

Around 1.2 million GCC nationals visited the Sultanate of Oman until the end of September this year. They were followed by Indian nationals (463,000), Yemenis (108,000), Chinese (97,000), and Germans (96,000). Around 2.9 million visitors arrived in the Sultanate of Oman during the same period. Total revenues of the hotels (3-5 star) were RO154 million, while the number of guests was 1.4 million.**SEE P2**



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IYER AND RAHUL
TONS HELP INDIA TO
THUMP NETHERLANDS
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SALALAH
MILLS TO SET
UP NEW FOOD
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AWARD-WINNING
OMANI PHOTOGRAPHER
FULFILS HIS "DREAM"
EXHIBITION



MUSCAT

TAXIS MUST JOIN
LICENSED COMPANIES
FROM JANUARY 1

All Orange and White taxis operating must join the licensed company before January 1, 2024, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) stated. The licensed companies are Oman-Taxi, O'Taxi, Marhaba, Hala, and Tasleem. This is the third phase of MoTCIT plans to streamline street Orange and White taxis in the country that will now operate as per a mobile-based meter called Aber. The first phase that started on October 1 included taxis operating at the airports while the second phase launched on November 1, cover tourist complexes, hotels, commercial centres, and ports beginning from November 1. Also part of the efforts, the ministry recently stipulated that 'to practice taxi activity, a light driving licence must be 3 years old from the date of issuance. **SEE P2**

OPINION

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Preserving national identity
and dignity

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Kamla Said al Rahbia
The importance of emotional
intelligence in business

Approval for sick
leave certificate
online: MoH

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The Ministry of Health (MoH) has said that the approval of sick leave certificates issued by private clinics and hospitals can be done online via the ministry portal. Citizens and residents can upload sick leaves issued by private medical sector institutions in the Sultanate of Oman through the MoH portal. The Directorate General of Private Health Institutions will not accept any hard copy of sick leaves for approval. Patients who were given sick leave from private health institutions need to be approved by the Ministry of Health to be submitted to other authorities. Approval of the two-day sick leave can be accessed directly from the health portal. If the sick leave is for more than two days, the sick leave certification fee of RO 2 must be paid and the form can be printed from the private health institution after payment. If the patient wishes to pay later, the patient will receive a text message containing a link to complete the approval fee payment procedures. The signature of the doctor or health institution is not required, and the validity of the sick leave can be verified by QR code.

JOINT SESSION OF 8TH TERM ON TUESDAY



HIS MAJESTY TO
OPEN CONVENING OF
COUNCIL OF OMAN

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will open the 8th term's first annual convening of the Council of Oman, at the council's premises in the Governorate of Muscat on Tuesday. This was stated by the Diwan of Royal Court in a statement reading as follows: "His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq will open on Tuesday, November 14, 2023, the first annual convening of the 8th term of the Council of Oman, at the council's premises in Muscat. The convening will be attended by members of the Royal Family, members of the Council of Ministers, Chairman of the State Council, Chairman of

the Shura Council, Commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces and the Royal Oman Police, members of the State Council and Shura Council, heads of the diplomatic missions accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, undersecretaries, governors, members of the Supreme Judicial Council, some business persons, CEOs at Oman Investment Authority, editors-in-chief of local newspapers and representatives of the committees and professional associations. May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and guard him as a source of pride for his homeland and people!" — ONA

Babies die in 'power less' hospitals

MAJOR GAZA HOSPITALS
SUSPEND OPERATIONS DUE TO
LACK OF MEDICINE AND FUEL

BOMBING FORCES STAFF TO
LINE UP PREMATURE BABIES
ON ORDINARY BEDS

11,078 GAZANS KILLED IN AIR
STRIKES SINCE THEN, AROUND
40% OF THEM CHILDREN

LIVES OF OTHER PREMATURE
BABIES AT RISK AFTER ISRAEL
STEPS UP ATTACKS

GAZA/JERUSALEM: Major hospitals in north Gaza remained cut off by Israel's onslaught against Gaza on Sunday, while at the largest a Palestinian official said three premature babies had died and dozens more were at risk from lack of power. Al Shifa and other hospitals in north Gaza, the focus of Israel's month-old war to wipe out the militants and free hostages, were barely able to care for patients, medical staff said. More people are killed and wounded daily by Israeli bombardment but there are fewer and fewer places for the injured to go. Speaking from inside Al Shifa, Gaza health ministry spokesperson Ashraf Al-Qidra said Israeli fire was "terrorising medical officials and civilians alike". Israel's chief military spokesperson, Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, said on Saturday Israel's military would help evacuate babies from the hospital at the request of staff there. Al-Qidra said that of 45 babies in total, three had already died and that they had not been told how to get the babies to safety. A plastic surgeon in the hospital said bombing of the building housing incubators had forced them to line up premature babies on ordinary beds, using the little power available to turn the air conditioning to warm. "We know this is very risky," Dr Ahmed El Mokhallalati told Reuters. "We are expecting to lose more of them day by day." In the Indonesian Hospital in Beit Lahiya also in north Gaza, Mosab Subeih, a baby boy, had been rushed in from a house struck by an Israeli missile. "He has a direct injury to the head and bleeding, and we have no surgeries," said one of the medics treating him with a manual resuscitator as power was cut. The Palestinian Red Crescent said medical staff at the second largest hospital in northern Gaza, Al-Quds, were struggling to care for those there with little medicine, food and water. "Al Quds hospital has been cut off from the world in the last 6-7 days. No way in, no way out," said Tommaso Della



Palestinians gather at the site of an Israeli strike, in Khan Younis on Sunday. — Reuters

Longa, spokesperson for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Shifa was also out of reach for the newly wounded, said Mohammad Qandil, a doctor at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis in south Gaza, who is in touch with colleagues there. "Shifa hospital now isn't working, no one is allowed in, nobody is allowed out," he said. The World Health Organisation said it had lost contact with the hospital and was worried about people trapped

there. Israel has said doctors, patients and thousands of evacuees who have taken refuge at hospitals in north Gaza must leave so it can destroy what it says are Hamas command centres under and around them. Hamas denies using hospitals this way. On Sunday, Israel said people could safely evacuate from three hospitals in northern Gaza, including Shifa via one of its exits. Hospital director Mohammad Abu Selmeyah told Al Arabiya television that there was no safe passage out. **SEE ALSO P6 & 7**



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ALL TAXIS MUST JOIN LICENSED COMPANIES FROM JANUARY 1

VINOD NAIR
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street Orange and White taxis in the country that will now operate as per a mobile-based meter called Aber. The first phase that started on October 1 included taxis operating at the airports while the second phase launched on November 1, cover tourist complexes, hotels, commercial centres, and ports beginning from November 1. Also part of the efforts, the ministry recently stipulated that ‘to practice taxi activity,



This is the third phase of MoTCIT plans to streamline street Orange and White taxis in the country that will now operate as per a mobile-based meter called Aber

a light driving licence must be 3 years old from the date of issuance, and the operator’s monthly salary must not exceed RO600 if an employee is in the private sector.’ The age must not be less than 21 years and not more than 60 years. One-year extensions can be given based on a medical report from accredited health institutions indicating his ability to drive a taxi. It is also required that the

age of the taxi vehicle must not exceed 7 years from the date of the year of manufacture to carry out operations at airports, ports, and hotels while the age of the taxi vehicles should not exceed 10 years from the date of the year of manufacture to practice the activity in the public places and commercial centres. The ministry stressed the need for everyone to reconcile their situation before September 1, 2024.

GCC chiefs of staff military meeting concludes



The meeting discussed several topics related to fostering the march of joint military cooperation between the GCC states. – ONA

MUSCAT: The ordinary meeting of the GCC Supreme Military Committee of Chiefs of Staff concluded at Al Bustan Palace Hotel on Sunday. The meeting discussed several topics related to fostering the march of joint military

cooperation between the GCC states. The Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF) chief of staff, chairman of the meeting, stressed the importance of the existing cooperation enhancing common interests while achieving more

coordination between the armed forces of the GCC states, praying to Allah the Almighty to grant everyone success for the good and prosperity of the GCC countries under the wise leaderships of the leaders of the GCC countries. — ONA



GCC nationals, Indians top visitors to Oman

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Around 2.9 million visitors arrived in the Sultanate of Oman until the end of September this year

per cent to 1,053,254 in September 2023 compared to the same period last year, according to the figures released by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). During the same period, aircraft movement at Muscat International Airport increased by 30 per cent to 8,835 in 2023

from 6,802 in 2022. The number of passengers using Salalah Airport increased 28 per cent to 122,289 in June 2023 compared to 95,563 during the same period last year. Aircraft movement at Salalah increased by 19 per cent to 1,183 in 2023 from 998 in 2022.

‘Schoolchildren spend average 3 hours on digital devices’

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Students aged 6 to14 spent an average of 3 hours per day on screens, and 46.4 per cent of them were on devices for 2 hours or more per day, according to a scientific study conducted by Kaspersky which evaluated their behaviour and attitudes using digital devices. The study titled ‘Screen time among school-aged children 6-14: a systematic review’, further suggests that parents need to decide on how much time they should allow their

wards on screens and how their behaviour is formed using additional screen time. “Children aged 6 to14 spent an average of 3 hours per day on different forms of screens, and most importantly, as much as 46.4 per cent of them are found to be on devices for 2 hours or more per day,” the study further suggests. The study elucidates that parents’ attitudes, beliefs, norms, and behaviours create a shared social environment that affects children’s behaviour. “Children spending long hours on digital devices is not a good



The study titled ‘Screen time among school-aged children 6-14: a systematic review’, further suggests that parents need to decide on how much time they should allow their wards on screens.

sign for their health as well as for their mental well-being. Chances are they might be

lured in to banned sites as well as dangerous online games which are detrimental to their

life. Parents need to monitor their wards and digital time within parents’ supervision is one task that we need to practise,” Educational Adviser of a community school said. There are Safe Kids apps and digital parenting app where children can request extra device time in one click. Now parents don’t need to add extra time in the settings box manually, instead they just need to approve or reject the request by tapping on the notification and set additional time limit. This feature is designed to help

make communication between parents and children quick and convenient. “Considering the fact, kids have their own devices from a rather early age, control of screen time is one of key features for effective digital parenting. Having said, the needs of both parents and children need to be continuously assessed. We believe that making this task digital will make the communication between adults and little ones more convenient and less stressful”, said Emad Haffar, Head of Technical Experts, META at Kaspersky.



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The regulations were approved during the first meeting of UATS Council for the current academic year (2023), held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour, Chairman of UTAS Council. — ONA

UTAS Council endorses consultancy bylaw

MUSCAT: The Council of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) has approved a draft regulation of consultations at the university, the academic system for postgraduate studies and topics related to UATS workflow.

The regulations were approved during the first meeting of UATS Council for the current academic year (2023), held on Sunday under the chairmanship of Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour,

Chairman of UTAS Council.

The Council reviewed a follow-up report on the implementation of draft organisational regulations for the university's system, pending endorsement of the same by competent authorities.

The Council also looked into the progress made in the establishment of UTAS branch in Musandam ahead of its opening in the second semester of academic year 2023-2024, the time the branch will receive 150 students.

The Council approved a draft bylaw for regulating consultation services. The bylaw was the outcome of efforts made by specialised committees and working teams.

The Council also approved the academic system for postgraduate studies at the university, which will implement a diverse set of programmes in a gradual manner, in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework.

The Council endorsed steps to award degrees

to as many as 2,196 students who successfully completed graduation requirements for the summer semester and those who completed the spring semester for the academic year 2022/2023 at UTAS.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Council stressed the need to maintain the university's role in providing students with values, scholarly knowledge and skills to help them join the labour market and contest all areas of competence in modern life. — ONA

Oman sees big jump in Facebook users in 2023

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@vinot_nair

The number of Facebook users surged by 102 per cent in the Sultanate of Oman in the first half of 2023, compared to the second half of 2022.

According to the report by the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRA), Snapchat saw an increase of 31 per cent in the number of users, followed by Instagram (27 per cent), YouTube (18 per cent), X (15 per cent) and WhatsApp

(12 per cent).

There has been an increase of four per cent in Mobile Broadband usage between Q4, 20202, and Q3, 2023 to 7.30 GB per subscription. The total Mobile Broadband subscription has increased by 120 per cent to 5,937,159 and the average monthly revenue per subscription is RO 3.248.

According to a report by World of Statistics, these are the most 'popular' social media platforms by monthly users as of October

2023.

Facebook is ranked as the most 'popular' social media platform worldwide as it has about three billion monthly active users. YouTube ranked second with about 2.49 billion monthly active users while WhatsApp is ranked third with about two billion monthly active users Instagram is ranked fourth with about two billion monthly active users and LinkedIn is eighth on the list with about 930 million monthly active users.



The number of Facebook users surged by 102 per cent in the Sultanate of Oman in the first half of 2023



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OMAN, QATAR DISCUSS COOPERATION IN MUNICIPAL AREAS



MUSCAT: Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat, Chairman of the Municipal Council of the Governorate of Muscat, received on Sunday Mohammad Ali al Athba, President of the Central Municipal Council in the State of Qatar. During the meeting, the two sides explored means of enhancing cooperation in the municipal work fields. — ONA

Oman, Bahrain discuss judicial cooperation

MUSCAT: Sayyid Khalifa bin Said al Busaidy, Chairman of the Supreme Court, received in his office on Sunday a delegation led by Shaikh Khalid bin Ali al Khalifa, Vice-President of the Supreme Judicial Council in Bahrain, Chairman of the

Court of Cassation, who is currently visiting Oman.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed various aspects of judicial cooperation between Oman and Bahrain and exchanged views in the judicial field.

The visit of the Bahraini

judicial delegation will last several days during which it will meet Omani officials as part of a programme to promote the exchange of views and expertise among GCC supreme courts and courts of cassation.

— ONA



During the meeting, the two sides discussed various aspects of judicial cooperation between Oman and Bahrain and exchanged views in the judicial field. — ONA



■ SECRETARY-GENERAL RECEIVES GCC CHIEFS OF STAFF



MUSCAT: Dr Mohammed bin Nasser al Za'abi, Secretary-General at the Ministry of Defence received on Sunday chiefs of staff of the military forces in the GCC countries who are participating in the meeting of the GCC Supreme Military Committee of Chiefs of Staff. The meeting discussed a set of military topics of common interest. It was attended by Lt Gen Eid Awad Al Shalawi, Commander of the GCC Unified Military Command and Air Vice Marshal Issa Rashid Al Mohannadi, Assistant GCC Secretary-General for Military Affairs. – ONA

Fostering innovation and research across borders

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, NOV 12

In a vibrant showcase of intellectual prowess, Sohar University is hosting the 24th Arab Creative Student Forum, bringing together 36 student research papers from 17 universities and 6 centres and institutes spanning 8 countries in the Arab world.

The event, taking place from November 11 to 15, 2023, serves as a platform for creative Arab youth to share their innovative ideas and research projects across diverse fields and a great research exposure opportunity for Omani youth who are interested in research fields.

Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), said, “The international universities have initiated the expansion of scientific student companies as an effective scientific strategy that refines researchers’s capabilities, elevates their visions, and motivates them to produce high-quality intellectual and cognitive output.”

“Our gathering is merely a reflection of such strategies based on activation and interaction.



The forum, taking place from November 11 to 15, 2023, was under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation

The yield of these thoughtful research forums for students and researchers in higher education institutions in the Arab world will positively impact the job market and the quality of institutional graduates.

It will effectively contribute to meeting societal needs and addressing its challenges,” she added.

Dr Hamadan al Fazari, Sohar University Vice-Chancellor said, “We believe that student forums contribute significantly to shaping the students’ personalities through purposeful and beneficial programmes. These programmes highlight talents, excellence, and creativity in activities, research, and innovation. Moreover, they provide a fertile ground for students to explore different cultures and vast scientific fields, whether in their specialisation or cultural interests.”

Dr Fawaz al Zaghoul, Director of the Arab Council for Training and Student Creativity emphasises that developing a knowledge-based economy requires a skilled workforce. He believes educational research contributes to awareness and knowledge, serving as the main driver for economic growth.

OMANI RESEARCHER EXPLORES REUSING OF RETIRED EV BATTERIES

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 12

The Sultanate of Oman has witnessed an array of significant research projects from its citizens in various fields and topics, raising the research culture within the country.

‘Techno-economic feasibility of retired electric-vehicle batteries repurpose/reuse in second-life applications: A systematic review’ by Mohammed bin Khalifa al Alawi, a PhD candidate at Canterbury Christ Church University, is one of the studies that expressed the capabilities of researchers of the Sultanate of Oman.



Mohammed al Alawi

According to him, the research project evaluated state-of-art modelling/experimental studies focused on repurposing Retired EV Batteries (REVB) in second-life applications.

The research team identified that repurposing REVB holds significant potential in addressing the unreliability of cleaner energy technologies and mitigating the high investment required for new storage systems. REVB can be effectively utilised for alternative applications such as energy storage, energy arbitrage, and frequency regulation.

Al Alawi and the team

confirmed the technical and economic viability of repurposing REVB through the research project. They found that hybrid systems incorporating photovoltaics (PV) are particularly promising, with successful attempts at evaluating REVB performance in providing grid services.

However, he stated that certain applications like frequency regulation pose technical challenges, affecting the degradation of batteries which requires further exploration.

The research team also identified the lack of market

regulation on REVB resale and the absence of standardisation of technical parameters such as State of Health (SoH) and State of Charge (SoC). These factors are decelerating the full potential of repurposing REVB which necessitates urgent attention to establish market regulations and testing standards.

The study clarified that 35 per cent of the cost of a fresh lithium battery may be adopted as a rough indicator for the pricing of REVB when sold directly in the market. The study also affirmed that repurposing REVBs will remain highly economically viable even if the price of new batteries decreases in the future.

According to Al Alawi, the impact of the findings of the research project is multifaceted. He mentioned that for the research community, the systematic review consolidates the existing knowledge on repurposing REVB and serves as a valuable reference for future studies. It identifies key technical challenges and highlights the opportunities for improving and optimising second-life applications. Researchers can build upon the findings to develop innovative strategies and technologies for utilising REVB effectively.



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following tenders

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Site Visit	Tender Price (OMR)
NESC/ 04/2023	DATA CENTER & IT INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT (AMC) at NESC	19/11/2023	03/12/2023	Specialist	N/A	52.500

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -						
Participation	• Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and in I Supplier with Nama Groupe may obtain Tender documents. • The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. • Riyadh card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Tender fees. • The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply). • To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please contact us by email Tender@supply.nama.om . • Tender purchase will be in working ours between 08:00 AM till 02:00 PM.					
Enquiries	• Any inquiry can be sent to Tender@supply.nama.om , (5) Five days before bid submission date. • Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.					
Tender Submission	• Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in the Prime Document.					
Guarantee	• The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF MINOR TENDER COMMITTEE, Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C. • The bid bond should including 5% VAT. • The bid bond should be submitted as seprate envelope. • Riyadh card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. • Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.					
Terms and Conditions	• The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. • If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. • NESC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. • Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization. • NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. • Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.					



Recall

**Lexus
NX350,NX350H**

Recall Date: 13/11/2023

Brand of Commodity#	Year of Production**	Number of Affected Commodities#
LEXUS NX350	May 10, 2023 - June 20, 2023	33
LEXUS NX350H	May 10, 2023 - June 20, 2023	5

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

Recall consequence

In the subject vehicles, the vehicle category in the Certification label is incorrect and the vehicle category is different between the Certification label and the Certificate of Conformity.

Recall Action

To replace the Certification label.
This customer Satisfaction Campaign is set to expire on 30/09/2026.

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



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Contact details: Toll free -80073000
Working days: Sunday - Thursday
Working Time: 8:00 - 17:00 hrs.



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Book on change makers launched

KABEER YOUSUF
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A book introducing notable Indians who have excelled in various fields in Oman was launched at the Sharjah International Book Festival last week.

The book, titled ‘Changemakers,’ introduces 20 people who have excelled in their homeland through different initiatives that support local and international humanitarian efforts, art and literature.

Published by Onlooker Publications, the book features people who came abroad as expatriates and made a difference to the society back home as well as at the country of choice.

It also elucidates people with grit and determination who have shown excellence in the fields of art, literature, cinema, education, health and technology.

Adil Thomas Alexander, a native of Pathanamthitta, who was honoured by the Oman government with citizenship, Rahim Pattarkadavan, the first Malayali youth to receive Saudi Premium Residence, Nadisha, a young scientist from Chavakkad, Harris Master, who was awarded by the President of India, U A Nazir, a prominent American Malayali, Dr Abdul Rasheed, Dr Nigel Kuriakose, Rajan V Kokuri, social worker and well known writer, Sarathi Soma Rajan, Kollam Gandhi Bhavan which is Asia’s largest joint family, CM Najeeb who excelled in maritime sector, Dr Rajashree Narayankutty, international breast cancer awareness activist, Maadin Qulant Director, Sainuddin Nizami Kundamangalam, African businessman



Book on Change Makers was released at the Sharjah International Books Fair last week

‘Changemakers,’ introduces 20 people who have excelled in their homeland through different initiatives that support local and international humanitarian efforts, art and literature

Nadeem from Punnayur, KC Abraham, owner of Sky Line International, Shahul Hamid, manager, Happy Line, a transport service provider in Gulf, Suresh Unni, a top Malayali investor from Suhar, Manoj Kumar from Kozhikode, an ex-serviceman and volunteer, Luqman Azhari, Holy Quran researcher, and other luminaries who are featured in the book

besides sharing the stories of Shahnaz Ashraf and others.

The coffee table sized book contains messages from Kerala Governor Arif Muhammad Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The book was prepared by a committee with Abdul Ahad as legal adviser, and Fahad Saliman, Happiness Mentor and Author, Managing Editor, Pradeep Chandran, M Sajitha, N M Suhail and Dr Mohan Poulani as co-editors.

Under the Onlooker publication launched by Padmasree M A Yusufali in 2011. More than a dozen books have already been published, including directories of top talent among Saudi Malayalis, 30 selected company CEOs in Oman, trendsetters and 50 industry luminaries based in the UAE earlier.

Entrepreneurship forum activities begin in Al Wusta

HAIMA: The activities of the first edition of the ‘Entrepreneurship Forum’ in Al Wusta Governorate for 2023 organised by the branch of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry began on Sunday. This is being held in cooperation with the management of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority in the governorate and coincides with the Global Entrepreneurship Week.

The three-day activity will conclude on November 14, Tuesday.

The opening of the forum was sponsored by Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber

of Commerce and Industry, in the presence of Dr Salem bin Salim al Junaibi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chamber’s branch in the governorate, and other officials.

The forum included the signing of agreements, launch and updating of the second Al Wusta Governorate guide, in addition to launching two working papers.

The first working paper includes one on investment opportunities in the Duqm Special Economic Zone, and the second paper on how to register for business opportunities offered by the unified supplier registration system.

— ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying/ Participate	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (OMR)
RFP No. 21/ Nama Supply/2023	Consultancy For Financial Data Review Process in the Areas of General Ledger, Revenue & Trade Receivables, Value Added Tax and Fixed Assets	20/11/2023	04/12/2023	Specialist	26.250
RFP No. 22/ Nama Supply/2023	Social Media Management for 5 Months	20/11/2023	04/12/2023	Specialist	26.250
RFP No. 23/ Nama Supply/2023	Supply of Drinking Water for Nama Electricity Supply Company for 2 Years - 2024-2025	20/11/2023	11/12/2023	Specialist	Free Cost
RFP No. 24/ Nama Supply/2023	Supply of Pantry Stuff for Nama Electricity Supply Company for 2 Years - 2024-2025	20/11/2023	11/12/2023	Specialist	Free Cost

The table below shows the instructions for participation:-

Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and in I Supplier with Nama Groupe may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - To obtain the tender document and payment procedure, please contact us as follow: 1. For tenders RFP No. 21 and 22 Nama Supply/2023 by email procurement@supply.nama.om 2. For tenders RFP No. 23 and 24/Nama Supply/2023 by email sharif.albalushi@supply.nama.om
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to: procurement@supply.nama.om, (3) Three days before bid submission date. - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
Tender Submission	Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in the Prime Document.
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of at least sixty (60) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF PROCUREMENT COMMITTEE, Nama Electricity Supply Company S.A.O.C. - The bid bond should including 5% VAT. - The bid bond should be submitted as a separate envelope. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.
Terms and Conditions	- The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least Sixty (60) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - NESC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization. - NESC gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.
Incentives and exemptions	- Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Tender fees - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from registration fees on business opportunities platform and supplier registration with Nama Group.



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SME workshops held in Al Batinah South

AL RUSTAQ: The Department of Small and Medium Enterprises Development in the Al Batinah South Governorate on Sunday began implementing introductory programmes and workshops in the field of entrepreneurship targeting owners of small and medium enterprises, students and various segments of society.

This coincided with the Global Entrepreneurship Week, which falls from November 12 to 19 each year.

The activities include organising awareness workshops in cooperation with government agencies, including a workshop entitled (International Standards) presented by the Department of Trade, Industry and Investment Promotion in the governorate, and another entitled (Income and Value Added Taxes and Electronic Services) presented by the Department of the Tax Authority in the governorate.

Taher bin Sulaiman al Naabi, Assistant Director, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Department in the Al Batinah South Governorate, indicated that a final ceremony will be held to announce the winners of the first places among the finalists in December after each team makes a visual presentation of their projects before the judging committee.

Al Naabi also mentioned that the administration will participate in an introductory seminar to spread the culture of entrepreneurship among other activities.

— ONA

TENDER NOTICE

Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries
Wealth and Water Resources

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tender:-

Tender No.	Description	Tender documents price (R.O)	Class	Last date for collection of documents	Last date for Submission of documents
1054/2023/ MAFWR/ HQ-120	REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE TO THE BOAT RAMP AT TAQAH FISHERY HARBOUR	25/-	Specialized	Tuesday 28/11/2023	Monday 18/12/2023

- Interested Companies registered with The General Secretariat of the Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- Preference will be given to companies whose bid includes the largest percentage of Omanization and possible purchase of national products.
- The Tenderer should attach Bid Commitment Declaration (regarding the exemption from submitting a bid bond in tenders).
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: **+968 24402200** or etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources



Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
444/ 2023	Supply of foodstuffs and commodity supplies to the Child Care Center at Al Khoud	Companies specialized in the field of food, beverage and luxury supply services registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellnt, first or second degree.	Sunday 3-12-2023 02:00 PM	Sunday 24-12-2023 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

- Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Monday 13/11/2023.
- For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

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

www.mosd.gov.om



GAZA WAR INFLICTS
CATASTROPHIC
DAMAGE ON
INFRASTRUCTURE
AND ECONOMY

GAZA: Israel’s land, sea and air assault on the Gaza Strip, triggered on Oct. 7, has brought upheaval and destruction to the Palestinian territory on a scale never before seen in the enclave.

Here are latest estimates from international organisations on the socio-economic impact of the conflict.

HOUSING

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), quoting data from the Palestinian public works and housing department, said Israeli attacks had destroyed more than 41,000 housing units and damaged more than 222,000 housing units. In all, it said at least 45 per cent of Gaza’s housing units had reportedly been damaged or destroyed.

It was impossible to independently verify the numbers, but reporters in Gaza say the destruction is on a huge scale.

HOSPITALS AND SCHOOLS

In a Nov. 10 report, OCHA said 279 educational facilities had reportedly been damaged, more than 51 per cent of the total, with none of Gaza’s 625,000 students able to access education.

It said more than half of Gaza’s hospitals and nearly two-thirds of primary health care centres were out of service and 53 ambulances damaged. All 13 hospitals in Gaza City and northern Gaza have received evacuation orders from the Israeli military.

WATER AND SANITATION

OCHA said water consumption has fallen by 90 per cent since the war started. Two of the three water pipelines from Israel are functioning, however there is 50 per cent leakage from the main pipeline between Rafah, on the Egyptian border, and the southern city of Khan Younis, where many refugees from the north have fled. Most of Gaza’s 65 sewage pumps were out of service, OCHA said.

FOOD SECURITY

OCHA said Gaza has wheat supplies that should be sufficient for 12 days, but the only operative mill in the enclave cannot transform the wheat into flour due to electricity outages. It said there were no stocks left of vegetable oil, pulses, sugar or rice.

People were on average queuing for 4-6 hours to receive half the normal bread ration.

HUMANITARIAN AID

On average 500 trucks of food and goods entered Gaza each day before the conflict. All imports were halted after Oct. 7 and only resumed on Oct. 21. Between then and Nov. 10 a total of 861 trucks carrying humanitarian aid had crossed into Gaza.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

In a joint report, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said on Nov. 5 that around 390,000 jobs had been lost since the start of the war. The socio-economic situation of Gaza was already dire before the war, with the poverty rate estimated to have reached 61 per cent in 2020. In a preliminary estimate, the UN agencies said poverty was expected to rise by between 20 per cent and 45 per cent, depending on the duration of the war. They also forecast that the war would cost Gaza between 4 per cent and 12 per cent of gross domestic product in 2023. — **Reuters**

Heavy combat h
for people trapp

Doctors Without Borders
warned that without a ceasefire
or evacuation the hospital “will
become a morgue”

GAZA: Intense fighting raged around Gaza’s biggest hospital on Sunday where doctors said thousands of Palestinians were trapped in dire conditions.

Gaza City’s Al-Shifa hospital is caught in Israel’s ground offensive, and the compound has been repeatedly hit by strikes, one of which health officials said destroyed the cardiac ward on Sunday.

The Israeli military has denied deliberately targeting the hospital and has accused fighting groups of using medical facilities or tunnels under them as hideouts — a charge Palestinians deny.

Fears have intensified for patients and people taking refuge in Al-Shifa and other healthcare facilities in Gaza, and medical aid group Doctors Without Borders warned that without a ceasefire or evacuation the hospital “will become a morgue”.

Other buildings serving as shelters have also been hit, including a strike on a UN compound in Gaza City that the United Nations Development Programme said late on Saturday caused “a significant number of deaths and injuries.”

Israel’s relentless campaign has killed more than 11,000 people, mostly civilians and including thousands of children, according to the latest figures from the health ministry in Gaza.

The ministry has not updated tolls for two days citing the collapse of hospital services.

Witnesses inside the Al-Shifa hospital said on Sunday that “violent fighting” had raged around the hospital the whole night.

Inside Al-Shifa hospital, Doctors Without Borders surgeon Mohammed Obeid said there was no water, power, food or internet access for about 600 post-operative patients, 37-40 babies and 17 people in intensive care.

The surgeon said in an audio message posted on Saturday on social media that two babies died in the Al-Shifa neonatal unit after power to their incubators was cut off and a man also died when his ventilator shut down.

Twenty of Gaza’s 36 hospitals are “no longer functioning”, according to the UN’s humanitarian agency.

Very little aid has made it into Gaza in the five weeks of war, with the densely populated coastal territory effectively sealed off by a total blockade that Israel has vowed.

The Israeli military confirmed that a Jordanian plane dropped medical equipment and food to the Jordanian Hospital in the Gaza Strip.

The army declined to elaborate further, and Israel’s Foreign Ministry also made no comment.

Around the world, the war has sparked pro-Palestinian rallies decrying the plight of people in Gaza and demanding a ceasefire.

Police estimated 300,000 marched in London on Sunday to support Palestinians. Many carried placards proclaiming “Stop Bombing Gaza”, “Ceasefire Now” or “Free Palestine”. — **AFP**



Displaced Palestinian children gather at a refugee camp in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip. — **AFP**

Displaced Palestinians live

KHAN YUNIS: Perched on trucks, crammed into cars, pulled by donkeys on carts, and on foot, tens of thousands of Palestinians are fleeing Israeli army strikes on the territory squeezed between Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean. At the Bani Suheila crossroads in Khan Yunis, on the immense Salah Al-Din road that threads Gaza top to bottom, the processions are growing still.

People fleeing Gaza City are joined by those leaving Khan Yunis heading further south, towards

Rafah, the last city before Egypt.

At first Youssef Mehna thought the war would quickly be over. Then he was wounded, his house was destroyed, and he was forced to survive “25 days without anything”.

So like thousands of others, Mehna finally fled north Gaza for the south.

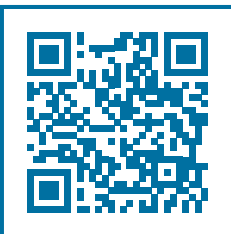
Mehna left the Jabalia refugee camp at seven in the morning, in the north of Gaza City, also hoping to reach Rafah.

But his journey finished in Khan

Access to bread in the south is “challenging” because the only operative mill in Gaza remains unable to grind wheat due to a lack of electricity and fuel

Yunis, after eight hours of travel covering only 25 kilometres.

Each trip was short, as fuel



Heightens fears in hospital



▲ A child reacts as people salvage belongings amid the rubble of a damaged building following strikes on Rafah. — AFP



► This picture shows flares being fired by Israeli troops over the Gaza Strip. — AFP

◀ Trucks carrying humanitarian aid, wait on the desert road (Cairo – Ismailia) on their way to the Rafah border crossing to enter Gaza. — Reuters



ISRAEL STRIKES LEBANON AFTER ANTI-TANK MISSILE LAUNCHED



White phosphorus fired by Israeli army is seen on the Israel-Lebanon border in northern Israel. — Reuters

JERUSALEM: Israeli forces fired artillery into southern Lebanon on Sunday after an incoming anti-tank missile wounded several Israelis near the border, an army spokesman said.

The Israeli army said “a number of people were wounded” in the anti-tank missile strike near the village of Dovev, just 800 metres from the frontier with Lebanon.

“Artillery is striking the origin of the launch,” a statement said.

The Israel Electric Corporation said that the missile from Lebanon had “hit employees” who were repairing power lines downed by earlier strikes. Since the October 7, Israel has traded fire with groups in southern Lebanon on a near-daily basis.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Sunday’s strike.

The Israeli army also said it had struck “a cell embedded in a civilian area in Lebanon that intended to open fire toward Israeli territory”. — AFP

EVACUEES ARRIVE IN EGYPT AFTER RAFAH CROSSING REOPENS



Representatives from various embassies wait for dual nationals arriving in the Egyptian part of the Rafah border crossing with the Gaza Strip. — AFP

CAIRO: The first group of foreigners and injured Palestinians evacuated after the Rafah border crossing re-opened arrived in Egypt from Gaza on Sunday, four Egyptian security sources said.

Evacuations through the border crossing, the only entry point to Gaza not controlled by Israel, were suspended for a third time on Friday after issues transporting injured Palestinians from northern Gaza.

Hundreds of foreign nationals and dependents and dozens of injured have passed through since the crossing began facilitating limited evacuations on November 1.

The suspensions had been due to bombardments that aid staff said hit or targeted medical convoys.

At least 7 injured Palestinians arrived on Egyptian soil to receive medical treatment, plus more than 80 foreign nationals and dependents, with more undergoing border procedures, the sources said. More than 32 Egyptians also crossed over, they said.

At least 80 aid trucks had moved from Egypt into Gaza by Sunday afternoon, two of the sources said.

Meanwhile, the evacuation of Polish citizens from Gaza started on Sunday via the border crossing in Rafah, the head of Poland’s National Bureau of Security Jacek Siewiera said.

“The first Polish citizens staying in the Gaza Strip crossed the border crossing in Rafah and are on the Egyptian side. The process has begun,” Siewiera said in a post on X platform.

“Air Force as ordered by Polish president are ready to carry out transport.”

Siewiera later said that the Rafah crossing was opened on Sunday morning, enabling the departure of 18 Polish citizens, including minors.

He said that he hoped that at least several more Polish citizens would be able to cross later in the day, and after that the group would be transported to a hotel in Cairo to wait for a military aircraft to fly them to Poland.

— Reuters

in dust, fear and hunger

shortages prevent drivers from accepting long-distance fares. Sometimes, between car rides, they were forced to go on foot.

Around him, hundreds of families were waiting. Children sleep on the floor beside parents wondering how they will live in a territory where more than 1.5 million people are displaced and nearly one house in two has been destroyed, according to the United Nations.

The UN has said access to bread in the south is “challenging” because

“the only operative mill in Gaza remains unable to grind wheat due to a lack of electricity and fuel”.

Before the war, a little over 80 per cent of Gazans lived in poverty and almost two-thirds were dependent on international aid, especially for food, according to the UN.

Now, 50-kilo sacks of flour have increased in price from 40 shekels to 150 shekels, so it’s worse still.

But hunger is not the only worry for Umm Yaaqub. “My husband has heart problems,” she says.

And her 20-year-old daughter Rim “is normally in a medical bed”. “But we all sleep on the ground, in the dust, and we don’t have a single blanket even though the nights are very cold.”

Shops across southern Gaza are running out of everything. Bottled water, milk for children, nappies, pasta and juices are now nearly impossible to find.

Water flows from a tap where long crowds of displaced people queue.

— AFP



Palestinians flee north Gaza to move southward as Israeli tanks roll deeper, in the central Gaza Strip. — Reuters

The writer is Associate
Professor, Dept of
English Language
and Literature Sultan
Qaboos University

According to multiple sources cited in *The*

When it comes to accurate information,

Such criteria are still more commonly found in traditional newspapers and television channels.

SOPHIE MAKRIS

Technological innovations could take the sport “to a higher level”, he said. — **AFP**

The writer is a reporter
for the Express desk,
based in London

The country also has about 130 volcanoes, most of which are active.



“Since the turn of the 19th century, not a decade has gone by without one; however, it’s entirely random whether they go off in quick succession or with

Grindavik is also near the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa resort, a popular tourist destination which closed as a precaution earlier this week.

— The New York Times

To comment & email: opinion@omanobserver.om

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Preserving national identity and dignity

Every nation around the world is characterised with a special national identity. The people's identity mirrors the morality behind their culture and traditions. For instance, the way people dress, greet one another or speak to others mark a part of their culture.

So, national identity can be shaped through literature, culture, arts, traditions, clothes and folklore. However, sometimes cultures of different countries interact with each other in different fields. Thus, foreign cultures should be observed according to the way they influence other cultures.

Hence, how easy and acceptable it is to lose something very personal and precious?! Losing anything of high value is unquestionably displeasing and frustrating. How about losing part of your personal identity, which represents your nationality and who you are? Can you tolerate losing your cultural traditions that stand a part of the country where you were brought up? Isn't it offensive and hurting?

Does anybody like to be described as a person who has no identity or being disrespectful to his culture and nation?

I don't think so! It is very disgraceful to see people around us disrespecting themselves and their national identity. They are likely more influenced by globalisation and the trend of modern technology. This is obviously reflected in the way they dress and behave, especially in public. Some have been attracted by Hollywood fashion, celebrities and action movies; they imitate some of the dress styles or behaviours while paying no attention to their genuine customs, traditions and morals.

Such people believe they are keeping up with the fashion when they dress in a strange and awkward way, which does not conform to the normal standards. They rarely use their national dress, even when they go to a public place or visit government and private establishment for any official work. Don't these people feel embarrassed to dress like that and



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
aljahdhami22@gmail.com

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

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOUNG GENERATIONS LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR CULTURE AND NATIONALITY. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL IDENTITY IS KEY TO THE PROGRESS OF THE NATION.

face their fellowmen while reflecting looks of disgust and disrespect?

How do you look at or deal with a man approaching a certain public establishment to apply for a certain service, wearing short pants and a shirt or pyjamas? Can you imagine a man coming for treatment in a public hospital wearing casual pants and a shirt? I think the public deserves more respect than this.

Speaking of this, the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said pointed out that "It has been very clear to us that our heritage is not only represented by forts, castles and ancient buildings, but by spiritual customs and traditions, by science, art and literature transmitted by one generation to another. The real preservation of heritage will not be accomplished unless we understand this and cherish it".

Even though the country has embraced different foreign cultures and economic values from all over the world, Oman has always stuck to its roots as far as traditions and culture are concerned. When interacting with other nations, one should embrace what suits his culture and values as well and leave aside what does not go well with the strength of our unique civilisation.

Oman's government has ensured that any development has to be in accordance with the Omani people's cultural identity and natural environment and avoiding over development, which is typical of some countries in the region.

Accordingly, it is very important that young generations learn more about their culture and nationality. The development of national identity is key to the progress of the nation.

Preserving a national identity is a shared responsibility between all segments of people within society. People, especially youth and teenagers should stop focusing on blind imitations from other nations. They must not carelessly imitate other cultures. Omanis should be proud of their rich culture and pristine heritage that differentiate them from others worldwide.

GUNNING FOR GOAT



Kyrgyz riders take part in Kok-Boru national championship in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on Saturday. Kok-Boru is a traditional Central Asian game similar to polo, in which horsemen aim to drop the headless carcass of a goat in their opponents' goal. – Reuters

The wars of the new world order

The crises, conflicts, and wars that are currently raging highlight just how profoundly the geopolitical landscape has changed in recent years, as great-power rivalries have again become central to international relations.

With the wars in Gaza and Ukraine exacerbating global divisions, an even more profound geopolitical reconfiguration — including a shift to a new world order — may well be in the works.

These two wars heighten the risk of a third, over Taiwan. No one — least of all Chinese President Xi Jinping — can watch the United States transfer huge amounts of American artillery munitions, smart bombs, missiles, and other weaponry to Ukraine and Israel without recognising that American stockpiles are being depleted. For Xi, who has called Taiwan's incorporation into the People's Republic a "historic mission," the longer these wars continue, the better.

US President Joe Biden understands the stakes and is now seeking to defuse tensions with China. Notably, after sending a string of cabinet officials to Beijing, Biden's planned summit talks with Xi on the sidelines at the November 15-17 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in San Francisco is set to steal the spotlight. And he and his G7 partners have stressed that they are seeking to "de-risk" their relationship with China, not "decouple" from the world's second-largest economy.

Whatever one calls it, this process is set to reshape the global financial



Brahma Chellaney

The author is Professor of Strategic Studies at the New Delhi-based Center for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin

THOUGH THE DETAILS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW, A FUNDAMENTAL GLOBAL GEOPOLITICAL REBALANCING NOW APPEARS ALL BUT INEVITABLE. THE SPECTER OF A SUSTAINED CLASH BETWEEN THE WEST AND ITS RIVALS LOOMS LARGE.

order, as well as investment and trade patterns. Already, trade and investment flows are changing in ways that suggest that the global economy may be split into two blocs; for example, China now trades more with the Global South than with the West. Despite the high costs of economic fragmentation, China, seeking to reduce its vulnerability to future pressure, has been quietly decoupling large sections of its economy from the West.

In no small part, the US has itself to blame for the current situation. By actively facilitating China's economic rise for four decades, it helped to create the greatest rival it has ever faced. Today, China boasts the world's largest navy and coast guard, and is overtly challenging Western dominance over the global financial system and in international institutions. In fact, China is working hard to build an alternative world order, with itself at the centre.

Though the current system is often referred to in neutral-sounding terms such as the "rules-based global order," it is undoubtedly centred on the US. Not only did the US largely make the rules on which that order is based; it also seems to believe itself exempt from key rules and norms, such as those prohibiting interference in other countries' internal affairs. International law is powerful against the powerless, but powerless against the

powerful. When it comes to creating an alternative world order, the current conflict-ridden global environment may well work in China's favour. After all, it was war that gave rise to the US-led global order, including the institutions that underpin it, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the United Nations. Even reforming these institutions meaningfully has proved very difficult during peacetime.

This is certainly true for the UN, which appears to be in irreversible decline and increasingly marginalised in international affairs. The hardening gridlock at the UN Security Council has caused more responsibility to be shifted to the UN General Assembly, which was forced, notably, to adopt a resolution on the war in

Gaza calling for a "humanitarian truce" and an end to Israel's siege. But the General Assembly is fundamentally weak, and, in contrast to the Security Council, its resolutions are not legally binding.

As US-led institutions deteriorate, so, too, does America's authority beyond its borders. Even Israel and Ukraine — which depend on the US as their largest military, political, and economic backer — have at times spurned US advice. Israel rebuffed America's counsel to scale back its military attacks and do more to minimise civilian casualties in an already dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. US officials have blamed Ukraine's wide dispersal of forces for its stalled counteroffensive.

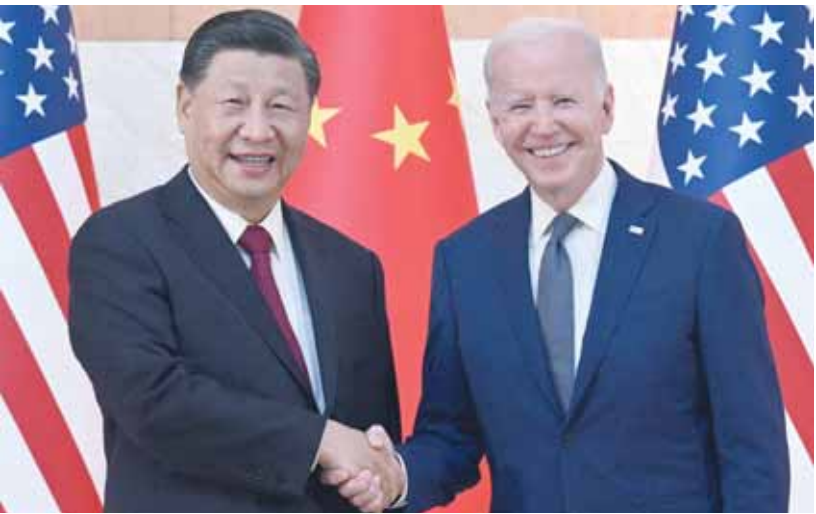
Beyond the global reordering that the Sino-American rivalry appears to be causing, important

regional shifts are possible. A protracted conflict in Gaza could set in motion a geopolitical reorganisation in the Greater Middle East.

If the conflict spreads beyond Gaza, the geopolitical implications would be even farther-reaching. Whatever comes next, Ukraine may well be among the biggest losers. As Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has acknowledged, the war in Gaza already "takes away the focus" from his country's fight against Russia at a time when Ukraine can ill afford a slowdown in Western aid.

Yet more forces and trends — including Russia's increasingly militarised economy, China's stalling growth, and the growing economic weight of the Global South — are making fundamental changes to the international order more likely. Meanwhile, the world is grappling with widening inequality, rising authoritarianism, the rapid development of transformative technologies like artificial intelligence, environmental degradation, and climate change.

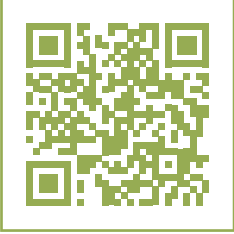
Though the details are impossible to know, a fundamental global geopolitical rebalancing now appears all but inevitable. The specter of a sustained clash between the West and its rivals — especially China, Russia, and the Islamic world — looms large.



US President Joe Biden (R) and China's President Xi Jinping. – Reuters

sport

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Nizwa triumph over Oman Club, Al Seeb dominate Salalah in OBL

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 12

The matches of the Oman Basketball League for the 2023-24 season, held on Saturday, witnessed Nizwa Club secured a resounding win against Oman Club with a final score of 82-63, while Al Seeb Club also won against Salalah Club with a score of 116-34 in the two matches held at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

The first match showed varied performances, with Nizwa Club dominating most periods, especially in the first, second, and fourth quarters. However, Oman Club regained control in the third quarter, but the point difference in the winning periods was enough to secure the victory with a comfortable lead.

In a match that started perfectly for Nizwa, they managed to take a 5-point lead after two shots, including a three-pointer from their player Nefer McCord. Oman responded with two two-point shots and a free throw by Haitham Bani Arabah. The excitement continued with more attacks, and Nefer McCord scored five more points, including a three-pointer, allowing Nizwa to lead Oman 10-3. Despite efforts from Oman's player Haitham Bani Arabah, who scored two points from under the basket, Nizwa responded with five points, including a three-pointer from Musab al Riyami, extending their lead to 15-5. The thrill continued with more attacks, and Nizwa added nine more points, while Oman added four points. The first quarter ended with Nizwa leading

Oman 24-9.

In the second quarter, Oman Club's performance changed slightly as they became more active defensively and offensively. Hussein al Kindi scored two points from under the basket and one from a free throw, narrowing the gap. Oman continued their progress with a three-pointer from Basem al Musalmi. Nizwa responded with 10 consecutive points, starting with a three-pointer from Musab al Riyami and two points from Nefer McCord, including one from under the basket and another from a free throw. The teams continued their attempts with both sides scoring, and the first half ended with Nizwa leading Oman 45-28.

In the third quarter, the performance changed, and Oman took the lead in seeking points, adding 19 points while Nizwa added 16. The third quarter ended with Nizwa leading Oman 61-47.

In the fourth quarter, the performance changed again, and Nizwa took control of the game. Their players consistently pressured Oman's basket, adding 21 points, while Oman scored 16 points. The match ended with Nizwa defeating Oman 82-63.

The international refereeing team included Esam al Siyabi as the first referee, Thani al Khalasi as the second referee, and AL Mahdi al Alawi as the third referee. While Jameel al Hinai, Musa al Siyabi, and Majid al Akhzami officiated on the table.

AL SEEB SUPREME
In the second match, Al Seeb thumped Salalah 116-34. Al Seeb

demonstrated superiority in all four quarters, securing an easy victory with a significant lead.

The first quarter started perfectly for Al Seeb as they managed to open the scoring through Marwan al Hadidi with a three-pointer. They continued their lead with two points from Ahmed al Maamari. Salalah responded with two points by Mohammed al Hooti. Following a foul, Al Seeb added two more points, and the defence of Al Seeb successfully thwarted most of Salalah's attempts. Al Seeb added 18 more points, and Salalah added 10 points as well. The first quarter ended with Al Seeb leading Salalah 35-12.

In the second quarter, Al Seeb continued their offensive and defensive dominance, adding 24 points, while Salalah managed to score only nine. The first half concluded with Al Seeb leading 59-21.

In the third quarter, Al Seeb maintained relentless pressure on Salalah, doubling their score with an additional 34 points. Salalah struggled to score, managing only five points. The third quarter ended with Al Seeb in a commanding lead of 93-26.

The fourth quarter saw Al Seeb adding 23 points, while Salalah scored only eight. The match concluded with Al Seeb winning 116-34.

The match was officiated by Rashed al Mushaifri as the first referee, Ali al Sulaimani as the second referee, and Wafa al Sumari as the third referee. Mariam al Zadjali, Yaqoub al Nadabi, and Sherifa al Zadjali were at the table.



Oman player against Nizwa



Oman player faces Nizwa defender



Al Seeb player tries to dodge Salalah player

Al Seeb, Al Bashayer and Al Salam register second wins in OVA League



Al Salam player in action against Majees at Sohar Sports Complex



Competition from Oman First Division Volleyball League 2023-24

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 12

Al Seeb, Al Bashayer and Al Salam clubs registered their second consecutive victories in the second round of Oman First Division Volleyball League 2023-24 on Friday.

Defending champions Al Seeb posted their second win as they won against Saham 3-0 after their first triumph against Bahla 3-0 in the previous round. It was the second loss for Saham as they suffered a 3-0 defeat against Majees in the last round. The triumph took the Muscat-based team tally to six points and top of the league standings while northern Batinah team struggling at the bottom without any points. Al Seeb, coached by national experienced coach Jamal al Maamari, are moving in the right direction to defend their title.

Al Bashayer earned a 3-0 win over Bahla in the second round at Nizwa Sports Complex. The victory meant the northern Batinah team captured their sixth point after their opening win against Oman Club 3-1 in

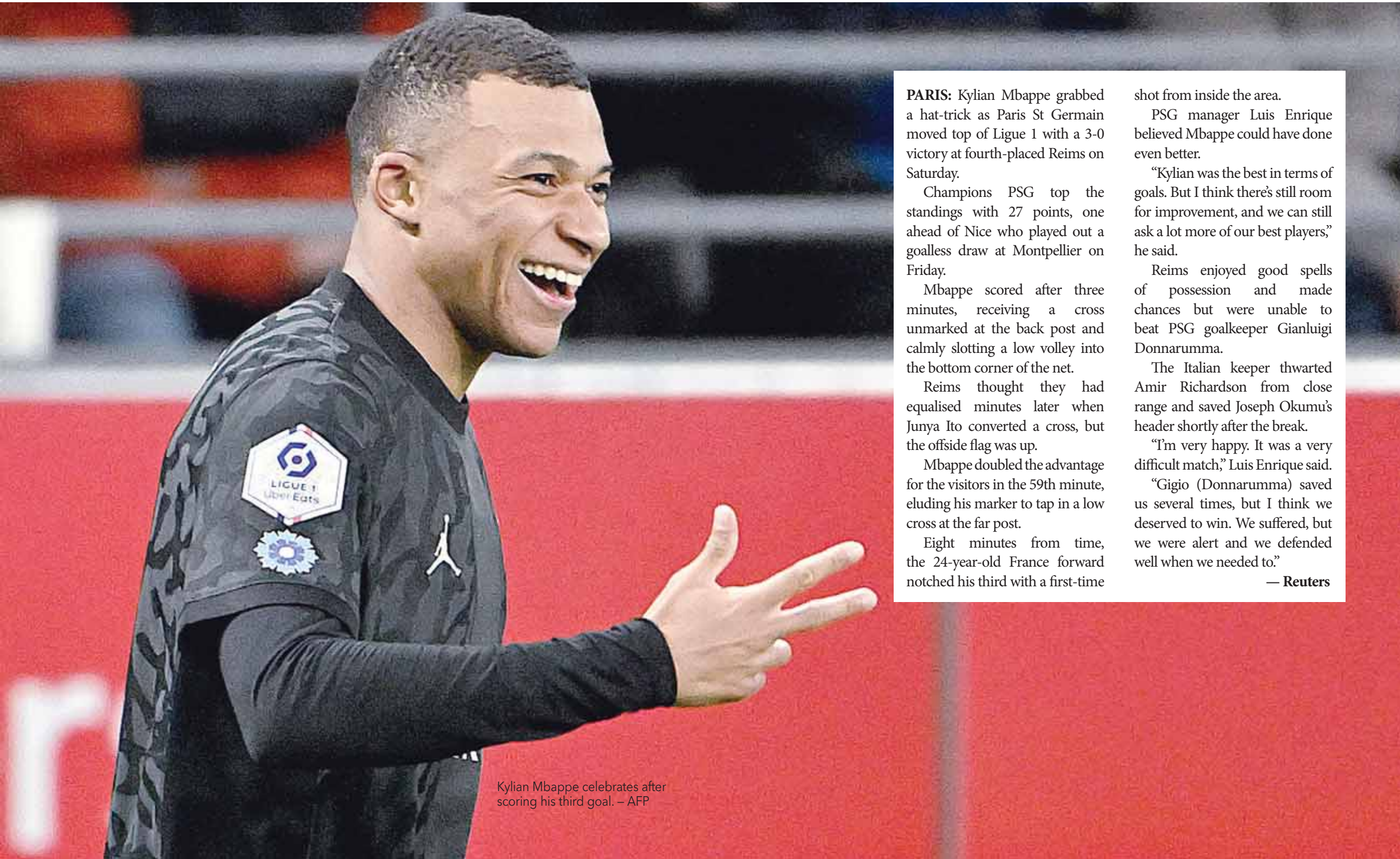
the last week. On the other hand, Bahla are positioned in the bottom without any points.

Al Salam were the third team who managed to earn their full points from two games as they stunned Majees 3-1 in a thrilling game at Sohar Sports Complex. The triumph meant, the northern Batinah team reached six points while Majees remained in their previous credit of three points collected during the opening match against Saham 3-0.

Oman Club registered their first win as they edged Sohar 3-1 during the second round match of the league. The Muscat-based team had suffered a loss against Al Bashayer in the previous game while Sohar received their second defeat as the first loss was against Al Salam 3-1 in last week.

On the other hand, the Oman Volleyball Association (OVA) will receive a delegation from West Asian Volleyball Federation who will visit the Sohar Sports Complex during November 14 to 16 as part of Oman's preparation to host the West Asian Volleyball Championship for clubs in February 2024.

MBAPPE HAT-TRICK LIFTS PSG TO THE TOP



Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring his third goal. – AFP

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe grabbed a hat-trick as Paris St Germain moved top of Ligue 1 with a 3-0 victory at fourth-placed Reims on Saturday.

Champions PSG top the standings with 27 points, one ahead of Nice who played out a goalless draw at Montpellier on Friday.

Mbappe scored after three minutes, receiving a cross unmarked at the back post and calmly slotting a low volley into the bottom corner of the net.

Reims thought they had equalised minutes later when Junya Ito converted a cross, but the offside flag was up.

Mbappe doubled the advantage for the visitors in the 59th minute, eluding his marker to tap in a low cross at the far post.

Eight minutes from time, the 24-year-old France forward notched his third with a first-time

shot from inside the area.

PSG manager Luis Enrique believed Mbappe could have done even better.

“Kylian was the best in terms of goals. But I think there’s still room for improvement, and we can still ask a lot more of our best players,” he said.

Reims enjoyed good spells of possession and made chances but were unable to beat PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

The Italian keeper thwarted Amir Richardson from close range and saved Joseph Okumu’s header shortly after the break.

“I’m very happy. It was a very difficult match,” Luis Enrique said.

“Gigio (Donnarumma) saved us several times, but I think we deserved to win. We suffered, but we were alert and we defended well when we needed to.”

— Reuters

Arsenal outclass Burnley with 3-1 win



Oleksandr Zinchenko forms a love heart with his hands as he celebrates after the match. – Reuters

LONDON: Arsenal handed Burnley a sixth straight defeat in all competitions with a 3-1 home win on Saturday to move up to second in the Premier League table.

Goals from Leandro Trossard, William Saliba and Oleksandr Zinchenko gave Arsenal victory but their afternoon ended on a sour note when Fabio Vieira was sent off.

Arsenal moved to 29 points in the standings, level with leaders Manchester City and one point above north London rivals Tottenham Hotspur, who lost 2-1 at Wolverhampton Wanderers in the early kickoff.

Burnley’s crisis deepened as they sit 19th with four points following their 10th defeat in

12 games.

Vincent Kompany named an unchanged Burnley side for the first time this season and they did well to keep Arsenal at bay even as Mikel Arteta’s team dominated possession and piled on the pressure in search of a breakthrough.

The London side inevitably scored on the stroke of half-time when Bukayo Saka headed the ball across the six-yard box and Trossard leapt into the air to head home Arsenal’s 1,000th goal at Emirates Stadium.

However, celebrations were muted as the brave Belgian clattered into the post and winced in pain as he held his arm. But he returned to the pitch after medical treatment and also came back out for the

second half.

Burnley levelled against the run of play in the second half when a blocked shot fell to Josh Brownhill and the skipper’s effort took a deflection to beat the helpless David Raya in Arsenal’s goal.

But the scores were level for barely two minutes as Arsenal won a corner and Trossard’s dangerous delivery into the box found Saliba, who positioned himself in front of goalkeeper James Trafford and nodded home from a yard out.

Zinchenko then made it 3-1 with an improvised volley after Burnley failed to clear a corner before Vieira saw red for a high boot when he caught Brownhill on the knee with a mistimed challenge. — Reuters

Bastianini wins Malaysian Grand Prix, Bagnaia extends championship lead

SEPANG: Ducati’s Enea Bastianini claimed his first race victory of the season when he won the Malaysian Grand Prix ahead of Gresini’s Alex Marquez on Sunday, while Jorge Martin failed to close the gap on championship leader Francesco Bagnaia.

Pole sitter Bagnaia eventually finished third while Pramac Racing’s Martin, who was second fastest in qualifying, finished a distant fourth to fall 14 points behind Bagnaia in the championship.

Victory was sweet redemption for Bastianini, who broke his shoulder in the season-opening sprint in Portugal while he missed more races after undergoing surgery in September to mend broken bones in his left hand and left ankle.

The 25-year-old Italian was under pressure for results after making the switch to the factory Ducati team and he became the seventh different rider to win a race this season.

“I’m so tired. I gave my 100% today. After a long time without a podium, I’ve got this victory,” an exhausted Bastianini said in a post-race interview.

“My family and friends know what I’ve had to do to arrive here, it’s fantastic.”

Bastianini and Saturday’s sprint winner Marquez were both quick off the line and left the two title contenders behind on the opening lap with some serious pace up front.

The four riders quickly left the chasing pack behind as



Enea Bastianini celebrates after winning the race. – Reuters

Bastianini extended his lead over Marquez while Martin had a couple of looks in as he attempted to overtake Bagnaia.

But as the race wore on, Martin was forced to back off as he looked to conserve his tyres in the searing heat at the Sepang International Circuit while Bagnaia also looked content to bide his time in third place.

“I tried to close the gap to Alex and Bastianini, but I was really struggling with the braking... But I’m happy to keep a gap in the championship,” Bagnaia said.

With two laps to go, Martin

was nearly six seconds behind Bagnaia and the Spaniard was seen shaking his head, knowing he had missed out on yet another opportunity to close the gap in the battle for the championship.

Yamaha’s Fabio Quartararo prevented an all-Ducati top five and spoiled Marco Bezzecchi’s 25th birthday when he overtook the VR46 Racing rider in the dying stages to push him down to sixth.

The MotoGP championship has two more races left this season in Qatar and Valencia.

— Reuters

IYER AND RAHUL TONS HELP INDIA TO THUMP NETHERLANDS IN WORLD CUP

BENGALURU: Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul hit hundreds as World Cup hosts India geared up for the semi-finals with a crushing 160-run victory over the Netherlands on Sunday to keep intact their 100 per cent record with nine group wins.

After their colleagues had departed following breezy fifties on a good M Chinnaswamy Stadium track, Iyer (128 not out) struck his fourth ODI ton before Rahul (102) exploded as the duo lit up the stage on the Hindu festival of Diwali to get India to 410-4.

Requiring a record World Cup chase to win, the bottom-placed Dutch side got good starts from Max O'Dowd (30), Colin Ackermann (35), Sybrand Engelbrecht (45) and Teja Nidamanuru (54) but they never threatened and were dismissed for 250 in 47.5 overs.

Mohammed Siraj (2-29) overcame a throat injury suffered in a dropped catch to dazzle alongside Kuldeep Yadav (2-41), Jasprit Bumrah (2-33) and Ravindra Jadeja (2-49) to secure victory for India, who face New Zealand in the semi-finals on Wednesday.

Iyer reached his century in 84 balls and finished with 10 fours and five sixes while Rahul needed only 62 balls for his ton,

getting there with two huge sixes in the last over that took India past 400. The duo forged a 208-run partnership — the highest fourth-wicket stand in World Cups -- as India scored 126 runs in their final 10 overs to post the third total above 400 in the event.

India put the Netherlands to the sword after winning the toss and opting to bat as skipper Rohit Sharma (61) and Shubman Gill (51) smashed boundaries at will to give them a superb platform with 91 runs in the powerplay.

Gill was severe on the bowlers with three fours and four sixes, but the world's top-ranked batsman found the man in the deep while taking on a short one from Paul van Meekeren after reaching his 12th half-century.

The Netherlands chipped away and were rewarded when Bas de Leede had Rohit caught at wide long-on, but Kohli (51) and Iyer took India past 200 runs in the 29th over with a 71-run stand.

Kohli delighted the crowd with a wide array of shots after a shaky start to his quest to reach 50 ODI tons and eclipse Sachin Tendulkar's record, but Roelof van der Merwe briefly silenced fans by breaking his stumps with a flatter one. — **Reuters**



India's Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul. – Reuters



India's KL Rahul celebrates after taking a catch to dismiss Netherlands' Scott Edwards off the bowling of Virat Kohli. – Reuters

WORLD CUP STANDINGS

Team	Played	Won	Lost	Points	NRR
India	9	9	0	18	2.570
South Africa	9	7	2	14	1.261
Australia	9	7	2	14	0.841
New Zealand	9	5	4	10	0.743
Pakistan	9	4	5	8	-0.199
Afghanistan	9	4	5	8	-0.336
England	9	3	6	6	-0.572
Bangladesh	9	2	7	4	-1.087
Sri Lanka	9	2	7	4	-1.419
Netherlands	9	2	7	4	-1.825

NOTE: Top four teams qualified for the semifinals



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Salalah Mills to set up new food JV in Yemen

Omani Food Manufacturer
Expands Regional
Presence through Strategic
Partnership

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 12

Salalah Mills CoASAOG, a leading Omani food manufacturer, has announced that it will establish a limited liability company named ‘Yemeni Omani Food Company LLC’ in the Republic of Yemen. The joint venture company will be headquartered in Yemen and will import and distribute grains. The announcement was made in a board of directors’ resolution disclosure on Thursday. The board also approved the un-audited financial statements of the nine months period ending on September 30, 2023, and the board of director’s report for the same period. Salalah Mills will own a 50 per cent stake in the new company,

while the remaining 50 per cent will be owned by a Yemeni partner. The authorised capital of the company will be \$25 million, with an initial paid-up capital of 50 per cent. The partnership will be financed through commercial loans. The establishment of the new company is part of Salalah Mills’ expansion strategy in the region. The company is looking to capitalise on the growing demand for food in Yemen, which is a country of over 30 million people. Yemen is a net importer of food, and the country has been facing food insecurity challenges in recent years due to conflict and economic instability. The establishment of the new company will help to improve food security in Yemen and provide Yemeni consumers with access to high-quality food products from Oman. The joint venture is also expected to boost trade between Oman and Yemen. The two



Salalah Mills’ complex at Raysut Industrial City in Salalah

countries have strong economic ties, and the new company is expected to further strengthen these ties. The establishment of the new company is a positive development for both Oman

and Yemen. It is a sign of the growing economic cooperation between the two countries and the commitment of Salalah Mills to expanding its business in the region.

Collaboration with first-movers to inform CCUS policymaking in Oman

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 12

Oman’s Ministry of Energy and Minerals has pledged to work closely with early adopters of Carbon Capture, Utilisation & Storage (CCUS) technologies in the formulation of a regulatory framework and underlying policies governing this promising new industry. According to a key official, policy actions envisioned by the Ministry to help underpin the growth of a thriving CCUS sector in Oman will seek to, among other things, enable first-movers to implement their proposals for carbon capture and sequestration in the Sultanate of Oman. Eng Muhannad bin Al Khattab al Hinai, Director of the Hydrogen Policies and Strategies Department at the Ministry, said: “We are taking the (...) early-mover approach in which we work together with industry to develop the right set of permits and licenses to get such projects going in a safe and controlled manner. And from there, we build on a regulatory framework that is fit for purpose.” Presenting on the theme, ‘CCUS in Oman: National Policies and Regulation’, during a recent forum held in the city, Al Hinai pointed out that a number of local and international companies are currently embarking on CCUS projects in Oman. He cited in particular the Blue Horizons



Oman foresees a 15 per cent contribution from CCUS projects in the abatement of planet-warming CO2 emissions. – Reuters

initiative being development by Oman Shell in collaboration with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO). In developing policy actions to drive the growth of a CCUS industry, the Ministry plans to undertake the following: Review international best practices, Build a regulatory support capacity, Assess current policies and regulations in relation to CCUS, and Identify regulatory gaps and barriers. The overarching goal, said Al

Hinai, is to establish a regulatory framework that best fits CCUS strategy. Besides enabling first-movers, the framework will embed environmental safeguards and support economic value creation for CCUS, he added. Just last week, the Ministry announced the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with Petroleum Development Oman, Oman Shell, OQGN (the gas network operator), and Oxy. The MoC supports the

establishment of a ‘House of Expertise’ that will contribute to the development of a regulatory and strategic framework to underpin the growth of CCUS and Blue Hydrogen projects in Oman. Investments in CCUS projects are key to supplementing decarbonisation initiatives vital to achieving Oman’s Net-Zero goals. The National Strategy for an Orderly Transition to Net-Zero envisions a 15 per cent contribution from CCUS in carbon abatement by 2050.

ASA’s new chopper to support expansion, drive aerial tourism

MUSCAT: Oman’s Al Sharqiya Aviation (ASA), part of the Mohammed Al Barwani Group, recently welcomed its latest addition, the Airbus H145D3 helicopter, marking a significant milestone in the company’s MENA expansion.

This third addition to ASA’s growing fleet holds the potential to not only enhance their services across various industries but also contribute to the burgeoning field of aerial tourism. The journey of the new H145D3 from Airbus’ German headquarters to Muscat, skillfully piloted by ASA’s captains, included multiple stops to assess its performance in diverse climates, ensuring both safety and operational readiness. The helicopter’s arrival in Muscat was met with warmth by ASA and MB Group staff, including Chairman Dr Mohammed al Barwani. Ahlam al Jahdhami, CEO of Al Sharqiya Aviation, expressed pride in the team’s accomplishments, stating, “In 2021, we were thrilled to become the first operator of the five-bladed H145D3 variant in the Middle East. Now, we are proud to build on our success and kick-start an ambitious expansion programme, providing the safest, fastest, and most reliable service to



ASA executives pictured during the arrival of the Airbus H145D3 helicopter in Oman

clients across various industries, including energy, telecom, medevac, and Emergency Medical Services (EMS).” Captain Tamer Gendy, Chief Operating Officer of ASA, highlighted the collaboration with Airbus to ensure the helicopter adheres to the highest safety standards and is fully IOGP compliant for both offshore and onshore oil and gas operations. He noted, “This addition is top of the line and will significantly enhance our capabilities.” With its Air Operator Certificate received in 2020 and the Accredited Maintenance Organization Certificate in 2023, ASA aims to not only unlock the potential of various industries in the MENA region but also contribute to the growth of aerial tourism by providing faster and more reliable transport options.

National Finance is top-performing company

MUSCAT: Adding another accolade to its repertoire, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman’s leading financial company, was recently named a winner in the Mid-Cap Segment at the prestigious OER Corporate Excellence Awards.

The honour was presented by His Highness Sayyid Firas bin Fatik al Said and was received by Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer, National Finance.

The awards ceremony, organised by the country’s premier English-language business magazine ‘Oman Economic Review’ (OER), was graced by the presence of chief guests His Highness Sayyid Firas bin Fatik al Said and Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat; and hosted by Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail al Mashani.

In attendance at the event were esteemed dignitaries, industry stalwarts, C-suite executives from the business fraternity and decision makers.

Fifteen top-ranking MSX-listed companies were felicitated with honours in a distinguished ceremony, based on a ranking



Tariq Al Farsi at the OER award ceremony.

process that assessed a myriad of parameters such as overall performance, profitability, shareholder returns, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), among others.

“We are truly honoured to be among the Winners of the Mid-Cap Segment at the OER

Excellence Awards,”Tariq bin Sulaiman al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer, National Finance, said on the occasion. He added, “This accolade reflects our unwavering commitment towards providing the fastest and most flexible financial solutions to all our customers to ensure they are able to realise their dreams.

We owe our success to our

innovative services, strategic collaborations, prudent business practices, and exceptionally talented and diligent staff.

Through our multi-pronged efforts, we have been able to leave an indelible mark on the country’s finance sector and contribute to progress at large.

This recognition serves as further impetus to continue

striving for excellence in all we do.” National Finance’s ability to adapt to the dynamic finance sector and evolving market trends has undoubtedly contributed to this remarkable achievement.

The company’s wide range of products and services have played a pivotal role in the success stories of not just personal finance seekers, but also those of small and medium enterprises and corporates. Another area that National Finance has shone in is corporate social responsibility.

Under its ‘Imtidad’ wing, the company has established several partnerships and worked with many organisations to positively impact the society and contribute to community progress.

The company has also been involved in environmental conservation initiatives in line with its aim to ensure a sustainable and green future.

The receipt of the Mid-Cap win at the OER Corporate Excellence Awards reaffirms National Finance’s position as a paragon of quality and a benchmark-setter in the finance industry.



Bank Muscat at Sayyid Abbas golf tournament 2023.

Bank Muscat extends support to Sayyid Abbas golf tournament

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to promoting sports and community-centric activities, Bank Muscat extended its support to the prestigious Sayyid Abbas golf tournament, which was recently held at the Ghala Golf Club.

This year’s tournament participation reached 116 of the top golfers in the country.

It is held annually in memory of the club’s former chairman, the late His Highness Sayyid Abbas bin Faisal.

Speaking on the occasion, Saleh bin Mohammed al Maaani, Deputy General Manager — Capital Regions, Bank Muscat, said: “The Bank attaches great importance to supporting initiatives that contribute to the country’s progress and development in all areas. We are delighted with the great success achieved by the Sayyid Abbas golf tournament, which is one of the most well-known sports tournaments in the country.

It is my great pleasure to thank the organisers and the participants for the splendid results that have been achieved this year.”

Bank Muscat places great emphasis on supporting initiatives aimed at contributing to the Sultanate of Oman’s progress and development across different spheres, particularly sports activities for the youth. As part of this strategy, Bank Muscat supports many sports activities.

Bank Muscat has previously extended strong support to different sports activities in the country as part of its social responsibility initiatives.

The bank’s Green Sports programme is one of the leading CSR programmes, which provides support to local sports teams as part of the bank’s efforts to develop sports infrastructure and provide green spaces.

Bank Muscat’s Green Sports programme has so far benefitted 183 teams with over 50,000 team members across Oman.

Vale supports 15 schools in Al Batinah North



Vale in Oman supports 15 schools in Liwa, Shinas, Suhar and Saham.

MUSCAT: Demonstrating its commitment to education and to sustainable community development, Vale in Oman supported 15 schools in Liwa, Shinas, Suhar and Saham with the latest educational devices. Recognising the important role of technology in today’s learning journey, the devices will help support the academic growth of students in Al Batinah North.

Nasser al Azri, CEO, Vale in Oman, said: “We have a responsibility towards our youth, to nurture their talents, and provide them with means to expand their horizons.

By enabling the introduction of technology into classrooms, we are not just modernising education, we are preparing our students to better navigate the ever-changing technological landscape in our digital lives.”

In line with the company’s Corporate Social Responsibility strategy and commitment to the

United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal for Quality Education (UNSDG 4), Vale volunteers delivered the array of devices to schools, engaging with students and teachers, one-on-one.

Carefully selected to enrich the educational experience within the schools, the devices included tablets, iPads, interactive bags, specialised electric and robotic bags, the latest projectors, in addition to a variety of furniture to complement the upgraded digital classrooms.

Today, technology in classrooms has become crucial, exposing students to multiple learning styles, increasing engagement and encouraging collaboration.

Education stands as a significant pillar in Vale’s CSR strategy aiming to set Omani youth on the path for career success.

TAAGEER FINANCE AWARDED ‘BEST PERFORMING COMPANY’

MUSCAT: Leading finance and leasing company (FLC) — Taageer Finance — is delighted to announce that it has been named ‘Best Performing Company’ in the Mid-Cap sector at the Alam Al Iktisaad awards.

Beginning the fourth quarter with a string of prestigious industry awards, the company has also been named ‘Finance and Leasing Company of the Year’ and won the ‘Pioneers in Digital Evolution’ in the NBFC Sector at the DX Oman Digital Transformation awards.

That’s not all, the company’s CEO Shahin bin Mohammed al Balushi has also been named the ‘Finance and Leasing CEO of the Year’! Commenting on the company’s success, Shahin bin Mohammed al Balushi mentioned: “Taageer Finance remains committed to realising its vision and mission, contributing to the economic growth of our nation, and creating lasting value for our customers and shareholders.

This recognition energises us to continue pioneering financial solutions that drive prosperity and empower communities.”

He added: “To be the recipient of this award is exceptionally gratifying as we grow and evolve our business to be the nation’s FLC partner of choice.



A number of important areas of focus are reflected in this success — our commitment to supporting our clients; being an employer of choice; and the way in which we operate, alongside our focus on constantly developing new and innovative solutions.

Most significantly, these awards reflect the exceptional talent that we have here at Taageer Finance, across our business.”

Witnessing the highest growth in market share among FLCs, Taageer Finance has demonstrated consistent growth across its revenue, portfolio, profitability, and provision coverage; showcasing financial resilience and prudent risk management practices.

Playing a pivotal role in SME development, Taageer Finance contributes significantly to

job creation and economic empowerment.

With a commitment to fostering local talent, the company actively contributes to the development of a skilled workforce, a crucial element for the nation’s progress. The company credits its success to a cadre of experienced and talented top management professionals and teams that bring industry knowledge and strategic acumen to the forefront.

Taageer Finance offers a diverse range of financial and leasing solutions for businesses and individuals. Headquartered in Al Khuwair in Muscat, the company has an extensive nationwide network, through branches at Al Wattayah, Suhar, Al Kamil W’al Wafi, Barka, Nizwa, Salalah and most recently Al Seeb.

Alizz Islamic Bank wins award for Best Children’s Value Proposition

MUSCAT: In appreciation of the bank’s leading role in providing products that cater to all segments of society, Alizz Islamic Bank recently won the Award for ‘Best Children’s Value Proposition’ at the Muntada Al-Mara’a awards that was held at the Sheraton Hotel Muscat under the patronage of the HH Sayyidah Hujaija bint Jaifar al Said.

The award was received by Adhari al Aisari, Manager of

Product Development, Muna al Khusaibi, Deputy Senior Manager of Corporate Communications and Mazoon al Jabri, Senior Marketing, Branding & Design Specialist on behalf of Alizz Islamic Bank. Alizz Islamic Bank was given the award in recognition of its continued dedication to providing exceptional sharia-complaint services and products to its customers. ‘Alizz Jr’ offers parents the opportunity to earn attractive



HH Sayyidah Hujaija bint Jaifar al Said, Adhari al Aisari, Manager of Product Development, Muna al Khusaibi, Deputy Senior Manager of Corporate Communications and Mazoon al Jabri, Senior Marketing, Branding & Design Specialist on behalf of Alizz Islamic Bank.

profits on the amount they deposit in a savings plan that can be used for education/higher studies or for future savings of the child.

This will provide parents with flexible options for deposits and standing instructions.

This aims to support the children’s higher education studies and secure their future.

Additionally, ‘Alizz Jr’ has no minimum balance requirement for savings accounts, allowing

individuals to open an account without the need for a specific minimum amount.

The value proposition also includes unlimited local funds transfers via the Mobile Payment Service through the Alizz Islamic Bank mobile banking application.

Lina al Abdulsalaam, said “We are truly honoured to receive this award as a testament to our dedication to serving all segments of society.



A delegation from the Sultanate of Oman participates in the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS) meeting in Tokyo, Japan.

Oman participates in IAIS meeting in Tokyo

MUSCAT: A delegation from the Sultanate of Oman, headed by Shaikh Abdullah bin Salem al Salmi, Executive President of the Capital Market Authority (CMA), participated in the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS) meeting in Tokyo, Japan, on November 9-10, 2023.

The CMA's participation aimed to enhance Oman's presence in international organisations and exchange experiences, information, and expertise with member states to develop practices in the insurance sector. The delegation also discussed the most important vital issues at the financial, regulatory, and supervisory levels.

On the sidelines of the meeting, a workshop was held to discuss financial inclusion, the challenges facing countries, and the most important developments that have affected it.

The workshop also examined the differences between financial inclusion in developed and developing countries, as well as the IAIS's role in promoting financial inclusion for member countries.

The delegation also participated in the conference accompanying the meeting, which

was attended by all delegations of the IAIS's members.

The conference was held under the slogan "Beware the Gap: The Role of Supervisors in Making the Global Insurance Sector More Inclusive."

The conference began with a review of the IAIS road-map and its future work plans. Other important topics discussed at the conference included:

- The role of supervisors in helping to address protection gaps from natural disasters
- The development of regulatory practices to address climate risks
- The development of risks in the global insurance sector and regulatory responses, including the impact of rising inflation, tightening monetary policy, and increasing credit and liquidity risks

The IAIS was established in 1994 to set international standards related to insurance markets.

It has 220 member countries and aims to enhance the protection of insurance policyholders and contribute to global financial stability by enhancing effective supervision for the development of fair, safe, and stable insurance markets.

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 12

Oman Business Forum, together with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion is hosting a Tejarah Talks session on the impact of m-commerce.

The event, M-commerce: Your Gateway to Global Markets is scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday, December 6, Zain Auditorium, Omantel HQ in Airport Heights. Industry leaders will explore the explosive growth of m-commerce and its role in reshaping travel, manufacturing, retail and more.

Moderated by Shabib al Maamari, MD, Visit Oman, panelists Shaikh Khalid al Hosni, CEO & Chief Data Scientist, KA Consultants; Majid al Amri, CEO, Thawani Technologies; and Hamood al Hamdan, Director, Tech Ecosystem Development Department, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology will provide insight into the



Maymuna al Adawi, Director, PPP at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

global m-commerce landscape, discussing how the digital commerce revolution is reshaping industries, highlighting specific trends and data across key sectors.

Maymuna al Adawi, Director, PPP at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and organiser of Tejarah Talks remarked: "The global m-commerce market is not

just thriving it's fundamentally altering how industries operate.

For example, in travel and tourism we are seeing a surge in mobile bookings and on-the-go travel services. In manufacturing, mobile solutions are streamlining operations and sales processes.

While in retail, the shift towards mobile shopping is undeniable. For Omani businesses, understanding and embracing m-commerce is key to their future success."

Supported by Jindal Shadeed, Sustainable City Yiti, Nortal, Omantel and Oman FM the December 6 panel will examine the integration of social media with m-commerce, the growing impact of social media influencers and the critical role of user-generated content in shaping consumer preferences.

The advancements in mobile payment options and security measures, enhancing consumer trust and facilitating seamless transactions will also be discussed.

An additional focus of the session will be on how SMEs are utilising m-commerce to broaden

their consumer base.

Recent data shows SMEs leveraging mobile platforms have seen an average increase of 30 per cent in sales, with some sectors reporting even higher growth. Omani craft businesses have expanded their reach to international markets, while local food producers are connecting with a wider regional audience through mobile platforms.

These examples underscore the effectiveness of m-commerce in providing local SMEs with the tools to move beyond Oman's borders and tap into new markets.

Al Adawi concluded: "With worldwide m-commerce sales set to exceed \$700 billion by 2025, December's Tejarah Talks is more than just a discussion session – it is a strategic workshop for local SMEs poised to capitalise on this digital revolution.

We are offering the keys to unlock the potential of m-commerce, enabling Omani businesses to not only participate but thrive and lead in the digital economy."

Investors pull record sums from Saudi in Middle East fund

LONDON: Foreign investors pulled a record amount of money from US equity funds tracking Saudi Arabia in October as the Middle East's worst violence in decades shook the region's business-friendly narrative.

The iShares MSCI Saudi Arabia ETF saw record net outflows in October of more than \$200 million, LSEG data shows, cutting 20 per cent from what it held at the beginning of the month.

Exchange traded funds (ETFs) providing exposure to stocks in Qatar, the UAE and Israel also suffered outflows, with investors worried about instability, and flows have been muted this month.

"Capital flight can be quite indiscriminate," said Torbjorn

Soltvedt, principal analyst for the Middle East and North Africa with Verisk Maplecroft.

"It's not necessarily 100 per cent based on the fundamentals for each country.

And so obviously, right now, there's a perception that risks are increasing throughout the region. And we're seeing a negative impact as a result of that," he added.

The iShares MSCI Qatar ETF lost \$7.7 million in funds in October, while the iShares MSCI UAE ETF suffered outflows of \$2.75 million. Exchange-traded funds tracking Israel such as the iShares MSCI Israel ETF, ARK Israel Innovative Technology ETF and BlueStar Israel Technology have seen net outflows between \$2.5 million

الأكثر نشاطاً بالكمية			
الكمية	السعر	الإسماء	
24,411,954	▼ 18.62	أرامكو السعودية	
15,180,229	▼ 27.20	الراجحي	
8,715,361	▼ 53.10	دار الأركان	
7,743,248	▼ 8.36	الجزيرة	
4,792,730	▼ 11.22		
الأكثر نشاطاً بالقيمة			
القيمة	السعر	الراجحي	
452,142,612.50	▼ 53.10	الإسماء	
449,112,843.78	▼ 18.62	أرامكو السعودية	
410,610,262.20	▼ 27.20		

Trading information is displayed on the screens at the Saudi Stock Exchange, in Riyadh. – Reuters

and \$9.3 million since Oct 7 attack by Hamas militants.

The outflows from ETFs tracking Gulf countries far

outpace those from most emerging markets in the same period, while outflows from Israel are also above average.

Iraq expects deal to resume Kurdistan oil output within three days

BAGHDAD: Iraqi oil minister Hayan Abdel-Ghani expects to reach an agreement with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and foreign oil companies to resume oil production from the Kurdish region's oilfields within three days, he said on Sunday.

Abdel-Ghani said during a visit to Erbil, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan, that Iraq has reached an "understanding" with Türkiye in relation to resumption of northern oil exports through the Iraq-Türkiye pipeline.

Türkiye halted 450,000 barrels per day (bpd) of northern exports through the Iraq-Türkiye pipeline from March 25 after an International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) arbitration ruling.

The ICC ordered Ankara to pay Baghdad damages of about \$1.5 billion for unauthorised exports by the KRG between 2014



Iraqi oil minister Hayan Abdel-Ghani speaks during a press conference at Iraq's Majnoon oil field near Basra

and 2018. Abdel-Ghani and top federal oil officials on Sunday started meetings with the KRG's

ministry of natural resources and senior Kurdish energy officials to discuss the matter.

"The purpose of this meeting is to resolve all issues to facilitate resumption of oil production and exports," Abdel-Ghani told reporters in Erbil.

"First step is to agree with the region and companies on adjusting their existing contracts to be consistent with Iraq's constitution.

We could reach a deal in three days."

Iraqi government oil officials met representatives of the Association of the Petroleum Industry of Kurdistan (APIKUR) for the first time on Wednesday to discuss a resumption of flows to Türkiye.

APIKUR's members include international oil and gas companies that have a direct or indirect interest in upstream oil or gas contracts in Iraq's Kurdistan region, many of which have had to stop output because of the pipeline closure. — **Reuters**

Google launches new version of redesigned chrome browser for computers

MUSCAT: The American technology company Google announced that it has begun launching the new version of the redesigned Chrome computer browser for all users, based on the company's Material You design language.

Google is presenting these changes in its famous browser on the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of its launch and relies heavily on the design language Material You that the company is developing for the Android system and the web, with many rounded corners in different aspects of the browser such as the side panel, changing the dimensions of the tab bar, address bar, and bookmarks.

Google removed the lock icon in the URL address bar due to almost all sites adopting the secure HTTPS protocol.

Instead, it added a new icon that allows you to control data and site permissions.

Other changes include new

icons in the interface, and they appear clearly in the main menu, where each option is associated with an explanatory icon.

The elements of that menu have also been rearranged, and a submenu has been added for the Google account logged in to the browser.

Chrome browser can now be customised using many colour options, which make the browser tabs fit into the toolbar, and the interface colour can be changed by clicking on the Customise Chrome option on the home page, but it is recommended to turn off night mode to get the best results when customising.

In addition, the new design of the Google Chrome browser can be obtained on computers running Windows, Mac, or Linux systems by updating the browser to the latest version Chrome 119, noting that the new design of the browser is not yet available in the Chrome OS system yet. — **ONA**

The importance of emotional intelligence in business



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The author is a renowned coach, trainer and consultant.

In the bustling world of business, where strategies, numbers, and innovation often take centre stage, one element quietly but significantly influences success: emotional intelligence (EI).

For startup founders navigating the intricate landscape of entrepreneurship, EI is not just a soft skill; it's a powerful tool that can shape the culture, decision-making, and overall success of a venture.

1. UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS:

Emotional intelligence starts with self-awareness. Successful startup founders understand their own emotions, recognise how these emotions can impact their behaviour and decisions, and remain in control even in high-pressure situations.

2. Empathy in Leadership:

Leadership is not just about giving orders; it's about

understanding and empowering your team. EI enables founders to step into the shoes of their team members, fostering a culture of empathy. This understanding builds stronger connections and enhances collaboration within the startup.

3. EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION:

Communication is a cornerstone of business success. Emotionally intelligent leaders excel in communication by not only articulating ideas clearly but also by understanding the emotions behind the words.

This skill is particularly crucial in negotiations, client interactions, and team dynamics.

4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

In the dynamic environment of startups, conflicts are inevitable.

EI equips founders with the ability to navigate conflicts constructively. Instead of

escalating tensions, emotionally intelligent leaders can find solutions that benefit everyone involved.

5. DECISION-MAKING UNDER PRESSURE:

The entrepreneurial journey is riddled with moments that demand quick and effective decision-making. Emotionally intelligent founders maintain clarity of thought and make sound decisions even under intense pressure, ensuring the stability and resilience of the startup.

6. CREATING A POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE:

The emotional tone set by a leader permeates the entire organisation. Founders with high EI contribute to a positive workplace culture.

Positivity, motivation, and a sense of purpose become contagious, fostering an

environment where individuals thrive.

THE TEASER FOR WHAT'S NEXT

As we delve into the intricate realm of emotions in business, the next article promises a crucial exploration: "Product-Market Fit: Finding Your Niche."

Just as emotional intelligence shapes the interpersonal dynamics within a startup, finding your niche defines how your product or service resonates in the market.

Prepare for insights into aligning your offerings with the needs and desires of your target audience.

How do you ensure your product is not just a solution but the solution? Stay tuned for a guide that goes beyond identifying a market; it's about finding the perfect fit that propels your startup to new heights.

IN CONCLUSION

Emotional intelligence isn't a luxury for startup founders; it's a strategic advantage. As you navigate the challenging waters of entrepreneurship, remember that every decision, every interaction, is infused with emotion.

EI is the compass that ensures these emotions steer your startup towards success. So, as you embrace the significance of emotional intelligence in your entrepreneurial journey, envision a future where your startup is not just succeeding in business but thriving in its emotional intelligence. The next chapter awaits, promising insights into the critical concept of product-market fit. Get ready to define your niche and propel your startup towards unparalleled success. Until then, lead with emotional intelligence, and may your business journey be as enriching emotionally as it is financially.

Doing economic nationalism the right way

With the United States leading the way, the world seems to be entering a new era of economic nationalism, as many countries prioritise their domestic social, economic, and environmental agendas over free trade and multilateralism.

While President Joe Biden's approach is more measured and open to international cooperation than Donald Trump's was, it nonetheless raises concerns among economic liberals, who see echoes of a 1930s-style return to protectionism and autarky.

But "economic nationalism" is one of those scare terms that economic liberals use to discredit practices they don't like. As with any ideologically loaded label, it hides more than it reveals.

After all, economic nationalism comes in many different forms, some harmful and some beneficial. Moreover, some of the leading theorists of economic nationalism, such as Alexander Hamilton and Friedrich List, were political liberals.

Though economic nationalism can backfire when taken to extremes, so can economic liberalism.

When applied judiciously in pursuit of legitimate domestic goals — such as building economic strength and reinforcing a sense of national purpose — it can be beneficial without necessarily harming other countries.

Economic nationalism frames the economy primarily in terms of the nation, much like political nationalism does with the polity. The economy exists primarily to serve the nation, just as the nation-state pursues the national interest.

Neither formulation has much content until we start to define what "serving the nation" or the "national interest" means.

Focusing on the national economy can be perfectly benign, as well as compatible with significant degrees of openness to international trade and finance.

According to conventional



DANI RODRIK

The author is a professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School, is President of the International Economic Association and the author of Straight Talk on Trade: Ideas for a Sane World Economy (Princeton University Press, 2017).

economic theory, it is in a country's own interest to adopt free trade.

Economic nationalism has not turned out well everywhere, of course. Too many governments have engaged in excessive dirigisme (state ownership or control), propped up inefficient firms for too long, and closed their economies off too indiscriminately.

A government that pursues autarky will forsake the benefits of specialisation, miss out on frontier technologies, and lose access to foreign capital.

As the economic historian Marvin Suesse argues, economic nationalism therefore wavers between two somewhat contradictory impulses: the temptation to restrict economic exchange with other countries in order to advance national independence; and the desire to expand and leverage international links in the service of national economic growth and development.

In recent times, no one has done a better job of combining these impulses than the "developmental" states of East Asia. Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and, most spectacularly, China have all relied on a mix of policies that both encourage global economic integration and selectively protect key industries.

Each shaped its own economic future through a wide range of industrial policies — directed credit, subsidies, tariff and non-tariff barriers, and local-content and other requirements for foreign investors — that helped it develop new areas of economic competence.

These were not just economic programmes. They were national projects of renewal, aimed at catching up with the West.

As political scientist Elizabeth Thurbon of the University of New South Wales and her co-authors put it, policymakers with a developmental mindset "view local manufacturing capacity, technological autonomy, and export competitiveness as the essential foundations of domestic political legitimacy, national security, and international status and prestige, and embrace a central role for the state in



Ruan Xuefeng/VCG via Getty Images.

advancing these goals through strategic interventions in the market."

No one can deny these countries' success. Their rapid economic growth lifted hundreds of millions of people from abject poverty, and elevated some of them to the status of advanced economies in less than two generations.

China became not only an economic powerhouse but the West's main geopolitical rival.

Each country's dramatic rise met with charges that it was not being open enough, and not providing sufficient market access.

Widespread government subsidies — for steel, autos, solar cells, and so on — often undermined foreign firms' competitive positions and drew their governments' ire.

Yet, on balance, East Asia's economic nationalism was a boon for the rest of the world. Even with trade barriers here and there, the booming markets that it created for trade partners were much larger than any alternative economic strategy would likely have produced.

Moreover, the subsidies — according to economic liberals' own logic — were a gift to other countries, because they helped lower prices for their consumers.

To be sure, China's rapid

expansion of exports did create some important difficulties for advanced economies.

The "China shock" led to long-term job losses in the regions most exposed to competition from Chinese imports, thereby increasing political support for authoritarian, right-wing populists in both the US and Western Europe.

But if anyone bears more of the blame, it is Western governments, for failing to manage trade with China appropriately (by not liberalising their trade more slowly, for example).

While China was achieving exceptionally strong export performance, these governments were clinging to an excessive faith in economic liberalism.

If the US acts like a bully, imposing its policy preferences on others and seeking to undermine its rivals' technological development, it will do much harm to the rest of the world and little good for itself.

Economic nationalism has not turned out well everywhere, of course. Too many governments have engaged in excessive dirigisme (state ownership or control), propped up inefficient firms for too long, and closed their economies off too indiscriminately.

When governments make these mistakes, it is primarily their own people who pay the price. Economic nationalism gone wrong is a beggar-thyself policy, not a beggar-thy-neighbour one.

East Asian developmentalism offers an important lesson for today's world. If economic nationalism in the US focuses on creating a strong, inclusive domestic economy, it will do much good — even when it violates some of the tenets of economic liberalism.

In fact, such a strategy would revive an earlier tradition of developmentalism in US history. Other countries will ultimately benefit from a healthier US economy and more cohesive society, and should have little to complain about.

As Suesse shows, economic nationalism is typically a response to being left behind by other countries. Here, the current US experience is a bit different.

Though others — China especially — have been catching up, the US remains technologically and militarily the world's most powerful country.

The risk, then, is that American economic nationalism will go beyond building a better society and finding purpose at home.

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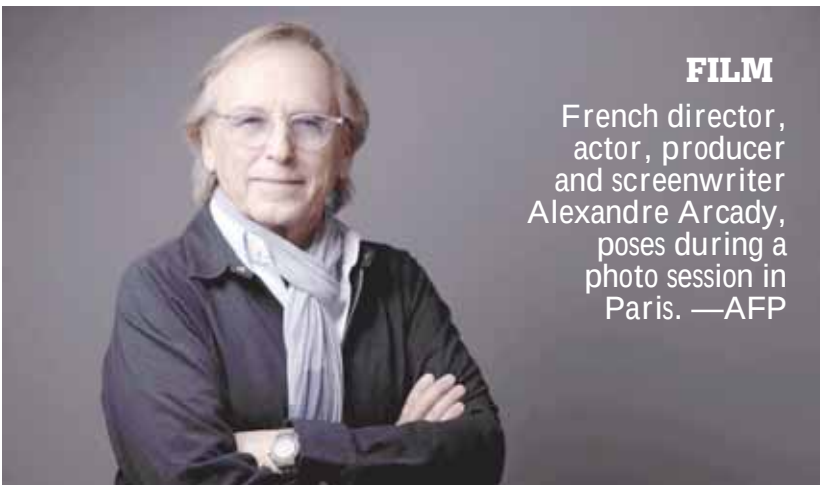
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FILM
French director, actor, producer and screenwriter Alexandre Arcady, poses during a photo session in Paris. —AFP



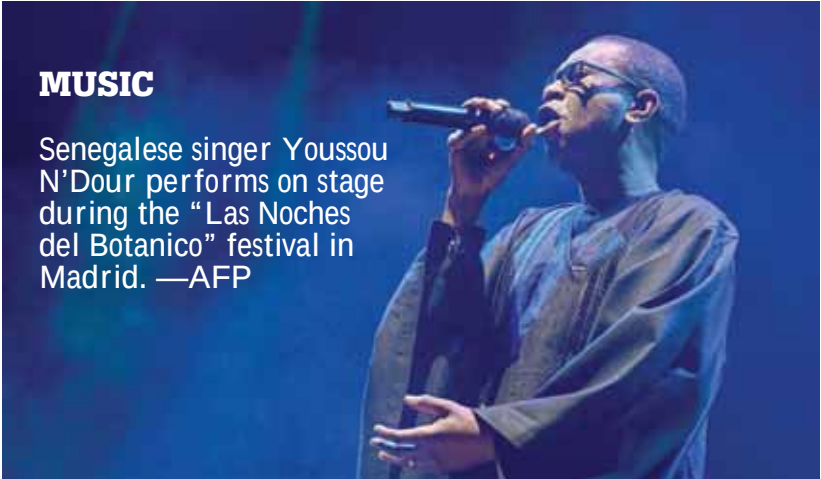
TRADITIONS
A falcon perches on the arm of its trainer during the annual traditional crafts and industries heritage festival in Qattara market in the Gulf emirate of al-Ain. —AFP



FASHION
French World pastry champion Nina Metayer posing at her workshop in Issy-Les-Moulineaux, outside Paris. —AFP



CULTURE
Tourists pose with people wearing historical costumes near Red Square in downtown Moscow. —AFP



MUSIC
Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour performs on stage during the "Las Noches del Botanico" festival in Madrid. —AFP

art & life

MONDAY | NOVEMBER 13, 2023 | RABEE AL THANI 29, 1445 AH | OMAN OBSERVER | www.omanobserver.om | features@omanobserver.om

Oman's colourful past vividly documented in this writer's memoir

Author Margaret Kapenga Shurdom's book, "Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past," explores her family's transformative journey in Oman, vividly capturing 1940-1960s life through photographs and letter....P20

FASHION

Brazilian cotton hits the runway at Sao Paulo Fashion Week

BRAZILIAN COTTON producers took the natural fibre to the runway on Thursday night, strutting the catwalk of Sao Paulo Fashion Week (SPFW) in celebration of the 150th anniversary of jeans. The fashion show, organized by the Sou de Algodao movement, showcased models wearing 40 outfits made from denim, the cotton-based material now synonymous with jeans. Paulo Martinez, a Brazilian fashion icon who styled the show, pointed out that Brazilian



cotton is "indispensable" in the manufacturing of the denim garments. Brazil is just 400,000 bales away from overtaking the United States as the largest global cotton exporter in the 2023/24 harvest, accord-



ing to USDA data, and will finish this season as the third-largest global producer, behind China and India. More important than the race to come out on top is to show the industry and consumers the



quality of Brazil's product, said the president of the Brazilian Cotton Producers Association (Abrapa), Alexandre Schenkel. The country tracks more than 80 per cent of its production based on



environmental and social criteria with the ABR certification, which includes a QR code on the clothing label of some national brands, allowing the cotton to be traced to its farm of origin. For Schenkel, the run-



way showcased the fruits of designers' labour. "It was their harvest," he said. "And everyone in the cotton chain is celebrating something I like - jeans. Who doesn't have a piece of denim in their closet?" — **Reuters**



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AROUND THE WORLD

TECHNOLOGY



Samsung to add real-time translation to smartphone model

SOUTH KOREAN SMARTPHONE giant Samsung Electronics will roll out a real-time translation service on calls using AI technology next year, a company representative told AFP on Friday.

Samsung is the world's largest smartphone maker accounting for a fifth of global sales between July and September, as Apple trails in second with 16 per cent of the market, according to market tracker Counterpoint.

The new real-time translation feature will be incorporated into Samsung's new Galaxy flagship model, which will launch early next year, the representative said.

It will enable "real-time translation in audio and text as the callers are on the line", the spokesman said, adding that it has not been determined how many languages will be supported.

The translation will be enabled even if a call partner uses a non-Samsung smartphone, as the new model will use "on-device AI technology".

Speaking to a foreigner using the new AI feature will be "as simple as turning on closed captions" on streaming shows, Samsung said in a press release, with private conversations safely locked in on the phones.

The unveiling comes as the South Korean firm is racing to develop its generative AI model called Samsung Gauss, which comes in three fields of language, code and image, and is currently used among company staff.

The company will incorporate the AI system into its wide range of products in the near future, it said, without specifying timing or the models. — **AFP**

PHOTOGRAPHY



Award-winning Omani photographer fulfils his "Dream" exhibition

BY BALQEES AL ORAIMI

UNDER THE auspices of Dr Said bin Hamad al Rubaie, Vice Chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Bait Al Zubair hosted the "Dream" exhibition by the Omani photographer Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Shuaili, in the presence of a number of photographers and interested parties.

Al Shuaili, a luminary in the realm of photography, shared insights into his journey, stating, "My passion for photography ignited in my youth, leading me to garner numerous accolades both locally and internationally. My artistic odyssey began in 2014, propelling me to partake in various photography exhibitions across the globe. My lens gravitates towards capturing the essence of Omani life, particularly the simplicity and authentic elegance found in the lives of its people — woven into the fabric of traditional clothing, heritage buildings, and the vibrant markets, castles, and forts."

A collection of 30 evocative photographs unveiled Al Shuaili's dream, as he realised a personal exhibition long envisioned. The event drew a gathering of fellow photographers and art aficionados, transforming his photographic journey, replete with challenges and triumphs, into an inspiration for budding talents



striving to see their dreams materialise.

Since 2014, Al Shuaili has graced local and international exhibitions, amassing a collection of awards. Commencing his career by capturing the essence of Omani markets, castles, forts, and villages, his lens delved into the intricacies of traditional attire and the nuances of life that underscore the simplicity and uniqueness of the Omani culture.

Among his accolades, Al Shuaili claimed the top spot and a gold medal in the World Cup of Photography's 21-year-old age group, secured first

place in the Nasser bin Hamad International Youth Creativity Competition, earned the prestigious title of the best young photographer in France with a gold medal, and clinched the fourth position in the World Cup competition in Germany at the youth level.

This awe-inspiring exhibition unfolds its splendor until the close of November this year, alongside other permanent exhibitions gracing the halls of the institution. Embark on a visual journey through the lens of Al Shuaili, where dreams materialise in every meticulously captured frame."

ENVIRONMENT



The new satellite will detect and share CO2 data from individual facilities

CANADIAN EMISSIONS monitoring company GHGSat on Saturday launched a satellite aimed at detecting carbon dioxide emissions from individual facilities like coal plants and steel mills from space for the first time.

The satellite, named Vanguard, launched from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, GHGSat said.

Space-age technology is increasingly being used to hold polluting industries accountable for their contributions to climate change. GHGSat's data is available for sale to industrial emitters who want to reduce their emissions, as well as to governments and scientists.

Vanguard will build on the growing network of satellites that are already spotting plumes of methane, an invisible greenhouse gas that is difficult to detect because it tends to leak from an array of small sources including pipelines, drill sites and farms.

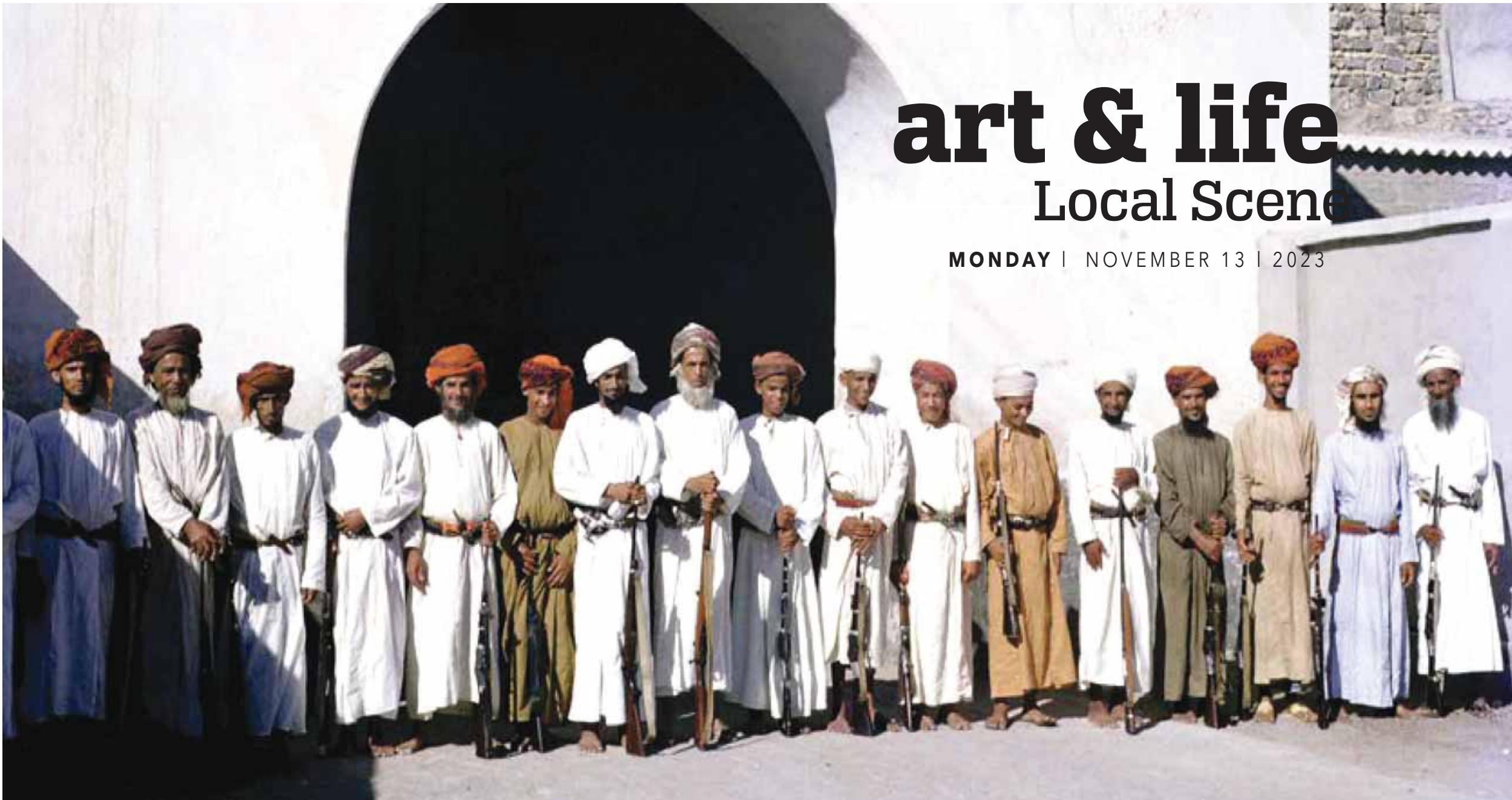
Carbon dioxide accounts for nearly 80% of US greenhouse gas emissions from human activities and tends to enter the atmosphere from large industrial sources like power plants. Satellites monitoring carbon dioxide in the atmosphere currently are not focused on facility-level emissions, GHGSat said.

The data collected by Vanguard will help substantiate common practices of monitoring and measuring carbon dioxide emissions, according to Stephane Germain, CEO of Montreal-based GHGSat.

"Often what we find is a mix of direct measurements and estimates — therefore having a direct measurement of the entire facility from a satellite will act as a validation," Germain said in an interview.

Satellites have already shown that methane emissions are broadly higher than estimated and Germain said he suspected the same is true of carbon dioxide.

The information will help bolster the accuracy of government emissions inventories and scientific modelling and will improve the quality of corporate greenhouse gas reporting for investors, GHGSat said. — **Reuters**



art & life

Local Scene

MONDAY | NOVEMBER 13 | 2023

Oman's colourful past vividly documented in this writer's memoir

BY KABEER YOUSUF
@KABEERYOUSEF

HAVING SPENT the good years of childhood and adolescence in a country, one inevitably accumulates a rich tapestry of cherished memories, resonant laughter, exhilarating fun, and a fair share of tears and innocence—now held as invaluable treasures of a bygone yesterday. For author Margaret Kapenga Shurdom, who meticulously captured the essence of Oman's historical past in her book, this journey is nothing less than a triumphant homecoming, made possible by the gracious support of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

Under the esteemed auspices of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, and with the unwavering support of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, the Minister of Heritage and Tourism, along with the backing of the Oman Historical Association, the book entitled "Oman Zaman: Traces of the Past" was resoundingly unveiled at the National Museum in a recent event.

This masterfully crafted piece, presented in English, meticulously excavates the bygone era, offering profound insights into diverse facets of ancient life in the Sultanate of Oman and providing a vivid elucidation of the myriad dimensions of days long past.

The last 50 years were epochs of transformation. The late HM Sultan Qaboos, a visionary monarch, guided Oman from the shadows of isolation into the luminous dawn of modernity. The ancient whispers of the souqs harmonised with the construction symphony, as Muscat's skyline began to reach for the heavens.

In 1948, the adventurous newlyweds Jay and Marjory Kapenga embarked on a transformative journey, arriving on the shores of Oman and Muscat aboard the British India boat 'Barpeta.'

Their destination was the Arabian Mission of the Reformed Church of America (RCA), a commitment that unexpectedly shaped the next 35 years of their lives.

In those early days, life in Oman presented formidable challenges: meager infrastructure, scarce communication, the absence of banks, no air-conditioning, limited electricity, and no city water supply. Despite these hardships, Jay and Marjory embraced the difficulties with unwavering resilience.

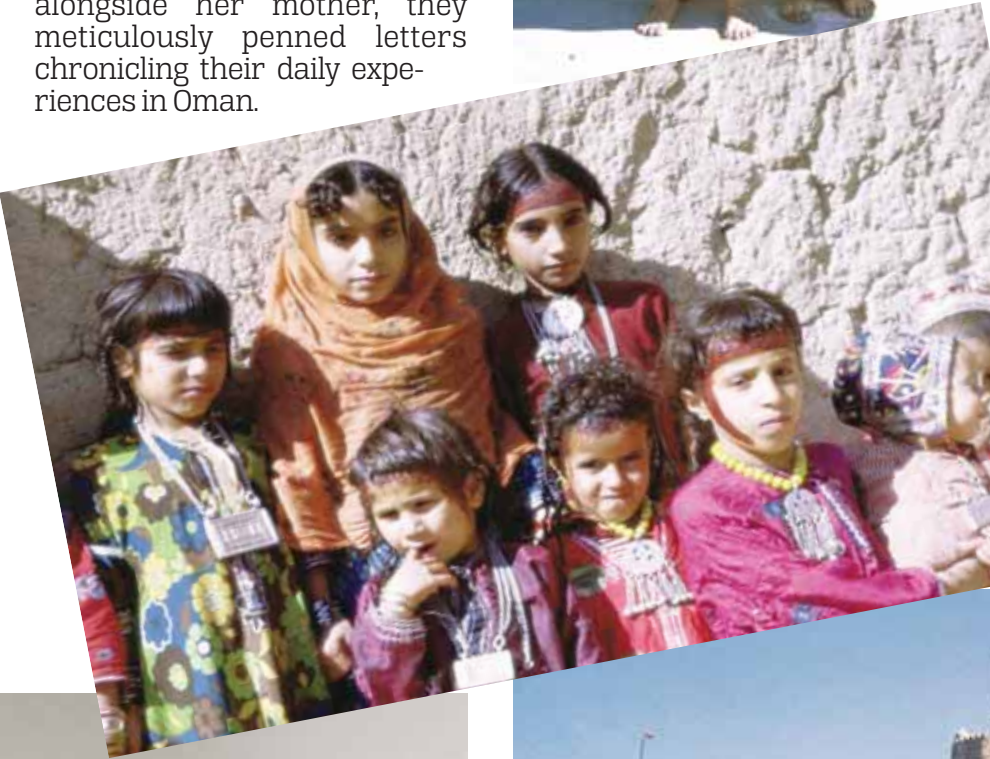


Shurdom, their child, fondly collects their sentiments: "My parents always remembered life at that time as being difficult but good."

During this era, Muscat and Muttrah stood as the primary

coastal towns, while Nizwa dominated the interior as the central hub for commerce among many other towns. As the nation gradually opened up, thanks to the visionary leadership of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the Kapenga family seized the opportunity to explore the interior. For eight years, they dedicated themselves to working with weavers in the once remote areas of Oman, contributing to the cultural and economic development of these regions.

In their formative years, her father diligently captured numerous photographs, while alongside her mother, they meticulously penned letters chronicling their daily experiences in Oman.



viding a vivid portrayal of life in Oman prior to 1970, during the reign of the late HM Sultan Qaboos.

Despite challenges such as the camera's limitations and the harsh environmental conditions of heat and humidity, these snapshots offer a compelling glimpse into that era. Notably, some images may lack optimal quality, a consequence of both the camera's specifications and the unpredictable incidents spurred by the elements.

A captivating anecdote underscores the lengths to which these visuals were obtained. Margaret vividly recalled an incident when her father accidentally plunged his camera into the sea during a transition from a 'bourie' to the ladder of a British India Line ship. The subsequent overhaul in Bombay (today's Mumbai) incurred a charge of \$25, yielding functional pictures, albeit with dissatisfaction regarding the focusing mechanism.