

Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary-General of Majlis Ash'shura, said that the contents of the Royal speech delivered by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the opening of the first annual session of the eighth term of the Council of Oman constitutes a roadmap for the upcoming period for the Council of Oman in particular and the Sultanate of Oman in general. Al Nadabi said that the contents of the Royal address touched on the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the realisation of further development and prosperity to achieve the aspirations of the Omani people. **DETAILS ON P5**



COUNCIL OF OMAN REPRESENTS AN INDISPENSABLE PARTNER



H M P R E S I D E S O V E R 8 T H T E R M C O N V E N I N G O F C O U N C I L O F O M A N

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over the 8th term's first annual convening of the Council of Oman, at the council's premises in the Governorate of Muscat on Tuesday.

Upon the arrival of His Majesty the Sultan in the premises of the Council of Oman, he headed to the Dais of Honour where the Royal Anthem was played while the artillery fired a 21-gun salute for His Majesty. Then, His Majesty the Sultan proceeded to the Hall of the Council where verses from the Holy Quran were recited at the beginning of convening of the Council of Oman's 8th term.

His Majesty the Sultan gave a Royal speech reading as follows: In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious "Our Lord! bestow on us Mercy from Thyself, and dispose of our affair for us in the right

way!" Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon the most noble of prophets, our guide, Prophet Muhammad, and upon all his Family and his companions.

Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, today, we convene to inaugurate the first annual session of the 8th term of the Council of Oman. We commence with profound gratitude and praise to Allah the Almighty for His bounteous gifts bestowed upon our beloved country - gifts of peace, stability and prosperity.

We earnestly solicit His grace for continued progress and development for our homeland, aspiring for a future that is even more luminous and prosperous.

In the initiation of our current assembly, we extend our profound gratitude for the unwavering dedication and significant initiatives

- HM COMMENDS COUNCIL'S EVOLVING MATURITY AND ITS COHESIVE INTEGRATION
- DESIRE TO ENSURE THAT SUCH NATIONAL EFFORTS RECEIVE AUGMENTED FOCUS
- COUNCIL MEMBERS TOLD TO UPHOLD DUTY WITH THE UTMOST INTEGRITY
- OMAN HAS SUCCESSFULLY ATTAINED NOTABLE RESULTS ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS
- PORTION OF FISCAL SURPLUS JUDICIOUSLY ALLOCATED TO INVIGORATE SOCIAL SECTORS
- FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN POSITIVELY INFLUENCED CONSOLIDATION OF FINANCES
- UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY SOURCES OF INCOME

undertaken by the esteemed members of the Council of Oman during preceding sessions.

COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOUR
We commend the Council's evolving maturity and its cohesive integration with the other esteemed institutions of the State, a collaboration that fortifies the effectiveness of our collective national endeavours. It is our earnest desire to ensure that such national efforts receive augmented focus and support, thereby enabling us to accomplish our established goals and fulfil our vision of prosperity for all our citizens.

We seize this moment to extend a cordial welcome to the members of the State Council, selected by us from among the most distinguished experts in our nation.

In a similar vein, we greet the members of Majlis Ash'shura,

elected by our citizens through the utilisation of advanced electronic voting technology.

The Council of Oman represents an indispensable partner within the structural framework of our State. This partnership confers upon you a weighty responsibility. We urge you to uphold this duty with the utmost integrity, championing the interests of our country, guided by the principles set forth in the Basic Law of the State and the regulatory statutes that govern your responsibilities, along with the authorities granted to you by the Law of the Council of Oman.

With the confidence we have vested in you, we anticipate that your endeavours will significantly contribute to the ongoing progress and development, integral to the prosperous renaissance of our nation. **TURN TO P2**



His Majesty presides over annual



FROM PAGE 1

Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, the citizens of Oman have rendered an indispensable contribution to the continuous achievements witnessed during the past four years of the nation's comprehensive development.

Their endeavours have been effectively fortified by the steadfast commitment of various state institutions, assiduously implementing the strategies that have been meticulously devised. These strategies are propelled by a vision emphatically prioritising the enhancement of social sectors and the preservation of the advancements secured hitherto.

ECONOMIC SECTORS

By the grace and guidance of Allah the Almighty, our country has successfully attained notable results and significant accomplishments across social and economic sectors, as well as in fiscal performance, in spite of the global economic challenges. These challenges have notably impacted our economy and national programmes. Our plans, intricately crafted with specific objectives, strive to address the exigencies of the present and aim for sustainable development through efficacious resource management, ultimately seeking to diminish public debt burdens. A portion of our fiscal surplus has been judiciously allocated to invigorate social sectors and stimulate economic growth.

The implementation of our Fiscal Sustainability Plan has profoundly and positively influenced the consolidation of the country's financial standing and augmented the efficiency of our spending. The national programmes have been instrumental in bolstering economic growth and catalysing investments in burgeoning sectors.

We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to continuing our efforts to diversify the sources of national income, emphasising the enhancement of non-oil revenues, to ensure the long-term stability of the State's public finances. Simultaneously, we envisage that the Social Protection System, recently introduced, will be comprehensive, extending its benefits to all segments of society, thereby guaranteeing a dignified life for all.

Our dedication remains steadfast in sparing no effort to achieve the objectives and aspirations delineated in Oman Vision 2040. Esteemed

Members of the Council of Oman, the restructuring of the State's Administrative Apparatus has been pivotal in augmenting the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations. We have meticulously implemented systems designed to optimise the decision-making process and to conduct rigorous evaluations of institutional performance.

We remain dedicated to rigorously overseeing the implementation of endorsed principles for procedural streamlining, with the objective of integrating these principles as a prominent aspect of governmental performance.

NEW INITIATIVES

Recognising the judiciary as an integral component of the State's framework, we are committed to advancing the judicial system and fortifying it with skilled professionals. We pledge our steadfast focus to the judiciary, enabling it to administer justice with unparalleled competence.

Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, by the grace of Allah, our national endeavours have catalysed the continuous development of the health, education and service sectors, which have been diligently expanded in proportion to our population's growth.

We have focused on implementing well-conceived initiatives in these sectors, grounded in realistic, thoroughly researched strategies and plans, to ensure comprehensive and inclusive development. These enhancements have reached every governorate and wilayat without exception.

Our emphasis on the development of the governorates and the reinforcement of the decentralisation principle have been realised through the enactment of the System of Governorates and the Law of Municipal Councils. This strategy aligns with our vision for locally administered governance based on decentralisation principles. It also dovetails with our objectives to empower local communities in managing their affairs and actively participating in the nation-building process.

We assert that the role of municipal councils transcends local municipal affairs; these bodies are vested with extensive powers, duties and a broad spectrum of tasks. We urge members of municipal councils to fully utilise the authority and resources at their disposal, innovating in ways that substantially enhance the well-being

and welfare of our citizens.

DECENTRALISATION

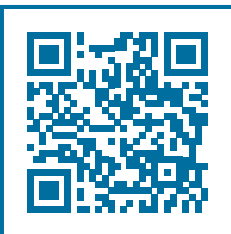
Adhering to the principle of gradual progression in our policies and decisions, we remain committed to an ongoing evaluation of the outcomes anticipated from the policy of decentralisation of the governorates. We are determined to continuously reassess and expand this approach, aiming to broaden its scope to encompass various sectors and multiple aspects. This endeavour is focused on significantly enhancing and strengthening the active participation and engagement of local communities in the developmental process, ensuring the local administration initiative is diligently pursued to achieve its specified objectives, thereby contributing effectively to our comprehensive journey of economic and social development.

Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, as we discern the challenges pervading our society and recognise their intolerable impacts on its ethical and cultural fabric, we underscore the imperative to assiduously address, scrutinise and continuously monitor these issues. This endeavour is paramount to augment society's resilience in confronting them and to fortify our national identity and foundational values and principles.

Furthermore, it is imperative to accord paramount attention to the family, the cornerstone of our society, which acts as a bulwark in safeguarding our progeny from harmful ideologies that are in direct opposition to the tenets of our venerable religion and core values. Such detrimental trends also conflict with our Omani traditions, which are deeply ingrained in our history and national character.

EDUCATION SECTOR

Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, recognising that educational institutions, research and cultural centres at all levels constitute the foundation of our society's scientific and intellectual advancement, and act as drivers for our technological and industrial progression, we reaffirm our steadfast commitment to empowering the educational sector. This includes adapting academic curricula to meet the demands of economic development, broadening opportunities for our youth to engage in scientific expertise, and immersing themselves in the broad



convening of Council of Oman

realms of science and knowledge. We encourage them to utilise their cognitive and intellectual abilities for creative and innovative endeavours, thereby laying a robust groundwork for authentic investment and establishing themselves as leaders in economic growth. In light of rapid global advancements in frontier technologies and their applications, including artificial intelligence (AI) and its potential to amplify productivity and efficiency across myriad sectors, and with our profound recognition of the necessity to diversify sources of income through knowledge, technology and innovation, we are resolutely intent on positioning the digital economy as a pivotal and central pillar of our national economy.

We have promulgated directives to inaugurate a national programme for the adoption and localisation of AI and to expedite the establishment of legislations that will enable AI technologies to become an instrumental force in our developmental sectors. Moreover, driven by our firm belief in addressing climate change's impacts and our commitment to sustainable, renewable energy, in line with the government's goal to achieve Net-Zero carbon emissions by 2050 - a target we endorse - we have directed efforts to expedite the development of the renewable energy sector. This encompasses the development of its legal and policy framework, the provision of incentives to encourage foreign investment and local industries, thereby fostering the domestic growth of this vital technology.

CONCERN OVER GAZA

Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, as we observe with profound concern the grave predicament of our brethren in the occupied Palestinian territories, enduring relentless Israeli aggression and an unjust siege, we reiterate our firm stance on the establishment of a Palestinian state, with Al Quds Al Sharqiyyah (East Jerusalem) as its capital. We vehemently urge the international community to fulfil its obligations and honour its commitments pertaining to the Palestinian cause. It is of utmost urgency that effective and fundamental solutions be expedited to actualise the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people in establishing their sovereign state, a cornerstone for the realisation of lasting peace in our region and the security of the global community.

We reassert our firm political tenets, solidly anchored in the principles of good neighbourliness

and non-interference in the internal affairs of other sovereign nations. Our position is further rooted in a steadfast belief in the establishment of a just and equitable system for mutual benefit and exchange of interests, aimed at establishing solid foundations for stability and peace, and to make a positive contribution towards these noble objectives. Esteemed Members of the Council of Oman, in conclusion, we extend our profound gratitude and appreciation to the civil, military and security sectors of the state for their steadfast dedication towards the success of our development initiatives and the realisation of our national goals and aspirations. The preservation of these achievements would not have been feasible without the establishment of safety and security across our nation. The vigilance and dedication of our military and security forces have been vital in ensuring peace and safety in every corner of our land. We salute our valiant troops who stand guard in every location within our borders, safeguarding our homeland and securing our accomplishments. We highly commend the invaluable contributions of these services and all their personnel.

CONTINUOUS PROSPERITY

We implore Allah the Almighty to grant us success and guide us on the path of righteousness. We pray for His continued grace to bestow bountiful blessings and prosperity upon the people of our country and all those residing within its territory, preserving its tranquillity. We extend our sincere wishes for continued prosperity to our beloved country and its loyal citizens, year after year. May the peace and blessings of the Almighty be upon you all.

The convening was attended by members of the Royal Family, members of the Council of Ministers, Chairman of the State Council, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura, Commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces and the Royal Oman Police, members of the State Council and Majlis Ash'shura, heads of the diplomatic missions accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, under-secretaries, governors, members of the Supreme Judicial Council, some business persons, CEOs at Oman Investment Authority, editors-in-chief of local newspapers and representatives of committees and professional associations. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and guard him as a source of pride for his homeland and people! — ONA







ROYAL ADDRESS IS ROADMAP FOR UPCOMING PERIOD



MUSCAT: Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary-General of Majlis AshShura, said that the contents of the Royal speech delivered by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on the opening of the first annual session of the eighth term of the Council of Oman, constitutes a roadmap for the upcoming period for the Council of Oman in particular and the Sultanate of Oman in general.

Al Nadabi said that the contents of the Royal address touched on the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 and the realisation of further development and prosperity to achieve the aspirations of the Omani people.

The secretary-general of Majlis AshShura pointed out His Majesty's emphasis on the role of the Council of Oman in the past periods and the initiatives it presented through its members. This, he said, constitutes an important base from which the Council of Oman starts its 10th-term with a steady resolve to add more achievements in the roles assigned to it. The powers of the Council of Oman are determined by the Basic Law of the State and the Law of the Council of Oman to strengthen legislation supporting various economic and social fields with the aim of achieving the comprehensive development goals.

The Royal speech touched on several topics including exerting more efforts to diversifying sources of national income, making the social protection system comprehensive and inclusive of all society segments, realising the goals of the Oman Vision 2040, increasing the effectiveness of the government performance, enhancing the roles of the local community by expanding decentralisation in the governorates.

— ONA

‘A mandate for future in liaison’

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Citizens and expatriates from different walks of life lauded the Royal speech by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik calling it ‘a mandate for future in liaison with the Vision 2040’.

“The speech was very inspiring in many aspects. It touched the current genocide on our Palestinian brothers and sister which shows the clear stance of our government against oppression. I was also glad to see that four important elements such as AI, economy, social welfare and Omani identity were addressed too. These four elements represent the top priorities of our nation,” Hatim Abdulsalam, Religious Scholar, said.

Li Lingbing, Ambassador of China to Oman, said Oman has made remarkable achievements in various fields such as economic construction and social development. “The royal speech by His Majesty focused on major issues such as governance of nation, economic development, people’s livelihood, education and technology innovation, demonstrating his majesty’s long-term strategic vision, superb leadership and pragmatic style.

I believe that under the

leadership of His Majesty, Oman will achieve greater prosperity and development.”

Dr Talib bin Mohammed al Balushi, film-maker said, “Vision 2040 has goals that all those living in the land of the Sultanate of Oman share with us, including expatriate communities. His Majesty the Sultan, may God protect him, confirms his thanks to all the actors from the communities residing in the Sultanate of Oman, respecting their cooperation, efforts, and support for the arts and culture movement between Oman and friendly and brotherly countries.”

Abdul Lateef, Governing Body Member and Head of Foreign Investment Committee, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, MD - Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, said His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik’s Royal Address marks a pivotal moment, emphasising a holistic approach to national development.

“Prioritising healthcare, the commitment to bolstering public health infrastructure reflects a dedication to citizens’ well-being. The emphasis on other sectors underscores the nation’s investment in the future, fostering a knowledgeable and skilled workforce and moving the Sultanate of Oman towards

prosperity. The focus on overall economic growth signals a strategic plan for expansion and growth. The comprehensive agenda for many sectors in the Royal Speech aligns with the aspirations of the people, illustrating his kind devotion to a thriving, resilient, and progressive society,” he said.

Dr Abood al Sawafi, Educationist, said the vision and foresight of Oman Vision 2040 that His Majesty shared highlights the nation’s commitment to sustainable and inclusive development, as well as combating climate change. “The emphasis on investing in education, research, and innovation, as well as embracing Artificial Intelligence technologies, underscores the nation’s forward-thinking approach to growth and development,” he said.

A L Sabarullah Khan, Ambassador of Sri Lanka, said, the speech of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik at was a progressive policy statement. “While reiterating the commitment to a more efficient decentralised local government system, His Majesty outlined the progress in socio-economic and global spheres such as climate, renewable energy and concerns on regional security,” he said.

Concrete plans to deliver on Digital Economy goals: MTCIT

MUSCAT: Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, affirmed the Ministry’s commitment to implementing a number of strategic initiatives, outlined by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in his Royal speech on Tuesday. Those initiatives pertain to the materialization of the Digital Economy and the achievement of Carbon Neutrality.

In a statement to ONA, he said the National Program for the Digital Economy launched by the Ministry includes a set of main pillars and medium- and long-term targets based on the national directions of “Oman Vision 2040” in an effort to achieve it through a set of executive roadmaps outlined by the Implementation Follow-up Unit of Vision 2040.

The program is based on several main principles for its implementation, most notably the creation of national industries in the digital economy, enhancing local added value, creating sustainable and income-



Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali

generating opportunities, creating a strategic partnership with private sector institutions, and digitally empowering the economic sectors mentioned in the tenth five-year plan.

The main deliverables of the program are based on three pillars. The first pillar calls for the acceleration of government digital transformation to create a flexible and innovative government apparatus that works to improve the digital user experience and provide smart and distinguished services and proactive measures.

Under the second pillar, the program will work to strengthen the digital society by empowering and developing skills and competencies to ensure that they keep pace with the requirements of the technical future. With regard to the third pillar, the program will focus on enabling the digitization of businesses in the economic and strategic sectors and rehabilitating the advanced infrastructure that supports the digital economy. — ONA



Tender NumberT-44-2023

Tender Announcement

“Mwasalat” invites professional firms for the following tender:

Tender NamePre-qualification Tender for “the Construction of New Catamaran type HSC Passenger Vessel”

Project SummaryMWASALAT (NFC) invites competent and specialized Shipbuilder / Shipyard to submit ‘Pre-qualification Proposal’ for the Construction of “Catamaran type HSC Passenger Vessel” for MWASALAT, as per the details stipulated in the tender documents.
The pre-qualified Shipbuilder / Shipyard will be responsible to participate the tender for “the Construction of Catamaran type HSC Passenger Vessel” for MWASALAT, for a period of 5 years.

Tender FeeOMB, 500/- (Waived to SME Riyada Companies)

Grade & SpecialtyShipbuilders / Shipyards specialized in Vessel Construction

Start date for tender document distributionWednesday 15th November 2023

Last date for tender document distributionMonday 04th December 2023

Last date for submissionSunday 24th December 2023

- The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00 A.M - 2:00 P.M.
- Tenderers are requested to share Company Registration documents / Commercial registration & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Documents shall be shared by email, after the receipt of Tender Fee.
- The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.
- Participants should submit their offers through email tenders@mwasalat.om.
- Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

Mwasalat
Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: +968 1551
P.O.Box: 911, Al Khuwailid, PC 119, Sultanate of Oman

For more information please send to: tenders@mwasalat.om



SULTANATE OF OMAN

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Directorate General of Khoula Hospital

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT



The Directorate General of Khoula Hospital invites you to the following Auction:-

Auction No.	Description	Last date for Collection of Auction Document	Bid Submission Date	Eligibility	Tender Box	Auction Fee (Non-Refundable)
01/2023	Renting of coffeeshop at Al-Watiya Polyclinic for Obstetrics and Gynecology & IVF Center	Tuesday 28/Nov/2023 Before 01:00 PM	Tuesday 12/Dec/2023 Before 02:00 PM	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	Directorate General of Khoula Hospital (Administration Building)	R.O 25,000

- Companies & institutions willing to participate can purchase Auction Documents from the Financial Affairs Department (Purchase & Tender Section) between 8.30 am and 12.30 pm on working days till date of 28/Nov/2023, on payment of Auction fee mentioned above.3
- Auction should be submitted in plain, sealed envelope, Enclosing A Bank Guarantee issued by a Local bank for not less than (1%) of the value of the bid, addressed to the Ministry of Finance and it will be refunded if the bid is not awarded and valid for (90) days from the date of submission of offers. **Auction(s) Submitted without Bank Guarantee will not be considered.**
- Auction should be submitted in plain, sealed envelope with wax, on which the number and name of the auction should be written on the outside on the envelope, **avoid writing the bidder name.**
- Requested to Deposit their Auction Documents at the Directorate General of Khoula Hospital (Administration Building), **Before 02.00 PM** on Tuesday, **12/Dec/2024**, and bids submitted after this date shall not be considered, whatever the reasons for the delay.
- Copy of **Commercial Registration Certificate & Chamber Certificate** is to be attached along with the bid submitted.
- The Directorate General of Khoula Hospital is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offer.



ANNOUNCEMENT

EXTENDING COLLECTION DATE OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

Based on Tender No. EHC/2023/24 issued by Nama Holding on 5th November 2023, we would like to draw your kind attention that the collection date of tender documents has been extended until Thursday, 16 November 2023.

Interested party may purchase the tender through the company website (www.nama.om).



Nama Holding

In Beach One Building, 3rd Floor (Units 305 & 307), Shatti Al Qurum
P.O Box 850, Post Code 116, Sultanate of Oman.
Phone Number: +968 24559200 / 211
E-Mail: Ibrahim.AlHinai@Holding.nama.om



TO ENSURE A SMOOTH OPERATION, UPDATE YOUR DETAILS



The first session will include a number of topics, the most important of which is the members’ taking of the oath

State Council begins eighth term; to elect two vice presidents today

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahalbalushia

The State Council begins its eighth term (2023-2027) with its first session today for its first regular session, by taking of the oath of the members and electing the two vice-presidents of the Council.

The first session will include a number of topics, the most important of which is the members’ taking of the oath, in accordance with what is stipulated in Article (25) of the

Council of Oman Law.

In the session, the Council will also elect two vice-presidents of the Council from among the members wishing to run for the two positions in accordance with Article (9) of the Council of Oman Law.

The first session will also include the election of members of the Council’s office, and nominations for membership in the permanent committees.

khalid bin Ahmed al Saidi, Secretary-General of the State Council, confirmed that

the Council appreciates the attention given by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the process of legislative work within the framework of the state of institutions and law.

He added that members of the State Council will exercise their role in following up on national issues and achieving what citizens aspire to through a new phase of legislative work in accordance with the competencies stipulated in the Basic Law of the State.

The State Council is one of the two parts of the Council of

Oman, with its composition and the national competencies and experiences it includes, and those with academic qualifications, potentials and abilities in various fields, who have practiced cultural, academic, social, economic, military, security and legislative work, in confirmation of His Majesty the Sultan’s keenness to build national capabilities that possess competence, integrity and responsibility to keep pace with the requirements of building Oman’s future.

GCC Public Administration Institutes to be more dynamic

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH AND
AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The 21st meeting of the Directors General of Public Administration Institutes in Gulf, titled ‘Gulf Leaders with Innovative Thinking,’ defined the outlines of what is expected from Gulf management institutes as the nations move towards the future that is rapidly changing globally.

The meeting, held at Al Bustan Palace Hotel, was convened under the chairmanship of Dr Ali bin Qasim al Lawati, President of the Royal Academy of Management.

The primary objective of the two day meeting is to bolster government transformation, foster cooperation, facilitate knowledge exchange, and promote innovation within the administrative development frameworks across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

In his remarks, Dr Ali said, “Undoubtedly, we live in a rapidly changing world, and the focus of the meeting was on the role of institutes in this dynamic environment and how administrative institutes can contribute to realising national visions. It is undeniable that each Gulf country has its national vision.” He noted that the primary role of public administration institutes is to support the government in achieving these visions, extending beyond mere training.

He explained that the training serves as a means towards achieving these visions, whether they are at the national, institutional, or leadership levels because administrative institutes play a role in developing these institutions, ensuring government entities are more responsive to global changes, and leaders possess the skills, mindset, capabilities, and tools to thrive in this evolving world.

During the meeting, the

Sultanate of Oman proposed launching an initiative called the ‘Future Government Work Programme,’ incorporating modern learning tools, including a digital learning component and a cognitive aspect executed in each Gulf state. The integration of these two aspects aims to prepare mid-level leaders, specifically in the government sector, to handle high-level changes and assist in bringing about more prepared governments. The initiative has been agreed upon, and Oman’s Sultan Qaboos Academy for Administration will collaborate with other institutes in the council to develop and finalise the programme, and its launch scheduled for 2024.

During the meeting, participants explored a range of collaborative topics in various fields of administrative development, with a particular emphasis on innovative training solutions aligned with emerging trends in the new

economy.

In his opening speech, Dr Ali called for enhancing the effectiveness of these institutes in achieving national visions and sustainable development goals, stressing the importance of adopting new ideas that support leadership to align with global changes.

He said the focus should be on the role of scientific institutions during government transitions to provide sustainable and developmental solutions.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Development Affairs, Khalid bin Ali bin Salim al Sunaidi, in his speech emphasised achieving the desired goals that led to the Gulf countries achieving advanced positions globally, topping the Arab list, according to the 2023 Global Competitiveness Report issued by the International Institute for Administrative Development in Switzerland.



During the meeting, the Sultanate of Oman proposed launching an initiative called the ‘Future Government Work Programme’. – ONA

Entrepreneurship week underway until Nov 19

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahalbalushia

The activities of Global Entrepreneurship Week, currently underway until November 19 with the aim of promoting the culture of entrepreneurship, are targeting various groups, and encouraging small and medium-sized enterprises to be more productive and adaptable competitive in local and international markets.

The SMEDA organised Global Entrepreneurship Week targeting owners of small and medium enterprises, incubators, craftsmen, as well as school, college, and university students, job seekers, and all members of society.

Its organisation aims to enhance the culture of entrepreneurship among young people and those with innovative ideas, and encourage them to generate pioneering ideas that depend on creativity and innovation through workshops and events accompanying the week, and to support the development of small and medium enterprises.

It also, comes to introduce

entrepreneurship as an essential strategy for developing the national economy and achieving development sustainable.

The Global Entrepreneurship Week includes many events in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, the most prominent of which is the Entrepreneurship Clinic, which provides free consultations for entrepreneurs, small enterprises and small and medium enterprises facing challenges in their entrepreneurial journey.

A consultation session will also be held, which will contribute to increasing the awareness of owners of incubated small and medium enterprises in the field of entrepreneurship in cooperation with experts and representatives of government and private agencies and consultants. Even, workshops entitled the Enterprise Stock Exchange in cooperation with the Capital Market Authority, nomination for the International Support Fund for Cultural Diversity, and effective marketing for emerging companies and holding Entrepreneurship Cup events.



The Global Entrepreneurship Week includes many events in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, most prominent of which is the Entrepreneurship Clinic

Image-guided interventional unit for cancer patients established



This marks a significant step towards improving healthcare quality, ensuring the safety of patients and healthcare providers. – ONA

MUSCAT: The Radiology and Nuclear Medicine Department at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Centre, represented by the Interventional Radiology Unit, has established Diagnostic Reference Levels (DRLs) for Image-Guided Interventional Procedures (IGIPs), specifically for cancer patients in the Sultanate of Oman.

This marks a significant step towards improving healthcare quality, ensuring the safety of patients and healthcare providers, and reducing unnecessary radiation exposure while maintaining high-quality diagnostic and treatment procedures. The study compared radiation doses experienced by over 1,000 patients at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre (SQCCRC) to determine appropriate radiation doses in IGIPs for cancer patients

in Oman in line with international studies, and within acceptable limits and global best practices.

Naema bint Ali al Maymaniyah, Medical Physicist said: “Fluoroscopy in medical applications can lead to high radiation doses for patients and operators. Local Diagnostic Reference Levels (DRLs) have been implemented in interventional radiology to minimise radiation exposure while optimising imaging quality and patient safety. Noura bint Mohammed al Makhmariyah, Medical Physicist at SQCCRC added: “By setting specific benchmarks for radiation doses, the study will enhance radiological practice, optimising patient safety, imaging quality, and therapeutic outcomes and it will contribute to radiation safety knowledge, and providing guidance for healthcare professionals. — ONA



omanobserver.com/podcast

Gaza

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

WEDNESDAY | NOVEMBER 15 | 2023

7

Jordan's king rejects any Israeli plan to occupy the strip

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah rejected any plans by Israel to occupy parts of Gaza or to create security zones within the enclave, saying the root cause of the crisis was Israel's denial of Palestinians' legitimate rights, state media said on Monday.

In comments at the royal palace, the king was quoted as telling senior politicians that there could be "no military or security solution" to the conflict between Israel and the Palestine.

He said war-ravaged Gaza should not be severed by Israel from the other Palestinian territories.

The monarch said the "root of the crisis was Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories and its denial of Palestinians legitimate rights".

"The solution starts from there and any other path is doomed to failure and more of a cycle of violence and destruction," he said.

King Abdullah said he had long warned about Israeli violations in the West Bank, with which Jordan shares a border, and Israeli settler



Jordan's King Abdullah II

attacks on Palestinian civilians could "expand the conflict" and push the region "to the abyss".

Jordan is home to a large population of Palestinian refugees and their descendants who fear Israel could expel Palestinians en masse from the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where Israeli settler attacks on Palestinian inhabitants have surged since Hamas's October 7. Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said in an interview with public broadcaster Al Mamlaka that Israel had crossed "every legal, ethical and humanitarian red line in its barbaric war on Gazans."

— Reuters

Indonesian president urges Biden to help end 'atrocities'



Indonesian President Joko Widodo appeals to US President Joe Biden during a meeting in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, US. — Reuters

WASHINGTON: Indonesian President Joko Widodo pressed US President Joe Biden during a visit to the White House on Monday to do more to end "atrocities" in Gaza and help bring about a ceasefire.

"Indonesia appeals to the US to do more to stop the atrocities in Gaza," Widodo, the leader of the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation, said as the two presidents met in front of a roaring fire.

"Ceasefire is a must for the sake of humanity."

The Indonesian president had said on Sunday he would bring Biden a "very strong message" from a joint summit of Arab and Muslim leaders in Riyadh at the weekend which condemned Israel and called for a ceasefire.

Widodo had also said he would "deliver a specific message from President Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine, who asked me to convey it to President Biden," regarding the war.

Global concerns about the war in Gaza were on the agenda in Washington, as they will be in San Francisco later this week.

US officials had said that Biden would in turn urge his Indonesian counterpart to take a "larger role" in resolving the Middle East situation.

"I think it will be critical to hear the perspectives from Indonesia about the ongoing conflict in the Middle East," a senior US administration official said on Sunday in a call with reporters. — AFP

Led by Oman, GCC demands action to halt Israeli aggression

NEW YORK: The GCC ambassadors to the United Nations (UN) in New York, headed by the Sultanate of Oman, held a meeting with António Guterres, UN Secretary-General. The meeting, which was held at the UN headquarters, reviewed the latest developments on the Palestinian scene in light of the continued Israeli aggression against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

For his part, the UN secretary-general expressed his concern about the huge loss of civilian lives, especially women and children. He added that the UN lost many UNRWA employees. The UN secretary-general affirmed that UNRWA is in dire need of the support and donations of other member states of the world in light of the humanitarian needs and the acute shortage of medical and relief materials. He called on the international community to facilitate the arrival of aid to the



The GCC ambassadors to the United Nations (UN) pose for a photo after a meeting with António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, in New York. — ONA

Gaza Strip as quickly as possible to save lives and protect civilians.

For their part, the GCC ambassadors referred to the resolution issued by the extraordinary joint Arab-Islamic summit that concluded its deliberations in Riyadh. The summit condemned the brutal Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including Al Quds. The summit also called for confronting this aggression and addressing the humanitarian

catastrophe it causes, as well as endeavouring to end all illegal Israeli practices that perpetuate the occupation and deprive the Palestinian people of their rights, especially their right to freedom and an independent state with sovereignty over their entire national territory. During the meeting, the GCC ambassadors also reaffirmed the centrality of the Palestinian cause. They stressed that all Arab and Islamic countries stand united with all their capacities and capabilities

alongside the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle to liberate all their occupied territories and to fulfil all their inalienable rights, especially their right to self-determination and to live in their independent, sovereign state along the borders of 4 June 1967 with its capital Al Quds. The GCC ambassadors explained their vision that a just, lasting and comprehensive peace constitutes a strategic option and the only way to guarantee security and stability for all peoples of the region and protect them from cycles of violence and wars.

The ambassadors also reiterated their rejection of any attempt to mislead international public opinion by describing this retaliatory war as self-defence or justifying it under any pretext. For his part, the UN secretary-general stressed that the mission of the United Nations and its specialised agencies will not stop helping the Palestinian people. — ONA

Hospital buries 179 in 'mass grave' in Gaza compound

GAZA: Gaza's main hospital has been forced to bury scores of dead patients in a mass grave, its director said on Tuesday.

Israeli forces were at the gates of the sprawling Al Shifa Hospital they say sits atop an underground command base, but Palestinians deny the charge and doctors say thousands of people are stranded inside in horrific conditions.

"There are bodies littered in the hospital complex and there is no longer electricity at the morgues," said Al Shifa Hospital director Mohammad Abu Salmiyah, adding that 179 bodies had been interred so far.

"We were forced to bury them in a mass grave," he said, adding that seven babies and 29 intensive care patients were among those who had died after fuel for the hospital's generator ran out.

A witness said the smell of decomposing bodies was everywhere in the facility, but nighttime fighting and air strikes had been less intense compared to previous nights.

The United Nations believes that thousands, and perhaps more than 10,000 people -- patients, staff and displaced civilians -- may be inside and unable to escape because of fierce fighting nearby.

The health ministry in Gaza



A smoke plume erupts during Israeli bombardment in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP

says Israel's relentless assault has killed 11,240 people, mostly civilians, including thousands of children.

Israel's military says 47 of its troops have been killed in Gaza.

Israel's top diplomat acknowledged on Monday that his nation has "two or three weeks until international pressure really steps up".

Quoted by his spokesman, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen

added that Israel is working to "broaden the window of legitimacy, and the fighting will carry on for as long as necessary."

Israel's massive response have sparked protests around the world, with hundreds of thousands of people taking to the streets in the Middle East, Europe and beyond.

Israel's critics point to the toll of a blockade and near-relentless bombing campaign on long-

suffering civilians in Gaza.

International aid agencies speak of hundreds of thousands of people displaced and a rolling humanitarian catastrophe.

Israel has urged Palestinians to flee south from the heavy combat in the north of the besieged territory, and has agreed to daily pauses in military operations around specified "corridors" to allow the passage of fleeing civilians. — AFP

WHO says moving vulnerable patients 'impossible'

GENEVA: The World Health Organization insisted Tuesday that moving the most vulnerable patients from Gaza's Al Shifa Hospital has become an "impossible task".

The Israeli mission in Geneva had at the weekend slammed the WHO, the UN humanitarian agency OCHA and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for criticising Israel's month-long call for civilians and patients to leave the Palestinian enclave's main hospital.

Israel has faced growing international pressure over its

offensive the since the October 7.

"The international community could have facilitated the transfer of patients, but they did nothing, except call out Israel," the mission said.

But the WHO said moving the most fragile patients would inevitably lead to deaths.

"The reason we said that people can't be evacuated is first of all ... the people in the hospitals were very vulnerable, very sick. So moving them was an impossible task," WHO spokeswoman Margaret Harris told journalists in Geneva.

She said it would be "asking



Men walk as patients rest at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City. — AFP file photo

doctors and nurses to move people knowing that would kill them."

"And again, why would you need to move them? A hospital should never be under attack. A hospital is a place, a safe haven. This is agreed under international humanitarian law."

Doctors say thousands of people are stranded inside in horrific conditions. The ICRC said on X platform, that under international humanitarian law, "hospitals are protected because of their life-saving function for wounded and sick".

While it is possible for hospitals

to lose that protection under certain circumstances, "this is not a free licence to attack", it insisted.

Harris said there was a lack of healthcare capacity in southern Gaza, with most healthcare, especially the most complex, usually provided in the north.

She said many hospitals were unable to admit new patients.

Moving patients from the north "might kill them -- but also, where did they go? Where do you put them?" said Harris.

"There were very clear reasons why that was not something that was in any way feasible." — AFP

Recommended for classic enthusiasts



Rasha al Raisi
rashabooks@yahoo.com

The writer is a certified skills trainer and author of *The World According to Bahja*

Whenever I heard of Henry James’s novel *The Portrait of a Lady*, the storyline that always came to mind was of a lady getting her portrait painted by some artist while sharing her story.

I bought the book right after the Covid-19 pandemic’s lockdown was lifted and was immediately put off by its small print (40’s suck!). The book joined other small print companions till my cousin Taggy announced that she bought a copy herself and was dismayed by the size of the print too (buying books without checking the print size is a default that runs in our family!).

As a motivation for both of us to read the book, I suggested that we read it together as I haven’t had any reading competitions since my brother’s marriage. She liked the idea and agreed to it immediately although I knew that I won’t stand a chance at winning as Taggy was the classics’ fan and expert.

We started the competition and kept exchanging texts about how slow the first few chapters were. By the 10th chapter, Taggy gave up claiming sheer boredom while I – the tenacious Capricorn-continued reading till the end (it took almost two

months, as I kept oscillating between being busy and in the canny-be-bothered Scottish mood).

The Portrait of a Lady is the story of Isabel Archer, a young American woman, who goes to England to stay with her aunt after the death of her father. There, she meets her aunt’s family: the husband Daniel Touchette and her cousin Ralph. The family are wealthy and live in an estate called Garden court.

Everyone is charmed by Isabel’s independence and rebellious spirit, including Ralph’s good friend Lord Warburton who asks for her hand in marriage but she refuses.

Another suitor appears in the scene, this time it’s a wealthy American businessman called Caspar Goodwood. He had followed Isabel from America as he was in love with her and had asked her to marry him before leaving but she wasn’t sure.

Daniel Touchette dies and leaves a huge sum of money to Isabel. At that time, she meets her aunt’s friend Madam Merle who introduces her to a widower called Gilbert Osmond.

Despite all obvious flows in Osmond’s character, Isabel chooses to marry him and suffer a miserable fate. Even when the opportunity arises to abandon him and start new, she stays as a punishment for her bad choice.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY IS THE STORY OF ISABEL ARCHER, A YOUNG AMERICAN WOMAN, WHO GOES TO ENGLAND TO STAY WITH HER AUNT AFTER THE DEATH OF HER FATHER

As a woman, I couldn’t relate to Isabel Archer as I couldn’t understand neither her emotions nor the logic behind her decisions. However, I found other female characters such as Madam Merle and Henrietta interesting and well-built.

Pansy - Osmond’s daughter - is the character that I mostly empathised with as her strict upbringing left her with no personality. The male characters made more sense, especially Osmond the most hated and feared man in the book.

There are many themes that James highlights in the book, especially that of freedom and the choices we make. The female characters are free-spirited, independent, and progressive; as James emphasises that this is how the future looks like.

Published in 1881, it’s considered one of James’s well-known novels. James was inspired by the work of George Eliot as he was a fan of her writings.

Isabel Archer’s character is based on James’s cousin Minny Temple, who was charming, curious and brave but died young of tuberculosis.

The book was adapted four times into a movie, the latest was in 2009 starring Nicole Kidman and John Malkovich. *The Portrait of a Lady* is richly textured and a well imagined tale. Recommended for the classic enthusiasts.

Sunak gambles on return of Cameron

ELIZABETH PIPER, ALISTAIR SMOUT AND ANDREW MACASKILL

Few expected David Cameron’s return to government, but his appointment is one that British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak hopes will signal to wavering supporters that the Conservatives are not lurching to the right to win an election expected next year.

As well as firing his interior minister, Suella Braverman, after she published an unauthorised article criticising the police’s handling of protests, Sunak has used a wider reshuffle to bring back the prime minister who campaigned to remain in the European Union in a referendum on membership he called in 2016.

It’s a risky strategy - while welcomed by centrist lawmakers, the party’s right senses the end of their increased dominance, built during the wars over EU membership, with one fearing the appointment amounted to a “Brexit surrender”. “He has appointed the man who led the ‘remain’ campaign and who has got huge problems over his association with Greensill,” said a Conservative lawmaker on the right of the party, referring to Cameron’s lobbying work for a now-collapsed supply chain finance firm.

“Is he spoiling for a fight with Conservatives?”

The decision to fire Braverman removes from the cabinet one of the most prominent supporters of leaving the EU and means even more of Sunak’s top ministers supported remaining in the bloc in 2016. Out of the 29 cabinet roles, at least 16 backed remaining in the EU, compared with 10 who supported leaving. Sunak backed Brexit.

Since he became Britain’s third prime minister in as many months, Sunak has tried to keep all wings of the party happy - reappointing Braverman, a favourite on the right, to her interior minister role just a week after she was fired in the final days of his predecessor Liz Truss’s brief premiership.

He has also tried to portray himself as a tough decision-maker and agent of change, ready to take on “establishment attitudes” on the environment and crime despite the Conservatives having been in power for more than a decade.

Sunak’s party still languishes around 20 points behind the opposition Labour Party before an election that must happen by January 2025.

He has resisted the right’s calls to cut taxes before the next election, and his moves could mean Sunak creates a hostile and vocal lobby sitting behind him in parliament. — Reuters



Abdullah Gül

The writer is a former president of the Republic of Türkiye

The rules-based international order is collapsing in Gaza

In 2007, I found myself in a car with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and then-Israeli President Shimon Peres en route to Türkiye’s Grand National Assembly. During their historic visit to Ankara, which I had the privilege of hosting, both leaders addressed the Turkish parliament, advocating peace and a two-state solution. This was just two years after Türkiye launched its Industry for Peace project, which sought to rehabilitate the Erez industrial park in Gaza. When my Palestinian and Israeli counterparts and I endorsed this initiative, we were all optimistic that developing the Palestinian economy would pave a path towards sustainable peace in the region.

Regrettably, this dream was extinguished by Israel’s decision that year to impose a land, sea, and air blockade on Gaza. Sixteen years later, having witnessed the events of October 7 and its aftermath, I am once again overcome by disappointment and sorrow over this lost opportunity for lasting peace.

October 7 marks a major turning point in Israeli-Palestinian relations, with far-reaching domestic, regional, and global implications. At this critical juncture, we must ask ourselves: Are we truly committed to maintaining a rules-based international order rooted in shared values, or are we prepared for a fragmented and polarised world where these values are obsolete?

Make no mistake: I unequivocally condemn the loss of civilian lives on both sides. Killing and abduction of Israeli civilians must not be endorsed under any circumstances. At the same time, the disproportionate response of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu’s government will not only lead to more violence and suffering across the region but also fuel the spread of hatred and division around the world. Ultimately, it is civilians who suffer the consequences.

The tragic events unfolding in



Men use their hands to drink rainwater dripping from the roof of a tent amid water shortages at a school run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East in Rafah. – AFP

OCTOBER 7 ATTACK ON ISRAEL, AND ISRAEL’S RESPONSE TO IT, ARE A MAJOR TEST OF OUR COMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL LAW

Gaza should not come as a surprise. Neglecting the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has never been sustainable, especially as the plight of Palestinians worsens by the day. Israel’s ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories, aggravated by its illegal and pernicious expansion of settlements in the West Bank, contravenes United Nations Security Council resolutions, undermines the foundational principles of international law, and violates established human-rights norms.

Moreover, the ongoing blockade of Gaza has segregated and traumatised the enclave’s 2.3 million inhabitants, depriving them of basic necessities. Making matters worse, the West has grown accustomed to this grim status quo. This historic miscalculation has

stoked Palestinians’ anger, setting the stage for the current conflict.

In 1999, as a member of parliament on a fact-finding mission to the Gaza Strip established by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, I saw the helplessness in the eyes of Palestinian children and women. Our report highlighted the untenable living conditions and mounting frustration among the Palestinian populace. In my subsequent visits as Türkiye’s foreign minister and president, it was evident that the situation had worsened, as the political rifts driving this enduring conflict became even more entrenched.

Over the past five decades, the international community has failed to champion the only viable solution: the establishment of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace. As opportunities slipped by, conditions on the ground deteriorated rapidly. Today, Palestinian children are reportedly writing farewell letters to their families as they prepare for the possibility of losing their lives in an Israeli bombardment. This state of affairs is bound to breed even more despair and animosity.

@Project Syndicate, 2023

Live healthfully at every stage of life!

Come November, the global community joins hands with a myriad of activities, including in-person events and awareness campaigns, to shine a spotlight on the escalating prevalence of diabetes, its impact, and also to enlighten people on practical tips for prevention.

Diabetes cases have increased from 4.7 to 8.5 per cent in the adult population globally, and its prevalence has almost doubled. According to the International Diabetes Foundation, in 2021, diabetes caused 6.7 million deaths, and 1 in 11 adults, or 463 million, were living with diabetes in 2022. It's expected to increase to 643 million in 2030 and 783 million in 2045.

About 44 per cent of adults with diabetes, or about 240 million people, do not know they have diabetes. Most of them have type 2 diabetes, which can be prevented with a few lifestyle changes.

Due to not knowing the signs and symptoms and not getting an early diagnosis, around 541 million adults are at risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

“This has become a top global concern, prompting the need to reduce the risk through awareness programmes and quality diabetes education platforms. The aim is to educate individuals on managing and preventing diabetes in its early stages”, the Foundation points out in a report.

Type 2 diabetes is a condition that can be prevented and managed by adopting proper lifestyle habits. Unfortunately, all too many people struggle to break away from a sedentary lifestyle and ensure that they engage in ample physical activity each day.

“Sedentary lifestyles make it one of the more serious yet insufficiently addressed public health problems of our time”, states a World Health



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

Organisation (WHO) report. This has worrying implications for future health, as physical inactivity is one of the main risk factors for death, it adds.

The number of people leading sedentary lifestyles is increasing due to a rise in occupational behaviours such as long office hours, increased use of electronic devices, and travel. Accordingly, the prevalence of relevant non-communicable diseases has registered a steep increase.

Studies show that 31 per cent of the global population consists of inactive individuals over the age of 15. This contributes to the deaths of 3.2 million people annually. It is estimated that nearly two-thirds of children are also insufficiently active, with serious implications for their future health.

While describing sedentary lifestyles as being among the 10 leading causes of death and disability in the world, the United Nations' health agency reveals that of the premature deaths, 86 per cent are estimated to occur in low- and middle-income countries.

Children, adults, and the elderly are all vulnerable to risk factors, whether from unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and exposure to tobacco smoke, or the harmful use of alcohol or air pollution.

Among the preventive measures recommended by WHO are moderate physical activity for up to 150 minutes of moderate exercise per week or 75 minutes each week of strenuous physical activity, tobacco cessation, and healthy nutrition. While ultimate responsibility may rest with each individual, our lifestyle affects us not just individually but also has an impact on our surroundings and, thus, on society.

Living healthfully at every stage of life means being aware of your body, its conditions, and its changing demands as you grow older!

'BABY JANE' FOR AUCTION!



The skull of a Triceratops dinosaur, nicknamed 'Baby Jane', from the Jurassic period, from South Dakota, United States, is displayed before its auction at Christie's auction house in Paris, France, on Tuesday. – Reuters

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE LEADING SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES IS INCREASING DUE TO A RISE IN OCCUPATIONAL BEHAVIOURS

Justice for street vendors

A wave of evictions recently hit in Dakar's bustling Liberté 6 market, a roughly mile-long commercial hub that has served its community for more than 20 years. Hundreds of street vendors' stalls were bulldozed to make way for a new bus system. Authorities gave prior notice and an indemnity to help with the loss of business, but did not address the real problem: the lack of trading space.

Street vending is a legitimate economic activity that provides livelihoods for millions and accounts for a large share of urban employment in many cities across the Global South. Nearly 59,000 street vendors work in Dakar, accounting for 13.8 per cent of total employment, while metropolitan Lima has roughly 450,000, comprising 8.8 per cent of total employment. And these numbers are likely growing as the informal economy absorbs many of those left unemployed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is a livelihood that requires one resource above all: access to busy, pedestrian-friendly, well-connected, and affordable public space. But government authorities focus instead on “cleaning up” cities, which means clearing the streets of vendors. In their view, informal traders are a nuisance: they litter and clutter streets, obstruct urban mobility, and occupy precious space that could be used for modernisation or beautification projects, or sold to deep-pocketed developers and transformed into oases of leisure for urban elites.

The failure to provide street vendors with the space they need is



Teresa Marchiori

The writer is an adjunct professor at American University, is an access to justice lawyer at WIEGO

GOVERNMENTS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH HAVE RUSHED TO “CLEAN UP” CITIES AND ADOPT STRATEGIES TO FORMALISE THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN THE WAKE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. YET SUCH EFFORTS OFTEN FAIL TO RECOGNISE PUBLIC SPACE AS A WORKPLACE AND CRIMINALISE THE AFFECTED WORKERS

short-sighted, at best (eviction campaigns never solve the “problem” – workers often have no choice but to set up shop again). In 2015, the International Labour Organization recommended that subsistence workers be permitted to use public space as member states move from informal to formal economies. Yet time and again, governments have implemented narrow policies and legal frameworks that curtail access.

In fact, this pattern has become embedded in policymakers' strategies to formalise the informal economy. These strategies, focused mainly on getting informal workers to register and pay taxes, can provide important opportunities, including access to social protection, financing, and professional training. But they almost never recognise public space as a workplace, perpetuating the status quo. Instead, they build complex structures on shaky foundations – namely, punitive legal and policy frameworks that criminalise informal trading and deny the most vulnerable access to economic activities.

Proposals to relocate street vendors to enclosed markets are often empty promises – or implemented with little or no consultation with the affected individuals, resulting in poorly planned markets far from the city's commercial hubs and difficult to reach. Vendors either

shun or quickly abandon them, returning instead to the streets from which they were removed.

Acutely aware of their precarity, street vendors usually have one goal: to trade without fear of harassment or eviction. “I know we are not allowed to work here, but I have a family to feed,” said an informal worker selling mobile phones from a small kiosk in Guédiawaye, a municipality on the outskirts of Dakar, in an interview in 2022 conducted by my organisation, WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing). “All I want is to be able to work and make a living,” added the man, who asked not to be named. Pointing to an empty

patch of land across the street, he said, “With other vendors, we asked the municipality to authorise us to sell there, but we got no response.”

The United Nations' New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016, recognises that public space can function as a workplace reality and supports measures that allow for the “best possible commercial use of street-level floors, fostering both formal and informal local markets and commerce.” A legal framework that guarantees informal vendors access to this space must underpin any formalisation strategy. In fact, it is a logical prerequisite for all other aspects of formalisation, like registration and taxation.

Of course, as a scarce resource, urban public space is highly sought after, and there are many competing interests. But its effective management requires input from workers in informal employment, as various initiatives have demonstrated. In India, for example, the 2014 Street Vendors Act established “town vending committees,” consisting of government officials, sellers, and others, to make decisions about trading locations and monitor evictions and relocations. In the 1990s, the Lima municipality involved street vendors from the outset in its relocation planning process to ensure that they had proper access to infrastructure and customers. Between 2009 and 2011, the Dakar municipality started an effective dialogue with informal traders about relocation.

These examples are far from perfect. The inclusive planning process was discontinued in Lima (though it did result in successful relocations), as were the dialogues in Dakar, while India's Street Vendors Act is only partly implemented. But they show that the inclusive management of public space is possible.

Fair distribution of public space is crucial to recognising street vendors, legalising their access to a workplace, and protecting their livelihoods. That will not happen unless informal traders participate in – and meaningfully influence – the policies and regulations that affect them. @Project Syndicate, 2023



Street vending is a legitimate economic activity that provides livelihoods for millions.

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Zverev battles back to overpower Alcaraz

Medvedev prevails in ATP Finals Russian derby

TURIN, Italy: Alexander Zverev battled back from a set down to beat Carlos Alcaraz 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 6-4 at the ATP Finals on Monday as Daniil Medvedev won a Russian derby against Andrey Rublev in straight sets 6-4, 6-2.

Germany's Zverev, a two-time winner at the year-ending tournament, put on a powerful display to see off world number two Alcaraz who is not on top form after returning from injury at the end of last month.

Zverev is tough opposition on hard courts like the one at the Pala Alpitour in Turin and made full use of his height and power in the Red Group clash to see off Alcaraz who looks far from being the ageless Novak Djokovic's main rival for the title.

The 26-year-old Zverev rattled off 16 aces and was only broken once over the course of an impressive win in which he hit more winners and made significantly fewer unforced errors than out-of-sorts Alcaraz.

"In the beginning of this year, I was nowhere near at his level," Zverev told reporters.

"I'm just happy to be back at the level where I'm competitive with those guys, where I feel like I can win, I feel like I can compete for tournaments again."

Wimbledon champion Alcaraz has struggled with lower back and left foot problems which had kept him out of action since the Shanghai Masters in early October until the Paris Masters.

He was dumped out early in the French capital by Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin and flagged towards the end of a bruising contest with giant Zverev, the number seven seed in Turin.

However Alcaraz insisted that he was not struggling back to form after his lay-off.

"I'm one of the players who has played most matches on tour... I feel good physically," insisted

Alcaraz. "I don't think I need more matches (to be in top condition)."

Before Zverev's win Novak Djokovic was presented with the trophy for finishing the season as world number one.

'THE PINNACLE'

The 24-time Grand Slam winner secured that position after winning his thrilling Green Group opener with Holger Rune on Sunday, a match which lasted more than three hours.

Djokovic is red-hot favourite to claim his seventh Finals title which would put him out of his own as the record winner, one ahead of retired great and old rival Roger Federer.

"Winning Grand Slams and being number one in the world are probably the pinnacles of the sport," said Djokovic on court.

Medvedev moved above Zverev — his next opponent — to top the Red Group with a straightforward win over his childhood friend Rublev who once again had the worst of a match between the two Russians.

Third seed Medvedev, who has five titles to his name this season, has now won seven of his nine matches with Rublev and needed just one hour and 31 minutes to prevail.

The match turned on the game which would end up handing Medvedev the first set, a 17-point thriller which took more than 10 minutes to resolve and featured four break and set points.

Rublev has had a fine season and won this season's Monte Carlo Masters, but struggles to step up when it counts.

And he lost his head after losing the first set, giving up his serve in the first game of the second and from there allowing Medvedev to cruise to victory to take charge in the group. — AFP



BWF's flag-ship programme 'Shuttle Time' comes to Muscat

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Oman Racket Sports Committee (ORSC), in coordination with Badminton World Federation (BWF) and Badminton Asia, organised series of 'Shuttle Time' events and activities including Shuttle Time for teachers, Shuttle Time for lecturers and Shuttle Time for schools.

'Shuttle Time' is an international programme launched by BWF in 2012. According to BWF, it offers school teachers access to free resources, training and equipment, which support the teaching of enjoyable, safe and inclusive badminton activities to children aged 5-15 years old.

Shuttle Time lessons are designed to provide children with a positive image of badminton through many opportunities to have fun, engage with others and experience success. Schools badminton programme supports the principle that children should lead a healthy and active life, both in and out of school. BWF's goal is to make badminton one of the world's most popular and accessible school sports.

The programme is currently

being implemented in more than 140 countries in partnership with BWF's Continental Confederations and Member Associations.

The first main event for Shuttle Time run by ORSC was Shuttle Time for teachers. More than 20 teachers representing different schools around the Sultanate of Oman took part in the three-day course which was delivered by Sambenthana Sivaperumal, Senior Development Manager at Badminton Asia. The participants learned various proper approaches on coaching the junior players besides learning different theoretical and technical theories and enhancing teachers experience on some main fundamentals of badminton.

Amna al Ajmi, one of the participants, affirmed that she obtained the desired experience in coaching badminton. "I will try to transfer the learned knowledge in this course to my colleagues in the school and then to the students. We are working closely with Al Suwaiq club to organise a tournament for badminton in the club and gather the school students. The planned date is during the summer holidays," she said.



The participants at the Shuttle Time for teachers course delivered by Badminton Asia's Sambenthana Sivaperumal, with officials of Oman Racket Sports Committee.



TATUM LEADS CELTICS RALLY PAST KNICKS, BUCKS PIP BULLS

NEW YORK: Jayson Tatum and Kristaps Porzingis led a second-half fightback as the Boston Celtics overpowered the New York Knicks 114-98 in the NBA on Monday.

Tatum finished with 35 points — including 17 in the fourth quarter — while Porzingis added 21 to fire the Celtics to their eighth win of the season.

“First half, they were scoring at will, but second half we started making stops,” Tatum said after the Celtics bagged their third straight victory.

“We’ve had three games in four days, now we go out on the road for a week and play some good teams — hopefully we can keep it going,” Tatum added.

New York caused Boston problems in the first half, edging into an eight-point lead in the second quarter with Jalen Brunson and Julius Randle both influential at Boston’s TD Garden.

But Jaylen Brown drained a superb three-pointer from 25 feet on the stroke of half-time to cut the Knicks’ lead to just one point at 53-52 heading into the break.

That parting shot from Brown was to herald a third quarter rally from Boston that ultimately took the game away from the Knicks, who had been chasing a fourth straight victory.

Porzingis led the third quarter onslaught with 11 points from 3-of-3 shooting, including two from outside the arc, along with 3-of-3 from the free throw line.

Tatum then turned it on in the



Jayson Tatum (0) shoots against Josh Hart (3) at TD Garden. – USA Today Sports

fourth quarter with his 17-point display as the Celtics outscored the Knicks 30-22 in the final frame to complete victory.

Tatum finished with five three-pointers throughout the game from 13-of-23 shooting, with six rebounds and seven assists. Porzingis’s 21-point haul included three from three-point range, while Brown had 22 points, five rebounds and six assists.

Brunson led the Knicks scorers with 26 points while Randle finished with 25. Josh Hart added 16 points with Quentin Grimes chipping in 12 points.

“I like that we’re finding different ways to win,” Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said afterwards.

The Celtics improved to 8-2 to remain second in the Eastern Conference behind the Philadelphia 76ers (8-1).

Elsewhere on Monday, the Toronto Raptors pulled off a remarkable comeback to snatch victory over the Washington Wizards, overturning a 23-point second-half deficit to win 111-107.

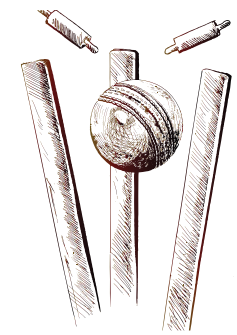
The Wizards looked to be cruising to victory after roaring into a 64-45 half-time lead. But the Raptors flipped the script after half-time, outscoring Washington 66-43 in the final two quarters to take the win.

In Milwaukee, 35 points from Giannis Antetokounmpo helped the Bucks bounce back from consecutive defeats on the road to clinch a 118-109 win over the Chicago Bulls. — AFP

What if both Rohit and Virat fail together?



ANIS SAJJAN



All set for the big semifinal on Wednesday between India and New Zealand at Wankhede and the fans are curious if Indian captain Rohit Sharma will play the same brand of cricket which has been bang bang and aggressive from ball one or play with more calmness since it’s a knockout and won’t take risk as there is no second chance if it fails.

Barring two games which was the first match against Australia in Chennai and Sri Lanka in Mumbai, Rohit has given India good starts in the rest seven games scoring 503 runs at an astonishing strike rate of 121.49 which has made it easy for the rest of the batsman to follow. He has hit 60 sixes already in this World Cup and has not been shy in going after the bowlers stepping

out and charging the fast bowlers.

Similarly, Virat Kohli too has been in great form scoring 594 runs at an average of 99 and both these stars have been the main scorers for Team India. In case Rohit has failed, Virat has scored and if Virat has not clicked then Rohit has taken care and made sure India have either chased down a target or put up a good score. There has not been a single game where both have failed, and Indian camp would be definitely wary of it. Yes, the likes of Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul all have contributed but if comes a scenario where both Rohit and Virat fail, then will the others soak up the pressure?

Another statistics which must be worrying all Indian fans is the past record of Rohit in the knockouts. In 2015, If Virat fell for just one, Rohit had scored 34. In the 2017 Champions Trophy final against Pakistan, Rohit went for a duck and Virat fell for just 5. In the last semifinal in 2019 both Indian biggies fell for just one. In the all the above three games India were chasing and lost the games.

When speaking to Zaheer Khan, I had brought this topic what if both stars fail which has been the case in all three knockouts, Zaheer had said India needs to be prepared for it and must have Plan B or Plan C in such a scenario and need to tackle it. Easier said than done, it needs to be seen how the semifinal pans out, but Indian fans will be hoping the juggernaut continues and India make it to the final.

Bank Muscat beat AER, Vanderlande trounce OCT Ruwi by 93 runs

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat dominated AER claiming victory by 5 wickets on Friday in the A Division League 2023-24 powered by Khimji Ramdas LLC on OCA Turf 2.

Bank Muscat wrapped AER for 72 courtesy three-wicket haul from Adnan Ul Haq, Deepak Kumar and Ali Hussnain.

In response, Bank Muscat chased down the target courtesy Ali Raza’s 36 n.o to take Bank Muscat over the line by 5 wickets. Syed Amir Ali picked 2 wickets.

Brief scores: AER 72 all out in 23.4 overs (Adnan Ul Haq 3/6, Deepak Kumar 3/19, Ali Hussnain 3/24) lost to Bank Muscat 73/5 in 18.3 overs (Ali Raza 36(48) 5x4; Syed Amir Ali 2/5) by 5 wickets.

Vanderlande trounced OCT Ruwi by 93 runs on Saturday in another match of A Division League 2023-24 powered by

Khimji Ramdas LLC on OCA Turf 2.

Ciril Sebastian’s 73 with four boundaries and four maximums along with contributions from Abdulgani Sheikh (41) and Aravind Ramesh (36) led Vanderlande post a total of 223. Mohammed al Balushi picked 3 wickets conceding only 12 runs in his quota of ten overs.

In reply, OCT Ruwi only managed to score 130 courtesy Shoaib al Balushi’s 41 and Mohammed al Balushi’s 32. Aiyappan B claimed a fifer while Haja Hussain picked 3 wickets to consolidate a 93 runs victory for Vanderlande.

Brief scores: Vanderlande 223/9 in 50 overs (Ciril Sebastian 73(80) 4x4,4x6; Mohammed al Balushi 3/12) beat OCT Ruwi 130 all out in 30.2 overs (Shoaib al Balushi 41(38) 8x4; Aiyappan B 5/38, Haja Hussain 3/14) by 93 runs.



Aiyappan B, Ciril Sebastian and Abdulghani S of Vanderlande.

OCA concludes third Gary Kirsten Camp



MUSCAT: Oman Cricket’s relentless commitment to providing world-class coaching to young cricket enthusiasts in the Sultanate of Oman has manifested in the success of the third edition of the Gary Kirsten Camp (GKC).

The four-day camp, held at the Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds in Al Amerat recently, witnessed a satisfactory turnout, with a total of 46 players, including 26 in the under-14 category and the rest in the under-19 group.

Evert Laubscher, Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) manager, said, “The third GKC edition turned out to be a success with a good number of participants attending.”

He highlighted the consistent progress observed in the young cricketers who participated, a testament to the effectiveness

of the world-class coaching provided.

The camp featured distinguished coaches from the Gary Kirsten Centre (GKC), including Jimmy Cook and Garreth Von Hoesslin.

Assisted by four OCA coaches, the GKC coaches emphasised the development of match temperament, organising four T20 matches at the Al Amerat grounds for the under-19 cricketers.

Laubscher noted that the players gained valuable experience facing match situations, contributing to the enhancement of their cricketing skills.

Alkesh Joshi, OC treasurer, was impressed with the growing success of the GKC, noting that many children attended for the third time, underlying the enduring benefits of such world-

class camps.

He stated, “Our goal is to ensure top-class coaching for young cricketers in Oman, and the positive response to the GKC aligns with this objective.”

Joshi revealed the board’s eagerness to continue the partnership with Gary Kirsten, with plans for the next camp in early 2024.

He said, “We hope to build on this excellent partnership, which is helping our players develop into better players.”

The success of the GKC camps has been a consistent theme since October 2022 when OC first collaborated with the renowned South African cricketer Gary Kirsten.

Notably, the second camp in February 2023 saw Gary Kirsten personally visiting Muscat, and

lauding the commitment of OC in providing top-class lessons for Omani cricketers.

During Kirsten’s maiden visit, he highlighted the pivotal role of parents in nurturing young cricketers.

Since his retirement in 2004, Kirsten, a former opening batter, has dedicated himself to running GKC, coaching international teams and franchises, achieving significant success, including leading India to a World Cup title in 2011 and mentoring Gujarat Titans to inaugural success in IPL 2022.

Oman Cricket looks forward to the continued success of its partnership with Gary Kirsten, aiming to further elevate the skills and potential of Oman cricketers through future editions of the Gary Kirsten Camp.

1920

SEND USD WORLDWIDE
FOR BUSINESS, EDUCATION,
FIXED DEPOSITS & MORE

OMR 4 SERVICE FEE

SIMPLE | SECURE | SWIFT

OMAN'S 1st EXCHANGE

SEND MONEY TO ANY
BANK ACCOUNT IN UAE FOR
CORPORATES AND INDIVIDUALS

OMR 2.5 SERVICE FEE

PURSHOTTAM KANJI
EXCHANGE

شركة برشوتم
كانجي للمرافعة

www.pkanjiexchange.com

NZ misery all in the past for Rohit

MUMBAI: India captain Rohit Sharma insisted his side's record of big game defeats by New Zealand was "all in the past" as they prepared to face the Black Caps in a World Cup semifinal.

Tournament hosts India head into Wednesday's showpiece match at opening batsman Rohit's Wankhede Stadium home ground as the outstanding side of the 10-term event, having won all nine of their round-robin games to qualify for the knockout phase in style.

But four years ago a team featuring several of the same players, including Rohit and star batsman Virat Kohli, were members of an India side that suffered an agonising 18-run defeat by New Zealand in a rain-affected World Cup semifinal spanning two days in Manchester.

New Zealand also defeated India in the inaugural 2021 World Test Championship final.

The Wankhede was the venue when India defeated Sri Lanka in a 2011 final to win their second World Cup title following a 1983 triumph in England under captain Kapil Dev.

The build-up to Wednesday's game has seen much speculation about whether Rohit's men can join those celebrated teams as World Cup champions of whether New Zealand, who gave India a run for their money before going down by four wickets in pool play, will prove their downfall once again.

Rohit, however, insisted his focus was firmly on the here and now. "That's the beauty of this team," he told a pre-match press conference on Tuesday.



India's Virat Kohli during practice at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. — Reuters

"None of the guys were born when we won our first World Cup and then, when we won our second World Cup in 2011, half of the guys were not even playing the game."

He added: "This current crop of players is very much into what is happening today, what can happen tomorrow...The focus is

on how they can get better as a player, what they can bring to the team and the things they can improve."

MANDATORY PRESSURE

Rohit said while a semifinal was a high pressure situation, his side were always under intense scrutiny in cricket-crazy India.

"If you are an Indian cricketer,

then whatever the format, whatever the tournament, there is always pressure. Because you hear the same voice from everywhere that we have to win the match tomorrow...So, I think in terms of pressure, it becomes mandatory for Indian cricketers.

"There is pressure, but we have tried so hard in all these years to keep that aside and focus more on our game, strategy, and the way we play," he added.

Before this World Cup, Rohit spoke about having "unfinished business", with the 36-year-old saying on Tuesday: "Now it's just about business, the pure business of getting the job done for the team."

Kohli, who now needs just one more century to surpass the record of 49 one-day international hundreds he shares with former India team-mate Sachin Tendulkar, is this tournament's leading batsman with 594 runs — and Rohit is not far behind on 503. India also boast a formidable fast-bowling line-up in Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj and Mohammed Shami, and two fine spinners in Ravindra Jadeja and Kuldeep Yadav.

But Rohit said he was well aware of the threat posed by New Zealand, beaten finalists at the last two World Cups. New Zealand captain Kane Williamson is coming into form after injury and the Black Caps' attack will be led by experienced left-arm fast bowler Trent Boult.

"They are probably the most disciplined team, they play their cricket very smartly, they understand the opposition very well," said Rohit. — AFP

Tour de France to start in Lille in 2025

Paris: The 2025 Tour de France will start in the northern city of Lille, the organisers of cycling's most famous race announced on Tuesday.

The opening stage has been held in Lille, near the Belgian border, twice before in 1960 and 1994.

The past two editions of the Tour, which started in 1903, have taken place

abroad, in Copenhagen and Bilbao.

Next year's race will take off from Florence, Italy and for the first time it will end in Nice and not Paris, due to the Olympic Games taking place in the French capital.

Further details will be released on November 30 by organisers, Amaury sport organisation. — AFP

سالونباس
Salonpas

بخاخ
سهل الاستخدام وذو تأثير بارد وسريع
SPRAY
EASY TO USE, FAST COOLING EFFECT

MAZOOON PHARMACY L.L.C
PO Box: 24, Jibroo, PC: 114, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: 24814040 / 24819500
Fax: 24819494
Email: headoffice@mazoonph.com
www.mazoonph.com

/mazoonph

@mazoonph

mazoonph

Recall Date: 15/11/2023

TOYOTA
HIGHLANDER

Brand of Commodity*	Year of Production**	Number of Affected Commodities*
TOYOTA HIGHLANDER	March 14, 2023 - June 2, 2023	33

*Not all vehicles in this production period, are affected.
Subject to revision, based on the information received from manufacturer, from time to time.

Recall consequence

The steering column assembly in the subject vehicles contains electrical connections to the driver's airbag module housed in a spiral cable assembly, which includes a Flexible Flat Cable (FFC). Due to an insufficient weld condition of the FFC to the spiral cable's bus bar, there is a possibility that the FFC can separate, resulting in one or more open circuits connected through the FFC. This separation could occur on the circuit that provides connectivity to the driver's airbag module. If connectivity is lost, the SRS warning light will illuminate and the driver's airbag could become deactivated, causing it to not deploy in the event of a crash of the type that would cause deployment. As a result, the vehicles may not comply with some requirements of local regulations where driver's airbag deployment is needed. This could result in an increased risk of injury to the driver in a crash.

Recall Action

To inspect and replace spiral cable if necessary

To check the serial Numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website for Recalls & Warnings: <http://recall.pacp.gov.om>

Saud Bahwan Automotive LLC
C.R. 1703412
Contact details: Toll free - 800730000
Working days: Sunday - Thursday
Working Time: 8:00 - 17:00 hrs.

هيئة حماية المستهلك
Consumer Protection Authority
www.pacp.gov.om

خط المستهلك
Consumer line
80079009
80077997

Recall Date: 15/11/2023

VW

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
Volkswagen - Passat	2007	63

Recall consequence

Because of high air humidity and temperature fluctuations. As a result, fragments from the generator housing can come loose and inject the vehicle occupants in an accident with a deployment of the front airbag.

Recall Action

Replacement of front airbags.

To check the serial Numbers of the affected commodities, please visit the website for Recalls & Warnings: <http://recall.pacp.gov.om>

هيئة حماية المستهلك
Consumer Protection Authority
www.pacp.gov.om

خط المستهلك
Consumer line
80079009
80077997

During Official Working Hours
Contact Number +968 22845100

المتحدة للسيارات
Premium Motors

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.



Closer than you think
Over 100 branches, and more than 300
ATMs/CDMs/FFMs/MFKs to serve you



New logistics hub
launched at Muscat
International Airport



NASRULAH AL AJMI
MUSCAT, NOV 14

A new logistics facility has been introduced at Muscat International Airport, signalling a significant stride by leading international logistics players in the enhancement of the Sultanate of Oman's logistical capabilities.

This strategically positioned facility near Muscat International Airport is poised to play a central role in streamlining shipping processes, emphasising efficiency and precision in handling packages, says multinational logistics and courier company Aramex.

The inauguration of this facility on November 14 was attended by relevant stakeholders, including government officials and private sector partners, highlighting the collaborative efforts in advancing Oman's logistics sector. Beyond its immediate operational impact, the facility is expected to contribute to the local job market by creating new employment opportunities, particularly for the youth. This, in turn, is anticipated to support economic growth and community development in Oman.

The facility, equipped with state-of-the-art sorting and processing technology, will

enable expeditious delivery times and optimise logistics management.

Notably, its location near the airport is expected to contribute to faster and more efficient shipping operations. In addition to its logistical functions, the facility will serve as a customer service centre, offering in-person assistance and swift support for customer inquiries.

This multi-functional approach aligns with the broader goal of improving the overall customer experience in logistics services. Security is a paramount concern in the logistics sector, and the facility addresses this through continuous CCTV surveillance, strict access controls, and robust security protocols.

These measures are designed to ensure the safety and protection of packages and sensitive information, fostering peace of mind for customers.

The introduction of this logistics facility underscores Oman's commitment to advancing its logistical infrastructure, with a focus on efficiency, security and customer-centric services.

As the country continues to invest in and strengthen its logistics capabilities, it positions itself for further economic growth and competitiveness in the global market.

British firm wins contract to
master-plan Omani spaceport

New landmark: NASCOM
picks UK Launch Services Ltd
to design Etlaq Spaceport in
Duqm

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 14

In a major development for the future of space exploration in the Middle East, the National Aerospace Services Company (NASCOM) of Oman has awarded the first major contract for its Etlaq spaceport in Duqm, to UK Launch Services Ltd (UK LSL).

The award was formalised at a signing ceremony held recently at the British Embassy in Muscat, attended by Dr Liane Saunders, the British Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, along with HH Azzan bin Kais al Said, the Chairman of NASCOM, and Andy Bradford, the founder and CEO of UK LSL.

UK LSL will be responsible for designing the official master plan for the Etlaq spaceport, which is projected to be one of the most advanced spaceports in the world.

NASCOM has been meticulously laying the groundwork for this innovative spaceport over the past six months, engaging with both local and international stakeholders to set the stage for a project of unparalleled significance.

The Etlaq spaceport is an ambitious and visionary project that promises to make a significant mark on the global space industry. It is located in the Wilayat of Duqm on Oman's southeast coast, and is ideally positioned for a variety of space



Illustration of the future launch site

launch missions. The spaceport will also feature a range of state-of-the-art facilities and services, including a launch pad, assembly and testing facilities, and a mission control centre.

NASCOM believes that the Etlaq spaceport will play a vital role in promoting the development of the space industry in Oman and the wider Middle East region.

The spaceport will also serve as a major hub for international space exploration, attracting companies and organisations from around the world.

In addition to the engineering consultancy contract, NASCOM has also been able to secure seed funding for the Etlaq spaceport project from key institutional investors within the Sultanate of Oman.

This is a significant milestone for NASCOM, and it demonstrates the strong support for the project from both the public and private sectors.

NASCOM aims to begin breaking ground at the Etlaq spaceport site by the beginning of the second quarter of 2024, as part of a 24-month development plan for the first phase of the project.

The company believes that the spaceport will be operational by 2026, and that it will play a major role in the future of space exploration.

The Etlaq spaceport is a truly groundbreaking project, and it is one that has the potential to transform the global space industry.

NASCOM and UK LSL are committed to making the Etlaq

spaceport a success, and they are confident that it will play a vital role in the future of space exploration.

The award comes on the heels of Monday's announcement of the successful launch of Oman's first satellite, Aman-1, on board Falcon 9, a first-ever orbital class rocket capable of re-flight.

The landmark achievement, spearheaded by ETCO Space, an Oman-based emerging technology innovator, is supported by SpaceX: an American aerospace manufacturer and space transport services company; SatRev: Polish nanosatellite manufacturer and operator and TUATARA: specialists in advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI), data analytics and cognitive technology solutions.

Youth Centre hosts freelancer empowerment forum

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Youth Centre held a freelancer empowerment forum on Monday November 13 at its headquarters in Muscat.

The forum, "Tamakun", is part of the Centre's collaborative Empowerment Programme for Freelancers with Oman Oil Marketing Company, aimed at supporting young adults who are interested in freelancing.

Speaking to the Observer, Acting Managing Director of the Centre, Maryam bint Nasser al Kharbooshi, highlighted the significance of the event in empowering young freelancers. "The Youth Center recognises the importance of developing

the talents, capabilities, and creating opportunities for [young freelancers in Oman]. Today's forum serves as an opportunity for exchanging views, learning from successful experiences, and understanding the roles of government entities and the private sector in supporting freelancers," she said.

Additionally, Al Kharbooshi highlighted the role the Centre plays in supporting young freelancers in Oman. "Through our platform, the Youth Center's website, any individual can register as a freelancer or independent worker."

She explained that registered individuals can list their skills on the website and can later be



Maryam bint Nasser al Kharbooshi addressing the audience Acting Managing Director of the Centre

matched to specific projects or programmes.

"This service allows direct communication with freelancers, helping them find opportunities and contributing to their economic needs. It's one of the

important paths that assist job seekers, providing economic coverage and simultaneously developing their skills," she stated.

According to Al Kharbooshi, the Centre hired ten freelancers for the event itself.

The forum included talks by several government entities including the Small and Medium Enterprise Authority, the National Employment Programme. In addition to talks by several established Omani freelancers who shared their experiences.

Additionally, the forum included two panel discussions, and specialised consulting clinics for freelancers.

The Empowerment Program meme for Freelancer "Tamakun" launched in October with 200 registered individuals. The programme consists of two stages, including a development and training stage aimed at training and qualifying individuals, and a launch stage aimed a further training 50 participants and

providing them with service contracts.

Speaking to the Observer, Khamis al Shuaibi, General Manager Shared Services at Oman Oil Marketing Company, highlighted the significance of the collaboration between the Youth Centre and OOMCO.

Sharing that Youth and Education are one of the main key pillars of the company's CSR values.

Additionally, he shared that the programme will aim to prepare young people at different stages of their lives, to embrace freelancing, as a way to combat unemployment, by providing them with the necessary skills and tools to succeed amidst changing labour laws in the country.



Abraj is solidifying its position and has set a new benchmark in the industry.

Abraj posts strong Q3 results

MUSCAT: Abraj Energy Services, Oman's leading provider of oil and gas services, announced its outstanding performance for Q3 2023.

With a commanding 28 per cent share in Oman's drilling market and an impressive 15 per cent in key well services, Abraj is solidifying its position and has set a new benchmark in the industry.

In an extraordinary feat, the company has successfully completed 93 wells ahead of the planned schedule, showcasing its efficiency and commitment to excellence.

This achievement is further highlighted by the significant reduction in rig move duration, thanks to a combination of design, planning, and the implementation of lean practices.

2023 marks a milestone year for Abraj, celebrating over ten years of unparalleled safety performance.

Operating a robust fleet of 30 units, including 25 drilling rigs and 5 workover rigs, the company has maintained an impeccable safety record.

This year alone, Abraj achieved 675 days without a Lost Time Injury (LTI), 61 days without Total Recordable Cases (TRC),

294 days without Road Traffic Accidents (RTA), and 36 days without High Potential Incidents (HiPo).

Abraj's commitment to operational efficiency is evident in its Non-Productive Time (NPT) performance, achieving an NPT of 1.33 per cent.

This not only surpasses the industry-standard allowable NPT of 1.5 per cent but also significantly outperforms the international allowable NPT of 3 per cent.

Eng Saif al Hamhami, CEO of Abraj Energy Services, states, "Abraj has consistently demonstrated exceptional performance, setting new benchmarks in the oil and gas sector.

Our remarkable achievement of a 28 per cent market share in drilling and 15 per cent in key well services this quarter is a testament to our operational excellence and strategic foresight.

We are not just meeting industry standards; we are redefining them, as evidenced by our significant advancements in drilling efficiency and safety protocols."

The company continues to demonstrate its operational

prowess with all 25 rigs and 5 hoists operating at full capacity.

This has led to the drilling of 193 wells, totalling an impressive 458,000 meters in depth, averaging 32.2 wells per month, including workover wells.

In well services, Abraj thrives with a formidable fleet and five business lines.

The company's Integrated Fracturing services, a first in the MENA region by a local company, have shown exceptional operational excellence and technical advancement, completing hydraulic fracturing for over 200 wells.

The stimulation business of Abraj has seen significant growth, marked by the addition of another Frac fleet dedicated to high-rate acid stimulation treatments.

This expansion is supported by strong technical collaboration with clients, as demonstrated by notable presentations at prestigious international forums.

Abraj's dedication to advancing industry knowledge is evident in its active participation in research and development. The company recently presented three technical papers at the SPE International Hydraulic Fracturing Conference in Muscat, Oman.

Maisarah participates in Omani Islamic Banking conference

MUSCAT: Maisarah Islamic Banking Services, the Islamic banking window of BankDhofar, recently participated in the second edition of the Omani Islamic Banking Conference.

The conference showcased the competitiveness of the country's Islamic finance industry and highlighted the investment opportunities available within Oman and the greater Gulf region. The Omani Islamic Banking Conference, organised by 'Al Roya,' was held under the auspices of Dr Mohammed bin Said al Maamari, Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. The event was attended by Abdulhakeem bin Omar al Ojaili, CEO of BankDhofar, Kamal Uddin bin Hassan al Maraza, GM & Chief Maisarah Islamic Banking Officer, and witnessed the presence of prominent leaders from the Islamic finance industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

The conference included several working papers and panel discussions to formulate new determinants for an Islamic banking sector that meets future priorities and examines enhancing the competitiveness of Islamic banking and finance to create sustainable opportunities.

During the conference, Mohammed Al Mulla al Balushi, Head of Priority Banking and Wealth Management at Maisarah



Mohammed Al Mulla al Balushi, Head of Priority Banking and Wealth Management at Maisarah Islamic Banking Services, presented a work paper on "Islamic Sukuk and Funds and Sustainable Investment Opportunities."

Islamic Banking Services, delivered a presentation entitled "Sukuk, Islamic Funds, and Sustainable Investment Opportunities," emphasising how Islamic banking plays an important role in boosting the overall economy.

Maisarah aligns its efforts with key sectors supporting the government vision in terms of diversification and the promising sector that the government is considering boosting. The presentation focused on financing options that are compatible with Islamic Sharia, also known as Islamic finance.

Mohammad mentioned that Sharia-compliant financing follows some basic standards; the first is

the explicit rejection of usury. He also highlighted another basic rule, which is risk-sharing, as the Islamic banking sector works to share both benefits and damages between the parties, enhancing the sense of organisation and common benefit.

He emphasised that Sharia-compliant financing holds great importance for Muslims and others looking for financial arrangements that resonate with their moral and religious values.

At the conclusion of the Omani Islamic Banking Conference, Mohammed al Balushi, Head of Priority Banking and Wealth Management at Maisarah Islamic Banking Services, was honoured for his participation in the conference.

Airbus announces EgyptAir order

DUBAI: European aerospace giant Airbus announced an order for 10 A350-900 planes by Egypt's state-owned carrier EgyptAir on Tuesday, the second day of the Dubai Airshow.

Airbus commercial director Christian Scherer told a news conference the deal marked "an important milestone" in the "long and successful partnership" with EgyptAir.

Without discounts, which are routinely applied in the industry, the transaction is worth \$3.2 billion, according to the manufacturer's latest published list price.

Airbus, which on Monday announced an order for 30 A220-300s from Latvian budget carrier



Photographer: Thomas Samson. – AFP/Getty Images

airBaltic has been overshadowed by US rival Boeing at this year's Dubai Airshow.

Boeing announced a mega-contract with Emirates, the Middle East's biggest airline, on Monday for 55 Boeing 777-9s, 35 777-8s and five 787 Dreamliners in a deal worth \$52 billion.

The 777-9s are expected for delivery in 2025 and the 777-8s are scheduled for 2030.

Low-cost carrier flydubai, also based in the Gulf emirate, announced an order for 30 Boeing 787-9s, valued at \$63 billion. Emirates CEO Tim Clark said on Tuesday that he will not buy Airbus's A350 until he has concluded negotiations with engine manufacturer Rolls Royce, which he blames for a lack of durability and longevity.

Clark said "40 per cent of the 350-1000s have been sold into this region," adding: "This is the region that is buying these airplanes and will buy the big numbers if the engine issue's resolved." — AFP

CMA launches consultation on Securities Law draft executive regulation

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) has invited all public joint stock companies, audit firms and law firms to offer their feedback on the draft Executive Regulation of the Securities Law prepared by a dedicated team set up by the CMA Executive President.

The draft regulation is available on the CMA's website and application for all concerned parties. Feedback will be received until December 11, 2023.

This consultation represents the principle of participation in the drafting of regulations governing the securities sector.

The CMA believes on the importance of participation of all concerned parties in the process of drafting legislations. The team finalised the draft regulation and it is now presented to the public to collect their feedback.

After that, the draft regulation will be presented to the CMA's



CMA launches consultation on Securities Law draft executive regulation

Board of Directors and then it will be reviewed by the concerned government institutions before final approval.

The regulation seeks to stimulate the development of a suitable investment environment to attract and encourage local and foreign investments in the

Sultanate of Oman, to cope with the new updates in the money and business world.

The regulation draft also includes regulatory provisions related to the entities operating in the field of securities, securities, trust, Investment Funds and disclosures.

Bank Nizwa launches first sharia compliant sustainable finance

MUSCAT: Committed to chart a strategic path towards a more sustainable future, Bank Nizwa has consistently assumed a pioneering role in spearheading green initiatives that have tangible, far-reaching implications on the macroeconomic landscape.

In accordance with this unwavering dedication, the leading Islamic bank in the Sultanate of Oman recently announced the launch of a comprehensive suite of Islamic green financing solutions for home, automotive, and personal finance.

In continuation of Bank Nizwa's efforts to enhance environmental awareness and encourage individuals to make sustainable environmental decisions, sustainable financing offers a competitive profit rate and reduced processing fees which make it an attractive option for those looking for financing solutions that combine environmental awareness with wise financial decisions.

Excited to announce the new Islamic Green Finance offering, Khalid al Kayed, Chief Executive Officer at Bank Nizwa said, "The approach we adopt towards addressing environmental challenges in the upcoming decade will significantly shape the impact we have on our planet and on the wellbeing of the future generations.

In this regard, it is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal role that financial institutions play in encouraging and enabling the essential shift toward a sustainable future.

As an Islamic bank deeply rooted in the principles of Sharia, inclusivity, and environmental stewardship, Bank Nizwa considers this duty a fundamental cornerstone of its operations." He added saying, "Having established a



In line with Oman Vision 2040 and its pioneering approach towards sustainability

commendable presence in the country and serving a substantial customers, we understand the strong influence we exert in the economy, society and environment. Hence, it is our responsibility to steer the transition toward a low-carbon society.

Our innovative green finance will not only make sustainable finance a more competitive and accessible option but also catalyse the 'green multiplier effect,' wherein both the economic and environmental domains thrive in harmonious synergy." Geared toward achieving resource optimisation and nurturing a healthier, more socially conscious generation, the bank's Personal Goods Finance will extend competitive green finance rates to individuals opting for smart or sustainable systems and those seeking financing for health and education which are one of the main components for the welfare of the society.

China emissions could fall in 2024 on renewables jump



The International Energy Agency says the country is projected to account for 45 per cent of global emissions from existing fossil fuel assets between 2023 and 2050. – AFP

BANGKOK: China's carbon emissions are likely to fall in 2024 because record growth in renewable energy capacity is now sufficient to cover growing demand, a new analysis finds.

China is the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter and has brushed aside calls for a more ambitious carbon neutrality target than its current 2060 goal.

The International Energy Agency says the country is projected to account for 45 per cent of global emissions from existing fossil fuel assets between 2023 and 2050.

But China has also been installing renewable energy capacity at breakneck speed, with new solar in 2023 alone amounting to twice the entire installed capacity in the United States, the analysis, released on Monday by UK-based climate site Carbon Brief, said.

"Newly installed solar, wind, hydro and nuclear capacity added in 2023 alone will generate an estimated 423 terawatt hours (TWh) per year, equal to the total electricity consumption of France," the report by Lauri Myllyvirta of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air added.

The massive ramp-up in installation and a projected rebound in hydropower generation as drought

recedes and reservoirs refill "are all but guaranteed to push fossil-fuel electricity generation and CO2 emissions into decline in 2024," the report said.

That decline could be sustained because "the rate of low-carbon energy expansion is now sufficient to not only meet but exceed the average annual increase in China's demand for electricity overall," the analysis argues.

The report is based on official figures and commercial data.

However, China continues to expand its coal power capacity, and the report warns that is "setting the scene for a showdown between the country's traditional and newly emerging interest groups".

Renewable energy growth "threatens the interests of the coal industry and local governments with a high exposure to the coal sector," Carbon Brief said.

"These stakeholders could be expected to resist the transition, raising concerns about potential roadblocks."

Chinese and American climate officials met earlier this week for talks ahead of this month's COP28 discussions, with both sides praising constructive talks, without offering details.

— AFP

EU markets being prepped for imports of Omani green hydrogen

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 14

With international developers committing tens of billions of dollars in investments in green hydrogen production in the Sultanate of Oman – much of it destined primarily for export, Oman's authorities are looking to make sure that prospective import markets are ready to receive the zero-carbon fuel starting from around 2030.

The main criteria for readiness to receive green hydrogen, says a key official, rest on two key prerequisites: one, the physical logistics of receiving and discharging the highly volatile fuel from specialised carriers upon their arrival at a destination port, and two, ensuring that the fuel meets with locally mandated zero-carbon certification specs.

According to Eng Abdulaziz bin Said al Shithani, Managing Director – Hydrom, the orchestrator and master-planner of Oman's renewable hydrogen sector, multiple delegations representing stakeholders from the Omani side, have visited promising European Union (EU) markets to ensure the readiness of their receiving ports for green hydrogen exports from the Sultanate of Oman.

"Among of the goals (of these visits) was to ensure the readiness of the markets to receive hydrogen," said Al Shithani.

"It became clear to us through these visits that the other parties are serious about equipping their ports for this as well. This gives confidence that the efforts being



Belgium's Port of Antwerp-Bruges, the second largest port in Europe, is tipped to be an important gateway for green energy flows into Europe

made in Oman are accompanied by parallel efforts in other countries."

The EU is expected to be the biggest destination for exports of Omani green hydrogen or its derivatives, starting from 2030.

Seeking to ensure that logistics and certification standards are in alignment at both ends, Oman's Ministry of Energy and Minerals has led delegations to Brussels and other European capitals over the past year.

Prospective markets in the Far East, notably Japan and South Korea, have been covered as well.

Speaking to Duqm Economist, the newsletter of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), Al Shithani also pointed out that the visits doubled as campaigns for the marketing of Omani green hydrogen to countries with

ambitions to decarbonise their economies.

"There is a continuous endeavour to promote the available opportunities more, not only by Hydrom, but also includes several other entities related to the sector, such as the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

The available resources in the Sultanate of Oman require more promotion, thus we have started several virtual meetings, and had external visits.

These efforts have begun to bear fruit," he said.

Most notable, said the official, was a high-level visit led by Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, to The Netherlands in March this year.

Besides taking part in the World Hydrogen Summit held in Rotterdam, the delegation also visited the ports of

Amsterdam and Rotterdam in The Netherlands and the port of Antwerp in Belgium.

Also during the visits, agreements supporting a Green Hydrogen Certification Pilot Project were signed in Brussels.

The pilot, led by Hyport Duqm, aims to "ensure that green hydrogen production projects in the Sultanate of Oman meet the requirements of the European Union, which paves the way for exporting green hydrogen produced in the Sultanate of Oman in the future to European markets", said Al Shithani.

Hyport Duqm, comprising a consortium of DEMA Concessions of Belgium and OQ Alternative Energy of Oman, is investing in a major green hydrogen project at the SEZ in Duqm for the production of green ammonia and other derivatives.

IEA raises oil demand growth forecasts

LONDON: The International Energy Agency (IEA) on Tuesday raised its oil demand growth forecasts for this year and next despite an expected deceleration in economic growth in nearly all major economies.

Although voluntary supply cuts from Saudi Arabia and Russia until the end of the year will keep supply tight, with demand growth still set to slow, the market could shift into surplus at the start of 2024, the Paris-based IEA said.

While overall economic and oil demand growth are expected to lose steam next year, demand in 2023 has been supported by resilient US deliveries and record



An oil pump of IPC Petroleum France is seen at sunset outside Soudron. – Reuters

September demand from China. Expectations for 2024, meanwhile, are underpinned by hopes of interest rate cuts and the recent fall in crude prices, the IEA, the energy adviser to industrialised nations, added.

"For now, with demand still exceeding available supplies heading into the Northern Hemisphere winter, market balances will remain vulnerable to heightened economic and geopolitical risks - and further volatility ahead."

Brent oil prices have weakened to around \$82 a barrel from a 2023 high in September near \$98. – Reuters

OPAZ launches handbook on environmental compliance

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 14

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) published a handbook on environmental affairs and compliance processes. It seeks to distinctly outline the Authority's responsibilities with respect to environmental matters concerning the zones it oversees and the projects that are undertaken there.

The guide aims also to streamline and standardize environmental procedures on projects throughout the zones in order to guarantee that they adhere to the laws, rules, policies, and guidelines that govern

them as well as the application of best practices pertaining to environmental sustainability, risk assessment, security, occupational health and safety, and investment environments.

The purpose of the guide, according to Eng Ahmed bin Harib al Balushi, Director of the Authority's Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department, is to make it easier for the department's specialists to track procedures in the zones they oversee and within OPAZ. This will increase productivity, guarantee that environmental procedures are followed on projects, and save time and effort.

The environmental procedures

and supervisory framework issued by the Authority's decision No. (37/2023) are included in the guide, Al-Balushi added. This decision outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Authority and the zones with regard to environmental studies, the issuance of environmental permits, environmental monitoring, and periodic reports, as well as compliance procedures in the environmental field for projects.

An information and data form about compliance in the areas of risk assessment, environmental management, occupational health and safety, and security aspects is included in the guide to help create a record of all the information



related to environmental aspects in the zones under the Authority's supervision.

OPAZ is creating a framework for cooperation, coordination, and unification of efforts between the Authority and the administrations of the zones it manages in order to ensure environmental safety, increase production capacity, and progress the production process—all of which improve the standard and expertise of work. It is noteworthy that the Authority seeks to standardize environmental tasks and responsibilities related to compliance and environmental issues in order to establish a common strategy for regulatory and supervisory work.

Tough new US tech laws could open up a new UK market

A burgeoning branch of Fintech promises a £10 billion opportunity for British business – if only Britain gets the regulation right. As a report by Policy Exchange, published last month argues, an increasingly hostile regulatory regime in the US, the UK has a golden opportunity to seize a larger share of this market.

The City (financial district) of London has long led the world in financial innovation. From the invention of the modern company to the pioneering work of Lloyds in insurance, much of today's financial ecosystem was invented in London.

The Big Bang of the 1980s revitalised the financial district and in 2021, a study found that London was the second most innovative city in the world.



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK

One area that offers much potential is Web3, a decentralised technology based on blockchain that offers to revolutionise the use of the Internet. It is an extension of cryptocurrency using blockchain in new ways to new ends and allows crypto assets to be transferred quickly and securely.

Although the sector has had to shake off a “casino capitalism” image, now tech companies are rapidly developing new products with serious applications, according to Iain Mansfield, Director of Research at Policy Exchange.

Web3 ecosystem Multiversx handed out a mammoth \$1 million prize fund at its xDay Hackathon. Organised alongside Encode and Dora Hacks, the event was powered by partners including Google, Cloud, Tencent Cloud and

Deutsche Telekom, offering one of the largest hackathon[AJ1] prize funds in history. The event ran until 21st October.

Established companies like Paypal, JP Morgan, and Nike now offer blockchain products, and Web3 technology has been used to deliver aid to people in Ukraine, send cheap remittances to unbanked people in the developing world, digitise driving licences in California, and pay for carbon credits in India.

The US has traditionally led the field in this sector but a harsh wind is blowing in California, driving US firms across the Atlantic.

Red tape and an increasingly febrile regulatory environment is pushing Web3 companies to establish branches outside the country – and some have even shut down their US operations.

A recent survey found that 12 per cent of crypto hedge funds are considering relocating from the US to jurisdictions that provide a more proportionate regulatory regime.

As a global Fintech hub, with a regulatory approach characterised by the “same risk, same regulatory outcome” approach, Britain is now increasingly attractive to investors. With £77 billion invested globally in blockchain start-ups, a conservative estimate suggests that the UK could easily secure new assets worth £10.7 billion – supporting 36,000 jobs.

The Prime Minister has made his goal for Web3 clear. When he was Chancellor, he said it was his ambition to make the UK “a global hub for crypto-asset technology” which brings jobs to the UK. Importantly, he added: “by regulating effectively we can give

them the confidence they need to think and invest long-term.” Since then, a number of major US companies have opened branches in London.

Now the Financial Conduct Authority, and other regulatory authorities need to follow through, as Mansfield points out.

New concepts such as digital wallets, stablecoins and tokens may sound unfamiliar to consumers now — but with the right regulatory approach, could become a familiar and well-used as banking apps and social media.

The UK's public services also need to be ready to make the best possible use of Web3 and other emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

These technologies are coming and the UK, particularly London, should be at the heart of it.

A New approach to international tax cooperation

The African Group at the United Nations recently called for the negotiation of an international tax convention to prevent avoidance and boost urgently needed revenues. Latin American countries should likewise support a UN-led process to create more comprehensive and equitable rules that reflect the interests of developing economies.

BOGOTÁ — As one of the world's most unequal regions, Latin America is desperately in need of additional revenues if it is to solve its knotty economic, social, and environmental problems. But tax collection in Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries is low, averaging 21.7 per cent of GDP in 2021, compared to 34.1 per cent for OECD members. What accounts for this gap, and what should be done to close it?

Regionally, the overall lack of progressive taxation certainly plays a role. But the international tax architecture is also to blame. All too often, multinational corporations and the wealthiest in our societies can exploit the rules to avoid paying.

The unfairness baked into the current system not only reflects and reproduces inequalities, but also fuels demagogic discourse and undermines faith in the rule of law. Many of the rules that form the basis of the international tax system were drawn up a century ago by wealthy countries. No surprise, then, that these countries — and their richest citizens — benefit the most from the current framework.

That is why the African Group at the United Nations tabled a resolution in October calling for a new round of negotiations on international tax cooperation.

This process could create more equitable rules that reflect the interests of developing economies. Ensuring fairness is important, to be sure, but so is giving governments a realistic chance of generating sufficient revenue to fund sustainable development, climate action, and infrastructure investment, as well as to tackle social inequality and sovereign-debt crises.

LAC countries should welcome the UN's involvement in shaping global tax policy. For starters, the drawn-out negotiations



JOSÉ ANTONIO OCAMPO,

The writer is a former UN under-secretary-general and a former minister of finance and public credit of Colombia, is a professor at Columbia University, a member of the UN Committee for Development Policy, and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.



Project Syndicate

under the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) have been disappointing for many in the Global South, who blame the initiative's lack of inclusivity and flawed decision-making process.

Few believe that the resulting agreement to reform international corporate taxation, even if implemented, will deliver meaningful and sustainable revenues for the developing world.

UN-led negotiations would allow LAC countries to advocate their shared interests. Despite facing common challenges when it comes to cross-border taxation, especially regarding digital businesses, we have not come together to devise common solutions, whether at home or in global discussions. That must change.

As part of this new approach, policymakers must build on and go beyond the reallocation of taxing rights provided for in the OECD agreement.

The current design, lacking

a comprehensive and effective strategy for taxing mega-corporations operating in digital markets, must be reformed to ensure a more equitable redistribution of these rights.

More crucially still, even if enough BEPS members sign the multilateral treaty, securing the two-thirds Senate majority required for ratification in the United States is highly unlikely.

Given that many of the world's largest tech firms are headquartered in the US, the deal would end up being written in water, and the global digital economy would remain under-taxed.

In the short term, developing countries should implement unilateral measures, rather than wait for others to decide on their behalf.

This could mean introducing digital-services levies or taxation based on the principle of significant economic presence.

While not a comprehensive reform, such measures (which Colombia recently enacted during

my tenure as finance minister) ensure that multinationals start paying their fair share of tax in the countries where they earn their profits.

At the same time, the UN process would allow for a broader reconsideration of how to close the loopholes in the international tax system. For example, the scope of reform could be widened to include coordination on taxing individual wealth.

A recent study by the EU Tax Observatory shows that a 2 per cent global wealth tax on the world's billionaires (roughly 3,000 people) would raise a total of \$250 billion annually, and around \$7.3 billion in Latin America alone.

While the BEPS framework has normalised the idea of a global minimum tax rate for corporations, intergovernmental negotiations at the UN could do the same for ultra-wealthy individuals.

The UN is uniquely positioned to address these issues, given its universal membership and its

foundling principle of sovereign equality. Recent history has demonstrated that inclusiveness is a prerequisite for successful implementation of a progressive and efficient tax system. When a negotiation agenda is built collectively, the outcomes are seen as more legitimate by all parties involved, often leading to greater compliance.

Moreover, at the UN, developing countries are organised into negotiating blocs, through which they gain more leverage to promote their interests.

None of the LAC countries has the political, demographic, or economic clout to influence international negotiations by itself. That is why Colombia, Brazil, and Chile have created the Regional Tax Cooperation Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean. We must now use that unified voice to support the African Group's call for a new, more inclusive UN convention on international tax cooperation.

© Project Syndicate, 2023

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

MELBA DEBT RECOVERY

Specialized in Debt Recovery since 2005
Offering: (No Recovery No Fee Policy)

For service please contact: **(+968) 99357404**

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 15, 2023 | JUMADA AL ULA 1, 1445 AH

OMAN DAILY

Observer Classified Section

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

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

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

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

DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

INDIA BANGLADESH NEPAL PHILIPPINES UAE INDONESIA EUROPE UK CANADA USA

WHATSAPP **96353654** TOLL FREE NUMBER **80066766**
Follow us: [f](#) [i](#) [t](#) [w](#) www.alnamanicargo.com

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

SIT. VACANT

OMANI man required for sales and admin job in a chemical trading company. Driving license necessary. E-mail: sales.oman@ecabiotech-me.com. Contact: 79741371

FOR RENT

FLATS and offices for rent in Muscat. 96379095, 98403020.

WAREHOUSE/ workshop 2600 sqm for rent in Misfa, near Oman Cement Factory, including accommodation. Contact: GSM 98286899. E-mail: sales@jetsoman.com

SPACIOUS 3 bedroom flat plus sitting room, behind Honda showroom, Al Wattayah Muscat. Contact number: 92269972 only Whatsapp.

FOR SALE

COFFEE shop with 3 clearances & staff for immediate sale in Rex Road. 78501743.

A commercial residential building in the southern Maabela next to Nesto, consisting of 12 floors and fully rented shops. Contact: 99888390.

A commercial residential building in the Al Amerat, next to Sultan Al Jamal and Lulu Al Amerat, consisting of 9 floors and fully rented shops. Contact: 99888390.

AN INDUSTRIAL building in al Jifnain, fully rented, consisting of a warehouse, four shops, and 4 apartments. Contact: 99888390.

ROYAL CARGO

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

SERVICES BY AIR & SEA

DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT **93213206**

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

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

WE ARE HIRING

Urgent Recruitment @ Al Baraka Group Oman

Passionate about hospitality? Thrive in a dynamic environment? Exciting job opportunities await you at our upcoming hotel project. If you're experienced and enthusiastic, we want to hear from you! Be a part of a great future with Al Baraka Group Oman. Join us in shaping the hospitality landscape.

Position	Experience
Hotel Marketing Executive	3 years in Hotel and Hospitality Marketing
Accountant	3 to 5 years in Hotel and Hospitality
Kitchen Staff -Commi (1)	3 to 5 years
Kitchen Staff -Commi (2)	3 to 5 years
Kitchen Staff -Commi (3)	3 to 5 years
Waiter	3 years Minimum

Candidates may Email their updated CV to hr.albarakagroupintl@gmail.com
CV must be in MS Word or PDF format. Please mention the post in the subject line

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

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

For Sale:

Concrete Canvas, created specifically for erosion control, containment and shelter applications. Concrete Canvas products are part of a revolutionary class of new, innovative materials called Geosynthetic Cementitious Composite Mats. It is a flexible, concrete filled geosynthetic which provides a thin and durable concrete layer when hydrated. Typically, 10-times faster to install than conventional concrete solutions; essentially, it's Concrete on a Roll.

Quantity 16 roll
Total of 3000 M2

Contact: Sultan A Shamsi +968 99048787

SITUATION VACANT

Required for a reputed club **BARTENDER**

Job Requirements ▶ Serve and billing. Work schedule on shifts.

Qualification ▶ Minimum Secondary School Certificate with good communication skills (spoken and written English). Young and Energetic with Pleasant Personality.

Experience ▶ 3-5 years work experience as a bartender in a reputed hospitality establishment.

Candidates will be required to attend interviews and undergo practical evaluation test.

Please email CV to: oceanint@omantel.net.om

SIT. WANTED

ACCOUNTS professional with 17 years' experience in Oman seeks senior level opportunity. Please contact: +968 78581435.

MBA (Finance), Boom, PG Diploma (HR); 20 years experience in Muscat; seeking senior/middle level opportunity; can join immediately. Please contact: 78293476

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

1 year and 4 month work experience as media. M.com graduate with Oman driving licence, residing in Muscat with finance executive in India, seeking for accounts assistant or other related eligible jobs. Contact: 71755901, krishnanmahesh02@gmail.com.

SALES & marketing professional with 27 years of Oman experience, having driving licence & all types of products/services sales experience. 78501743.

EXPERT in selling and marketing goods produced in Oman to the UAE markets and vice versa is looking for a good break. 78501743.

INDIAN male experienced in sales, having DL & release is looking for a job in sales and marketing. Please call: 78501743.

AUTOMOBILE service supervisor/advisor/diagnostic master 12 years GCC experience in multi-brand vehicle. Available in Muscat. Looking for new challenge job. Contact# 78827334.

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



OMAN OMAN DAILY

Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com



@omanobserver

www.omanobserver.om



LIFESTYLE

A farmer harvests marigold flowers at Ichangu Narayan village in the outskirts of Kathmandu on the eve of the Nepali-Hindu festival of lights Tihar. — AFP



CULTURE

A camel herder controls his camel ahead of the annual Camel Fair at Pushkar in India's desert state of Rajasthan. — AFP



ACTOR

French actor Ralph Amoussou poses during a photo session at the Palais Brongniart in Paris. — AFP



ART

An art student paints a mural against corruption along a street in Lahore. — AFP



TRADITION

A model shows her hands adorned with henna artwork, traditionally worn by brides for weddings, during Aceh Cultural Week in Banda Aceh. —AFP

art & life

WEDNESDAY | NOVEMBER 15, 2023 | JUMADA AL ULA 1, 1445 AH ⓘ OMAN OBSERVER f x @ y t v www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om

The growing significance of gifting flowers

The perception of gifting flowers has evolved beyond romantic symbolism, encompassing various events. Flowers now symbolise impressions, mental health benefits, and social status. The demand has surged, fostering creative competition... P20



CAR

1962 Ferrari auctioned for \$51.7 mn in New York: Sotheby's

1962 FERRARI AUCTIONED for \$51.7 mn in New York: Sotheby's New York, Nov 14, 2023 (AFP) - A 1962 Ferrari 250 GTO sports car sold for \$51.7 million in New York on Monday, making it the second most expensive car ever sold at auction, Sotheby's said. The bright red roadster had been the property of an American collector for the past 38 years, and its auction price was surpassed only by that of a Mercedes 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupe that went for 135 million euros in 2022, the auction house said.

That would be \$144 million at today's exchange rate. The 250 GTO went on sale Monday evening after a few minutes of bidding in the auction room, but at a price lower than the more than \$60 million expected by RM Sotheby's, the luxury car subsidiary of the auction house. Sotheby's did not identify the winning bidder. Dating from 1962, the legendary Scuderia sports car — chassis 3765, four-liter engine developing 390 horsepower — had finished second in a race of 1,000 kilometres (620 miles) on the German Nurburgring circuit, as well as in the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans, where the team had to withdraw due to engine failure, according to RM Sotheby's. After several years of competition on the Italian mainland and in Sicily, the car was sold and exported to the US in the late 1960s. Restored and modified, the



250 GTO changed American owners several times before ending up in the hands of an Ohio "dedicated collector" in 1985, who sold it on Monday. "This stunning GTO offers its next caretaker further touring and vintage racing enjoyment, or display at major concours

d'elegance and marque gatherings worldwide," Sotheby's said. The Mercedes 300 SLR Uhlenhaut Coupe that fetched 135 million euros in 2022 was one of only two examples of the sport car. It sold at a confidential auction at the German manufacturer's museum in Stuttgart and

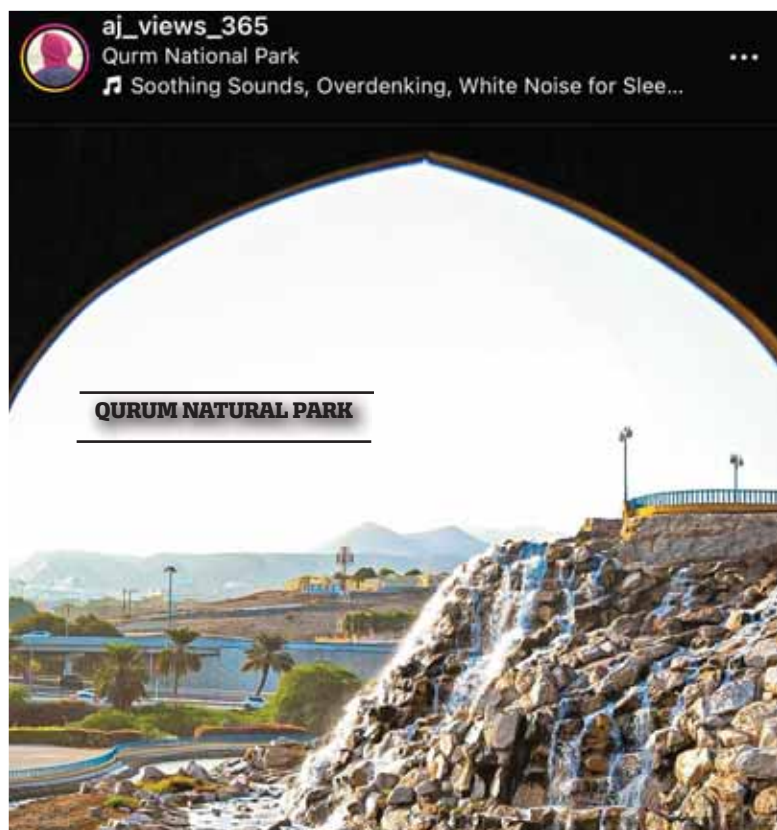
was the most expensive car ever sold worldwide, whether at auction or privately, a RM Sotheby's spokesman said. This week, New York auction houses Sotheby's and Christie's conclude their autumn season of art sales, which have not been affected by hard times and have raked in hundreds of millions of dollars since November 7. Christie's, which on Thursday sold Claude Monet's "Le bassin aux nymphéas" ("Water Lily Pond") for \$74 million and three paintings by Paul Cezanne for \$53 million, reported a total of \$864 million by late on Monday. Competitor Sotheby's, which closes its New York sales on Thursday, sold Pablo Picasso's "Femme à la montre" ("Woman with a Watch") on Wednesday for \$139 million, the second-highest amount ever achieved for the Spanish master, who died 50 years ago. Sotheby's followed that sale on Monday with a Cezanne —

"Peupliers au bord de l'Epte, temps couvert" ("Poplars on the banks of the Epte, overcast") — to an Asian collector for \$30.7 million. An 1892 Monet, "Le Moulin de Limetz" ("The Mill at Limetz), in the same American family for 130 years, sold for \$25.6 million. And finally, American painter Mark Rothko broke his record for works on paper: "Untitled" was bought by an anonymous bidder in the room for \$23.8 million. The market is driven by China and Asia and shows no signs of slowing down, according to Sotheby's, despite a tense international context. "Whatever happens in the financial markets, a car of this calibre is a collector's item, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Michael Caimano of RM Sotheby's said before the car sale, comparing the Ferrari to a work of art that "can be touched, felt and heard." —AFP



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

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



AROUND THE WORLD

CIRCUS



Circus lion escapes in Italian seaside town



A LION PROWLED the streets of an Italian seaside town for several hours Saturday after escaping from a local circus, before being sedated and captured.

Alessandro Grando, mayor of Ladispoli, near Rome, had warned residents to stay at home while police and circus staff sought to catch the animal.

Videos later published by Italian media, apparently taken by locals but not confirmed by AFP, showed the adult lion walking through dark and deserted streets.

In a Facebook post around 10:30pm (21:30 GMT), more than five hours after his original message raising the alarm, Grando said the lion had been "sedated and captured".

"Now he will be taken in hand by the circus staff," he wrote, thanking emergency services and volunteers who helped during "these hours of great concern".

"I hope that this episode can stir some consciences, and that we can finally put an end to the exploitation of animals in circuses," the mayor added.

Anticipating residents' complaints, he earlier said he had not authorised the presence of a circus with lions in the town, but said he did not have the power to block it. —**AFP**

ENVIRONMENT



Endangered sea turtles get second life at Tunisian centre

A CROWD HAS gathered to see off Rose, a loggerhead sea turtle, who labours across the Tunisian sand to rejoin the waters of the Mediterranean.

For the last month, Rose has been recovering at the First Aid Sea Turtle Centre in the coastal city of Sfax after she was ensnared in a fishing net.

The facility, one of two in North Africa, is run by the EU-funded Life Med Turtles project, which looks after endangered species, such as the loggerhead, and aims to improve marine life protection by gathering data on their behaviour.

Since the centre opened in 2021, nearly 80 turtles have been treated and returned to their natural environment, said its chief Imed Jribi.

The project also aims to educate the local population in places like Sfax, which relies on fishing.

"Before, we were ignorant," said 29-year-old local fisherman Hamadi Dahech, who brought Rose into the centre after trapping her accidentally.

"People ate them, used them for witchcraft, or as medicine and many other things. Today, thanks to (the centre) raising awareness among fishermen, she has a better chance of survival at sea," Dahech said at Rose's release.

DO NOT EAT

"We use the turtles that arrive here for scientific research, for their protection as well as raising awareness," Jribi said.

To highlight the natural wonders in the waters off Tunisia, the centre opens to the general public on weekends.

Malak Morali, a 30-year-old local who brought her two children to watch Rose's release, said her son loves the ocean-going creatures.

"Every time he hears that there are turtles, he wants to



come to take photos and learn new things," she said.

Morali said that it was only thanks to the centre that she learnt "that the meat is not edible".

"We usually say that cooking it is good, but it is the opposite."

The consumption of sea turtle meat is dangerous due to the high levels of pollution in the waters they inhabit.

Toxins, such as mercury, build up in their liver and kidneys, posing a significant threat to human health.

Besides the deadly metals, the turtles often eat floating waste.

The creatures can "confuse plastic bags with jelly-fish", said Hamed Mallat, a marine biologist.

A 2015 study by the University of Queensland in Australia found that the majority of the world's sea turtle population was consuming plastic.

TRAPPED IN NETS

Every year, around 10,000 loggerheads are caught by trawlers and in fishing nets in the waters off Tunisia, a potential death sentence for the turtles.

Life Med Turtles estimates that around 70 per cent of sea turtle deaths in the Mediterranean alone are caused by gillnets, a sort of large net suspended verti-

cally in the water.

Some, however, make it through alive and at the centre in Sfax, it is often the fishermen themselves who bring in the injured turtles.

As an acknowledgment of their help, the rescued animals are frequently named after the fishermen themselves.

One of them, a frail baby turtle called Ayoub, was fed by caretakers with a syringe.

As well as fishing, global warming poses an acute threat to the turtles by altering their gender ratio.

According to the US National Ocean Service, if a turtle's egg incubates below 27.7 Celsius (81.9 degrees Fahrenheit), the hatchling will be male.

But above 31 degrees Celsius the baby turtle will be female, putting the turtles at greater risk of extinction as fewer males are born.

The rescue centre in Sfax nonetheless has hope and is continuing its work to prevent the death of the species. Before releasing Rose, Jribi and Mallat attached a location tracker to her shell.

They aim to analyse where Rose is most active, which could reveal more about her species' migration and behaviour.

"She is the one who will protect the ecosystem at sea," said Rose's rescuer Dahech. —**AFP**

EDUCATION



Uniting the forces of parenting and teaching

BY BUTHAINA AL RIYAMI

THE ETHOS OF collaboration between educators and parents stands as the cornerstone for Nasra al Riyami, a dedicated social worker at Al Maalim School, and Samia al Maamari, the esteemed school health nurse at Al Awabi School.

Their latest initiative, a groundbreaking workshop titled 'Screening for Common Disorders in Students,' orchestrated in collaboration with Darat Al Shaq Rehabilitation Centre, aims to elevate awareness within the parental and broader community sphere concerning the identification and observation of various disorders affecting children.

This event, launched at the advent of November, is but one facet of the array of programmes meticulously crafted by Nasra al Riyami and Samia al Maamari.

Their collective objective is to foster an effective channel of cooperation and communication with parents. The workshop boasts an impressive lineup of specialists and experts in the rehabilitation of children with disabilities and autism. Their purpose? To provide invaluable consultations to parents navigating the intricacies of their children's individual cases.

The resonance of this event reverberated within the hearts of parents, educators, and preschool professionals alike, each expressing heartfelt gratitude for this transformative initiative.

Nasra al Riyami, the driving force behind this workshop, reflected, 'Witnessing parents seek consultations for their children's well-being embodies the very awareness I strive to cultivate through my educational initiatives.'

She further articulated the emotional depth of the event, recounting the plethora of commendations received by the organisers. 'It was truly heartening to witness participants express their elation at being part of a workshop that equipped them with the foundational knowledge they had been seeking for an extended period.'

By amplifying the language and emphasizing the importance of collaboration between educators and parents, the revised version strengthens the message conveyed by the original writer.



art & life

f x i y t @omanobserver

WEDNESDAY | NOVEMBER 15 | 2023

The growing significance of gifting flowers

BY BALQEES AL HABSI

Over generations, flowers have consistently embodied the stereotypical image of deep love, as portrayed in old movies and cinemas. This image worked to connect the value of flowers with romantic scenes and significant celebrations such as weddings and official ceremonies.

However, within a short period of time, that stereotypical image has changed, allowing more space for the availability of flowers at many other events and ceremonies. This shift has broadened its symbolism, making it more polysemous.

It has transformed from a unique symbol of deep love exclusively to becoming a tool for translating good impressions among people and a marketing method to create a fabulously highlighted reputation for individuals and institutions. This change has led to shifts in economic and psychological value flows, increasing consumption.

Zakiya al Habsi, the owner of a flower shop, expressed her experience, saying, "In the past, flowers did not hold great specific value in the eyes of people; they were only used by specific individuals and were limited to certain occasions. Now, consumption has changed based on new shapes and meanings created by people. In addition to reflecting good impressions and the beauty of the heart, flowers are considered one of the beautiful things that contribute to providing many benefits for mental and physical health."

Therefore, the flower shop is considered one of the competitive shops that everyone seeks to establish due to the large demand for it, especially on special occasions such as weddings, holidays, annual celebrations, and birthdays. This competition fosters more creativity and excellence in generating ideas and coordination for each shop. The feeling of fair competition is a beautiful emotion that takes us to the pinnacle of creativity in the world.

In an interview with Sahar Salmanian, a counselling psychologist, she said, "Flowers have been associated with different psychological effects on human beings for a long time in different cultures, religions, and rituals. The act of giving flowers used to be perceived as a sign of respect, worship,

In addition to reflecting good impressions and the beauty of the heart, flowers are considered one of the beautiful things that contribute to providing many benefits for mental and physical health



and celebration in ancient times but later turned into a romantic action for showing love and passion in intimate relationships."

Salmanian added that the growing significance of gifting flowers in contemporary times is evident, attributed to the following: international days, global festivals, and celebrations. She further mentioned that, on a basic level, the presence of flowers can evoke a sense of freshness and happiness; studies have shown that people who are exposed to floral scents experience elevated mood, reduced stress, and improved mental health. On a deeper level, receiving flowers reminds us of the importance of nurturing relationships and taking care of the delicate nature of the interpersonal bonds we have with people in our lives, just as flowers need to be taken care of, she noted.

Flowers can be psychologically viewed in different ways. From a colour psychology perspective, each colour can represent different emotions; for example, red flowers often represent passion and love, said Salmanian. She noted that the old tradition of gifting flowers, deeply rooted in various cultures, has had a profound impact on flower consumption.

Furthermore, noting the universal influence of social media, she highlighted that it has placed even greater emphasis on the act of giving flowers as a gesture of love and kindness.

She further mentioned that this shift has given rise to a flourishing and more creative flower market. Lastly, she noted that offering flowers as a gift can have a positive impact as long as it is not seen as the sole superficial expression of love.

