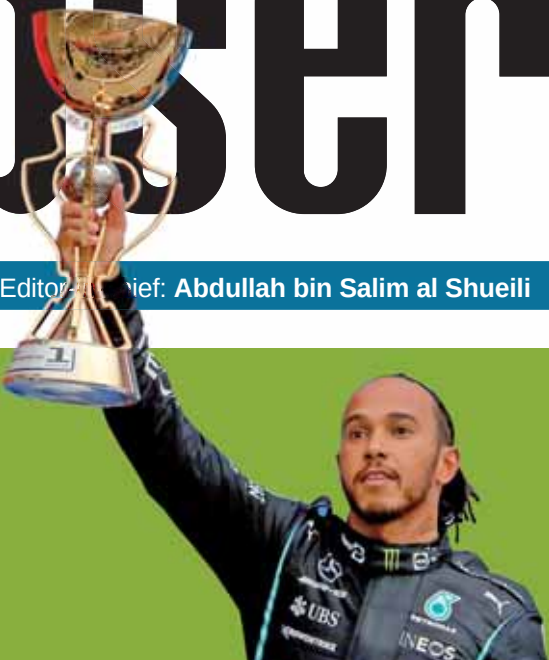


Ban on import of live birds

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resource has issued a ministerial decision banning the import of live poultry, their products, their derivatives and their wastes from states of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh in India, and Punjab province in Pakistan, until further notice. Products processed thermally are excluded from the decision as per the Animal Health Law. – ONA



P10
HAMILTON
CLAIMS 100TH
WIN IN RUSSIA



P15
CLIMATE, COVID
CAST SHADOW
OVER JET DEMAND



P20
AN IMPRESSIONIST
ARTIST'S TAKE ON
OMANI WOMEN



MUSCAT

88 CORONAVIRUS CASES IN 3 DAYS

As many as 88 new cases of coronavirus (Covid-19) were registered during the past three days, in addition to two new Covid-19-related deaths. This brings the total number of positive Covid-19 cases to 303,639 in the Sultanate. The total number of Covid-19-related death cases reached 4,095, the Ministry of Health said. The ministry added that 1,359 new cases have recovered, bringing the total number to 296,527 recoveries. SEE ALSO P5

OMANI WINS FIRST GCC WATER PRIZE

Dr Mohammed bin Zahir al Abri, Associate Professor of Petroleum and Chemical Engineering at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)'s Engineering College, won the first edition of the GCC Water Innovation Prize. Dr Al Abri, who is also the Director of the Nanotechnology Research Centre at the SQU, was awarded the prize for a research on safe water management enhancing nanofibers. He was conferred the trophy at the conclusion of the 5th Arab Water Forum held in Dubai. DETAILS ON P3

READ IN

OPINION P9

Memories cherished by artistic handcrafts
Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami

The adventures of a blonde and a very old car
Rachael MacIver

INSIDE



SUDAN RULING BODY CHIEF PLEDGES ARMY REFORMS | **P6**



EUROPE'S FIRST WOMEN-MAJORITY PARLIAMENT | **P8**

Safeguard achievements of renaissance

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND STATE COUNCIL HOLD JOINT MEETING



HH Sayyid Fahd with members of the State Council's Office on Sunday.

PHOTO BY MOHAMED AL RASHDI

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, received members of the State Council's Office, headed by Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.

The meeting was held within the context of cooperation between the Cabinet and the Council of Oman. The meeting, held at the Council of Ministers, is one in a series of meetings which come within the framework of coordination stated in the Basic Law of the State and in pursuance

of the continuous interaction between all institutions of the state. It is an opportunity to exchange views about matters of significance to sustainable development in the Sultanate. At the outset of the meeting, HH Sayyid Fahd commended the leading role of the State Council's

Office in fostering fruitful cooperation. The meeting affirmed the need to rally efforts to promote the supreme interests of the state and safeguard the achievements of the country's comprehensive renaissance. The government hopes that the State Council will utilise its

- An opportunity to exchange views on matters of significance
- Role of State Council's Office in fostering cooperation hailed
- Affirmed need to rally efforts to promote the interests of state

expertise in conducting more intensive studies to upgrade the level of public service programmes, said HH Sayyid Fahd, who laid emphasis on cooperation between the two sides in supporting plans that sustain the country's progress and prosperity. **TURN TO P2**

BOOK ON HISTORICAL TIES LAUNCHED



The book 'Oman - India Ties Across Sea and Space' was officially launched at the Indian Embassy by Under-Secretary of Ministry of Information, Ali bin Khalfan al Jabri, and Ambassador of India to the Sultanate, Munu Mahwar, in the presence of dignitaries and co-authors on Sunday. The book comes in commemoration of Oman's 50th National Day coinciding with 75 years of India's Independence. The book is published by *Oman Daily Observer* in association with the Embassy of India. **PHOTO BY SALEH AL SHARJI**

Fishing enthusiasts rescue turtle

MIDHUN RAJ
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

A casual weekend ended in a surprise of sorts for Saif Abdul Latif when he and his friend were on a fishing mission and rescued a turtle that was stranded amidst a heap of plastic waste. Saif and his friend Hilal al Battashi had gone to the sea in search of some prized catch of some yellowfin tuna. After cruising some 100 km from the Marina al Bandar to the deep sea, they spotted something floating in the sea. The giant object was



moving towards their boat. Saif was hoping to be a school of fish under the floating object, as it generally happens when he goes fishing. However, to his surprise,

the object turned out to be a turtle that was slowly swimming towards their boat, "hoping to grab our attention." "I was so surprised and excited to see the giant turtle swimming towards us. Though sea turtles are common in the deep sea, they don't generally come close to boats. When we brought our boat closer, we realised the turtle was tangled in plastic waste and was not able to swim properly. I felt like it was seeking our help and we decided to intervene", said Saif. **TURN TO P3**

Tropical atmospheric activity in Arabian Sea

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

The National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre, Civil Aviation Authority, has said that it has detected tropical atmospheric activity in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal.

In a statement the Centre said: "A tropical condition may originate in the Bay of Bengal, cross the Indian peninsula and reach the Arabian Sea, with chances that it might dissipate there over the next few days."

An official at the centre pointed out that the current period will see the second tropical season in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal trailing monsoon winds in the area, including the Sultanate.

The official added that this season will last for three months (September, October and November), when conditions are ripe for the occurrence of tropical conditions, often developing into low pressure systems or tropical storms or

tropical cyclones. When asked if there is any chance for the system to have an impact on the Sultanate, the weather forecaster said: "It is too early to predict whether it would reach here, but we are following it up very closely. For now, the cyclonic storm is over the Bay of Bengal, and the Indian meteorologists have mentioned on their website that it could move westwards. "At this point, there is no effect of this weather situation over Oman's coast or the Arabian Sea," she said. She added that there might be an effect at the end of this weekend, but it is too early to talk about it.

As of now, the Met Office is monitoring the tropical situation.

"Currently, it is only a cyclonic storm and not even a depression. Now it is in Bay of Bengal, but it can cross over to the Arabian Sea", she pointed out. **TURN TO P3**

OFFICIAL
Oman Met Office

“Currently, it is only a cyclonic storm and not even a depression. Now it is in Bay of Bengal, but it can cross over to the Arabian Sea

Council of Ministers, State Council hold meeting



FROM PAGE 1

Need to safeguard the achievements of renaissance

Shaikh Abdulmalik and members of the State Council's Office valued the meeting between the government and the State Council and underscored the importance of the coordination in the next stage of development. Topics of the agenda were reviewed, among them ways of cementing partnership between the government and the State Council. The two sides agreed that the State Council would pursue social awareness and collaboration in serving the nation under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

— ONA

OCCI discusses private sector issues, welcomes SC's support

AIMS TO STIMULATE THE ECONOMY BY PROVIDING MORE FACILITIES AND ADVANTAGES TO THE SECTOR

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) held its Ordinary General Assembly Meeting at the OCCI's headquarters in Ruwi on Sunday. The meeting chaired by Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Board Chairman of the OCCI and attended by members of the general assembly, discussed the means of examining the directions and demands of the private sector.

At the beginning of the meeting, Al Saleh commended the support and guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. He explained that such support reflects HM's attention paid to ensuring the sustainability of the private sector as a partner in the development process.

Al Saleh elaborated that this support drives the private sector to contribute effectively to the journey of building the national economy and achieving the objectives of the future vision (Oman 2040).

He reviewed the role of the private sector organisations in the current exceptional conditions and amid the negative impacts of Covid-19 outbreak on the economy and the business sector.

This comes as part of the role played by the OCCI to serve the interests of the private sector and to ensure its growth and sustainability with a view to activating its contribution to the continued renaissance journey.

On this occasion, he stated: "The OCCI strived during this extraordinary period to reflect the directions, demands and conditions of the private sector by adopting some initiatives that sought to reduce the severity of Covid-19 implications and manage its impacts at various sectors."

"Although the private sector appreciates the dire need to apply the financial balance plan that aims to maintain the financial sustainability of the state, reduce the budget deficit and control the public debt; we look forward to seeing this sector take part in stimulating the national economy by providing more facilities and advantages to it. As the private sector is a vital driver of the national economy, it can reduce the economic downturn and its repercussions on local markets" he emphasised.

Al Saleh called upon all entities



The OCCI strived during this extraordinary period to reflect the directions, demands and conditions of the private sector by adopting some initiatives that sought to reduce the severity of Covid-19 implications and manage its impacts at various sectors

RIDHA BIN JUMA AL SALEH
Board Chairman of the OCCI

and officials to share the private sector its visions, ambitions and ideas aiming to advance the national economy during the next period.

He touched upon the decisions issued by the Supreme Committee entrusted with dealing with the impacts resulting from the Coronavirus outbreak during the last week. These decisions included the cancellation of fines for expired licenses, renewing the labour cards of non-Omanis and the cancellation of fines accrued on all organisations and companies for not renewing their commercial registration certificates. The decisions included also exempting the small and medium enterprises from paying the fees of Riyada Card, as well as urging the banks and finance companies to cooperate with the affected borrowers, particularly the small and medium enterprises.

Al Saleh also reviewed some facilities provided during the past year after the OCCI exerted great efforts to prove the sufferings of private sector organisations. The OCCI has also taken part in many studies in collaboration with the

respective entities to contribute to the recovery of private sector organisations and to reduce the adverse impacts that afflicted them as a result of the economic and health crises.

The meeting also discussed the OCCI's endeavours to develop the economies of the wilayats through its branches across all the governorates. The contributions made by the OCCI to national companies that are being established in the wilayats were highlighted including its donation of RO 5,000 to such companies.

The meeting also reviewed some of the OCCI's contributions including launching the OCCI's fund and its social corporate responsibility programme to support the private sector with an amount of One Million Omani Riyals. The OCCI also highlighted its international participations aiming to attract the investments. Most importantly, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry will take part in Expo Dubai 2020 through its stand at the exhibition along with other organisations and entities that represent the Sultanate at the expo.



Oman, Belgium review joint cooperation

MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received Tinne Van der Straeten, Minister of Energy in the Kingdom of Belgium, on Sunday.

The meeting reviewed aspects of the joint cooperation between the two friendly countries and

means of enhancing them. It also explored further fields of cooperation, particularly in the green energy. The two sides touched means of completing the agreements that boost partnership between Oman and Belgium. The meeting was attended by Eng Salim bin

Nasser al Aufi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Khalid bin Hashil al Muslahi, Head of the Minister's Office Department at the Foreign Ministry, Reggy Vermeulen, Honorary Consul of Belgium to the Sultanate, and a number of officials from both sides. — ONA

Omani wins first GCC water innovation prize



MUSCAT: Dr Mohammed bin Zahir al Abri, Associate Professor of Petroleum and Chemical Engineering at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU)'s Engineering College, won the first edition of the GCC Water Innovation Prize.

Al Abri, who is also the Director of the Nanotechnology Research Centre at the SQU, was awarded the prize for a research on safe water

management enhancing nanofibers.

He was conferred the trophy at the conclusion of the 5th Arab Water Forum held at Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The GCC Water Innovation contest, was first announced in 2020 to encourage innovation and creativity in researching nontraditional water resources. — ONA

■ FROM PAGE 1

Tropical atmospheric activity detected in Arabian Sea

The official called upon citizens and residents to follow up circulars and reports issued by the departments concerned.

Meanwhile, the Sultanate has been experiencing clear to partly cloudy skies along the coastal areas of Dhofar Governorate and adjoining mountains with chances of intermittent drizzle over the mountains.

"The aerial image shows local clouds over Al Hajar Mountains with chances of scattered rain and scattered clouds forming over parts of Dhofar Governorate," the Met Office stated.

Mainly clear skies are predicted over rest of the Sultanate with chances of medium and high cloud advection. Chance of convective clouds formation and isolated rain occasionally thundershowers over Al Hajar Mountains and adjoining areas are expected towards afternoon and evening. Chance of dust rising winds have been highlighted over governorates of Al Buraimi, Al Wusta and Al Dhahirah. Chance of late night to early morning low level clouds or fog patches along the coastal areas of Arabian Sea are also reported.

Omani fishing enthusiasts rescue stranded turtle

With the help of Hilal, Saif managed to get the turtle onto the boat. The turtle's head and legs were tangled in a thick plastic sack and was not able to swim freely. "The turtle seemed exhausted. It must have been in this stuck position for weeks without food. It took almost 45 minutes for us to untangle the plastic sack without hurting the turtle. When we finally released it back to the sea, the turtle stayed close to the boat a little more before disappearing into the depths of the sea," Saif said.

Hilal al Batashi said the turtle was lucky because they spotted it and saved it on time.

"While cruising across the sea, we see many dead turtles and dolphins stranded in plastic. Whenever we venture into the sea, we try our best to clean up the plastic waste. We urge everyone to stop dumping plastic into the ocean. Even a small mask is enough to kill a turtle," he added.

Sea turtles are the victims of the high level of plastic pollution in the sea. Oman's seas are home to five of the seven rare species of turtles found in the world, four of which nest on the shores of the Sultanate.

Book on Oman-India historical ties launched



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

The book 'Oman-India Ties Across Sea and Space' was officially launched at the Indian Embassy by Ali bin Khalfan al Jabry, the Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Information, and Munu Mahwar, the Ambassador of India to the Sultanate, in the presence of dignitaries and the co-authors on Sunday.

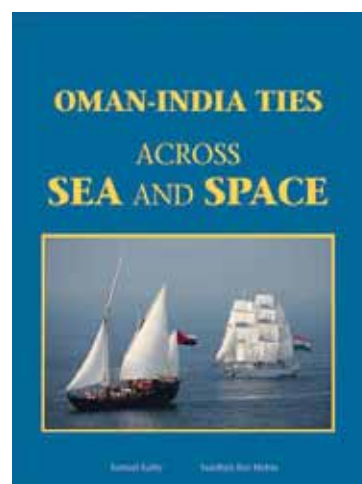
The book comes in commemoration of Oman's 50th National Day coinciding with 75 years of India's Independence.

At the event the ambassador of India said, "There is so much to write about India-Oman relationship which is about 5,000 years old, historical links, the vibrant people to people ties, growing economic ties, close security cooperation and opportunities for further expansion. The book has more than 300 pages and must have been challenging to do justice to each facet of the relationship."

"I recall during the prime minister of India's visit to Oman in 2018, the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may his blessed soul rest in peace, said, 'Sky is the limit for the Oman-India cooperation.'"

"I would like to thank both the authors and everyone who contributed to the book, and the officials of the Ministry of Information and Oman Daily Observer."

In his address Al Jabry said, "we are here together to launch the valuable book marking the deep relations between Oman



The book comes in commemoration of Oman's 50th National Day coinciding with 75 years of India's Independence

initiative in bringing out this book, which includes treasures of knowledge. Undoubtedly this book aims at rooting the cultural and historical dimensions for the bilateral relations between the two nations," said the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information.

The book written by Samuel Kutty, Senior Editor of the Observer, and Sandhya Rao Mehta, Associate Professor of SQU, and published by Oman Daily Observer in association with the Embassy of India, Sultanate of Oman.

and India, two friendly countries for over decades of civilisational contacts and joint contribution to enhance values of regional neighbourhood.

"We would like to extend our thanks and appreciation to the Indian Ambassador accredited to the Sultanate and the entire Indian Embassy in taking the

Oman, Saudi discuss exchange of expertise in criminal justice



RIYADH: Nasr bin Khamis al Sawai, Attorney General met here on Sunday with Shaikh Saud Abdullah al Mua'jab, Attorney General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). During the meeting, the two sides discussed

means of enhancing cooperation in the field of retributive justice and the exchange of expertise in a bid to develop performance and sharpen the skills of public prosecution employees.

The Saudi side gave a presenta-

tion on their experience, including the technical developments. The visit comes within the context of promoting the bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries in judicial and legal areas. — ONA

CARING ELDERLY

FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY



KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

They may be free of any duty of life, obligations and living a life of contentment, still, they need an ear to have listen, a shoulder to lean upon and a hand to hold tight at times of feeling nowhere.

Yes, we are talking about aged people whose lives are celebrated not just in a day, but through one's life, for their sacrifices, duties and efforts in making the people around them what they are today.

October 1 is commemorated as the 'International Day of Older Persons' and this day is dedicated to the geriatric population in Oman which is currently 6 per cent projected to increase to 12 per cent by 2050.

"Population ageing is occurring alongside broader social and economic changes taking place throughout the world, decrease in fertility, increase life expectancy and improve in heathcare services/facilities. Between 1950 and 2010, life expectancy worldwide rise from 46 to 68", according to Dr Saleha al Jadidi, Consultant Psychiatry and Geriatric.

Oman has nearly 145,450 elderly people comprising 75,265 females and 70,194 males. Their population is expected to grow at a rate of 9 per cent by 2040, thanks to the advanced medical care and better living standards.

According to WHO reports, the number of older adults in 2020 are 700 million persons aged around 65 years and above worldwide. This projected number expected to increase in 2050 by 1.6 billion persons aged 65+. It expected to increase from 9 per cent to 16 per cent in 2050.

Moreover, the increase in ageing led to many

issues including dementia, which represents 50 million people around the world which is predicted to touch 140 million figure in 2050. The fastest increase is projected to take place in least developed countries, where the number of persons aged 65 or over rise from 37 million in 2019 to 120 million in 2050.

Therefore, the International Day of Older Persons (October 1) coined by UN in 1990 is to increase awareness issues related to elderly, each with given a theme for addressing awareness issues.

"As population, ageing became one of most significant social transformation with implications to all sectors. Hence, collaboration actions required to improve the lives of older adults and their families by education the public on issues of concern and mobilise the resources", adds Dr Saleha, who is also the Chairperson of Oman Geriatric Society.

Oman has recently launched a society called 'Omani Association for the Elderly Health', a major milestone in the care for the elderly under the umbrella of the Omani Medical Association.

The Association brings together a group of

doctors interested in the health of the elderly, medical groups and assistance interested in providing healthcare to the elderly patients.

This year 2021, the theme of the Int'l Day of the Older Persons (October 1) is digital equality for all ages. This is to bring the attention of the world for digital inclusion of older adults while tackling stereotypes and discrimination associated with digitalisation. It also aims to address Public and private interests in areas of availability and affordability of infrastructure, to explore the role of policies and legal frameworks and to highlight the need for legally binding instrument on rights of older persons.

■ OMAN'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO UN
MEETS US SPECIAL ENVOY FOR YEMEN

NEW YORK: Dr Mohammed Awadh al Hassan, the Sultanate's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) in New York, met with Tim Lenderking, US Special Envoy for Yemen. Lenderking asserted the stance of the US Administration to end the crisis in Yemen. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly. — **ONA**

■ INDIAN CHIEF OF NAVAL STAFF ARRIVES ON OFFICIAL VISIT



MUSCAT: Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff in the Republic of India arrives here on Sunday on an official several-day visit to the Sultanate. The Indian guest and his accompanying delegation were received at Al Seeb Air Base by Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman and a number of senior officers. They were also received by the Indian Ambassador to the Sultanate and the Defence Attaché at the Indian Embassy in Muscat. — **ONA**

Omani researchers participate in Sharjah forum

SHARJAH: The 21st edition of Sharjah International Narrator Forum (SINF) kicked-off with the participation of two Omani researchers, namely Ahmed al Rashdi and Abdulaziz al Rashdi.

Ahmed al Rashdi presented

a number of works, including reading narratives such as "Stories from Oman" for children, in addition to his contribution to daily seminars on the Omani cultural heritage.

As for Abdulaziz al Rashdi, he

participated, along with a group of Arab narrators, in a discussion session entitled "Animal Stories in the Arab Heritage". During the discussion, he touched on a morphological reading of animal stories. — **ONA**

SME owners recount
business hardships
during pandemic

MUSCAT: Since the global effect of the Covid-19 pandemic began to really kick in more than a year ago, many small and medium enterprises across the globe have suffered. To this, Omani small businesses are no exception.

One such business is Brum Bites, a restaurant owned by Mohammed Miller, located in Al Wadi, in Salalah. Mohammed started his restaurant in January, 2021, driven by the desire to provide quality, healthy food to the Dhofari people. However, he has faced many challenges in doing so. "This Covid has messed up a lot of things. It has made the world unstable in terms of finance, health and people's mental state. In some way we're all feeling it."

Mohammed said he understood and respected the decisions of the government, but in reality the Covid-19 restrictions posed great challenges for his business.

Yaarab Kofan, another Omani entrepreneur who started his own business this year as well. The business, a coffee shop named Patria Café, was started in February 2021. Yaarab says he has had the plan to start this business for years now, and that there have been certain advantages to starting during the pandemic.

"Had I started the business in 2019, my focus would have been different. Like outside and inside seating arrangements." Because Yaarab began his venture after the pandemic began, he feels it has been far easier to assess risk.

However, it is not to say that his business has been unaffected.



"Sales for coffee shops in general have gone down... Some friends of mine have had to close their shops down altogether."

Abdullah al Hadhari is an Omani entrepreneur who has three different businesses that have each been affected by Covid-19 in their own way.

The first of his businesses, a perfume and frankincense shop, was started in 2010, the second, a horse stable which allows people to ride horses, was started in 2013, and the third is a bus transportation service for students, started in 2015.

All three of Abdullah's businesses are self-funded. Abdullah said Covid-19 has had a strong impact on all three of his businesses.

"The frankincense shops

have all been closed during lockdown... transportation had been on hold because there had been no school, and I needed to sell many of my buses, and there have been fewer people riding horses because the beaches were closed."

Another contributing factor affecting his businesses is Covid-19's effect on tourism. Frankincense and horse riding are popular with tourists, and the pandemic has had a large effect on global transportation. Although Abdullah's transportation business remains closed, he says that the other two have been gradually getting better, though he believes that it will take some time for businesses to heal from the effects of the pandemic. (**Mazid Mustahil Akaak**)

88 new Covid
cases, 2 deaths
in last 3 days

MUSCAT: As many as 88 new cases of coronavirus were registered in 3 days in Oman, in addition to 2 new Covid-19-related deaths.

This brings the total number of positive Covid-19 cases to 303,639 in the Sultanate.

The total number of Covid-19-related deaths reached 4,095, the Ministry of Health said.

The ministry added that 1,359 new cases have recovered, bringing the total number to 26,652 recoveries.

The ministry also pointed out that 2 cases were hospitalised over the past 24 hours, as the total number of current hospitalised Covid-19-infected patients stands at 41 of them 24 are in intensive care units (ICUs). — **ONA**



Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Heritage & Tourism

ANNOUNCEMENT TENDERS

Tender No.	36/2021	Tender Name	Design and Supervision Consultancy Services for Construction of Visitor Center and Ancillary Building at Qalhat Archaeological Site in Sur
Tender No.	37/2021	Tender Name	Design and Supervision Consultancy Services for Construction of Bat Visitors Center at Ibri
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)		37.500 OMR	
Tender Document Sales End Date		17/10/2021	
Last Date for Bid Submission		9/11/2021	
Grade		First (Consultancy)	
E-Tendering Portal		https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om	

- Interested companies and institutions registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Tenders should be submitted online on given website.
- Bids are submitted that fulfill the technical conditions and specifications, accompanied by a tender bond from a local bank or international registered bank that has a branch in Oman of not less than (1%) of the bid value, valid for (90) days from the date of its submission, while the original bond should be submitted at least one day before the bid submission at the Ministry In the Department of Tenders and Contracts on the second floor.
 - Any bid that does not meet the required tender bond will not be considered.
 - The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids.
- The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids.

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



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY
Advertisement No. 40/2021

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

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/20/080	2021/MM/QS-9	Rectification Works of Waterproofing in Muscat Municipality Building at Quriyat (E- Tender)	Rial 25	24/10/2021	07/11/2021	Second
PRE/21/072	2021/MM/QS-10	Replacing of Damaged Gantry Signs in Various Locations in Muscat Area (E- Tender)	Rial 25	24/10/2021	07/11/2021	Specialized

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Tender Bonds shall be placed in the Tender Bond Box (B) for E-Tendering in the First floor at Muscat Municipality HQ, Darsait before **10:00 am** as per the date Mentioned in the above table. All envelopes are to be clearly marked with the name of the Tender being presented and no other marks.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@ita.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

GOVERNMENT THWARTED A SEPTEMBER 21 COUP ATTEMPT LINKED TO MILITARY

Sudan ruling body chief pledges army reforms

KHARTOUM: The general who heads Sudan's ruling transitional authority on Sunday pledged to reform the army, days after a failed coup.

"We are going to reorganise the armed forces... Partisan activities are banned in the army," Sovereign Council chief General Abdel Fattah al Burhan said at the opening of a military hospital in Khartoum.

"The armed forces are committed to holding elections on the date fixed for ending the transition" in 2023, he said.

"After that, the army will leave the political scene and its role will be limited to protecting the country,"

Sudan is led by a civilian-military administration under an August 2019 power-sharing deal signed after president Omar Bashir's ouster by the military in April that year following mass protests against his iron-fisted rule.

Sudan's government said it thwarted a September 21 coup attempt involving military officers and civilians linked to the regime of imprisoned Bashir. At least 11 officers were among those arrested.

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has since called for reforms within the army, a highly sensitive issue in Sudan.

A transition to full civilian rule has remained shaky, reeling from deep fragmentation among political factions, economic woes and a receding role for civilian leaders.

Paramilitary leader and Burhan's deputy in the Sovereign Council, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, has pointed a finger of blame at politicians after the failed coup.

"Politicians are the main cause behind coups because they have neglected the average citizen... and are more concerned fighting over how they can stay in power,"



Sudan's Sovereign Council chief General Abdel Fattah al Burhan

Daglo said.

Meanwhile, Sudanese protesters blocked two key oil pipelines in Port Sudan, the main seaport on the Red Sea, over a peace deal with rebel groups, the oil minister said.

Warning of "an extremely grave situation", Oil Minister Gadein

Ali Obeid said one pipeline transports oil exports from South Sudan while the other handles Sudanese crude imports.

"Entrances and exits at the port's export terminal have been completely shuttered" since early on Saturday, he said.

Last October, several rebel

groups signed a peace deal with Sudan's transitional government which came to power shortly after the April 2019 ouster of long-time ruler Omar al Bashir.

The protesters, from Sudan's Beja minority, say that the deal, with rebels from the Darfur region and Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, ignored their interests.

Beja rebels agreed a peace deal with the Bashir regime in 2006 after a decade of low-level conflict in Port Sudan and the east.

Port Sudan is the country's main seaport and a vital trade hub for its export-dependent economy.

The Khartoum government receives around \$25 for every barrel of oil sold from South Sudan, according to official figures.

South Sudan produces around 162,000 barrels per day, which is transported by pipeline to Port Sudan and then shipped to global markets.

"There are enough (oil) reserves to last the country's needs for up to 10 days," Sudan's oil ministry said in a statement.

It warned the export pipeline could sustain damage after demonstrators prevented a vessel from loading crude.

Protests against the October 2020 deal have rocked east Sudan since last week.

On September 17, demonstrators impeded access to the docks in Port Sudan.

On Friday, demonstrators blocked the entrance to the airport and a bridge linking Kassala state with the rest of the country.

The unrest comes as Sudan grapples with chronic economic problems inherited from the Bashir regime.

Shortly after it began, the transitional government of Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok said it had foiled a coup attempt by supporters of the ousted president. — AFP



Demonstrators chant slogans during a protest in Tunisia's capital Tunis on Sunday. — AFP

Algeria postpones corruption trial

ALGIERS: A court in the Algerian capital on Sunday postponed the corruption trial of the younger brother of ousted president Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who died this month, local media reported.

Defence lawyer Miloud Brahimi requested the postponement, citing Said Bouteflika's "psychological condition" after the September 17 death of his brother.

Algerian media said the

63-year-old who served as presidential advisor appeared pale and weak at the court hearing.

The trial of Bouteflika and several co-defendants in the capital's Dar el-Beida suburb was delayed until October 10, but a defence request for their release on bail was turned down.

Said Bouteflika was detained in May 2019, a month after his brother quit office following mass protests against his bid for a fifth presidential term. Said was

sentenced to 15 years in prison for "plotting" against the army and the state, but a retrial in January cleared him of those charges.

He remains in custody on corruption charges, along with several other political and business leaders from the Bouteflika era.

The once-mighty presidential aide was long seen as the real power running the North African country after his brother suffered a debilitating stroke in 2013. — AFP

5 Palestinians dead after Israeli raids in the West Bank

RAMALLAH: Five Palestinians have been killed in a raid by the Israeli army in the West Bank.

There were exchanges of fire at various locations during the broad operation against members of the Hamas organisation, Israeli media reported on Sunday, citing the army.

The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed that three Palestinians were killed north-west of Jerusalem and two others near the Palestinian town of Jenin in the northern West Bank.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett spoke of an operation by the security forces targeting "Hamas who were on the verge of carrying out attacks."

"The killing of today's martyrs is the result of the continuous security coordination with the (Israeli) occupation and the fruit of the normalisation meetings held by (Palestinian Authority) leaders with Israeli ministers and Knesset members in Ramallah a few days ago," Hamas spokesman Abdulatif al Qanou said.

"It is a continuation of crimes against our people," Al Qanou said.

Israeli military spokesperson Ran Kochav told the *Times of Israel* that Israeli officials are



Palestinians work in their house that was destroyed by Israeli strikes during Israel-Hamas fighting last May, in Khan Younis in southern Gaza Strip, on Sunday. — Reuters

The Palestinian Health Ministry confirmed that three Palestinians were killed north-west of Jerusalem and two others near the Palestinian town of Jenin in the northern West Bank

assuming Sunday's actions could lead to retaliatory rocket attacks out of the Gaza Strip.

Such attacks often prompt Israeli retaliation and have, in the past, led to larger wars, most recently in May.

Israel has controlled the West Bank and East Jerusalem since a 1967 war, but both are claimed by Palestinian groups who one day hope to use the area to set up their own country. — dpa

SHORT TAKES

SANAA

50 dead as fighting intensifies for Marib

At least 50 Ansar Allah fighters and Yemeni pro-government troops have been killed as fighting intensifies for the city of Marib, a key battleground of the seven-year conflict, military sources said on Sunday.

Hundreds of fighters have died this month alone after the Iran-backed rebels renewed their campaign for Marib, the government's last stronghold in the oil-rich north.

"In the past 48 hours, 43 Ansar Allah fighters were killed,



mostly in coalition airstrikes" west of Marib, a military source said, while another source said at least seven loyalists died in fighting. The Ansar Allah rarely announces their casualties.

AMMAN

Russian strikes kill 7 Turkey-backed rebels in Syria

At least seven Turkey-backed Syrian rebels were killed and 13 injured in Russian strikes on north-western Syria, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group reported.

The airstrikes targeted the headquarters of the rebel group in Barad village, in Aleppo province. More victims are expected to be pulled from under the rubble. The United Nations said that more than 350,000 people have been killed in the conflict in Syria since March 2011, when the



uprising-turned-conflict started.

Forces loyal to President Assad control about 70 per cent of the territory, an area home to about 40 per cent of the population, the UN said.

DAMASCUS

Syria coronavirus spike sees hospitals reach capacity

Hospitals in the Syrian capital Damascus and the coastal province of Latakia have reached capacity due to rising coronavirus admissions, a health official said on Sunday.

"We have started transferring Covid-19 patients from the province of Damascus to the (central) province of Homs, and from Latakia to the province of Tartus," Tawfiq Hasaba, a health ministry official, was quoted as saying by Syrian state TV. The move came after "hospitals in these



areas reached capacity because of a large spike in coronavirus cases," he added. Syria on Saturday logged 442 new coronavirus infections in government-held areas — a new daily record.

In brief

BANGKOK



MYANMAR BLAMES NET BLACKOUTS ON ANTI-COUP FIGHTERS

Myanmar's junta has denied suspending the Internet in conflict-racked regions, blaming a recent spate of data blackouts on anti-coup protesters who had destroyed military-owned communications towers.

The country has been in chaos since the military toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's government in February, triggering huge democracy protests that security forces have sought to quell in bloody crackdowns.

Some in the anti-coup movement formed local "people's defence forces" in their townships to fight back, and in recent weeks destroyed several communications towers.

HAVANA



CUBA KICKS OFF COVID-19 VACCINE EXPORTS TO VIETNAM

Cuba said it had exported its three-shot Abdala coronavirus vaccine for the first time, sending an initial shipment to Vietnam as part of a contract to supply five million doses to the Southeast Asian country.

Scientists in the Communist-run island have developed three home-grown vaccines against Covid-19, all of which are waiting to receive official recognition from the World Health Organization.

State-run pharmaceutical corporation BioCubaFarma made export announcement after saying earlier this week it had produced enough doses to immunise more than 90 per cent of the local population.

SINGAPORE



SINGAPORE TIGHTENS CURBS AFTER DAILY VIRUS RECORD

Singapore's Health Ministry reported a record number of coronavirus cases for the third consecutive day, along with three related deaths, prompting the government to tighten restrictions.

The ministry reported around 1,600 new infections, taking the total to over 84,000, almost 20,000 of which have been reported over the past four weeks. The three fatalities reported mean that 73 people have died in the 5.7-million population city-state since the start of the pandemic. Two of three who died were among the 82 per cent of fully-vaccinated.

TWO MAIN CANDIDATES LIKELY TO GET MAJORITY IN THE FIRST ROUND

Race to determine next Japan PM likely to go to run-off

TOKYO: The race to determine Japan's next premier will likely go to a run-off as neither of the two main candidates look able to secure an outright majority in the first round of voting three days from now, public broadcaster NHK said on Sunday.

Taro Kono, the minister in charge of Japan's vaccine roll-out, has been viewed as the top contender to become the next head of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The leader of the party becomes prime minister because of the LDP's majority in parliament's lower house.

But Kono faces competition from former foreign minister Fumio Kishida; Sanae Takaichi, a former internal affairs minister; and Seiko Noda, a former minister for gender equality.

Kono and Kishida command



Candidate for the presidential election of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Taro Kono at the party headquarters, in Tokyo, Japan. — Reuters

the most support but neither will have enough votes on Wednesday to secure an outright majority, NHK said, citing its polling of party members.

A total of 764 people will vote in the race, including 382 lawmakers and grassroots party members nationwide, NHK said. About 30 per cent of the lawmakers support Kishida, NHK said, with Kono expected to garner the most support among local party members, particularly in big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka.

Kono and Kishida were followed by Takaichi, according to NHK. A hardline conservative, she is one of two women in the race and has picked up the backing of former prime minister Shinzo Abe.

Separately, a Kyodo News poll on Sunday showed Kono

remained the top pick among rank-and-file LDP members, with 47.4 per cent support, although that was down by 1.2 percentage points from a similar survey earlier this month.

The four candidates wrapped up a series of debates on Sunday, with both Kono and Noda voicing support for legislation allowing gay marriage.

The candidates also called for more support for education, with Takaichi saying she wanted to extend existing financial support for families to include children in secondary school.

Frontrunner Taro Kono, the vaccine minister, said he wanted greater financial support for graduate students, to cover their cost of living expenses, so that Japan can boost its research capabilities. — Agencies

High alert as Cyclone Gulab bears down on eastern India

KOLKATA: Tens of thousands of people have been evacuated in three Indian states ahead of a cyclone expected to smash into the east coast later on Sunday, authorities said.

Cyclones are a regular menace in the northern Indian Ocean but many scientists say they are becoming more frequent and severe as climate change warms sea temperatures.

Cyclone Gulab is expected to make landfall between the coastal states of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, bearing gusts of up to 95 kilometres per hour, the state-run India Meteorological Department said.

The storm system from the Bay of Bengal would bring "strong winds and very heavy (and) extremely heavy rainfall", the weather bureau added in an advisory on Sunday.

Odisha and Andhra Pradesh officials ordered tens of thousands of people living along the coast to move to shelters, as hundreds of emergency workers were sent to the region.

Authorities in West Bengal — to the north of Odisha — said on Sunday that, while Gulab appeared unlikely to hit the state directly, they were still taking precautions.

"We have so far evacuated more than 20,000 people to schools (and) government offices, which have been turned to cyclone shelters," Bankim Hazra, a state minister responsible for the low-lying areas, said.

Odisha Special Relief Commissioner P K Jena said seven districts in the state were

on high alert and evacuation efforts were under way. Ganjam, a coastal district, was expected to be badly hit by the cyclone, Jena added in a statement.

In Andhra Pradesh, some 85,000 families were expected to

Authorities in West Bengal — to the north of Odisha — said that, while Gulab appeared unlikely to hit the state directly, they were still taking precautions. Odisha and Andhra Pradesh officials ordered tens of thousands of people living along the coast to move to shelters, as emergency workers were sent to the region

be moved from low-lying areas to temporary relief shelters.

In May, more than a million people were evacuated from their homes along India's east coast before it was battered by Cyclone Yaas with winds gusting up to 155 km an hour — equivalent to a category two hurricane.

At least 20 people were killed and tens of thousands were displaced in the storm, which caused widespread damage worth more than \$2 billion in Odisha and West Bengal states and in neighbouring Bangladesh. — AFP

UP IN THE AIR



Indian Air Force (IAF) paratroopers perform over Dal lake during an IAF's air show in Srinagar, India, on Sunday. — AFP

Germans vote in close election to decide Merkel successor

AACHEN/POTSDAM: Germans went to the polls on Sunday in a national election too close to call, with the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) mounting a strong challenge to retiring Chancellor Angela Merkel’s conservatives.

Merkel has been in power since 2005 but plans to step down after the election, making the vote an era-changing event to set the future course of Europe’s largest economy.

A fractured electorate means that after the election, leading parties will sound each other out before embarking on more formal coalition negotiations that could take months, leaving Merkel, 67, in charge in a caretaker role.

“We all sense that this is a very important federal election,” Laschet told journalists after voting in his home constituency of Aachen. “It is a federal election that will decide the direction of Germany in coming years and therefore every vote counts.”

Running against Laschet is Olaf Scholz of the SPD, the finance minister in Merkel’s right-left coalition who won all three televised debates between the leading candidates.

Scholz, 63, has seen his party’s lead over the conservatives squeezed to 1-3 points in final opinion polls, leaving Laschet with a chance of clinching a narrow victory.

“I hope that as many citizens as possible will go and vote and make a very strong result for the SPD possible and give me the mandate to become the



Germany’s conservative CDU leader and candidate for chancellor Armin Laschet and his wife Susanne after casting his vote at a polling station in Aachen. – AFP

Final opinion polls gave Social Democrats a narrow lead as Conservatives reduced gap in final stages of campaign

next chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany,” Scholz said after casting a ballot in his own constituency of Potsdam near Berlin.

The election is expected to yield a splintered parliament, which will force the winner to form a three-way coalition to secure a majority.

The most likely coalition scenarios see either the SPD or the conservative CDU/CSU bloc — whoever comes first — forming an alliance with the Greens and the liberal Free Democrats (FDP).

Scholz told supporters in Potsdam on Saturday that his preferred outcome was for the SPD and Greens to secure a majority to rule alone without a third partner.

Both the conservatives and the FDP reject a European “debt union” and want to ensure that joint European Union borrowing to finance the bloc’s coronavirus recovery package remains a one-off. The SPD has talked about taking steps towards a fiscal union.

The Greens favour a common European fiscal policy to support investment in the environment, research, infrastructure and education.

Scholz has not ruled out a leftist coalition with the Greens and the Left party, which wants to pull Germany out of Nato, a red line for the SPD. — AFP

Kremlin releases photos of Putin’s Siberian fishing trip

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin spent several days hiking and fishing in Siberia in early September, the Kremlin said on Sunday as it published pictures of the president on the holiday.

A caption under one of the 20 pictures published on the Kremlin website said the president stopped for a few days in Siberia after a working trip to Russia’s Far East in early September.

Several days later, in the middle of September Putin said he would have to spend “a few days” in self-isolation after dozens of people in his entourage fell ill with Covid-19.

He had to cancel his trip to Tajikistan for a security summit. Putin has cultivated a macho



Russian President Vladimir Putin poses with a fish in the taiga. – AFP

image, appealing to many Russians, and has previously been pictured riding a horse bare-chested and in sun glasses, as well as carrying a hunting rifle and piloting a fighter jet.

This time, his outings were more mundane. The Kremlin

published photos of Putin standing in a river and catching a fish, walking through lush meadows and talking to Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu, his usual holiday companion. Putin, 68, has had two shots of Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine. — Reuters

HUGE DAMAGE FROM LA PALMA VOLCANO



Jorge, a farmer from La Palma, looks at the smoke of the Cumbre Vieja volcano as he harvests sweet potatoes, the only undamaged produce from his ash-covered plot of land, in Los Llanos de Aridane on the Canary island of La Palma. No casualties have been reported so far since the Cumbre Vieja went on erupting on September 19, but the damage to land and property has been enormous, with the Canary authorities estimating the cost at well over \$470 million. – AFP

Majority of women in Iceland’s new parliament, European first

REYKJAVIK: In a first in Europe, women hold more than half of the seats in Iceland’s new parliament, final election results showed on Sunday.

Of the 63 seats in the Althing, 33 were won by women, or 52 per cent, according to projections based on the final results.

No other European country has had more than 50 per cent women lawmakers, with Sweden coming closest at 47 per cent, according to data compiled by the World Bank.

Five other countries in the world currently have parliaments



Iceland’s Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir

where women hold at least half the seats, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union: Rwanda (61 per cent), Cuba (53 per cent), Nicaragua (51 per cent) and Mexico and the UAE (50 per cent).

Unlike some other countries, Iceland does not have legal quotas on female representation in parliament, though some parties do require a minimum number of candidates be women. Iceland has long been a pioneer in gender equality and women’s rights, and has topped the World Economic Forum’s ranking of



Iceland’s Finance Minister, leader and top candidate of the Icelandic Independence Party Bjarni Benediktsson (L) and party delegates react to the results in Reykjavik. – AFP

most egalitarian countries for the past 12 years.

It offers the same parental leave to both men and women, and its first law on equal pay for men and women dates back to 1961.

Iceland was the first country to elect a woman as president in 1980, and since 2018 it has had a pioneering gender-equal pay law that puts the onus on employers to prove they are paying the same wages to men and women.

Saturday’s election saw the left-right coalition government widen its majority. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

WASHINGTON

3 dead, dozens injured after US train derailment

At least three people were killed and dozens more injured when a US train derailed on Saturday afternoon in northern Montana, with rescuers rushing to safely evacuate everyone on board. Around 141 passengers and 16 crew members were travelling from Chicago towards the Pacific coast when eight of the 10 cars came off the tracks at around 4 pm.

“We are deeply saddened to learn local authorities are now confirming that three people



have lost their lives as a result of this accident,” rail operator Amtrak said, adding that there were also “reported injuries”. It was not immediately clear what caused the incident.

PARIS

France to double vaccine doses for poorer countries

France will double the number of vaccine doses it will send to poorer countries to 120 million, President Emmanuel Macron has pledged in a video broadcast during the Global Citizen concert in Paris.

“The injustice is that in other continents, obviously, vaccination is very late...,” he said. “We have to go faster, stronger. “France pledges to double the number of doses it is giving,” he added. “We will pass from 60 million to 120 million doses of-



ferred.”

On Wednesday, the United States announced that it would be doubling its donation of vaccine doses, bringing its total contribution to 1.1 billion.

LONDON

UK police arrest man over teacher’s murder

Police in Britain investigating the murder of Sabina Nessa, a teacher who was found dead in a south-east London park last weekend, said they arrested a 38-year-old man. Primary schoolteacher Nessa, 28, was killed after leaving her home to go to a bar just a five-minute walk away, in the latest case to galvanise public concern about women’s safety in the UK.

Detectives from London’s Metropolitan Police took the suspect into custody in the early hours of Sunday at an address in



East Sussex, a county southeast of the British capital. Detective Chief Inspector Neil John, from the Met’s specialist crime command, called the arrest a “significant development”.

A leader who held Europe together!

ELLA JOYNER

A spot of gardening, catching up on unread novels, hiking in South Tyrol? No one knows what the tireless German leader Angela Merkel has planned for retirement as chancellor after Sunday’s election.

Her successor in Berlin won’t be having such a relaxing time however, at least when it comes to Europe: he or she will have to fill the EU’s largest political shoes and — some observers in Brussels hope — push ahead with major EU-wide policies on climate change, migration and digitalisation.

Few are expecting radical political change when it comes to dealing with the next chancellor. Polls point to another centrist coalition in the German government, perhaps without the Christian Democrats and then pulled left by either the SPD the Greens, or both. What European diplomats who spoke and are accustomed to the longtime chancellor’s slow, considered manner will miss however, is her political skill at crunch times and tense late-night talks.

“Merkel’s personality and experience were greatly appreciated during budget negotiations and for top EU jobs,” one diplomatic source said on condition of anonymity.

Another Brussels-based diplomat described Merkel as a known entity who valued consensus.

The next chancellor will likely be more focused on domestic affairs at first, the diplomat said, leaving space for France to dominate. Most major EU initiatives hinge on cooperation between Paris and Berlin, the 750-billion-euro (\$880-billion) coronavirus recovery fund being a case in point. For political expert Jana Puglierin of the European Council on Foreign Relations, Merkel’s stability, and her reluctance to rock the boat also made her a barrier to progress.

From this point of view, she was “a German chancellor with no vision for the future of the EU and without the will to make necessary reforms,” Puglierin wrote in the *Internationale Politik* magazine this month.

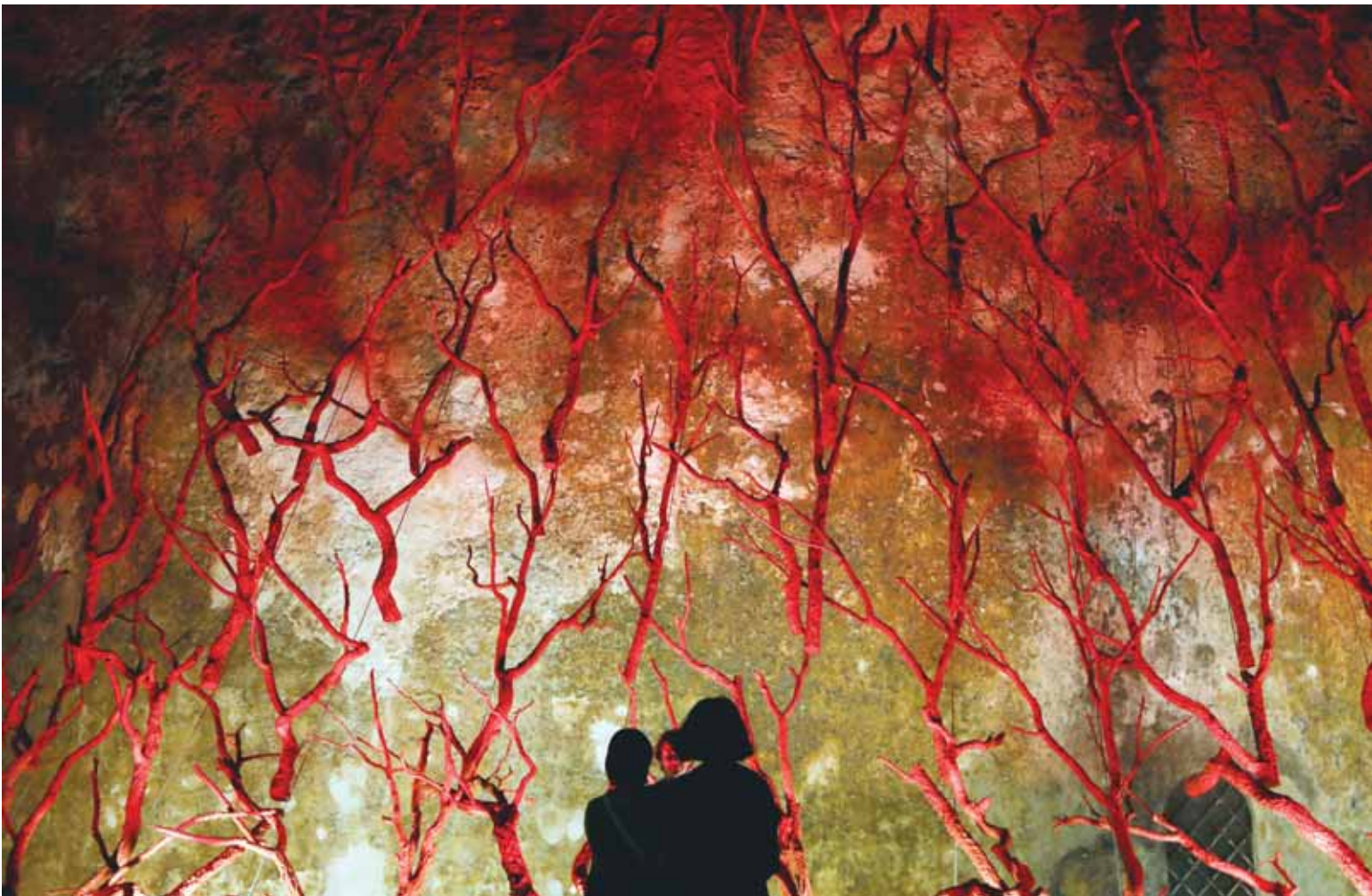
“At the European level, (Merkel) has often shied away from taking clear positions, preferring instead to sit problems out only to end up taking the lowest common denominator solution at the last moment,” the Berlin-based analyst argued.

It’s an image that hits home for some.

— dpa

Merkel’s personality and experience were greatly appreciated during budget negotiations and for top EU jobs

A DIPLOMATIC SOURCE



A CORAL TREE

People walk in front of an art installation called “L’albero di corallo” (Coral tree), in Alghero, Italy, on Sunday.

– Reuters

Memories cherished by artistic handcrafts



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
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WHAT IS THRILLING IS TO SEE YOUNG OMANIS MAKING A LIVING FROM A BUSINESS OF MAKING HANDCRAFTS

Creativity is something which needs to be valued, explored and expressed. Crafts express emotions about creativity as well as how one can use his head and heart to capture memories, mood, and feelings in distinctive ways. Whether it is arts or crafts, everything about creativity involves honest feelings. Creativity is infinite and cannot be exhausted as there is always something new to explore.

Arts and crafts have always been cherished, but the popularity has increased today with people exploring new tools, styles, and media, in both traditional and contemporary crafts. These days everything can be made with machines, but nothing compares to something made with hands and the heart. The appreciation and demand for handcrafted things are growing, as handcrafts are believed to make homes more human.

Getting a sawdust of wood, a splash of paints or a spot of colour on the floor of your place is what turns your house or apartment into a warm and loving home where you feel comfortable and inspired! Sometimes, the feeling of home is hidden in tiny things and small stories that every item carries with it. The same is the reason behind buying handcrafts and keep them

at home. Every piece tells a story, reflecting the passion and inspiration of the artisan who created it. That is why handcrafts make the perfect fit for any house.

Handcrafting is very important for it represents nations’ culture and tradition. It promotes the heritage of a country through the use of local genuine materials and it also preserves traditional knowledge and talents. It marks the expression of history through which artisans showcase its beauty. Throughout the history of humanity, people of different origins, cultures and beliefs have developed strong and notable loyalty to their national genuine cultures, traditions and rituals. Some of the cultural and historical aspects are even celebrated in various occasions and events worldwide.

Despite the technology revolution attacking every house, there are still passionate people about traditions, culture and heritage. They are so attached to their national identity, which is mirrored in all walks of their life. Owning and making handcrafts is something that goes deep into their heart. Some are making their own living from mastering a traditional handcraft industry. Basically, some have not only inherited the business from their ancestors, but in fact they were fed with

the passion and born with skillful hands, so they grow up with the talent.

Regardless of all the changes happening in the world and people’s embracing to the modern life, Omanis are presenting an exemplary model of those devoted to preserve their culture, heritage and traditions. Many have never given up working on the traditional handcrafts industries. What is thrilling is to see young Omanis making a living from a business of making handcrafts. Though, some might have the chance to get a better and well paid job opportunity.

They strongly believe in that he who works with his hands is a labourer, he who works with his hands and his head is a craftsman, but he who works with his hands and his head and his heart is an artist. The Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him, was asked what type of earning was best, and he replied: “A man’s work with his hands and every lawful business transaction.”

Art is not a handcraft, it is the transmission of feelings the artist has experienced. Therefore, in crafting, there are no mistakes, just unique creations. As a matter of fact, a piece of art is a world in itself reflecting senses and emotions of the artist’s world.

The adventures of a blonde and a very old car



Rachael MacIver
Instagram: @rachael_maciver

IN RUB AL KHALI YOU OFTEN FIND THESE IN OLD DRIED UP RIVERBEDS. THEY WERE TRULY AMAZING TO LOOK AT

“You can’t fight the desert... you have to ride with it” Mrs J exclaimed, obviously in her philosophical mood.

“Impressive”, I nodded.

“Well, it was actually Louis L’Mour who said it first”, she admitted “but nevertheless”.

We were driving in a convoy of 10 vehicles through Rub al Khali — The Empty Quarter. It was still early morning and the sun had not yet worked up its strength, but we were under no illusions that we wouldn’t be sweating buckets later. We had already packed up camp, had the first strong cup of coffee and as clockwork scattered in all directions to find a bush. Except, there weren’t any, of course. Only sand. And more sand.

Now we were driving on a flat, firm stretch which looked like it

once upon a time could have been a riverbed. “We’ll soon hit the soft sand and the dunes”, our driver Mohamed assured us with a wider grin. This was what he had come for. All Mrs J and I had to do was pack up our tent and sleeping bags in the mornings, get to the kitchen tent for breakfast — and try not to wet ourselves when charging full speed up a sand dune, only to fly over the ridge, and hurl down the equally steep back.

For two 55+ year olds, who hadn’t bothered with their pelvic floor exercises after giving birth many moons ago, this wasn’t easy. I gotta be honest with you.

“Stop! Look!”, Mrs J pointed to something sticking out of the sand close to the car. Reluctantly Mohamed stopped to let us out, thereby holding up the rest of the

convoy behind us. But this was too good to miss. To the right of us, scattered like a giant’s marbles, were dozens of geodes. These hard round balls of rock, which most of all looked like fossilised cauliflowers in varying sizes, were not anything special to look at. Until you cracked them open. Then the inside revealed itself, hollow has a layer of hard silicac, showing up as beautiful quartz crystals fit for a queen.

In Rub al Khali you often find these in old dried up riverbeds. They were truly amazing to look at, and just like when finding your first 4-leaf clover, you hold it in your hand and feel incredible lucky and special. Until you realise that there is another one next to it, and another one, and another one.

The one Mrs J had spotted from the car, was indeed a prime

specimen. It was the size of a football. She dragged it back to the car. “Just imagine this being created over thousands of years ago” she marvelled “only to be found by little ol’ me!” And she was off again in a frenzy, plucking geode after geode off the ground and clutching them against her shirt front. She came running back to the car and unloaded her loot. “Just one more”, she shouted.

Mohamed cleared his throat. “She knows she can’t actually take the geodes with her, right? They are supposed to stay where they are. Dhofari geodes are some of the most trafficked geological heritage in Oman”. I looked at him in horror. “So, at the moment Mrs J is actually the desert equivalent of a cat burglar?” I asked. “Well, maybe not quite”, he looked down

at the growing pile of geodes next to his car, and back to Mrs J rushing around hording rocks while mumbling to herself “just one more, just one more”.

“All she has done so far is just moving them from one place to another. I was kind of hoping she would tire herself out”.

With the rest of the convoy growing restless, it fell unto me to drag Mrs J back in the car and explain. I wasn’t sure if it was Mohamed’s wish that had come true of if she was just sulking, but the silence from the backseat was bliss.

“You can’t fight the desert”, I reminded her “you just have to ride with it”.

I smiled to myself. A tiny geode was safe in my pocket. I would give it to her later.

sport

HAMILTON CLAIMS

100TH

WIN IN RUSSIA



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Mercedes driver now two points clear at the top ■

Verstappen goes from last to second ■

Sainz third for Ferrari ■

Heartbreak for Norris after leading from first pole ■

SOCHI: Lewis Hamilton became the first Formula One driver to win 100 Grands Prix with a dramatic rain-assisted victory in Russia that sent the Mercedes driver back to the top of the championship on Sunday.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished an impressive second at Sochi's Olympic Park, after starting 20th and last due to engine penalties, thereby limiting the damage from his rival's win. Seven-time world champion Hamilton is now two points clear of Verstappen with seven races remaining, after starting fourth on the grid and five points behind the young Dutchman.

Spaniard Carlos Sainz was third for Ferrari on a day of heartbreak for McLaren's Lando Norris, who led three laps from the end but decided to stay out on slicks as the rain began to fall and ended up seventh.

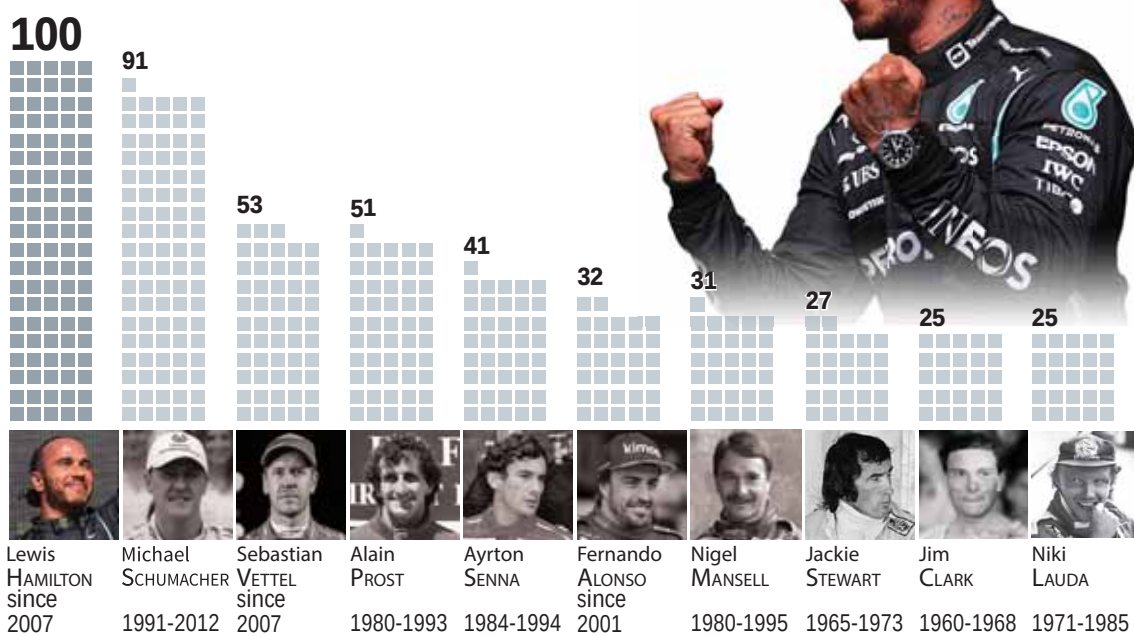
"What a race the weather provided. It's taken a long time to get to 100 and I wasn't sure it would come", said Hamilton, who last season passed Ferrari great Michael Schumacher's previous record of 91 wins.

"Max must've done a really great job to come up to second from last. We've got our work cut out", added the Briton.

Hamilton had pitted from

F1: Lewis Hamilton, 1st driver with 100 wins

The seven-time world champion has won at least one Grand Prix in each of his 15 seasons in Formula 1



Sources: Formula 1, statsf1.com, AFP Photos

second place for intermediates with four laps to go and it was the right decision as Norris, on pole for the first time in his career and heading for a first win, found out to his dismay.

The 21-year-old Briton slid and slithered on the treacherous surface as Hamilton made up the 25-second gap and seized the lead.

"The team made a great call

right at the end. I didn't want to let Lando go and I didn't know what the weather was doing", said Hamilton.

"It would've been tough to get past Lando unless we came up to some traffic or he made a mistake, which he hasn't been doing, so then the rain came and it was very opportunistic."

While Hamilton celebrated a personal century, his Mercedes

team maintained their own 100 per cent record in Sochi.

The champions have won every Russian grand prix since the first in 2014, Hamilton triumphant in five of them.

Australian Daniel Ricciardo, winner of the previous race at Italy's Monza circuit, was fourth for McLaren, with Valtteri Bottas fifth for Mercedes after starting 16th. — Reuters

Russian Grand Prix

Sochi circuit

1	Lewis Hamilton (GBR)	1:30:41.001	25
	Mercedes		
2	Max Verstappen (NED)	at 53.271	18
	Red Bull		
3	Carlos Sainz (ESP)	at 1:02.475	15
	Ferrari		
4	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	at 1:05.607	12
	McLaren		
5	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	at 1:07.533	10
	Mercedes		

Driver standings	
Hamilton (GBR)	246.5
Verstappen (NED)	244.5
Bottas (FIN)	151
Norris (GBR)	139
Perez (MEX)	120
Teams	
Mercedes	397.5
Red Bull	364.5
McLaren	234
Ferrari	216.5

Source: Formula1.com

PNG bamboozled by Oman spinners

SHAHZAD RAZA
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Left-arm spinners Zeeshan Maqsood and Ayaan Khan left Papua New Guinea (PNG) in tatters as Oman started another round of World Cricket League (WCL) 2 campaign with a massive 110-run win here at Oman Cricket Academy Ground 2 in Al Amerat on Sunday.

Chasing Oman's 250 for 7, PNG could only crawl their way to 140 before being dismissed in the 43rd over, captain Zeeshan did the bulk of early damage, picking up 4 for 28 in 10 overs.

Ayaan came on to seal the tourists' fate with a superb purchase of 3 for 12 in 7.2 overs.

Only Jason Kila and Assad Vala made notable contributions with the



Oman captain Zeeshan Maqsood bowls against PNG at OCA Ground 2 in Al Amerat on Sunday.

bat, scoring 36 and 27 respectively.

Oman showed a lot of maturity to reach 250 on a pitch that always seemed to have something for the bowlers.

Spinners in particular

looked more threatening as the ball gripped, turned and bounced, doing everything to keep the batters on the guard.

Suraj Kumar's top-score of 62 not out was of much more value considering the

life wasn't all that easy in the middle. Ayaan (44) and Aqib (34) looked equally impressive in their stay on the pitch, exhibiting focus and flourish at the same time. Zeeshan and Naseem Khushi chipped in with useful contributions of 27 and 26 respectively.

The tournament will resume after Monday's rest day when Oman takes on fancied Scotland on Tuesday in what promises to be an intriguing contest.

BRIEF SCORES

Oman 250 for 7 in 50 overs (Suraj Kumar 62 - 2x4, 2x6, Ayaan Khan 44 - 5x4, Aqib Ilyas 34 - 5x4, Naseem Khushi 27 - 4x4, Zeeshan Maqsood 26 - 3x4; Kabua Morea 2-50) thrashed PNG 140 all out in 42.2 overs (Jason Kila 36-2x4, 1x6, Assad Vala 27 - 1x4. Zeeshan Maqsood 4-28, Ayaan Khan 3-12, Aqib Ilyas 2-34) by 110 runs.



Sultanate of Oman MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects:-

Tender No.	Project Category	Location	Grade in Tender Board Registration
20/2021	Construction and Maintenance	CONSTRUCTION OF SPORT HALL AT OMAN CLUB (MUSCAT GOVERNORATE)	First Grade

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) until 09/10/2021.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00 am 08/11/2021

A Tender Bond equivalent to 1% of the tender sum issued from a registered bank, in the prescribed form, in Sultanate of Oman and valid for 90 days should enclosed with the tender.

Any tender without the bond will be reject and the tender committee is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender received.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email etenderhd@ita.gov.om



Open rapid chess tournament on October 1

MUSCAT: An Open rapid chess tournament will be conducted at the Panaroma mall food court from 1 pm on October 1. The tournament will be the first Open over the board chess tournament in nearly two years. Interested players may send entries by Whatsapp to 71549460. The tournament is open to fully vaccinated people only.



India end Aussie women's 26-match winning streak

SYDNEY: Australian women's world record 26-match winning streak in ODIs came to an end after India pulled off their highest-ever run chase to defeat them by two wickets in the third ODI on Sunday. India won with three balls to spare after fifties from Shafali Verma and Yastika Bhatia helped them chase target of 265 in Mackay.



Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant in action. – BCCI

Delhi, Punjab register contrasting victories

ABU DHABI: Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant guided his side through a frustrating game to defeat Rajasthan Royals by 33 runs and take the lead in the Indian Premier League on Saturday.

Pant hit 24 and Shreyas Iyer 43 as Delhi made 154 for six in their 20 overs. The batsman wicketkeeper then claimed two catches and a stumping to leave Rajasthan struggling on 17 for three in their chase.

Despite a stubborn unbeaten 70 from captain Sanju Samson, Rajasthan could only reach 121 for six. It was only the third time that Delhi have defended a total of 154 or less to win in the IPL — all three have been against Rajasthan. But victory pulled them two points ahead of Chennai Super Kings.

Iyer's fiery 43 put backbone into Delhi's innings as wickets fell regularly. Openers Prithvi Shaw (10) and Shikhar Dhawan (8) went cheaply, leaving Iyer

and Pant to put on Delhi's best partnership of 62 for the third wicket. Iyer was stumped by Samson having lasted 32 balls including two sixes.

HOLDER FIREWORKS

Punjab Kings beat Sunrisers Hyderabad by five runs in a thrilling second clash of the day that left Kane Williamson's Hyderabad rock bottom of the eight team table with just one win from nine games. Punjab managed only 125 for seven with South African Aiden Markram hitting the top score of 27.

West Indies import Jason Holder took three wickets for Hyderabad and then led the run race after his side's openers failed again. David Warner was dismissed for two and Williamson for one.

Holder hit 47 off 29 balls including five sixes. But needing a six off the last ball to force a super over, Holder was restricted to a single by Nathan Ellis. — AFP

Jadeja cameo powers Chennai to last-ball win over Kolkata

DUBAI: Ravindra Jadeja's crucial cameo and 43 by Faf du Plessis helped Chennai Super Kings to a two-wicket win on Sunday over Kolkata Knight Riders that sent them top of the table.

Needing 26 off 12 deliveries while chasing 172 for victory, Chennai reached their target on the final ball in Abu Dhabi to record their third straight win in the Twenty20 tournament.

The left-handed Jadeja, who made 22 off eight balls, smashed fast bowler Prasidh Krishna for two sixes and two fours in the 19th over to leave Chennai needing four to win off the final six balls.

Spinner Sunil Narine bowled the 20th over and tried to defend four runs. He took two key wickets including Sam Curran, for four, and Jadeja to take the match to the final ball with the scores level.

New man Deepak Chahar kept his calm to hit the winning run for MS Dhoni's Chennai.

The chase was led by an opening stand of 74 between Du Plessis and Ruturaj Gaikwad, who made 40, before Kolkata's bowlers clawed their way back.

Narine bowled Ambati Rayudu, Lockie Ferguson sent back Moeen Ali for 32, and Varun Chakravarthy cleaned up Dhoni for just one, as Chennai faltered.

NUMBER SEVEN

But Jadeja proved his worth at number seven to take his team past Delhi Capitals in the eight-team table with equal points but a better run rate.

Earlier Eoin Morgan's Kolkata made 171 for six with Rahul



CSK's Ravindra Jadeja and Sam Curran during the match against KKR in Abu Dhabi. – BCCI

Tripathi top-scoring with 45 after they elected to bat first.

Shardul Thakur and fellow quick Josh Hazlewood took two wickets each while Jadeja got Tripathi's scalp.

Virat Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore take on holders Mumbai Indians in the second match of the day. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES:

Chennai

Super Kings 172/8 (Faf du Plessis 43, Ruturaj Gaikwad 40; Sunil Narine 3/41) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 171/6 (Rahul Tripathi 45, Nitish Rana 37 *; Shardul Thakur 2/20) by 2 wickets.

Everything to play for Rajasthan Royals, Hyderabad



Indian Premier League is cruising at the moment and Saturday was a day full of emotions. It was a doubleheader and in each of those matches, there was ecstasy for one side and agony for the other. Sunrisers Hyderabad and Rajasthan Royals both lost their respective matches despite having to chase under-par totals. They will be up against each other in the upcoming contest and that match is going to be everything to play for, at least for the Royals.

Rajasthan and Hyderabad both will now move to Dubai International Cricket Stadium to play match 40 of the tournament. Hyderabad may already be knocked out of the race, but they still have a lot to play for. Rajasthan, on the other hand, desperately need to win this won to stay ahead of their competitors

in the race. This is certainly going to be a cracking contest, definitely not the one to miss out.

TOUGH TIMES

It must be a heart-breaking affair to be a Sunrisers Hyderabad fan. They once used to be a very strong side, but they have been a mere shadow of themselves this year. They have been so poor this year that they still have five matches to go, but are practically already knocked out of the contention.

From a total of nine matches played, the Sunrisers have won just one and have a terrible net run rate of -0.637. They have done reasonably well with the ball up until now, but their performance with the bat has been far from satisfactory. The same was on display in their previous match as well as they failed to chase down a reasonably modest total of 125 at a venue known for high-scoring affairs.

All in all, Sunrisers Hyderabad have been far from their best and even though they have done well in patches, that has not been enough. They desperately need their seniors



to step up and unless that happens, Sunrisers Hyderabad are going to find it very difficult.

LOSING CONTROL

Rajasthan Royals will be gutted to lose a match that they pretty much had control of at the halfway mark. On a surface that wasn't too difficult to bat on, the Royals gave away too many easy wickets to the Delhi bowlers and eventually had to pay the price. They are still in the hunt for the play-offs but will need to play out of their skins if they have to qualify from here.

The Royals are currently placed seventh on the points table, but they can quickly bounce up to the fourth spot if they are able to register a win in this upcoming contest and the other results fall their way. From a total of nine matches done, the Royals have won four and lost five. They have a net run rate of -0.319, which they would want to improve going forward.

In their previous match, against Delhi Capitals, the Royals arguably took the matter too casually with

the bat before things went out of their control. Barring Sanju Samson, who was terrific with the bat and happened to be the lone warrior with his 70-run knock, none of their batsmen managed to stay at the wicket.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Comparing the recent results of the two sides and their respective on-paper combinations, Rajasthan Royals appear to be slightly ahead. Besides, they have a strong motivation to do well here.

For Rajasthan, expect Sanju Samson, Liam Livinstone and Yashasvi Jaiswal to shine with the bat. Mahipal Lomror and David Miller could play a good cameo. While with the ball, Mustafizur Rahman, Chetan Sakariya and Karthik Tyagi have been doing brilliant. Evin Lewis and Chris Morris could make a come back, while Shreyas Gopal could replace Riyan Parag.

For Sunrisers Hyderabad, expect Jason Roy to come in for David Warner, Priyam Garg could come in for Kedar Jadhav.

AL FAISAL, SOUCEK FINISH FIFTH IN GT OPEN



MONZA, Italy: Al Faisal al Zubair and Andy Soucek finished the first of the weekend's International GT Open races at Italy's Monza circuit in fifth position.

After starting the dry 70-minute race from sixth on the grid, the Lechner Racing Team's Porsche 911 GT3 R crew were never able to make in-roads into the top three places in a race where Martin Kodrić and Ethan Simioni reached the chequered flag 2.713 seconds clear of Michele Beretta and Frederick Schandorff in their Vincenzo Sospiri Racing Lamborghini.

Reno Racing's Marco Bonanomi and Jacopo Guidetti were third in a Honda NSX.

Al Zubair said: "I am actually quite happy with P5. I think we

did a strong job. Three out of the four ahead of us were guest drivers and that is pretty good for my championship to get back into second place. It was not the easiest of races. Hopefully we will have a better second race.

"Unfortunately, we lost around 4.5 seconds in the pits and that didn't help and trying to undercut with the Porsche Cup traffic didn't pay off well. Despite that, P5 is a good result and we hope to do better in race two."

The Lechner Racing crew qualified in sixth for the first of the weekend's races with a best lap of 1min 47.278sec. Pole position fell to their main series rivals, Beretta and Schandorff. Bonanomi and Guidetti were second.

Soucek took the wheel of the

I think we did a strong job. Three out of the four ahead of us were guest drivers and that is pretty good for my championship to get back into second place

AL FAISAL
AL ZUBAIR

Porsche for the first stint and lined up in sixth. He managed to squeeze into fifth on the opening lap and held position through the first 10 minutes of the race, with

Beretta continuing to lead from Bonanomi.

Soucek moved up to fourth soon afterwards and was closing in on the top three when the yellow flag was raised and the safety car was briefly deployed. Martin Kodrić managed to overtake Bonanomi to snatch second place behind Beretta.

Al Zubair replaced Soucek after 15 laps and 41 minutes of the race to run and was the first of the leaders to make a drive change with the exception of Guidetti replacing Bonanomi. The Omani slipped to 13th position, climbed back to 10th when some of the front-runners also pitted and rose to fifth when the remainder made their driver changes.

Twenty-eight minutes

remained for Al Zubair to move further up the leader board, with Ethan Simioni leading from Guidetti, Fabrizio Crestani and Schandorff. Schandorff climbed to third on lap 23 and Al Zubair reduced the gap on fourth-placed Crestani to 3.456 seconds.

Al Zubair reduced Crestani's grip on fourth place to 2.28 seconds heading into the final 19 minutes and to 1.585 seconds heading into the last 17 minutes.

The gap was just 1.51 seconds after 29 laps with 13 minutes to run, but Al Zubair was not able to hunt down the Ferrari 488 driver and had to settle for fifth place a mere 0.987 seconds behind the Italian at the end. Simioni held off Schandorff to seal the win, with Guidetti demoted to third.

None of the Pro category cars took to the track for the practice session that was won by Pro Am section's Loris Spinelli and Florian Scholze in their Mercedes AMG GT3.

The Lechner Racing crew made a subdued start to their Monza weekend and were down in seventh at the end of the first one-hour practice session.

2021 INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN - OVERALL STANDINGS AFTER 11 RACES:

1. Frederick Schandorff (SUI)/Michele Beretta (ITA)	126 pts
2. Andy Soucek (ESP)	96 pts
3. Baptiste Moulin (BEL)/Yuki Nemoto (JPN)	81 pts
4. Al Faisal al Zubair (OMN)	78 pts
5. Ollie Millroy (GBR)/Brendan Iribe (USA)	65 pts
6. Loris Spinelli (ITA)	55 pts

Al Wahaibi sets two top five timings in Cyprus

NICOSIA, Cyprus: Omani rallying legend Hamed al Wahaibi impressed on his return to international competition at the Nicosia-based Cyprus Rally, round four of the 2021 FIA Middle East Rally Championship (Merc). He had set a fifth and a fourth quickest time on the opening two special stages before a setback cost him his place in the top five on SS3 on Saturday.

Running with logistical support from Asyad Express, an Omani delivery and logistics company, and Sandan Development LLC (a new industrial area near Muscat), the 53-year-old and co-driver Tony Sircombe were revelling in their return to the stages as a partnership that thrived 20 years ago in the FIA World Rally Championship.

Despite the setback on stage three, the team will restart under Rally2 regulations on Sunday and hope to complete the Cyprus round of the regional rally series.

"Unfortunately we were not able to finish the stages on the first day," said Al Wahaibi. "We slipped off the road entering a narrow corner.



Hamed al Wahaibi, Nasser Saleh al Attiyah and Abdullah al Rawahi in Nicosia.

Tony and I are still learning with the new car and we will try and find out where the error occurred, maybe in the pace notes. We performed well before the accident. The car is in good condition and we can return for the last day."

Sircombe added: "It was just one of those things. A slight mistake in the notes, it appears. It was a narrow corner with a drop off. We knew it tightened but it was a bit deceptive at the beginning. It looked like it was a lot wider than

it really is and it put us out."

Al Wahaibi's first taste of Merc rallying since 2011 came on the short, but nonetheless demanding, Nikitari gravel test. The Omani clocked an impressive time in his Motortune-run Skoda Fabia 1.6 and that put him into a confidence-boosting fifth place behind three experienced local drivers with knowledge of the stages and defending champion Nasser Saleh al Attiyah.

Al Wahaibi was now getting into



his rhythm and a professional drive through the longer 20.07km of the Kapouras special saw him earn the fourth quickest time behind early leader Simos Galatariotis, Alex Tsouloftas and Al Attiyah. He moved to within 1.1 seconds of Christos Demosthenous' hold on fourth overall.

The last stage of the opening loop was a first run through the 21.21km of the longest stage of the rally at Kourdali. The stage win again fell to Galatariotis and

the Cypriot extended his overall advantage over Tsouloftas to 27.9 seconds. But Al Wahaibi left the road without incurring too much damage to the car and was forced out of the day's action.

The sixth stage at the end of the second loop was cancelled after an accident and a resultant fire destroyed Al Attiyah's Volkswagen Polo GTi. It meant that Galatariotis led from Tsouloftas at the night halt.

Al Wahaibi added: "Nasser had

a small accident and was a bit off the road. The grass caught on fire and the car was ablaze, just like what happened to me here with Tony in 2001.

The pace is so fast here. You can see the apex of the corners. They (local drivers) know the lines. These stages were used at the ERC in 2019. It is very impressive and the limit is very high. I am happy though. My pace is there and tomorrow I will have the balance of the rally."



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Oman, Belgium ink MoU on green energy cooperation

MoU for implementing standards for green certification of grid electricity, and interaction between academia, research institutions and private sectors

STRATEGIC LINKAGES:
The two countries commit to collaborating on standards, scientific research and academic interaction in support of anchor HYPOR Duqm project

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Oman and Belgium signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here on Sunday to collaborate on a wide range of green energy related issues.

The MoU signing, which was held under the auspices of Dr Mohammed bin Hamad al Rumhy, Minister of Energy and Minerals, builds on last year's landmark agreement linked to the development of a world-scale green hydrogen scheme — dubbed HYPOR Duqm — at the SEZ in Duqm.

HYPOR Duqm is a joint initiative of OQ Alternative



Energy (a division of OQ — the Sultanate's integrated energy group) and DEME Concessions of Belgium (which is a key shareholder in Port of Duqm). Recently, German energy giant Uniper was also signed on to provide engineering services and negotiate an exclusive offtake agreement of green ammonia

from the project.

In the first phase, the HYPOR Duqm project will develop a 250 to 500 MW green hydrogen facility in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. The facility is planned to come into operation in 2026 and will respond to the global demand for green hydrogen and its derivatives. HYPOR Duqm

Phase 1 will establish a complete power-to-product value chain at utility scale, combining first-of-a-kind technology integration with economies of scale, producing competitive green hydrogen and green ammonia.

Future expansions are foreseen in subsequent phases, whereby a further scaling up of the value

chain will transform the Duqm SEZ into a Green Hydrogen hub in Oman and the wider region. HYPOR Duqm showcases the development of a complete green hydrogen value chain, from the installation of up to 1.3 gigawatt-peak (GWp) of renewable power generation capacity from solar and wind

(Phase 1), via the electrolysis-based hydrogen production to the synthesis of green ammonia. HYPOR Duqm will connect to Port of Duqm's brand-new export terminal, storage infrastructure and liquid jetties and will use Port of Duqm as its gateway to deliver competitive decarbonised molecules to users worldwide.

Announcing the latest MoU signing, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals said in a tweet: "Stemming from the distinguished relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Belgium, desiring to promote and develop cooperation between them. An MoU was signed today to enhance and develop cooperation between them in the field of green energy."

In addition to collaborating on the anchor HYPOR Duqm project, the "MoU also calls for implementing standards for green certification of grid electricity, interaction between universities, scientific research institutions and the private sector of both countries", the Ministry further noted.

CBO fintech sandbox initiative receives 'overwhelming response'

STRONG INTEREST:
Innovative payment solutions submitted by local and international start-ups currently being assessed for compliance with regulation, security and customer safety

CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](#)



Oman's nascent efforts to open up the banking and financial services sector to fintech solutions providers have garnered a heartening response, according to the Central Bank of Oman (CBO).

Fintech, which refers to the combination of technology and innovation to offer financial services digitally to consumers, is growing exponentially across the world with a current market value estimated at \$300 bn. Phase 1 of the initiative has been well-received, CBO's Executive President, Tahir bin Salim al Amri, said.

"The Fintech Regulatory Sandbox launched in December 2020 received an overwhelming response, with several local and international participants coming forward to present their

payment solutions during the first cohort", Al Amri said.

"Even as their fintech applications are being assessed across the different stages of the sandbox, we are faced with certain challenges, such as the lack of compliance awareness of fintech start-ups in ensuring their secured access to the payment system infrastructure. However, we are committed to overcome and foster the growth of an effective ecosystem wherein the fintech start-ups and banks work in a collaborative framework for the benefit of all stakeholders", the Executive President stated.

Speaking at the New Age Banking Summit held in the

city last week, Al Amri said the apex bank, while working to complete the assessment process expeditiously, was also keen to ensure that the approved participants "start and success and not start and fail".

The sandbox will enable the CBO to introduce agile regulatory frameworks and other strategic initiatives to foster innovation in the Omani financial sector while maintaining financial stability and ensuring high standards for consumer protection.

"Going forward, we would like to engage with a larger number of participants and seek their innovative ideas and solutions", he further added.

Tender

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) would like to announce the following public tender; -

Tender No.	Tender Name	advanced companies	Tender Document Fee (Do not answer)	Last day to purchase tender	Last day to submit bids
5/2021	Consulting Study: Raising the competitive position of the Sultanate of Oman in the ease and attractiveness of businesses	Companies specialized in preparing economic, administrative and financial studies	Companies specialized in printing and publishing	11 October 2021	Before twelve o'clock 25 October 2021

Companies and offices specialized in preparing economic, administrative, and financial studies. Obtaining the conditions and specifications documents from the Department of Administrative Affairs on the second floor in the main chamber building, at Ruwi, during official working hours and after paying the tender fees.

Tender Terms:
Tender /offers shall be submitted in envelopes sealed with red wax addressed to the name of the Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs - Chairman of the Procurement Committee - Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the tender number and subject written on it, and not writing on the envelope the name of the Tender /offer or what it refers to.

A temporary insurance shall be attached to the bid in the form of a bank guarantee or a certified check of (1%) of the bid value, certified by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, valid for a period of (120) days from the date of the last date for submitting the bid/offer and addressed to the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Please note that any bid/offer that does not meet the temporary insurance will not be considered.

Bids/bids shall be placed in the Tender Box in the Chamber building in Ruwi, second floor / Administrative Affairs Department
Please note that the Chamber is not restricted to accepting the lowest bid/offer and has the right to accept or reject it without giving reasons.

For inquiries, you can contact the following numbers: 24763742

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Khedmah bags ‘Contribution to Digital Payments Growth’ title

MUSCAT: The Oman Investment and Finance Company, Khedmah, was recently recognised with ‘Outstanding Contribution to Digital Payments Growth’ award at the Oman Banking & Finance Awards 2021. The ceremony was the sixth edition of the New Age Banking Summit Oman, held at the Al Bustan Palace.

The event was hosted by Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail al Mashani at the Majan Ballroom, Al Bustan Palace. Tahir al Amri, Executive President of Central Bank of Oman (CBO), was the chief guest and presented the award to Said Safrar, CEO of Khedmah.

Expressing his delight on this milestone, Said Safrar said: “This would not have been possible without our employees’ sterling efforts in implementing the company’s strategy towards excellence in services and attaining leadership in the industry. This achievement serves as a motivation for us to further deliver to our clients and



accomplish more milestones for a hassle-free customer experience.” “Through our participation in such prestigious events that gathers industry leaders, we seek to exchange experience and knowledge to contribute to Oman’s digital drive and add value to our people and country alike. Furthermore, we support the national priorities and

Oman Vision 2040 that focus on technology and the fourth industrial revolution, ultimately creating a digital and sustainable economy,” he further stated. Khedmah — the ‘Digital Payments Partner’ of NABS — received this coveted award in recognition of its pivotal role in developing the financial online payments ecosystem in

the Sultanate. This is through harnessing innovation and digital transformation in its services to keep abreast with the latest technological advancement in the industry, thereby providing efficient and smart solutions to its clients that save their time, effort and money.

Along with fellow industry pioneers, Safrar participated in the panel discussion and shed light on the company’s journey towards digital transformation, advanced digital payment solutions, high demand on Khedmah app from various segments of the community and OIFC’s expansion plans.

He also discussed ways of collaboration between fintech companies and banks to make Oman a cashless economy.

With features that accentuate OIFC’s top customer service standards, Khedmah mobile app resonates with the company’s digital transformation strategy through its seamless and innovative services.

Maisarah marks Omani Women’s Day with exclusive cash prizes

MUSCAT: Maisarah Islamic Banking Services, BankDhofar’s Islamic banking window, has revealed a special prize draw, exclusively made for women for Omani Women’s Day on October 17.

These special prizes are guaranteed for each branch where one winner per branch is granted RO 1,000 (10 winners from 10 branches) during the Omani Women’s Day special draw which comes as part of Maisarah’s efforts to promote the culture of saving among its customers nationwide.

In addition to the expected profit of up to 2.5 per cent per annum (subject to the weightages applicable for each month), the account — which is a personal savings account that is based on the Islamic concept of Mudaraba — allows customers to win cash prizes distributed from the shareholders’ funds. Each RO 100 gives customers the chance



to win cash prizes as per terms and conditions of the scheme. Winners are randomly selected by an automated system in line with the approved procedures for the prize draws.

Valid through December 31, 2021, weekly prizes of RO 100 each are also granted to three winners from each branch, with total number of 30 winners every week. Moreover, there are exclusive prizes for children in the monthly draws where one winner per branch is awarded RO 100, with total number of 10 winners every month.

Benefits, privileges from Bank Muscat’s Asalah Priority Banking

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat continues to innovate and launch new services and benefits for its Asalah Priority Banking customers. Asalah Priority Banking reflects the bank’s continued commitment to remain the bank of first choice in the Sultanate by providing its elite clientele with innovative and exclusive benefits and features. From lifestyle benefits, savings and financing options to elite wealth management, Asalah Priority Banking offers an unsurpassed range of benefits.

Abdulnasir al Raisi (pictured), Deputy General Manager — Premier Banking, said: “Bank Muscat’s Asalah Priority Banking offers a large number of exclusive and innovative products and services. In line with global banking trends and customer centricity, Asalah continues to launch new services and benefits. The recently launched exclusive WhatsApp service for Asalah customers provides one more channel of communication with the bank, and helps customers quickly get answers to their various queries. Backed by an excellent customer service team, Asalah Priority Banking



is working to further enhance benefits and ease of banking for its valued clientele.”

Asalah customers enjoy a range of unrivalled benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 35 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre. Exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 “Buy 1 Get 1 free” offers in Oman and at international destinations as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments. The Asalah debit card offers access to 50 lounges worldwide and has a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO 1,000.

BankDhofar’s monthly prizes for youth

MUSCAT: In line with its endeavour to promote savings culture among the community in general and among the youth in specific, BankDhofar has dedicated prizes for this segment of the society within its Savings Account Scheme 2021. With a total of RO 30,000, five winners per month will get the chance to win RO 500 each.

Dr Tariq Taha (pictured), Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar said: “The Youth draws have gained popularity in the last years’ schemes. Thus, we maintained this prize in this year’s scheme. We look forward to congratulate more winners and we encourage our youth customers to start building the habit of savings as they might be one of the lucky winners.”

In addition to the exclusive Youth draws, BankDhofar Youth customers may enter other draws, including: Guaranteed Monthly draws, National Day draw, in addition to the Year-End Grand



Prizes. Along with the Savings Account Scheme, BankDhofar provides youth customers exclusive offers with BankDhofar cards, access their account on the go through Mobile Banking App and conduct their banking transactions at their convenience 24/7, in addition to having access to a wide network of digital channels such as ATMs & Cash Deposit Machines 24x7.

With a total of more than RO 2 million, the scheme is valid till December. As per the prize draw

scheme, BankDhofar customers who save a minimum of RO 100 in their accounts are eligible to enter the draws and get the chance to win in the monthly guaranteed prizes for branches, worth total of RO 708,000 (59 winners per month/RO 1,000 for each winner), Monthly Prizes for children, worth total of RO 177,000 (59 winners per month/RO 250 for each winner) and Monthly Prizes for Youth, worth total of RO 30,000 (5 winners per month/RO 500 for each winner).

In order to show our respect for the retirees in the society, we have also introduced for the first time ever, monthly Prizes for Amaan Retirees Banking Services’ customers, worth total of RO 300,000 (5 winners per month/RO 5,000 for each winner).

BankDhofar will continue celebrating occasions with customers, the 2021 scheme includes Omani Woman’s Day Prizes, worth total of RO 10,000

(10 winners / RO 1,000 for each winner), and National Day Prizes, worth total of RO 59,000 (59 winners /RO 1,000 for each winner). In addition to the Year-End Grand Prizes worth total of RO 100,000 (2 winners /RO 50,000 for each winner).

As for Al Riadah Priority Banking Services’ customers, the scheme will include monthly prizes worth total of RO 120,000 (1 winner per month/RO 10,000), Al Riadah Prestige Monthly Prizes worth total of RO 300,000 (1 winner per month/RO 25,000), and Year-End Grand Prizes worth RO 200,000 for one winner.

To learn more, check-out BankDhofar pages on social media; Facebook (www.facebook.com/BankDhofar), Twitter (@BankDhofar), Instagram (www.instagram.com/BankDhofar), or visit the official website www.BankDhofar.com or contact the call centre 24/7 on (+968) 24791111.

Popular Toyota Prado with exclusive summer surprises

MUSCAT: Toyota Prado, the all-terrain capable and powerful SUV is available with exclusive benefits including Service 2 years/20,000 kms (whichever is earlier). Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year.

The Prado is an icon that has made its impressive mark across varied terrains. From its powerful build quality to its performance and excellent capability, the Prado is an SUV that excels on all levels. Visually stunning, the new Prado features a unique design which appears even more dynamic, yet maintains three core strengths essential to the Prado’s celebrated ‘go-anywhere’ credentials. These are ‘Total Practicality’ — with headlamps and cooling openings positioned to maximise both protection and wading depth; ‘Total

Durability’ — with the powertrain and all functional parts well-protected and ‘Total Capability’ — with the tight turning circle and generous ground clearance essential for even the most demanding off-road driving.

The Prado’s class-leading features complement its thrilling power and performance. Presently Prado has two petrol engine variants — 4.0 Litre delivering 271 HP and 2.7 Litre delivering 163 HP. It offers 6-speed Automatic Transmission on Petrol models along with Full-Time 4WD with Centre Differential Limited Slip Differential. Available in either 17”, 18” or 19” Alloy Wheels, the Prado has LED Type Headlamp & Clearance Lamps and Moonroof.

Toyota Prado’s refined interior has plenty of room to comfortably accommodate up to seven adults. It is also equipped with a host of High-end Luxury features including



Cool Box. Cushioned Seats offer wonderful Under-thigh Support. Second-row Seats fold in a 60:40 Split offer Enhanced Utility with a Slide Function and Walk-in Accessibility for facilitating Easy Ingress/Egress for the Third-row Seats. The Third-row Seats, fold in a 50:50 Split.

The Prado also offers Power Tilt

& Telescopic Steering Column, Smart Entry & Push-button Start & Retractable Outer Mirrors (With Turn Signal). The Prado also has Front Sensors and Rear Parking Sensors, 9” Navigation System, Leather Seats, Cruise Control, Rear View Camera and Steering with Audio & Bluetooth Switches.

Reinforcing Prado’s broad, powerful stance, the sharply Trimmed Lower Section minimises the effect of the Front Overhang on the vehicle’s Off-road Driving Approach Angle, thus enabling the model’s outstanding off-road abilities.

Prado also has Airbags for Driver,

Front Passenger and Curtain, Side (Front). The Prado’s Strong Chassis offers excellent Impact Protection while the Long Wheelbase and Wide Wheel Track give Excellent Handling and Stability. The Prado’s unparalleled 4WD prowess is apparent on smooth as well as rough terrain. It has the power to hold its own and the performance to ‘Reach the Unreachable’.

Specifications of vehicle imported from Toyota Motor Corporation are as per the GSO Conformity Certificate applicable to the model/grade. Parameters such as vehicle weight, dimensions & fuel economy could vary from the GSO Conformity Certificate due to fitment of dealer installed accessories. Pictures and colours shown may differ from actual specifications. Terms and conditions apply. The campaign is valid up to October 21.



In brief

■ MUSCAT

**130 FIRMS TAKE PART IN OMAN-IRAN VIRTUAL EXPO**

More than 130 government and private sector entities from Oman and Iran are taking part in a virtual expo showcasing consumer products, equipment and other merchandise and services from the two countries.

The multi-day exhibition, which is supported by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), has attracted leading Omani and Iranian companies specialising in trade, industry, mining, agriculture and Informational Technology.

A number of B2B meetings and workshops were held between the two sides to support trade and collaboration. Both sides also explored avenues for enhancing trade and investment, and sharing experience and expertise, with the overall goal to boost trade volumes between the two countries. — ONA

■ WASHINGTON

**UNITED AIRLINES FINED \$1.9M FOR US TARMAC DELAYS**

United Airlines was fined \$1.9 million by the US Transportation Department for violating federal rules on long tarmac delays and ordered to cease future similar violations. The department said between December 2015 and February, United allowed 25 flights to remain on the tarmac for lengthy periods without allowing passengers to deplane. United said it remains “committed to fully meeting all DOT rules and will continue identifying and implementing improvements in how we manage difficult operating conditions.” — Reuters

■ MILAN

**EUROPE NEEDS LONG-TERM ENERGY PLAN, ENI CEO SAYS**

Soaring gas prices as winter approaches are evidence that the European Union needs to work out a long-term energy security plan, the head of Italy's Eni has told *La Repubblica* newspaper.

Claudio Descalzi noted the EU imports almost all the natural gas and most of the oil it needs, making it structurally dependent on foreign supplies. “Europe needs to have what it hasn't got today, a structured and long-term energy security plan”, Descalzi said in an interview published on Saturday. “I don't think there will be problems with gas procurement, but it will cost more”, he said regarding this winter. — Reuters

Oman, Lebanon eye enhanced trade ties

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

Lebanon has sought more avenues predominantly in Oman's private sector to work closely and to enhance bilateral trade relations between the two friendly countries.

It was expressed by Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) after the recent meeting with Elie Rizk, representative of the Lebanese-Gulf Economic Relations Development Authority.

During his visit to OCCI headquarters, Rizk handed over a message from the head of economic bodies, former minister Muhammad Choucair, in preparation for the latter's visit to the Sultanate at the invitation of the OCCI next month.

“We have a lot of ways to work very closely with Lebanon and we have explored ways to further bolster the mutual relations. Next month's visit of the high-level delegation to the Sultanate will see

We have a lot of ways to work very closely with Lebanon and have explored ways to further bolster the mutual relations

RIDHA BIN JUMA AL SALEH
OCCI Chairman

more of the same”, Al Saleh told the *Observer*.

The OCCI chairman who reviewed the Oman Vision 2040 and its sectors, which provide national development that would raise the economic and trade levels praised the continuous cooperation between the chambers through which successful economic relations can be achieved, indicating that there is a desire among Omani businessmen to cooperate and establish partnerships with their Lebanese counterparts in various trade fields.

“We discussed with OCCI the necessary preparations for the success of the visit and the increase of cooperation between the private sector in the two countries”, said Elie Rizk, adding that Oman showed a strong impulse to achieve a new leap in the level of bilateral economic cooperation.

Oman exports aluminium, plastics, miscellaneous edible preparations, mineral fuels, oils, distillation products, essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics, toiletries, dairy products, eggs, honey, ceramic products, electrical and electronic equipment, glass and glassware, animal, vegetable fats and oils.

Exports to Lebanon totalled \$19.05 million prior to the pandemic, according to the United Nations COMTRADE database.

Omani imports from Lebanon amounted to 38.97 million and included pearls, precious stones, metals, coins, vehicles, vegetables, fruits, resins, plastics, coffee, tea, spices, essential oils, perfumes, cosmetics and toiletries.

Jusoor to support four social investment projects



BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Jusoor Foundation has signed contracts for four social projects that are jointly funded by OQ, Sohar Aluminium and Vale Oman at a total investment of 330,000.

The first project relates to the establishment of a Digital Educational Studio at the Directorate General of Education in North Al Batinah Governorate in Suhar. The studio will be used to produce digital educational content for students and teachers in high quality to benefit from digital education, which is key a key tool in developing visual skills of students and teachers and enhancing their knowledge of digital audiovisuals. It will be equipped with a digital photography studio fitted with special audiovisual and recording systems.

Also in Suhar, Jusoor Foundation is funding the provision of a Mobile Mammography Unit in the North Al Batinah Governorate in cooperation with the Oman Cancer Association. This unit will help support early diagnosis of cases and consequently reduce the mortality rate caused by breast cancer.

At Shinas, Jusoor is supporting the construction of a Physical Rehabilitation Centre catering to the elderly and patients with disabilities. It will also support the rehabilitation of those with post-

accident fractures, burns, and sports injuries.

As part of the project, a new building for physiotherapy and rehabilitation services will be constructed at Shinas Health Complex over an area of 187.86 square metres.

It will feature six diagnostic and rehabilitation clinics, a physiotherapy hall, and a waiting room (male and female).

The fourth project centres on the second phase construction of the Plant Genetic Resources in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Centre in North Al Batinah Governorate of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. This project aims to improve the quality of citrus seedlings distributed to citizens in general and to farmers in particular, as the project will increase the area planted with high-quality and disease-free citrus trees. The increased planted area will increase the productivity of the Sultanate and thereby increase the self-sufficiency of the Sultanate of citrus fruits.

In addition, a share of citrus seedlings will be allocated by the Agricultural Experiment Station in Suhar to citizens with home gardens to enhance aesthetic and environmental features.

The contracts were signed by Shaikh Saif bin Hamyar al Shehi, Governor of North Al Batinah and Jusoor Board of Directors Chairman.

Oman Cement's new brand made from local resources

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Majority state-owned Oman Cement Company (OCC) has developed a new brand of high quality cement that it says is made from locally available raw materials and is thus ideally suited for the Omani environment.

Named 'Al Burj Cement', the new brand is cited for its physical properties such as high smoothness and less porosity, which makes it more resistant to salts and elements harmful to concrete. This product is environment friendly as it contributes to rationalising the usage of raw materials during the manufacturing process, the publicly listed company said in a press statement.



Dr Hilal bin Saif al Dhamri, Director General of Manufacturing at Oman Cement Company said: “The production of Al Burj Cement started after the success of practical experiments at the Company's laboratories and testing it by a selected group of our main customer. In addition, the Directorate General of Standards and Metrology at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and

Investment Promotion ensured that our new product fulfills the needs of our customers and the specifications approved by the Directorate. Al Burj Cement also meets the European specifications 'EN197 BS/EN 42.5N', he stated. Produced from local raw materials, Al Burj Cement will satisfy the requirements of the local market, but will also be marketed across the region, he said.

Climate and Covid cast shadow over jet demand outlook

LONDON/TOULOUSE:

Jetmakers see strong demand for airliners even as the industry braces for tough new environmental measures, but some financiers have raised doubts over forecasts that the \$150 billion industry will return to pre-Covid growth in just a few years.

Lessors and underwriters of securities that finance aircraft purchases met in London this week to survey Covid damage and contemplate the impact of moves to combat climate change through regulation and new technology.

Some speculated that the industry's deepest fear could come true: These trends might shorten the operational lifespan — and hurt the valuations — of even the most modern aircraft.

If confirmed, that could upend assumptions that have made the dollar-based jet industry an investor hot spot for a decade.

After trimming forecasts at the height of the pandemic, Boeing last week increased its 20-year demand forecast, citing the swift US economic recovery. Once a pandemic travel slump disappears



A Southwest Airlines Boeing 737-800 plane is seen at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) in the Greater Los Angeles Area, California. — Reuters

by around 2024, it said annual demand growth would resume a long-term trend of 4-5 per cent.

At a London conference of the leasing industry, which buys around 60 per cent of global jet output, Boeing downplayed fears of a structural contraction of business and leisure travel.

“With business travel, I think it's hard for me to believe that it won't be back to where it was”, said Darren Hulst, Boeing Vice President for Commercial Marketing.

Airbus, laying out its vision for more sustainable flying at a two-day company conference

in Toulouse, was more cautious ahead of its own outlook update expected in November.

“We are still scratching our heads trying to best factor in all the things that have changed recently in the world and in our sector”, said Chief Executive Guillaume Faury.

Aircraft investors struggle to assess climate impact as values of older aircraft undermined

Climate concerns will have “an impact, a significant impact, but the demand remains very strong and we have seen this all around the world”, he added.

But at the Airline Economics and Airfinance Journal conferences, which both attracted just a small fraction of the 2,000 or so delegates who usually attend, many participants believed the industry would see slower growth than Boeing and some suppliers have forecast, at least in more mature markets.

One senior aerospace executive said that Covid-19 had cost the industry five years of growth in the short term. And post-Covid, long-term growth could be slower than historical trends notably because of pressure from environmental measures. — Reuters

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we shall overcome

BREAKING

features



An impressionist artist's take on Omani women, culture and solidarity

Maryam al Wahibi is one of Oman's prolific impressionist artists simulating Omani customs and traditions into her work and shedding major light on Omani women — their way of life, dresses and day to day humdrum. Her goal is not only to unify women but also to educate foreigners on what life is like for women in the Sultanate... **P20**

AUCTION

READ

APPLES NEVER FALL
BY LIANE MORIARTY

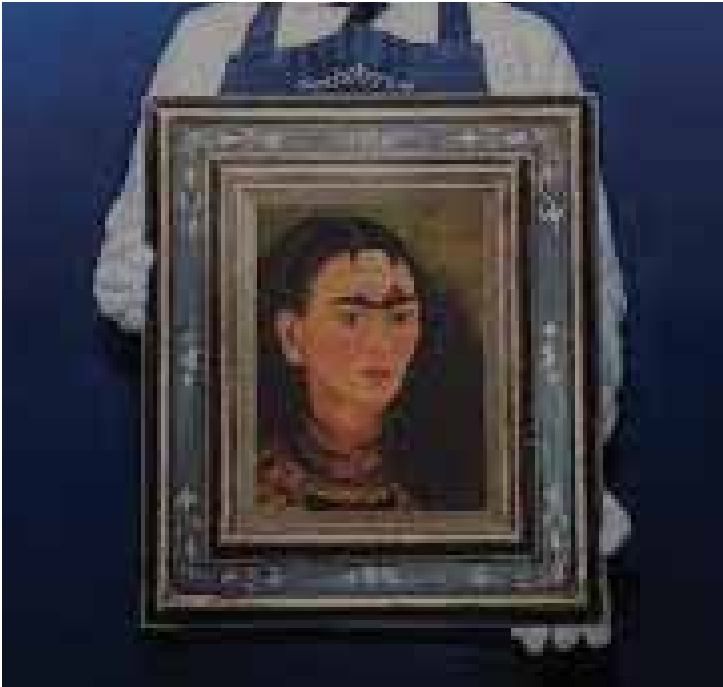
The Delaney siblings suspect their father of causing the disappearance of their mother.

Frida Kahlo self-portrait set to smash records at auction

A FRIDA KAHLO self-portrait featuring her husband Diego Rivera is tipped to sell for more than \$30 million at auction in New York, Sotheby's said on Wednesday. "Diego y yo" (Diego and I), painted in 1949, "is poised to shatter" Kahlo's current auction record of

\$8 million set in 2016, the auction house said in a statement. The artwork, which will be the star lot of Sotheby's big November sale, is also expected to smash the record for a painting by a Latin American artist. "Los Rivaless," a 1932 work by

Rivera, with whom Kahlo had a passionate and tumultuous love affair, is currently the most valuable — Christie's sold it for \$9.8 million in May 2018. "Diego y yo" is emblematic of Kahlo's self-portraits, known for their intense and enigmatic gaze that made the Mexican painter, a feminist icon, famous around the world. In the painting, Rivera's face appears on Frida's forehead, above her distinctive eyebrows and dark eyes from which a few teardrops fall. The depiction of Rivera, who at the time was close to Mexican actress Maria Felix, as a third eye symbolises the extent to which he tormented her thoughts, art experts say. Kahlo and Rivera married each other twice. She died aged just 47 in 1954. "Diego y yo" last sold at Sotheby's for \$1.4 million in 1990. — AFP





‘I wonder how Oman safeguards natural assets untouched’, CNN on Oman

By Kabeer Yousuf

“OMAN IS ONE of those rare countries with a plethora of untouched natural assets and I wonder how it maintains all these priceless properties intact”, said CNN anchor and correspondent Eleni Giokos.

She was in the Sultanate to feature the country's rich heritage and cultural values and to show them to the world. The *Oman Daily Observer* team caught up with her over a tête-à-tête where she opened up and shared her invaluable impressions about the country, people and everything else.

**EXCERPTS FROM
THE INTERVIEW:**

TELL US WHAT YOUR EXPERIENCE IN OMAN HAS BEEN LIKE SO FAR

I travel a lot, so it's increasingly rare that I get to visit a country I've never been to before and know very little about, but this was one of those occasions. I arrived in Oman with no expectations, and I was blown away everyday by what I discovered.

I always say that an airport is the microcosm of the experiences you'll have in a country, and this was definitely a positive first impression — it was efficient, practical, and everyone I encountered was friendly. I was also struck by the traditional attire of the local people, which really gave me a sense of place.

One thing I really loved, and which amazed me, is that the entire country literally smells of frankincense! My hotel would burn it twice a day, the airport has it as an air freshener, while the souqs and markets are filled with its smoky perfume because almost every stall seems to burn it.



The Muscat skyline is incredibly evocative and tells a story of its own at a glance. It's filled with history, with old colonial forts cheek by jowl with indigenous architecture, with the majestic mountain ranges that surround the capital looking over it all.

Then I was lucky enough to have one of the most wonderful experiences of my life when we went snorkelling as part of our filming. The waters are just beautiful and teeming with life. I saw dolphins, turtles and an array of the most spectacular fish.

One other thing that struck me was the calmness and sincerity of the Omani people. It's something I

noticed again and again on the trip and is so welcoming.

BASED ON WHAT YOU SAW, CAN YOU SHARE YOUR IMPRESSION OF THE PAST AND PRESENT OMAN AND WHAT YOU THINK IS IN STORE FOR ITS FUTURE?

This is a proudly traditional country, from the clothing to the food and language. Omanis have not diluted their culture in pursuit of the future, instead they have found a way to modernise without leaving their values behind.

One thing I noticed from the people we encountered and interviewed is that Omanis think big; they want a diversified economy

and really understand that technology and smart skills are going to propel their country forward.

Something else that really strikes me is that, while so many countries are now trying to create policies around the environment, Oman, an oil-producing country, has always been very protective of its natural assets. I spent time with British explorer Mark Evans, who has been living in Oman for 16 years, and he spoke highly of the way the country's ethos around ecology and climate change has helped safeguard Oman as one of those rare countries with a plethora of untouched natural assets.

Now the new journey for Oman is to move away from oil and gas and think of industries of the future. Its ports are perfectly positioned to capture more global trade traffic, and it is also well-placed to move into tech industries and capitalise on its youth dividend while maintaining the formula that has worked so well in protecting its traditions and natural assets.

When global trade was disrupted by the pandemic one logistics company, Asyad, told me they were so well prepared for the global shock that Oman was elevated as an important trade hub at the height of the crisis. In fact, they had an over-supply of fresh fruit and vegetables because their logistics functioned so smoothly. It's that kind of efficiency that builds resilient economies.

“Steeped in history, primarily placed on the map to handle trade, and brimming with potential, perhaps all Oman needs to do now is something it hasn't focused on before, market itself to the world”, Giokos added.

Follow the writer on Twitter:
@kabeeryousef

FASHION

D&G glitter at Milan fashion week, seaside chic for Armani

GLITTER LIT UP the catwalk at Dolce & Gabbana's Milan fashion show on Saturday, with the designer duo peppering their spring/summer 2022 women collection with sparkling, sequined blouses and rock-studded mini-skirts and trousers.

The #DG Light show, which was held in a disco-like atmosphere with glimmering mirrors as a backdrop, also featured black biker jackets and camouflaged overcoats, cargo pants worn with crystal-encrusted tops, fringed gold and silver dresses.

Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana incorporated elements seen in previous collections, such as embroidery, lace, flowers, animalier prints, bras, corsets and tight black dresses. Some jackets had large, butterfly-like shoulders, while accessories included thigh-high denim boots.

The creative pair said on the sidelines of the presentation they had looked back at the early 2000s, when their exuberant designs broke with the dominant minimalist style.

The lights and glitzy glamour of the show were a call to leave behind the darkness of the coronavirus pandemic, they said.

Veteran designer Giorgio Armani, 87, used pastel colours and soft shades of green and blue for a light collection inspired by the sea. The show featured elegant chiffon dresses, embroidered evening gowns, small tailored jackets, fluid trousers and sleeveless tops in an ode to effortless elegance.

The models, at times resembling undulating mermaids, were openly smiling on the runway, and Armani said the world today needed sweetness, kindness and smiles.

The shows were among the last big events of Milan Fashion Week, which runs until Monday and is hosting both in-person events and digital presentations following virtual editions in February due to the pandemic.

— Reuters





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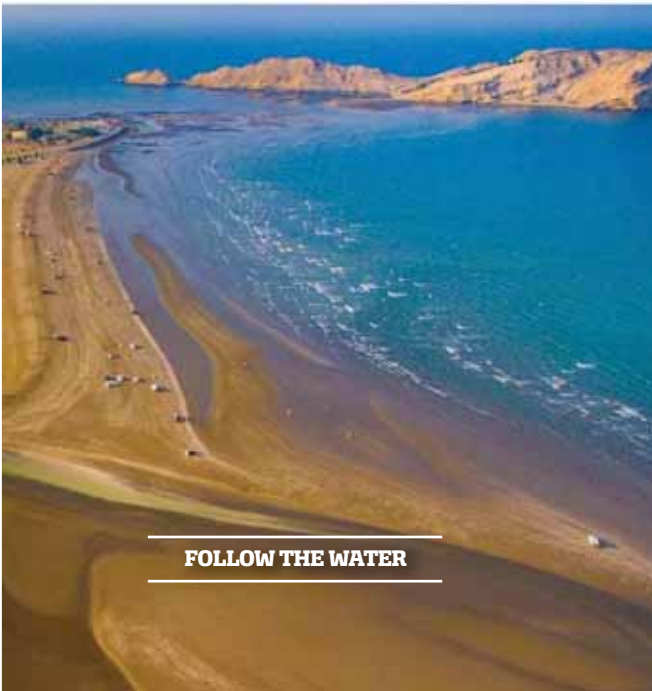
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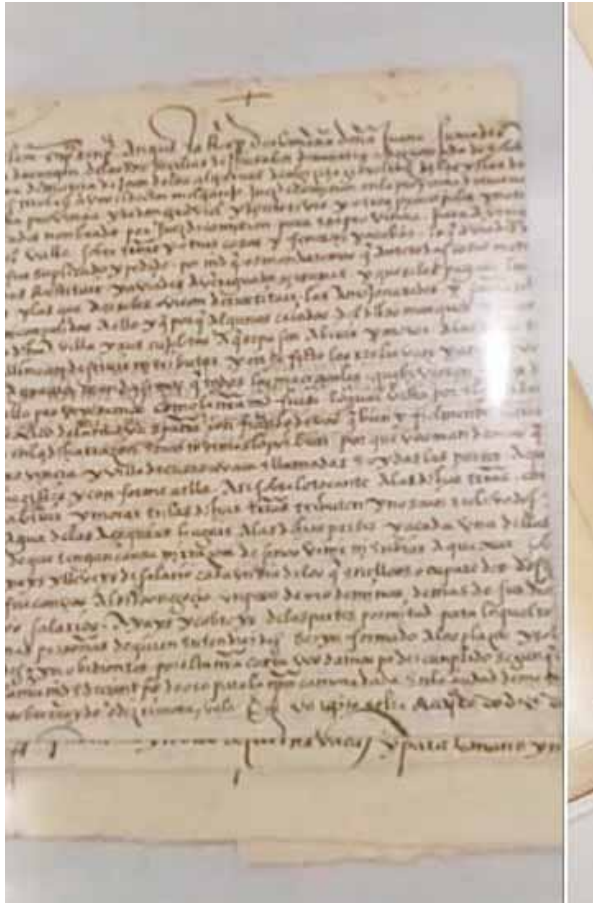
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AROUND THE WORLD

HERITAGE

Mexico recovers missing manuscripts from 16th century sold at auction



MEXICO'S FOREIGN ministry said on Thursday it had recovered valuable manuscripts from the 16th century, including some relating to conquistador Hernan Cortes, months after a group of academics reported them missing from Mexico's national archives.

In apparently systematic fashion, 10 documents were stolen over several years from a collection dedicated to Cortes and later put up for sale in international auction houses including Swann, Bonhams and Christie's sale, the academic investigators said.

Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said on Twitter that the documents had been recovered by US investigators and the office of the attorney general of New York.

"Today the documents were handed over to the foreign ministry and taken into the custody of our consulate to be transported to Mexico City," Ebrard wrote, after noting that the documents had been sold illegally.

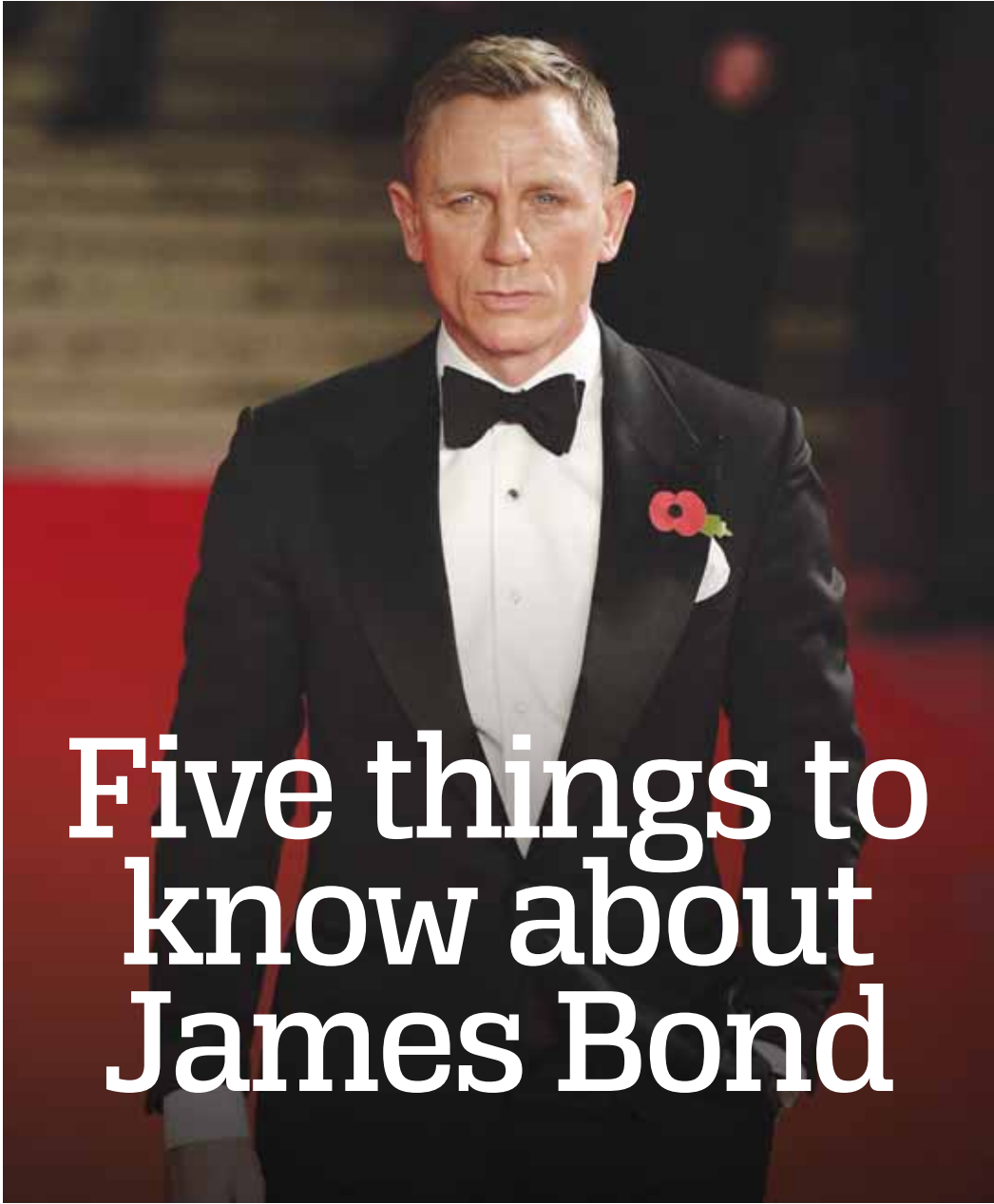
Among the recovered manuscripts is a document from 1521 that reveals political intrigue involving Cortes, who led the Spanish army that with its local allies overthrew the Aztec Empire.

Documents relating to Cortes are highly sought after, and nine other such papers were sold in US galleries, fetching tens of thousands of dollars, the academics said.

The investigating team found the manuscripts by matching images posted on the Internet by auction houses with images from the investigation at the National Archives of Mexico.

The academic sleuths who tracked down the documents comprised Michel Oujdik and Sebastian van Doesburg at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, Rodrigo Martinez at the National Institute of Anthropology (INAH) and Maria del Carmen Martinez at the University of Valladolid, Spain. — **Reuters**

FILM



Five things to know about James Bond

"NO TIME TO DIE" is the 25th official Bond film, and the franchise retains its status as one of the most popular in the world.

Here are five things to know about the man with a licence to kill.

BORN ON PAPER

James Bond started life on the page, his name taken from the cover of a Jamaican bird-watching book because author Ian Fleming wanted something as mundane as possible.

Fleming was able to draw from some rich real-life experiences, having served in naval intelligence during World War II.

One of Commander Fleming's key missions was Operation Goldeneye, aimed at sabotaging ties between Spain and Germany — which later gave him the name for his Jamaican home, and inspired the 1995 movie.

His first novel, "Casino Royale", was released in 1953 and was a huge escapist hit at a time of postwar rations and hardship in Britain.

He went on to write 13 more Bond novels and also penned the hit children's musical "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" for his son.

He died in 1964 at the age of 56, just two years after the first film appeared.

BIG MONEY

The figures vary, but Bond is clearly one of the most successful film franchises of all time, having spawned 25 official films and enough product placements to make a glossy magazine editor blush.

Industry data site The Numbers places Bond in third place for worldwide box office takings, behind only the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Star Wars.

Although it has been running for fewer years than other franchises such as King Kong and Godzilla, it is perhaps the most consistent — rarely going more than two or three years between instalments.

The longest gap was between Timothy Dalton's last outing "Licence to Kill" in 1989 and the renaissance with Pierce Brosnan's "Goldeneye" in 1995. Underlining the immense value of the franchise, Amazon this year bought the Bond rights from MGM for a cool \$8.45 billion.

INTERNATIONAL AGENT

The various Bonds of the past 60 years have included Englishmen Daniel Craig and Roger Moore, Scotsman Sean Connery, George Lazenby from Australia, Timothy Dalton from Wales and Irishman Pierce Brosnan.

In the novels, Bond is actually the son of a Scottish father and Swiss mother — both of whom die in a climbing accident when Bond is a boy.

CODENAMES

The codename "007" has a specific meaning.

The "00" designation signifies the agent's licence to kill, while the "7" is his identification within the elite unit of MI6, Britain's external intelligence service.

The M designating Bond's boss comes from the "Missions Department".

Q, who furnishes Bond with all his nifty gadgets, gets his moniker from "quartermaster" — a military term referring to the person in charge of supplies. The bad guys also have some nicknames.

"SPECTRE", the organisation that causes Bond so much trouble, is short for "Special Executive for Counter-intelligence, Terrorism, Revenge and Extortion".

A FAMOUS FAN

One big name who gave Bond an early boost was President John F Kennedy, who cited "From Russia With Love" in his top 10 books. Reportedly, it was also the last film he ever watched before leaving for Dallas in November 1963. — **AFP**

ENTERTAINMENT

'Blue Moon', Chastain, among San Sebastian festival winners



"BLUE MOON", Romanian director Alina Grigore's first film, won the top prize at the San Sebastian festival on Saturday, while Denmark's Tea Lindeburg another first-timer, took best director for "As In Heaven".

The best leading performance accolade — open for the first time to both sexes — was shared by Denmark's Flora Ofelia Hofmann Lindahl, who starred in "As in Heaven" and American Jessica Chastain for her role in "The Eyes of Tammy Faye".

Chastain, a two-time Oscar nominee, played the late Tammy Faye Bakker, wife of controversial TV evangelist Jim Bakker and also co-produced the film.

"I'm so honoured to share this award with Flora," said Chastain. "I hope the film reminds us to look beyond our first judgments," she added.

"I love what I do," said Hoffman Lindahl, who starred in "As in Heaven," set in the 19th century.

"It was a unique and fantastic experience," the Dane added of playing a 14-year-old, the eldest of her siblings and first in her family to go to school, whose plans radically are changed when her mother goes into labour. The prize for best supporting performance went to the cast of "Quien lo impide" (Who's Stopping Us) while Terence Davies won the best screenplay jury award for "Benediction". — **AFP**

Star-studded voice cast announced for Super Mario Bros film

Chris Pratt and Anya Taylor-Joy are to voice characters in a new animated film based on the world of Super Mario Bros.

Guardians Of The Galaxy star Pratt will voice the classic Nintendo character Mario, while Taylor-Joy, known for The Queen's Gambit, will bring Princess Peach to life.

The film is due to be released worldwide in late 2022. Charlie Day will play Mario's brother Luigi, and supervillain Bowser will be voiced by Jack Black.

Also taking on the classic characters are Seth Rogen as Donkey Kong, Keegan-Michael Key as Toad, Fred Armisen as Cranky Kong, Kevin Michael Richardson as Kamek, and Sebastian Maniscalco as Spike. Super Mario Bros began as an arcade game and has been adapted throughout the years for every major Nintendo video game console.

An anime film based on the video game was produced in 1986 — titled Super Mario Bros: The Great Mission To Rescue Princess Peach! — and alive-action film was produced in 1993.

The new animated film will be produced by Chris Meledandri of Illumination and Shigeru Miyamoto of Nintendo, and directed by Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic, who previously collaborated on the animated series Teen Titans Go! and the film Teen Titans Go! To The Movies.

Matthew Fogel, who worked on The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part and the upcoming film Minions: The Rise Of Gru, will write the screenplay. — **PA Media/dpa**



An impressionist artist's take on Omani women, culture and solidarity

By Jade Tampepe

At some hours of the day, warm glowing lights peek into a room where aspiring impressionist artist Maryam al Wahibi does her work. She loves her studio as it is usually filled with natural lights that help her put into action the vision of art she has for each specific day.

Her space is infused with lots of brushes scattered around the room near the pallet where they sit side by side with her paints. Acrylic and watercolour are her preferred mediums to use these days. Her canvas is usually tainted with vivid colours, mostly, portraits of women and sceneries that evoked different emotions.

"This is my sanctuary," she said. In her mind's eye, she knew all of the women on her canvas by heart. To some, they may look at her work as just a collection of women but it is this powerful presence that inspired her to continue doing what she does best and encourage other women artists to pursue the path that makes them happy.

Looking at her Instagram account, these women will become a big part of her narrative. These women, in their different articles of clothing and colours, highlight different parts of an Omani and Arabian woman's daily life — from life in provincial towns to day to day gossip with friends. They are all distinctive, vibrant and fiery when they need to.

"My artwork, they do feature a lot of ladies. I am trying to simulate Omani customs and specifically, the art and style of Omani women. I wanted to celebrate their origins highlighting the traditional dresses of different wilayats that whenever a foreigner looks that them, they get an idea what life is like for these women," she shared.

She explained, "I get inspired by the environment around me, by the colourful tradition and costumes. I even get inspired

sometimes by a poem I heard. Inspiration is all around us, we only need to see through our heart not only through our eyes."

"The most important message I want to deliver is to focus on women's solidarity in my painting," Maryam said and this is especially true when she is commissioned or asked to make her painting an art cover for a book.

Maryam developed her talent for art at a young age. In fact, art class was always her favourite. She used to draw and sketch using pencil and watercolours way back at her school. Those memories formed the foundation of where she wanted to be and given the opportunity and support by the community both in the art world and the public, she held her first solo exhibition in 2015 followed by exhibitions with different groups both in Oman and abroad.

The Oman Fine Art Association played a special part in her career when she joined it in 1999. Looking at being an artist as her profession, the association has allowed her to showcase her work and while she was growing up both in skills, learning and intellect, she eventually fall in love with Impressionism.

"Professionally, I joined the Oman Fine Art Association in 1999, since then I have participated in most of the exhibitions held by the association. I started with the realism school then I found myself falling into Impressionism. I was influenced by Van Gogh and the Syrian Artist Lwai AlKiali. I also like the Iraqi Art," she said.

As an impressionist artist, Maryam said that she paints not to imitate life but to showcase them from an "impression" point of view providing the needed posterity and preservation of important Omani traditions and cultures. She also paints from her own perspective of beauty trying to capture the life, atmosphere and movement of what she sees.

"I learned through my experience

that there are no rules in Art. An artist can make art with any media and about anything and can use any material from the environment around," Maryam said but to accomplish this, "I like to work in a peaceful and calm environment because painting to me is a form of meditation."

Just like other artists, Maryam's writing can take either a day or a month, sometimes more depending on the size and her mood. One of her favourites that she's created so far is a painting that won second prize in an annual exhibition in 2018.

Women artists, for Maryam, had come a long way from their humble beginnings.

"In my opinion, Omani women artists nowadays are also growing in popularity and has become more powerful than ever. They are given many opportunities to create exposure for their works both in the country and abroad," she said.

"As Omani artists, we share the same concerns as our male counterparts. The art industry in Oman still had a long way to go in creating awareness about the rich art scene in the Sultanate. We need to improve on how we market art both in the traditional and non-traditional media," she noted.

Maryam is currently busy working on her second solo exhibition and at the same time accepts commissioned works.

"Being an artist, you need both heart and passion to thrive in this industry. There is no greater strength and power except Allah. This I always tell myself. For those wanting to take this path, there is always a happy ending but you would have to figure out what exactly wanted to accomplish," she said.

Maryam's work can be found in Muttrah Gallery, the Soughat Shop in Muscat Grand Mall and in Sarah Gallery. You can also follow her on her Instagram account: @maryamalwahibi.art

