

P13

MEETING HELD TO RENEWABLE ENERGY INITIATIVES AND COLLABORATION



P18

A COOL OASIS AMIDST OMAN'S MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS



P12

GAUFF DEFEATS SABALENKA TO WIN US OPEN CROWN



MUSCAT

NOD FOR APPLE PAY, SAMSUNG PAY

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) has issued guidelines and instructions for banks and payment service providers to provide the Card Tokenisation Service, which will replace the current method of card-based payments. The decision will be enforced based on the readiness of banks and payment service providers. Customers can register payment cards on smart devices, and perform contactless payment transactions at local and international electronic payment applications on smart devices (such as Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, etc.) in the Sultanate of Oman. Customers will not be charged any fee for activating and using the service. According to CBO, the latest decision will encourage innovation in electronic payments and be less cash-dependent. SEE P2

Royal orders to send relief to Morocco

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal orders to send rescue teams and relief and medical assistance to back the efforts made by the sisterly Kingdom of Morocco to cope with the impact of the earthquake that struck the country recently.

The Royal move comes within the framework of the fraternal relations between the two countries and as an expression of the humanitarian role played by the Sultanate of Oman to provide relief to those affected by natural calamities.

Meanwhile, using heavy equipment and even their bare

hands, rescuers in Morocco on Sunday stepped up efforts to find survivors of a devastating earthquake that killed more than 2,100 people and flattened villages.

The first foreign rescuers flew in to help after the North African country's strongest-ever quake killed at least 2,122 people and injured more than 2,400, many seriously, according to official figures updated late on Sunday.

Friday's 6.8-magnitude quake struck 72 km southwest of the tourist hub of Marrakesh, wiping out entire villages in the hills of the Atlas mountains.

On Sunday an aftershock of



Villagers mourn next to collapsed houses in Tafeghaghte on Sunday. – AFP

magnitude 4.5 rattled already-traumatised residents in the same region.

The mountain village of Tafeghaghte, 60 km from Marrakesh, was almost entirely destroyed, an AFP team reported, with very few buildings still standing. Amid the debris, civilian rescuers and members of Morocco's armed forces searched for survivors and the bodies of the dead.

"Everyone is gone! My heart is broken. I am inconsolable," cried Zahra Benbrik, 62, who said she had lost 18 relatives, with only the body of her brother still trapped.

SEE ALSO P6

OMAN SUPPORTS 'ONE FUTURE' AT G20



Representing His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, chaired the delegation of Oman in deliberations of the closing session of G20's 18th summit, which was held in New Delhi. DETAILS ON P2

Majlis Ash'shura 10th Term elections on October 29

MUSCAT: Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior, on Sunday issued a ministerial decision specifying the date, day and time of Majlis Ash'shura 10th Term elections in Oman and abroad.

The decision states that Sunday (October 22, 2023), will be the date on which Omani voters abroad could elect members for the Majlis Ash'shura's Tenth Term.

The decision also states that Sunday (October 29, 2023), will be the date on which Omani voters within Oman could elect members for the Majlis Ash'shura's Tenth Term.

On either date, the voting

process begins at 8 am and ends at 7 pm. The Ministry of Interior will outline the steps and procedures necessary for the voting process at a later stage.

As many as 883 candidates, including 33 women, are running for the Majlis seats for the next four years.

The ministry has intensified media campaign, urged citizens to participate in the electoral process, and use electronic applications to facilitate voter registration and stay connected with everything about the elections.

People with special needs are given additional facilities to make voting hassle-free and less

time-consuming. They can use 'Antukhib', a mobile application that emphasises the need to enable people with disabilities to participate in the elections.

'Intekhaab' will also help citizens to discuss all aspects related to elections and to study opinions and proposals among officials, specialists and voters, and to go through the profiles of the candidates before voting.

The Department of Election at the Ministry of Interior is working round-the-clock to ensure a free and fair election. According to the officials, artificial intelligence and digital media will help in offering a fruitful election experience. — ONA



PATEK PHILIPPE
GENEVE
BEGIN YOUR OWN TRADITION

YOU NEVER ACTUALLY OWN A PATEK PHILIPPE.
YOU MERELY TAKE CARE OF IT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION.



PERPETUAL CALENDAR REF. 5320G

Patek Philippe Boutique
at
القرم
Al-Qurum
MUSCAT · 22009991



HH SAYYID ASAAD RETURNS HOME

MUSCAT: HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan returned back home after his visit to the Republic of India during which he headed the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the G20 Summit that was held in New Delhi.

Upon his return, HH Sayyid Asaad and his accompanying delegation were received by Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Amit Narang, Ambassador of the Republic of India to the Sultanate of Oman and Saif bin Mohammed al Abri, Secretary-General at the Office of HH Sayyid Asaad.

HH Sayyid Asaad left India's capital city New Delhi at an earlier time on Sunday. He was seen off by Kailash Choudhary, India's Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Issa bin



Saleh al Shaibani, Ambassador of Oman to India and several officials from the government of India.

Moreover, HH Sayyid Asaad was accompanied during the visit by an official delegation compris-

ing Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Issa bin Saleh al Shaibani,

Ambassador of Oman to India, advisers at HH Sayyid Asaad's Office and Pankaj Khimji, Adviser for External Trade and International Cooperation at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. — ONA

Oman supports 'One Future' for human civilisation

NEW DELHI: Representing His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, chaired the delegation of the Sultanate of Oman in deliberations of the closing session of G20's 18th summit, which was held in New Delhi.

HH Sayyid Asaad delivered a speech at the closing session in which he stressed that the Sultanate of Oman lays emphasis on the significance of joint action and that Oman agrees with the vision of the Indian presidency on establishing "One Future" for human civilisation, notably at a time that challenges are expected to emerge in the forthcoming years.

HH Sayyid Asaad expressed Oman's welcoming of the remarkable efforts exerted along many tracks aimed to define the map of global skills and diminish the inherent gap between those skills and the requirements of the labour market.

Pointing out that the dedication of digital infrastructure to serve all nations will play an important role in realising sustainable economic growth, HH Sayyid Asaad noted that this is consistent with Oman's approach. He added that Oman welcomes initiatives to provide all means of making knowledge

accessible to all. He reiterated the stance that Oman agrees with G20 countries to devise safe, reliable and well-established principles for digital economy.

HH Sayyid Asaad expressed appreciation for the Republic of India's inviting the Sultanate of Oman to participate in the 18th Summit of G20. He observed that the gesture reflects the depth of relations between the two friendly countries. He also congratulated India on the successful landing of its spacecraft on the moon, a development he described as "a great achievement and a turning point towards a promising future".

Prior to the closing session, HH Sayyid Asaad and his delegation joined other delegates in visiting the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial in New Delhi. They placed a bouquet of flowers on the monument to mark the visit.

The 18th summit of the G20 carried the slogan "One Land, One Family, One Future" and focused on the issue of sustainable development, in addition to measures to spread economic growth in a more balanced way between developed and developing countries.

The Sultanate of Oman's participation in the summit at the invitation of India consolidates Oman's position as an active partner in development and prosperity, regionally and internationally — ONA

CBO gives nod for Apple Pay and Samsung Pay

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Central Bank of Oman has issued guidelines and instructions for banks and payment service providers to provide the Card Tokenisation Service, which will replace the current method of card-based payments.

The decision will be enforced based on the readiness of banks and payment service providers.

Customers can register payment cards on smart devices, and perform contactless payment transactions at local and international electronic payment applications on smart devices (such as Apple Pay, Samsung Pay, etc.) in the Sultanate of Oman.

Customers will not be charged any fees for activating and using the service. According to CBO, the latest decision will encourage innovation in electronic payments and be less cash-dependent.

It will ensure a new seamless payment experience, enhance security in card payment transactions, and support the national digital transformation programme and e-commerce strategy.

From January 2022, the cashless payment scheme was rolled out in stages, covering shopping malls, cafes and restaurants, commercial centres, gift markets, jewellery stores, electronic shops, grocery stores, vegetables, and fruit sellers, building material shops, and outlets in industrial areas.

More people are resorting to cashless transactions such as account-to-account transfers via mobile or the Internet, giving a boost to government initiatives to achieve comprehensive digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) in its Financial Stability Report 2023 said that online retail



transactions (direct credit & direct debit) exponentially increased in the Sultanate of Oman by 37.8 per cent in 2022 from the previous year reaching 274.4 million from 199.2 million transactions.

The cheque payments volume has been decreasing- falling below the 5-year average- indicating the move from paper-based to digital alternatives.

Whereas, mobile payment

usage showed a significant increase of 551 per cent in transactions and 385 per cent in value. Accordingly, the volume of E-Payment transactions increased by 39.4 per cent in 2022 to 252.9

million transactions compared to 180.8 million transactions in 2021, primarily driven by POS transactions (50.2 per cent), followed by transactions via e-commerce (35.5 per cent).

In comparative terms, the growth of ATM transaction volume was at a slower pace (8.75 per cent) compared to transactions performed via cashless means as people were encouraged during the pandemic to avoid unnecessary cash usage.

The value of transactions executed via retail systems increased by 13.1 per cent from the previous year reaching a total value of RO 27.3 billion, said the report.

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) in its recent reports said that there has been a significant growth in the volume of electronic financial transactions and a decrease in transactions via bank cheques, as well as in the volume of returned cheques.

Job opportunities committee meeting discusses Omanisation in oil and gas



MUSCAT: The technical coordination committee tasked with supporting the provisioning of job opportunities in various sectors held here today its first meeting under the chairmanship of Shaikh Nasr bin Amer al Hosni, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Labour.

The meeting discussed efforts and initiatives of

Omanisation in the oil and gas field. It also reviewed employment figures in sectors related to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Further, the meeting also highlighted the role of the committee of regulating the job market in the oil and gas sector and its efforts in raising the Omanisation rate in this sector. — ONA

Met issues heatwave warning

MIDHUN RAJ
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

The Sultanate of Oman is preparing to endure a significant rise in temperatures over the next two days, with the nation under the influence of a dominating high-pressure system, according to the Oman Meteorological Office.

In a weather advisory issued on Sunday, the Oman Meteorological Office warned that the presence of the high-pressure system is expected to push temperatures to soaring levels.

Meteorologists have urged residents to stay hydrated, limit outdoor activities, and seek shelter during peak heat hours.

Meanwhile, the latest weather data reported by the Oman Meteorological Office said Saiq station experienced the lowest recorded temperature in the past 24 hours, with a relatively cooler



20.2°C.

In stark contrast, Dima W'attayeen and Al Sunaina bore the brunt of the scorching sun, registering the highest

temperature recorded on Saturday, at a sweltering 42.8°C.

Authorities urged those who work outside to follow necessary precautions to avoid heatstroke.



‘Green Madha’ initiative launched

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

The Environment Authority announced the launch of the ‘Green Madha’ initiative, a project aimed at enhancing the environmental aspects of the Wilayat of Madha. This initiative capitalises on the region’s unique natural components, distinctive demographic characteristics, and abundant green cover.

The Wilayat of Madha is renowned for its pristine environment, distanced from industrial projects and pollution sources. The ‘Green Madha’ initiative has been conceived to bolster the values of environmental sustainability, protect and nurture the region’s vegetative cover, monitor air quality, and integrate

circular economy principles into the local ecosystem. Furthermore, it aims to revamp waste management, improve environmental cleanliness, and bolster environmental services.

The initiative’s official launch took place at the Madha Club under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Ali bin Abdullah al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority.

The event witnessed the active participation of various government bodies, the private sector, the local community, and citizens.

Key highlights of the ceremony included presentations of several environmental projects. These projects encompassed planting an impressive 30,000 trees within the Wilayat of Madha and sowing a

million seeds in the current year.

Notably, there was a project unveiled for the creation of a model village for livestock breeders, initiatives for controlling gas-emitting plants, the restoration of 18 affected aflaj (traditional irrigation channels) due to climatic conditions, a solar power generation project, an advanced municipal waste management and green waste collection programme, and the introduction of modern irrigation systems for green areas.

In his address, Dr Al Amri emphasised the primary objective of the “Green Madha Initiative” – to achieve environmental sustainability within the wilayat. This will be accomplished through various environmental projects across sectors.

These projects include enhancing, rehabilitating, and developing vegetative and arboreal cover for wildlife.

Moreover, initiatives within the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources will expand the dam system, optimise natural water resource utilisation, promote green waste recycling, and eliminate gas-emitting tree species.

Other projects, presented by Nama Group, the Authority for Public Services Regulation, and Municipal Initiatives in Madha, underscore the collective responsibility for environmental preservation.

Shaikh Dr Hamad bin Saeed al Maamari, Wali of Madha, underscored the significance of the “Green Madha Initiative.”

OMAN CHAIRS GCC MEETING



The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Authority, chaired the 43rd meeting of GCC Environment Undersecretaries. During the meeting, held at Al Jabal Al Akhdhar (The Green Mountain), Dr Abdullah bin Ali bin Abdullah al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority underscored the march of joint GCC action in the environment field. The meeting discussed a spectrum of topics, including matters related to unifying stances. – ONA

Strict regulations to ensure safe potable water supply



QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has issued new guidelines to regulate the quality of potable water production in the Sultanate of Oman.

The regulation, issued by Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of the Board of Directors of APSR, aims to protect the health of the general public by putting in place safeguards to secure the quality of water.

Per the regulation, water utilities are required to prepare a water safety plan, which must include operational and administrative controls, a contingency plan, and a comprehensive risk assessment. The water safety plan must also establish standards for the inspection of water samples.

The regulation also prohibits anyone from harming or compromising the integrity of water sources. If any water

sources are damaged by a third party, the person responsible must remedy the situation at the earliest and compensate any affected persons for any damage or loss they suffered.

In addition, the regulation requires water utilities to check the quality of water on a monthly basis by taking samples and inspecting them to determine whether they conform to the approved specifications.

The water utilities must also provide a monthly report to the APSR that includes the results of the water quality tests.

If water does not conform to the approved specifications, the water utility must determine the source of the substandard water, halt supplies from it, and inform the Authority of the measures taken to protect public health.

The water utility must also inform the affected customers and develop a plan to address the lack of water needs if the shortage exceeds more than six hours.

SMEDA gives over RO 100,000 for 23 activities

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@Afrahalbalushia

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) revealed that the total value of sponsorships provided for the activities and initiatives implemented by small and medium enterprises amounted to RO 114,969 for 23 activities and initiatives that were implemented until the end of August 2023. The total number of institutions benefiting from the support reached 18 institutions.

The aspects of sponsorship are represented in exhibitions, seminars and conferences that promote small and medium enterprises and craftsmen, in addition to competitions and programmes related to spreading the culture of entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation, and



include many sectors, including the industrial sector, the craft sector, the health sector, the tourism sector, startups and other sectors.

On the other hand, the

Authority contributed to supporting small and medium enterprises in various tourist seasons in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman to enhance the sustainability of

small and medium enterprises. Furthermore, to the activities and initiatives that the Authority contributed to supporting during the Khareef Dhofar Season 2023 as in the Khareef Dhofar, it provided support to a number of institutions and events that contributed to revitalising the tourism season with its innovative ideas and spreading the culture of startups and expanding them in the local and international markets.

SMEDA assigns great importance to promoting the growth and sustainability of small and medium enterprises, as it has formed an internal committee concerned with studying, analysing and evaluating requests for sponsorship of events, activities and programmes related to small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurs, and craftsmen.

ODB approves projects worth RO10 million

MUSCAT: Oman Development Bank (ODB) approved the funding of 4 projects in the sectors of converting industries and food security to the tune of RO 10.2 million.

This came during the board’s 6th meeting for 2023, which was held under the chairmanship of Eng Mohammed bin Abu Bakr al Ghassani, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ODB.

Al Ghassani affirmed that increasing the lending ceiling contributed to funding projects with high in-country value (ICV). The projects will also boost growth in promising economic sectors, he added. — ONA



ROHM starts its new season with ‘The Barber of Seville’

MUSCAT: The Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) announced that the start of the new season is packed with exciting musical performances filling the calendar from September 2023 to May 2024.

The dazzling opera which will open the season with traditional elegance and fanfare is The Barber of Seville from popular composer Gioacchino Rossini.

The opera will be performed by the Orchestra Nazionale

Sinfonica della Rai and Intermezzo Choir conducted by Antonino Fogliani, with a spray of glittering opera stars in the main roles. Antonino Siragusa sings Conte d’Almaviva, Carlo Lepore takes the role of Dr. Bartolo, Nicola Ulivieri will sing Don Basilio, Maria Kataeva will sing the role of Rosina, and Vito Priante takes the main role of the wily fixer Figaro. The Omani Choir Group will also participate in this production.

The Barber of Seville will

be performed on 29 and 30 September at the Royal Opera House Muscat at 7pm. Each performance is preceded with a talk by the creative team, revealing fascinating insights into their production.

On Saturday 23 September, the opening Lunch Music concert of the new season will take place in the Opera Galleria. This popular informal event is free of charge. Singers from the Intermezzo Choir will perform arias from across

the Rossini canon ahead of the performance of his much-loved opera, The Barber of Seville, on the main stage the following weekend.

Opera Talks will be held at the beautiful Music Library in the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts on 27 September. Gaston Fournier leads the discussion on themes within the opera, and opera singers give the audience a close up of Rossini’s incredible work.

— ONA





SCHOOL HARASSMENT
A DANGEROUS PHENOMENON

STOP BULLYING

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@Afrahalbalushia

Bullying in schools has become a dangerous phenomenon that threatens students’ safety and the correct and proper functioning of the teaching process.

This phenomenon affects the psychology of students and prevents them from studying, achieving academic excellence, and establishing close and robust friendships among them.

Bullying occurs in the school environment when there is an intention to harm repeatedly. It happens due to differences in power between the two parties. Bullying can be physical, verbal, social, as well as electronic. It is possible to identify physical bullying in the school environment by grabbing part of the child’s clothing, traces of beating and bruises, or the child losing his things or items.

It is possible that these behaviours affect the child psychologically and lead to his isolation or sadness as a result of these actions or cause a deterioration in his academic performance and the beginning of a change in his personality from what is usual at home, such as fun, happiness, and others with enters the tunnel of depression.

The effects of bullying in the school environment may remain for years, as they may continue into the youth stage. Perhaps the measure of the survival of these effects depends on the bullying the child was exposed to, their personality, their ability to deal with pressures, and the psychological support they receive, whether from the family, the school, or specialists.

Bullying is one of the behavioural problems that should be paid attention to in order to reduce its appearance among students due to its negative psychological, physical and social effects on all parties that are part of the behavioural situation in which bullying behaviour appears. Treating this problem requires a comprehensive approach in which the roles of the various educational institutions are integrated, starting with the family that bears the greatest responsibility for raising children.

Social specialists confirmed that a child who has been subjected to bullying in the school environment must have the ability to talk to someone at school, such as a teacher, principal, or social specialist, and children need to communicate with parents or teachers about their exposure to bullying.

The child should communicate with the specialist himself about his exposure to

bullying. Later, the family can intervene, as in the beginning, the child must talk about what they were exposed to. Knowing the effects of the child being exposed to bullying is essential. Does he have anxiety, depression, or any clear psychological effects? These effects are then treated by resorting to specialists in this field.

SPECIAL AWARENESS

At the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Social Development allocated a special awareness programme about school bullying for students from grades 1 to 6. Samraa bint Saeed al Maashariyah, a psychologist at the Family Guidance and Counselling Department, mentioned the importance of establishing an awareness programme to educate students about the issue of bullying; because they are unaware of what they are doing to their colleagues.

It is challenging to have a radical solution to bullying, but its effects and its presence among students can be reduced by intensifying and activating guidance sessions, training and dialogue sessions with students by the social specialist at the school to learn about their trends and opinions, and also organising specialised workshops at the school (for students, teachers and parents), in which will introduce them to how to properly deal

BULLYING
OCCURS IN THE
SCHOOL
ENVIRONMENT
WHEN THERE IS
AN INTENTION
TO HARM
REPEATEDLY.
IT HAPPENS
DUE TO
DIFFERENCES
IN POWER
BETWEEN THE
TWO PARTIES.
BULLYING CAN
BE PHYSICAL,
VERBAL,
SOCIAL, AS
WELL AS
ELECTRONIC

with bullying students, to talk about the mechanisms for controlling them, and this applies to students who have been subjected to bullying or the bullies themselves.

Parents must adopt a favourable parenting method in their dealings with their children and periodically monitor their children’s behaviour in public life and at school, as monitoring helps clarify all of their children’s emergency behaviours, making it easier for them to intervene directly to avoid the accompanying problems, whether the bully or the bullied.

It is necessary to shed light on this phenomenon, or rather this social issue, which is widely spread in all educational facilities, and solutions must be found that reduce its negative effects. Bullying greatly affects an individual’s mental health and may even end their life! In general, bullying is an integral part of the phenomenon of racism that is widespread globally and has begun to take over our society, especially our children, in the recent period through technological development and the means accompanying globalisation.

The school environment plays a major role in influencing our children’s psychology and personality, so bullying in this environment may be a deadly weapon to end the child’s mental health and self-confidence.



ARTIFICIAL REEFS ENHANCE FISHERIES SECTOR THROUGH ONGOING DEPLOYMENT

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

An interim assessment of the benefits of artificial reef deployment has begun off the Wilayat of Sur coast, an initiative sponsored by Omifco.

This assessment – the third in the series — aims to rigorously track the efficacy of these modules while also undertaking a detailed examination of fish abundance and seasonal trends to comprehensively understand their performance.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) recently signed an agreement with Haejoo Engineering and Construction Company (HAEJOO) to execute the second phase of the artificial reef project

off the Wilayat of Sur.

The agreement encompassed the design, manufacturing, and deployment of artificial reef modules in the Wilayat of Sur and the monitoring of their performance in the marine environment.

Within the framework of the efforts to follow up and evaluate the artificial reef units in the Wilayat of Sur, the Directorate of Fisheries Research in Oman, represented by the Marine Science Center, has now commenced the third phase of evaluation of these units in cooperation with Haejoo.

The evaluation aims to monitor the efficiency of these units and compare the abundance and seasonality of fish.

Artificial reefs are marine habitats created and built from ecologically acceptable materials in a variety of types



to accommodate varied depths and targeted marine organisms.

They are placed on the seafloor,

particularly in locations where natural coral reefs do not exist.

The importance of artificial reefs

lies in their ability to improve the biodiversity of the area in which they are constructed. They offer a proper habitat for marine life reproduction and sustenance, helping to the promotion and sustainability of fish populations.

They provide an ideal fishing environment for local fishermen by decreasing labour, time, and the need for selective fishing equipment like nets, resulting in the high-quality catch, and enhanced financial returns.

By providing an appealing environment for diving and tourist activities, artificial reefs help to boost other economic sectors. They also provide a habitat for scientific studies on artificial reefs and the biological creatures that inhabit them.

Forum on Zakat promotes social responsibility, economic impact

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The annual mandatory charity initiative, which requires contributions from individuals’ wealth and savings, serves a broader purpose of strengthening social support and welfare within the community, as highlighted by the Gulf Cooperation Council’s Zakat Forum.

The inaugural annual meeting of the Zakat committees for 2023 was held under the auspices of Abdullah bin Salem al Salmi, Executive President of the Capital Market Authority, at the Oman Across Ages Museum in Manah on Sunday.

The ‘Modern Methods in Managing and Distributing Zakat Resources’ Forum, organised by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs (MoARA) in alignment with Oman’s Vision 2040, aims at fostering social responsibility.

The event was graced by the presence of Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, Fahd bin Abdullah al Suwailam, representative of the General Secretariat of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf, and representatives from all GCC countries.

During the forum, it was emphasised that while Zakat is a religious obligation with a well-structured system, it carries not only spiritual significance but also social and economic implications. It profoundly affects the giver, the receiver, and the community that upholds it.

Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs,



The ministry has established a working group to review Zakat regulation and governance guide, issuing guidelines for Zakat committee programmes

said, “The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs formed Zakat Committees to play its role in raising awareness of this great pillar of Zakat and achieving the values of solidarity, cooperation and social welfare through collecting and distributing it, in addition to what it does in terms of distributing alms, expiations and various aids.”

The ministry has also issued the Zakat Regulation and the Zakat Governance Guide to ensure that all practices and

applications adhere to a transparent and effective system, clarifying the rights and duties of all stakeholders involved.

“The progress we’ve made in organising Zakat-related work is a source of pride. It undoubtedly motivates us to improve the services of the Zakat committees, enhancing the community’s trust in them and attracting support from various institutions to promote cooperation,” Al Maamari added.

Currently, the ministry is actively working on the development of the Zakat sector. It has established a working group to review the Zakat regulation and governance guide, issuing guidelines for Zakat committee programmes. The aim is to elevate Zakat committees to the status of Zakat institutions, similar to endowment institutions, thereby receiving greater attention and care.”

UTAS gears up to welcome 9,433 new students for 2023-2024 academic year

MUSCAT: The University of Technology and Applied Sciences is gearing up to welcome 9,433 students for the upcoming academic year 2023-2024.

Among these students, 4,623 are male, 4,800 are female, and 52 are expatriates enrolled in the International Student Programme. These students will be distributed across various branches of the university.

About 1,693 students, the highest number will be enrolled in the Muscat branch, followed by 1,295 in Nizwa, 1,118 in Salalah, and approximately 1,000 each in Shinas, Al Musannah, Ibra, and Ibri branches. Suhar will enroll 394 students, Sur 338, the teacher preparation programme in Al Rustaq 298, and Musandam 139.

To ensure a smooth transition for the newcomers, the university has organised an induction week from September 10 to 14, with classes officially commencing on September 17.

All university branches have prepared comprehensive programmes to introduce students to the academic system, university regulations, and the various departments and centres within the university. Placement exams will also be administered to determine students’ placement in the first foundation year according to university regulations.

The University of Technology and



Applied Sciences has branches in several governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, including Muscat, Nizwa, Ibra, Salalah, Al Musannah, Al Rustaq, Suhar, Shinas, Sur, Ibri, and Musandam.

It offers a total of 6 colleges and 44 specialisations.

The university is committed to supporting national initiatives and collaborations, such as the Omani programme for cultural cooperation with brotherly and friendly countries. Omani or international schools in Oman can apply for fee-exempt scholarships for their students to study at the university through the Unified Admission Center.

In the upcoming academic year, the university is dedicated to creating an optimal educational environment and providing the necessary infrastructure, educational resources, and service facilities to advance education in the Sultanate of Oman. — **ONA**

Tender floated for Maritime History Museum in Sur

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) has floated a tender for providing design and supervision consultancy services for the establishment of the Maritime History Museum in Sur.

The museum will be developed as a cultural and educational national institute that will house, preserve, and showcase the seafaring Omani heritage.

The project includes a main walkway ‘Boulevard’ containing cafes, restaurants, and a park, as well as another walkway overlooking the sea, linking the sea street walkway to Khor Al Battah Bridge and the Ship Factory.

The project also includes a public square that contains an open theatre overlooking the coast, in addition to office spaces.

All these components are directly related to the urban structure of the region, as all spaces and services can be used separately



from the museum.

The Museum will be located on Sur Beach on a site area of 14,154 square metres

and the building will be accessed by cars, coaches, and pedestrians from the nearby neighbourhoods.



Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

Tender Announcement

Tender No.	129/2023/ MHT/HQ-26	Tender Name	DESIGN AND SUPERVISION CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A MARITIME HISTORY MUSEUM AT SUR
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)	150 OMR		
Tender Document Sales End Date	1/10/2023		
Last Date for Bid Submission	23/10/2023		
Grade	First		
E-Tendering Portal	https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om		

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.

The Tenderers must acknowledge commitment to the bid.

The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids.

The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
	For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om or 24402200
For further information	Email : solic@mht.gov.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085

MOROCCO MOURNS QUAKE VICTIMS AS DEATH TOLL PASSES 2,000

TAFEGHAGHTE: Moroccans on Sunday mourned the victims of a devastating earthquake that killed more than 2,000 people as rescue teams raced to find survivors trapped under the rubble of flattened villages.

The strongest-ever quake recorded in the North African country has killed at least 2,012 people and injured over 2,000, many seriously, according to the latest official figures.

Friday's 6.8-magnitude quake struck 72 kilometres southwest of the tourist hub of Marrakesh, wiping out entire villages in the hills of the Atlas mountain range.

"I've lost everything," said Lahcen, a resident of the mountain village of Moulay Brahim, whose wife and four children were among those killed.

Rescue workers recovered the bodies of Lahcen's three daughters from the rubble of their home, but had not yet found the remains of his wife and son.

"I can't do anything about it now, I just want to get away from the world and mourn," he said.

Troops and emergency services have scrambled to reach remote mountain villages where victims were still feared trapped under the rubble of houses, many of which were constructed from mud bricks.

Al-Haouz province, site of the epicentre, suffered the most deaths with 1,293, followed by Taroudant province where 452 lives were lost, authorities reported.

Citizens on Sunday rushed to hospitals in Marrakesh to donate blood to help the many injured.

Many residents of the usually bustling tourist hotspot of Marrakesh spent a second night sleeping out on the streets, huddled together under blankets and among bags filled with their belongings.



Volunteers watch as a digger moves rubble of collapsed houses in Tafeghaghte, 60 kilometres southwest of Marrakesh. — AFP



People walk past a damaged building in the old quarters of Marrakesh. — AFP

In the city's historic Jemaa el-Fna square, about 20 people were huddled on the ground, wrapped in blankets, while others were

staying on the lawn of the nearby town hall, with its 12th century ramparts partially collapsed. The kingdom declared three



Emergency workers search a destroyed building, in the aftermath of a deadly earthquake, in Amizmiz, Morocco. — Reuters

days of national mourning while countries including France, Israel, Italy, Spain and the United States have offered aid.

US Deputy National Security Advisor Jon Finer said: "We've got search and rescue teams ready to deploy... We are also ready to

release funds at the right time."

Spain meanwhile said it would send search and rescue teams and other aid after it received a formal request for help from Rabat.

Algeria, which has long had rocky relations with neighbouring Morocco, opened its airspace, which had been closed for two years, to flights carrying humanitarian aid and evacuating the injured.

The Red Cross warned that it could take years to repair the damage.

"It won't be a matter of a week or two... We are counting on a response that will take months, if not years," said Hossam Elsharkawi, its Middle East and North Africa director.

The village of Tafeghaghte, 60 kilometres southwest of Marrakesh, was almost entirely destroyed by the quake.

"Three of my grandchildren and their mother are dead," said 72-year-old Omar Benhanna. "They're still under the debris. It wasn't so long ago that we were playing together." Residents buried around 70 victims on Saturday, cries and screams punctuating the funeral rites.

In the evening, television channels broadcast aerial images showing entire villages of clay houses in the Al-Haouz region completely destroyed.

"The public authorities are still mobilised to speed up rescue operations and evacuate the injured," the interior ministry said.

The tremor was also felt in the coastal cities of Rabat, Casablanca and Agadir, where many panicked residents rushed onto the streets in the middle of the night.

The quake was the deadliest in Morocco since a 1960 tremor destroyed Agadir, a disaster in which more than 12,000 people died. — AFP

As Morocco reels from deadly quake, survivors seek aid

MOULAY BRAHIM: Survivors of Morocco's deadliest earthquake in more than six decades struggled to find food and water on Sunday as the search for the missing continued in hard-to-reach villages.

Many people spent a second night in the open after the 6.8 magnitude quake hit late on Friday. Relief workers face the challenge of reaching the most badly affected villages in the High Atlas, a rugged mountain range where settlements are often remote and where many houses crumbled.

In Moulay Brahim, a village near the epicentre south, residents described how they had dug the dead from the rubble using their bare hands.

"We lost our houses and we lost people also and we are sleeping like two days outside," said 36-year-old Yassin Noumghar, another Moulay Brahim resident.

Some aid efforts were underway in his village. Residents said food donations were coming from friends and family who live elsewhere. On Sunday morning cheese, bread and hot drinks were being distributed at the mosque.

Makeshift tents had been erected on a dirt soccer pitch.

Residents were wrapped in blankets after spending the night outside. One man, who was salvaging mattresses and



Villagers inspect the rubble of collapsed houses in Tafeghaghte. — AFP

clothes from his wrecked home, said he believed his neighbours were still under the rubble.

The government said that it was taking urgent measures to address the disaster including strengthening search and rescue teams, providing drinking water and

distributing food, tents and blankets.

Spain received a formal request from Morocco for assistance and it would be sending search and rescue teams, the Spanish foreign minister said. France said it stood ready to help and was awaiting such a request from Morocco.

The World Health Organization said more than 300,000 people have been affected by the disaster.

"The next 24 to 48 hours will be critical in terms of saving lives," Caroline Holt, global director of operations for the International Federation of Red Cross

and Red Crescent Societies, said in a statement.

A road connecting Marrakech to Moulay Brahim was partly blocked by fallen boulders.

"There are a lot of people still under the rubble. People are still searching for their parents," Adeeni Mustafa said, a resident from the Asni area.

Morocco has declared three days of mourning and King Mohammed VI called for prayers for the dead to be held at mosques across the country on Sunday.

The village of Tansghart in the Ansi area, on the side of a valley where the road from Marrakech rises up into the High Atlas, was the worst hit of several visited by Reuters journalists on Saturday.

Its picturesque houses, clinging to a steep hillside, were cracked open by the shaking ground. Those still standing were missing chunks of wall or plaster. Two mosque minarets had fallen. Families huddled on the streets, fearing their homes were no longer safe to return to.

Marrakech is due to host the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank from Oct. 9.

An IMF spokesperson, asked on Saturday about the planned meetings, said: "Our sole focus at this time is on the people of Morocco and the authorities who are dealing with this tragedy."

— Reuters



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 11 | 2023

7

In brief

■ MARSEILLE



68 MIGRANTS RESCUED FROM MEDITERRANEAN

The Ocean Viking, a rescue ship chartered by SOS Mediterranée, rescued 68 stranded migrants in international waters off Libya on Sunday, NGO announced.

“The Ocean Viking rescued 68 shipwrecked people from a double-decker wooden boat that left Zouara in Libya last night,” the NGO said.

“Several of them are suffering from seasickness and are currently being treated by the medical team of SOS Mediterranée and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on board the Ocean Viking,” it added. — **AFP**

■ KUALA LUMPUR



YOUTH PARTY LEAVES RULING COALITION

The Malaysian United Democratic Alliance (MUDA) announced on Sunday it was leaving Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's ruling coalition, citing corruption concerns after graft charges were dropped against the country's deputy premier.

The youth-centric MUDA has just one elected lawmaker and its move to quit will not affect the government alliance's stability, but could deny Anwar a two-thirds majority in parliament — a necessity for passing constitutional amendments and other key reforms. — **Reuters**

■ AMSTERDAM



POLICE DETAINS 500 ACTIVISTS AMID PROTESTS

Dutch police on Sunday said more than 500 climate activists had been detained on a second consecutive day of protests against government subsidies for the fossil fuel industry.

Hundreds of protesters marched on the A12 highway into The Hague around midday, ignoring warnings from authorities not to block the major traffic artery into the Dutch seat of government.

On Saturday around 2,400 protesters were detained as an estimated 10,000 activists blocked the same highway for several hours. Extinction Rebellion, which organised the event, has said protesters will try to block the highway on a daily basis until the Dutch government stops using public funds to subsidise the oil and gas industry. — **Reuters**

G20 summit ends with nations boasting success



World leaders arrive to pay respect at the Mahatma Gandhi memorial at Raj Ghat on the sidelines of the G20 summit. — **AFP**

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi wrapped up on Sunday a G20 summit that played several moments in the diplomatic spotlight.

G20 nations have been riven over the Ukraine war since Moscow's attack last year, with Russian President Vladimir Putin skipping the summit entirely to dodge political opprobrium.

On Sunday, Modi formally closed the summit by passing on a ceremonial gavel to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whose country will take the bloc's presidency in December.

“We cannot let geopolitical issues sequester the G20 agenda of discussions,” Lula said, an implicit reference to wrangling over the Ukraine war.

“We have no interest in a divided G20. We need peace and cooperation instead of conflict.”

Indian civil servant Amitabh Kant wrote on X that the compromise text on Ukraine had

involved “over 200 hours of non-stop negotiations, 300 bilateral meetings (and) 15 drafts”.

It backed a target of tripling global renewable energy capacity by 2030, while committing only to a “phasedown” of coal “in line with national circumstances”.

The climate outcomes were “insufficient”, French President Emmanuel Macron said on Sunday, saying the world must “phase out coal very rapidly and much more quickly than today”.

Modi, who marked the summit as India's diplomatic coming of age and is pushing for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, celebrated the accession of the 55-member African Union to the G20.

As the G20, the grouping included 19 countries and the European Union, representing 85 per cent of the world GDP, with South Africa its only member state from the continent.

Modi proposed another G20

leaders' meeting in November by video-link, opening up the possibility of Putin joining — along with China's Xi Jinping, who skipped the summit with the Asian giants at loggerheads over territorial and other issues.

Lula said Putin would be free to attend next year's event in Rio de Janeiro, despite Brazil being a signatory to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Others came together on the summit sidelines, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan holding face-to-face talks with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on Sunday following a decade-long rift between the two countries.

World leaders had earlier joined Modi to pay their respects to revered Indian independence hero Mahatma Gandhi, taking off their shoes at the site of his cremation, where normal footwear is forbidden as a mark of respect. — **AFP**

At least 40 killed in air strike on Khartoum market

KHARTOUM: At least 40 civilians were killed and dozens injured in an air strike by the army on a market in southern Khartoum, a local volunteer group said in a statement on Sunday, marking the largest single-incident death toll since the war in Sudan began in April.

Air and artillery strikes in residential areas have intensified as the war between the Sudanese army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) nears the five-month mark with neither side declaring victory or showing any concrete signs of pursuing mediation.

Drones carried out a series of heavy air strikes on Sunday morning on southern Khartoum, a large district of the city occupied mainly by the RSF.

Images shared by a body of local volunteers called the Southern Khartoum Emergency Room showed many women and men injured as well as what appeared to be dead bodies covered in cloth, some piled together.

Residents of the area tend to be day workers who, cut off from jobs, are too poor to afford the cost of escaping from the capital.

Mohamed Abdallah, a

spokesman for the Emergency Room, which tries to provide medical and other services, said the injured had to be transported on rickshaws or donkey carts.

In a statement, the RSF accused the Sudanese army of carrying out the attack, as well as other strikes. The Sudanese army denied responsibility and blamed the RSF.

While the RSF has fanned out across residential areas throughout the capital Khartoum and neighbouring Bahri and Omdurman, the army has used its advantage of heavy artillery and air strikes to try to push them back, resulting in hundreds of civilian casualties.

Strikes in western Omdurman last week killed at least 51 people across two separate days. With most hospitals closed and no functioning local government, volunteers struggle to document the full extent of deaths.

Medical aid agency MSF, which operates Bashair hospital in southern Khartoum, said that the crowded Gorro market was hit at 7 am, and that at least 60 people were wounded. Doctors had stopped trying to count as they operated on torn body parts.

— **Reuters**



Smoke rises above buildings after an aerial bombardment during clashes, in Khartoum North, Sudan. — **Reuters file photo**

Russia stages overnight drone attack on Kyiv

KYIV: Russia launched nearly three dozen drones at Kyiv early on Sunday, with blasts ringing out across the Ukrainian capital and the surrounding region for around two hours and debris falling across several city districts, Ukrainian officials said.

The night sky was illuminated by explosions from air defences engaging targets and blasts were heard throughout the city. At least one plume of smoke was spotted rising from in between buildings.

Kyiv resident Liudmyla said she heard the buzzing of the drones before a blast wave shattered windows in her building and the jars on her windowsill. “It was a very frightening experience — I can't even put it into words.”

The state emergency service reported that debris had fallen in three different districts, but there was no serious damage. Kyiv officials also said four people were wounded.

Regional Governor Ruslan Kravchenko wrote on Facebook that an unspecified infrastructure facility and eight houses had been damaged by the overnight strikes.

Ukraine's air force said the military destroyed 26 out of 33 drones launched by Russia, all of



Broken windows are seen near a building damaged during a Russian drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv. — **Reuters**

which targeted Kyiv and the region around it.

There was no immediate comment from Russia about the attacks. Moscow has conducted regular air strikes on Ukrainian population centres far from the eastern and southern front lines.

A Russian attack killed 17 people on Wednesday in the eastern city of Kostiantynivka, Ukrainian officials said.

Meanwhile, Russia will return to the Black Sea grain deal 'the same day' as Moscow's conditions for export of its own grain and

fertilisers to the global markets are met, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters on Sunday.

“When all the necessary actions for removing obstacles for our grain and fertiliser exports are implemented, the same day we will return to the collective

The night sky was illuminated by explosions from air defences engaging targets and blasts were heard throughout the city. At least one plume of smoke was spotted rising from in between buildings

implementation of the Ukrainian part of the ‘Black Sea initiative’, Lavrov told a briefing after attending a two-day G20 summit in New Delhi.

Ukraine opposes the idea of easing sanctions on Russia in order to revive a grain deal. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday he was not ‘hopeless’ about reviving the deal, and Russia, Ukraine and Türkiye would continue to discuss it.

UN told Russia a unit of Russian Agricultural Bank in Luxembourg could immediately apply to SWIFT to “effectively enable access” for the bank to the SWIFT international payments system within 30 days.

— **Reuters**

Learning is a never-ending journey

Literacy is extremely significant to every human endeavour. Most importantly, if adults cannot read, who will help children as they strive towards success?! As Khalil Gibran, a Lebanese writer and poet, said: “Education sows not seeds in you, but makes your seeds grow.” It is the right of all people to receive quality education that enables their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society.

Though education is always bitter, its fruits are better. This is very common typecast that one needs to permanently keep in mind. Such stereotype reflects the difficulty of pursuing education, acquiring knowledge and going to school for students. Regardless of how difficult or challenging learning is, the rewards are of course very fruitful afterwards. Learning is also sometimes hard to those young and old people who missed the chance of going to school on their days.

Likewise, learning is challenging to those who could not continue with their learning journey at school for certain circumstances. However, a quality education grants people the ability to fight the war on ignorance and poverty. Therefore, the right to receive quality education is the perfect tool to bridge the gap between different cultures and to merge various civilisations. Without having this right, the value of liberty, justice and equality will definitely have no meaning at all.

As a matter of fact, ignorance marks the biggest danger and threat to humankind nowadays. The world is changing in every single second of the day and adapting to the highly advanced technology. Thus, those who are not getting along with the rapidly happening changes worldwide will be left behind. Most likely, they will struggle to cope with the lifestyle that people are used to. They might feel outdated or perhaps in a different world!

It was right what John F. Kennedy said, “a child uneducated is a child lost”! This is mirrored in the world’s dance with the tunes of technology revolution. New discoveries and inventions, for



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
aljahdhami22@gmail.com

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

LITERACY IS IDENTIFIED AS A PROCESS BY WHICH ONE EXPANDS OTHER’S KNOWLEDGE OF READING AND WRITING IN ORDER TO DEVELOP THEIR THINKING AND LEARNING

instance, are attacking people’s life everyday. Everyone should be always awake and standby to run with the new advancements coming regularly onboard. That is why every human being has the right to get a proper education.

Thus, out of courtesy to people who missed their chance of learning or completing their study, the world introduced the International Literacy Day. Literacy is identified as a process by which one expands other’s knowledge of reading and writing in order to develop their thinking and learning for the purpose of understanding oneself and the world. This process is essential to achieving competence in every educational subject. Actually, literacy is one of the greatest gifts a person could receive.

The International Literacy Day was first announced at the 14th session of Unesco’s General Conference on October 26, 1966. Over the past years, this day has been celebrated annually worldwide in September to remind the public of the importance of literacy as a matter of dignity and human rights. Unesco designated this day to gather international community around a great cause, literacy. The day conveys a message that education shall be directed to developing human personality and strengthening respect for human rights and freedoms.

Today, nearly 800 million people around the world are illiterate in their own languages. Two-thirds of those who can’t read are women. As studies attribute that if the world was 100 people, 14 of them could not read or write. This means in 2018, 1.05 billion people are not literate. Furthermore, 250 million children are failing to acquire basic literacy skill and 56 per cent of children in primary school are not reaching the minimum proficiency in reading and maths. On the local front, according to the National Centre of Statistics and Information, there are 2,623 literacy centres in different parts of the Sultanate of Oman during the academic year 2022/2023. Thanks to government for sparing no effort to make learning in the reach of all.

A ROWING EVENT



Rowers scull in front of the Eiffel Tower along the River Seine as they participate in the annual ‘La Traverse de Paris en Aviron’ rowing event, that brings together more than 1,000 rowers and 230 boats in Paris, on Sunday. – AFP

A new era of connectivity through rail, ports

A historic announcement was made on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in the Indian capital of New Delhi on Saturday (September 9) about an ambitious project of a rail-shipping corridor from India to Europe via the Middle East.

Named the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, the new initiative is part of the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment, a collaborative effort by G7 nations to fund infrastructure projects in developing countries, and is expected to help bring countries in the Middle East together and establish the region as a hub for economic activities.

Through the new transport corridor, the countries involved aim to usher in a new era of connectivity with a railway, linked through ports connecting Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

The agreement consists of two distinct shipping corridors — the East Corridor linking India to West Asia/Middle East and the Northern Corridor connecting West Asia/ Middle East to Europe. The two shipping corridors will be linked by a railway track in the Middle East, covering the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel.

The rail line, upon completion, will provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is senior journalist and author

THE RAIL LINE, UPON COMPLETION, WILL PROVIDE A RELIABLE AND COST-EFFECTIVE CROSS-BORDER SHIP-TO-RAIL TRANSIT NETWORK TO SUPPLEMENT THE EXISTING MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORT ROUTES

the existing multi-modal transport routes enhancing the transshipment of goods and services between South East Asia through India to the Middle East and Europe.

Although details of the value of the project were not available, objects of the MoU on the project unveiled jointly by leaders from the United States, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, India, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, this ground-breaking initiative is expected to boost manufacturing, food security, and supply chains within its sphere of influence.

“The project will connect commercial hubs, support the development and export of clean energy, lay undersea cables, expand energy grids and telecommunication lines, promote clean energy technology, and enhance Internet access for communities, ensuring stability and security”, a fact sheet released by the White House outlined.

The railway network in the corridor is designed to provide reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit, complementing existing maritime and road transport routes. This railway route, primarily traversing the Middle East, includes plans for laying

electricity cables and clean hydrogen pipelines.

“Along the railway route, participants intend to enable the laying of cable for electricity and digital connectivity, as well as pipe for clean hydrogen export. This corridor will secure regional supply chains, increase trade accessibility, improve trade facilitation, and support an increased emphasis on environmental social, and government impacts”, the MoU document says.

While no official announcement has been made on the detailed route, reports indicate that India will be connected with the UAE through a shipping route.

From the UAE, the rail connectivity will start, going through Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel, terminating at the Haifa port. From that Haifa port, it will be again a shipping route towards Italy, from which it will enter Europe. The project will use existing routes and build new networks where needed, like linking Saudi with Israel through Jordan.

In this context, observers stress on the importance of the GCC Railway project, which once on track, stands to significantly gain from the planned rail lines in the new corridor. This rail lines

combined will further improve regional and international connectivity, enhance trade flows, and attract more investors.

Oman’s strategic placement offers the country substantial advantages, both strategically and economically, and opens up substantial opportunities within the logistics and transportation sector.

The Sultanate of Oman has long had plans to construct a national rail network starting at the UAE border and passing through Suhar and Muscat in the north before linking up with the port towns of Duqm and Salalah on the country’s coast.

In September 2022 Oman Rail and Etihad Rail signed a \$3 billion agreement to build a railway. The new railway entity, Oman-Etihad Rail, established under the agreement will primarily connect Suhar to Abu Dhabi.

Oman is also collaborating with Saudi Arabia for the establishment of a railway link connecting Duqm with Riyadh through the Ibri border. The railway line aims to serve the upcoming economic zone that the two countries are planning to build in the Al Dhahirah Governorate.

In July 2021, as part of the Oman National Spatial Strategy,

the government unveiled plans to construct the country’s first metro network. The project is planned to connect the commercial districts of Ruwi, the administrative centre of Muttrah and the northern coastal town of Al Seeb via the Muscat International Airport.

The GCC rail line, planned to span over 2,000km, will start from Kuwait City in the north and pass through the coastal cities of Jubail and Dammam in Saudi Arabia, before heading through Manama and Doha, the capital cities of Bahrain and Qatar, respectively.

The line will also pass through the major cities of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Fujairah, before reaching its terminal station in Muscat.

The Gulf Railways Authority was formed following approvals from the General Secretariat of the GCC in December 2021. Reports indicate that individual countries have been making progress in their respective projects. A report in oilprice.com said that Kuwait has already launched the first phase of the metro project.

In January 2022, Saudi Arabia announced plans to more than triple its rail network’s size by building 8,000 km of track. Progress has also been made on rail projects in the UAE.

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Oman suffer unexpected loss to Jordan

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

Jordan substitute Waseem Wasef Alriyalat's goal in the dying minutes spoiled Oman Olympic (under 23) football team's chances in securing a direct spot at AFC U23 Asian Cup Qatar 2024 Qualifiers after they suffered a 1-0 loss late on Saturday in Amman city.

A solitary goal turned out to be enough for Jordanian side to inch closer to the finals in Doha city, Qatar during April 15 and May 3, 2024.

Oman, coached by national coach Akram Habreesh, began the match with a similar starting list like the previous match.

Despite pressure from the hosts, Oman strikers created goal-scoring chances.

Abdulmajeed al Balushi missed a scoring attempt in the 20th minute as he sent a strong ball towards the opponents net but was saved by their goalkeeper.

The opponents were the better side in the first half as they pressed hard and were seeking for an opening goal.

Jordan's Ameen al Shniah was the active player from the opponents' side as he created panic inside the Oman box. The first half ended goalless.

In the following half, Jordan's players entered the match with more focus and were eying on breaking the deadlock. After



several substitutions, the hosts confirmed pocketing valuable three points with substitute Waseem Wasef Alriyalat's goal with three minutes remaining for the final whistle.

In the additional time, the referee showed the second yellow card for Oman's Khalid al Ghafri as they played with 10 men till the end of the game. The only goal was enough for Jordan to capture vital three points.

Oman team entered the match with high hopes like Jordan team as both teams ended the opening round on a victory note with Oman registering a 2-0 triumph over Syria while the hosts Jordan thrashed Brunei Darussalam by nine goals.

SYRIA REVIVE HOPES

On the other hand, Syria revived their hopes to move into the second round by registering a large 11-0 win over Brunei Darussalam on Saturday. Oman will meet Brunei Darussalam on Tuesday while Jordan and Syria will be in a tight clash for deciding the group topper.

Oman chances are based on the other team's results in the concluding round to secure a slot to the finals among the 11 group toppers and four best second placed teams who will secure their place in the Asian finals in Doha. Syria's win against Jordan by one or two goals maximum with a victory for Oman against Brunei Darussalam will progress Oman to the Asian finals.

No Messi, no problem as Miami win again

MIAMI: Despite missing Lionel Messi, Inter Miami moved within six points of the playoff positions in Major League Soccer with a 3-2 win over Sporting Kansas City on Saturday.

Messi was one of eight Inter Miami players away on international duty, but Gerardo "Tata" Martino's team showed their strength in depth as they extended their unbeaten run in all competitions to 12 games.

With Miami battling to rise from their pre-Messi position at the bottom of the Eastern Conference into the top nine, they know they have little room for error but their night began poorly.

Goalkeeper Drake Callender failed to hold on to a drive from Felipe Gutierrez and Daniel Salloi slotted home the loose ball.

Miami drew level though in the 25th minute through a Leonardo Campana penalty after the Ecuadoran forward was flattened by Kansas City keeper Tim Melia as they challenged for a high ball.

Unlike Messi, Campana was not called up for this week's South American World Cup qualifiers

and he proved decisive as he put the home side 2-1 up with a fine header from a DeAndre Yedlin cross on the stroke of half-time.

Campana went close to a hat-trick after the break with a deft touch goalwards from a low Jordi Alba cross but Melia got down well to save. Melia was in action to deny Nicolas Stefanelli after more good work from Alba, who recently retired from duty with the Spanish national side.

Miami's other former Spain stalwart, midfielder Sergio Busquets, created the third when he showed great awareness to take a quick free-kick on the half-way line and send Argentine forward Facundo Farias through.

Farias, one of a trio of young South American signings brought in to add some energy and talent to accompany the team's veteran stars, showed great composure as he ran in on goal and beat Melia with a perfectly placed shot.

But with 12 minutes remaining, Sporting pulled a goal back with Alan Pulido's 13th MLS goal of the season, the Mexican pounding on a loose ball and then beating



Inter Miami CF forward Leonardo Campana (9) celebrates with midfielder Dixon Arroyo (right) after scoring a goal on a penalty kick against Sporting Kansas City. — USA TODAY Sports

Callender with a clinical finish.

The visitors enjoyed plenty of pressure in the latter stages, including the seven minutes of stoppage time when a tired Miami was hanging on.

But with DC United held to a 0-0 draw at home to San Jose, Miami are now just six points behind Wayne Rooney's ninth placed team in the East and have two games in hand.

SWIFT EXCHANGE

Champions Los Angeles FC suffered a third straight defeat with a 2-0 loss at the Portland Timbers who are also looking to make a late push into the playoffs.

After defeats to Charlotte and Miami, LAFC fell behind when their goalkeeper John McCarthy made a hash of a corner allowing Larrys Mabiala to tap in from close range. Claudio Bravo then made it 2-0 in the 53rd minute with the Argentine full-back starting off a swift exchange of passes before bursting into the box and providing the finish.

The win moves the Timbers up to 11th, just a point outside the

playoff positions with six games left in their season.

In the East, Minnesota United equalised in stoppage time through Franco Fraga to earn a 1-1 draw at home to second-placed New England.

Carles Gil's excellent first time finish from a low cross from fellow Spaniard Nacho Gil gave the Revolution a 38th minute lead.

But with the clock running out, Minnesota won a corner and goalkeeper Dayne St. Clair came forward for the set-piece, providing the pass to Fraga for the dramatic leveller.

After the game, New England announced that their head coach and sporting director Bruce Arena had resigned following an MLS investigation into what the league called "insensitive and inappropriate remarks".

The 71-year-old Arena had been placed on administrative leave after the investigation was launched on July 30.

Arena's former assistant Richie Williams will continue as interim head coach of the team, the club said. — AFP

LATE BARDHI GOAL EARNS NORTH MACEDONIA 1-1 DRAW WITH ITALY

SKOPJE: North Macedonia captain Enis Bardhi's stunning free kick cancelled out Ciro Immobile's header to earn a 1-1 home draw against Italy in their Euro 2024 Group C qualifier on Saturday, spoiling Luciano Spalletti's debut as the Azzurri coach.

European champions Italy dominated the game and their captain Immobile netted with a header just after the break, following up after Nicolo Barella hit the bar from distance.

But midfielder Bardhi delighted the crowd when he equalised with a free kick from just outside the box that flew into the top right corner in the 81st minute.

"We conceded little, but we could have done more harm," said Spalletti, who was named Italy coach in August after former manager Roberto Mancini resigned to take over Saudi Arabia.

"We suffered when the game got messy and we were not ready to recreate the defensive solidity, so the clearances were often recaptured by their midfielders."

Italy remain third in the group level on four points with fourth-placed North Macedonia although the Italians have only played three games to their opponents' four.

Italy also have two games in hand of leaders England, who have 13 points after earlier on

Saturday rescuing a 1-1 draw against Ukraine, who are second with seven points from four matches. Italy next host Ukraine at the San Siro on Tuesday.

Italy had 85% of possession in a chaotic first half during which midfielder Barella thought he netted the opener in the third minute but his effort was flagged for a clear offside.

The hosts also had chances and forward Bojan Miovski could have upset the visitors as early as the 19th minute on his debut when he narrowly missed the target with a diving header.

Italy midfielder Sandro Tonali hit the post with a low shot shortly after and Bryan Cristante was denied by goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski from close range.

The state of the pitch caused some Italy players to complain about its condition which, however, did not prevent the visitors from taking the lead through Immobile in the 47th minute.

But North Macedonia, who last year beat the Italians in a qualifying playoff to reach the 2022 World Cup, spent more time in the visitors' half after the break and Eljif Elmas could have levelled from distance but shot was just wide of the far post.

But Bardhi did finally conjure up a late equaliser to give his side a boost before they visit bottom side Malta on Tuesday.

— Reuters



Macedonia's Jani Atanasov celebrates after Enis Bardhi scores their first goal.

— Reuters

Running great Farah ends competitive career with fourth at Great North Run

NEWCASTLE: Britain's Mo Farah capped his illustrious competitive racing career with a fourth-place finish at the Great North Run half-marathon in Newcastle on Sunday.

Wearing a bib that read "Sir Mo," the six-times Great North Run winner crossed in one hour, three minutes and 28 seconds, high-fiving dozens of people lining the route down the home straight.

"There was a lot going through my mind today," Farah told the BBC.

"I wanted to end my career here in Newcastle. I've won it six times and come here off the back of Olympics and World Championships.

"It is very emotional. I get to go and enjoy my time with my wife and kids. Running is all I know. When you win something, you don't quite appreciate it as much as when you lose. I've struggled with injuries these last few years."

Ethiopia's Tamirat Tola,

the 2022 world marathon champion, won in 59:58 to erase his disappointing marathon at the worlds last month in Budapest where he did not finish.

Peres Jepchirchir won the women's race in 1:06.45.

The 40-year-old Farah is a six-times world champion and four times Olympic champion. He raced to gold medals in the 5,000m and 10,000m in both the 2013 and 2015 world championships and repeated the golden double at both the 2012 London and 2016 Rio Olympics.

"I shared my story of what I went through as a child. Without having something to do and make me happy, it would have been very difficult for me," Farah said.

Farah was born in Somalia and revealed in 2022 that he was illegally brought to the UK and forced to work as a domestic servant at the age of nine.

— Reuters



Britain's Mo Farah reacts as he crosses the finish line.

— Reuters

Samarawickrama helps Lanka beat Bangladesh

COLOMBO: Sadeera

Samarawickrama smashed 93 to set up a 21-run win for Sri Lanka in their opening Super Four clash of the Asia Cup against Bangladesh on Saturday.

Samarawickrama's knock steered Sri Lanka to 257-9, a total their bowlers defended to put Bangladesh on the brink of elimination in the 50-over tournament, a precursor to the upcoming World Cup in India.

Bangladesh were bowled out for 236 in 48.1 overs despite a valiant 82 by Towhid Hridoy and suffered their second loss in the Super Four stage.

With one match to go, Bangladesh need a mathematical miracle for a place in the final on September 17.

Dasun Shanaka, who turned 32 on Saturday, played a captain's role with his 24 and three wickets from his medium-pace bowling.

Spinner Maheesh Theekshana and fast bowler Matheesha Pathirana also took three wickets each.

"When there's no frontline bowlers someone needs to chip in and today was my day," Shanaka said on the absence of injured bowlers including Dushmantha Chameera and Wanindu Hasaranga.

"Maheesh bowled and in the end the result matters. Our players, specially Kusal Mendis and Sadeera Samarawickrama played really well, read the wicket very well."

Sri Lanka, who co-host the tournament with Pakistan, faltered after being invited to bat first with Bangladesh fast bowlers getting

regular breakthroughs.

However, Kusal Mendis (50) and then Samarawickrama, who was named man of the match, made sure they reach a competitive and eventually a winning total on an inconsistent pitch.

Samarawickrama reached his 50 in 45 balls and accelerated in a 60-run partnership with Shanaka to rouse the home fans at a largely empty ground.

- Turned the tide -

Sri Lanka slipped after a brisk start before Pathum Nissanka and Mendis put on 74 runs with some sensible batting, forcing Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan to rotate his bowlers.

Shoriful Islam was brought into the attack and he delivered with the wicket of Nissanka, trapped lbw for 40.

Mendis reached his fifty with a boundary off Shoriful in the next over but the fast bowler had his revenge four balls later to have him caught out.

The bowlers kept up the charge, but Samarawickrama turned the tide with a string of boundaries and finished off well as he surpassed his previous ODI best of 82. He was dismissed on the final ball.

Bangladesh started strongly with Mehidy Hasan Miraz hitting a few boundaries to take on the Sri Lankan attack alongside fellow opener Mohammed Naim.

Shanaka hit back with his medium-pace bowling to send back Miraz for 28.

Pathirana got the big wicket of Shakib, caught behind for three and with Liton Das' departure Bangladesh slipped to 83-4.

— AFP



Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana (L) celebrates with team-mate Sadeera Samarawickrama after taking the wicket of Bangladesh's Towhid Hridoy. — AFP



GAUFF DEFEATS SABALENKA TO WIN US OPEN CROWN

NEW YORK: American teenager Coco Gauff came from behind to win the US Open on Saturday, clinching her first Grand Slam title with a battling win over Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus.

Gauff, 19, produced a gutsy performance on the Arthur Ashe Stadium court to win 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 in 2hr 6min to complete a fairytale transformation in her season's fortunes.

The sixth seed from Florida had gone into the final as the underdog against the hard-hitting second seed Sabalenka, who will become world number one in next week's rankings.

But with both players making a slew of mistakes throughout an error-strewn final watched by a star-studded record crowd of 28,143 it was Gauff who held her nerve when it mattered to seal a deserved victory.

The win completed a remarkable turnaround for Gauff, who was left distraught after a first round exit at Wimbledon in July.

However she bounced back to win titles in Washington and Cincinnati and has now landed the biggest win of her career, after a shattering loss in her first Grand Slam final at the French Open last year.

"It means so much to me," an elated Gauff said afterwards. "I feel like I'm a little bit in shock in this moment."

"That French Open loss (last year) was a heartbreak for me. This makes this moment even sweeter than I could imagine."

Gauff, the third American teenager to win

the US Open after Tracy Austin and Serena Williams, also used her victory speech to thank those who doubted her talent.

"Honestly thank you to the people who didn't believe in me," she joked.

"To those who thought they were putting water on my fire, they were putting gas on my fire and I'm burning so bright right now."

Sabalenka meanwhile blamed self-inflicted errors for her defeat, saying at times she was playing "me against me."

"She was moving just unbelievable today," Sabalenka said of Gauff. "But then the second set I start probably overthinking, and because of that I start kind of like losing my power."

"Then she start moving better. I start missing a lot of easy shots."

FIRST SET STRUGGLE

Gauff was in trouble in the opening game, Sabalenka breaking her straight away with a rasping backhand that drew a roar of "Come On!" from the Belarusian.

She held easily to take a 2-0 lead but Gauff then took advantage of a shaky service game from Sabalenka to break at 2-2 in the fourth.

The Belarusian double-faulted twice to allow Gauff to get back on level terms.

But that hard-won parity was surrendered in the next game as Sabalenka broke back to go 3-2 ahead.

Australian Open champion Sabalenka then wobbled on her own serve once more as Gauff eked out two break points in the sixth game.

But Sabalenka got it back to deuce with an ace and then took a 4-2 lead with an emphatic smash.

Gauff's problems on serve continued and Sabalenka broke for the third time to race 5-2 ahead, and she duly wrapped up the set by holding in the next game.

Yet with the match threatening to become a rout, Gauff finally clicked into gear in the second set, making fewer unforced errors and ironing out the kinks in her serve.

Instead it was Sabalenka who began to show signs of brittleness as the tension mounted. She double-faulted to hand Gauff the only break of the set and a 3-1 lead.

Gauff fended off a break point in the next game to hold for 4-1 and went on to hold for the remainder of the set to level the match when Sabalenka smacked a forehand long.

The momentum remained firmly with Gauff in the final set and she secured another crucial break in the opening game when she put away an underhit Sabalenka lob with a smash. Gauff then held easily for a 2-0 lead as Sabalenka struggled to regain any semblance of composure.

She coughed up four unforced errors to gift Gauff a break and a 3-0 lead, and the American then held with ease to go 4-0 up.

Sabalenka stopped the rot by holding serve in the fifth game, before taking a medical timeout to receive treatment on her left thigh.

Gauff was in no mood to let her grip on the match slip though. — AFP

business

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
4,696.170



Follow us on
omanobserver.com/business



Need cash?

Transfer money easily from your credit card to your account

2477 5777 | www.maisarah-oman.com

[/MaisarahOman](#) [@MaisarahIslamic](#) [@Maisarah.Islamic](#)


بنك مساره
MAISARAH
البنك المصرفي الإسلامي
Islamic Banking Services

OQ Group achieves net profits of \$1.1 billion in H1 2023

MUSCAT: During the first half of this year, the OQ Group — the global integrated energy group — recorded EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation) of about \$2.3 billion with net profits amounting to \$1.1 billion, and recorded assets worth \$31.2 billion.

The half-yearly report issued by the group indicated that OQ's total oil production from assets operated by it and by investment partnerships amounted to about 222k barrels per day, with production in the first half of this year recording an increase of 7 per cent compared to the first half of last year.

Block 60 oil production rose to 61k barrels of oil equivalent, compared to 49k barrels of oil equivalent in the first half of 2022.

The gas network availability rate in the first half of 2023 reached about 99.999 per cent in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Natural gas production reached 471 million cubic feet per day. Of this volume, 18 million cubic feet per day of gas came from assets operated by OQ, while



the production of assets operated from foreign partnerships with OQ amounted to about 454 million cubic feet of gas per day.

The report pointed out that the refining capacity of its assets totalled 302k barrels per day.

Petrochemical production capacity of OQ Polymer reached about 595 thousand metric tonnes, while the methanol production capacity reached about 497 thousand metric

tonnes.

Output of the aromatics plant reached 1,016 thousand metric tonnes.

The production capacity of the OQ LPG plant reached about 167 thousand metric tonnes.

Total expenditure for the first half of 2023 amounted to about \$653 million. It included \$488 million in contracts to local companies, while value retained in-country totalled \$211.23

million.

Spending on small and medium enterprises by the group amounted to \$123 million, representing 19 per cent of the total spending on goods and services, including \$34 million for holders of the Small and Medium Enterprises Entrepreneurship Card.

OQ also consumed Omani manufactured goods totalled \$81.9 million in value. — ONA

Oman unveils new e-commerce regulatory framework

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion has issued a regulatory framework governing e-commerce activity in the Sultanate of Oman.

Under Ministerial Decision No. 499/2023, individuals and commercial establishments must now apply for an e-commerce licence before offering the service. According to a statement by the Ministry, the framework was introduced to establish a legal and regulatory environment to develop, regulate and promote e-commerce in Oman.

Furthermore, the Ministry hopes to closely monitor the activities of e-stores in an effort to reduce online frauds and scams.

Earlier this year, an advisory research firm identified e-commerce as one of the top three most promising sectors for emerging businesses in Oman. According to market research firm Statista, the e-commerce market in Oman generated \$657.1 million in revenue in 2020.



This figure is expected to increase by 5.7 per cent by 2025, reaching \$867.7 million.

According to ONA, the introduction of the framework is the result of a National E-commerce Plan, a strategy designed to place Oman as a regional hub for e-commerce, as part of a wider economic diversification strategy.

Future phases of the plan include the establishment of an e-commerce complex, and developing the necessary infrastructure to support the sector.

The new framework will require online stores to protect consumer data. According to the regulations, vendors must maintain the confidentiality of consumer data and disclose measures taken to protect the data. In a case of a breach, vendors must immediately contact relevant authorities.

Meeting held to advance renewable energy initiatives and collaboration in the GCC

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals recently chaired the 11th meeting of the Renewable and New Energy Committee, in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the GCC, represented by the Energy Department, marking a significant step towards advancing renewable energy initiatives in the country and in the region.

The committee, comprising representatives from the government and relevant stakeholders, convened to discuss various topics related to renewable energy, including localisation, storage, and energy transition plans.

During the meeting, a presentation was made on the progress of electricity sector in the GCC.



In terms of regional collaboration, it highlighted the involvement of TSO (Transmission System Operator) entities from Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These TSO entities play a crucial role in facilitating the integration and transmission of renewable energy across the region.

Additionally, the meeting shed light on the concept of vertical integration with Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for power generation, which is being adopted by all GCC member states.

TURN TO P15

Agro-textile farming set to take off in Salalah

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, SEPT 10

Nakheel Oman Development Company, an affiliate of Oman Food Investment Holding Co (Nitaj), has firmly established its presence in Dhofar Governorate, with a range of ongoing operations and exciting new ventures on the horizon.

Current initiatives in the governorate include Al Najd Farm in Marsoodad in Maqshin, Rahab Farm in Shaleem, and an advanced organic fertiliser factory located in Raysut Industrial Area.

These endeavours have played a pivotal role in advancing agricultural practices and promoting sustainability within Dhofar.

Reaffirming this commitment, Nakheel Oman recently signed a key agreement to establish a Textile Agriculture Centre branch in Salalah. This visionary project underscores the company's bid to pioneer agricultural technologies and drive innovation in the country.

Another significant undertaking in the pipeline is the Integrated Centre for the Collection of Agricultural Products at Hanfeet in Al Najd. This project is poised to



High-level officials pictured at the recent signings of key agreements linked to Nakheel Oman's investments in Dhofar

CURRENT INITIATIVES IN THE GOVERNORATE INCLUDE AL NAJD FARM IN MARSOODAD IN MAQSHIN, RAHAB FARM IN SHALEEM, AND AN ADVANCED ORGANIC FERTILISER FACTORY LOCATED IN RAYSUT INDUSTRIAL AREA

revolutionise the agricultural product supply chain and improve efficiency in the collection and distribution of produce.

Total investments across these projects within Dhofar

Governorate are approximately RO 14 million.

Speaking on the sidelines of the agreements signing recently, Khalid bin Awad al Balushi, CEO of Oman National Investments Development Company (Tanmia), a co-founder of Nakheel Oman, said: "The company signed an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to invest in a plot in Dhofar. This is in line with

the company's focus on textile agriculture, which is a promising technology for the future."

He further added: "The Sultanate of Oman is a pioneer in textile agriculture, with over 20 years of experience in this field. Our presence in the Dhofar province will allow us to produce a variety of plants for textile agriculture, such as palm and banana tissue. We will also be able to process and distribute these products locally, closer to the consumers."

Design innovative beach huts and win cash prizes in Al Sharqiyah South contest

NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

In an exciting event aimed at promoting innovation in beachfront design, the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate has announced a new competition inviting young Omani professionals with expertise in urban planning, civil engineering, and design to put their skills to the test.

The challenge consists of designing innovative beach huts and canopies that will enhance the coastal experience at various

locations within the governorate.

The competition, which is a collaborative effort between the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate and the General Directorate of Housing and Urban Planning, seeks to tap into the creative potential of local talent.

This initiative not only promises to rejuvenate the coastal landscape but also offers promising prizes to reward the most exceptional designs.

The competition sites are spread among coastal areas of Sur, Masirah, Jaalan Bani Bu Hassan, and Jaalan Bani Bu Ali.



Designers are urged to consider the distinctive features and cultural significance of these locations when creating their designs.

Each entrance, through combining practicality and beauty, has the potential to become a cornerstone of the local beach experience.

The competition prizes are set to motivate participants to push their creative boundaries: First Place: RO 3,000, Second Place: RO 2,000, and Third Place: RO 1,000.

These prizes not only recognise the hard work and talent of the

winners but also demonstrate the Al Sharqiyah South Governorate's commitment to supporting young professionals in their pursuit of excellence in their respective fields.

Young professionals who are passionate about design and aspire to make a lasting impact on Oman's coastal beauty are encouraged to participate in the competition.

For more information about the competition, guidelines, and submission details, interested individuals can visit Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

Abraj showcases technical expertise with international publications



MUSCAT: Abraj Energy Services (Abraj), a leading provider of oil and gas services, in partnership with Petroleum Development Oman, a leading oil exploration and production company, has published a series of technical papers that highlight industrial progress and advancement.

The research was presented during several international conferences earlier in the year, demonstrating the company's unwavering commitment to technical contribution and leadership in the oil and gas industry.

The first paper, titled, 'Enhancing Productivity and Infectivity in the Sultanate of Oman's Nimr Cluster Using Hydraulic Fracturing: Challenging The Status Quo High Permeability Fracturing', was presented at the SPE Hydraulic Fracturing Technology Conference and Exhibition held in February 2023, at The Woodlands, USA.

It focuses on the methodology and processes of an injector well fracturing campaign and explores an innovative method called hydraulic fracturing to boost productivity and extract more oil.

The second paper, titled, 'Fields High Permeability Propped Fracturing Case Studies and Lessons Learnt', was put forward at the SPE Gas and Oil Technology Conference in Dubai, UAE, in March 2023.

It highlights case studies and lessons learned from hydraulic fracturing operations in Nimr cluster.

The paper also emphasises the importance of maintaining post fracture retained conductivity in high permeability zones and discusses the successful results of fracturing treatments in Nimr fields.

Furthermore, four technical papers are scheduled for publication at the SPE International Hydraulic

Fracturing Conference in Muscat, Oman, in September 2023.

This series of technical journals on hydrocarbon production enhancement complements the area of study and work coverage from the North to South petroleum basin in Oman.

The topics of these papers highlight the process of fracturing for screenless sand control, acid and propped fracturing in carbonate rock reservoirs, and scale solution with scale inhibition-infused proppant fracturing.

Additionally, the company has another publication scheduled for the SPE Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition, to be held in San Antonio, USA, in October 2023.

This publication highlights a study conducted after a hydraulic campaign in a high-permeability heavy crude reservoir in the South Oman basin.

This series of publications

marks the first time that Abraj Energy Services has published technical papers internationally.

The milestone achievement showcases the company's position as both a service and solutions provider beyond its domestic market, with its technical contribution to prestigious global industrial forums.

Eng Saif al Hamhami, CEO, Abraj Energy Services says, "Our focus has always been on providing clients with solutions that go beyond conventional approaches.

The research and results are a testament to our commitment to thought leadership and demonstrate our ability to drive innovation and success in the oil and gas sector."

By actively engaging at both regional and global levels, Abraj Energy Services aims to contribute to the continuous improvement and sustainable growth of the oil and gas sector.

OAB, Omran Group sign pact to finance Nikki Beach Resort & Spa Muscat



MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) and Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group) have sealed a strategic partnership to solely finance the upcoming Nikki Beach Resort & Spa Muscat, currently being developed adjoining the Sustainable City — Yiti.

This marks the latest landmark project that the bank has financed in the Sultanate of Oman, further supporting the country's advancement across developmental, economic and sectors.

Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said: "We are proud to partner with Omran Group to bolster the nation's hospitality sector.

The bank has a proven track record of handling large-scale, complex projects and catalysing economic diversification efforts that are aligned with the objectives of Oman's Vision 2040.

Economic diversification is vital to stimulate Oman's sustainable development at a global level and this project

represents another step forward on that journey."

Omran Group's CEO, Hashil al Mahrouqi, said: "We are excited to be working with Oman Arab Bank to see the Nikki Beach Resort & Spa Muscat project through to its successful completion. This resort is part of our continued endeavour to build on the nation's position as a preferred global destination for tourists.

It is a landmark development widely considered to be one of the most significant additions to Oman's luxury hospitality sector.

It will undoubtedly play a vital role in pushing Oman's tourism sector to reach its full potential, which aligns with Omran Group's commitment to developing exceptional and sustainable destinations."

Nikki Beach Resort & Spa Muscat will feature 140 hotel rooms and 30 villas with private pools.

Facilities will include the beach club, three signature restaurants, three swimming pools, a spa, gym and marina.

Enjoy exciting drives with Kia Seltos SUV

MUSCAT: Kia Seltos SUV with its distinctive style, space, comfort and more is a great choice for those looking to make the most of SUV experiences. The Seltos SUV is the perfect partner that will make even the most routine experiences fun.

The Seltos SUV boasts a stylish exterior with long hood, a strong, character line on the front bumper, and sharp lines pressed into the bodywork. Underlining its appealing look are the headlights and taillights which increase the style quotient besides providing the car with a commanding and confident presence.

The LED daytime running lights and rear lamps and 3D multi-layer indicators all play a fantastic role in making the Seltos SUV an exciting model. For driving in foggy conditions, the car is also equipped with LED fog lights.

The Seltos is equipped with a 1.6-litre gasoline engine that dishes out 121 HP and is paired to a six-speed automatic transmission (6AT). To further elevate the driving experience, the Seltos is equipped with a Drive Mode Select system



that lets drivers adapt the car to their preferred style or the road conditions. Drivers can choose from 'Normal', 'Eco' and 'Sport' mode.

The Eco mode is tuned to maximise vehicle range by using fuel-saving measures, while Sport mode increases responses from the steering and electric motor to maximise the dynamic driving feel of the car. Normal mode provides a careful balance between the two.

On the interior front, the Seltos is equipped with a range of technologies to maximise convenience, connectivity and ease of use.

Contributing to make every drive a delight are a range of

technological features including a Smart Key with Button Start, Auto Cruise Control, Terrain Mode System (Snow, Mud, Sand), 8" Display with Android Auto / Apple Car Play, Rear View Camera, Remote Engine Start, Rear AC Vent, Sunroof and Electronic Stability Program (ESP).

In terms of safety, the Seltos SUV scores well. The features include dual airbags, as well as a suite of electronic vehicle safety systems.

These include Kia's Vehicle Stability Management system as standard, incorporating traction control and electronic stability program. It also includes Anti-lock Braking System, a Traction Control System as well as front and rear parking sensors, for assistance when parking. 17" Alloy Wheels are standard.

Reliable International Automotive (RIA), the distributor for Kia in Oman provides a rewarding ownership experience for customers. Excellent product attributes and unmatched facilities easily ensure their absolute satisfaction, every mile of the way.

Vale builds community walkway in Liwa

MUSCAT: Committed to delivering long-term socio-economic impact to the communities where it operates, Vale in Oman announced the completion of a 1.2 km well-being walkway in the heart of Liwa.

Constructed in partnership with North Al Batinah Governor's Office, represented by Al Batinah North Municipality, the project includes walking paths and cycling lanes surrounded by scenic greens and seating areas, creating spaces that promote physical fitness, enhance mental health and foster a sense of community belonging amongst its users.

Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah, commended the great CSR efforts made by the



private sector, particularly those companies operating in the Governorate, saying that the well-being walkway project in Al Tayeb city, constructed by the Vale in Liwa, is a great example of these socially-driven efforts.

Al Kindi added, "Cultivating partnerships between government and private sector institutions is pivotal in our shared journey of development. To elevate the quality of development services provided

to society, integration and active participation are paramount.

The company's latest project is a testament to its multifaceted societal impact, and we, in turn, are committed to leveraging our resources to create thriving investment opportunities for both large corporations and emerging, medium, and small businesses."

Nasser Azri, CEO of Vale in Oman said, "Community well-being is at the heart of our social initiatives and the Liwa wellness walkway project was born from a need for a safe and inviting destination for community members of all ages to exercise and enjoy the outdoors.

Our aim is to extend our commitment to health beyond our own employees, promoting a culture of well-being within our extended community in Liwa."



Meeting held to advance renewable energy initiatives and collaboration in the GCC

FROM PAGE 13

For the distribution of renewable energy, Oman and the UAE were identified as the key countries involved in implementing effective distribution networks.

These networks are essential for efficiently delivering renewable energy to end-users and consumers. Furthermore, the meeting recognised the importance of a procurement model, specifically the single buyer model, which is being adopted by Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE.

This model streamlines the procurement process and ensures a unified approach to sourcing renewable energy.

While the single buyer model is being implemented in multiple countries, Oman stands out as the only member state in the GCC with a spot market system in place.

The spot market allows for the real-time trading of electricity, providing flexibility and enabling market participants to respond to supply and demand dynamics.

The meeting also emphasised the role of regulators in overseeing and governing the power sector.

In Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the UAE, regulators have been established to ensure fair competition, transparency, and the implementation of appropriate policies and regulations.

These regulators play a vital role in fostering a conducive environment for the development of renewable energy projects and the overall transformation of the power sector.

The ongoing task of reforming the power sector was acknowledged as a shared responsibility among all member states. While some countries still rely on their government's electricity ministries to carry out all functions related to electricity, others have established government owned companies to manage and oversee the sector.

These reforms aim to enhance efficiency, encourage private sector participation, and promote the integration of renewable energy into the power systems of member states.

Sembcorp Jinko Shine Co to develop Oman's Manah II Solar project

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 10

Sembcorp Jinko Shine Co SAOC, a newly established company registered in the Sultanate of Oman to develop and operate a new solar Independent Power Project in the Wilayat of Manah (dubbed Manah II Solar IPP), has secured approval for its share capital to be listed on the Third Market of Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX).

Sembcorp Jinko Shine Co SAOC represents the partnership of Sembcorp Utilities (wholly owned subsidiary of leading Singapore headquartered energy and urban solutions company Sembcorp Industries) and Jinko Power Technology (well-known China-based clean energy supplier and service provider).

In May this year, the new joint venture signed an agreement with the Omani government, represented by Nama Power and Water Procurement (Nama PWP) — the sole national buyer of power and water output — to set up the 500 MW capacity Manah II Solar IPP in the Wilayat of Manah in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

Last week, following an administrative decision issued by MSX CEO Haitham al Salmi,



SEMBCORP JINKO SHINE CO SAOC WAS LISTED ON THE BOURSE'S THIRD MARKET - A PLATFORM THAT ENABLES SMALL AND EMERGING COMPANIES TO PUBLICLY TRADE THEIR SHARES, WITHOUT BEING SUBJECT TO THE SAME STRINGENT REGULATIONS THAT APPLY TO COMPANIES LISTED ON THE PRIMARY STOCK EXCHANGE.

Sembcorp Jinko Shine Co SAOC was listed on the bourse's Third Market - a platform that enables small and emerging companies to

publicly trade their shares, without being subject to the same stringent regulations that apply to companies listed on the primary stock exchange.

Just earlier, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion had issued a license to establish Sembcorp Jinko Shine Co with a share capital of RO 500,000 comprising 500,000 shares.

As part of its agreement with Nama PWP - member of Nama Group - Sembcorp Jinko Shine Co will build, own and operate the Manah Solar II IPP under a 20-year Power Purchase Agreement reached with Nama PWP.

Construction work on the plant is expected to begin in earnest later this year, with the project slated to be operational in 2025.

Separately, Wadi Noor Solar Co is building a similar 500 MW capacity solar IPP (dubbed Manah I Solar IPP) adjoining Manah II Solar IPP.

Wadi Noor Solar is a partnership of EDF Renewables Middle East, the regional arm of leading international energy giant EDF Renewables, and Korea Western Power Co Ltd (KOWEPO), a key player in South Korea's power sector. Total investment in Manah I and II, offering a combined capacity of 1000 MW, is about \$800 million.

Oman electricity and water production up by 1.6%

MUSCAT: The total electricity production in the Sultanate of Oman until the end of June 2023 grew by 1.6% to 20,349.1 gigawatts per hour, compared to 20,023.8 gigawatts per hour during the corresponding period in 2022, according to preliminary statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The governorates of Al Dhahirah, Al Batinah South, and Al Batinah North posted an increase of 0.4% in total electricity production, to 12,985.5 gigawatts per hour, by the end of June 2023.

Electricity production in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate went up by 7.2% to 35.4 gigawatts per hour, while it grew by 6% in the governorates of Al Sharqiyah North and Al Sharqiyah South to 4,541.5 gigawatts per hour.

In the Governorate of Dhofar electricity production increased



by 12.4% to 2,297.1 gigawatts per hour, while it saw minor growth of 0.2% to 203.5 gigawatts per hour in Musandam Governorate.

However, in Muscat Governorate, total electricity production went down by 51.5%

to 181.4 gigawatts per hour, while it dropped by 33.2% to 104.7 gigawatts per hour in Al Wusta Governorate.

Oman's net electricity production until the end of June 2023 (which includes the

purchases of the Oman Power Procurement Company and the purchases of the Rural Areas Electricity Company by region) stood at 19,697.1 gigawatts per hour.

The largest amount of net electricity production (12,547.6 gigawatts per hour) emanated from the Governorate of Al Dhahirah and the governorates of Al Batinah South and Al Batinah North.

Meanwhile, the total volume of water produced in Oman saw an increase of 1.6% to 256,220,000 cubic metres by the end of June 2023, compared to 252 million and 296.4 thousand cubic metres in the period in 2022.

Dhofar Governorate's water production grew by 3.7%, followed by Muscat Governorate's water production, which went up by 1.7%. — ONA

Ministry grants licences for taxi services at Oman airports

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announced the granting of two licences to manage taxi services at the airports of the Sultanate of Oman.

The two licences came after it fulfilled the requirements and provisions of the regulation of the Land Transport Law, and the commitment to include all current taxi owners at airports in the applications, train them and develop their skills, and fulfil all the technical requirements specified by the Ministry in the license in order to upgrade the public transport system in Oman



The two licences include, the Cloud World Company represented by 'Otaxi' application, and the Ubar Smart Cities represented by 'Oman Fare' application. Both are Omani companies.

Their applications contain many smart options and features for use with ease and ease.

— ONA

Unified GCC Standardisation System lauded at Salalah meet

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, SEPT 10

The 56th meeting of the Technical Council of Heads of Standardisation Bodies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was held in Salalah on September 10, 2023. The meeting was chaired by Dr Saleh bin Said bin Salim Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry.

The two-day meeting discussed a variety of topics related to the activities of the GCC Standardisation Organisation, including the outputs of the various technical committees, specifications and metrology, and the conformity system.



The meeting also followed up on the implementation of the decisions of the previous 55th technical council meeting, and prepared for the sixth meeting

of the Ministerial Committee for Standardisation Affairs.

In his opening remarks, Dr Saleh bin Said bin Salim Masan praised the work of the Technical

Council and its contributions to promoting joint Gulf work.

He also stressed the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to continuing the work of the Technical Council

and achieving further progress in joint Gulf standardisation.

The key topics discussed at the 56th GCC Technical Council Meeting included the outputs of the Gulf Committee for Conformity Verification, the developments of the International System of Classification of Chemicals (GHS), the outputs of the Gulf Technical Committees for Standards.

It also include the implementation of the decision of the Ministerial Committee for Standardisation Affairs on stressing the importance of expanding the application of the Gulf Technical Regulation for Low-voltage Electrical Devices and Equipment, and the memorandum of the Presidency of the Standardisation Organisation on the outputs of the

meeting of the Gulf Committee for Laboratories and the document of services required to implement the unified Gulf conformity system.

Saud bin Nasser al Khusaibi, Chairman - GCC Standardisation Organisation, emphasised the importance of collective efforts to overcome challenges and achieve the objectives set by the Supreme Council.

He also expressed his gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Investment Promotion of Oman for hosting and organising the meeting. He also commended the efforts of the Director-General of the Directorate General for Specifications and Measurements, Imad al Shukaili, for his exceptional leadership in ensuring the success of the event.

Understanding consumer behaviour for effective sales

As-Salaam Alaikum!
In a world of unlimited choices and hyper-targeted marketing, understanding consumer behaviour is more crucial than ever for effective sales. As entrepreneurs, we may be passionate about our products or services, but our success hinges on our ability to understand and satisfy our customers.



KAMLA SAID
AL RAHBIYAH
kamlaa2040@gmail.com

The author is a renowned coach, trainer and consultant.

1. The importance of understanding consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour refers to the study of individuals, groups, or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas.

It encompasses the decisions that lead up to these activities and the impacts these decisions have on society. Understanding consumer behaviour is critical for various reasons:

- **Product development:** It helps in developing products or services that solve a real problem and meet the needs and preferences of our target audience.
- **Marketing and advertising:** It helps in creating

marketing and advertising strategies that resonate with our audience, thereby increasing the chances of a sale.

- **Customer experience:** It aids in providing a better customer experience, thereby increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty, leading to repeat purchases and referrals.
- **Competitive advantage:** It provides insights into our competitor's customers, enabling us to create strategies that give us a competitive advantage.

2. Factors influencing consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour is influenced by various factors:

- **Cultural factors:** These include culture, subculture, and social class. Culture is the fundamental determinant of a person's wants and behaviours. Subcultures consist of groups of people who share the same values based on their life experiences. Social class is determined by a combination of variables such as income, education, wealth, and occupation.
- **Social factors:** These include reference groups, family, and social roles and statuses. Reference groups influence our

attitudes and behaviours. Family members can influence the buyer's behaviour, and the roles and status of individuals in society also affect their buying behaviour.

- **Personal factors:** These include age, occupation, lifestyle, personality, and self-concept. As people grow, change jobs, or alter their lifestyles, their preferences also change.
- **Psychological Factors:** These include motivation, perception, learning, beliefs, and attitudes.

The perception of the product or service, the motivation behind the purchase, and the beliefs and attitudes towards it all play a significant role in the purchase decision.

3. Strategies to influence consumer behaviour

- **Segmentation:** Divide the market into smaller segments with distinct needs, characteristics, or behaviours that may require separate marketing strategies or mixes.
- **Targeting:** Evaluate each market segment's attractiveness and select one or more segments to enter.
- **Positioning:** Arrange for the product to occupy a clear,

distinctive, and desirable place relative to competing products in the minds of the target consumer.

- **Product differentiation:** Create a product or service that is perceived as unique and valuable to the target audience.
- **Personalisation:** Tailor marketing messages, product recommendations, and offers to individual consumers based on their past purchasing history or browsing behaviour.

4. The buying decision process

The buying decision process involves five stages:

- **Problem recognition:** The buyer recognises a problem or need.
- **Information search:** The buyer searches for more information from personal sources, commercial sources, public sources, and experiential sources.
- **Evaluation of alternatives:** The buyer evaluates alternative products or services in the choice set.
- **Purchase decision:** The buyer decides which product or service to purchase.
- **Post-purchase behaviour:** The buyer evaluates the product or service's performance in

comparison to their expectations.

As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger." Similarly, understanding and controlling our approach to consumer behaviour can lead to stronger and more effective sales strategies.

In conclusion, understanding consumer behaviour is a powerful tool that can lead to more effective sales strategies, better product development, and a competitive advantage in the market.

By considering the cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors that influence our customers' buying decisions, we can tailor our products, services, and marketing strategies to meet their needs and wants, ultimately leading to business success.

Stay tuned for our next article, where we will delve into "Cultivating a growth mindset for startup success".

How can we foster a mindset that not only embraces challenges but thrives on them? Find out in our next piece. Ma'as salama!

AS ENTREPRENEURS, WE MAY BE PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES, BUT OUR SUCCESS HINGES ON OUR ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND AND SATISFY OUR CUSTOMERS.

After the 'Beijing consensus'

For four decades, 'made in China' has been a defining feature of global capitalism. China has manufactured a majority of global exports since 2010 and many countries are emulating its development paradigm.

But a wave of disappointing economic news from China has given rise to increasingly gloomy forecasts, with some going so far as to argue that decline is imminent.

There has been much speculation about this reversal's implications for the global economy, but what does it mean for development theory?

Poster child
China has been the poster-child for successful economic development ever since the reform and opening up launched in 1978 under its then paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping. This unleashed unprecedented economic growth, which persisted for so long it appeared immune to business cycles.

In just a few decades, China's per capita income increased 25-fold, lifting 800 million people out of poverty, and its landscape was transformed by massive infrastructure investments, including highways, airports and the world's largest network of high-speed trains.

By 2010, China had become the world's second-largest economy, pulling ahead of France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom to nip at the heels of the United States, which some predict it will overtake by 2030.

China did not achieve this by implementing the 'Washington consensus', according to which liberal capitalism—democratic governance plus 'free' markets—was the only possible path to prosperity.

Instead, China's authoritarian regime implemented a state-capitalist system which, in contrast to the radical, one-size-fits-all 'shock therapy'



ANTARA HALDAR

The author is associate professor of empirical legal studies at the University of Cambridge, a visiting faculty member at Harvard University and principal investigator in a project supported by a European Research Council grant on law and cognition.

CHINA'S DEVELOPMENT MODEL HAS OFTEN BEEN POSITIONED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE LONG-DOMINANT WASHINGTON CONSENSUS. NOW THAT CHINA'S ECONOMY IS SPUTTERING, DOUBTS ABOUT THE CHINESE MODEL'S SUSTAINABILITY ARE MOUNTING, THOUGH A CLOSER LOOK REVEALS THAT IT NEVER BROKE THE DEVELOPMENT MOLD AT ALL.

adopted in much of the post-Soviet bloc, embraced an incremental approach based on experimentation and adaptation.

The Chinese approach has been characterised in a range of ways, from the modest 'China case' to the somewhat bolder 'China model'.

Bolder still, some call it the 'Beijing consensus', thereby positioning it as an alternative—even challenger—to its neoliberal counterpart.

In development circles, China's experience became the 'dragon in the room,' especially as a growing number of countries—including Bolivia, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Rwanda—committed themselves to emulating it. Even China's rival, India, 'borrowed' the idea of special economic zones.

Losing its lustre
In 2002, the Financial Times described the 'Washington consensus' as a 'damaged brand'.

Today, the 'Beijing consensus'—or whatever one prefers to call it—may also be losing its lustre.

On the surface, China's economy seems to be suffering from 'economic long Covid,' legacy of the draconian and prolonged 'zero-Covid' policy of the president, Xi Jinping, which severely disrupted global supply chains and led to a sharp drop in exports.

But China's problems run much deeper. Crippling debt, record youth unemployment, plummeting consumer confidence (apparent in declining household spending and a savings glut) and turmoil in the property sector have put a brake on growth and driven the country to the brink of deflation.

A broader backlash against globalisation, including efforts by major economies to shift their supply chains away from China, has further dimmed the country's prospects. One might take this as evidence that the Chinese development model is flawed. But we should start with an



A worker cuts an oil pipe at a factory in Qingdao in China's eastern Shandong province, in this file photo. – AFP

even more fundamental question: how distinctive was China's path in the first place? In fact, for all its novel aspects, China's experience has not significantly widened the development canon.

On the contrary, China adhered to several—by some counts eight—of the 'ten commandments' of the 'Washington consensus'.

Ultimately, China achieved its 'economic miracle' by playing the humble role of 'factory of the world', not by acting as a global laboratory or boardroom.

Like developing countries before it, policy-makers adopted an export-oriented growth strategy, which required attracting massive inflows of foreign direct investment.

With its vast reserves of cheap labour for foreign firms seeking a low-cost production base, China elbowed its way ahead of other developing countries.

In this sense, the miracle was a race to the bottom China won.

Yes, this is beginning to

change. But the fact remains that China integrated itself into global production networks, or supply chains, by manufacturing and assembling products invented and designed in developed countries.

So, the developed world retained its role as the engine of global capitalism, while the developing world, led by China, served as its wheels.

Radical rethink
With the benefit of hindsight, the 'Beijing consensus' may simply have been the 'Washington consensus' with more state intervention and less preachiness.

(China is known to be less moralistic vis-à-vis the recipients of its loans and investments than the west is toward beneficiaries of its development aid.)

It is worth noting that China's growth miracle also brought rising inequality, a patchy welfare system, suicide-inducing working conditions (such as in Foxconn's iPhone city) and environmental devastation. So, a quarter of the

way into the much-anticipated 'Chinese century' the Chinese economy is sputtering and the global mood is souring.

But the demise of the 'Beijing consensus' might have a silver lining if it serves as a cautionary tale to the developing world.

As with the 'Washington consensus', the wellbeing of today's citizens must not be wagered on an economic future that may never arrive.

A more radical rethink of development is needed, with countries seeking to show that they can produce new ideas—in particular, ideas that complement and advance a sustainable, egalitarian economic paradigm—rather than just manufacturing low-cost goods made to developed-world specifications.

As the Made in China label fades, developing countries should seek to use the tabula rasa for more than merely inscribing their own names.

©Project Syndicate, 2023

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- 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

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

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

OMAN OBSERVER DAILY

Observer Classified Section

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 | SAFAR 25, 1445 AH

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

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

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595



النماني للشحن
AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

DOOR TO DOOR CARGO



INDIA BANGLADESH NEPAL PHILIPPINES UAE INDONESIA EUROPE UK CANADA USA

WHATSAPP 96353654
TOLL FREE NUMBER 80066766
Follow us: f i n t
www.alnamanicargo.com

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: 97239696 95355638

Gulf Center Consultancy & Audit
Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Sur

EAGLE FREIGHT EXPRESS
DOOR TO DOOR COURIER SERVICES
INDIA | NEPAL | BANGLADESH

25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FAST DELIVERY EXCELLENT SERVICES

WORLD WIDE CARGO SERVICE Tel.: 99432926, 78211708, 92319472, 93350126
Head Office (H.O.) Room No.: 218, 1st Floor, Aircargo Complex, Branch Al-Hail, Email: eaglefreightexpress@gmail.com

SKT سماء الخضراء للتجارة
SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

Tel: 24501568, 24502479 • Fax: 24503566
Email: sales@samaalkhadra.com
Website: www.samaalkhadratradingco.com

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

DAWOOD JOB VACANCY

An Excellent grade, ISO 9001:2015 -QMS accredited Construction company wishes to recruit enthusiastic personnel for the following positions:

1. HR Manager: Bachelor degree with min 8 yrs experience. Omanis only
2. Procurement Manager: Bachelor degree with min 10 yrs experience
3. Procurement Engineer: Bachelor degree with min 6 yrs experience.
4. Senior Planning Engineer: Bachelor degree with min 8 yrs experience.

Interested candidates pls forward your CV's to info@dawood.om

Applus IAF

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

ROYAL CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

ALL OVER INDIA INDONESIA NEPAL
AIR EXPORT (Port to Port)
SEA EXPORT (Container Booking)
PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT 93213206

SERVICES BY AIR & SEA
FOR MORE INFORMATION JUST DIAL CUSTOMER CARE 93213207

FLAT FOR RENT

FLATS and offices for rent in Muscat.
96379095, 98403020

IN DARSAIT, 3 bedrooms, hall, 4 bathrooms, kitchen with store, small sea view.
Near the Indian Schools.
RO 220 monthly only.
Tel: 99315986

FOR SALE

DISCONTINUOUS

PU Sandwich Panel Machine, running condition, for sale.
Contact number: 99205104. Mail iD: mktho@omantel.net.om

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

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

Quadzone
RELIEF • RECOVERY • REHAB
PHYSIOTHERAPY CLINIC عيادة العلاج الطبيعي

عيش حياتك خالي من الام و ملي من الطاقة
Live pain free and energetic

We combine our expertise and knowledge to make you well!

QUADZONE PHYSIOTHERAPY CLINIC
Call us for an appointment @93387138
www.quadzonephysio.com

SIT. WANTED

SUDANESE lawyer and legal adviser, with more than 30 years of experience in Sudanese courts of all levels and types. Available in Muscat, Tel: 79121176, Yasir. Elmahi@hotmail.com

SENIOR

Accountant, B.Com, MBA (Finance), 17 years experience in Oman, seeks senior level opportunity.
Contact: +96878581435

ACCOUNTANT (male), MBA Finance and a Certified SAP FICO Consultant with 7 years work experience from Oman in Finance Department. Looking for a suitable position.
Contact: 99685330.
Email: hussain_ca87@yahoo.com

INDIAN male 34 years, MBA-Marketing. 12yrs Oman Exp, looking for a job. Experience in sales, operations and project. Presently working as operation manager. Driving licence. Contact: 98469481

AVAILABLE in Salalah looking for a job in the field of Finance or Banking. I have a bachelor's degree in banking and a Master's degree in business administration also I'm a lecturer in universities. Phone number 98147738. (nosaway22@gmail.com)

OMAN OBSERVER

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,
WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232



OMAN OBSERVER DAILY

Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadialmeeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

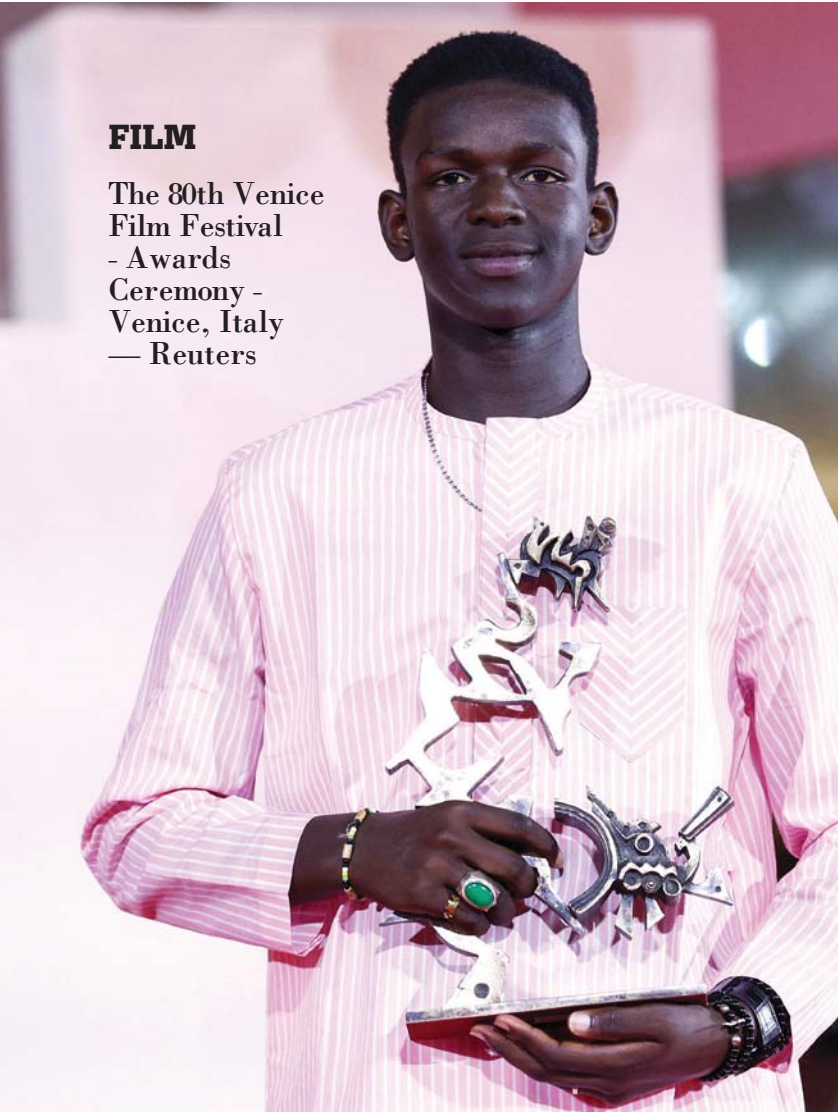
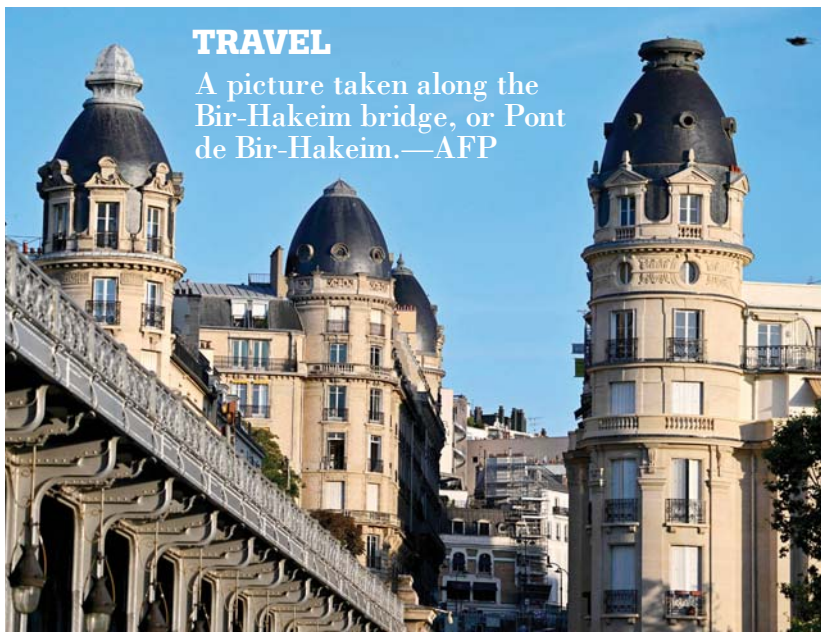
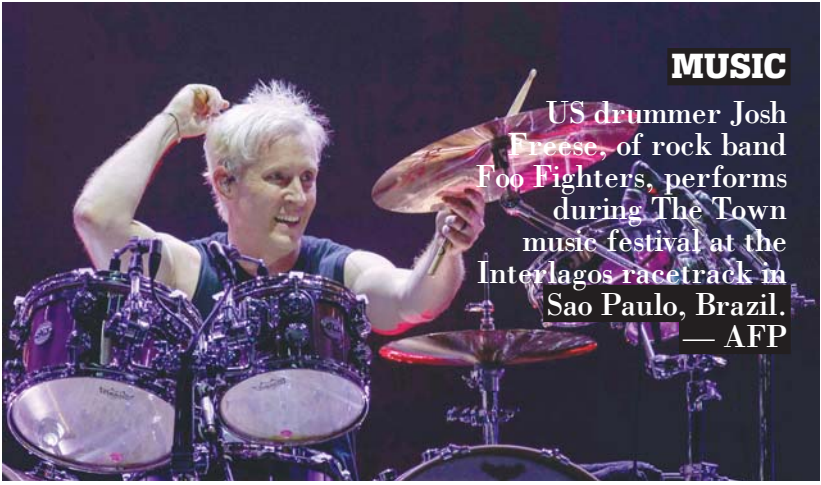
Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

You Tube Instagram Facebook Twitter

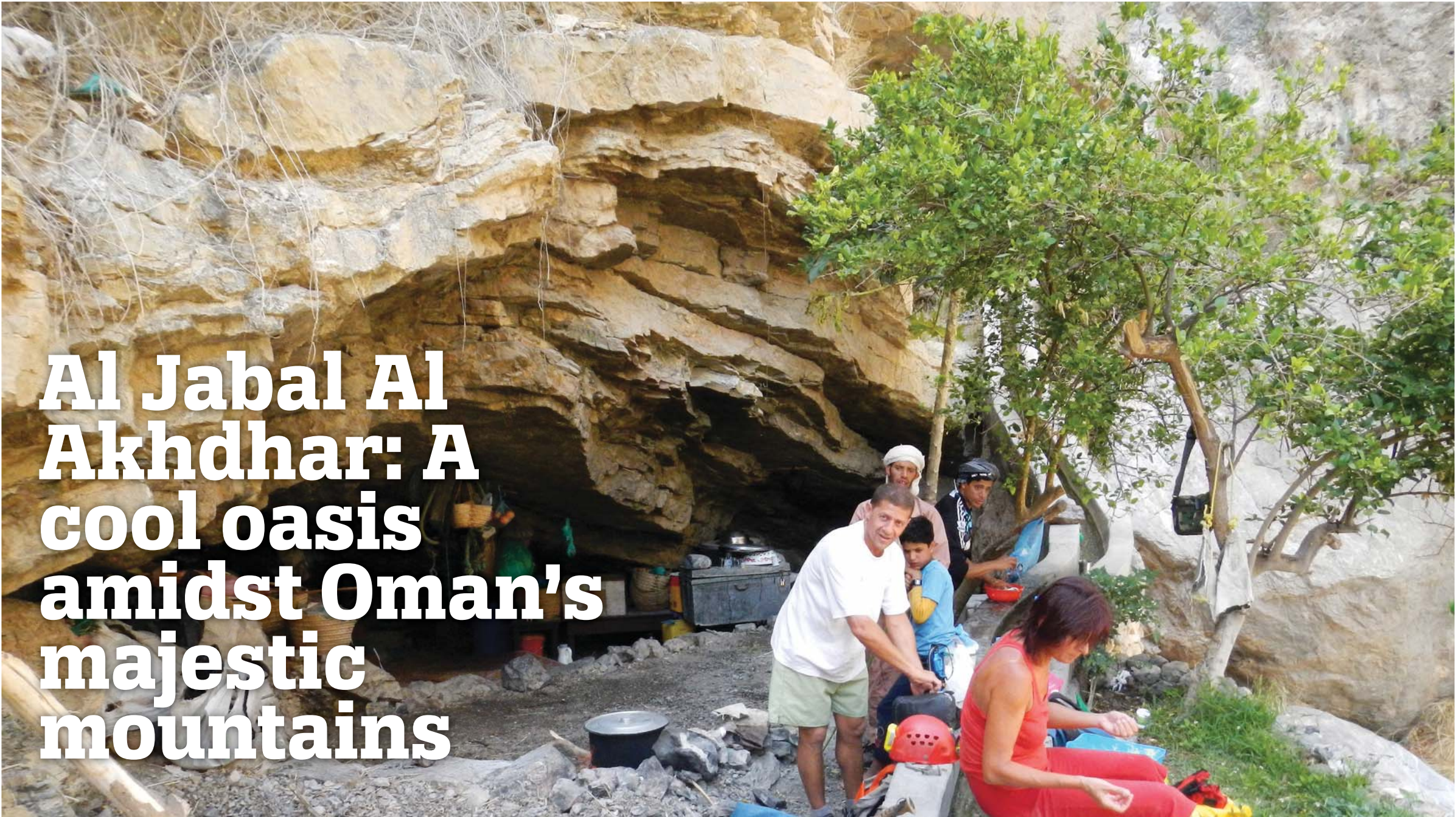
@omanobserver
www.omanobserver.om



art & life

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 | SAFAR 25, 1445 AH

OMAN OBSERVER f x @ y t v www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om



Al Jabal Al Akhdhar: A cool oasis amidst Oman's majestic mountains

BY KHALED ABDUL MALAK

Within Oman's stunning Al Hajar mountain range, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, also known as the 'Green Mountain,' has long been a hidden gem. Until the 1990s, this spectacular destination was restricted to locals and foreigners with special permits. However, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar's transformation in the past few decades has been remarkable. Located approximately 150 kilometres from Muscat, this once remote mountainous area has undergone a major urbanisation overhaul. The development of the Sayq plateau at 2,000 meters above sea level has given rise to a modern village known as Sayh Qatanah. This newly established community boasts a modern infrastructure, complete with asphalt roads, electricity, water supply, Internet connections, schools, hotels, and clinics, transforming the lifestyle of its residents. Many former villagers from the wadi, situated at the mountain's base, abandoned their terraced fields, once adorned with pomegranate, date, peach, and lime trees, due to the chal-

lenges of accessing these hamlets, often only reachable by mule or along ancient donkey trails that require hours to traverse. Despite this shift, Musabbah al Awemeri, a 32-year-old from the spectacular village of Masirat al Shreeqiyeen perched on the mountain's rocky edge, remains committed to preserving his family's legacy. Together with his younger brother Nasser, they dedicate their weekends to tending to the trees and repairing the terraces, ensuring their ancestors' gardens flourish. Their dedication extends to cultivating organic crops like garlic, sweet potatoes, pomegranates, and banana trees. "The pomegranates of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar are the best on Earth! Our neighbours from the Gulf countries are crazy about Omani pomegranates, and it provides a good income for us during the summer," Nasser al Awemeri proudly asserts. In recent years, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar has welcomed an increasing number of tourists, particularly from the Gulf countries, seeking respite from the scorching summer heat. Temperatures on the plateau rarely exceed 30 degrees



Celsius during the summer months. Musabbah and Nasser al Awemeri have found a thriving market for their produce among the visitors to Sayh Qatanah, now home to thousands of residents who once inhabited the wadi villages. This gradual exodus from the wadi occurred over more than 25 years as urban development flourished. Previously, the inhabitants of Al Jabal Al

Akhdhar split their time between the wadi and the mountain's summits. They sought refuge in the wadi's warmer villages during winter, while summers lured them to the cooler high-altitude spots. Many have permanently settled on the plateau, like Yaacoob al Jamoudi, who works for the Sultan's armed forces, enjoying job security and modern amenities thanks to the government's investments. Al Jabal Al Akhdhar earned its designation as a protected natural reserve in 2011, home to some of the world's oldest trees, including thousand-year-old juniper and olive trees. Its Mediterranean climate supports the flourishing of grapes, peaches, and pomegranates, otherwise rare in the country. Additionally, the region is renowned for its roses, used to distil fragrant rosewater in late April and May. A stroll through the terraced fields along the narrow walls of the ancient water canal, known as the falaj, offers visitors a unique experience. It provides an informative glimpse into the people's daily lives in this remote region. However, amid the progress, there are concerns. An elderly man in Aaqabat al Biyout



laments the changing work ethic of the younger generation. He passionately imparts traditional skills to his grandchildren, emphasizing the importance of farming and craftsmanship. He worries that the current generation's perceived laziness may jeopardise the region's identity and the wealth derived from its wadi. Al Jabal Al Akhdhar has profoundly transformed from a restricted sanctuary to a burgeoning tourist destination. Still, its essence remains deeply rooted in its natural beauty and the determination of its inhabitants to preserve their heritage amidst modernisation.





find us on



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

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 11 | 2023

19

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



#omanobserver

drsreejith • എന്റെ കേരളം - ente keralam

Follow



FLOWER NECTAR



manojbarai8

Follow



TO GREENER SIDE



tour.to.oman.by.monika.sommer

Oman

Follow



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.



Yorgos Lanthimos and Emma Stone's 'Poor Things' wins Venice top prize

THE GOLDEN LION in Venice was awarded on Saturday to a hilarious and shockingly explicit reworking of Frankenstein, "Poor Things", starring Emma Stone as a sex-mad reanimated corpse, which had festival-goers in stitches.

An ongoing Hollywood strike may have robbed Venice of its usual bevy of stars, but its strong selection showed the world's oldest film festival was still a launchpad for Oscar contenders.

"Poor Things" by Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos was labelled an "instant classic" by critics. It looks set to repeat the success of his 2018 film "The Favourite", which won two awards in Venice on its way to a string of international prizes.

Stone plays Bella, a woman brought back to life with an infant's brain by a mad scientist (Willem Dafoe).

Accepting the award, Lanthimos said the film "couldn't exist without another incredible creature, Emma Stone", who could not appear due to the strike.

The film features some of the most explicit sex ever seen in an A-list Hollywood film as Stone's character discovers — and very much enjoys — her sexuality.

It brilliantly skewers the way men try and fail to control the innocent Bella — particularly a roguish Mark Ruffalo — triggering bursts of spontaneous applause and riotous laughter from audiences in Venice.

- 'TERRIFYING' AI THREAT -

The Volpi Cup for best actress went to 25-year-old Cailie Spaeny, who said she was "overwhelmed by the

responsibility" of portraying Elvis Presley's wife in Sofia Coppola's "Priscilla".

Best actor went to Peter Sarsgaard for his performance as a man living with dementia in "Memory", playing alongside Jessica Chastain.

He used his speech to back the Hollywood strike and warn of the "terrifying" threat from artificial intelligence, one of the key issues in the dispute.

"If we lose that battle in the strike, our industry will be the first of many to fall," Sarsgaard said.

Independent films like "Memory" and Michael Mann's "Ferrari" were given exemptions by the unions, allowing the stars to come to Venice.

Chastain earlier said that actors had been silenced for too long about "workplace abuse" and "unfair contracts".

But director David Fincher, who premiered his assassin movie "The Killer" starring Michael Fassbender and has been closely associated with Netflix, triggered controversy by saying he understood "both sides".

- 'DEPRIVED OF DIGNITY' -

The winners were chosen by a jury led by director Damien Chazelle ("La La Land") and including Jane Campion and Laura Poitras, who won last year with Big Pharma documentary "All the Beauty and the Bloodshed".

The runner-up Silver Lion went to Japan's Ryusuke Hamaguchi for "Evil Does Not Exist", a quiet and eerie eco-



fable that follows his Oscar-winning "Drive My Car".

Venice audiences were floored by two brutal migrant dramas, and both went home with awards.

"Io Capitano", the epic story of Senegalese teenagers crossing Africa

to reach Europe, won best director for Italy's Matteo Garrone ("Gomorrah") and a best newcomer prize for its star, Seydou Sarr, in his first-ever film.

"Green Border", a harrowing account of refugees trapped between Belarus and Poland, took the third-place Special Jury Prize.

"While we're sitting here tonight, the situation is still going on," said its Polish director Agnieszka Holland, accepting the award.

"People are still hiding in forests, deprived of their dignity, from their human rights..."

Some of them will lose their lives here in Europe not because we don't have the resources to help but because we don't want to."

One of the stranger entries, "El Conde", which reimagined Chile's former dictator Augusto Pinochet as

a vampire, won best screenplay for writer-director Pablo Larraín.

- 'LAUGHLESS DEBACLE' -

The strong line-up helped distract from the controversy around the inclusion of Roman Polanski in the out-of-competition section.

As a convicted sex offender, the 90-year-old director was already struggling to find distribution in the US and other countries for his slapstick comedy "The Palace".

The response from Venice will not have helped: it currently holds a resounding zero percent on review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes, variously described as a "laughless debacle" and "soul-throttlingly crap" by critics.

Another director effectively blacklisted in the US, Woody Allen, had a better time with his 50th film (and first in French), "Coup de Chance". Some critics considered it his best in years — **AFF**

TECHNOLOGY

At Munich auto fair, movie-projecting cars and a bike wash

FROM WEIRD AND wonderful technological innovations in Chinese cars, to the rush to transition to electric vehicles — and even a bike wash.

Here are some key takeaways from this week's Munich auto fair IAA, one of the world's biggest.

- MOVIE-PROJECTING CHINESE CARS -

Carmakers, in particular those from China, are pulling out all the stops as they rush to meet consumers' demands to have the latest tech in their motors.

One brand, HiPhi, has launched a car that can use its headlights to project a film against a wall and symbols on the road. It can even display



emojis on screens under its headlights letting know pedestrians they can pass.

It is fitted with an "assistant" which consists of a robotic arm that moves a screen towards the person speak-

ing to it.

While such innovations may seem like fun, but largely unnecessary, gimmicks, analysts believe they could have real practical value.

Andreas Nienhaus, from consul-

tancy Oliver Wyman, said electric, autonomous vehicles are typically silent, meaning they "need to have display to talk with the pedestrians".

Another Chinese automaker, Leapmotor, has introduced a virtual

assistant that can identify people using the car with facial recognition technology. It records their habits and does things such as adjust the seating position and lighting.

- BYE BYE, COMBUSTION ENGINE -

Not a single petrol-powered car was on display at the stands of BMW, Volkswagen or Renault, while Mercedes was exhibiting just a few plug-in hybrids.

It highlights how European manufacturers are racing full tilt towards the green transition, even though electric models still only account for a tiny proportion of sales on the continent.

Among the European titans, only luxury sports carmaker Porsche exhibited a petrol-powered model — and that was in the second row of its stand.

- CHINA TAKES CENTRE STAGE -

Chinese carmakers were out in force at the biennial IAA mobility show — 41 per cent of exhibitors at the fair have their headquarters in the world's number two economy.

BYD, the country's leading electric auto manufacturer, set up shop in Munich opposite Volkswagen, and its stand was barely smaller than that of Europe's leading carmaker.

The group is aiming for between four and six per cent of the German

market within a few years, its boss Michael Shu said in an interview with financial daily Handelsblatt.

"The Chinese are of course better on price than VW," said Dietmar Kepiro, a visitor from Germany, after looking at some of the models on display.

"I think the quality is very good", especially as when it comes to on-board software, he said.

- BIKE WASH -

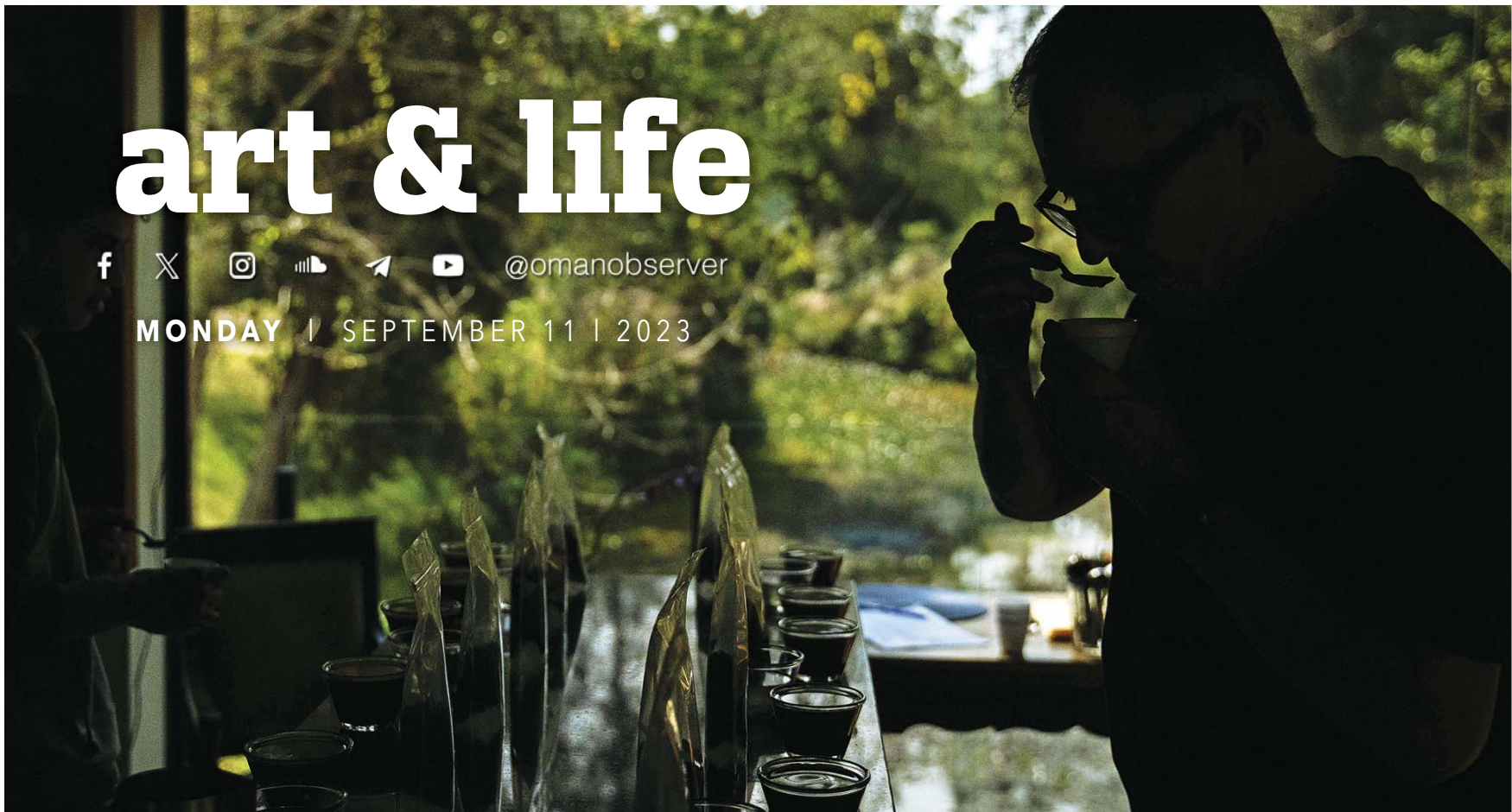
The Munich car show wasn't just about cars — dozens of cyclists flocked to use a bike wash equipped with water jets and rotating brushes.

The set-up cleaned two-wheelers in about 15 minutes, leaving frames sparkling like new, and it proved a hit — on one day alone, 120 to 130 bikes used it.

"It was a rush," said Christopher Stroebel, who was running the bike wash.

It is part of efforts by the auto fair to boost its green credentials by focusing on other forms of mobility. Several stands were also offering test rides on bicycles, both electric and pedal-powered.

But the efforts did not go far enough for some — activists from environmental group Greenpeace protested at the show, calling for the auto sector to do more to fight global warming. — **AFF**



COFFE

From the rear end of a pheasant, Brazil's best coffee



IN BRAZIL, THE proverbial goose that lays the golden egg is in reality something closer to a pheasant that excretes coffee beans.

At the Camocim coffee farm, deep in the bucolic hills of Espirito Santo state in Brazil's southeast, jacus — a type of pheasant native to tropical forests there — are considered some of the most astute pickers (or rather, eaters) of coffee cherries.

"He chooses the best fruits, the ripest," said worker Agnael Costa, 23, delicately scooping up droppings left behind by one of the birds between two tree trunks.

What goes in as ripe cherries comes out as beans, which can go on to be sold as some of the most delicious — and expensive — coffee in the world.

The coffee at Camocim grows in the middle of the lush forest, and the jacus here are wild, eating (and defecating) at their own pace.

"It was this agroforestry system that created the necessary conditions for this exotic coffee to exist here," farm owner Henrique Sloper tells AFP.

Domestically, jacu coffee can sell for 1,118 reais per kilogramme (or around \$100 a pound) — a price that can rise significantly upon export. Foreign distributors include British department store Harrods, among others.



- FROM ENEMIES TO ALLIES

The jacu, with its black feathers and red throat, wasn't always welcome at the farm. It was originally seen as a hungry pest feeding off precious crops.

But when Sloper discovered "kopi luwak," an expensive Indonesian coffee made with beans from civet excrement, he figured jacus might make good allies in the quest to make a better brew.

Kopi luwak sometimes has a bad reputation, with farmers accused of pressing civets — small mammals similar to weasels — into captivity to boost production.

The wild jacus at Camocim, meanwhile, roam, eat and poop at their leisure.

"It's 100 per cent natural," said farm production supervisor Rogerio Lemke. "The jacu is within its own natural habitat," in Brazil's Atlantic Forest.

Linking production to the whims of a jacu's appetite is just one of the reasons it fetches such a high price.

Jacu droppings look a bit like a cereal bar, with beige grains protruding from a blackish, pasty mess. Once



collected and dried, the beans are carefully sorted and hulled, and put into a

chilled room. "It is naturally expensive. There is no way to make a jacu coffee at a low cost," says Sloper.

All told, jacu coffee represents less than 2 per cent of the estate's production.

The bird also carries other advantages, both for farmers and those seeking a cheaper — if less intimately — cup of Joe.

"It serves not only as a selector (of the best beans), but also as a harvest alarm," says Sloper. "Where it eats, the coffee is ripe."

DELICIOUS

While jacus help select the best coffee, there's nothing in particular about their digestive system that imparts a different taste on the beans.

"The birds have an extremely short intestinal transit time," Ensei Neto, a coffee specialist, tells AFP. "So there is not exactly any kind of biochemical process, there is no time."

Their digestive process is much faster than civets or elephants — another animal whose dung is used, in Thailand, to produce specialty coffee.

Some think the fermentation process stemming from those animals' longer digestion times imparts a better flavor on the resulting beans.

The jacu "only goes for the ripe fruits," says Neto, producing a coffee with "sweet notes, with good acidity."

"It doesn't add anything else. But the story is good."

The jacus have found a fan in Poliana Cristiana Prego, 37, a Brazilian tourist who has come to visit Camocim.

"It's a delicious coffee and the story behind its production is very original. It's a new experience for us," she says.

"Our customers are lovers of exotic products, but also those who value the idea of sustainable development," says Sloper.

For him, "the future of coffee will come from Brazil," already the world's top producer.

Whether it comes from jacus or otherwise, Brazilian coffee "is showing the world that we really are able to do what nobody else can."—AFP

LIFE AT THE ACADEME



Dr Zainab Al Ajmi

Green Curriculum: The Sustainable Learning at Education Institutions

"EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE development (ESD) has been viewed as an important agent which will ensure the livability and beauty of nature while increasing the quality of life for all people (Sutton, 2004). With this point of view, the focus on ESD has been mounted up in recent years. A worldwide action plan, Agenda 21 which was accepted in the Earth Summit (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development [UNCED], 1992) proposed that 'education is critical while promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of human beings to address sustainability issues. In addition, Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) encourages economic and social development while ensuring environmental protection by all levels of formal and non-formal education which integrates related issues into all disciplines. In a later document, namely the Johannesburg Declaration, the crucial role of education in achieving sustainability goals was also highlighted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 (WSSD, 2002). P 123 from the implication of green curriculum. From this perspective, the United Nations (UN) constituted 2005–2014 as the decade for educational sustainable development when bridges have to be built between academic institutions and their communities" (Sahin, Ertepinar& Teksoz, 2009; Louw, 2013).

A green curriculum, referred to as an environmental or sustainability curriculum, is an educational framework that incorporates environmental and sustainability principles into various levels of education. A green curriculum goes beyond traditional academic subjects to integrate environmental topics and sustainability practices into the core of the educational experience through the enhancement of new concepts such as environmental awareness, sustainability education, critical thinking, ethical and moral dimensions, global perspective, community engagement and service learning, environmental literacy, and lifelong learning. Moreover, green curriculum is adaptable to various educational levels, from early childhood education to higher education, and can be integrated into formal school settings, informal education programmes, and community initiatives. Its overarching aim is to prepare students to be responsible and informed global citizens who actively contribute to a sustainable future.

According to (Kardoyo, 2020) development of green curriculum is one strategy to improve students' ability to understand something related to environmental awareness. The implementation of the green curriculum in universities is a response to global issues on the environment and represents the ways to save and conserve the energy sources included in universities' curriculum. In Europe and in the United States (as previously mentioned) various courses of action have been taken towards curricular greening, and the following topics were proposed for sustainable development: atmosphere and climate; transport systems and fuel sustainability; agriculture, conventional and organic farming; ecological economics; tourism and sustainability; and urban physical environments. (Louw, 2013). Kardoyo (2020) indicates that the relationship between the curriculum of each study programme that is designed with the conditions of the field. The stronger the relationship, or relevance, the more likely the study programmes to produce graduates who are suited to the needs in the field and bring it to better. The development of human resources in education is very important because education personnel are the main instrument to achieve educational goals in national development.

To conclude, in a world grappling with the consequences of unsustainable practices, a green curriculum serves as a symbol of optimism. It is more than an educational framework; it equips individuals to address environmental challenges and shapes them into responsible and informed global citizens through fostering environmental awareness, ethical considerations, and community engagement. The importance of a green curriculum cannot be overstated; it is an investment in the future.

Dr Zainab al Ajmi is very passionate about the growth of the education system in Oman and wants the country to produce globally competitive workforce. Her column tackles movements and developments within the education sector.

FOR FEEDBACK, EMAIL THE AUTHOR AT zeinbf@moe.om