constructing a 5 million tonnes per annum capacity steel mill powered primarily by green hydrogen and other renewable energy sources. Total investment in the Duqm venture, backed by Indian power and steel conglomerate Jindal Group, is about \$3 billion.

The announcement came in a report published by Ocelarska Unie, an association of Czech and Slovak steel producers. It quoted Radek Strouhal, CEO of Vitkovice Steel, as saying that the deal will position the steelmaker among the first European producers of low-carbon steel



Vitkovice Steel's mill in the Czech Republic.

products.

"Acquiring a new supplier of input material produced with state-of-the-art technology is a breakthrough strategic step that will allow us to produce and supply to the market quality sheets, sheet plates and billets from ecological steel," said Radek Strouhal.

"We should to become one of the first producers of so-called green sheets in Europe and thus strengthen competitiveness and its position on the markets. We reserved 1 million tonnes per year through the memorandum.

We have not yet achieved such a volume of production, this year we would like to produce

approximately 600,000 tonnes, but this is our goal in the coming years," he added.

A leading European manufacturer of heavy steel slabs, Vitkovice's steel products are used in a wide range of industries, including construction, energy, transportation, and engineering.

A pair of company-owned mills in Ostrava convert these slabs into heavy plates, shaped cutouts and sheet pilings used as parts of major bridges, building structures and high-performance machines.

The binding MoC commits Vulcan Green Steel to supplying low-carbon steel plates of thicknesses ranging from 230mm

to 300mm at prices to be decided under separate agreements, according to the Czech company.

Following the closure of its own steel mill in 2015, the company has been scouring overseas markets for steel slabs to be fashioned into engineering and construction hardware for its domestic and European customers.

Vulcan Green Steel, with its commitment to produce steel with a carbon footprint of less than 0.6-0.7 tonnes of CO₂ per tonne of crude steel, will go a long way in satisfying its input requirements, it pointed out.

Last November, Vulcan Green Steel broke ground on an integrated steel mill featuring two production lines of 2.5 million metric tonnes per year each, comprising direct reduction iron (DRI), an electric arc furnace (EAF) and a hot strip mill.

The project will initially be powered by natural gas but later transition to green hydrogen to produce low carbon steel suited for the automobile, wind turbine and consumer durable goods manufacturing industries in Europe and Japan. First production of green steel is slated during 2027.

Nama Water Services adopts latest technologies in water leak detection

MUSCAT: Since its launch in 2021, Nama Water Services has achieved an impressive 18% reduction in water loss. This is a significant step forward considering the global challenge of leaks in water networks. Around one-third of the world's drinking water is lost due to these leaks, both visible and hidden underground. The main culprits are aging pipes and damage caused by construction, repairs, and other activities.

Nama Water Services is committed to tackling water leaks by adopting multiple approaches. The company uses cutting-edge technology and advanced methods to pinpoint and fix leaks, significantly reducing water loss.

The company has achieved remarkable successes in this field and is striving to keep up the momentum this year. In this context, Engineer Abdullah bin Mohammed al Naimi, CEO of Operations and Maintenance at Nama Water Services, explains: "Water utilities around the world, including Nama Water Services, face the challenge of water loss from leaks in their networks."

This leakage wastes precious drinking water and inflates production costs.

There are two main types of water loss: technical loss and commercial loss. Engineer Al Naimi commended the company's tireless leak detection teams. They use a multi-pronged approach to minimise water loss. This includes network monitoring, specialised leak detection equipment, and cutting-edge techniques like drone technology.

Drones equipped with thermal



The company uses cutting-edge technology and advanced methods to pinpoint and fix leaks, significantly reducing water loss.



Engineer Abdullah bin Mohammed al Naimi, CEO of Operations and Maintenance at Nama Water Services

and multispectral cameras patrol water transmission lines across regions. This aerial perspective helps pinpoint hidden leaks.

The captured data seamlessly integrates with the company's GIS for enhanced analysis. Additionally, drones overcome access challenges posed by high-rise tanks. They conduct thorough inspections swiftly and safely,

eliminating worker risks.

Thermal imaging, a key strength of drones, pinpoints temperature variations, a telltale sign of leaks. Moreover, drones cover vast areas efficiently, regardless of terrain, saving significant time and effort compared to traditional methods.

Elaborating on the technologies used by Nama Water Services, Engineer Khalil bin Suleiman al Adwi (Technical Loss Engineer), noted that satellite imagery (satellite) technology, which is a global platform on which the company has registered by purchasing some images specific to the Sultanate of Oman. These high-resolution images, encompassing 3,500 square kilometres each, identify potential leak locations.

Nama Water's team then investigates these areas to verify and address any leaks.

This technology has proven to be highly effective, as it has contributed to shortening the time and effort spent. Now, the role of the company's teams is limited to inspecting potential sites according to satellite images. Currently, the company employs 12 teams of qualified and equipped Omani cadres, in addition to 12 teams formed by the company's subcontractors, distributed in all the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, and are fully prepared to respond to any leak reports and deal with them quickly and professionally.

Engineer Al Adwi continues: "Nama Water Services utilises noise monitoring sensors to pinpoint leaks. These smart devices listen to the constant sound of running water, filtering out background noise to ensure accurate leak identification."



Delivery of school buses for the Ministry of Education will commence in Q3 2024.

Karwa Motors kicks off work on 5,000 school-bus order

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, JUNE 8

Karwa Motors, a partnership of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Mawasalat Qatar, has announced the start of production of an estimated 5,000 school buses for the local education sector.

The announcement, which came in a post by Karwa Motors' CEO Dr Ibrahim bin Ali al Balushi, is in line with agreements signed earlier this year with a number of government ministries and state institutions, effectively positioning the Duqm-based automaker as the country's number one supplier of buses for government schools and public sector enterprises.

"Work has started on the production of school buses for the local market — 1,000 buses annually for the next five years," Dr Al Balushi remarked.

Earlier in March, Karwa Motors signed agreements with Oman's Ministry of Education and the Development Bank covering the assembly and supply of 5,000 school buses designed to high standards of roadworthiness and safety.

Envisioned for delivery at the rate of 1,000 buses per annum, the new 'Made in Oman' vehicles

will replace school buses coming to the end of their operational lives.

Following another agreement reached with the Government Tender Board, Karwa Motors will also receive preferential treatment in procurements of buses by public sector companies and ministries.

Both sets of pacts promise to place Karwa Motors on a strong growth trajectory in line with the Omani government's vision to reduce the country's dependence on imports.

Since the start of operations in 2021, starting with the delivery of buses for the 2022 Fifa World Cup, the company has also begun diversifying its assembly line.

Earlier this year, it began delivery of buses designed for intercity commutes to local transport companies.

Last September, it signed an agreement with TAG Duqm, an affiliate of US-based The Armored Group (TAG), to collaborate in the production of armoured vehicles at the Duqm facility. TAG specialises in the production and supply of reinforced, bullet-proof vehicles catering to law enforcement and military, personal protection and the cash-in-transit service providers.

Fool’s gold in the age of AI



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

The author is a member of the International Press Association

AI AS A BUZZWORD HAS ALREADY CREATED A MULTITUDE OF SCAMS. FRAUDULENT INVESTMENT PLATFORMS THAT TOUT AI-POWERED TRADING OR ARBITRAGE CAPABILITIES ARE QUITE COMMON NOWADAYS.

Some of the insights and information presented in this article are taken from the Elliptic Report 2024, titled “AI-enabled crime in the cryptoasset ecosystem.”

This comprehensive report explores the emerging risks and trends at the intersection of artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency, showing how AI-powered scams and fraudulent activities within the crypto space are now harder to detect and discover.

Towards the end I share some of my ideas and concerns beyond the crypto industry and more on the ethically debate around AI technology.

AI as a buzzword has already created a multitude of scams. Fraudulent investment platforms that tout AI-powered trading or arbitrage capabilities are quite common nowadays.

The US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) has issued warnings about these “AI trading bot” scams, which often use buzzwords like “quantum,” “Web3,” and “DeFi” to lure

victims.

How to identify scams? The traditional rule of thumb is “if it seems too good to be true, it probably is,” but the recent success of some meme coins with extraordinary returns has blurred the line between legitimate projects and scams.

While excessive use of technical jargon without clear explanations could be a red flag, some genuine projects, like the popular meme coin Dog Wif Hat, avoid technical jargon altogether.

Additionally, while anonymity and a lack of transparency about the team behind a project are usually warning signs, even this paradigm is sometimes challenged by successful meme projects with anonymous teams.

Deepfake technology has opened a Pandora’s box of deception, enabling scammers to impersonate authority figures, creating realistic videos of celebrities and political leaders endorsing fraudulent crypto projects, lending them an air of legitimacy.

This tactic was recently employed in Singapore, where a

deepfake video of former Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was used to promote a fraudulent investment scheme.

Moreover, AI is being used to streamline and automate scam operations. In large-scale scams like “pig butchering,” AI-generated communication scripts and fake profile images make these scams more efficient and harder to detect. Even high-level executives at major companies have fallen prey to deepfake scams during online meetings, resulting in significant financial losses.

The line between legitimate AI use and deception is increasingly blurred. While AI can undoubtedly streamline and accelerate the development of legitimate projects, it also opens the door for deception.

For instance, using AI to generate a website or content for a project is acceptable, but fabricating team members with AI-generated avatars and names crosses ethical boundaries.

This practice misleads potential investors and raises concerns about the project’s

authenticity.

The crypto community needs to establish clear guidelines to navigate this evolving landscape and ensure transparency and ethical practices in the use of AI.

Consider the example of Sophia, the AI robot.

Everyone is aware that “she” is not human, yet people engage with her as if she were, showcasing our willingness to interact with AI as social beings.

Sophia’s advanced social capabilities and human-like appearance have allowed her to take on roles traditionally reserved for humans, such as being granted Saudi Arabian citizenship and named the United Nations Development Programme’s first Innovation Champion.

Similarly, in the future, a founder using AI for coding or content creation might choose to give that AI a face and name on their website, essentially treating it as a team member. While the AI is not human, it performs the functions of a human developer or content manager.

The question is whether this

transparency about the AI’s role is sufficient or if it’s still considered deceptive to present an AI as a human employee.

This blurred line raises important ethical questions about transparency and authenticity in the use of AI.

As AI becomes more integrated into our lives, it will be crucial for the crypto community and society as a whole to establish clear guidelines and ethical standards for the representation of AI in professional settings.

Since ChatGPT’s release in November 2022, we have witnessed AI’s immense potential for both innovation and deception.

The awe-inspiring capabilities of AI have been met with concerns about job displacement and economic disruption.

However, the primary focus of this article is to underscore the alarming potential of AI-generated content to deceive even the most discerning individuals, leading them to make decisions that are detrimental to their financial well-being and overall lives.

The prospects of using AI in Oman’s renewable energy-based power generation and utilisation



MARYAM AHMED YOUSUF AL NOFLI
maryam.alnoqli@utas.edu.om

The author is a faculty staff member at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences — Musandam Branch

AI INTEGRATION IS A KEY COMPONENT OF THE NATION’S STRATEGIC VISION 2040, WHICH INTENDS TO DIVERSIFY ITS ENERGY PORTFOLIO AND LOWER CARBON EMISSIONS. OMAN IS A PRIME LOCATION FOR SOLAR POWER PRODUCTION DUE TO ITS HIGH LEVELS OF SUN INSOLATION.

The Sultanate of Oman, like many other countries, is facing the combined challenge of fulfilling rising energy demand while shifting to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources. Renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind power, present a possible answer.

However, incorporating these intermittent energy sources into the current power infrastructure necessitates novel ways.

The incorporation of artificial intelligence (AI) into renewable energy systems is a game-changing move toward realising sustainable energy objectives.

Through the optimisation of numerous facets of energy systems AI technologies are transforming Oman’s generation and use of renewable energy.

AI algorithms can accurately forecast the output of renewable energy by analysing historical meteorological data, solar irradiance, wind patterns, and other parameters.

By balancing supply and demand, this predictive skill helps lessen dependency on fossil fuels. AI models can predict solar energy output for places and timeframes in Oman, where solar irradiance is abundant, allowing grid operators to efficiently manage energy dispatch.

Additionally, by maximising load distribution and averting outages, AI improves grid management. To ensure a seamless transition to greener energy sources without sacrificing reliability, AI-accelerated power grid models may simulate scenarios to analyse the impact of increased renewable energy capacity on grid stability.

Furthermore, AI has the potential to optimise energy storage devices, like batteries, by forecasting energy surplus and demand.

This can maximise battery longevity and efficiency, which is important in handling fluctuations in renewable energy sources.

AI and the Internet of Things (IoT) together enable smart grids to dynamically adjust to shifting energy requirements. Real-time data from renewable energy installations, power lines, and substations is gathered by sensors and processed by AI to maximise energy distribution and reduce losses.

AI integration is a key component of the nation’s strategic Vision 2040, which intends to diversify its energy portfolio and lower carbon emissions. Oman is a prime location for solar power production due to its high levels of sun insolation.

AI-driven systems, for example, have the potential to raise solar panel efficiency by as much as 20%, which would greatly increase overall energy output. Oman’s coastal areas have a lot of wind energy potential.

AI can be used to optimise turbine operations and forecast wind patterns.

This may result in a 10-15% improvement in energy capture, which would result in considerable cost savings and higher energy output. Recent research indicates that up to 30% less energy can be lost during grid management when AI is used.

Oman’s solar farms could see a 15–25% increase in energy production with AI optimisation. This growth can play a major role in helping Oman meet its 2030 aim of generating 30% of its energy from renewable sources.

Predictive maintenance powered by AI can cut operating expenses by up to 25%. Early failure detection in solar panels and wind turbines, for example, can save expensive repairs and downtime.



AI has the potential to optimise energy storage devices, like batteries, by forecasting energy surplus and demand.

Significant drops in carbon emissions can result from renewable energy systems’ increased dependability and efficiency.

By 2040, Oman could cut its carbon footprint by almost 10 million tons yearly with the use of AI in renewable energy.

Several significant projects in the Sultanate of Oman demonstrate how AI and renewable energy projects work well together.

Ibri 2, the largest utility-scale solar photovoltaic plant in Oman, went into commercial operation in January 2022. AI is a key component in energy production optimisation, solar irradiance forecasts, and mirror alignment for optimal efficiency.

Another noteworthy project is the 500-megawatt solar photovoltaic power plant, which began construction in September 2023 and is being headed by Korea Western Power (KOWEPO) and French developer EDF Renewables.

This ground-breaking project uses AI to monitor solar output

in real-time and maintain grid stability.

In addition, Oman’s wind farm in Dhofar uses wind energy to generate electricity.

To guarantee effective power conversion, AI-driven wind turbine control optimises blade angles. Suhar, Duqm, Mahout, and Jaalan Bani Bu Ali are among the five new wind power plants that Oman intends to build. AI will improve grid integration and help the nation reach its 2050 carbon neutrality target. In October 2022, Oman unveiled a Green Hydrogen Strategy, aiming for \$140 billion of investment in the green hydrogen industry

Targeting 1 million tonnes annually by 2030, Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom), a recently established subsidiary, oversees hydrogen development.

AI optimises hydrogen production from renewable energy sources. By 2035, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) wants to see 79%

of Oman’s vehicles run on electricity.

AI will be used to manage the infrastructure for EV charging and maximise the uptake of EVs.

The Oman Sustainability Centre, a new government entity, oversees carbon neutrality plans, where AI analytics track progress and recommend strategies for achieving sustainability goals.

The Sultanate of Oman can benefit greatly from the use of AI in the production and use of power derived from renewable energy sources.

AI can make a substantial contribution to Oman’s sustainable energy goals by increasing efficiency, cutting costs, and limiting environmental effect.

However, achieving these advantages will need resolving issues with infrastructure, data, and regulatory backing.

Oman can become a leader in the world of renewable energy with careful planning and investment, utilising AI to create a sustainable and prosperous future.

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربيت ORBIT Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

URGENT HIRING

LEADING LAB CHEMICAL/CONSUMABLE/EQUIPMENT DISTRIBUTION COMPANY IN OMAN

URGENT HIRING

TECHNICAL SUPPORT ENGINEER

- More than 2-year work experience in Oman/GCC
- Degree of bachelor of Mechanical Engineering
- Driving license in Oman preferred.

Suitable candidate can send CV to:
recruitment74@gmail.com

SUNDAY JUNE 9, 2024 | DHUL HIJJAH 2, 1445 AH

Auditors & Accountants

• Audit & Accounting • CFO Services • Secondment
• VAT & Tax Return Filing • VAT Refund Assistance

Contact: 92182750 • Email: contact@umpauditors.com

ROYAL CARGO

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

SERVICES BY AIR & SEA

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

PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT **93213206**

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

SIT. WANTED

LOOKING for job 2 years experienced Mechanical Engineer available in Muscat.
vineeshvijay98@gmail.com
79527123.

ACCOUNTANT with over 6 years of experience. Detail-Oriented Financial Professional: Expert in Accounting, Audit Prep, and Expense Management. Ready to join immediately. Contact: +968 78320801

INDIAN male 6 years experience in accounts/automobile/admin. Seeking for suitable opening in any field, currently in Oman. Contact: 78988055/ 92850930, email: ullasmon8@gmail.com

PLANNING Engineer, PMP. Indian male 11 years experience in Construction Projects. Well versed with Primavera P6 Software, strong communication skills, Interpersonal skills, EDT Claims, Recovery schedules, project control. Having Omani Driving License. Contact: 78002582, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com

INDIAN male 14 years experience light/ heavy driver. Looking for suitable opening currently in Oman. Contact: 77050986/ 91280205, email: kokkadmou@gmail.com

B. COM. 35 years of experience in accounts, sales coordinator, admin, HR, personal assistant, document controller with Oman D/L, looking for a job. Contact: 92558734

SIT. VACANCY

MECHANICAL/ TECHNICAL

REQUIRED service technician for air compressors with D/L. Send your CV to denny@pumpsoman.com. 79119341

SIT. VACANCY

WANTED Sales & Service engineer for laboratory
sales@alchemyarabia.com
96654041.

Looking for a candidate having minimum 5 years of Oman experience in accounts and administration. Knowledge of Oracle/ Tally accounting & inventory package is must preferable experienced in Trading of Building Materials, Tools etc e-mail CV to jobvacancyoman2023@gmail.com

BACHELOR degree in mechanical or electrical engineering ASNT level 2 (NDT), ASNT level 3 (NDT) additional advantage. LEEA foundation, LEEA lifting accessories diploma (LAC). Contact: pipe2566@yahoo.com

SALES Executive required for building materials, hardware items and similar items. Driving licence necessary. E: sangita@dhiyahilal.com. M: 93559800

FOR RENT

400M RENTAL space Ghubra 18 Nov Street second line suitable for all commercial use. Tel: 92408308

WAREHOUSE / workshop 2,600 sq metres for rent in Misfa near Oman Cement Factory including accommodation contact: GSM 98286899, email: sales@jetsoman.com

3BKH- Ghubra 18 Nov Street. Tel: 92408308

IN Ruwi, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, hall, kitchen, with car parking. RO 150 monthly only. Tel: 94402003.

SIT. WANTED

29 YEARS old Indian female, MBA holder with 2 years experience. Seeking a suitable position. Currently in Muscat on visit visa. Contact: 78641071, shazashakeel@gmail.com

28 YEARS Experience in Oman in sales, marketing and management, Indian with DL and release.

Looking for a good job change. Contact: 78501743.

A Sudanese resident in Salalah, Bsc of administrative sciences with 21 years of experience in the fields of (sales/ management/ logistics and fleet). Contact: +968 98510880.

Job Vacancy

Candidates with at least 5-10 years of experience are urgently needed for the following positions in a multinational company in Oman

- **Electrical Engineer** (O & M experience)
- **DCS Engineer** (Honeywell DCS experience)
- **Planning Engineer**
- **Quantity Surveyor**
- **Draftsman**

Interested candidates can send CVs to **recruitment2024n@gmail.com**

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp <your name> to **96473232**

FOUR STAR TECHNICAL SUPPLIES LLC
(Formerly OMEIR NASSER AL FALAHY & PARTNERS TRAD. CO. LLC)

"Quality products, exceptional service, guaranteed"

Our products:

Electrical, Building Material, Hardware, Oilfield Industrial Equipment & Tools

OSRAM, Milano, ELORA, HONEYWELL, METZ CONNECT, VICTOR, DORMER, BOSCH, RIDGID, DeWalt, ALEMTI, PCE, Beta, etc.

P.O. Box 3897, P.C. 112, Ruwi, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
Tel.: +968 24837874, Fax: +968 24831341
Mobile: +968 99354944
Email: onasser@omantel.net.om / nelson@onasser.com

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

SIT. VACANCY

****HIRING: Cake & Pastry Chef****

We're looking for a talented chef skilled in cakes, pastries and a variety of sandwiches. Join our dynamic team today!
Apply now by emailing your CV:ALSTROMERIA6660@GMAIL.COM

SIT. WANTED

ACCOUNTANT & sales Executive, Indian male, 31 years, BA English, specialised in Accounting. 2 years experience in India & 6 years experience in Oman. Seeking position in Accounts/Sales fields (has Oman licence). Mob: 78805951. Gmail: akhilgopinath2017@gmail.com

To advertise on our social media platforms and website

Please Contact our Team

95210257

OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.om

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, @omanobserver

omanobserver

we shall

Observer

OMAN DAILY **Observer**

FREE* CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

* NOW FREE CLASSIFIED IN OMAN DAILY OBSERVER ON THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ONLY

Send your advertisement (Only one per coupon & no photocopies), either by mail or in person, with your local identity.

To advertise please contact:
Tel: 71455532/ 71455531/ 71455530
Email: adv@omaninfo.om

To advertise in Information Ministry channels



To contact

71455532- 71455531- 71455530
adv@omaninfo.om
izdihar_info izdihar.info

ازديهار izdihar





LIFESTYLE
A Cuban private dressmaker works at "Dador" fashion workshop, property of entrepreneur Lauren Fajardo, in the Old Havana neighbourhood. — AFP



AGRICULTURE
Vincent Nallatamby, who has invested in startup Neoplants from its beginnings, poses next to a Neo Px house plant (L) in his home in San Francisco, California. — AFP



MUSIC
French singer-songwriter and composer Francis Cabrel performs on stage during the first concert of his North American Trobador Tour at the United Theatre on Broadway in Los Angeles. — AFP



HEALTH
A health worker administers polio vaccine drops to a child during a polio vaccination campaign in Karachi. — AFP



ART
Soizic Carbonnel, 72, takes part in a painting workshop at "La maison", a pioneering palliative care facility in France, in Gardanne. — AFP

art & life

SUNDAY | JUNE 9, 2024 | DHUL HIJJAH 2, 1445 AH

OMAN OBSERVER www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om



THE FRAGRANT LEGACY OF OMAN

"In Sur, as we serve food to our guests, we also serve perfumes and incense" ... P20

Dancer

REVIEW: 'WHAT'S THE POINT?' OONA DOHERTY'S RESONANT AMBIVALENCE

DESPITE THE enormous impact that the pandemic had on dance, few works have emerged that capture the experience. Plenty of pieces have been shaped by isolation and social-distancing rules, but not many have made something of the emotions of lockdown. Oona Doherty's "Navy Blue," from 2022, is one, and the feelings it effectively expresses are those of the lucky: dread, helplessness, guilt.

At the start of "Navy Blue," which had its New York premiere at the Joyce Theater on Tuesday, a dozen dancers are lined up, dressed in mandarin-collared workers' suits, their heads shaking so fast that their faces blur. Mostly they move in loose unison: sinking, crouching, clumping, stumbling, circling, fleeing with nowhere to go.

Although the music is Rachmaninoff, big and romantic, the dancers shrink from large gestures, wary-eyed. When they raise a fist in the air, it looks less like the defiant punch of striking workers or a Black Power salute than like the stance of a straphanger, pendant and insecure. They approximate ethereal ballet steps and point at the stars, but all the reaching quickly retracts or deflates, as if in embarrassment.

There's a cracking sound like a gunshot, and a dancer falls. Then another and another. It doesn't matter whether the performers try to be moving targets, hoping someone else will be chosen, or offer themselves as sacrifices. The slaughter is random (except that it isn't — the choreographer is the invisible killer). Before long, everyone joins together

in a new unison: the stillness of death. Video projections (by Nadir Bouassria) outline each body in bloodlike pools of blue.

Eventually, the dancers rise and take on yet another kind of unison, all mouthing a single disembodied voice: Doherty's. Her speech (written with Bush Moukarzel) floats a premise of futurity and cosmic distance — she thanks the audience for travelling 4.5 billion years to see a show.

Doherty wallows in human insignificance (each of us is "a pale blue dot on a pale blue dot"). She lists historical villains and violent events as if doomscrolling. She indicts herself, itemising the costs of the production. "What's the point?" she asks.

This rant, with its questions about the meaning of art and the meaning of life, is somewhat adolescent in tone. That impression is heightened by the movement that accompanies it: purposely messier, driven more by feeling than form. Some dancers are able to focus this better than others.

Yet "Navy Blue" remains compelling. While it lacks Doherty's physical presence, her unguarded charisma and authenticity come through in her voice in an unstable mix of ambition and humility. After her 2015 breakout solo, "Hope Hunt and the Ascension Into Lazarus," her career rocketed at a speed that must have felt vertiginous and doubt inducing. She's expressed as much in interviews. Her ambivalence about her career comes through, sublimated



and not, in her art. "What's the point?" is her continual question, and it finds resonant form in "Navy Blue."

"Look again," Doherty keeps saying in her rant, as much to herself as to the audience. She's looking for a

way out. She arrives, with a rueful laugh, at gratitude for "the importance of being unimportant" and the admonition that "we must love one another and die." Onstage, a cathartically flailing solo, like the Chosen

One's dance of death in "The Rite of Spring," is followed by a group hug.

The hope that gesture is trying to convey isn't all that convincing. She's still hunting for hope, and that makes her an artist to watch. — NYT



find us on



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

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



SHOULD YOU DELAY YOUR MORNING CAFFEINE?



Q: I've heard that drinking coffee first thing in the morning can interfere with my ability to feel awake and lead to an afternoon energy crash. Is that true?

A: IT'S AN IDEA that has been popularised by online influencers: Avoid consuming caffeine for 90 to 120 minutes after waking up, they say, and you will perk up more naturally, thwart the dreaded afternoon slump and have better sleep.

Proponents explain the idea as if it's supported by good evidence, with some people who have tried the method saying it has "been a game changer" for their energy levels.

But scientists who study the relationship between caffeine and sleep say that while there may be some benefits to putting off your morning coffee, there's not much research to back them up.

In some cases, experts warn, the risks of delaying your morning caffeine could outweigh the purported benefits.

How Caffeine Works, and How Long It Lasts

Throughout the day, your body produces a chemical called adenosine,

which binds to receptors in your brain and makes you feel drowsy. Caffeine perks you up by blocking those receptors, said Marilyn Cornelis, a caffeine researcher at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

But you don't feel the stimulating effects of caffeine immediately after your first sip of coffee, said Michael Grandner, the director of the sleep and health research program at the University of Arizona. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes for caffeine to be absorbed into your bloodstream, reach your brain and make you feel more alert, he said.

How long caffeine keeps you sharp "varies considerably," based in part on your genetics, Cornelis said.

Some people may have one morning brew and "ride that for much of the day," she said. Others clear caffeine from their bodies more quickly and might want another cup within a few hours, she added.

"Everyone responds to caffeine differently," Cornelis said, so there's not a one-size-fits-all solution for timing your caffeine. — **NYT**

HEALTH



JISHY SEBY

THE WRITER IS A
CLINICAL DIETICIAN
AT KIMS HEALTH
HOSPITAL

Essential tips for your summer diet

Summer is here and it is time to search for soothing foods that keeps us cool.

Basically, a summer diet consists of foods that is high in water content, provides ample nutrition and cools down your body while preventing you from dehydration. Break your meal in smaller meals and small snacks to let your body use the food properly to keep energised.

Diet during this time should be rich in natural and seasonal foods. It is easy to fill your meals with a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables during the summer months.

Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and contain antioxidants and other phytonutrients that may slow aging, protect against various diseases and improve blood pressure, and keep your heart healthy. Avoid using dried fruits during summer as they are very low in water content.

Eating a healthy breakfast should remain part of



your morning routine. Starting each day with a balanced, nutritious meal jump-starts your metabolism and gives you energy. It also holds off your hunger between meals, so you don't overeat later on.

Drink naturally cooling beverages like coconut water, lemon juice, buttermilk, sugarcane juice, etc rather than aerated soft drinks, caffeine, and alcoholic beverages as they contain sugar and other preservatives which act as diuretics (increase the flow

of urine) and can cause loss of water from the body.

Have a bowl of salads for lunch which includes veggies like cucumbers, tomatoes, carrots, spinach etc to increase the water content in your body. It's important to pay attention to the type of dressing and the quantity of dressing you use in your salads.

A fresh dressing made from lemons and olive oil is going to be a lot healthier than a creamy, mayo dressing. Avoid heavy meals at one time as it can cause

acidity and affect digestion. Rather, eat small meals to feel light and keep your system active.

Curd is excellent for summers as it increases friendly bacteria in the gut and improves digestion and boosts immunity. Track your protein and carbohydrate intake during summer.

Animal proteins like eggs and meat are not easy to digest and can pose a digestion problem during summer periods. However you can include pulses and fishes, yogurt in your diet to gain proteins. Nuts are good option for snacks time; but avoid eating fried ones. Roasted or plain would be a better option.

All the health benefits that you get from eating light summer food may be wasted if you fall sick because you've eaten food that is not fresh.

During summer, food gets spoilt more quickly. So, make sure that you pay extra attention to the fresh-

ness of meats and sea foods. Bacteria in food multiply faster in hot, humid weather. We have to be very careful regarding the storage of foods during summer.

Simple rule is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Avoid storing foods in the room temperature for long time. Don't eat food that's been left out of the fridge for more than four hours — especially poultry, meat, seafood, cooked rice and cooked pasta.

Fast and junk foods to be avoided as these foods have heated thermal effect on the body and makes the body sluggish. Avoid chilled liquids as they constrict blood vessels and reduce heat loss via skin and has negative impact on heat.

Since the scorching heat of summer increases with each degree rise in the mercury, by rooting ourselves to nature's provision of healthful food choices we can experience the bloom of our health and vitality.

Fast and junk foods to be avoided as these foods have heated thermal effect on the body and makes the body sluggish

THE FRAGRANT LEGACY OF
OMAN

BUTHAINA AL RIYAMI

As roots anchor deeply in the soil, aromatic traditions are deeply embedded in Arab history and culture, playing a pivotal role in their norms and daily life. Frankincense, incense, and perfumes have long symbolised luxury and personal grooming in Arab societies, and are revered as tokens of hospitality. This tradition is not a recent addition but has ancient roots. The importance of Arabic perfumes is even acknowledged in literature, as illustrated by Shakespeare's Macbeth: "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand," says Lady Macbeth (Act V, Sc. 1).

In Oman, these aromatic customs are especially pronounced. Oman is renowned for its frankincense, which is not just a trading commodity but a cultural touchstone, evoking memories and traditions among its people. Many Omani women recall childhood experiences where perfumes symbolised hospitality, such as the postpartum traditions where a basket of perfumes is presented, or the guest room rituals involving a person walking around with a frankincense burner.

Perfumes and incense, long symbols of hospitality and personal care, have inspired a new generation of entrepreneurs.

Asma al Arimi, the founder of La Odor World, an Omani brand specialising in perfumes

and incense, emphasises that their products are deeply inspired by local traditions. "In Sur, as we serve food to our guests, we also serve perfumes and incense. These elements are integral to our hospitality customs," Al Arimi explains.

Recognising the demand, perfumes and incense services have become popular in event planning, reflecting a symbolic gesture of hospitality.

Al Arimi's business has thrived, with her team dedicated to enhancing these services, expanding their reach across various governorates in Oman. This modern entrepreneurial venture, rooted in tradition, highlights how ancient customs can inspire contemporary business success.