

Oman, US discuss Yemen situation

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking. During the meeting, the two sides discussed the latest developments pertaining to the sustainability of the truce in Yemen. They stressed the importance of collaborative work to build confidence and enhance dialogue among all parties. **DETAILS ON P2**



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GREEN HYDROGEN ELECTROLYSER CAPACITY TO BE SECOND LARGEST



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MUSCAT

OMAN-EGYPT JOINT DRILL CONCLUDES

The joint Oman-Egypt military exercise 'Mountain Castle' concluded on Tuesday. The exercise was held at the military drills zone in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. The drill ran from September 4 to 13. The concluding event was held under the auspices of Maj Gen Matar bin Salim al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO). During the exercise, the RAO was represented by the Sultan of Oman's Parachute Regiment.

CRUDE PRICE AT \$94.37 A BARREL

Oman oil price for November delivery on Tuesday reached \$94.37, comprising a rise by \$2.02 from the price of Monday which stood at \$92.35. The average price of Oman oil for September delivery has stabilised at \$103.21 per barrel, thus \$9.72 per barrel lower than August delivery. World oil prices climbed higher as Tuesday progressed — after an initial fall in the Asian morning — as a weaker dollar offset some of the concerns around demand destruction.



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF SHINAS LINK ROAD

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has issued a direct order to a specialised firm to design and construct Shinas Link Road. The project includes a 5.8-km link road connecting Al Batinah carriageway with Al Batinah Expressway. It begins after 1.8 km from Shinas roundabout on the way to Al Batinah Expressway. — **ONA**

RO 3.9 million for provision of additional 650 school buses

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

The Ministry of Education said it has closely followed reports circulated on social media regarding school transport across the Sultanate of Oman. The ministry affirmed its keenness to provide a convenient educational environment for the students.

In a statement, the Ministry of Education clarified that it had managed to secure financial allocations in coordination with the Ministry of Finance to the tune to RO 3.9 million for the provision of an additional 650 school buses to meet the

Many successful bidders were facing the issue of lack of required bus models as per tender specifications

increasing number of students for the 2022-2023 academic year, as well as improve the condition of school transport by renting more modern buses in a number of governorates.

Stemming from the ministry's keenness to enable the successful bidders to deliver on their commitments, it gives them 10 days to buy buses and equip them

with the required specifications. However, many successful bidders were facing the issue of lack of required bus models as per the tender specifications. After ascertaining that the original successful bidder has failed to provide the required buses within the specified period of time, the ministry is obliged to turn to the next bidder, the statement added.

With regard to school transport situation at Al Warith Ibn Kaab School for boys (10-12) in the Wilayat of Al Suwaiq, the ministry clarified that this school has recently been supplied with two more buses...

TURN TO **P2**



SPACE SETTLEMENT R&D CENTRE IN DUQM

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has signed a land usufruct agreement with Global Space and Technology Company to establish a space settlement centre for researches and scientific and practical experiments to simulate astronauts and conduct researches on advanced technology and artificial intelligence, over an area of 20,000 sqm in the Artificial Intelligence Zone in Duqm. The centre has been allocated to simulate astronauts in the zone designated for the artificial intelligence in Duqm.

DETAILS ON P13

LAW GUARANTEES DECENT TREATMENT

Oman handles abuses as per Penal Code

MUSCAT: Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has observed reports published by the *Sunday Mail* newspaper in Zimbabwe and a Dutch Organisation named 'Do Bold' in relation to Zimbabwean and Sierra Leon women who arrived in Oman as domestic workers.

Following an investigation conducted by OHRC in coordination with Ministry of Labour and Royal Oman Police (ROP), OHRC issued a statement, "Some Zimbabwean women are deceived usually by the recruitment agencies in their countries. They were deceived about the nature of the job, salary, and the place of stay. Some of them tried to flee their employer after they discovered that the recruitment agencies in their countries deceived them."

OHRC further said, "To secure the rights of those maids, they should have filed their complaints with the authorities concerned in Oman as per the established laws and regulations. They should have reported any violation to the airport officers and submitted documents or evidence proving that they have been subject to any abuse as guaranteed by the Omani laws and regulations."

As for their physical health safety, OHRC points out that the Omani judiciary and competent



To secure the rights of the maids, they should have filed their complaints with the authorities concerned as per the established laws and regulations. They should have reported any violation to the airport officers with evidence proving that they have been subject to any abuse

OHRC STATEMENT

authorities handle the physical and sexual abuse cases as per the provisions of the Omani Penal Code. As per the law, everyone should receive decent treatment which maintains his/her dignity and preserve his/her rights.

TURN TO **P2**

World in 'wrong direction' as climate impacts worsen: UN

PARIS: Humanity is "going in the wrong direction" on climate change due to its addiction to fossil fuels, the UN said in an assessment showing that planet-warming emissions are now higher than before the pandemic.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization and its Environment Programme warned that the catastrophes such as Pakistan's monumental floods and China's crop-withering heatwave this year will become commonplace should the world economy fail to decarbonise in line with the need to prevent the worst impacts of global heating.

"Floods, droughts, heatwaves,



A driver pushes his auto through a flooded street in Karachi, Pakistan. — **AFP**

extreme storms and wildfires are going from bad to worse, breaking records with alarming frequency," said UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. The

UN warned that the drought gripping the Horn of Africa and threatening millions with acute food shortages was now likely to extend into a fifth year. — **AFP**



Badr receives US envoy to Yemen



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidy, Foreign Minister received US Special Envoy for Yemen Tim Lenderking in Muscat on Tuesday. During the meeting, they discussed the latest developments pertaining to the sustainability of the truce in Yemen. They stressed the importance of collaborative work to build confidence and enhance dialogue among all parties. They also expressed their keenness to support the international efforts, including the missions of the UN Envoy to Yemen, towards ending the war and commencing a comprehensive political process that meets aspirations of the Yemeni people to achieve security, peace and stability for their country. The meeting was attended by the Head of the Foreign Minister's Office Department, the US Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman and several officials from both sides.

Oman handles abuses as per Penal Code

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As for the low salary as alleged by these reports, OHRC noted that these salaries are agreed in the labour contract signed between the employer and the worker voluntarily. As for the allegation of housemaids' passports confiscation upon arrival, it should be noted that the employer should not take the passport of the worker without his/her approval.

As per the Ministry of Labour circular in 2006, "The employer may not confiscate the passport of the worker without his/her approval or without permission from the court. This affirms that the right is protected for the worker to maintain his/her passport. In case any violation is made on the same, the worker may report such violation to the Royal Oman Police, the Ministry of Labour, and other competent authorities in Oman."

Regarding the allegation that the housemaids were forced to complete their two-year employment contracts in spite of poor working conditions, denial of adequate food and healthcare, OHRC affirmed that the Ministry of Labour's Decision No 189/2044 about the conditions for the employment of housemaids states that 'the agreement between the employer and the housemaid should be in writing. It should specify the rights and obligations of both parties including the salary, vacation and food. If the worker failed to honour his obligation, he/she may report such violations to the competent authorities.

In its statement, OHRC noted that the aforementioned decision mandated the employer to provide free-of charge food, healthcare, and return ticket to the maid at the termination of the employment contract.

The same decision also

provides maids rest period during the day, in addition to monthly day-offs as per the employment contract terms.

Additionally, OHRC said that the Article 3 of the Omani Labour Law No 35/2003 banned all forms of forced labour. Oman has also ratified Convention No 29 on Forced Labour and Convention No 105 about Elimination of Forced Labour. OHRC has affirmed that it has not received any complaints from workers about forced labour.

As for the cases in which housemaids may be victims of human trafficking, it should be noted that housemaids who may be victims of human trafficking or being forced to carry out illegal works can report such violations to the National Committee for Combatting Human Trafficking through its toll-free number which operates round the clock. OHRC affirmed that the National Committee for Combatting

Human Trafficking maintains coordination with the Ministry of Social Development to provide human trafficking victims with accommodation (Dar Al Wifaq), legal assistance, healthcare and psychological support until the case is settled and the complainant receives equitable rights.

Infringement of the rights of both the worker and the employer can be addressed by approaching competent authorities, and through the available means of reporting, filing complaints, and requesting legal protection, which OHRC believes that these channels are available and guaranteed in the Sultanate of Oman.

OHRC affirms that Omanis and non-Omanis who may need to report any violation or inhumane treatment may report to the toll-free number 1970 or WhatsApp number (72221966) or www.ohrc.com or Twitter account @ohrc_oman. — ONA

New guidelines for Saudi-bound vehicles

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The land transport companies operating between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have been asked to take note of the new regulations to be followed from February 1, 2023.

The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology (MoTCIT) said the age of all cargo trucks travelling to Saudi Arabia, including transit services, should not exceed more than 20 years from the year of manufacture.

The statement also said that the distance between the centres of the two axes should not be less than 2.72 metres in all Saudi-bound taxi vehicles. The age of these vehicles should not exceed five years from

The MoTCIT said the age of all cargo trucks travelling to Saudi Arabia, including transit services, should not exceed more than 20 years from the year of manufacture

the year of manufacture.

The bus operators must consider that their vehicles should be less than 10 years from the date of manufacture.

With 400,000 people having used the Saudi-Oman Road, officials say the potential of this unique highway project is still untapped or unexplored, according to Said bin Hamoud al



Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

"As of September this year, nearly half a million tonnes of goods have been shipped, and over 400,000 passengers have used the new direct road between two countries. We expect this number to double and triple in the next five years easily because currently, the movement on this road does have much transit or third-party traffic," he said.

The road and border Empty Quarters linking the Sultanate of

Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was opened on December 8.

The length is 725 km; from the Sultanate of Oman the road starts from Ibri in Al Dhahirah Governorate and ends at the Empty Quarter border port with a length of 161 km. The route starts from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from Batha intersection and ends at the border port with a length of 564 km.

The road is expected to contribute to expanding the volume of trade exchange, reviving tourism, and enabling Omani exports to reach the rest of the world through the Red Sea gateway. It will also enable Saudi exports to reach the rest of the world directly through the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Sea.

3 projects from Oman qualify for Entrepreneurship World Cup 2022

MUSCAT: Three projects from the Sultanate of Oman have qualified for the Entrepreneurship World Cup (EWC) 2022 national round. The "Nashid" project won the idea-stage segment, while the "I lab marine" project won the early-stage segment. "Rahal" came top in the growth-stage category. Those qualified projects will undergo a virtual training one-month camp to empower them with skills and to enhance their communication with investors worldwide.

The virtual training camp also gives the participants a chance to exchange expertise with participants from other countries. The Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED) manages organising the competition in Oman.

The qualified projects will represent the Sultanate of Oman in the final international qualifiers of the Entrepreneurship World Cup in December 2022. The international competition attracts more than 200 entrepreneurs from all over the world as they compete on the bases of their projects' innovation, sustainability and creativity. The projects are categorised into three segments (Idea, Early and Growth).

EWC is more than just a global pitch competition but it's still a competition. It offers more than \$1 million total in prizes, in addition to investment opportunities, visibility, network, access to markets, and more than \$10 million in in-kind services for the top EWC100.

Moreover, as soon as participants register at the competition, they receive access to educational and training resources and courses in the field of entrepreneurship.

The global finals will be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in March 2023. It is a culmination of a year-long search to find some of the most promising entrepreneurs all over the world.

RO 3.9 million for provision of additional 650 school buses

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... and one of them is already operational, while the other bus is still waiting to be pressed into service as it has yet to be installed with safety equipment required as per the tender terms. When it becomes operational, the other bus would improve the transport situation at the school.

The school buses in question are under the category of buses which are currently being substituted by the ministry in a bid to improve school transport in return for an increase in the contract value to RO 600 per month, the ministry said in the statement, adding that the number mentioned by the bus driver is inaccurate and does not represent the actual number of student transported by the bus.

The ministry said that it has signed interim contracts for a number of schools as a temporary solution to the issues faced by some successful bidders, and the delay they may experience in obtaining the exact model stipulated in the tender specifications.

The Ministry of Education affirmed its keenness to improve the condition of the school transport system and enhance the safety of school buses according to the available financial resources.

Arabian leopard, cub spotted in Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve

MUSCAT: An Arabian leopard and her young cub were spotted in Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve in Dhofar Governorate recently. The image was captured by the camera traps set for the national survey that aims to improve the ranking of the environmental performance index of the Sultanate of Oman in biodiversity, in addition to building a national database for different species and updating their areas of existence and changes in them.

The Office for Conservation of Environment in the Governorate of Dhofar also spotted other species of the Nubian ibex and the Arabian wolf in the Reserve.

The Environment Authority in the Governorate of Dhofar is implementing a project to survey large mammals along the southern slope of the Jabal Samhan Nature Reserve. The project will continue until the end of the year.

The project provides data on the type and number of predators living in the area, through images collected through camera traps, and field surveys by the research team due to monitoring the increase in predatory attacks on



citizens' livestock near the Jabal Samhan Reserve.

The project comes as a continuation of the efforts made by the authority to expand the knowledge on large mammals, especially those listed as threatened with extinction such as the Arabian leopard. The project aims to obtain accurate statistics for the enumeration of all types of medium and large-sized wild animals in order to identify areas of protection of the highest



priority, in addition to publishing and documenting the biodiversity in the Sultanate of Oman. It is noteworthy that this project will continue its work until the end of



2024 in various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman by using camera traps, in addition to field surveys of project sites by a team of specialists. — ONA



Oman 54th in Human Development Index

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The Sultanate of Oman has been ranked among the five best Arab countries in the newly released index in the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Oman is ranked 54th globally, with a score of 0.816 points, and was ranked with the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait as the best Arab countries in the world's human development index.

In the Arab world, Algeria is ranked 91st, Egypt and Tunisia at 97, and Jordan at 106, among others.

The latest flagship UN report on human development, however, warns that multiple crises are halting progress on human development, which is going backwards in the overwhelming majority of countries. Here are five things to look out for in the report.

While painting a picture of a global society lurching from crisis to crisis, and which risks heading towards increasing deprivation and injustice, the report titled "Uncertain Times, Unsettled Lives: Shaping our Future in a Transforming World", signals a deepening crisis for many regions, and Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia have been hit particularly hard.

For the first time in the 32 years that UNDP has calculated it,



Innovation in its many forms can build capacities to respond to whatever challenges come next.

the Human Development Index, which measures a nation's health, education, and standard of living, has declined globally for two years in a row.

Human development has fallen back to its 2016 levels, reversing much of the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

The reversal is nearly universal as over 90 per cent of countries registered a decline in their HDI score in either 2020 or 2021, and more than 40 per cent declined in both years, signalling that the crisis is still deepening for many.

While some countries are

beginning to get back on their feet, recovery is uneven and partial, further widening inequalities in human development. Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have been hit particularly hard.

"The world is scrambling to respond to back-to-back crises. We have seen with the cost of living and energy crises that, while it is tempting to focus on quick fixes like subsidising fossil fuels, immediate relief tactics are delaying the long-term systemic changes we must make," says Achim Steiner, UNDP Administrator.

"We are collectively paralysed in making these changes. In a world defined by uncertainty, we need a renewed sense of global solidarity to tackle our interconnected, common challenges."

The report explores why the change needed isn't happening and suggests there are many reasons, including how insecurity and polarisation are feeding off each other today to prevent the solidarity and

collective action we need to tackle crises at all levels.

"Even before Covid-19 hit, we were seeing the twin paradoxes

Oman is ranked 54th globally, with a score of 0.816 points, and was ranked with the UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Kuwait as the best Arab countries in the world's human development index

of progress with insecurity and polarisation. Today, with one-third of people worldwide feeling stressed and fewer than a third of people worldwide trusting others, we face major roadblocks to adopting policies that work for people and the planet," says Achim Steiner.

"This thought-provoking new analysis aims to help us break this impasse and chart a new course out of our current global uncertainty. We have a narrow window to re-boot our systems and secure a future built on decisive climate action and new opportunities for all."

To chart a new course, the report recommends implementing policies that focus on investment from renewable energy to preparedness for pandemics and insurance, including social protection, to prepare our societies for the ups and downs of an uncertain world. Innovation in its many forms — technological, economic, cultural — can also build capacities to respond to whatever challenges come next.

Tourism promotion drive in UK, Germany

LONDON: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is organising a campaign showcasing Oman's tourism landmarks to the British and German public. The campaign, which runs till September 16, covers major cities like London, Munich and Frankfurt.

It is an extension of similar drives undertaken by the ministry in India and elsewhere to utilise global tourism indicators' bouncing back to normal after Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign also lends support to the State of Qatar's efforts to organise World Cup 2022 and celebrate this region's hosting of the international event by promoting Oman and its capital as key destinations for the world cup's public audience.

The campaign began with workshops and seminars organised in London for representatives of top tourism and hospitality firms, tour operators and travel agents. A second workshop was held in Manchester, with the campaign scheduled to relocate to Germany, where a workshop will be held on September 15 in Munich. The city of Frankfurt will host the final workshop on September 16.

CPA to recall all defunct vehicles

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The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has said that all vehicles with manufacturing defects will be recalled in view of the safety of the people using them.

The CPA is currently initiating various educational campaigns to recall the same belonging to different brands with a variety of technical errors.

"The vehicle recall campaign comes with the aim of introducing the importance of following up on the recall of vehicles, reviewing the affected types of recalled vehicles, reducing traffic accidents resulting from manufacturing defects, and introducing the legal articles in the Consumer Protection Law and its executive regulations regarding vehicle recall," a spokesperson from the Authority said.

The campaign also aims to raise awareness of the importance of recalling vehicles and their impact on the the customers.

"A number of technical knowhow should be employed while buying the vehicles and customers should report any such violation that they think is harmful," said Adel bin Shanan al Busaidi, Director of the Studies and Development Department at the CPA.

A workshop conducted by him also dealt with the statistical indicators of the vehicles recalled by the Authority and legal aspects related to the subject of the recalls from the Consumer Protection Law and its executive regulations, the penalties and financial fines punishable by law, and the risks of not responding to the recall campaigns, which amount to accidents and deaths and their consequences on the health and safety of the customers.

Nizwa Hospital marks Physiotherapy Day

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, SEPT 11

The Medical Rehabilitation Department (physiotherapy) at Nizwa Hospital celebrated International Physiotherapy Day, which falls on September 8 every year.

The celebration targeted hospital staff and patients. It aimed to raise awareness and introduce arthritis and osteoporosis and the role of physical therapy in dealing with these disorders.

In the evening, the Medical Rehabilitation Department at Nizwa Hospital, in cooperation with the Ihsaan Association branch in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, organised a walking march for the elderly in the hospital campus.

Then they tackled biometrics for the participants. They provided them with medical consultations and awareness advice in cooperation with the Department of Internal Medicine, the Department of Clinical Nutrition and the Fitness Centre.

1st GCC FILIPINO GOLFERS CLUB TOURNAMENT

The awarding ceremony was held at the Radisson Blu hotel muscat where the chief guests HE Imelda M Panolong ambassador of the Republic of Philippines, and Mr Faiz Mohammed Riaz, Oman National team player, board member of Ghala Golf club and Managing Director of Mohammed Riaz & Partner LLC Jointly distributed the prizes to the winners.

Mr Faiz Mohammed Riaz received an appreciation award from HE Imelda M Panolong, ambassador of the Republic of Philippines.

We had 35 Filipino golfers coming from across the GCC countries; KUWAIT, QATAR, UAE, Saudi Arabia & the host Oman.

The tournament was played over two days using a modified stableford with no handicap format. The opening ceremony was blessed by HE Imelda M Panolong, the Philippines ambassador in Oman.

After a fierce battle over 2 days the Oman team was the winner.
1st runner up UAE
2nd runner up KSA.
The Individual Award was also won by our rising star:
Champion: Kaizar James (Oman)
2nd Hussain Dad (Oman)
3rd lejan leble (UAE)

On behalf all the participants We would like to thank our sponsors: Philippines Embassy
Ghala Golf Club
Radisson Blu
Europcar
Naranji & Hirji Co

Thanks to all the friends who supported us without the sponsors and support this wouldn't happen successfully. Next year UAE will be hosting the event.



Thank you Filgolfers Oman for making our Golf Tournament a success!

The 1st GCC Filipino Golfers Club Tournament is in the books and what an event it was! We had the best group of participants, sponsors and staff and on behalf of FGA Kuwait, we would like to thank all of you for your support in making this inaugural tournament a success. There were so many fun times shared, relationships formed, and unforgettable memories made. Thank you again and we already can't wait until next year, hope to see you in UAE!



Faiz Mohammed Riaz received an award from HE Imelda M Panolong, Ambassador of the Republic of Philippines, for his support of the tournament.





CHILD SAFETY FIRST

01

DRIVERS HAVE BEEN URGED TO MAKE SURE THAT THE CHILDREN GET DOWN AT THE SAME SIDE OF THEIR HOUSE

03

BEING PART OF SOCIETY, COMMON PEOPLE MUST ALSO BE ALERT EVEN IF THEIR WARDS ARE NOT STUDYING IN



02

24 CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 7 YEARS DIED IN ROAD ACCIDENTS WHILE 84 CHILDREN WERE INJURED IN 2021

KABEER YOUSUF
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The safety of schoolchildren is a shared responsibility. Parents, teachers, school management, and transport operators involved in picking up and dropping off the students are responsible for their safety. Being part of society, common people must also be alert even if their wards are not studying in schools.

In most cases, carelessness is the cause of accidents. But the trauma it leaves behind is unbearable and unacceptable.

According to a report published by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), 24 children under the age of 7 years died in road accidents while 84 children were injured, which is 5.3 per cent of the total traffic accident victims in 2021.

Accidents are bad, but it becomes worse when it involves school-going children. For no fault of theirs, they become the victims of a situation, leaving everyone in a state of shock.

Keeping this in mind, the Ministry of Education has urged everyone to be watchful for the safety of the children.

“Crisis happens, but care and attention make the whole difference,” said Dr Bakhait bin Ahmed al Mahri, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

According to him, there should be awareness among the people to avoid accidents. “There should be foresight to prevent accidents,” he says.

“For me, institutions, family, parents and teachers must pay attention to the children. We need to remind ourselves to be careful against such dangers,” he adds.

At a meeting, school authorities called upon all the parties to be careful about children when they are around the bus, inside or outside the classrooms, playground and the like.

Al Nahdha School for Basic Education in the Wilayat of Al Amerat convened a meeting of all the parties to find out the ways to meet the situation and gave instructions to the bus operators and staff.

“We called upon the transport committee and the bus drivers to find out the most important developments and gave instructions for the transport operation. During the meeting, the stress was on security and safety requirements and a system of alert while transporting students,” Yousuf al Rahbi, Head of the Public Schools, told the Observer.

Earlier, Dr Ali al Jahwari, Director of Education, Muscat Governorate, had said that the Ministry was committed to the safety and security of children, and it registered concerns over the safety of the children, as the student who died in a run-over accident was unfortunate.

“No negligence and recklessness on the bus driver’s part or from anyone will be tolerated,” he added.

Drivers have been urged to make sure that the children get down at the same side of their house and not otherwise. By doing this, they are saved from crossing the roads.

As far as child safety at home and swimming pools is concerned, parents should be watchful of their children, especially below 12 years of age, just as they need to be vigilant about their children crossing wadis or playing in water ponds when it’s raining, and flash floods are formed. Many drowning incidents involving children were reported from many wilayats.



Britain's King Charles III, flanked by Britain's Camilla, Queen Consort, makes a speech after receiving a message of condolence at Hillsborough Castle in Belfast during his visit to Northern Ireland. — AFP

Charles III in historic visit to Northern Ireland

BELFAST: Charles III on Tuesday made his maiden visit to Northern Ireland as king, as he tours all four nations of the United Kingdom before next week's state funeral of his mother Queen Elizabeth II.

The 73-year-old head of state's jet touched down in Belfast from Edinburgh, where the late queen's coffin was brought after her death last Thursday aged 96.

The casket will be flown on Tuesday evening to London, where huge crowds are expected to pay their respects as she lies in state from Wednesday evening until her funeral on Monday morning.

As heir-to-the-throne, Charles made 39 visits to Northern Ireland, whose recent history has been scarred by sectarian violence over British rule and where a fragile peace has held since 1998.

His 40th visit comes as unionists loyal to the Crown feel their place in the wider UK is under threat as never before, with nationalists set

While large crowds welcomed Charles, visiting the deeply divided region could prove testing

to lead the devolved government in Belfast for the first time.

Meanwhile, the possibility of a united Ireland is seen as growing.

But at Hillsborough Castle — the monarch's official residence in Northern Ireland — he sent a message to political leaders that he would work for all communities in the divided province.

"I take up my new duties resolved to seek the welfare of all the inhabitants of Northern Ireland," he told them.

The queen's visit to Ireland in 2011 was the first by a British monarch since its independence from the Crown and was seen as a huge step towards cementing the hard-won peace in Northern

Ireland.

Charles and his wife, Queen Consort Camilla, greeted crowds who had turned out early to catch a glimpse of the couple at Hillsborough.

Ceremonial gun salutes in his honour then rang out as the royal standard was raised above the castle southwest of Belfast.

Flowers, cuddly toys and handwritten remembrance notes of the late queen had been left at the gates.

"This is very important for Charles to come here," Rhonda Irvine, 47, a wedding and events administrator, said.

Describing Charles's late mother as an "inspiration for him", she predicted he would be a "very good" king.

Ann Sudlow, 61, a retired nurse from nearby Dromore, had also made the early morning drive "to show the king that we're behind him as a country and Northern Ireland is supporting him". — AFP

Queen's funeral: No invites for Russia, Belarus and Myanmar

LONDON: In Britain, invites to the Queen's state funeral have not been sent to Russia, Belarus or Myanmar while Iran will only be represented at an ambassadorial level, Whitehall sources have said.

The event will see around 500 dignitaries from around the world descend on London to pay their last respects to the long-reigning monarch. They will join members of the royal family and UK prime minister past and present at Westminster Abbey — the

historic church which can hold around 2,000 people — at 11 am next Monday.

"This is the biggest international event we have hosted in decades," a Whitehall source said. The source compared the logistical task to organising "hundreds of state visits" within a matter of days. Normally, there might only be two or three a year.

It presents a huge logistical, diplomatic and security challenge, with practice runs taking place in

the dead of night.

Invitations were sent over the weekend to the heads of state of countries with whom the UK has diplomatic relations.

For most countries, the invitation extends to the head of state plus a guest.

However, the leaders of Russia, Belarus and Myanmar have not received an invite. US President Joe Biden was among the first to declare he would be flying in with his wife, Jill Biden. — dpa

Over 30 sealed royal wills

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II's will, if the public could see it, would offer rare glimpses of the late monarch's wealth, but unlike those of ordinary British citizens, her will will be sealed for at least 90 years and in one safe to be included.

The practice of sealing the wills of deceased royals dates back to 1910 and the seldom remembered Prince Francis of Teck, whose will is one of more than 30 kept in a safe in an undisclosed location in London under the custody of a judge becomes.

Under the convention, after the death of a senior king, the executor applies to the Head of the Family Division of the London High Court for the will to be sealed. Successive judges in this position have always agreed. — Reuters

FOR SALE New Samsung LED TVs

New Samsung Television sets of model 2017 with built in set top box in seal packed condition available for sale at BEC Ghala warehouse.

Samsung LED TV with built in set top box

49" TV	-	95 Nos.
65" TV	-	4 Nos.
55" TV (8 Series)	-	85 Nos.
55" TV (6 Series)	-	9 Nos.

For individual or bulk purchases on cash

Contact:

Mr. Sudheer Sharma - GSM: 79907358



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (33/2022)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following biddings

Serial	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee	Deadline for obtaining bidding docs.	Deadline for inquiries submission	Deadline for submission
1	BB/03/2022	Use of Muscat Municipality sites to hold events Accompanying for FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022	25/- OMR	26/09/2022	26/09/2022	27/09/2022
2	BB/04/2022	Rental & Operation Muscat Municipality shops at Al Seeb (Specified for SMEs)	25/- OMR	11/10/2022	09/10/2022	13/10/2022

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bids are invited to participate as per the following:

- Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:
Bank Muscat 0423010702710024
- A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be sent to the following e-mail (**MM.PC@mm.gov.om**), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name, office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.
- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents. Any bid's document request received after the specified time will not be considered, even if the fee of the document is paid.

Submitted offers must be accompanied with a bond mentioned in the tender document valid for a period not less than (90) days issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat Municipality. Bidding that do not meet the required bond **will not be accepted**.

Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and drop in the box located in Third floor at Directorate General of Quantity Surveying and Contracts in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait.

NOTES:

- Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality's website (**www.mm.gov.om**). For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (**crm@mm.gov.om**).
- If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to sent their inquiries through the following e-mail (**MM.PC@mm.gov.om**).
- 10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om

Surge in hotel, transport demand

LONDON: London expects vast crowds for the lying in state and funeral of Queen Elizabeth II, resulting in few available hotel rooms, while transport bosses warn of strong demand.

The late monarch's coffin can be viewed by members of the public from Wednesday in Westminster Hall, while her funeral will take place in nearby Westminster Abbey on Monday.

Huge gatherings are expected also around Windsor Castle, west of the capital, where the queen will be buried.

Monday will be a public holiday across the United Kingdom, a government decision approved by King Charles III following the death of his mother last week, aged 96.

"Our hotels in central London and Windsor are literally sold out, and demand is... strong for our hotels situated near to a train or tube station throughout Greater London," according to budget hotel chain Travelodge.

— AFP



Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of tender document	Last date for tender submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)
30/2022	Construction of Villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree	Wednesday 28-9-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 13-10-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
31/2022	Construction of villa at As Seeb	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree	Wednesday 28-9-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 13-10-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
32/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree	Wednesday 28-9-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 13-10-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
33/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree	Wednesday 28-9-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 13-10-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
34/2022	Construction of villa at Al Amrat	Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree	Wednesday 28-9-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 13-10-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (**https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om**), On Wednesday 14/9/2022.
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website (**reg@tenderboard.gov.om**) tel. (**24402200**).

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

www.mosd.gov.om



An air strike wounded at least one person in Mekelle, the capital of Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, a hospital official said.

Air strike hits Ethiopia's Tigray region following ceasefire offer

NAIROBI: An air strike wounded at least one person on Tuesday in Mekelle, the capital of Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, a hospital official said, two days after Tigrayan forces said they were ready for a ceasefire with the federal government.

The strike hit the business campus of Mekelle University and Dimitsi Woyane TV station, which is run by the regional government, said Kibrom Gebreselassie, the chief executive officer at Ayder Referral Hospital.

He cited a witness who arrived with a man wounded in the strike.

Getachew Reda, spokesperson for the regional government, said on Twitter that the business campus had been hit by drones.

Ethiopian military spokesperson Colonel Getnet

The air strike is the third to hit Mekelle since the nearly two-year-old conflict resumed late last month after a five-month ceasefire

Adane and government spokesperson Legesse Tulu did not respond to requests for comment.

The air strike is the third to hit Mekelle since the nearly two-year-old conflict resumed late last month after a five-month ceasefire.

Each side blames the other for the renewed fighting. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF),

which governs Tigray, said on Sunday it was ready for a ceasefire without preconditions and would accept an African Union-led peace process.

Diplomats described the offer as a potential breakthrough. The Ethiopian government has not yet officially responded.

Former Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, appointed as the AU's chief mediator, met with the American envoy to the Horn of Africa region, Mike Hammer, on Monday, Djibouti's former ambassador to Ethiopia, Mohamed Idriss Farah, who was also present, said in a tweet.

The TPLF dominated national politics for nearly three decades until Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in 2018. The TPLF accuses Abiy of centralising

power at the expense of Ethiopia's regions. Abiy denies this and accuses the TPLF of trying to reclaim power, which it denies. The conflict has also repeatedly spilled into the neighbouring regions of Amhara and Afar. Two Amhara journalists who publicly criticised the federal government were arrested last week.

The Amhara region, Ethiopia's second most populous, has been a key part of Abiy's powerbase.

Meaza Mohamed, a journalist with Roha Media, was accused of encouraging Amhara people to allow the TPLF to pass through their areas, the police document showed. "Amhara people, especially those close to the Tigrayan border – we are tired of war," Gobeze said in a Facebook post a week ago. — **Reuters**

Pope in Kazakhstan to promote 'dialogue'

NUR-SULTAN: Pope Francis, warned by doctors not to travel to Ukraine, arrived in Kazakhstan in Central Asia on Tuesday for a three-day visit to promote dialogue and peace in the ex-Soviet region.

The Argentine pope, who is forced by knee pain to use a wheelchair and has admitted he must slow down or consider retirement, will take part in an inter-religious summit in the capital, Nur-Sultan.

His plane landed shortly after 5:15 pm, a journalist onboard said, and the 85-year-old pontiff was greeted by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev before addressing the authorities and the diplomatic corps.

Greeting Francis, Tokayev said the visit was a "great honour".

Francis said on Sunday that the 38th trip abroad since his election in 2013 would be "an opportunity... to (have a) dialogue as brothers, animated

by the common desire for peace, peace that our world is thirsty for".

Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, was initially expected but has pulled out of the September 14-15 event, dashing hopes of a meeting with Francis over the Ukraine conflict.

While the pope has called for peace and denounced a "cruel and senseless war", Kirill has defended Putin's "military operation" and the fight against Russia's "external and internal enemies".

About 100 delegations from 50 countries are expected to take part in the event in Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic that gained independence in 1991.

"Dialogue, a coming together, the search for peace between different religious and cultural worlds are at the heart of this trip," Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said on Monday. — **AFP**



Pope Francis is welcomed by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev upon his arrival at Nur-Sultan International Airport in Nur-Sultan. — **AFP**

Syria cholera outbreak at risk of spreading: WHO

BEIRUT: The World Health Organization warned on Tuesday of a "very high" risk of cholera spreading across Syria after the country recorded its first cases since 2009.

"The risk of cholera spreading to other governorates is very high," the WHO said, after cases were recorded in at least five of the country's 14 provinces.

"The source of infection could be linked to people drinking water from untreated sources," or "food contamination due to irrigating plants with contaminated water," the WHO said in a statement.



A lab technician works on samples to test for cholera, at a hospital in Syria's northern city of Aleppo. — **AFP**

On Monday, the Syrian health ministry reported two cholera deaths in government-held areas.

On Saturday, Kurdish authorities reported three deaths in areas of northern and eastern Syria under their control.

The WHO said the cases were the first reported in Syria since 2009, when 342 cases were confirmed in the eastern province of Deir Ezzor and the northern province of Raqa.

The disease is generally contracted from contaminated food or water, and causes diarrhoea and vomiting.

It can spread in residential areas that lack proper sewerage networks or mains drinking water.

A decade of civil war has damaged two thirds of Syria's water treatment plants, half of its pumping stations and one third of its water towers, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has said.

Nearly half the population relies on alternative and often unsafe sources of water while at least 70 per cent of sewage goes untreated, it added.

The UN issued an urgent appeal to donor countries on Monday for

additional funding to battle the outbreak.

"The outbreak presents a serious threat to people in Syria and the region," the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Syria, Imran Riza said.

"Swift and urgent action is needed to prevent further illness and death."

The UN said the source of the outbreak "is believed to be linked to people drinking unsafe water from the Euphrates River and using contaminated water to irrigate crops, resulting in food contamination." — **AFP**

SHORT TAKES

BERLIN

Iran unveils new kamikaze drones

Iran has unveiled a new kamikaze drone that is capable of reaching targets in Israel. The drone could be used to attack Israeli coastal cities such as Tel Aviv and Haifa, for example, Iranian news agency Tasnim reported on Tuesday.

Tasnim, which is closely linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps, referred to the drone, called Arash 2, as "the new nightmare for the Zionists."

Iran has made several statements in the past about expanding its drone programme.



In May, state TV presented an underground air base for drones. Tehran has repeatedly threatened to attack Israel and the states have been enemies since the Iranian revolution in 1979. — **dpa**

NEW DELHI

Cheetahs to arrive in India for Modi's birthday

Eight cheetahs will be sent to India where they will be personally welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday on September 17, officials said, in an ambitious project to reintroduce the speedy big cats to the country.

However, New Delhi has since 2020 been working to reintroduce the animals after the Supreme Court announced that African cheetahs, a different subspecies, could be settled in a "carefully chosen location" on



an experimental basis. The five males and three females will arrive from Namibia and will initially be kept in a quarantine enclosure at the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. — **AFP**

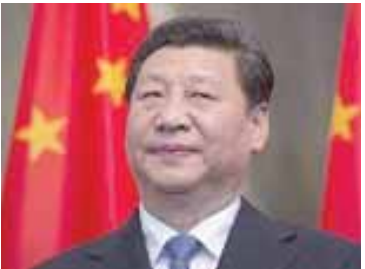
BEIJING

Xi meeting Putin, Modi at summit unconfirmed

China's foreign ministry declined to say whether President Xi Jinping will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin or Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) regional security bloc summit this week.

The summit will take place in Uzbekistan from September 15. The foreign ministry was asked about Xi's plans during a daily news briefing.

President Xi will make



state visits to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan this week, Beijing said on Monday — his first trip abroad since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic. — **Reuters**



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In brief

TUNIS



OVER 13,000 TUNISIAN MIGRANTS REACH ITALY IN 2022

More than 13,000 clandestine Tunisian migrants have reached Italy by sea since the start of the year, almost a fifth of them minors, a Tunisian rights group said. The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES) said more than 500 clandestine migrants have also perished or gone missing off the Tunisian coast over the same period. It added that some 2,635 minors and 624 women were among the Tunisians who reached Italy. “The migration crisis continues despite the silence of institutions and ministries, and the presidency of the republic is responsible,” FTDES spokesperson said. — AFP

PARIS



PARIS TO SCALE BACK MONUMENT LIGHTING

Paris will start switching off the ornamental lights that grace city monuments hours earlier than usual, plunging the Eiffel Tower and other landmarks in the dark to cope with surging electricity costs, officials said on Tuesday. Most monuments operated by the city will now go unlit from 10 pm, a potential disappointment for the tens of millions of tourists to the romantic City of Lights. The Eiffel Tower, usually bathed in a warm glow until 1 am, and which comes ablaze with dazzling white lights every hour, will now go dark after the last visitor leaves, at 11:45 pm. But streets lights will remain on for security purposes. — AFP

LONDON



MAJOR UK PORT SET FOR FRESH EIGHT-DAY STRIKE

Workers at Britain’s largest container port, Felixstowe, are to strike for a further eight days, union bosses announced on Tuesday, as the country suffers a cost-of-living crisis. The walkout from September 27 until early October 5 comes after an initial eight-day stoppage over the summer as dockers and railway staff at the port in eastern England demand pay rises to keep up with decades-high inflation. “The latest strike action is entirely of Felixstowe’s own making,” Bobby Morton of union Unite, said. Morton said the new strikes “will inevitably lead to delays and disruption to the UK’s supply chain”. — AFP

Ukraine advances, Russia strikes back

KRAMATORSK: Russia said on Tuesday it was carrying out “massive strikes” across the Ukrainian front line and accused Ukrainian soldiers of abusing civilians in territories recaptured in a dramatic counter-offensive.

Moscow’s retaliation came after it was forced to pull back its troops from swathes of the northeast, particularly in the Kharkiv region, following Kyiv’s lightning assault to wrest back terrain.

The territorial shifts marked one of Russia’s biggest setbacks since its troops were repelled from Kyiv in the earliest days of the nearly seven-month war, yet Moscow signalled it was no closer to agreeing to a negotiated peace.

“Air, rocket and artillery forces are carrying out massive strikes on units of the Ukrainian armed forces in all operational directions,” the Russian defence ministry said in its daily briefing on the conflict.

“High-precision” strikes have also been launched on Ukrainian positions around Sloviansk and Konstantinovka in the eastern Donetsk region, it added.

The Kremlin accused Kyiv’s army of abusing civilians in territory it had recaptured.

President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman said that in the



An abandoned Russian armoured personnel carrier near a village on the outskirts of Izyum, Kharkiv Region, eastern Ukraine, amid the Russian war on Ukraine. — AFP

Kharkiv region, reports were emerging of “outrageous” treatment of civilians.

“There are a lot of punitive measures... people are being tortured, people are being mistreated and so on,” Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

Russia’s allegations came after

Ukrainian authorities claimed to have found four bodies of civilians with “signs of torture” in the recaptured eastern village of Zaliznychne.

Residents reported that Russian troops had killed villagers, the regional prosecutor’s office said, announcing a war

crime probe.

Ukrainian forces launched their counter-offensive in early September, seemingly catching Russia’s military off guard.

Images posted by the Ukrainian military showed crates of munitions and military hardware scattered across

Ukrainian forces launched their counter-offensive in early September, seemingly catching Russia’s military off guard

territory abandoned by Russian forces.

Around the north-eastern town of Balakliya, journalists saw evidence of fierce battles, with buildings destroyed or damaged and streets mostly deserted.

By Monday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said that Ukraine’s forces have retaken a total of 6,000 square kilometres from Russian control.

In the northeast, dozens of areas including the cities of Izyum, Kupiansk and Balakliya, have been retaken, Ukraine said.

Ukraine has also claimed significant gains in the southern Kherson region, where the Ukrainian army also said it had recaptured 500 square kilometres.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken assessed that the Ukrainians had made “significant progress”, due to their resilience as well as US support. — AFP

Iran says has ‘fully’ cooperated with IAEA

TEHRAN: Iran said on Tuesday it had “fully” cooperated with the UN nuclear watchdog in its probe into traces of enriched uranium found at undeclared sites.

The comment came after Rafael Grossi, Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, on Monday expressed hopes that Iran would start cooperating “as soon as possible” with the investigation.

The IAEA has been pressing the Islamic republic to explain the previous presence of traces of nuclear material at three undeclared sites.

Grossi said that “we have found traces of uranium in places that have never been declared, and we are asking questions”.

The spokesman for Iran’s nuclear agency, Behrouz Kamalvandi, said in a statement on Tuesday that “Iran has fully cooperated with the agency regarding the three sites”.

Tehran has “provided information and responses to the agency and held meetings (with the IAEA) to resolve any ambiguity”, added the spokesman of the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran.

Kamalvandi argued that “the mere observation of contamination in a few places cannot be considered as an indication of the presence of undeclared nuclear materials”.

The IAEA had said in a report last Wednesday that it was “not in a position to provide assurance that Iran’s nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful”.

Iran later dismissed the report as “baseless”, but on Monday said it was “ready to cooperate with the agency to clear up the



Rafael Grossi, director-general, IAEA



Behrouz Kamalvandi, spokesman, Iran’s nuclear agency

Iran says it is ‘ready to cooperate with the agency to clear up the false and unrealistic perceptions regarding its peaceful nuclear activities’

be concluded as part of any deal — one of the sticking points in the talks to restore the 2015 agreement that gave Iran much-needed relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear programme.

The United States unilaterally withdrew from the deal in 2018 under then-president Donald Trump, reimposing biting economic sanctions that prompted Iran to roll back on its own commitments.

Last month, the European Union put forward what it labelled a “final” draft of the agreement to lift sanctions on Tehran once again and push Iran to fully comply with its obligations. — AFP

Ruto swears in, pledges to work for all Kenyans

NAIROBI: William Ruto pledged to work for all Kenyans after he was sworn in as president at a pomp-filled ceremony on Tuesday, five weeks after his narrow victory in a bitterly-fought but largely peaceful election.

Tens of thousands of people joined regional heads of state at a packed stadium in Nairobi to watch him take the oath of office, with many spectators clad in the bright yellow of Ruto’s party, cheering loudly and waving Kenyan flags.

“I will work with all Kenyans irrespective of who they voted for,” the 55-year-old said in his inauguration speech, announcing a series of measures to tackle the country’s economic woes. “In this process we have demonstrated the maturity of our democracy, the robustness of our institutions and the resilience of the Kenyan people.”

He described his swearing-in as Kenya’s fifth post-independence president as a “moment like no other”, adding:

“Today, I want to thank God, because a village boy has become the president of Kenya.”

A notoriously ambitious politician who has been deputy president since 2013, Ruto beat his rival Raila Odinga — who had the backing of former president Uhuru Kenyatta — by less than two percentage points in the August 9 poll.

But the Supreme Court on September 5 unanimously upheld his victory, dismissing his opponents’ claims of fraud and mismanagement.

The rags-to-riches businessman, who once sold chickens on the roadside, faces a daunting task ahead with the country hit by a deep cost-of-living crisis, youth unemployment and a punishing drought. African Union Commission chair Moussa Faki Mahamat, who was at the ceremony, hailed the peaceful transfer of power in a post on Twitter, saying it was “an enduring feature of the country’s political maturity”. — AFP



Kenya President William Ruto at the Moi International Sports Center Kasarani in Nairobi during his inauguration ceremony. — AFP

Game of thrones rings true in real life today



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The writer is an entrepreneur and innovation adviser

“In this game of thrones, you win or you die. There is no middle ground”. While this quote is by a character in George R R Martin’s popular novel *A Song of Ice and Fire* it rings true in real life today more than ever.

As the world mourns the widely admired late Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms, the longest serving female head of state in history, we were also reminded of the legacy of empires in general, and of a dark part of the of British colonisation that is still impacting people in many parts of the world.

I truly believe that what many around the world diplomatically dub as “the mixed legacy of an empire” serves today as a great reminder that societies must invest in the objective reading history, with the purpose of deducing useful knowledge

and lessons for all humanity. This could be done in investing in three values; abundance, objectivity and truthfulness.

Building a culture of abundance
Perhaps the first lesson from reading history objectively is that adopting a game of thrones mentality of “win or die” means a vicious cycle of destruction and revenge.

This vicious cycle, such as in the case of the Crusades, leave societies so traumatised that it is still resulting in conflicts a millennia after the events.

It is up to us today to choose to make tough choices and take roads less travel by negotiations and conflict resolutions. There are two main mindsets in negotiations; either that of abundance of resources in a way that is enough for everyone,

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO COMPLETELY CONTROL PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO INFORMATION. THIS IS THE REASON WHY IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THE LEGACY OF EMPIRES OR PAST CONFLICTS WITHOUT TAKING A STEP FURTHER IN BELIEVING IN OUR COMMON DESTINY

or scarcity mindset that inevitably leads to “us” vs. “them” behaviour.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of each one of us to be as creative as possible in facilitating a culture of abundance for the sake of our present and future.

Investing in objectivity
“History is written by the victor” is a common saying when we discussed past events, but it does not mean that we should make deliberate efforts to respect and listen to the different views about those events.

We live in the most connected times ever, and it is impossible to completely control people’s access to information. This is the reason why it is not enough to complain about the legacy of empires or past conflicts without taking a step further in believing in our common destiny.

For example, nostalgia has kept many Muslim majority countries in a glorious past that can be regarded by some societies like an expansion of an empire.

While the decision to be critical

of “your own people” is tough it is the optimal way to instilling sustainable objectivity in people for generations to come.

Fighting fake news
Technology is making it easier today to wage an information war to win people’s hearts and minds, where sometimes heroes become villains and vice versa, as in the Russian war on Ukraine.

Without protecting present and future generations from a rabbit hall of misinformation on social media tools we will end up perpetuating the same roots of conflicts that bring nothing but more war, famine, and diseases.

The way we consume media today is favouring breaking news even when it is not real, if we want to build forward better we need to stop feeding this fake news beast.

In Nigeria, finding value in waste recycling

LOUISE DEWAST

Mounds of waste scattered along roads and vast landfills are a Nigerian eyesore.

In Africa’s biggest economy and most populous country, collecting, sorting and recycling trash is despairingly rare.

But there is also good news. Some entrepreneurs are working hard to tackle the rubbish mountain, despite the many challenges.

Romco Metals started recycling aluminium at its factory outside Lagos in 2015, drawn by global demand for the light, strong, flexible metal.

Buoyed by good results, it built a second facility outside Ghana’s capital Accra and now plans to open at least three new plants across Africa and triple production by 2025.

Aluminium is the world’s second most-used metal after steel and used widely in construction, medicine and car-making.

“Electric vehicles require more durable lighter material such as aluminium, and that’s where our materials end up,” said the company’s youthful founder, 32-year-old Raymond Onovwigun.

A British-registered company, Romco melts down and recycles around 1,500 tonnes of discarded aluminium per month, out of a capacity of 3,000 tonnes.

It says it has created 450 direct jobs — 5,000 in total, in this labour-intensive sector — and plans to double that number within a year.

“Before... there was no work,” community leader Bankole Gbenga known as Chief Abore said during a recent visit to the Lagos facility.

Chief Abore says more than a hundred young people from his community alone now work for Romco in some capacity. “Some are doing carpentry, some are welders... some of the youth are doing security,” said the 40-year-old.

Among those who have most benefited from Romco’s business are material suppliers like Mohammed Ashiru Madugu, who delivers several truckloads of metal scrap each week.

Madugu has a warehouse in northwestern Katsina, where suppliers from across the state and even neighbouring states bring him discarded metal.

He loads the goods onto trucks and sends them — with escorts because of frequent ambushes by criminal gangs on the road — all the way to Lagos, more than a thousand kilometres away.

For one truck, he can get paid up to 26 million naira (about \$60,000) although the price fluctuates.

Only a tiny fraction of waste is recycled in Nigeria, a country of some 210 million consumers.

Plastic, metal and glass that in advanced economies are routinely picked up and processed are mostly tossed out. — AFP



Anton Troianovski

The writer is the Moscow bureau chief for *The New York Times*

As Russian losses mount in Ukraine, so does criticism back home

More than 40 local elected officials across Russia signed a two-sentence petition on Monday that ended with: “We demand the resignation of Vladimir Putin from the post of president of the Russian Federation!”

The petition, pushed by opponents of the Ukraine attack, had no practical impact, and it was roundly ignored in Russia’s state-controlled media. But it was striking in its very existence, showing that despite the Kremlin’s extraordinary crackdown on dissent, Ukraine’s counteroffensive successes have left Putin’s opponents newly emboldened — and his supporters looking for someone else to blame.

Pro-war commentators and politicians have pointed to the military leadership or senior officials, saying they have not waged the war with sufficient decisiveness and competence, or have not delivered all the facts to Putin. Longtime Kremlin critics have seized on that discord, and Russia’s setbacks at the front, to take the risk of speaking out against Putin.

“There is now hope that Ukraine will end this war,” said Ksenia Torstrem, a member of a municipal council in St Petersburg who helped organise the petition and called Ukrainian advances an “inspiring factor” for it. “We decided we needed to put pressure on from all sides.”

On Russian state television, where criticism of the Kremlin is rare, supporters of the war are increasingly pointing fingers over what they cast as a disorganised and insufficiently concerted attack; others are raising the idea of suing for peace. With anger spreading over the embarrassing withdrawal of Russian troops from more than 1,000 square miles of northeastern Ukraine, one senior lawmaker said in an interview that an “urgent adjustment” to the war effort was needed.

In a phone interview on Monday, that lawmaker, Konstantin F Zatulin, a senior member of parliament in Putin’s United Russia party, laid out the stakes.

Zatulin described the retreat by Russian troops as doing “very serious damage to the very idea of this special military operation,” using the term

ZATULIN DESCRIBES THE RETREAT BY RUSSIAN TROOPS AS DOING ‘VERY SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THE VERY IDEA OF THE SPECIAL MILITARY OPERATION,’ USING THE TERM THAT THE KREMLIN HAS ADOPTED FOR THE WAR

that the Kremlin has adopted for the war. But he also cautioned that if criticism of the war effort from across the political spectrum spirals out of control, it could lead to unforeseen consequences, citing the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Soviet collapse of 1991.

“It must be underlined that this criticism should not go overboard,” he said. “Otherwise, it could spark an uncontrollable reaction.”

Zatulin insisted that any optimism by people hoping that Putin would be toppled was “very much premature.” Ukraine’s successes, he said, might

prompt the Kremlin to escalate its war effort to try to deliver Ukraine a decisive defeat, though he added that he did not expect this to mean “nuclear war.”

Still, there were gathering signs that Russia’s elite was unsettled by the army’s retreat and uncertain how to proceed.

A member of the lower house of parliament, Mikhail Sheremet, told a Russian news outlet that the military would not succeed in Ukraine “without a full mobilisation.” It was an implicit criticism of Putin’s refusal to carry out a nationwide draft, a step that Russian proponents of an escalated war effort have long been demanding.

The leader of a pro-Putin party, Sergei Mironov, praised the strikes against Ukrainian infrastructure targets on Sunday night that left parts of the country without power, but complained that they “should have been carried out two to three months ago.” And on the social network Telegram, where pro-war Russian military bloggers have gained huge followings, the grumbling also continued. “Stop whining,” Yevgeny Poddubny, a war correspondent for Russian state television, posted, referring to those who were worried about an escalating war.

— *New York Times*



Russian conscript soldiers watch a tank biathlon at the annual Army International Games near Moscow.

A collective fight to protect life on earth



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

On September 16, the Sultanate of Oman will join other countries in the world to observe International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, which is also known as World Ozone Day with the theme “Protocol@35: global cooperation protecting life on earth”.

The date was designated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1994, commemorating the date in 1987 when nations signed the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The theme recognises the wider impact the Montreal Protocol has on climate change and the need to act in collaboration, forge partnerships and develop global cooperation to address climate challenges and protect life on earth for future generations.

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the first countries to make great efforts in all issues related to the environment and climate, and has been in the process of adopting several measures in its efforts to protect the ozone layer. The most significant among these steps is the formation of a national team and developing an electronic system to monitor import of ozone-depleting substances.

As part of the country’s interest in environmental issues and climate affairs and its continued support for these efforts, and its contribution with the international community in the protection of the ozone layer, Oman acceded to the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol in London and Copenhagen on September 28, 1998 under Royal Decree No 73/98.

Ratification of the Paris Agreement on April 24, 2019, was a conclusive step forward in Oman’s commitment to join the international efforts to combat climate change. The country has engaged through its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) to reduce their absolute greenhouse gas emission by 2 per cent by 2030. The Second Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) affirms that Oman has been successful in the protection of the ozone layer as it has pioneered the reduction of the consumption of the most important ozone-depleting substances, such as chlorofluorocarbons, hydro-chlorofluorocarbons, and halons which destroy the earth’s protective ozone layer. However, Oman is not considered safe from global climate change, as its geographical location near the sea and oceans make it more vulnerable than any other country in the region. Ratification of the Paris Agreement on April 24, 2019, was a conclusive step forward in the country’s commitment to join the international efforts to combat climate change.

The country is well-known for its sweltering summers and low annual rainfall, and it has become even hotter over the past five years. Oman was the location of the world’s hottest low temperature ever recorded. On June 26, 2018, and over 24 hours, the temperature in the coastal city of Qurayat, never dropped below 41.9 Celsius, most likely the highest minimum temperature ever observed on Earth.

Detailed climate simulation reveals that the Arabian Gulf and the Sultanate of Oman form a particular regional hotspot where climate change is likely to cross the survivability threshold in the absence of drastic carbon cuts. Moreover, much of Oman’s population, infrastructure, and economic activity are located in coastal zones and are vulnerable to sea-level rise, salt-water intrusion, and more frequent extreme tropical cyclones. Still, through the country’s recently developed Climate Change Strategy, national stakeholders have begun to identify climate-resilient opportunities within a set of key vulnerable sectors, namely water resources, marine biodiversity, and fisheries; agriculture; urban areas, tourism and infrastructure; and public health.

However, several gaps and barriers that hinder reaching NDC adaptation goals related to effective adaptation planning for climate-resilient development, which according to a recent report are limited data, information, and knowledge available for undertaking vulnerability. Adding to them are limited experience with methods and tools to support climate risk-informed decision-making in critical sectors, insufficient national budgets to address the scope and magnitude of climate change impacts effectively and insufficient national regulatory frameworks in place to support effective adaptation planning.



A YOUNG WELLWISHER

A young girl wearing a crown places a plant in a pot next to floral tributes outside Windsor Castle, west of London, on Tuesday, following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 8. Mourners in Edinburgh, some in tears, filed past the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II through the night, before new king Charles III travels to Northern Ireland and the monarch’s coffin returns to London. – AFP

The best way to preserve nature is also the fairest



Hindou Ibrahim

The author is President of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, is a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee

This is a critical year for the natural environment. Negotiations by world leaders in Montreal this December will determine the fate of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, a far-reaching agreement that will set the world’s environmental agenda for the next decade.

The future of perhaps a million plant and animal species hangs in the balance, as do the lives and livelihoods of billions of human beings.

Biodiversity is not about simply counting trees, birds, fish, or insects. These certainly matter, but so, too, does the broader balance of the ecosystems on which they, we, and many other species rely. Moreover, “we” must include indigenous peoples, who have a particularly important role to play in environmental talks.

I am one of them. My people, the Mbororo of Chad, are like many other groups that have ancient ties to ancestral lands around the world.

We are proven stewards of much of the world’s precious yet dwindling natural inheritance. Deforestation on our lands is much lower than elsewhere.

Vegetation is thicker, wildlife is more abundant, food chains are sturdier. Where we live, nature’s vitality has not yet been extinguished.

As much as one-third of the world’s tropical forests, peatlands, and mangroves — carbon-dense ecosystems that account for 80 per cent of global biodiversity — are found on indigenous lands. This is no accident. For indigenous peoples, land is everything.

It is the source of our food, shelter, and medicine, and the wellspring of our culture and history.

Over countless generations, we have learned to live well on our land.

We know how to protect it, how to restore it, and how to serve as its engineers and nurturers, not its destroyers.

Science has long confirmed indigenous peoples’ unique contributions to Earth’s well-being. In

GLOBAL SCIENCE BODIES
HAVE LONG CONFIRMED
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’
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CONSERVATION.
BUT WITH THESE COMMUNITIES
BEING RELENTLESSLY
DISPLACED FROM THEIR
ANCESTRAL HOMES, FINANCIAL
SUPPORT AND SECURE LAND
RIGHTS HAVE BECOME
CRUCIAL TO THEIR ONGOING
STEWARDSHIP OF
THE WORLD’S BIODIVERSITY

2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stressed that indigenous knowledge is critical to managing global warming and its effects.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reached the same conclusion with respect to preserving biodiversity. In a follow-up report this year, IPBES further emphasised the importance of indigenous people’s contributions to global conservation.

The world’s growing recognition of indigenous knowledge was also reflected at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow last year, when several countries and private donors pledged \$1.7 billion to support indigenous peoples and local communities’ conservation and climate-advocacy efforts.

It was an unprecedented commitment to a far-flung but increasingly united population.

But while we welcome world leaders’ growing recognition of indigenous knowledge and practices, fulfilling our stewardship role requires more than approbation.

To continue serving as the natural world’s most effective guardians, we

need the right to own — and thus to remain on and continue to manage — our ancestral lands.

With indigenous peoples being relentlessly displaced — often violently — from territory that we have always called home, land-tenure reform and secure land rights have become absolutely crucial.

Otherwise, outsider settlement, agricultural expansion, industrial extraction, desertification, and disease will continue to sever our historic bonds to the lands we live on.

Governments must commit to managing land more sustainably.

The 30x30 plan to protect 30 per cent of the world’s land and sea by the end of this decade is a good idea, provided that it is pursued in close partnership with indigenous peoples and local communities.

That means ensuring full inclusion, recognition of our land rights, and our free, prior, and informed consent.

We need to be fully represented at the table when new agreements are struck, and when projects to protect and restore ecosystems are being designed.

To carry out this vital mission, we also need access to funding.

The Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative, which focuses squarely on the intersection of land-tenure rights and community-led conservation, is a good start.

CLARIFI fills a key gap by channelling funds directly to indigenous and community-led initiatives.

It aims to raise \$10 billion by 2030, and to expand legally recognised indigenous territories by 400 million hectares.

This is crucial to curbing deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss.

The goal is to increase these communities’ legal land ownership to at least 50 per cent of all tropical forests.

If the world commits to investing in indigenous peoples, we can then take it from there.

With sufficient funding on the ground — not just on paper and in speeches — we can do more than anyone else to protect nature and preserve the world’s biodiversity.

Even though finalising the Global Biodiversity Framework is crucial to prevent wholesale ecosystem collapse, the process has run into delays, disagreements, and reluctance by key parties.

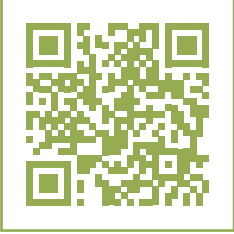
World leaders must rise to the occasion and secure an agreement that fully recognises indigenous peoples’ and local communities’ rights and unique contributions.



Biodiversity is not about simply counting trees, birds, fish, or insects.

sport

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OHA CHIEF PLANS OVERHAUL OF LEAGUE SYSTEM

OMAN HOCKEY ON FIRM FOOTING IN RUN-UP TO WORLD CUP

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

Oman Hockey Association is gearing up for a busy domestic season with one year left for the prestigious 2024 Hockey5s World Cup.

The seven-team Oman Hockey League 2022 will begin on September 23 and concludes on October 10.

The Sultanate of Oman will host the inaugural edition of the FIH Hockey5s World Cup, the quadrennial world championship for men's and women's national hockey5s teams organised by the world hockey body FIH. It will be held in January 2024 in Muscat. The qualification process is ongoing now.

OHA Chairman Dr Marwan bin Juma al Juma shared his thoughts on the national team and detailed the preparations for the global showpiece event in Oman during an exclusive interview with the *Oman Daily Observer*. "We are in full earnest working towards the big project of Hockey5s World Cup with support from the government and private entities."

"There will be new turfs laid out at the existing hockey courts at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher. An additional hockey court is under construction adjacent to the hockey stadium. It will be made a hockey5s court."

For the World Cup, the main hockey court will be turned into two hockey5s courts and along with the new court, there will be three



venues for the tournament. "After the World Cup, the main courts will be returned to the 11s format, while the new hockey5s court will remain as it is," Al Juma said. Regarding the national team's participation in the Asian Cup 2022, the OHA chief said technically the team has improved a lot. "Though we didn't fare much on results wise, we had a very good tournament. Oman

players now have no fear of facing the top-ranking teams such as South Korea and Pakistan as they scored goals against these teams," Dr Marwan said. Oman's lone win in the Asian Cup 2022 (May 23 to June 1) came against hosts Indonesia in the seventh-eighth play-off match. Oman beat Indonesia 2-0 to finish seventh in the eight-team tournament. Oman, ranked 26th in the world, had emerged champions of the Asian Games

Qualifiers in Bangkok (May 6 to 15) ahead of the Asian Cup.

Oman thrashed Bangladesh 6-2 in the final exacting a revenge for their final loss in penalty shoot-out at the AHF Cup in the Indonesia capital of Jakarta from March 11 to 20.

The OHA chairman highlighted the match against Pakistan as Oman's best in the Asian Cup. Pakistan won 5-2.

"We scored first in the match against the Asian giants. Overall it was a good performance by the boys and they showed no nerves of facing a top ranking team."

"We have many positives to take from Asian Cup though we were lacking on scoring and finishing," Al Juma said.

NEW LEAGUE SYSTEM

The OHA is planning to overhaul the domestic league system in 2023 ahead of the World Cup.

The existing Oman Hockey League system will be changed by constituting the main first division league for the top six clubs. Other teams from the 14 active clubs affiliated to the OHA will play in the second division league.

"Our main aim is to bring more professionalism in players and officials."

The OHA is also in the process of setting up a youth development centre for hockey.

"The OHA is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth as the Ministry is handing over the charge of its Youth Development Centres to the respective sports associations. We will take care of hockey and many clubs have shown interest to host the centre for hockey," Dr Marwan said.



11 races in RCC programme for new season

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

The Royal Court Affairs, represented by the Royal Camel Corps (RCC), announced the 20th edition of the annual festival programme for private camel racing for the 2022-2023 season on Tuesday.

The programme includes 11 races distributed across the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The camel racing season will start at the end of September 2022, and will conclude in the middle of March 2023. The schedule contains 8 races, two festivals for the camel beauty and one festival will be for traditional race 'Al Ardah'.

Wilayat of Adam in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate will host the first race at Al Bashayer camel racing track on September 28 and



29. The second race is also at the same track crowd on October 19 and 20.

The third event will be for camel beauty and camel's milk competitions in Dhofar

Governorate in the Wilayat of Thamrait, from October 28 to November 3.

The fourth race will be in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi



on November 9 and 10 and the fifth race will be for traditional camel racing in Al Batinah South Governorate at Barka camel racing track from November 27 to 30. The sixth race will be on December

7 and 8 in Al Batinah North Governorate at Sohar Camel Racing Track. The same track will host the seventh race on December 28 and 29.

With the beginning of the new

year, the eighth race will be held in Barka in Al Fulaij Square from January 10 to 12, 2023. The same track will host the ninth race from January 24 to 26. The second camel beauty festival will be the 10th event from January 29 to February 2 at Al Fulaij Square in Barka.

The Royal Camel Corps will conclude the camel season during March 13-16 with a big festival, including the grand prize which is Sultan Cup and SUV cars.

In the last edition, the concluding race was under the auspices of Salem bin Mustahail al Maashani, Adviser at the Diwan of Royal Court, when he crowned the Sultan Cup to Al Bashayer camel 'Al Asmah', owned by HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan.

Bumrah returns for India at T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI: Indian selectors on Monday named pacemen Jasprit Bumrah and Harshal Patel in the squad for the T20 World Cup starting next month in Australia.

Injuries had ruled both men out of the squad for the just-concluded Asia Cup T20 tournament.

Fast bowler Mohammed Shami was named as standby while Avesh Khan was dropped from India's pace arsenal for the marquee event, to be held from October 16 to November 13 Down Under.

India failed to make the final of the Asia Cup after defeats to arch-rivals Pakistan and Sri Lanka in the Super Four stage.

Sri Lanka won the title Sunday with a comprehensive 23-run victory over Pakistan.

The selectors also named squads for the upcoming home T20 series against Australia (September 20, 23 and 25) and South Africa (September 28,



October 2, October 4). — AFP
India squad for T20 World Cup:
Rohit Sharma (captain), KL Rahul (vice-captain), Virat

Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, Hardik Pandya, R Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal,

Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Harshal Patel, Arshdeep Singh

Standby players — Mohammed Shami, Shreyas Iyer, Ravi Bishnoi, Deepak Chahar

India squad for Australia T20Is: Rohit Sharma (captain), KL Rahul (vice-captain), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, Hardik Pandya, R Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Mohammed Shami, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah

India squad for South Africa T20Is: Rohit Sharma (captain), KL Rahul (vice-captain), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Deepak Hooda, Rishabh Pant, Dinesh Karthik, R Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal, Axar Patel, Arshdeep Singh, Mohammed Shami, Harshal Patel, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah

South Africa coach Boucher to quit after T20 World Cup

JOHANNESBURG: South African head coach Mark Boucher will quit his job after the T20 World Cup in October and November, Cricket South Africa announced on Monday.

Boucher, appointed in controversial circumstances in 2019, was due to be in charge until the end of the 2023 Cricket World Cup in India.

His shock decision means that South Africa have to appoint a new head coach before a challenging Test tour of Australia in December, which could be crucial to the country's chances of qualifying for the World Test Championship final at Lord's in June 2023.

According to CSA's statement, Boucher has decided to resign "in order to pursue other opportunities in line with his future career and personal objectives."

"While Cricket SA greatly regrets that Mr Boucher is unable to see out the term of his contract, it respects his decision and wishes him all the best in his future endeavours."

Boucher survived criticism of his appointment in December



2019 by former captain Graeme Smith without a formal recruitment process, and charges of racism levelled by CSA after what were termed Social Justice and Nation Building hearings into alleged racism in South African cricket.

The charges were later dropped and CSA issued a statement giving its full support to Boucher.

The former Test wicketkeeper was in charge while South Africa racked up 11 Test wins and briefly headed the World Test Championship table. They are

currently second after losing the third Test and the series against England earlier on Monday.

Boucher will take the team on a white-ball tour of India later this month, followed by the T20 World Cup.

CSA chief executive Pholetsi Moseki said Boucher "has helped navigate us through some rough waters following the departures of so many senior players through retirement and has helped lay some strong foundations for the next generation of Proteas".

Enoch Nkwe, who was bypassed for the head coach job and was briefly Boucher's assistant before resigning and later being appointed CSA director of cricket, said he was "deeply saddened" by Boucher's decision.

"He is a Proteas legend and has done so much for the game in our country, both on the field and over the last three years off it, which we highly appreciate," he said.

"He has built a sound platform for South Africa to flourish in all three formats and I'm sure we will see the results of that at the T20 World Cup next month." — AFP

LOCAL FLAVOUR

Oman Cricket organises ACC Level 1 Umpires Educator Course



MUSCAT: Oman Cricket recently conducted an Asian Cricket Council Level 1 Umpires Educator Course for the domestic senior Level 2 umpires.

The course was organised as part of OC's development programme. Following the conclusion of the five-day course at the Oman Cricket Academy, the senior umpires will now be able to share their knowledge and experience with the junior level umpires.

Sarika Prasad, an ACC Senior Umpire and Match Referee, conducted the course for umpires who completed their Level 2 certification before 2020.

Oman Cricket's Chief Development Officer, Duleep Mendis said, "We congratulate all the participants who have successfully completed the Level 1 Educators course. The course will develop our panel of umpires and raise the level of umpiring to a higher level. We encourage new participants to participate in Oman Cricket organised courses for Coaches, Educators, Umpires, Scorers etc."

The umpires certified as Level 1 Educators are: Harikrishna Pillai, Rahul Asher, Vinod Babu, Navaneetha K and Azad KR.

ISG emerge champions in Interschool football tourney



MUSCAT: Indian School Al Ghubra (ISG) emerged victorious in the football tournament hosted by Indian School Muscat on September 3.

To commemorate the special occasion of 75 years of India's Independence, 'Azadi Amrit Manthan', 14

Indian Schools across the Sultanate of Oman participated in both the U-19 and U-13 categories.

In a nail-biting finale, ISG swept to victory against the host school, ISM, with the final score at 1-0. With this resounding victory, ISG was rightfully crowned champions in the U-19 category.

The ISG U-19 team comprised Janav Sridhar Gowda, Kartik Sujana, Joshua Reji, Ruble James Mathew, Pranav Nair, Yahya Jamal, Mihir Mohan, Alan Saji, Fadi Sulaiman, Ammreswaran Soma Sekar, Uday Pisharody and Ziyan Solkar.

Another highlight of the tournament was that the U-13 ISG team faced ISAM in the final. After an intense battle, ISG was declared runners-up at the end of the penalty shoot-out.

The management and staff of Indian School Al Ghubra congratulated the stupendous effort of the teams. Principal Papri Ghosh commended the sportsmanship and competitive spirit of the players, football coach Murugan and the Physical Education Department. She encouraged them to carry the winning streak forward.



UAE CYCLISTS KEEP LEADERS JERSEYS AHEAD OF LAST STAGE

Said bags third stage in Salalah

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

Oman Royal Army's Said al Rahbi ended the United Arab Emirates riders podium domination in Tour of Salalah 2022 to win the Stage 3 race in Salalah on Tuesday. Said finished the 123-km stage from Mirbat Castle-Tawa Ateer to Wadi Darbat in 3 hours 14 minutes and 28 seconds.

The UAE cyclists had won all the podium spots in the first two stages of Tour of Salalah.

Azzam Abdulmunim of Saudi Arabia claimed the second position and another local rider finished on the podium as Mohammed al Wahibi of Salalah Club came third. All the top three riders finished on same time but Said prevailed on better bonus points (10) compared to Azzam

(6) and Mohammed (4) in the longest stage of the Tour.

However, UAE cyclists retained the jerseys for the leading riders in all the sections ahead of the last and fourth stage on Wednesday.

Stage 1 winner Saif al Kaabi of UAE topped the general individual time classification to keep his golden jersey after finishing fifth in stage 3 (03:15:49).

Stage 2 winner Khaled Mayouf kept the green jersey for the points classification after finishing 11th in stage 3.

Jaber al Mansoori retained the silver jersey for KOM classification with a seventh place while Abdullah al Hammadi was the under-23 leader with the white jersey after finishing sixth on Tuesday.

Thailand's Ponlawat Sakunthanaphum (03:15:49) claimed the fourth spot in the

third stage.

In the teams section, UAE national team was leading after third stage with an overall timing of 24:33:58. Oman-based Cycle KOM – NRO was second on 25:24:28 and Thailand national team was third (25:34:19).

Salalah Club was fourth (25:42:40) and Oman Royal Army fifth on 25:48:36.

The four-stage cycling race, which offers a total prize money of RO 7,730, is organised by the Oman Cycling Association and supported by Dhofar Municipality, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

Stage 4 and the concluding race will run for 116 km from Khor Rori to Municipality Entertainment Centre on Wednesday.



Oman to host tent pegging world qualifiers in March

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

The International Tent Pegging Federation (ITPF) President Mohammed bin Issa al Fairuz announced the programme of forthcoming events and championships scheduled for 2022-23 season at a press conference at the ITPF headquarters in Muscat on Tuesday.

Al Fairuz announced that Oman will host second group qualifiers of Tent Pegging World championships during March 5 to 7, 2023. The hosts Oman will compete with teams from the Netherlands, Kuwait, Yemen, Germany, Iraq and the USA.

The first group qualifiers will be staged in Egypt and the other teams in fray are Palestine, UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Malaysia. The qualifiers will take place in the mid of next January.

Pakistan will host the third qualifying group which will feature teams from Nepal, Iran, Australia, Syria and Jordan from February 15 to 17, 2023. The fourth group will be hosted by Sudan and other teams in fray include Canada, India, Bahrain, Norway, Sri Lanka and South Africa. This group matches are scheduled during January 18-20, 2023.

The chief of ITPF stated that the fourth edition of the 2023 ITPF Tent Pegging World championship will take place in South Africa from August 23 to 26, 2023 in presence of nine countries including the hosts. Eight teams from the four groups will advance to the finals and the hosts have confirmed their spot.

"Besides the World championship and the qualifier of the groups to the top major event, there are several major tent pegging (Grand-Prix) events



and championships which are dedicated for women, junior U-19, Youth U-21, Masters, Military, Universities student and the international friendly championships. We have received different applications from the members of ITPF and the announcement of the hosting cities with exact dates of events will be declared soon," he said.

JORDAN TO HOST WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL GP

The President of ITPF, which is based in Muscat, affirmed that Jordan are all set to host the International Women Tent Pegging Championship (Grand-Prix) which will be staged in Al Batraa city, Jordan, during September 22 to 24, 2023. As many as 14 countries confirmed their attendance including:

Jordan, Oman, Sudan, Russia, Belorussia, UK, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Norway, India, South Africa, Pakistan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

"On the sidelines of the championship, many coaching and umpiring courses will take place with participation of more than 41 candidates from different countries," he added.

Regarding efforts to secure a slot for tent pegging in the Olympic Games, Al Fairuz responded: "This is one of our major dreams and we are working hard for securing a slot for the game in Olympics. There are many requirements to meet the approval. We have started our official communication with International Olympic Committee (IOC). One of the main requirement is to raise the number of the members in the federation to 50 members and above. Currently, the ITPF has 42 members and there is a plan to reach to 50 soon. Also, there are some other required technical requirement and documents which are under revision status by sub-committees to raise it for final approval to the general assembly and board level. After meeting the requirements, we will approach the IOC for the their final confirmation and approval," the Omani official clarified.

Mohammed bin Issa al Fairuz concluded his comments with media persons by updating the new classification of umpiring and coaching grades which will be implemented in early 2023.

"Three grades for umpiring are approved including bronze, silver and gold badges and for each badge there are certain rules and regulations required to meet including to pass some exams and attendance in international events."

Czechs bring Kudela in from the cold for Nations League

PRAGUE: Controversial centre-back Ondrej Kudela has been recalled to the Czech Republic squad for Nations League games against Portugal and Switzerland later this month, coach Jaroslav Silhavy said on Tuesday.

Trailing Group 2 leaders Spain by four points, the Czechs host second-placed Portugal in Prague on September 24 and fourth-placed Switzerland in St Gallen three days later.

Kudela has not played for the national team since early 2021 when he allegedly aimed a racist slur at Glasgow Rangers midfielder Glen Kamara during a Europa League game.

Kudela, then with Slavia Prague, was handed a 10-game ban by Uefa which saw him sit out Euro 2020, postponed by a year.

The 35-year-old left Slavia for Indonesian top-flight side Persija Jakarta in the summer.

"We are a bit short of centre-backs now. We know Ondrej well, we have lost trace of him a bit but we watch him via video,"



coach Silhavy said.

"He plays all games, we may argue about the quality of the competition, but he has proved many times in the past that he is an experienced player," he added.

Bayer Leverkusen striker Patrik Schick also returns after missing the four Nations League games in June having undergone groin surgery. — **AFP**

SQUAD: **Goalkeepers:** Jiri Pavlenka (Bremen/GER), Jindrich Stanek (Viktoria Plzen), Tomas Vaclik (Olympiakos/GRE); **Defenders:** Jakub Brabec (Aris Thessaloniki/GRE), Vladimir Coufal (West Ham/ENG), Milan Havel (Viktoria Plzen), Vaclav Jemelka (Olomouc), Ondrej Kudela (Persija Jakarta/INA), David Zima (FC Torino/ITA), Jaroslav Zeleny (Sparta Prague); **Midfielders:** Antonin Barak (Fiorentina/ITA), Vaclav Cerny (Twente/NED), Jakub Jankto (Sparta Prague), Lukas Kalvach (Viktoria Plzen), Lukas Masopust (Slavia Prague), Tomas Soucek (West Ham/ENG), Petr Sevcik (Slavia Prague); **Forwards:** Adam Hlozek (Leverkusen/GER), Jan Kuchta (Sparta Prague), Patrik Schick (Leverkusen/GER)

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Space settlement R&D centre to be set up in Duqm SEZ

Simulated living: New facility to come up in Artificial Intelligence Zone

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has signed a land usufruct agreement with Global Space and Technology Company to establish a space settlement centre for research and scientific and practical experiments to simulate astronauts and conduct researches on advanced technology and artificial intelligence, over an area of 20,000 sqm in the Artificial Intelligence Zone in Duqm.

The agreement was signed by Eng Ahmed bin Ali Akaak, Acting CEO of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and Eng Bahiya bint Hilal bin Sultan al Shuaibiyah, Founder and CEO of Global Space and Technology Company. The Centre has been allocated to simulate astronauts in the zone designated for the artificial intelligence in Duqm.

Eng Bahiya commented: "We were pleased to announce the signing of the usufruct agreement to develop this project, which is space settlement centre to simulate living on space, such as staying on the moon or Mars. The project aims to create a simulating space environment to study the behaviour of astronauts before joining the actual astronaut flights.

The project will serve scientists, researchers and those interested



in doing their experiments in the space sector, artificial intelligence and advanced technology."

"Global Space and Technology Company will develop this centre to serve space and modern technology projects for commercial and research purposes, by providing several services, such as satellites for communications, remote sensing and space imaging. In addition, the project aims to establish training programmes to transfer knowledge in cooperation

with specialised international institutions.

Therefore, the Company designs different programmes related to virtual reality, 3D programmes for educational purposes and simulation, in line with the needs of educational institutions and providing them with the appropriate relevant devices," she added.

It is worth noting that the global space and technology company won the Business Excellence Award 2021 by the

World Business Federation in the USA.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones has allocated a zone for artificial intelligence, drone experiments and future technologies in Duqm, covering 18 sq km of area and an altitude of 80 metres above the sea level. Further, a supervisory committee was formed to supervise the works and projects developed in the artificial intelligence zone.

CBO, Omantel sign MoU to launch fintech accelerator programme

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) and Omantel signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on September 13 to introduce an accelerator programme to nurture and empower fintech startups. The MoU was signed by the CBO Executive President Tahir bin Salim al Amri and Omantel CEO Talal bin Said al Maamari.

The signing of the MoU comes within the framework of the Omani FinTech Roadmap launched by the Central Bank to promote fintech in the Sultanate of Oman and support fintech startups, SMEs, banks and technology companies. The partnership combines the expertise and shared vision of the Central Bank of Oman and Omantel to support local fintech startups.

Starting November 14 for a period of six months, the Accelerator Programme will help innovative fintech startups by providing the required support for their growth



through mentorship, training and networking services, and contributing to the provision of funding to address the challenges in the highly competitive FinTech space.

"Fintech is important for the future of the financial sector in the Sultanate of Oman," said Al Amri, stressing the CBO's commitment to support startups in this field.

Omantel CEO's added: "Our partnership with the Central Bank of Oman comes within the framework of the joint national vision and strengthens our efforts in supporting the digital transformation of the Sultanate of Oman, empowering startups, and seeking to harness all the potential to make the accelerator a success and maximise its benefit."

MDO, PDO ink deal to support produced water desalination

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 13

Minerals Development Oman (MDO), the government's mining and mineral processing flagship, has signed a contract with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) for the development of the Qarn Al Alam Hypersaline Associated Produced Water Desalination project. The initiative will allow MDO, a subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), to treat the produced water from Qarn Alam to extract salts and minerals.

PDO added in a tweet that the contract will enable the majority state-owned energy company to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and operational costs to further enhance its environmental and efficiency portfolio.

'Produced water' is a by-product of the process of oil and gas production from reservoirs. Heavy saline for the most part, produced water may also contain very small amounts of hydrocarbons and chemicals that got mixed with it during the production process.



Treating produced water is one of the most expensive elements in oil and gas production. Huge amounts of produced water are generated in many fields in the southern part of the Sultanate of Oman. At Nimr, for example, PDO employs reed beds to treat produced water and to evaluate its potential for desert irrigation and farming.

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MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

Meethaq launches new financing offer with special profit rates for retail customers

MUSCAT: Meethaq Islamic banking from Bank Muscat has launched a number of exclusive financing offers with highly competitive profit rates as part of its customer-centric strategy of offering maximum financial benefit to its customers.

The special profit rate is applicable on a number of financing products including home finance, auto finance, personal finance, education finance, marriage finance, travel finance and takeover finance.

Meethaq customers are eligible for up to 80 per cent financing for home or auto financing, while 100 per cent financing is available for travel, marriage, education and personal goods finance.



Applications may be submitted at any of Meethaq's 24 state-of-the-art branches across Oman.

The special rate is available for Omanis and expatriates working in governmental/quasi-government institutions as well as Tier 1 and Tier 2 companies. Customers will benefit from the

minimal documentation and quick processing of their applications. Sami Bait Rashid (pictured), Assistant General Manager – Meethaq Personal Banking, said: “Meethaq is well known for its keen efforts to offer various services and customer value propositions aligned to the needs of its large and growing family of customers in Oman as well as the latest global financial trends.

“We would like to extend our sincere appreciation and support to all our valued customers for their strong confidence and belief in Meethaq, and hope to facilitate the achievement of their dreams through our innovative and customer-centric services and facilities.”

Meethaq, which has established the largest Islamic network in Oman consisting of 24 branches and a dedicated network of over 40 ATMs and CDMs across Oman also provides free access to more than 740 plus ATMs and CDMs of Bank Muscat across the country so that customers can conduct their banking transactions easily and conveniently. It has adopted the best global practices in Islamic banking and finance to combine a robust model, which protects customers and complements the Islamic banking industry.

Every Meethaq product goes through the process of Shariah compliance certification by the Shariah Supervisory Board and is created in line with the guidelines

of the Central Bank of Oman.

With a strong commitment to offer a world-class Islamic banking experience to customers across the country, Meethaq's achievements have been well recognised with it winning a number of prestigious awards over the years.

In 2021, Meethaq was recognised as Oman's Most Trusted Brand for Islamic banking by Apex Media, while in 2019, it was recognised as the Best Islamic Bank in Oman by Islamic Finance News. Please go to <https://www.meethaq.om/en/consumerfinancing/Pages/default.aspx> or call on 24656666 for more details on Meethaq financing options.

Exclusive benefits on Lexus range ending soon



MUSCAT: Own a Lexus now and make the most of exclusive benefits that will end soon. Lexus is offering new car owners service 3 years/30,000 kms (whichever is earlier) and 1 year free registration. Campaign is valid up to September 14, 2022 (Conditions apply. Visit any Lexus showroom for details).

Lexus range in Oman includes, the NX which is equipped with two powertrain options. A newly developed inline 4-cylinder, 2.4 L turbocharged engine that produces 275 hp and 6000 RPM and is paired to an 8-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission (8AT). The NX is also available with hybrid-electric system that combines two power sources consisting of a 2.5-litre petrol engine and two electric motors producing 240 hp. The hybrid-electric system is paired to a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT).

The front wheel drive Lexus UX is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT). The pioneering five-seat Lexus RX350 is equipped with a 3.5-litre V6 that is paired to an eight speed automatic transmission. The RX is also available in a 3-row 7-seater option. Also available is the Lexus RX450h, a hybrid version featuring a 3.5-litre Atkinson-cycle engine.

The powerful Lexus GX460 is perfect for families who seek no-holds-barred adventure on their days off, yet also desire an easy-driving, comfortable and versatile luxury SUV for the work week. The Lexus GX460 features a 4.6L engine that provides outstanding power and responsive performance. In sedans, the range includes the IS350. This sleek and stylish powerful sedan is equipped with a 3.5-litre engine that's paired to an 8-speed automatic transmission.

The turbocharged IS300 features a 2.0-litre twin-scroll turbocharged inline four-cylinder engine with intercooler that generates 241 Hp.

The flagship LS, which is an inspiring luxury sedan, is available in 3.5-litre V6 Multi Stage Hybrid System producing 354 hp, a 3.5-litre V6 naturally aspirated Atkinson-cycle producing 311 hp and 38.7 Kg.M Torque, and a 3.5-litre twin-turbo V6 engine producing 415 hp and 61.2 Kg.M of Torque.

Lexus ES emotional design elevated by the new design front grille is a thrilling drive personality imbued by two powertrain options. ES350 is powered by a 3.5 litre, 24 valve, V6 engine that produces 298 hp and 36.3 Kg.M of Torque.

Oman Health Exhibition and Conference to focus on driving excellence in healthcare



MUSCAT: With a keen focus on the well-being of its people, the Sultanate of Oman has taken innumerable efforts to develop a strong healthcare ecosystem that is sustainable, inclusive, and highly responsive to the needs of the community.

In line with the same and to reaffirm its commitment to Oman's Health Vision 2050, Connect (Oman Exhibitions Organising Company LLC) is set to organise the Oman Health Exhibition and Conference (OHEC) at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Hall 5 on September 26-28, 2022.

The highly anticipated industry event will be conducted in partnership with Oman's Ministry of Health and will be supported by the Directorate-General of Pharmaceutical Affairs and Drug Control (PADC), the Directorate-General of Quality Assurance Centre (DGQAC) and Directorate-General of Private Health Establishments. Alongside the exhibition, drawing attention to the continuously evolving medical developments will be the Oman Health Conference organised by the Oman Medical Association, which is accredited by the Oman Medical Specialty Board (OMSB).

Cigna, the renowned healthcare, and insurance company, will be the Silver Sponsor for the event.

While the timings for the exhibition are from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm, the conference will follow a predefined agenda from 9:00 am to 4:15 pm on all three days.

Bank Nizwa continues to spearhead digitalisation and sustainability in Islamic banking

MUSCAT: As a progressive Islamic bank, Bank Nizwa has been committed to spearheading innovation, digitalisation and sustainable practices whilst advocating the values of Islamic finance in society. In line with the same, the bank recently participated as the Islamic Banking Partner at the Future Tech Event, which comprised an expo and a summit.

The exhibition was held on September 12-13, 2022, whereas the conference was scheduled exclusively on September 13, 2022. The highly anticipated industry event was organised at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) and welcomed as its chief guest, HH Sayyid Fahar bin Fatik bin Fahar al Said.

To support the efforts of digital transformation, Bank Nizwa signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ethisx to launch a crowdfunding platform



that aims to empower Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Commenting on Bank Nizwa's participation at the conference, Khaled al Kayed, the CEO, said, “Bank Nizwa has always been at the forefront of supporting events that have the potential to benefit the Islamic finance industry in the long run. We believe that sharing knowledge is critical to driving socio-economic progress.

“The Future Tech Summit

not only brings together leading industry experts for a meaningful, thought-provoking session on the Islamic finance industry, but it also provides an excellent networking opportunity for like-minded peers.”

He further added saying, “As an Islamic bank, the values of social responsibility and sustainability form one of our most critical pillars. At the same time, to keep pace with the changing economic

Takaful Oman restructures Board of Directors and Shariah Board

MUSCAT: Takaful Oman restructured its Board of Directors with board members who have long and prudent professional experience in managing companies and institutions including Abdulaziz al Saadi, CEO of Ubar Capital, Suleiman al Harthi, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank, and Bader al Shanfari, Chief Operating Officer of Ominvest, according to Mohammed bin Abdullah al Khonji (pictured), Chairman of the Board of Directors and Acting CEO of Takaful Oman SAOG.

Al Khonji stated that the company had learned and benefited from some of the stumbling blocks it faced by turning challenges into favourable opportunities and ways to enhance the customer experience.

“Since we took over the responsibility in Takaful Oman, the capital has been raised to



clear previous accumulated losses since the establishment of the company; Ominvest Group has strengthened the capital and injected the necessary funds in continuous coordination with the Capital Market Authority to increase the capital and take the necessary approvals in this regard,” he added.

“After restructuring the board of directors, we also restructured the committees affiliated with the board, and the executive management was provided with the professional expertise capable of keeping pace with

developments in the insurance sector, especially in light of the current economic challenges that have occurred globally.

“The restructuring of the Shariah Board followed this to adhere to the highest standards and ensure that we comply with the provisions and principles of Islamic Shariah in accordance with prudent directives in this regard, where the company strictly adheres to all laws, regulations and rules issued by the Capital Market Authority. The Chairman of the Shariah Board, Dr Majid al Kindi, is a renowned scholar and is a well-known figure across the Middle East.”

Al Khonji stressed in the same context that these changes were reflected in the improved performance. The company was able to compensate all the insured affected by Cyclone Shaheen, which hit Oman in October last year, with a total value of RO 7

million, and more than 4,000 people receiving compensation for the damages incurred.

This is part of the company's overall strategy to improve the insurance industry sector and be an essential support pillar to the community. The majority of the compensation was done in a record time of only four months, achieving customer satisfaction and enhancing their confidence in the services and products offered by the company.

Takaful Oman SAOG offers a variety of insurance products, including Takaful insurance on real estate, cars, machinery, equipment, personal accidents, travel, construction, family and health.

All insurance services provided by the company are in line with the provisions and principles of Islamic Shariah and have been approved by The Fatwa and Shariah Supervisory Board of the company.



Galfar eyes share of RO 2 bn worth of project opportunities in Oman

Diversification: Publicly listed contractor to target PPP, DBOOM and EPC based project opportunities

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 13



Leading Omani engineering and construction services contractor Galfar says it is keenly eyeing opportunities linked to the implementation of new projects worth an estimated RO 2 billion due to come on the market over the next three years.

Galfar CEO Dr Hamoud Rashid al Tobi (**pictured**) said the publicly traded company, which is listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), is also working actively to diversify its business model to include, for the first time, projects procured under the Public Private Partnership (PPP), Design Build Own Operate Maintain (DBOOM)

and Engineering Procurement Construction (EPC) models.

Having emerged from a transformation exercise that has spawned in a leaner, streamlined and focused contracting company, Galfar has sets its sights on achieving a minimum turnover of RO 200 million annually, he stated.

Speaking at the MSX Investor Roadshow held in Muscat last week, the CEO affirmed: "We believe this is doable because, as of today, we carry half a billion Omani riyals worth of order book in hand. That's \$1.3 billion worth

of jobs in hand. And we also have identified an addressable market with screened opportunities worth RO 2 billion coming up in the next three years."

Dr Al Tobi further added: "At Galfar, we aim to maintain the same market share of 10 to 15 per cent, based on which we aspire to acquire RO 300 million worth of new jobs every year to fuel our pipeline of projects and our future growth."

Key to sustaining the company's order book is a strategy to supplement its longstanding focus on conventional contracting projects with opportunities to be delivered under the DBOOM and EPC models – a trend being witnessed in the Oil & Gas sector, of late.

"We have done a comprehensive gap analysis to see what is required for us to go from the present level to the next level. So we are looking at DBOOM projects and EPC projects within Oil & Gas as a diversification

stream. We're also looking at renewables and we have already identified several opportunities that we are working on."

Equally promising is the PPP route that a number of government entities are currently adopting to deliver key projects.

"We are currently discussing several PPP-based opportunities in ports, roads and even civilian schools, notably the package of 42 schools, which is the first PPP project expected to be kicked off by the government. And Galfar is one of the shortlisted qualified companies for that project," Dr Al Tobi stated.

Additionally, Galfar is looking to expand its footprint to include key regional markets, notably Saudi Arabia where \$1 trillion worth of project opportunities have been announced. To this end, Galfar is currently taking part in the Saudi Infrastructure Expo to showcase its capabilities to facilitate its entry into the Saudi market, the CEO added.

MENA's green hydrogen electrolyser capacity set to be second largest



JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is set to become the second-largest green hydrogen electrolyser installer in 2040, this according to the latest report of Rystad Energy.

Globally, close to 145 gigawatts (GW) of electrolyser capacity is lined up for installation by decade-end based on announcements as of August, of which 20 per cent will be in the MENA region, thanks to the seven new announcements from the Suez Canal Economic Zone in Egypt. By 2040, this installed global capacity is projected to double with nearly 300 GW.

Europe is set to account 24 per cent of the global electrolyser capacity at this time, followed by MENA with 20 per cent. MENA aims to install over 28 GW by the end of 2030. Capacity is then set to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.7 per cent to reach 59.8 GW by 2040. Installations are lined up in the Sultanate of Oman, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE based on currently announced project pipeline.

The Green Energy Oman (GEO) in Al Wusta Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman is the largest announced so far in the MENA region with an annual hydrogen output of 1.75 million tonnes to be produced from an estimated 14 GW electrolyser. The green hydrogen will be used to produce 9.9 million tonnes per annum of green ammonia as end product. An international consortium comprising OQ – the integrated green energy

group of the Sultanate of Oman, Intercontinental Energy (ICE) based in Hong Kong, and EnerTech of Kuwait is behind the proposed development of this world-scale project, scheduled to be commissioned in 2032.

Meanwhile, Morocco's Amun project, with an annual hydrogen capacity of 0.9 million tonnes is the second largest project in the region. Guelmim-Oued Nour is currently the third largest project and will have the capacity to produce 0.71 million tonnes of green hydrogen, the report added. Six of the next top seven projects are in Egypt and come with annual hydrogen production ranging from 0.237 million tonnes to 0.53 million tonnes.

These projects are being developed by Scatec, Masdar & Hassan Allam Holding, ACME, Globeleq, H2-Industries, and K&K group. Saudi Arabia's Neom green hydrogen project, to be developed by ACWA Power, is the other big project in the top 10 with 0.23 million tonnes of annual hydrogen production capacity.

The largest green hydrogen developer in the MENA region is CWP Global with a 15% market share by 2040, meaning an estimated electrolyser capacity of 9 GW, followed by Total Eren which accounts for 10%. Further, OQ, InterContinental Energy and EnerTech have a market share of 8%, each. Other big developers in the region are Scatec (7%), ACME (7%), Globeleq (6%), K&K Group (4%), EDF (4%), Renew power (3%), Hassan Allam Holding (3%), and Tatweer (2%).

Agreement signed to showcase potential of Oman's ports in green hydrogen

MUSCAT: Driven by its goal to be among the leading companies in the global green hydrogen value chain, Asyad signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Oman Hydrogen Centre at the German University of Technology in Oman (GUtech) to study the potential of Oman's ports and logistics services in shaping the nation's green hydrogen economy.

According to international consultancy McKinsey's Global Energy Perspective, green hydrogen demand is anticipated to grow sixfold by 2050 driven by the road transport, maritime and aviation sectors.

Against this backdrop, Asyad's agreement with GUtech includes conducting in-depth research and analysis against global



best practices to enhance the efficiency of Asyad's ports and logistics operations as well as the competencies and human resources required to cater for this clean energy sector.

Essam bin Nasser al Shaibani, Vice-President of the

Sustainability at Asyad Group said, "Asyad's holistic approach revolves around achieving sustainability at various levels including economic, environmental and society particularly in its operations and development plans.

Partnering with Oman

Hydrogen Centre will help us identify, capture, and assess our strengths and areas of improvement. It will also allow us to gather the necessary data we need to set the competitive standards for our logistics services to contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's efforts in building a green hydrogen economy and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050."

Al Shaibani emphasised that Asyad is working to position Oman as a global hub for the clean energy sector, adopting the latest logistics technologies to handle and export green hydrogen and its derivatives to markets all around the world.

Furthermore, it is working closely with the private and public sectors to contribute in achieving Net-Zero by 2050.

Recession affecting manufacturing and construction



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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

FIRMS ARE EXPERIENCING A DOWNTURN IN THE SECTOR, AS MANUFACTURERS ARE FACING A REVERSAL IN NEW ORDERS FROM DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS CUSTOMERS.

The early days of recession in the UK are beginning to affect several sectors. Manufacturing production and new orders slumped in August, sinking at the fastest rate since the early months of the Covid-19 lockdown two years ago.

Firms are experiencing a downturn in the sector, as manufacturers are facing a reversal in new orders from domestic and overseas customers. Customer demand has fallen causing business confidence to plummet.

August marked the largest contraction since May 2020, the latest S&P Global/CIPS UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data showed. The index fell to 47.3 from 52.1 in July, with numbers below 50 are considered a contraction.

Analysts said that the data

indicated signs of an emerging recession in the manufacturing sector.

UK Head of Manufacturing at KPMG, Rebecca Shalom, said: "Faced with a multitude of costs pressures alongside rising inflation, manufacturers are increasingly searching for efficiencies or delaying investments."

Energy-intensive firms in particular are set to be increasingly concerned about how much longer they can survive such heightened pressures, Shalom added. There was weaker demand from key markets in August, with key markets including China, the UK and the US all subdued.

Dampening demand in these markets has intensified supply chain issues that arose after the Covid lockdowns and Brexit, according to the PMI report. Backlogs of orders also eased up in August, after sustaining firms

for a while.

Activity in the construction sector has shrunk for the second consecutive month in a sign of the UK economy's malaise spreading across sectors, a survey showed. S&P Global and the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply's (CIPS) PMI moved higher to 49.2 in August, up from 48.9 in July.

In spite of rising, the PMI remained below the 50-point threshold that separates growth and contraction.

The reading topped City investors' expectations. Stagnating demand driven by concern about the state of the UK economy weighed on the country's construction sector.

Economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, Andrew Harker, said: "The UK construction sector looks set to be in for a challenging period".

The survey matches with a

separate PMI published last week that showed Britain is hovering on the edge of a recession. The country's combined services and manufacturing PMI was revised down to below 50-point mark.

Surging inflation fuelled by high energy prices is putting households and businesses under intense strain, prompting experts to predict the UK is headed for a long recession. New prime minister, Liz Truss has signed off further measures to support the economy through the inflation spike.

Rising costs are squeezing businesses' margins, prompting them to shelve construction projects. New order growth slumped to its weakest level since June 2020, according to S&P Global and CIPS.

In the retail sector, the recovery of footfall slowed in August as the cost-of-living crisis caused shoppers to steer clear of spending splurges. Although

footfall at retail destinations in the UK continued to slowly climb back towards pre-Covid levels, the pace of improvement slowed according to the latest data from the British Retail Consortium (BRC).

Overall footfall for retail outlets was down 12.4 per cent compared to pre-Covid levels, an improvement of just 1.8 percentage points from July. This was worse than the three-month average decline of 12.3 per cent.

People in the UK are facing huge increases to energy bills as other household costs, including groceries and fuel, also shoot up.

BRC boss, Helen Dickenson said: "Many people remain concerned about the rising cost-of-living and the price of their energy bills, which has kept them away from visiting high streets and town centres." Compared to 2019, High Street footfall was down 13.6 per cent in August.

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1. INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEER - 1 No.

- Candidate should have experience in Road, Sewage, Pipeline, Telecom Networking, Electrical works in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Should have worked with MOTC, Municipalities, Madayan and other related Govt. Bodies.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be willing to lead team of qualified engineers.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with qualifications in Mechanical Engineering will be an added advantage.
- Should have 25 years of work experience.

2. PROJECT ENGINEER - 1 No.

- Candidate should have experience in Construction of Roads and other civil works in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with 15 years of work experience.

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When resin art is shaped with an Omani touch

More than 35 paintings, and other resin works including accessories and jewellery are currently on display at the Art & Soul Gallery in Waterfront Qurum for the exhibit 'Resin Art with Omani Touches' which the artists said hopefully would draw attention to this modern and beautiful art, which allowed the creation of works of great beauty and sophistication... P20

The 'majestic' Singapore orchid named in honour of Queen Elizabeth

ELIZABETH IS MAJESTIC, hardy and "very fashionable", said a top Singapore flower curator — referring not to the late monarch, but to an orchid named after the queen when she visited the former British colony. After Queen Elizabeth II's death last week, the city-state's Botanic Gardens loaned a towering sprig of Dendrobium Elizabeth to the British high commissioner's residence, to be displayed alongside pictures of the

monarch. The orchid hybrid, with twisted Dresden-yellow petals and a uranium-green lip, was named in honour of the queen when she visited Singapore in 1972, said Whang Lay Keng, curator at Singapore's National Orchid Garden. "Dendrobium Elizabeth is a majestic, robust and resilient plant," she said. "It's kind of like how Queen Elizabeth carried herself."



Flowering just twice a year, the Dendrobium Elizabeth was bred from orchids originating from Singapore and Papua New Guinea, and carries just about 40 blooms per plant. Orchid-mad Singapore boasts the

delicate, colourful blooms as their national flower, and the city-state often christens new hybrids after visiting dignitaries as part of its diplomatic charm offensive. The tradition took root in 1957 dur-

ing British colonial rule — which spanned more than 140 years — when an orchid variety was named after the wife of London's high commissioner to Singapore at the time. Queen Elizabeth first made a state visit to Singapore in 1972, followed by two more trips in 1989 and 2006. "During the 1970s, the colour yellow-green was very popular, so naturally we wanted to select something that was fashionable and very interesting," Whang said, adding that "yellow is a colour of royalty". But the tropical lowland orchid also has very distinct Southeast Asian traits. It is a "sun-loving plant that thrives in a moist and humid climate, where sunlight and warmth are important for its growth", the orchid curator said. Among the more than 200 orchid hybrids named after visiting leaders and celebrities — displayed in the VIP section of the city's sprawling Botanic Gardens — there is also the Dendrobium Memoria Princess Diana. The pastel-white bloom was so dubbed after the death of the princess of Wales. — AFP

READ

CARRIE SOTO IS BACK

BY TAYLOR JENKINS REID

A tennis player comes out of retirement and trains with her father to defend her record.

New York Times bestselling author of MALIBU RISING and DAISY JONES & THE SIX

TAYLOR JENKINS REID

CARRIE SOTO IS BACK

A NOVEL

HUSH HUSH

(From L-R) Bollywood actresses Kritika Kamra, Ayesha Jhulka, Shahana Goswami, Soha Ali Khan, film director Tanuja Chandra and Karishma Tanna pose for pictures during the trailer launch of their Amazon Prime Video upcoming Indian Hindi-language web series 'Hush Hush' in Mumbai. — AFP

CANCEL THE BULL FESTIVAL?

Participants on horses confront a bull during 'Toro de la Vega' festival in the central Spanish town of Tordesillas. The Ministry of Social Rights has asked the Prosecutor's Office to adopt measures to paralyse the tournament on the understanding that according to its new regulatory bases it could lead to a crime of abuse animal. — AFP



Hilfiger returns to New York with a new logo and metaverse focus

WITH A NEW LOGO and eyes on the metaverse, Tommy Hilfiger returned to New York's Fashion Week, presenting a collection that seeks to reinvent his brand. The American designer had not shown a collection on the catwalks of New York in three years, among the heavy-hitters including Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein who opted out. "We started the brand in New York — it is my home," Hilfiger said, explaining his decision to return. While the designer grants Paris the distinction of global fashion capital, he says New York is at its epicentre, for "pop culture, fashion or music, entertainment, celebrity." His show on Sunday drew inspiration from Andy Warhol, who Hilfiger dubbed the world's pop art king. Although most labels are presenting their spring-summer 2023 collections, Hilfiger chose to show a fall collection that better reflected the current changing temperatures — and also allowed spectators to purchase items in real time.

BACK TO BASICS

Persistent showers threatened the outdoor show on the banks of the East River, as fog obscured Manhattan's skyscrapers in the distance. But between a DJ, drag queen performance and Travis Barker on the drums, those in attendance could be distracted from getting soaked.

As a remix of Beyoncé's latest hit "Break My Soul" with Madonna's "Vogue" pumped in the background, Hilfiger introduced a return to form, with new takes on the horizontally striped sweatshirts and polos, or large-checked coats, that saw him reinvent prep and embrace hip hop in the 1990s and early 2000s.

To accessorise the classics the designer showed a playful line of ties, long-sleeved gloves, large scarves and heavy necklaces, which adorned a diverse parade of models spanning gender and body type.

"I went back to my archive with my design team," said the designer whose brand, like Calvin Klein, is owned by the Dutch group PVH, and whose global retail sales notched \$9.3 billion in 2021.

"And we took everything that was great 25-30 years ago and made it relevant for today."

METaverse

Sunday's novelties included a new Hilfiger monogram, although the brand's iconic logo is still in circulation.

And to add a final touch of modernity, a parallel, virtual show took place simultaneously on the metaverse, on the video game platform Roblox that's populated with avatars.

"If you look at the millions of gamers in the world — many of them in Asia, by the way — you're reaching an audience that you would not normally reach through physical fashion," Hilfiger said. — **AFP**



ENTERTAINMENT

Chazelle exposes 1920s Hollywood hedonism with 'Babylon'



"LA LA LAND" director Damien Chazelle on Monday gave the Toronto film festival a brief first look at "Babylon," his eagerly awaited ode to the drug-fueled and hedonistic excesses of Hollywood in the 1920s.

The movie starring Brad Pitt, Olivia Wilde and Margot Robbie, out in December, delves into early Tinseltown's dark side, with a first-look trailer showing characters inspired by real silent-era stars attending wild parties complete with mounds of cocaine, elephants and topless dancers.

"It was about capturing the spirit of that time, which is a lot more I'd say 'Wild West' than even our conceptions of the 'Roaring Twenties,'" Chazelle told an audience.

"There was more

and broader societal and technological changes transformed Los Angeles, a city which had only recently been built "from scratch" in the Californian desert.

"To do that, you need a certain kind of crazy person. It's this sort of American Dream, crazed, manic vision, of 'we are going to just conjure stuff up out of nothing,'" said Chazelle.

"I don't think it's a big surprise that the people who did that also did a lot of drugs and partied very hard. It's all part of the tapestry.

"So I wanted to try to capture all of it — the highest highs, the lowest lows.

"Humanity at its most glamorous and at its most animalistic and depraved. You kind of need all of it in order to actually explain what was happening in real



excess, more drugs, more extreme living on all ends of the spectrum than I think a lot of people realise."

The movie, which is still in production and has not been shown in full to audiences, is already being positioned by studio Paramount as another awards contender from Chazelle, who made the Oscar-winning "Whiplash" before his youngest-ever best director Academy Award for "La La Land."

Chazelle said the film's characters were each inspired by multiple real silent-era stars and moguls, although they are technically fictional.

Pitt plays an established movie star, shown in the trailer filming an epic Medieval battle scene, while Robbie is an aspiring and hard-partying actress.

"Babylon" will chart how the arrival of the "talkies" — movies with recorded dialogue —

life." "Babylon" will be released in limited theatres Christmas Day — just in time to be eligible for the Oscars in March — before a wider release in January.

It is one of several films celebrating the significance of cinema itself showcased at this year's Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

On Saturday, Steven Spielberg received a raucous ovation for "The Fabelmans," his semi-autobiographical movie about falling in love with filmmaking as child, which is already being tipped as an Oscars frontrunner.

Later on Monday, "American Beauty" and "1917" director Sam Mendes will introduce "Empire of Light," about a romance at a beautiful old cinema in 1980s England.

TIFF, North America's largest movie gathering, runs until Sunday. — **AFP**



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AROUND THE WORLD

ART

Art world to mark 50 years since Picasso's death



FROM THE PRADO museum to the Pompidou Centre and New York's Met, the art world has mobilised to stage "an unprecedented" 42 exhibitions marking 50 years since Picasso's death, officials said on Monday.

Prepared over the past 18 months by France and Spain, the "Year of Picasso" initiative will involve "38 very important art institutions in Europe and the United States," Spanish Culture Minister Miquel Iceta told reporters.

The aim is to "show off all the facets" of Picasso, said French Culture Minister Rima Abdul Malak, describing him as "the most famous and emblematic modern artist".

Picasso was born in the Spanish city of Malaga in 1881 and died in Mougins on the French Riviera in 1973.



A series of talks about him and his work will also be held alongside the exhibition.

The celebrations will begin on September 23 at Madrid's Mapfre Foundation with the exhibit "Pablo Picasso and the breaking down of sculpture" and will run until April 2024 with the closing exhibit at the Petit Palais in Paris.

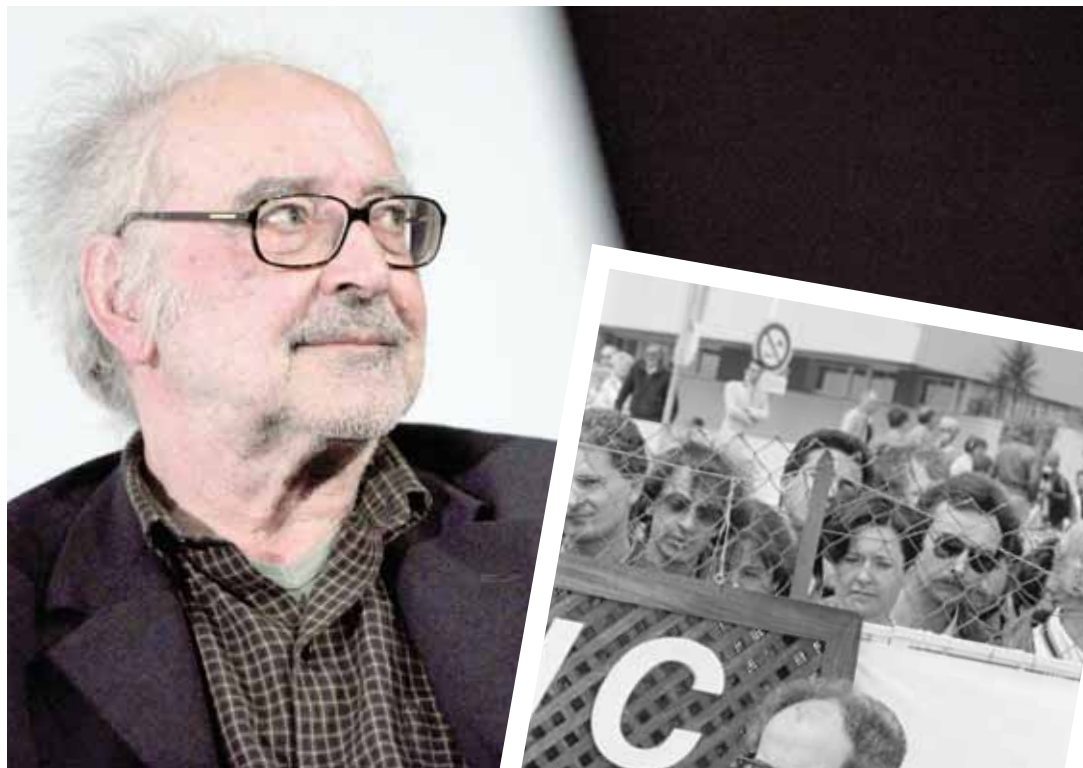
Although most events will take place in Spain, France and the United States, others will happen in Germany, Switzerland, Romania and Belgium.

Among the institutions involved in the celebrations are the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, Madrid's Prado, the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Picasso museums in Barcelona and Paris.

"We want to present Picasso exactly how he was," by highlighting his "artistic legacy" and the "permanence of his work", the Spanish culture minister said. — AFP

CINEMA

French cinema giant Jean-Luc Godard dies aged 91



JEAN-LUC GODARD, one of the most influential film-makers of the 20th century and the father of the French New Wave, died "peacefully at home" on Tuesday aged 91, his family said.

The legendary maverick blew up the conventions of cinema in the 1960s, shooting his gangster romance "Breathless" on the streets of Paris with a hand-held camera, using a shopping trolley for panning shots.

He continued to thumb his nose at Hollywood and an older generation of French film-makers by breaking all the rules again in "Contempt" (1963) with Brigitte Bardot and "Pierrot le Fou" in 1965.

"No official (funeral) ceremony will take place," his family said. "He will be cremated... And it really must happen in private."

The secrecy — and choosing to disappear in a puff of smoke — is typical of Godard, who loved to surprise the world from his lair in the Swiss village of Rolle where he lived as a virtual recluse for decades.

It was there that he died "peacefully at home", his wife Anne-Marie Mieville at his side, his producers said.

Godard's influence is hard to underestimate, with directors from Martin Scorsese, Quentin Tarantino and Paul Thomas Anderson to Robert Altman, the maker of "M*A*S*H" and "The Player", often speaking of their debt to him.

- FILM'S JOHN LENNON AND CHE GUEVARA -

French President Emmanuel Macron hailed the director's talent and mourned the loss of a "national treasure".

"Jean-Luc Godard, the most iconoclastic film-maker of the New Wave, invented a resolutely modern, intensely free art.

We have lost a national treasure, a genius," Macron tweeted.

Godard's house, with green shutters and a green bench out front, looked empty on Tuesday, its shades drawn, with an abandoned ashtray and teapot on the windowsill, an AFP reporter said.

Despite the film-maker's often difficult relationship with critics, The Guardian's Peter Bradshaw heaped praise on Godard, saying, "The last great 20th-century modernist is dead."

He compared him to other 1960s rebels like John Lennon and Che Guevara.

"Or maybe Godard was the medium's Socrates, believing that an unexamined cinema was not worth having," he added.

Guy Lodge, of the screen bible Variety, tweeted that it was "glib to say 'he changed everything', but he sure changed a hell of a lot of things."

Indeed, Godard became a "god" to many 1960s political and artistic radicals who would hang on every word of his often contradictory — and tongue-in-cheek — declarations on the state of cinema and the world.

- 'EVERY EDIT IS A LIE' -

"All you need for a movie is a gun and a girl," he once proclaimed, in a nod to US actress Jean Seberg, the star of

"Breathless".

The movie was a fashion as well as a film landmark, her pixie haircut copied by millions bowled over by her effortless Parisian cool.

"A story should have a beginning, a middle and an end — but not necessarily in that order," Godard later famously declared, and "every edit is a lie".

As he grew older, Godard would occasionally emerge from his Swiss bolthole to make low-budget films well into his 80s. He never, however, regained the capacity to shock or move more mainstream audiences as he had in the 1960s, though a small band of disciples remained doggedly loyal to the master.

His periodic appearances at the Cannes film festival — often via FaceTime — still drew crowds, however, though he no longer held the sway he did when he had managed to shut down the festival entirely in 1968 in solidarity with the student protests in Paris.

Cannes also saw the premiere in 2017 of "Redoubtable", a tragicomic film about Godard's doomed romance with the French actress Anne Wiazemsky, directed by the Oscar-winning director of "The Artist". Michel Hazanavicius. — AFP

SCIENCE

This Jellyfish Can Live Forever, Its Genes May Tell Us How



FLEETS OF TINY translucent umbrellas, each about the size of a lentil, waft through the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. These miniature jellyfish are known as Turritopsis dohrnii.

But they have a secret: When their bodies are damaged, the mature adults, known as medusas, can turn back the clock. They shed their limbs, become a drifting blob and morph into polyps, twiggly growths that attach to rocks or plants. Gradually, the medusa buds off the polyp once again, rejuvenated. A predator or an injury can kill T. dohrnii, but they are, effectively, immortal.

found many of the duplicated genes among them, including some that protect and repair the jellyfish's DNA.

To trigger rejuvenation, the researchers put the jellyfish under stress. As the medusas shrank, sprouted polyps and began remaking their adult bodies, the scientists took snapshots of the genes used in each development phase. They took jellyfish in each phase and extracted their mRNA, showing which genes were used to make proteins.

As the jellyfish transformed, the scientists were interested to see a marked change in the use of genes



tively, immortal.

In a paper published this month, scientists have taken a look at the jellyfish's genome, searching for the genes that control this remarkable process.

Gathering enough T. dohrnii to study their genomes can be difficult.

When it comes to living in an aquarium, "they are very picky," said Maria Pascual-Torner, a scientist at Universidad de Oviedo in Spain.

To boost research, Pascual-Torner and a colleague gathered wild jellyfish in Italy.

They and colleagues noticed the jellyfish had extra copies of certain genes, a sign these might be important for survival. The researchers

linked to DNA storage. In adults, these genes were active or expressed at a high level. But as the animals began their descent back into polyps, the genes became quieter.

Genes related to pluripotency, or a cell's ability to grow into fully developed forms, did the opposite. They were quiet in the adult form but leaped into action as a jellyfish broke its body down and started to build it back. The pluripotency genes returned to dormancy when the process was complete.

What this suggests, Pascual-Torner said, is that DNA is brought out during the transformation, and genes that coax cells to reset go into overdrive. — VERONIQUE GREENWOOD / NYT

art & life

Local Scene

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WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 14 | 2022

When resin art is shaped with an Omani touch

By Arwa Al Hashimi

The use of natural resin dates back to ancient Greece where it was commonly used as a primitive form of chewing gum. As of today, resin continues to rise in popularity becoming an important medium that allows artists to create stunning art pieces and builders and interior decorators to create dramatic furniture and decors.

In the art world, resin has been embraced by artists not just in the West but even in the Middle East and the rest of the Orient.

Working with resin for artwork, one needs to be familiar with how the resin acts and behaves and how hardener is applied to get the desired chemical reaction. After complete hardening, it gives a glossy surface like glass, but it is unbreakable and lighter in weight. Thus, you can mix resin with colours and pour it to make pots, coasters, bookmarks, medals and ornaments. It can be poured in certain ways on wood, glass and other surfaces to make very elegant wall paintings, wall clocks or tables.

Resin art is a highly versatile art form that allows for endless possibilities. Although this

craft is beginner-friendly, there are several important factors to consider before diving into it. The cost of the tools can't be considered cheap and the work requires time and focus.

To demonstrate how much resin has grown in popularity in the country, several female artists came together to launch Resin Art with Omani Touches on September 4, 2022 in the Art and Soul Gallery in Seef Mall, at the Waterfront Qurum under the auspices of Hilal bin Hamad al Sarmi, member of the Majlis Ash'shura and representative of the Wilayat of Al Seeb.

The exhibition was attended by Omani artists who specialised in making artworks with resin and had previously participated in local and international forums for this art.

Kamila al Rahbi, Hawraa al Mousawi, Fawziya Hassan Salman, Hayat Hassan Salman, Buthaina al Munthiri and Hawraa Mahboub all have their unique voices as artists and this showed in the different creations they presented before the public.

The exhibition includes more than 35 paintings, and other resin works such as trays, coasters, boxes, bookmarks, medals, phone covers, hair accessories, jewellery, and other artworks made

with resin.

At the exhibition, one of the most admired artworks is the one by Kamila which is a painting of the two Sultans — Sultan Qaboos and Sultan Haitham. Titled "The Vision", it is made up of an eye, and in the centre is a unique picture of the two Sultans with the Omani flag around them. It demonstrates how the Omani people are following the path and vision of the two Sultans.

Other head-turners include the work of Hawraa al Mousawi — an artwork of two huge golden wings that were made of resin and golden glitter, and the exhibitors took personal pictures of them in front of these wings and transmitted them through social media.

Hawraa al Mousawi is known for her wonderful and delicate murals, especially three-dimensional paintings in the shape of a rose and another in the shape of sea waves, poured on the image of a woman. For the first time in the Sultanate of Oman, the technique of preserving natural roses in resin has been used.

The participating artists said that the aim of holding the exhibition is to draw attention to this modern and beautiful art, which allowed creating of works of great beauty and sophistication.

