

Rains likely in governorates

The Sultanate of Oman is set to be under the influence of two weather systems this week... the tropical depression moving towards the coasts of Dhofar Governorate and a trough of low pressure that could impact the northern governorates. The tropical condition is centred in the middle of the Arabian Sea, gradually affecting the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman from Monday evening and continuing on Tuesday and Wednesday with chances of rain. **DETAILS ON P5**

SUNRISE - 06:04 AM

PRAYER TIMINGS

FAJR - 04:48 AM

DHUHR - 11:58 PM

ASR - 03:18 PM

MAGHRIB - 05:47 PM

ISHA - 06:57 PM



P12

SINNER WINS SHANGHAI MASTERS TO DENY DJOKOVIC 100TH CAREER TITLE



P13

RO 1.2 BILLION IN PROJECTS FOR INVEST OMAN LOUNGE



P20

'A POSTCARD TO MUSCAT' FASHION SHOW CAPTIVATES WITH COLOUR AND CRAFT



MUSCAT

OMAN-PAKISTAN MILITARY EXERCISE

The joint Oman-Pakistan military exercise ‘Washaq Al Jabal 1’ or ‘Mountain Lynx 1’ began on Sunday at the military training area in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. The drill is carried out by the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), units from the army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo). The drill, which runs until October 21, includes a range of military obstacles and joint training activities. Moreover, the drill aims to sustain combat and operational preparedness of RAO personnel as well as exchange expertise with friendly countries. The activities of the exercise were attended by several senior officers from both sides.

OMAN-UZBEKISTAN MOU ON LOGISTICS

ASYAD Group on Sunday signed in Tashkent a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The memorandum deals with exploring promising business opportunities in the fields of logistics and supply chains between the two countries. The MoU was signed by Shaikh Nasser bin Sulaiman al Harthy, Deputy President for Operations at Oman Investment Authority (OIA), Chairman of ASYAD Group’s Board of Directors, and Laziz Kudratov, Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan. **DETAILS ON P13**

TAMPA

BIDEN TOURS STORM-HIT AREAS

US President Joe Biden on October 13 surveyed the damage from Florida’s Hurricane Milton, the second storm to batter the low-lying state in recent weeks as rising floodwaters, fuel shortages and power outages further impacted cleanup efforts. Milton, which led to at least 17 reported deaths, has added to piles of debris following Hurricane Helene, with electricity and fuel still unavailable in many areas. Biden’s Marine One helicopter thundered along Florida’s western coast from Tampa to St. Petersburg over a landscape of golf courses and waterfront skyscrapers. Heaps of mattresses, siding, couches, microwave ovens, pillows and busted-up kitchen cabinets all lined the island’s roads, some still covered in large patches of sand.

Belarus Prime Minister on 3-day visit

VISIT TO STRENGTHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS AND ENHANCE COOPERATION

MUSCAT: Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, arrived on Sunday evening on a three-day official visit. Upon his arrival at the Royal Airport, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, led the welcoming party for the guest and his accompanying delegation. Sayyid Badr welcomed the guest and wished him a successful visit and a pleasant stay.

The guests were also welcomed upon their arrival by Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat, Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (Head of the Mission of Honour), Hamoud bin Salim al Tuwaih, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation and non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, as well as the Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the Sultanate of Oman.

Then, Sayyid Badr



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, led the welcoming party for Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, who arrived on Sunday evening.

accompanied the guest to the main hall, passing two rows of the Royal Oman Police (ROP) guard of honour. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus is accompanied by an official delegation comprising the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus to the Sultanate of Oman, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and

Food, Deputy Minister of Industry and several officials from the government of the Republic of Belarus. Hamoud bin Salim al Tuwaih, Ambassador of the Sultanate of

Oman to the Russian Federation and Oman’s non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman and Belarus have developed good relations and mutual cooperation in many fields.

In a statement to the Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Tuwaih said that the visit of Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, provides an important opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations, enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education and investments.

Al Tuwaih added that, through the visit, the two countries are looking forward to expanding bilateral cooperation. “The visit will pave the way for realising the aspirations of the two countries’ peoples. It is in pursuance of steps that have been taken by the two countries during the past years,” he said. **SEE ALSO P2**



The coral farm in the Wilayat of Al Suwaiq in the Governorate of Al Batinah North is the largest artificial coral farm in the Middle East and is rich in many types of corals, coral herbs, other marine life and fish.

Israeli tanks ‘forcibly entered’ UN positions

NEW YORK: The United Nations said on October 8, 2023, that Israeli tanks had burst through the gates of a base of its peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon, the latest accusation of Israeli violations and attacks that have been denounced by Israel’s own allies. Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on the United Nations to evacuate the troops of the UNIFIL peacekeeping force from combat areas in Lebanon. Hours later, the force reported what it described as additional Israeli violations, including two Israeli Merkava tanks destroying the main gate of a base and forcibly entering before dawn

that morning. Soon after the tanks left, shells exploded 100 metres away, releasing smoke which blew across the base and sickened UN personnel, causing 15 to require treatment despite wearing gas masks, it said. It did not say who fired the shells or what sort of toxic substance it suspected. It also accused Israel’s IDF military of halting a logistics convoy. The Israeli military did not immediately respond to the statement.

“Any deliberate attack on peacekeepers is a grave violation of international humanitarian law and Resolution 1701,” the UN force said. “UNIFIL’s mandate provides for its freedom

of movement in its area of operations, and any restriction on this is a violation of Resolution 1701. We have requested an explanation from the IDF regarding these shocking violations.”

In his earlier statement addressed to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Netanyahu said: “The time has come for you to withdraw UNIFIL from Hezbollah strongholds and from the combat zones.” The conflict between Israel and Hezbollah resumed a year ago when the group began launching rockets at northern Israel in support of Hamas at the start of the Gaza war.

SEE ALSO P6

Audit inspections yield RO 177.7m in 2023

MUSCAT: The outcome of inspections conducted by the State Audit Institution (SAI) during 2023 yielded a number of positive results. This included the realisation of direct added value and the reimbursement of as many as RO 177.7 million funds to the State Budget. The funds included RO 95 million from 2023 cases and RO 82 million and RO 700 million from 2022 cases, after the submission of the 2022 cases to the SAI. This was unveiled in the SAI’s ‘Community Brief’, quoting the outcome of its 2023 annual report, as well as its financial and administrative follow-up of some government units, investments, and companies under its supervision.

Ahmed bin Salim al Rujaibi, Deputy Chairman of SAI, said that the ‘Community Brief’ was compiled in implementation of the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to implement principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and responsibility in all sectors, while at the same time engaging society to consolidate the audit system and achieve national goals.

Al Rujaibi added that the ‘Community Brief’ for 2023 stemmed from the annual inspection plan prepared by the SAI, based on the objectives of

As many as 28 cases have been referred to the Public Prosecution department, while 22 cases are still in the investigation phase and 65 other cases are being circulated from previous years

Oman Vision 2040, in addition to the principles and standards approved by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI). The plan also takes into consideration audit action guides based on the principle of relative importance and risk analysis.

Al Rujaibi pointed out that, in 2023, the SAI handled 115 cases related to public funds, some of which resulted in convictions, penalties and imprisonment for periods ranging from one month to 10 years. He added that the related fines ranged between RO 200 and RO 63,000, in addition to subsidiary and complementary penalties. “As many as 28 cases have been referred to the Public Prosecution department, while 22 cases are still in the investigation phase and 65 other cases are being circulated from previous years,” Al Rujaibi added. — ONA

OMAN



Dr Shama Hussain receiving recognition from the World Book of Records, London.

MUSCAT TO HOST ‘INTL INFLUENCERS SUMMIT AWARDS’

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
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An international leadership award event titled ‘International Influencers Summit Awards (IISA)’ 2024 will take place in the Sultanate of Oman. This annual event, hosted in different countries each year, serves as a platform for global leaders across various sectors, including diplomats, business executives, industry experts, ministers, educators and startups, to come together and exchange ideas on leadership and innovation.

The Gulf Skill Pioneers Oman, the International Institute of Influencers (III), and International LifeSkills Technologies are spearheading the event. This event is dedicated to fostering global leadership and promoting sustainable skills.

“Oman, being a country of authentic culture, we decided to organise the international event in Muscat,” said Dr Shama Hussain, the founder and CEO of III.

Dr Shama envisions building an atmosphere of peace through education and leadership. The group has been recognised internationally. For promoting global peace through education, the World Book of Records, London, honoured Dr Shama at the British Parliament’s House of Commons.

The IISA 2024 event, which is set to take place at the W Hotel on December 20, 2024, will feature participants from across the globe, including leaders from the UK, US, UAE, India, Egypt, Indonesia, the Philippines, Italy, Africa, Kazakhstan, Belgium and Germany. This year’s theme, ‘Sustainability in Human Capital and Global Leadership,’ aims to highlight the importance of nurturing human values in leadership. A key feature of the event will be the D20 Leadership Awards, which honour outstanding global leaders. “We call people with leadership qualities influencers because they have the capability to influence both the mass and class,” says Dr Shama.



جهاز الضرائب
TAX AUTHORITY

Announcement

The Tax Authority would like to draw the attention of taxpayers who are subject to VAT and Excise tax to submit their returns for the third quarter of 2024, according to the forms prepared for this purpose through Tax Authority’s Portal: www.taxoman.gov.om not later than **30 October 2024**. We hope that all taxpayers will abide and commit to the deadline of submitting.

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Oman and Belarus forge stronger bonds

HAMOUD AL TUWAIH, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation, Oman’s non-resident Ambassador to the Republic of Belarus, affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman and Belarus have developed good relations and mutual cooperation in many fields. In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Tuwaih said that the visit to Oman by Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, provides an important opportunity to strengthen bilateral relations, enhance cooperation and exchange expertise in the fields of economy, trade, culture, education and investments.

Al Tuwaih added that, through the visit of the prime minister, the two countries are looking forward to expanding bilateral cooperation. “The visit will pave the way for realising the aspirations of the two countries’ peoples. It is in pursuance of steps that have been taken by the two countries during the past years,” he explained.

Al Tuwaih pointed out that the two countries earlier signed many memoranda of understanding, including the Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Investment (signed on May 10, 2004), the Agreement on Economic and Commercial Cooperation (signed in 2007), a Memorandum of Understanding for Political Consultations



Al Tuwaih said that, through the visit of the prime minister, the two countries are looking forward to expanding bilateral cooperation.

(signed in 2007), and the Agreement on the Avoidance of Double Taxation and an agreement on cooperation between the chambers of commerce of the two countries.

Other pacts include an agreement on mutual cancellation of visas for holders of diplomatic, special and official passports and memoranda of understanding between the ministries of foreign affairs, justice, education and culture. An air transport agreement was signed by the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman in July 2023, he added.

Al Tuwaih said that bilateral relations between Oman and Belarus were established

on July 23, 1992, and that the President of the Republic of Belarus made an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman in April 2007 and was received at that time by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

Al Tuwaih stressed that the two sides continue to exchange visits at parliamentary and political levels and that they hold rounds of political consultations regularly. Al Tuwaih affirmed that the two countries study prospects for expanding their bilateral cooperation in the fields of economy, trade, commercial exchange, investment, technology, energy and alternative energy.

Currently, bilateral cooperation covers the areas of education and research through the exchange of students and researchers, in addition to innovation, technology and cultural exchange. The two sides organised joint cultural events and took joint steps to support the tourism sector, with a view to expanding investments in this field, he added.

Al Tuwaih told Oman News Agency (ONA) that, “There is ongoing cooperation between the Omani National Museum and Belarusian museums. We hope that this coordination will be increased further in the forthcoming stage,” he said. In this context, he referred to an agreement signed in 2016 to establish a Centre for Arabic Language and Culture within the compound of Minsk State University. — **ONA**

MoE, Oman Cables launch ‘Kids in STEM’ programme

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahalbalushia

The Ministry of Education signed a support agreement to implement the ‘Kids in STEM’ programme with Oman Cables Manufacturing Company, as an initiative to develop the skills of school students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics to encourage research and innovation.

The programme is an initiative between the ministry and the company, aiming to develop the skills of primary school students in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics

to encourage research and innovation. The agreement was signed by Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, and Arkan Aidojou, CEO of the company.

The programme embodies the beginning of a transformational journey that aims to empower future generations with the basic skills and knowledge required to excel in an accelerating technological era.

Civil society is committed to driving efforts towards a flexible and diversified economy by preparing and empowering Omani children.

The MoE mentions that such an agreement aims

to spread the culture of innovation and the love of scientific exploration through experimentation and practice, and to present technical information in a distinctive and entertaining way through enriching educational processes, and to present electronics and programming in an entertaining and unconventional way through direct practical application.

Students are also involved in a group of activities and mental games to motivate them to think and interact positively and to produce a generation aware of the fields of IT capable of moving from consuming technology to producing it.

Oman’s governorates compete with projects

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The recently concluded Urban October Conference highlighted the competition between various governorates in implementing developmental and tourism-related projects across the country. According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, the event highlighted investment opportunities across the governorates through the winning projects from the first two editions of the competition (2023-2024), which offered a total investment value of RO 82 million.

It may be noted that the National Initiative for the Development of Local Governance based on Royal Decree 36/2022 has been implemented gradually in various governorates by supporting local leaders (Governors and Walis) in achieving balanced local development by strengthening their skills in governance and economic decentralisation, which will positively affect the governorates’ development and competitiveness.

Speaking on the investment opportunities in the governorates, Mohammed al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North, said, “There are RO 24 billion deposited in banks among individuals and the private sector, reflecting significant liquidity waiting for suitable investment opportunities. The main challenge lies in providing ‘good investment vehicles’ with high economic viability. If these vehicles are offered in a thoughtful and calculated man-



The National Initiative for the Development of Local Governance has been implemented gradually in various governorates.

ner, there will be a strong demand from investors. Currently, we are witnessing an active movement in investment across various governorates.”

The projects that came at the top in the first two editions of competitions are the Al Radhad Boulevard Project in the Wilayat of Salalah, Dhofar Governorate, spread over an area of 470,000 sqm with an investment value of RO 40 million. The Ames Bay Development Project in the Wilayat of Khasab, Musandam Governorate, covers an area of 68,700 sqm, with an investment value of over RO 7 million.

“The projects for the development of Ames Bay and Dolphin Bay in Musandam Governorate are distinguished by their unique geographical location, linking the Sea of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. These projects emphasise engaging the local community through small and medium enterprises and productive families.

Additionally, focusing on infrastructure development, such as road improvements, will enhance these projects and increase the tourism appeal of the surrounding areas,” said Abdulrahman al Alawi, director of the office of the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

The Remal Park Project in the Wilayat of Nakhal, Al Batinah South Governorate covers an area of 225,000 sqm, with an investment value of RO 7 million. This project consists of a resort, an entertainment city, Al Wadi Park, an aerial lift, a place for food trucks, a retail centre, and car parking. The project will cater to 15,000 weekly visitors and employ around 344 citizens.

The winning project in the second edition is the Al Durra Project in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah, Al Batinah North Governorate, which covers an area of 60,000 sqm with an investment value of RO 9.8 million.

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JOINT EXERCISE

‘MOUNTAIN LYNX’,
OMANI-PAKISTANI
DRILL BEGINS

JABAL AKHDHAR: The joint Oman-Pakistan military exercise, Washaq Al Jabal 1 or Mountain Lynx 1, began on Sunday at the military training area in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. The drill is carried out by the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), units from the army of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo). — **ONA**

Registration for
family support
from October 20

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 13

THE SOCIAL Protection Fund, after starting the disbursement of family income support benefits to registered social security families, will begin accepting registrations for other eligible groups starting from October 20. This initiative is part of the expanded social protection programmes, aiming to safeguard individuals and families through various life stages, from childhood to adulthood, and to ensure financial stability in the face of life's challenges.

Shabib al Busaidy, Deputy CEO of Social Protection, highlighted that the Fund has been providing support since January 2024, with 12,700 beneficiaries already benefiting from the initial phase. The Fund will allow eligible applicants from the remaining segments to apply through the electronic portal.

Applications will be processed after thorough coordination with the Ministry of Social Development and other entities to verify the accuracy of data, ensuring the integrity of the process. The benefit will be provided from the date of application, contingent upon meeting all eligibility conditions.

The target groups for the support have been diversified, as outlined in the Social Protection Law and its executive regulations.

This includes families of varying sizes, divorced women, widows, unmarried women over 40 years old, individuals of unknown parentage, and other vulnerable segments.

This initiative is designed to fill existing gaps in social protection coverage, aiming to build a more inclusive safety net.

The benefits provided are crucial in supporting the nation's goals for sustainable development and align closely with the targets of Oman Vision 2040. The programme aims to strengthen the pillars of the social protection system, including social insurance, supplementary savings, and a robust social protection floor, all managed under a unified approach.

This coordination ensures greater efficiency, enhances financial sustainability,

This initiative is part of the expanded social protection programmes

and provides a higher standard of living for beneficiaries.

Moreover, the programme is designed to address the long-term financial needs of different segments, offering a holistic approach to social welfare.

By integrating different components of social protection, the initiative seeks to create a more resilient system that supports the well-being of Omani society and ensures prior protection against unforeseen financial hardships.

The Fund has already rolled out various other benefits, including the Child Benefit, Elderly Benefit, Disabled Benefit, Orphans and Widows Benefit, alongside the Family Income Support Benefit, all part of a continued effort to strengthen the existing Social Security pensions.

The phased approach has enabled a smoother transition into the new framework, with the first phase targeting social security families and the next phase set to include a broader array of eligible applicants.

This initiative marks a significant step towards creating a comprehensive and integrated social safety net that is responsive to the diverse needs of Oman's citizens, providing them with a stable and secure future.

Oman Council at Geneva IPU General Assembly meetings

GENEVA: The Council of Oman is taking part in the 149th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) General Assembly meetings being held in Geneva from October 13-17.

Oman's delegation is headed by Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura.

The meetings will discuss the role of parliaments in dealing with various regional and international issues and taking relevant decisions.

Oman's delegation will participate in many meetings, notably with the Standing Committee for Sustainable Development, the Standing Committee for Democracy

Oman's delegation is headed by Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura

and Human Rights, the Association of Secretaries-General of National Parliaments, the Standing Committee for International Peace and Security,

the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, and the Forum of Young Parliamentarians of the Inter-

Parliamentary Union.

Al Maawali headed Oman's delegation taking part in the Arab Group's coordination meeting, which discussed preparations for the IPU 37th Emergency Conference scheduled to be held on October 15.

The meeting will discuss the Israeli occupation forces' aggression on the State of Palestine and the Lebanese Republic. The Arab Group at the IPU chose al Maawali as head of the emergency panel that will deal with issues submitted to the IPU for elaboration by the Algerian People's National Assembly and the Palestinian National Council. — **ONA**

TENDER NOTICE

Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) hereby announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Eligibility	Tender Fee (RO)	Last Date of Sale Tender Documents	Bid Submission Date
T/2661053/2024	Construction of Water Supply System at Wilayat Dema Wa Al Tayeen, Al Sharqiyah North Governorate	Local Companies registered with the Government Tender Board in Excellent Grade and International Companies specialized in the works mentioned	2500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	02/12/2024
T/2661044/2024	Construction of Water Distribution Network and House Connections of (Al Galilah - Al Rafsah - Al Oqdah - Al Jabi Aand Ayyoon) in Sur Wilayat in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	25/11/2024
T/ 2661063/2024	Engineering Design and Construction to Upgrade Existing STPs in Izki, Al Hamra, Bidbid, Manah, Al Jabal Al Akhdar and Bediya	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	1500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	25/11/2024
T/2661049/2024	Upgradation of Electrical Power Supply and Distribution Pumps in Al Mussanah Pump Station South Al Batina Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	18/11/2024
T2661048/2024	Lease of Light Vehicles for 5 years	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	2500/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	18/11/2024
T/2661051/2024	Cybersecurity Resources for ICT for 3 years	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	50/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	18/11/2024
T/2662046/2024	Landscape and Pest Control Maintenance Contract for Muscat Governorate	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	100/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	18/11/2024
T/2649003/2024	DBA support for Business applications for 2 years	Local Companies registered with Government Tender Board and specialized in the works mentioned	50/- (Plus 5% VAT) Non-refundable	28/10/2024	18/11/2024

- The tender documents can be obtained from the e-tendering page (Supplier Login) from this announcement date. The applicants shall pay the tender fee by logging into their (I-supplier Page).
- Applicants who are not registered shall register through the following link: <https://owwsc.nama.om/Business-with-Us/Vendor-Registration> in order to receive the login credentials of the Supplier portal.
- All applicants who have paid the tender fee shall have access to the Tender Documents through Nama Water Services e-tendering page (Supplier Login <https://nws.nama.om/en-us/Business-with-Us/Supplierlogin>). All participating companies shall submit a Bid Bond of 1% of the bid value in a sealed envelope. Bid Bonds must be obtained from a local Bank registered in the Sultanate of Oman addressed to Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) Chairman of Tender Committee not later than 2:00 pm on the bid submission date.
- The bid along with all required documents shall be uploaded through Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (Nama Water Services) e-tendering page not later than 2:00 pm on the date specified above. For more details refer to Tender Page of our website www.owwsc.nama.om & in case of general queries you may contact us through the email ID of tender@owwsc.nama.om



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EMBRACING LIFE AFTER WORK



BALQEES AL ORAIMI

RETIREMENT marks a significant transition after years of dedication to professional life. However, this stage can present unique challenges, as many retirees grapple with a newfound void that may impact their physical and mental well-being.

As the global elderly population grows, ensuring an effective and fulfilling retirement has become a critical issue.

How can retirees maintain an active and healthy lifestyle after stepping away from work?

Experts offer practical tips to make the most of this transformative phase.

Effective retirement is not merely a withdrawal from the workforce; it's an opportunity to embrace new activities and experiences that may have been postponed during working years. For some, it represents the chance to explore new interests or revisit old passions. For others, it's time to contribute to society through volunteer work or engaging in social activities.

Dr Nada Al Hadrami, a social psychologist, emphasises that “effective retirement should be viewed as a fresh opportunity, not the end of a journey.”

Retirees may struggle with feelings of isolation or a loss of purpose, but with thoughtful planning and active social engagement, they can continue to lead fulfilling and happy lives. She highlights the importance of staying mentally and physically active, significantly enhancing quality of life and reducing the risk of



Effective retirement should be viewed as a fresh opportunity, not the end of a journey

DR NADA AL HADRAMI
a social psychologist

age-related diseases.

Maintaining an active lifestyle post-retirement has numerous physical and psychological benefits. Research shows that retirees who remain active enjoy better health and are less likely to develop conditions like heart disease, diabetes and depression.

Regular physical activity, such as walking or light exercise, helps maintain muscle and joint flexibility, reducing the risk of age-related ailments. It also boosts circulation and energy levels, promoting overall well-being.

Mental and social activities foster a sense of fulfilment and psychological balance. Participation in social or educational pursuits can alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation, which are common among the elderly, thus positively impacting mental health. Retirees should incorporate regular physical activities like walking, cycling, or yoga to maintain fitness and enhance overall health.

Maryam al Zadjali, a sports specialist, notes, “Daily light exercise strengthens muscles and joints, preserves flexibility and improves mental health by stimulating the release of happy hormones.”

Social interactions are vital for retirees. Joining retirement clubs, volunteering for charitable organisations, or spending time with family and friends fosters a sense of belonging and combats isolation.

Retirement provides an ideal time to learn new skills or pursue educational interests. Retirees can enrol in courses like art, technology, or foreign languages, keeping their

minds sharp and encouraging cognitive stimulation.

Volunteering is a powerful way to remain engaged and give back to the community. Retirees can contribute to social causes or local initiatives, which not only fills their time, but also enhances their sense of purpose.

Retirement is an excellent opportunity to reignite old passions, such as writing, painting, or gardening. Engaging in hobbies enriches the retirement experience and provides creative outlets for personal fulfilment.

Despite the numerous opportunities to lead an active retirement, some retirees may encounter challenges related to health or financial limitations.

Planning for post-retirement is essential to ensure sufficient financial resources for desired activities and to maintain a comfortable standard of living.

Health challenges can also restrict retirees from enjoying certain activities. In such cases, consulting healthcare professionals is crucial to determine safe and suitable options.

Additionally, communities can support retirees by providing centres and programmes that cater to their needs, offering a safe environment for staying active.

Family support plays an equally vital role in encouraging retirees to engage in social activities. Families should encourage their elderly members to pursue hobbies and participate in community events, fostering a sense of involvement and well-being.

SHORT TAKES



The conference will feature participation from numerous experts and specialists from Oman, France, Germany, and Egypt

SQU 3-DAY INTL CONFERENCE TODAY

MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) is set to host the 10th International Conference on ‘Trends in Innovative Mathematics Curricula: Insights into STEM-Based Vocational and Technical Education for Sustainable Development’ from today. Organised annually by the Oman Mathematics Committee, the conference will run for three days and aims to explore the intersection of STEM education with vocational and technical training — a growing trend in global education that supports future skill development and sustainable development goals.

The conference will feature participation from numerous experts and specialists from Oman, France, Germany, and Egypt, creating a rich platform for knowledge exchange.

Dr Christophe Sorge, President of the International Mathematical Union, will deliver a keynote lecture at the opening ceremony, recognising the significant contributions of the Omani Mathematics Committee over the past decade. His address will celebrate Oman’s achievement in obtaining full first-class membership in the International Mathematical Union in 2018.

This focus aligns with ‘Oman Vision 2040’, which emphasises diversifying educational pathways to enhance vocational and technical education.

This initiative responds to the evolving needs of the Sultanate of Oman’s labour market, reflecting the country’s shift towards a knowledge-based economy.

The Omani Mathematics Committee, established by a decision from the Council of Ministers in 2011, operates under the supervision of SQU, represented by its International Cooperation Office. — **ONA**

FORUM ON CITIZENSHIP TODAY

AL MUSANNAH: The forum on ‘Citizenship and Digital Citizenship in Higher Education Curricula: Sustainable Horizons’ takes place today.

This will be held under the auspices of Major General Khalifa bin Ali al Siyabi, Assistant Inspector General of Police and Customs or Administrative and Financial Affairs, and in the presence of Dr Said bin Hamad al Rubaie, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS).

The forum aims to instil values of citizenship among university students, aligning with both global and regional developments, and to strengthen their sense of belonging to the nation and community. It also focuses on raising awareness of individual social responsibility, fostering harmony across diverse societal groups, promoting dialogue, understanding, and acceptance, and encouraging active participation in social, economic, and political life. The event will be inaugurated at the university’s branch in Al Musannah and features keynote speeches, workshops, presentations, student debate competition, and interactive discussion sessions.



NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that **Mr. Pradeep Kairan, holder of ID No. 78577079** is no longer an employee of this company effective from **26th September 2024**.

Atlantic Construction LLC & our group of companies shall not bear any responsibility for any dealings with him.

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Rains expected to begin from tonight

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
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THE Sultanate of Oman is set to be under the influence of two weather systems this week: the tropical depression moving towards the coasts of Dhofar Governorate and a trough of low pressure that could impact the northern governorates.

The clouds accompanying the tropical depression continued to move towards Oman’s coasts as the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre issued an alert on thunderstorms. With chances of intensification to deep depression in the next three days, initial forecasts suggest that the tropical system may move westward towards the coasts of Dhofar Governorate and the Sea of Oman.

The tropical condition is centred in the middle of the Arabian Sea, gradually affecting the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman from Monday evening and continuing on Tuesday and Wednesday with chances of rain of varying intensity ranging from 30 to 80 mm, sometimes thundery and accompanied by active winds and hail, stated the Centre. The impact will be concentrated on the governorates of Al Sharqiyah South, Al Wusta and Dhofar, extending to parts of the gover-

OSWL honours winners of literary creativity



HAIMA: The Omani Society for Writers and Literati (OSWL) held a ceremony to honour the winners of the OSWL’s Award for Literary Creativity for School Students in its second edition for 2024, recognising literary talent across Al Wusta Governorate.

The event aimed to encourage a culture of reading and writing among young people, fostering a new generation of creative minds in Oman.

During the event, 24 male and female students were honoured for their achievements in various categories of the competition, which included poetry, short stories, and essay writing.

Their work showcased the depth of imagination, creativity, and cultural awareness among the young literary community in the governorate.

The ceremony was presided over by Shaikh Ahmed bin Musallam al Kathiri, Governor of Al Wusta, who commended the students’ dedication to literary excellence.

Engineer Saeed bin Mohammed al Saqlawi, Chairman of the OSWL’s Board of Directors, highlighted the role of such initiatives in preserving Oman’s rich literary heritage and nurturing talent from an early age.

The event, held at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry branch in Al Wusta Governorate, brought together a number of officials, educators, and families, all celebrating the achievements of the young writers. — **ONA**



The sea state may rise along most of Oman’s Sea coasts (1.5–3 metres), with a reduction in horizontal visibility during thundershowers.

norates of Muscat, Al Sharqiyah North, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Batinah North, Al Batinah South, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi. The sea state may rise along most of Oman’s Sea coasts (1.5–3 metres), with a reduction in horizontal visibility during thunder-

showers. The Civil Aviation Authority has advised all to take precautions during thundershower rain, not to cross wadis (flash floods), avoid low-lying areas, and not to sail during the alert period.



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

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

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Site Visit Date	Tender Price (OMR)
NESC/ 2024/012	Supply and Installation of Air fresheners for Nama Electricity Supply Company Head Quarter Building for 2 years.	21/10/2024	04/11/2024	Specialist	23/10/2024	26.250

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -						
Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion 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 visit www.supply.nama.om, under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.					
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to procurement@supply.nama.om, using the inquiry form found in the tender document (05) Five working 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 and supplier guidelines available at NESC Website www.supply.nama.om, under NESC VENDOR / E-Tender.					
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 not less than Ninety (90) 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 hard copy of the bid bond should be deposited in the Tender Box at the Nama Electricity Supply Company Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 10:00 AM on the day specified for bid submission or any extended deadline. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.					
Terms and Conditions	- The Tender shall be valid for a period of (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 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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WORLD

SHORT TAKES



Vietnam’s PM Pham Chinh (R) and China’s Premier Li Qiang (L) wave as they pose for a photo. —AFP

VIETNAM, CHINA SIGN 10 DEALS AS LEADERS MEET

HANOI: Vietnam and China signed 10 agreements ranging from agriculture cooperation to cross-border QR code payments on Sunday, during Chinese Premier Li Qiang’s three-day visit to Hanoi, as the two neighbours seek to boost ties.

The signing ceremony followed Li’s meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh.

Li and Vietnam’s Communist Party chief, President To Lam, agreed on Saturday to boost economic ties, farm produce cooperation.

The Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh asked China to boost agricultural trade with Vietnam, open doors to Vietnamese farm produce and enhance customs clearance at borders, state broadcaster Vietnam Television (VTV) reported.

Vietnam and China also signed a document on updating progress on cross-border railway links related to site survey.

The two Asian neighbours have repeatedly showed interest in boosting rail links but have not announced concrete plans or the estimated costs to upgrade connections. —Reuters



Sudanese make their way to receive a medical check-up in Tokar, in eastern Sudan. —AFP

RESCUERS SAY STRIKE KILLED 23 IN KHARTOUM

PORT SUDAN: A Sudanese network of volunteer rescuers said on Sunday the military carried out an air strike a day earlier on a marketplace in Khartoum, leaving 23 people dead. The market is near one of the main camps in the Sudanese capital, where the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been fighting the military as part of a civil war that has killed tens of thousands of people.

“Twenty-three people were confirmed dead and more than 40 others wounded” and taken to hospital after “military air strikes on Saturday afternoon on the main market” in southern Khartoum, the youth-led Emergency Response Rooms said in a post on Facebook.

Fierce fighting has raged since Friday around Khartoum, much of which is controlled by the RSF, with the military pounding the centre and south of the city from the air. The military is advancing towards Khartoum from nearby Omdurman, where clashes erupted on Saturday. —AFP

PEACE DEMAND

ASEAN urges end to Myanmar violence



Southeast Asian leaders called on Sunday for an immediate halt to fighting in Myanmar and inclusive peace talks to end its civil war. The ASEAN chairman’s statement represents the consensus from meetings ended on Friday in Laos. ASEAN called for “an immediate cessation” of violence and the creation of a “conducive environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and inclusive national dialogue” that is “Myanmar-owned and -led”. —Reuters

PAKISTAN FRETS OVER SECURITY AHEAD OF SCO SUMMIT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan authorities were preparing on Sunday to shut down the capital ahead of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, overshadowed by recent violence and political unrest. The Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and Chinese Premier Li Qiang will be among senior regional government officials attending the two-day conference on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In the weeks leading up to the summit, Islamabad has authorised the deployment of troops on the streets for the duration of the summit. Imtiaz Gul, a security analyst and executive director of the Center for Research and Security Studies, said the meeting holds great significance for a country that’s “not seen as safe”. “The government claims to have made elaborate security arrangements and understandably so because it has to make sure that the event passes

off peacefully without any untoward incident,” he said. The SCO comprises China, India, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus — with 16 more countries affiliated as observers or “dialogue partners”. All visiting member nations are expected to send government heads apart from Pakistan’s arch-rival India, who will dispatch its foreign minister in a rare visit to its neighbour. —AFP



Displaced Palestinians, who fled areas in the northern Gaza Strip, take shelter in a stadium. —Reuters

TANKS DEEPEN THEIR PUSH INTO GAZA

CAIRO: Israeli forces widened their raid into northern Gaza, and tanks reached the north edge of Gaza City, pounding some districts of the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood and forcing many families to leave their homes. Residents said Israeli forces had effectively isolated Beit Hanoun, Jabalia, and Beit Lahiya in the far north of the enclave from Gaza City, blocking access between the two areas except upon their permission for families willing to heed evacuation orders and leave the three towns.

Nine days into a major Israeli operation in northern Gaza, the Gaza government media office said Israeli strikes had killed around 300 Palestinians there. Gaza’s health ministry says dozens of people have been confirmed killed in the assaults on northern areas, with many dozens of others feared dead on roads and under the rubble of houses beyond the reach of medical teams. —Reuters

Israel expands evacuation calls in south Lebanon

THE Israeli military on Sunday called on residents of more than 20 villages in south Lebanon to evacuate their homes, as troops expanded their ground operations across the border. “The Army does not intend to harm you. For your safety, you must evacuate your homes immediately and relocate to the north of the Awali River,” Israeli army spokesman Avichay Adraee wrote on X.

The Israeli military has been issuing regular evacuation messages to residents throughout southern Lebanon and in the capital Beirut, as it batters Lebanese Hezbollah strongholds and targets with air strikes.

In support of its ally Palestinians in Gaza, Hezbollah started firing into northern Israel in October last year, in a near-daily exchange of fire.

In September, Israel expanded its focus from Gaza to Lebanon, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowing to fight Hezbollah until Israelis displaced by the violence could return to their homes in the north of the country.

Since Israel began a wave of air strikes on targets in Lebanon and sent troops across the border on September 30, more than 1,200 people have been killed, according to Lebanese health ministry figures, and a million others have been displaced.

Meanwhile, Lebanon’s Prime Minister condemned on Sunday his Israeli counterpart’s call to UN chief Antonio Guterres to remove peacekeepers from the Lebanese side of the border, where clashes have intensified. Lebanon “condemns Netanyahu’s position and the Israeli aggression against UNIFIL” peacekeepers, said Najib



People inspect the damage at the site of an Israeli strike on the Mount Lebanon village of Maaysra. —AFP

Mikati. “The warning that Netanyahu addressed to... Guterres demanding the removal of the UNIFIL represents a new chapter in the enemy’s approach of not complying with international” norms, he added.

UNIFIL was created following Israel’s 1978 invasion of Lebanon. It is currently tasked with monitoring a ceasefire that ended a 33-day war in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah. Forty contributor nations to UNIFIL said on Saturday that they

“strongly condemn recent attacks” on the peacekeepers.

“Such actions must stop immediately and should be adequately investigated,” said the joint statement, posted on X by the Polish UN mission and signed by nations including leading contributors Indonesia, Italy and India. The Lebanese Red Cross said its paramedics were hit by a strike on Sunday while attending the site of an earlier attack in the south, leaving them lightly injured. —AFP

MOUNTING WATER

Tens of thousands flee Nigeria floods



Two major rivers have flooded across central Nigeria displacing tens of thousands of people, the Red Cross said. Rescue workers have been helping residents move away from the confluence of the Niger and Benue rivers to displacement camps or nearby villages. Kogi state’s information commissioner Kingsley Femi Fanwo said displacement camps were becoming “overwhelmed” and estimated that more than one million people could be in the highly affected areas of the country. —AFP

BRUTAL CRIME

7 people shot dead in a home in S Africa



Seven people were gunned down southwest of Johannesburg before the alleged shooter turned the gun on himself, police said on Sunday, the latest in a string of mass shootings that have shocked South Africa. Five family members, including a three-year-old boy, were killed at Mokokotlong, over 40 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg in the early hours of Sunday morning. A neighbour and a family friend were also killed. —AFP

PLANNEDTRIP



US President Joe Biden disembarks Air Force One during a visit to Florida. — Reuters

BIDEN TO VISIT GERMANY ON OCT 18

BERLIN: US President Joe Biden is expected to visit Germany next week, a government source said on Sunday, after a previously planned trip was cancelled due to Hurricane Milton. “He’s coming to Berlin on Friday” for a one-day visit, the source said. According to German media reports, Biden will meet German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, with the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East expected to be high on his agenda. Biden’s original visit to Germany was to have taken place between October 10 and 12 and to have included a four-way summit with Scholz, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer. He had also planned to travel to Angola immediately afterwards as part of a series of valedictory international trips in the final months of his presidency, after he withdrew from the race in July. — AFP



A MARCH TO DEMAND HOUSING

A woman holds cardboard keys reading “Out vultures” and “Right to a roof”, as people protest to demand lower housing rental prices and better living conditions in Madrid, Spain. — Reuters

In a first, SpaceX ‘catches’ megarocket booster after test flight

BOCA CHICA: SpaceX successfully “caught” the first-stage booster of its Starship megarocket on Sunday as it returned to the launch pad after a test flight, a world first in the company’s quest for rapid reusability. The “super heavy booster” had blasted off attached to the Starship rocket minutes earlier, then made a picture-perfect controlled return to the same pad in Texas, where a pair of huge mechanical “chopsticks” reached out from the launch tower to bring the slowly descending booster to a halt, according to a livestream from Elon Musk’s SpaceX company.

“Folks, this is a day for the engineering history books,” a SpaceX spokesperson said in a voiceover on the company’s livestream, after the booster was safely in the tower’s grasp and company staffers had erupted in cheers. “The tower has caught the rocket!!” SpaceX founder Musk posted on X. Liftoff occurred at 7:25 am in clear weather. While the booster returned to the launchpad, the upper stage of Starship was due to splash down in the Indian Ocean within the hour. During its last flight in June, SpaceX achieved its first success-



Starship’s Super Heavy booster is grappled at the launch pad in Starbase near Boca Chica, Texas. — AFP

ful splashdown with Starship, a prototype spaceship that Musk hopes will one day carry humans to Mars. Nasa is also keenly awaiting a modified version of Starship to act as a lander vehicle for crewed flights to the Moon under the Artemis programme later this decade. SpaceX said its engineers have “spent years preparing and months testing for the booster catch attempt, with technicians pouring tens of thousands of hours into building the infrastructure to maximise our chances for success.” Teams were monitoring to en-

sure “thousands” of criteria were met both on the vehicle and at the tower before any attempt to return the Super Heavy booster. Had the conditions not been satisfied, the booster would have been redirected for a splashdown in the Gulf of Mexico, as in previous tests. Instead, having been given the green light, the returning booster decelerated from supersonic speeds and the powerful “chopstick arms” embraced it. The large mechanical arms, called “Mechazilla” by Musk, have generated considerable excitement among space enthusiasts. — AFP

Russia fires glide bombs at Ukrainian troops

RUSSIAN glide bombs have struck a concentration of Ukrainian troops near the border of Russia’s western Kursk region, the Russian defence ministry said on Sunday. It said the attack was directed against “a strong point and concentration of Ukrainian Armed Forces personnel”, and the bombs were delivered by a Russian Su-34 warplane. Ukraine caught Moscow by surprise on August 6 by crossing the border into the Kursk region, in the first attack of Russian sovereign territory since World War Two. Russia has been trying for more than two months to expel Ukrainian forces. Earlier on Sunday, the defence ministry in Moscow said it was pursuing offensive operations at several dozen locations in the region. As of early September, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said his forces controlled more than 1,300 sq km of Kursk, including 100 settlements. On Saturday, he said Russian forces had tried to oust Ukrainian troops “but we are holding the designated lines”. Russia said its forces had taken back several villages last week. The outcome of the fighting in Kursk could have a significant impact on the course of the war that began with Russia’s full-scale attack on Ukraine in February 2022. If Ukraine can hold on to a portion of Russian territory, it will have a valuable bargaining chip in future peace negotiations. On the other hand, Ukraine’s decision to commit a substantial force to the Kursk offensive has come with a price elsewhere on the battlefield, as Russia advanced in eastern Ukraine at its fastest pace for two years in August and September.



Miners wait to enter an elevator to go underground at a coal mine in the western part of Donbas. — AFP

Meanwhile, Russia’s defence ministry said on Sunday that its forces had taken control of the village of Mykhailivka in eastern Ukraine, where they have been advancing towards the important logistics hub of Pokrovsk. The Ukrainian military said in its daily report that its troops repelled 36 Russian assaults in the Pokrovsk area, including near Mykhailivka. Russia launched 68 drones and four missiles targeting Ukrainian territory over-

night, Ukraine’s air force said on Sunday. Two Iskander-M ballistic missiles struck Poltava and Odesa regions, while two Kh-59 guided air missiles targeted the Chernihiv and Sumy regions, the air force said on the Telegram messaging app. Ukraine’s air defence units destroyed 31 of the drones, while 36 were unaccounted for, most likely intercepted by Ukraine’s electronic warfare, the air force said. One remaining drone was still in the air, it said. — Reuters

Harris plays health card against Trump

WASHINGTON: Democratic White House candidate Kamala Harris is in “excellent health” and fit for the presidency, according to a medical report published by the White House on Saturday, as she challenged rival Donald Trump to publish his own health records. “Vice-President Harris remains in excellent health,” her physician Joshua Simmons said in the report, adding that she “possesses the physical and mental resiliency required to successfully execute the duties of the presidency.” Speaking to reporters on Saturday ahead of a trip to North Carolina, Harris called Trump’s unwillingness to publish his records “a further example of his lack of transparency.” “It’s obvious that his team at least, does not want the American people to see everything about who he is... and whether or not he is actually fit to do the job of

Speaking to reporters on Saturday ahead of a trip to North Carolina, Harris called Trump’s unwillingness to publish his records “a further example of his lack of transparency.”

being president of the United States,” she said. But as Harris ramped up pressure for details on the physical health and mental acuity of the 78-year-old Trump, the former president’s campaign pushed back. The Republican candidate is also “in perfect and excellent health to be Commander in Chief,” it said in a statement, and charged that Harris lacked his strength to lead the country. Harris’s most recent physical exam, conducted in April, was “unremarkable,” according to Simmons. In the detailed report, her physician noted that Harris suffers from seasonal allergies and hives, which are managed by non-prescription as well as prescription medications. Trump became the oldest presidential nominee from a major political party in US history after 81-year-old President Joe

Biden withdrew from the White House race in July. Harris is 59. Biden passed the torch to Harris after a disastrous debate against Trump raised concerns in the Democratic Party about his own mental sharpness. But Trump’s age has not appeared to be a deal-breaker for voters, as polls show a knife-edge battle with Harris in the November 5 presidential election. Trump has continued to insist he is fit for office, and on Saturday, his campaign republished statements from his former White House doctor, Ronny Jackson, that were released following the July assassination attempt on Trump in which a bullet grazed his right ear. In the statement dated July 26, Jackson, who is now a Republican congressman from Texas, said Trump was doing “extremely well” and “rapidly recovering” from the wound. — AFP

OPINION

Women writers in Oman thrive amid growing readership



SANDHYA RAO MEHTA

The writer is Assoc Prof, Dept of English Language and Literature, SQU

AS Omani Women's Day is celebrated this week, on October 17, the contribution of women to the economic and cultural life of Oman will be noted by many.

Another very significant feature is the role that women in Oman play in the literary field – inventing new forms of writing, creating new platforms to disseminate their work, and using literature in innovative ways that reach out to the public, especially to the younger audience.

When Dr Jokha al Harthi won the Man Booker International Prize in 2019 for the best novel in translation for her novel ‘Celestial Bodies’, it could be said that Omani literature had well and truly arrived in the world stage.

But this did not happen in a vacuum. Right from the 1970s, women started to explore various forms of writing, including poetry, memoirs, novels, and they have now leveraged writing for its therapeutic potential as well.

From novelists like Badriya al Shihhi, HH Sayyidah Ghaliya al Said, Bushra Khalfan and Huda Hamed to poets like Nasra al Adawi, Hamdah al Shamsi, and the award winning Aisha al Saifi, the world of women's writings in Oman is fertile, ranging in style

from classical poetry, novels, children's books and memoirs.

Traditional writing by Omani women explores the everyday social lives of people, especially women, who overcome challenges to make a place for themselves in society.

Recently, one of the important developments for women writers is the way that they have added a community aspect to their work. This is linked to their firm belief in the social role of literature.

Some writers have established forums where women can share their work and participate in workshops to hone their craft.

Aisha bint Abdullah al Seraihiyah, for example, acts as a focal point in Dhofar Governorate for young writers who participate in various workshops to nurture their passion for writing.

The Noon Al Niswa Cultural Council initiative brings aspiring women writers together to incubate their ideas until they feel ready to share their work with the world. Al Sehaihiyah also believes in the power of literature to create social awareness and empower women by giving them self-confidence and agency.

This is a belief that is shared by Nasra al Adawi as well. A poet and a practicing poetry therapist, Al Adawi firmly asserts the power

Women writers draw inspiration from Oman's rich history and diverse natural beauty, using it as a backdrop to depict the nuances of personal and social life

of literature, especially poetry, to heal and ensure mental health.

Children's books and literature as therapy are now becoming popular ways in which writing is being re-invented for the digital age. Along with traditional poetry, novels and memoirs, there is a corresponding rise in working with youngsters who are more comfortable with online forums.

Books with a social message on issues like bullying and technology addiction are being written using friendly forms like pictures and big letters to attract young readers.

Introducing young learners to reading through book clubs, book sharing libraries and author interactions are all different ways of encouraging reading among youngsters in Oman.

The literary scene in Oman remains encouraging and fertile. Through their writings, women continue to take inspiration from the rich history and varied natural beauty of Oman to depict aspects of personal and social lives.

Not only are women prospering as creative writers, they are also making their mark as intellectuals, reflecting on society, its transformations and the implications of these changes on their identity.

UK’S FLAGSHIP SUMMIT SUFFERS BUMPY BUILD-UP

CLEMENT ZAMPA

The UK government hosts international business leaders to try and secure much-needed investment for Britain but the build-up has been chaotic with a major firm reportedly threatening to shelve a project.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the leader of the new Labour government, hopes the International Investment Summit in London will show the UK is “the best place in the world to do business”.

Starmer has been in power for just three months after securing a thumping majority in the general election.

But he is already on the back foot, with a YouGov poll showing only 18 per cent of Britons approve of his government’s record to date.

Labour sees Monday’s event as an opportunity to demonstrate its pro-business agenda and to stabilise the economy after 14 years of chaotic Conservative rule and Britain’s departure from the European Union. Starmer is expected to announce billions of pounds in investments.

He has already unveiled \$31.4 billion in green energy projects, including £12 billion by Spanish giant Iberdrola and £8.0 billion by Danish firm Orsted. But his attempts to woo investors suffered a blow when an expected announcement by P&O Ferries of a £1.0-billion port expansion was reported by UK media to be under threat.

This came after transport minister Louise Haigh and Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner issued a joint press release calling P&O’s employment practices “unscrupulous” and “exploitative”.

Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman of P&O owner DP World, then threatened not to attend the investment summit.

Last-ditch talks with the UK government ensued and the Times reported on Saturday that bin Sulayem would take part after all and an announcement about the P&O investment was still expected.

Starmer has placed great importance on the summit and will open the event in conversation with Eric Schmidt, the former CEO of Google.

Yet he has struggled to attract the top names.

While around 200 private sector executives are expected to attend, many multinational bosses and tech-titans have decided to give it a miss.

Even the opportunity to meet King Charles III at the closing reception, planned for Monday evening, failed to convince them.

In a critical article on Friday, the Financial Times partly attributed the summit’s poor turnout to concerns over its “quality and organisation”.

— AFP



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ISRAEL is now stuck in a mess of its own making, thanks to Prime Minister Netanyahu's reckless leadership and the hardline policies of his extremist government.

Their nonstop attacks on Gaza and now Lebanon have blown the region wide open, dragging the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) into a complex, unwinnable fight against groups they just can't defeat — Hamas, Hezbollah, and their powerful supporters in Iran.

Despite the devastating air strikes, which have caused horrific Palestinian civilian deaths, including tens of thousands of children in Gaza, Israel hasn't managed to deliver a knockout blow.

Gaza, once a smaller battleground, has now turned into a full-blown strategic disaster for Israel. The years of blockades and bombings haven't made the Palestinians back down — they've only fuelled more anger and strengthened Israel's enemies.

What started as a contained conflict is now a regional nightmare, drawing in not just Hezbollah from Lebanon but also Iranian proxies and even the Ansar Allah from Yemen. Israel is teetering on the edge of a multi-front war that it's far from ready to handle.

Taking the fight to Lebanon was another huge misstep.

Hezbollah, a well-organised and powerful force, is much tougher to take on than Hamas.

And now, with rumours that the Lebanese army might get involved, Netanyahu has set the stage for an even bigger conflict that could spiral out of control across the region.

Netanyahu's miscalculation is huge. His fantasy of wiping out Hamas, Hezbollah, and weakening Iran's influence has completely backfired. Instead of breaking these groups, Israel has pushed them closer together, making them more determined and dangerous.



A Palestinian youth reacts upon seeing the bodies of relatives killed in an Israeli air strike in the Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip in front of Al Maamadani. — AFP

What was supposed to be a path to security has become a never-ending nightmare of war.

On the global stage, Israel's actions are increasingly being met with criticism.

Traditional allies are beginning to voice their concerns, and calls for accountability are growing louder. The once unquestioned support from the United States is now accompanied by growing demands for a ceasefire and renewed negotiations.

The international community has grown impatient with Israel's military strategies and intransigence.

International condemnation is piling up, internal political divides are growing and the cost of this endless war is spinning out of control.

Netanyahu is out of moves, and the Zionist Colony in the State of Palestine may finally be facing accountability for 76 years of ethnic cleansing and the oppression of the Palestinian people.

The Zionist Colony was built on lies. The lie that Palestine was the promised land for Jews. The lie that Jews were the original inhabitants of Palestine and the biggest

Zionist lie that Palestine was a land without a people.

The only independent newspaper in Israel, the Haaretz, has recently published an article stating that Israel is on its last breath.

The State of Palestine belongs to Palestinian Muslims, Christians and yes, Palestinian Jews.

As all colonialists have learned over the centuries, most recently the white South Africans in Apartheid South Africa, they will eventually be eliminated. Noam Chomsky stated “Settler colonialism, which is what this is, is by far the worst kind of imperialism, because it gets rid of the native population.

Other kinds of imperialism exploit them, but settler colonialism eliminates them, exterminates them.” This has been the aim of the Zionists since 1948 but the Palestinian people have shown by their courage and determination that they are superior to the Zionists in every way.

Palestine has always belonged to the Palestinians and even many Israelis are beginning to understand this.

What is behind the screen of an ‘Idiot Box’



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ALTHOUGH it is often called the ‘Idiot Box’, television has become an integral part of our lives in today’s world. It can enhance family bonding time and provide a shared experience for everyone in the household. However, discussions about the necessity of TV in daily life are quite common.

Just ask yourself how concerned you are about the cartoons or entertainment programmes that your children or siblings watch. Perhaps, they are glued to the screen everyday or even every hour, often without proper supervision from you as a parent, brother, sister, or an adult!

To gain an insight, try spending few minutes watching some cartoons with your kids or younger siblings. Comprehend what you are watching and analyse the messages, lessons, or morals behind these programmes or cartoon series. Television has indeed changed our lives, attitudes, and thoughts in many ways. Many people now spend more time watching television than engaging in other productive activities, such as reading or exercising. Children, for example, spend too much time watching television or using computers and mobile devices. According to the study published in the journal JAMA Pediatrics, children’s average daily time spent on screen increased from 53 minutes at the age of one year to more than 150 minutes for a 3-year-old.

Nowadays, television has become an

essential household item, often replacing physical activities for not only children but also teenagers and some adults. In fact, television is a double-edged sword — both positive and negative. It is up to us to decide how useful or harmful it is to our lives, much like other electronic and smart devices we use today, such as iPads, mobile phones, and electronic games.

Television has its benefits... it can be both entertaining and educational. It opens new windows to the world for kids, allowing them to learn about different cultures and gain exposure to new ideas. Children might discover insights they would never encounter in their own communities. For millions of people around the world, television serves as a source of companionship, helping them stay updated on everyday happenings.

Moreover, television raises awareness of global responsibilities and fosters mutual cooperation and understanding among people from different nations. For instance, in 1985, around 1.5 billion people in 147 countries watched a TV pop concert that helped raise over \$100 million for people in Africa.

On the other side, some argue that watching television today often involves exposure to fighting, violence, and foul language; it largely depends on who controls the remote at home. Children have become less aware of the joys of traditional childhood games, such as flying kites,

According to the study published in the journal JAMA Pediatrics, children’s average daily time spent on screen increased from 53 minutes at the age of one year to more than 150 minutes for a 3-year-old

building sandcastles, and playing in fields with friends. They also seem to lack the innocence that comes with being stubborn and naughty. Furthermore, studies have shown that children are more fearful of violence in news coverage than in any other media content, and this fear tends to increase as they grow older. Therefore, parents should pay close attention to what their children watch, not just in cartoons, but also in the news.

Parents should provide access to television for their children with caution. The impact of TV on children depends on various factors, including how much they watch, their age and personality, whether they watch alone or with adults, and whether their parents discuss what they see on TV with them. Watching television should be a fun and relaxing activity for both kids and adults, but excessive viewing can lead to family conflict.

Generally, the impact of television on children is complex and multifaceted. Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in mediating this impact by monitoring content, setting limits on viewing time, and engaging in discussions about what children watch. It is always very important to manage how much time children spend watching TV to ensure a healthy balance with other activities. By doing so, they can help maximise the positive effects of television on children while minimising the negative ones.

‘LITTLE GREGORY’ MURDER HAUNTS FRANCE 40 YEARS ON

LOÏC VENNIN

Gregory Villemin was four years old when he was murdered on an autumn day in 1984, his hands and feet tied when his body was found in a river in eastern France.

The case of “little Gregory”, as it became known, has haunted the judiciary, media and the French public for four decades, with its resolution just as elusive today as it was on October 16, 1984, when he was found.

Investigators have amassed close to 18,000 reports bound in 42 volumes over the decades, and seven investigating judges have worked on the case, said Philippe Astruc, chief prosecutor in the eastern city of Dijon, where the investigation is still open.

At times, the probe’s twists and turns seemed to come straight from a TV mystery -- one suspect was murdered, an investigating magistrate who committed suicide and charges brought several times, only to be dropped.

“I don’t know how we survived,” Jean-Marie Villemin, Gregory’s father, said about the past 40 years in a comic book published recently, one of many works dedicated to the Gregory mystery.

The case of ‘little Gregory’, as it became known, has haunted the judiciary, media and the French public for four decades, with its resolution just as elusive today as it was on October 16, 1984, when he was found. Investigators have amassed close to 18,000 reports bound in 42 volumes over the decades

with one journalist even hiding a microphone in the wardrobe of a family member in the hope of recording a confession. Investigating magistrate Jean-Michel Lambert hoped the case would give him the break he hoped for in his first job in the judiciary. In under three weeks the 32-year-old brought charges against Bernard Laroche, a cousin of Gregory’s father, who was later released on bail.

Gregory’s father was convinced that Laroche was his son’s murderer. In March 1985, weeks after Laroche’s release, Villemin killed him with a rifle. He was jailed for five years for the killing and did 34 months of jail time. The investigation sensationally turned to Gregory’s mother, who was charged with her murder in 1985, but the charges were withdrawn because of errors committed by investigating magistrate Lambert. — AFP



DANI RODRIK

The writer is 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



China’s gains are the result of an exercise of global monopoly power that forces losses onto foreign producers.

WITH all major trading countries increasingly resorting to unilateral action to advance their own social, economic, environmental, and security goals, the world economy desperately needs a clear normative framework to determine the rules of the road. A useful starting point is for everyone to agree, in principle, not to deploy beggar-thy-neighbour policies. This may sound reasonable, but is it feasible? Aren’t countries relying on such policies too often to be dissuaded from changing their ways?

Actually, no, they are not. The perception that they are is rooted in a conceptual confusion between policies with adverse cross-border spillovers and policies that truly are beggar-thy-neighbour. It would indeed be hopeless — and counterproductive — to try to discipline all policies of the former type. Fortunately, beggar-thy-neighbour actions constitute only a small subset of such policies.

Hyper-globalisation floundered largely because of its ambition to over-regulate policies with international spillovers. By focusing on genuinely beggar-thy-neighbour policies, we can target the real source of the problem and make more headway in international negotiations.

To understand the significance of this

distinction, consider the classic case in which one country’s policy produces harms abroad, specifically by weakening another country’s terms of trade (prices of exports relative to imports). Initially formalised by Jagdish Bhagwati, this “immiserising-trade” scenario was later used by Paul Samuelson to argue that China’s economic growth could hurt the United States.

GOVERNMENT SUBSIDISES

Consider two policies in particular. First, when the Chinese government subsidises research and development that enhances the country’s competitiveness in high-tech products and lowers their prices on global markets, the US and other advanced economies are hurt, because these are the areas of their comparative advantage. Despite the harm, however, we would not consider it proper to ask China to remove such subsidies, because our intuition tells us that supporting R&D is a legitimate tool to promote economic growth, even if others incur losses.

The second policy is an export ban on rare earths or other critical minerals for which China is the principal global supplier. China benefits by increasing prices on world markets and making its exporters more competitive, owing to their

access to cheaper inputs. But this is a clear instance of a beggar-thy-neighbour policy.

China’s gains are the result of an exercise of global monopoly power that forces losses onto foreign producers.

A policy is beggar-thy-neighbour when the benefit provided to the domestic economy is made possible only by the harm that it generates for others. Joan Robinson coined the term in the 1930s to describe policies such as competitive devaluation, which, in a situation of generalised unemployment, shifts employment from foreign countries to the domestic economy. Beggar-thy-neighbour policies are generally negative-sum for the world overall.

Distinguishing beggar-thy-neighbour policies may be difficult in practice, because no country is likely to own up to them. But clarifying the kinds of actions that are truly objectionable, and narrowing the scope of disputes accordingly, would likely lead to better economic outcomes. It also would make for better politics, because governments would be encouraged to engage in a more productive discussion about what they are doing, why they are doing it, and the likely consequences.

Applying this perspective to the real world, one finds that the bulk of industrial policies in China and the US today are not beggar-thy-neighbour. In fact, many should be considered enrich-thy-neighbour.

The clearest example is the broad range of green industrial policies that China has deployed over the last couple of decades to bring down the price of solar and wind power, batteries, and electric vehicles. These policies have been doubly beneficial to the world economy. They generate innovation spillovers, reducing costs for the world’s producers and lowering prices for consumers. And they accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to renewables, partly compensating for the absence of carbon pricing.

When industrial policies appropriately target externalities and market failures — as in the case of green subsidies — they are not something to worry about. Moreover, while we can raise legitimate concerns about cases where these conditions are not met, the fact remains that the costs of inefficient industrial policies are borne primarily at home. It is domestic taxpayers and consumers who pay in the form of higher taxes and prices. Bad industrial policies are less beggar-thy-neighbour than beggar thyself. @Project Syndicate, 2024

SPORTS

SENIORFOOTBALL



AL NASR, AL SHABAB, AL NAHDHA SECURE VICTORIES IN OFA CUP

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 13

Al Nasr Club secured a well-deserved 2-0 victory over Oman Club in the match held on Friday at Seeb Sports Stadium, as part of the third round of the Oman Football Association Cup (OFAC). The win raises the team's points tally to 6 and places them at the top of Group B, while Oman sits at the bottom of the group with just a point.

The goals for Al Nasr were scored by Abdul Majeed Shamas and Jassim al Noubi.

In another match, Al Shabab defeated Al Rustaq 3-1 in the game held at Al Rustaq Sports Complex. Mahmoud al Khsaibi and Cosmos Dauda (two goals) netted the goals for Al Shabab, while the lone goal for Al Rustaq came from Musab al Shaqsi. With this victory, Al Shabab raised their points tally to 6, placing second in Group C, while Al Rustaq remains at the bottom with just one point.

Additionally, Sur Club achieved a narrow 1-0 win over Bahla in the match held at Nizwa Sports Complex, raising the team's points tally to 4, positioning them second in Group B, while Bahla remains with 3 points in third place.

In another match held on Saturday evening at Seeb Sports Stadium, Al Seeb defeated Al Khabourah 2-0, with goals from Nasser al Saqri and Frank William, the latter from a penalty kick. With this win, Al Seeb raised their points tally to 9, securing the top spot in Group C, while Al Khabourah remains in third place with just one point. In another encounter, Sohar was defeated by Saham 2-1 at Sohar Sports Complex. Saham's goals were scored by Emmanuel and Waleed al Saadi, while Joao Pedro netted Sohar's only goal. This victory raised Saham's points tally to 4, placing them second in Group A.

Al Nahdha concluded the round with a significant 3-0 victory over Ibri at Al Buraimi Sports Complex. Al Nahdha's goals were scored by Ali al Rashidi, Omar Osama, and Alex. With this win, Al Nahdha tops Group A with 5 points, while Ibri remains at the bottom with 3 points.



Oman team in Jordan for AFC qualifiers clash

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 13

THE Oman national football team's delegation arrived in Amman, Jordan, on Sunday ahead of their crucial tie against Jordan on Tuesday in the AFC Asian Qualifiers – Road to 26 group games.

The Red Warriors resumed their daily training sessions in Amman at Al Karama ground last night under the watchful eyes of the national head coach Rasheed Jaber, while today's main session will be held at Amman International Stadium, where the match will take place on Tuesday.

The training session on Sunday focused on the physical and recovery aspects following the trip, especially after the tremendous effort made by the players in the game against Kuwait. The coaching staff, led by Rasheed Jaber and his assistants, will develop technical strategies based on the forthcoming game, aiming to improve the areas of weakness identified in previous Asian qualifiers matches.

The Oman team will aim to secure maximum points from this game before the remaining matches in November. Oman faces Jordan in a tightly contested match, following their 4-0 victory over Kuwait last Thursday, which revived their chances in the group. They are chasing their second consecutive win to edge closer to the top teams in the group.

Oman's Ambassador to Jordan, Shaikh Fahd bin Abdulrahman al Ojaili, welcomed the Oman football team's delegation upon their arrival at the airport. "I am hoping for a positive result in the



game against Jordan. We coordinated with the Jordan Football Association a few days ago, securing around 1,000 seats for Omani fans," he said.

OFA Chairman, Salim al Wahaibi, thanked the players for their outstanding performance against Kuwait. "I want to thank the players and the technical staff, led by coach Rasheed Jaber.

I am confident that the team can achieve another positive result against Jordan. The players are in excellent shape and physically ready for the game," he concluded.

Oman squad: Ibrahim al Mukhaini, Faiz al Rushedi, Ibrahim al Rajhi, Mohammed al Musallami, Ahmed al Khamisi, Mohammed Ramadan, Khalid al Buraiki, Ghanim al Habsi, Ali al Busaidy, Ahmed al Kaabi, Amjad al Harthy, Abdulaziz al Sham-oosi, Mulham al Sunaidy, Harib al Saadi, Abdullah Fawaz, Arshad al Alawi, Sultan al Marzooqi, Jameel al Yahmadi, Yazeed al Mashani, Abdulrahman al Mushai-fri, Zahir al Aghbari, Ahmed al Riyami, Nasser al Rawahi, Salah al Yahyai, Omar al Malki, Mohsin al Ghassani, Issam al Subhi and Hatem al Roushdi.

Oman Sail and Asyad sign long-term partnership

MUSCAT: Oman Sail and the Asyad Group signed a partnership agreement, making Asyad the main sponsor of the 14th edition of Mussanah Race Week in 2025. The signing took place during the closing ceremony of the 13th Mussanah Race Week at Mussanah Sailing School, that was attended by Abdulmalik al Balushi, Asyad Group's Chief People Officer, and Dr Khamis al Jabri, Oman Sail CEO. The agreement also includes Asyad sponsoring the Oman Sail Youth Programme ILCA Class both locally and internationally.

Through this agreement, Asyad joins forces with Oman Sail to achieve excellence in the sport of sailing by enhancing Oman's presence at the global stage and provide high-quality training for Omani sailors of both genders, enabling

These efforts are part of establishing Oman as one of the leading countries in this sport. And in line with national efforts to develop sports, engage youth and enhance community development



them to compete at the highest levels. These efforts are part of establishing Oman as one of the leading countries in this sport.

The partnership also focuses on highlighting Oman's rich maritime heritage and promoting sustainable environmental practices in

maritime events, which aligns with Asyad Group's vision in this regard. This partnership is in line with national efforts to develop sports, engage youth and enhance community development.

Abdulmalik al Balushi praised this agreement and said: "This part-

nership with Oman Sail as a strategic partner and main sponsor of the 14th edition of Mussanah Race Week and the national ILCA teams is a true reflection of Asyad Group's vision to nurture national talents and shape the future for upcoming generations."

Dr Khamis al Jabri, Oman Sail CEO, said, "We are delighted to be working with the Asyad Group to achieve our shared objectives. Oman has built a well-deserved reputation as an exciting sailing destination and we believe this partnership will further enhance our capabilities by securing a long-running event which attracts sailors from across Oman, the region and around the world to Mussanah Sailing School, providing local and international exposure while also nurturing future talent.

POWERKNOCK



SAMSON POWERS INDIA TO T20 SERIES SWEEP

HYDERABAD, India: Opener Sanju Samson's blistering century helped world champions India hammer Bangladesh in the final T20 on Saturday to sweep the series 3-0 after they posted the format's highest total by a Test-playing nation of 297-6.

The hosts went past Afghanistan's 278-3 against Ireland in 2019. The Indian total is the second highest in all T20 internationals after Nepal's 314-3 against Mongolia at last year's Asian Games in China.

Samson hit 111 of 47 balls -- his first T20 international ton -- studded with 11 fours and eight sixes after India elected to bat first in Hyderabad.

In reply, Bangladesh managed 164-7 to go down by 133 runs in what was former skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's last T20 for the nation. Mahmudullah made eight before he fell to speedster Mayank Yadav and walked off with a smile and pat on the back by India skipper Suryakumar Yadav.

Najmul Hossain Shanto's Bangladesh, who came on the India tour at the back of a two-Test sweep in Pakistan, were outplayed by the hosts as they lost the earlier Test series 2-0.

Samson, a wicketkeeper-batsman, stood out as he hammered leg-spinner Rishad Hossain for five straight sixes in an over en route to his ton in 40 balls. He put on 173 runs for the second wicket with Suryakumar, who hit 75 off 35 balls but his knock was overshadowed by his partner's blitz and the mammoth total.

Samson finally fell to Mustafizur Rahman and walked back to a standing ovation by the weekend crowd.

Suryakumar fell in the next over by Mahmudullah, who announced his retirement from the format ahead of the second match.

But there was more punishment in store for Bangladesh as new batters Hardik Pandya, who struck 47 off 18 balls, and Riyan Parag, who made a 13-ball 34, kept up the charge with regular boundaries. — AFP

Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan shine at badminton tourney

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 13

SAUDI player Rayan al Mukhaimer clinched the men's singles at U-15 category in the West Asia Junior Badminton Championship following his defeat against Syrian player Mohammed al Rafai by 2-0 at the indoor courts of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Saturday.

Syrian player Mayas al Qabbani managed to earn a 2-0 win over her team-mate Leen Shakerdi to snatch the women's singles at U-15 category after tough tie.

The championship, which was hosted by Oman and organised through Oman Racket Sports Committee (ORSC) in collaboration with the Asia Badminton, came to an end on Saturday after six days of thrilling competitions. The event featured participation of 58 players representing eight West Asian countries including: Jordan, UAE, Bahrain, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Syria and the hosts Sultanate of Oman.

The medals and trophies were distributed by Eng Ahmed bin Hassan al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, in presence of Dr Abdulrahim bin Musallam al Daroushi, Chairman of Oman Racket Sports Committee (ORSC). With the conclusion of all the finals, West Asia Junior Badminton Championship came to an end after six days of exciting competitions.

The duo comprised of Mohammed al Rafai and Abdul Rahman al Qabbani from Syria defeated Saudi duo Ahmed al Mueed and Rayan al Mukhaimer by 2-0 in a thrilling contest to claim the gold medal and trophy of men's double event.

In the women's doubles final, Syrian duo including Mayas al Qabbani and Leen Shakerdi defeated Saudi duo comprised of Batool al Mutairi and Mai al Mutairi by 2-0.

Saudi players continued their domination on the event titles as the duo of Rayan al Mukhaimer and Batool al Mutairi beat Mohammed al Rafai and Mayas al Qabbani by 2-0 to win the mixed doubles event.

Jordan's Ismail Omar clinched the title of men's singles at U-17 category following his defeat against Syrian player Shadi al Ansari while Jordan's Maria Abu Arrah edged Syria's Jannah Aseela by 2-0 to claim women's singles event.

The duo of Saudi Arabia comprised from Al Watheq al Obaidi and Abdulaziz



al Maqhawi beat Iraq's duo comprised from Yahya al Humairi and Rami Salah to lift the men's double title while Jordan's Maria Abu Arrah and Jannah Aseela beat Saudi's duo Saba al Harthi and Ghram al Rushedi to win women's double event. Syrian team comprised from Hussam and Wasan won the mixed double event thanks to their win against Jordan Ismail and Rawan.

At the teams level, Saudi Arabia team emerged champions of U-15 at West Asia Junior Badminton Championship. Syria team managed to earn the title of team level category of U-17 event. The team competitions of the West Asia Junior Badminton Championship concluded recently while the singles event began on Thursday and runs until Saturday. Syria

team players managed to clinch the team's U-17 category title after defeating Saudi Arabia 3-2 in a thrilling final. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia team secured the U-15 title with a close 3-2 victory over Syria in a tough final clash.

Dr Abdulrahim bin Musallam al Daroushi, Chairman of Oman Racket Sports Committee (ORSC), stated that the tournament achieved numerous organisational and technical successes, receiving widespread praise from officials and various representatives.

"After the formation of ORSC since July 2023, we had managed successfully to host three local open badminton championships in addition to a continental tournament within just one year," he added.

Junior Basketball League kicks off with wins for Nizwa, Masirah

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, OCT 13

The Junior Basketball League for the 2024-2025 season kicked off with preliminary round competitions held at Al Amal and Al Seeb clubs, showcasing two notable victories for Nizwa and Masirah clubs.

Nizwa triumphed over Sohar with a massive score of 71-6, while Masirah secured an exciting win over Salalah with a score of 42-36.

In the first match, Nizwa dominated the game against Sohar, excelling both offensively and defensively. Nizwa quickly opened the scoring through a successful shot by Mulhem al Obaidani under the basket, followed by a three-pointer from Mohammed al Busaidi.

The attacks continued with Adam al Hinai and Mulhem al Obaidani each scoring two more three-pointers, ending the first quarter with Nizwa leading 30-2.

The control continued as Nizwa added 7 more points in the second quarter, with Sohar unable to respond, finishing the first half at 37-2. In the third quarter, Nizwa scored

The attacks continued with Adam al Hinai and Mulhem al Obaidani each scoring two more three-pointers, ending the first quarter with Nizwa leading 30-2

19 points against Sohar's 2, and the dominance persisted until the end of the game, with Nizwa winning 71-6.

The match was officiated by Taha al Amri as the first referee, Hussain al Awaimri as the second, and Said al Ghamari as the third. On the scoring table were Jumaa al Hinai, Ryan al Dhahoubi and Fatima al Harthi.

In the second match, Masirah achieved a hard-fought victory over Salalah, winning 42-36. The game was balanced between the two teams, with Salalah having the advantage in the first quarter, starting with a score by Fahad Bait Singoor, followed by two points from his team-mate Mishal Akak.

Masirah responded with two points from Khuzaymah al Shibli, bringing the score to 2-4. Both teams continued to exchange points, with the first quarter ending with Salalah leading Masirah 7-3. Salalah maintained their lead in the first half, finishing 21-17. In the third quarter, both teams scored 7 points each, with Salalah holding a 28-24 lead.

However, in the fourth quarter, Masirah put on a strong performance, overturning the score by



adding 18 points compared to Salalah's 8, clinching the win 42-36.

The match was refereed by Ali al Salmani as the first referee, Thabet

al Hinai the second, and Said al Ghamari as the third. On the scoring table were Maryam al Zadjali, Moosa al Siyabi and Mahmoud al Ajmi.



Jannik Sinner lifts the Shanghai Masters trophy. — Reuters

SINNER WINS SHANGHAI MASTERS TO DENY DJOKOVIC 100TH CAREER TITLE

WORLD

number one Jannik Sinner defeated 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 on Sunday to win the Shanghai Masters. Sinner took a crucial break in the fourth game of the second set to defeat the Serb in 1hr 37min and deny him a 100th career singles title. “He was just too good today, too strong, too fast,” Djokovic said after the match. Sinner said it was a “very special day”, saluting his opponent as a “legend” who kept playing “incredible tennis... year after year”. In a nod to former Djokovic rival Roger Federer, who was watching from the stands, the 23-year-old joked: “There are legends everywhere, I just try to keep up a little bit.” Facing off before an impassioned crowd, neither player blinked in the first set, unable to break the other’s serve. Sinner quickly took control in the



“I played pretty good, which gives me, I guess, a reason to believe that I can still play with these guys that are the best in the world at this level”
NOVAK DJOKOVIC

tiebreak, breaking Djokovic’s serve on the first point and going 5-1 up. The Serb steadied himself but then netted a volley to bring up set point at 6-3. Sinner failed to convert initially but didn’t miss the second time behind serve. The next key moment came in the fourth game of the second set when Sinner was up 40-15 on Djokovic’s serve. Djokovic saved one break point with a fiery ace but couldn’t stop a superb forehand down the line from Sinner that saw him pull ahead. All that remained was for the Italian to hold his nerve, hitting an ace to finish the match and claim the title. **TOUGH YEAR** Sinner’s victory is the latest triumph in a formidable season, in which he has won two Grand Slams and retained the top spot in the rankings since June. But it is also a year that has seen him embroiled in controversy after he twice tested positive for a banned steroid in March. In August, the International Tennis Integrity Agency accepted Sinner’s explanation that the drug entered his system unintentionally when his physiotherapist used a spray containing it to treat a cut, then provided massage and sports therapy to the player. However, the World Anti-Doping Agency said last month it would appeal against the decision to clear him of wrongdoing and was seeking

a ban of up to two years. That news came as Sinner was contesting the China Open, where he lost in the final to Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz, who was also watching from the stands on Sunday. “This year has been very, very tough for me... At points I lost a little bit of smile,” Sinner said on Sunday. “It’s never easy to play in these kind of circumstances,” he added. “I feel like I’m strong when I go on the court trying to not think about it... When I wake up I try to focus on every single (match or practice) I do, but then of course I have moments when I think about it which is not comfortable.” **DESERVED’ WIN** Djokovic said Sinner played “the big points better” and “deserved to win”. The 37-year-old said that getting a 100th title was “not a live-or-die type of goal”, but he would keep trying. Djokovic became the last man standing from tennis’ golden era after Rafael Nadal announced his retirement this week and said that, despite the loss, he was pleased with his performance in Shanghai. “I played pretty good, which gives me, I guess, a reason to believe that I can still play with these guys that are the best in the world at this level,” he said. “As long as that’s the case, I guess I’ll still feel the need to keep on competing and the motivation to be out there.” — AFP

BUSINESS



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SHORT TAKES



ASYAD GROUP SIGNS LOGISTICS MOU WITH UZBEKISTAN

TASHKENT: Asyad Group signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Uzbekistan's Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade, aiming to explore business opportunities in logistics and enhance supply chains between the two nations.

The agreement was signed by Shaikh Nasser bin Sulaiman al Harthy, Deputy Chairman of the Oman Investment Authority, on behalf of Asyad and Laziz Qodratov, Uzbekistan's Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade. The MoU focuses on utilising Asyad's expertise in managing land ports, railways, air freight, and e-commerce to improve logistics efficiency in Uzbekistan and Central Asia.— **ONA**

OMAN-PAKISTAN FORUM EXPLORES INVESTMENT AREAS

MUSCAT: The Omani-Pakistani Business Forum spotlighted potential areas for joint cooperation, particularly in economic, health and entrepreneurial sectors.

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones showcased investment opportunities and incentives available in Oman, while Pakistan presented its own investment prospects. The forum also included discussions on the legislative environment supporting investment, as well as an exhibition featuring Pakistani products.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), emphasised the importance of enhancing trade and investment exchanges between Oman and Pakistan, especially in sectors promoting economic diversification.— **ONA**

RO1.2billion in projects for Invest Oman Lounge

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 13

THE INVEST Oman Lounge has localised 29 investment projects worth RO 1.2 billion since its launch in January 2023. This platform, designed to attract investors and promote foreign direct investment (FDI), aligns with the strategic goals of Oman Vision 2040 by focusing on key sectors like renewable energy, technology and tourism.

Operating under the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Lounge provides a streamlined approach to facilitate investments. It acts as a gateway for businesses by offering attractive incentives, high-quality infrastructure, and access to skilled labour, helping investors navigate Oman's investment landscape.

The Lounge has played a pivotal role in enabling major investments, especially in Oman's industrial sector. One of the most notable projects is the polysilicon factory in the Sohar Free Zone, valued at more than RO 520 million. This facility, expected to open in 2025, will play a significant role in strengthening Oman's industrial capabilities and economic diversification.

Additionally, the Lounge has facilitated substantial investments in Sultan Haitham City, where total investments have reached RO 439 million. These projects are being developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, further enhancing Oman's real estate and urban development sectors.

One of the distinguishing features of the Invest Oman Lounge is its ability to bring together 15 representatives from various government entities. These representatives have the authority to issue approvals, permits and licences, significantly reducing the time and complexity of investment procedures.

Investors can also access a commercial



The Lounge provides a streamlined approach to facilitate investments.

The Lounge has facilitated substantial investments in Sultan Haitham City, where total investments have reached RO 439 million. These projects further enhance Oman's real estate and urban development sectors

bank and a visa accreditation office directly within the Lounge, allowing them to complete all necessary procedures in one location.

To further simplify the investment process, the Lounge offers a personalised service through its "Relationship Manager" programme. Each investor is assigned a dedicated manager who supports them throughout the investment journey, assisting with regulatory procedures and ensuring a smooth experience.

From opening a bank account to registering a company, the Relationship

Manager provides end-to-end assistance, ensuring that investors can focus on their projects without administrative hurdles.

Hafsa bint Salim al Rashidiyah, Investor Relations Manager at Invest in Oman, highlighted the Lounge's success in attracting a diverse range of investments, with the industrial sector leading the way. The renewable energy and health sectors have also seen significant investment, positioning Oman as a key player in the global shift towards sustainable development.

The Lounge is part of Oman's broader strategy to create a business-friendly environment that attracts both local and international investments. It offers a map of investment opportunities, supported by feasibility studies, to help potential investors make informed decisions.

Specialised teams also analyse the quality of incoming investments, ensuring that projects align with Oman's long-term economic goals.

Pact signed to drive growth of Oman's aquaculture industry

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 13

LEADING Malta-based international fisheries consultancy firm AquaBio-Tech has announced that it has secured an advisory services contract from Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) – the fisheries sector investment arm of the Omani government – to help spur the growth of Oman's aquaculture industry.

The announcement comes as FDO – part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – prepares to merge with fellow OIA subsidiary Nitaj (Oman Food Investment Holding Company) to create a potentially multibillion dollar food industry powerhouse in the Sultanate of Oman encompassing virtually all aspects of the food value chain.

Besides unlocking synergies for investment and value creation in various segments of the food econ-

The announcement comes as FDO – part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – prepares to merge with fellow OIA subsidiary Nitaj (Oman Food Investment Holding Company) to create a potentially multibillion dollar food industry powerhouse in the Sultanate of Oman encompassing virtually all aspects of the food value chain



FDO's shrimp farm at Jaalan Bani Bu Ali.

omy, the merger will also lend a new boost to Oman's food security objectives.

According to AquaBioTech, a prominent provider of aquaculture and fisheries development solutions with a presence in 55 countries globally, the advisory services contract will support wholly state-owned FDO in delivering on key aspects of its national mandate.

Central to this commitment is a pledge to co-invest in and develop industries across the fisheries, aquaculture and biotechnology segments. This commitment is already attested by its shareholding in a number of key subsidiaries, notably Blue Waters (focusing on marine finfish aquaculture), Oriental Shrimp Aquaculture (which operates a major shrimp farm in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali), Simak (the owner of a major fish canning and processing plant at Duqm) and Oman Pelagic, the group's commercial fishing arm. Additionally, FDO is an investor in Marsa Al Duqm, the operator of an industrial fisheries port at the Port of Duqm.

Also in FDO's sights are plans to invest in, among other areas, aquafeed production; microalgae production; mussel farming; broodstock development for various fish and shrimp species; abalone farming; algae farming; sea cucumber farming; oyster

farming; ornamental fish and coral propagation; tuna ranching; seriola farming; land-based RAS farming for various species, including salmon, grouper and seabass; as well as bioprospecting of molecules from marine sources, said AquaBioTech in its statement.

FDO's Group Director – Business Development, Badar bin Said al Naabi, was quoted as stating: "The fisheries sector is a vital pillar of Oman's economy.

Through FDO's strategic investments and initiatives, we aim to enhance Oman's standing in international fisheries markets while unlocking the untapped potential for aquaculture development."

Shane Hunter, CEO of AquaBioTech Group, commented: "FDO's ambitions for Oman's aquaculture sector are both bold and attainable, and through this partnership, we are dedicated to realising these goals."

BUSINESS

QUICK TAKES



The app enables users to complete the account opening process in just few minutes.

OPEN YOUR SAVINGS ACCOUNT WITH A CLICK VIA DHOFAR ISLAMIC MOBILE BANKING APP

MUSCAT: Building on the success of the Dhofar Islamic digital onboarding service via the app launched last year; new customers now will get a debit card without issuance fee instantly when opening a Mudarabah Savings and High Yield Savings Accounts at their convenience, following few easy steps. Dhofar Islamic continues to offer innovative banking solutions within its mobile banking application that meet the various financial requirements of customers, with exclusive features and added value benefits.

Dhofar Islamic is constantly working to improve the features and services of the app to meet and exceed the needs of customers. The app enables users to complete the account opening process in just few minutes, saving them time and effort and enhancing their banking experience with Dhofar Islamic.

Customers willing to open a new Mudarabah Savings Account or High Yield Savings Accounts may download Dhofar Islamic mobile banking app, which is available for both iOS and Android smart devices, and follow the steps.

In addition to the account opening, users may follow up on the status of their application through Dhofar Islamic mobile app. This option is available for all Omani and non-Omani residents of the Sultanate of Oman.

Dhofar Islamic innovative mobile banking app is a full-fledged smart banking platform designed thoroughly with the utmost attention to detail to offer 24/7 convenience to users at their fingertips. New services and features are introduced constantly to give customers the ultimate banking experience they deserve. The app is highly secure and is periodically enhanced with more safety and security measures.

Dhofar Islamic mobile banking app is available on Android and IOS devices, with enabled face recognition, fingerprint login and Touch ID.

Islamic banking in Oman: A growing force in finance

THE global Islamic Financial Services Industry (IFSI) has demonstrated resilience and steady growth over the years, with assets estimated at \$3.25 trillion in 2022, and now exceeding \$4 trillion. The industry developed significantly over the years after its foundation in the 1950s and has developed a global reach.

The Islamic finance sector has outpaced its conventional peers, particularly in the aftermath of the pandemic, and is projected to reach \$4.94 trillion by 2025.

Islamic banking continues to dominate within this sector, accounting for \$2.25 trillion, or 69.3 per cent of total IFSI assets, as of 2022. Over the last decade, it has been a key driver of banking growth, attracting investors and borrowers who previously avoided traditional banking for religious reasons.

This shift is most pronounced in Saudi Arabia, where Islamic banking holds an 85-per cent market share, with strong growth potential also seen in Oman, the UAE, Kuwait and Qatar.

In Oman, the Islamic banking sector has grown rapidly since its introduction in 2012. The country adopted a two-pronged approach, allowing both full-fledged Islamic banks and Islamic windows (offered by conventional banks).

The Islamic Banking Regulatory Framework (IBRF) governs the sector and ensures Sharia compliance, with a strong regulatory foundation provided by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) and the Financial Services Authority



Islamic banking continues to dominate within this sector, accounting for \$2.25 trillion, or 69.3 per cent of total IFSI assets.



RAJESH BANSAL

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(FSA).

The Islamic banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman consists of two full-fledged Islamic banks and five Islamic banking windows operating through a network of approximately 100 branches. By 2023, the combined assets of these institutions had grown by 18.1 per cent, reaching \$20.2 billion, representing 11.4 per cent of Oman's total banking assets.

Financing increased by 10.4 per cent to \$16.6 billion, while deposits rose 14.7 per cent to \$15.5 billion by mid-2024.

A key factor in the growth of Islamic banking is its adherence to Sharia principles, which require transactions to be asset-backed

and avoid speculative practices. One may say that Islamic banking is the outcome of Corporate Social Responsibility derived from religion and applied to banking wherein the CSR aspect represents ethical profits.

It removes speculation and creates value enhancement and sustainable activities. Islamic banks generally maintain lower levels of non-performing loans compared to their conventional counterparts. Moreover, Islamic windows benefit from shared resources with their parent banks, making them more cost-efficient.

Oman's regulatory environment has been supportive of Islamic banking, with each institution having its own Sharia board, overseen by the High Sharia Supervisory Authority of the CBO.

This structure has facilitated the rapid approval of new Islamic banking products and services. However, bankers have called for the introduction of short-term liquidity instruments to further support the sector's growth.

Looking ahead, the CBO has laid out a comprehensive strategic plan for 2024-2030 to further develop the Islamic banking sector.

This includes expanding the scope of Islamic finance for finance and leasing companies and creating a Sharia-compliant deposit insurance scheme. Sukuk issuance, representing 19 per cent of listed government bonds and sukuk in Oman, is also expected to grow, particularly with the introduction of ESG-linked instruments.

REAL ESTATE TRADING IN OMAN TOPS RO 1.9 BILLION

MUSCAT: Real estate trading in Oman surged by 5.4% in value, reaching RO 1.933 billion by August 2024, compared to RO 1.834 billion in the same period last year, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The value of sale contracts amounted to RO 716.1 million across 44,398 contracts, with a 0.9% rise in contract numbers. Mortgage contract values increased by



The value of sale contracts amounted to RO 716.1 million across 44,398 contracts.

7.9% to RO 1.207 billion, covering 13,565 contracts.

Meanwhile, exchange contracts recorded 927 contracts, valued at RO 9.2 million.

While the total number of properties issued decreased by 4.9%, properties owned by citizens from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries rose by 12.3%, with 985 properties issued by August 2024. — **ONA**

Oman International Hospital launches oncology unit

MUSCAT: Oman International Hospital is proud to announce the launch of Oncology Unit designed to deliver world-class cancer treatment and care to patients across Oman and the region.

In response to the growing need within Oman due to the continuous rise in cancer cases, and to support both the local economy and medical tourism, the Oncology Unit launched at Oman International Hospital.

This centre offers specialised and comprehensive oncology care, providing patients with world-class treatment options right here in Oman, eliminating the need to seek care abroad.

Additionally, the renowned expertise of our team and the high standards of our facility will not only meet local demands, but will also attract international patients seeking advanced cancer treatment.

Oman International Hospital is keen to provide comprehensive medical care for oncology patients. From preventive measures and early detection to state-of-the-art treatments, it brings together a mul-

This centre offers specialised and comprehensive oncology care, providing patients with world-class treatment options right here in Oman, eliminating the need to seek care abroad.



The certified oncologists are among the best cancer doctors in the region

tidisciplinary medical team under one roof, which includes medical oncology, radiation therapy and surgical oncology.

Our certified oncologists are among the best cancer doctors in the region with decades of experience in providing a personalised treatment plan that combines surgical intervention, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, targeted therapy and immunotherapy.

To ensure that all cancer patients

receive world-class care and advanced treatment services, all cases will be discussed at the multidisciplinary tumour Board, where specialist oncologists discuss the cases.

The team, led by Dr Bassim al Bahrani (Senior Consultant Medical Oncologist), consists of Dr Hilal al Rashdi (Senior Consultant Urologist), Prof Ahmed al Balushi (Senior Consultant Cardiothoracic Surgeon), Dr Mohammed al Lamki (Senior Consultant Endocrinolo-

gist), Dr Sultan al Maskari (Senior Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon), Dr Amr Ahmed Redha (Consultant General and Endocrine Surgery), Dr Ibrahim al Alawi (Senior Consultant General and Colorectal Surgeon), Dr Hussain al Balushi (Senior Consultant Interventional Radiologist), Dr Moza Al Kalbani (Senior Consultant Gynecologist), Dr Yahya al Azri (Senior Consultant Laparoscopic and Hepatobiliary Surgeon), Dr Roberto Cayon (Senior Consultant General Surgery) and Dr Mohammed al Azri (Senior Consultant General Surgery, Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgeon).

Marcelo Pereira, CEO of Oman International Hospital, said, "As we open the doors to our new Oncology Unit, we are not just launching a facility; we are making a commitment to the patients and families in Oman. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive cancer care experience that combines cutting-edge technology with compassionate support. This centre is a testament to our commitment to elevating healthcare standards and delivering hope to patients and their families."

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF I-RECS

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, OCT 13

How companies can certify renewable energy consumption

HAVE YOU seen advertisements for companies selling or auctioning International Renewable Energy Certificates (I-RECs)? What exactly are these certificates, and how can they help businesses reduce their carbon footprints? In a world where reducing emissions is a priority, companies are exploring innovative ways to demonstrate their commitment to renewable energy. I-REC certificates are a key part of this strategy.

UNDERSTANDING I-RECS: THE BASICS

At its core, an I-REC is an Energy Attribute Certificate (EAC), designed to track and verify renewable energy consumption. Many companies may want to shift toward renewable energy but face a unique challenge: most electricity grids are powered by a mixture of energy sources — both renewable and non-renewable. This makes it difficult for companies to trace the specific source of the electricity they consume.

As Anoud bint Yahya al Maashariyah, Senior Consultant (Climate Change and Sustainability Services) at EY Muscat, explains to *Oman Observer*, “Energy Attribute Certificates (EAC) serve to validate consumer claims regarding the type of energy utilised and its associated attributes, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions generated at the point of production.”

These certificates allow companies to account for their use of renewable energy even when they cannot physically control the exact power source entering their facilities.

HOW DO I-RECS WORK?

I-RECs operate on a “Book and Claim” system. This means that a renewable energy generator produces electricity and feeds it into the grid. For each megawatt-hour (MWh) of energy produced, a certificate is issued.

Companies that purchase these certificates can then claim that they have used renewable energy, even though the electricity they physically consume may come from a mix of sources. This system is particularly valuable in regions without regulated EAC markets, such as Oman.

“Where there are no regulated EAC markets, voluntary markets like the International Tracking Standard Foundation provide consumers with the flexibility to purchase EACs and demonstrate their use of renewable electricity,” says Al Maashari. Essentially, I-RECs provide a flexible, market-based tool for companies to prove their renewable energy consumption, especially in regions where the local energy mix includes a significant share of fossil fuels.

THE IMPORTANCE OF APPROPRIATELY REPORTING SCOPE 2 EMISSIONS

To fully understand the value of I-RECs, it’s crucial to explore the concept of Scope 2 emissions and the importance of accurately reporting them.

According to the

Greenhouse Gas Protocol, Scope 2 emissions account for the indirect emissions from purchased electricity. There are two methods for reporting these emissions: the location-based method, which reflects the average emissions of the power grid, and the market-based method, which allows companies to purchase renewable energy certificates like I-RECs to demonstrate their use of clean energy. Al Maashari highlights that “accurate reporting of Scope 2 emissions is critical for businesses striving to meet global sustainability standards.” By purchasing I-RECs equivalent to their electricity consumption, companies can report zero-emissions for that portion of their energy use under the market-based approach. This is significant for companies with stringent carbon reduction goals, as it provides a credible, auditable way to meet renewable energy targets. Accurate reporting, however, goes beyond simply claiming zero-emissions. It requires companies to disclose how much of their energy comes from renewable sources and how they are using tools like I-RECs to meet their sustainability objectives. Transparency in reporting is key to avoiding accusations of greenwashing and ensuring that companies are truly contributing to decarbonisation.

OMAN’S RENEWABLE ENERGY JOURNEY

Oman is taking significant steps toward supporting renewable energy markets. Nama Power and Water Procurement (NPWP) has been at the forefront of issuing I-REC certificates for the country’s renewable energy projects. For instance, the 50 MW Dhofar Wind Project and the 500 MW Ibri II Solar Project are registered under the I-TRACK Accredited Registry, allowing companies to purchase I-RECs from these projects to support their green energy goals.

As more companies commit to decarbonisation, the demand for renewable energy certificates like I-RECs is growing. With over 50 countries operating I-REC systems, it’s clear that these certificates are becoming a vital tool for businesses seeking to reduce their environmental impact. In Oman, auctions conducted by NPWP offer companies an opportunity to purchase certificates from local renewable projects, further supporting the country’s transition to clean energy.

EMBRACING I-RECS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Ultimately, I-RECs provide companies with an accessible and credible means to demonstrate their commitment to renewable energy. In a world where transparency and accountability in emissions reporting are non-negotiable, tools like I-RECs help bridge the gap between ambition and action. By embracing this system, companies in Oman and beyond can take another step toward a greener, more sustainable future. If your company is looking to make a meaningful claim about its renewable energy use, I-RECs offer a straightforward solution.

OPINION

GILT: A golden opportunity for Indian expatriates



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The writer is a former SBI and Financial Planner resident in Oman.

INVESTMENTS in Government Securities (Gilts) are considered risk-free. They are safe investments as the investors are guaranteed the return of both principal and interest from the government. These securities are Central Government Securities (CGS) Treasury Bills (T-Bills) and State Government Loans (SDL). T Bills are short-term, starting from 91 days to 365 days while CGS are long-term and issued up to 40 years of tenor.

While Non-Resident Indians are not allowed to invest in many popular deposit schemes of the Government of India like the Public Provident Fund, Sukanya Deposit, Senior Citizen Deposit Scheme, certain post office deposit schemes, and also Sovereign Gold Scheme(SGBs), they are however permitted to invest in the Indian Government and State Government Securities.

The advantage of the above is that these investments are risk-free and one can choose from short-term to long-term depending on the liquidity requirements. Again, this is best suited to those with a low-risk tolerance.

Under the Retail Direct Scheme (RBI) individual retail investors can open a 'Retail Direct Gilt (RDG) account with RBI. Using this account, the retail investors

can buy, hold and sell government securities through the online portal. Opening of an account is through a very simple process.

The NRI should have a rupee savings bank account with any bank in India with an online/UPI facility. Through the RBI website, the (https://rbiretaildirect.org.in) account can be opened by uploading the required documents like PAN/Aadhaar, e-mail id, mobile number, address proof, scanned signature and other KYC documents.

Once approved, user ID and other details will be made available through SMS/email. Joint account and nomination facility are available for the RBI Gilt account.

The facility is absolutely free and no charges are involved. Upon opening the account, the individual investor buy the securities through primary auction and also through the secondary platform of RBI known as NDS(OM).

A sufficient amount is to be kept in the savings bank account linked to the RBI Retail Direct account for participating in the auction.

The RBI conducts periodical auctions of Government dated securities and T Bills. Generally, T-Bills auctions are held on all Tuesdays while State Government and Central Government securities are held on Tuesdays and Fridays respec-

The advantage of the above is that these investments are risk-free and one can choose from short-term to long-term depending on the liquidity requirements. Again, this is best suited to those with a low-risk tolerance

tively. The investors are allowed to participate on non-competitive bid and the securities are allotted at a weighted average.

Since the amount payable is not known at the time of placing the bid, the indicative price, the accrued interest and a markup amount are also required to be kept in the SB account and marked lien.

In respect of State Government securities, the issue price is normally declared by the RBI. The excess amount will be released upon allotment of the securities.

Similarly, those who wish to buy securities or sell the securities acquired in the auction may do so in the secondary market (RBI-OM). Hence the scheme provides ample liquidity to the investors.

The minimum amount of investment is INR 10,000 while the maximum is restricted to INR 2 crores in respect of Central Government dated securities and 1 per cent and 5 per cent of the auction amount for state development loans and T-bills respectively. As stated earlier, investments in government securities are best suited to those whose risk appetite is very low and who need regular income.

Government securities except T-Bills pay coupons on a semi-annual basis.

Again, those who hold an outlook of softening of interest rates in the medium to long-term horizon can look for long-dated securities.

TESLA CHOOSES A HARDER SET OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

ELON MUSK'S pronouncements about \$700 billion valued Tesla are often outrageously over-optimistic, but they used to be reasonably detailed. His pivot from chasing supremacy in selling cars to touting artificial intelligence-driven taxis raises a host of questions. The Thursday Cybercab unveiling left viewers hanging.

The event featured dancing robots, hands-free rides around a test track, and a target to launch the no-steering-wheel vehicle "before 2027."

Musk is running behind Alphabet's Waymo and others, which already run driverless taxis in limited areas. But the promise of his self-driving approach, focused on cameras using AI trained by its vast vehicle fleet, leans into Tesla's strengths. Waymo's sport gigantic rigs and costly sensors.

That should allow Tesla to undercut rivals. Morgan Stanley analysts figure its vehicles should cost \$0.18 per mile before various operating expenses, or less than half Waymo's latest setup.

Musk also promises Tesla will update existing cars for truly hands-free driving, a step up from current assisted autonomy.

How he plans to do this is unclear. Waymo's expansion has been hard-won from local regulators; Tesla's approach drew investigations and lawsuits. Its existing autonomy software manages 69 miles between "critical" disengagements in city driving, according to crowdsourced data.

Waymo reports achieving thousands of miles between disengagements — though varying data quality and definitions make comparison difficult.

Even if Musk clears these hurdles, the list of remaining questions is maddening.

Will Tesla run its own app-based service? Or partner with, say, Uber Technologies, where Morgan Stanley reckons some 50,000 drivers may already use Teslas in North America? Does the Cybercab's two-seat design mean Tesla is relinquishing the 14% of rides with more passengers, judging by one study of New York City? Can a car be road-legal without a steering wheel? Tesla's story was once simpler than its valuation of roughly 42 times next-12-months' EBITDA, according to Visible Alpha, implies.

In 2022, when Musk's previous target of outselling Toyota Motor wasn't yet a distant memory, the company's valuation was reasonable, if you assumed 10 million eventual vehicle sales a year. — Reuters



BADAR CHAUDHRY

The writer is Head of Energy Sector, Mashreq



Establishing global regulatory frameworks that incentivise sustainable energy practices will be crucial, ensuring equitable development across regions.

THE global discourse on energy security and the urgent need to transition to sustainable energy sources has reached a critical juncture. The geopolitical turbulence of recent years and the resulting energy price volatility has underscored what is truly at stake: the stability of energy supplies which are essential to the functioning of economies worldwide.

This necessity has, in many cases, relegated long-term sustainability goals to the background, influencing governmental agendas and election results in regions such as Europe, India, and the US, and resonating through international business sectors.

As the climate crisis intensifies, with escalating extreme weather events and worsening environmental degradation, the stakes could not be higher.

There is an increasing recognition that current climate action strategies must evolve beyond ideological aspirations to address the immediate and practical realities of energy needs. This shift is becoming evident, particularly in Europe and parts of the US and within multinational corporations and financial institutions that are beginning to prioritise actionable, results-oriented approaches.

The complexity and urgency of this transition are most vividly illustrated in the US, where the challenge of stabilising electricity demand while transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable sources has become daunting. The stakes are further

amplified by the exponential growth in energy consumption, driven by data centres and the IT industry, highlighting the dire need for reliable power infrastructure. Failure to ensure this stability, regardless of the environmental footprint, could have severe consequences for both economic stability and the broader fight against climate change.

Addressing these challenges requires a balanced approach that integrates cleaner technologies, such as carbon capture, storage, and hydrogen, with the existing fossil fuel infrastructure. While the urgency is clear, it is important to recognise that not all is lost—there is still time to find and implement effective solutions.

Establishing global regulatory frameworks that incentivise sustainable energy practices will be crucial, ensuring equitable development across regions like India, China, and beyond. Technological innovations, such as smart grids, hold great promise for enhancing energy efficiency. Although their deployment has been uneven, particularly in less economically developed areas, there is ample opportunity to expand these technologies. Significant investments in grid infrastructure are essential to facilitate the widespread adoption of renewable energy sources, as evidenced by the progress and disparities observed in regions like Virginia. As we navigate these interconnected challenges, the path forward becomes clearer: simultaneous investments in power generation

and grid modernisation are not only possible but imperative. This white paper seeks to explore these multifaceted dynamics, offering insights into how the global community can balance immediate energy security needs with the pursuit of long-term sustainability objectives. With collective effort and determination, we can forge a resilient and sustainable energy future that meets the needs of both present and future generations. There is still time to make meaningful progress, and together, we can shape a better energy landscape for all.

The recognition of the pressing need for a more pragmatic approach to energy transition is rapidly gaining traction. Previously "blind ideological" methods, particularly in Europe and parts of the US, are being reevaluated in favour of strategies that address the immediate complexities of modern energy demands.

The unexpected surge in electricity consumption from US data centres has underscored the critical necessity for reliable energy sources—whether clean or conventional.

The challenge now is to meet this accelerating demand while addressing the essential energy needs of developing economies like India. A balanced approach that aligns energy security with climate objectives is not just important—it is imperative, and the time to act is now.

As electrification spreads swiftly across sectors—from transportation to industry—the strain on existing energy infrastructures is intensifying.

This shift underscores the vital need for a resilient and adaptable energy grid capable of meeting increased demand without compromising stability. Rapidly scaling up energy production is not a distant consideration; it is an immediate priority.

Prioritising energy security in planning and policy decisions will enable a smoother transition that supports both economic growth and environmental protection.

Furthermore, there is a growing awareness that fossil fuels and hydrocarbons must continue to play a role in the energy mix, at least in the near term. Advances in carbon capture, storage, and hydrogen technologies offer cleaner ways to utilise these resources, creating a pathway where traditional energy sources can coexist with greener technologies.

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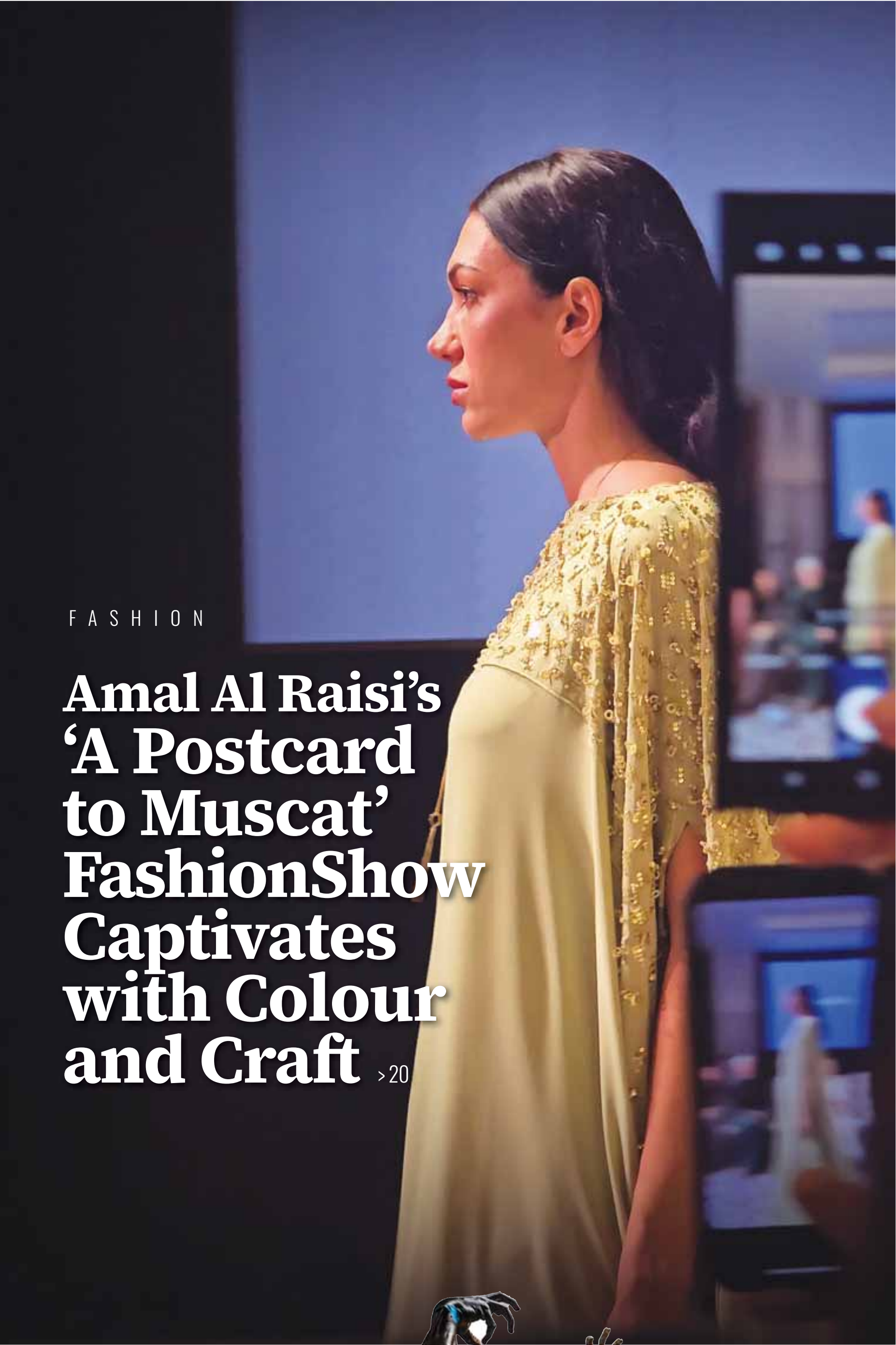
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ART/LIFE



F A S H I O N

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LIFE IN THE ACADEME

Integrating AI Chatbots in Education: Significant Challenges and Critical Factors



BY DR ZAINAB AL AJMI
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Dr Zainab Al Ajmi is an experienced academic who specialises in exploring trends and developments within her field.

Technology has evolved over the years; what was seen ten years ago as a technological revolution is now becoming ordinary. Moreover, AI technologies are at the pace of creating revolutions and paradigm shifts in almost all areas such as education, healthcare, business, engineering, automotive, etc. A chatbot is an AI technology powered by natural language processing techniques to learn and understand human language. Recently, many universities and educational institutions have started to use chatbot technologies to help students in the admission process and academic advising along with the learning process. Teachers can use chatbots to follow up with students, review their understanding of subjects, and assess homework, among many other (Aleedy, Atwell & Meshoul, 2022).

Chatbots offer numerous benefits, yet they also present certain limitations and challenges. According to (Annus, 2023) the analysis of these benefits encompasses two primary dimensions: the impact on students and the implications for teachers' work. For students the impacts include: 1. Interactive and personalised learning: ChatGPT enables interactive learning and question-and-answer based communication. Students can ask ChatGPT questions and ChatGPT can answer them, helping them to extend their knowledge and understanding of the material. This form of education gives students the opportunity to interact directly with an intelligent system and receive support in their learning process, even if they do not have immediate access to teachers or other tutors. 2. Fast and available help: ChatGPT is always available and can quickly answer students' questions and problems. This can help students get immediate help when they need it. ChatGPT can also provide support for students who have limited access to educational resources. 3. Language learning: ChatGPT can be useful for language learning. Through interactive communication, students can practice the target language and improve their grammar and language skills. As for teachers, the impact of AI chatbots includes several aspects, including: 1. Support materials and resources: ChatGPT can help teachers produce support materials and resources. ChatGPT can be used by teachers to generate supplementary materials, examples, or exercises to support the curriculum. 2. Generate tests and assignments: ChatGPT can help teachers create tests, assignments and homework. Teachers can generate questions using ChatGPT and the system can provide answers for students. This can test students' knowledge and help teachers monitor students' progress. 3. Research tool: ChatGPT can be a useful research tool for teachers. Teachers can ask questions about research topics or teaching issues and the system can provide extensive information and help teachers to expand their own knowledge and continuously improve their teaching.

Despite all these benefits of AI chatbots in education, studies indicate that there are several concerns to consider: First, responses may contain incomplete or incorrect information, which can mislead students if they are unable to recognise and rectify errors. Second, excessive reliance on AI tools can diminish students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, studies suggest that overuse of AI risks students' intellectual independence. Furthermore, the absence of human interaction in AI lacks the personal touch and emotional support essential to the learning process. Finally, privacy and security concerns arise when AI systems collect and store data.

Q U I C K F E A T U R E S



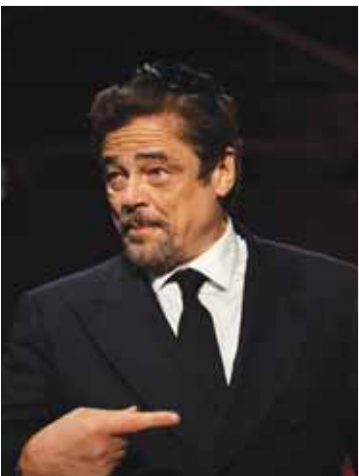
ART

An expert inspects the painting “The Virgin and Child with the young Saint John the Baptist” created by Sandro Botticelli and displayed in the chapel of the Chateau de Chambord, in Chambord, central France. — AFP



LIFESTYLE

A competitor strikes some poses while warming up backstage during the 2024 Mr and Miss East Africa Bodybuilding Contest in Nairobi. — AFP



FILMS

Actor and film-maker Benicio del Toro arrives to attend the opening ceremony of the 16th edition of the Lumiere Film Festival in Lyon, central eastern France. — AFP

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



Hold on Tight

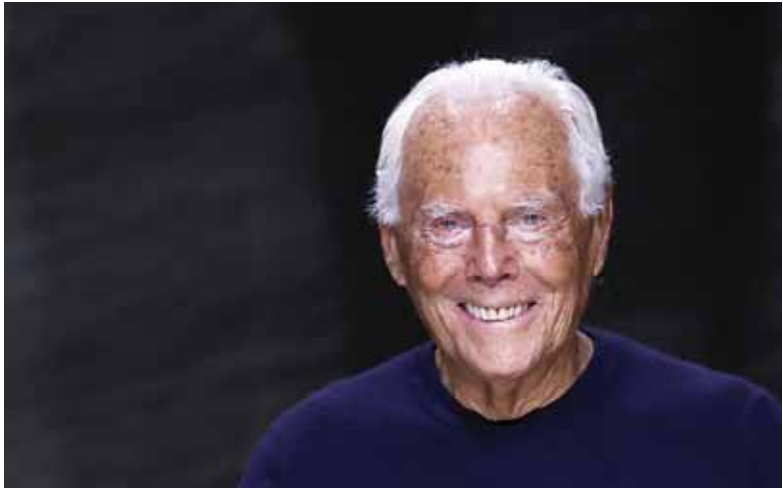


Desert Adventure

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Giorgio Armani, 90, says he plans to retire within ‘two or three years’



Giorgio Armani, the founder of the eponymous Italian fashion brand, said in an interview published on Sunday that he plans to retire within the next two or three years.

Armani is 90 years old and has so far been tight-lipped about the succession plans for the company he founded in 1975 and still firmly controls.

“I can still give myself two or three years as head of the company. Not more, it would be negative,” he told Italy’s Corriere della Sera newspaper.

Armani said he has restless nights in which he dreams of a future in which “I no longer have to be the one who says ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’”

He added he has received “slightly more insistent” approaches from potential outside investors in his company, “but for the moment I do not see any openings.”

With no children to pass it on

to, there has been speculation about the long-term future of Armani’s empire and whether, in an industry dominated by luxury conglomerates such as LVMH and Kering, it will be able to maintain the independence he treasures.

In the interview with Corriere della Sera, Armani said he had “built a kind of structure, a project, a protocol” to govern his succession, without elaborating.

Last year, Reuters reported on a document held by a notary in Milan which sets out the future governing principles for those who will inherit the group, and on another that details issues including protecting jobs at the firm.

Armani’s heirs are expected to include his sister, three other family members working in the company, long-term collaborator and partner Pantaleo Dell’Orco and a charitable foundation.—Reuters



Desert Racers Demolish Art Carved by Ancient People in Chile

EVERY year, hundreds of racers from around the world gather in northern Chile with their all-terrain motorcycles, jeeps, quads and buggies. They race in circuits for hundreds of miles around the Atacama Desert, carving tire tracks into one of the driest places on Earth.

What many of those racers potentially ignore is that the Atacama was once a canvas for ancient Indigenous peoples of South America. Starting 3,000 years ago, those Indigenous people carved vast figures of animals, humans and objects on the desert’s slopes. Known as geoglyphs, the specimens at Alto Barranco in the Tarapacá region stand out for their remarkable preservation.

But it is in that very location that both authorised and illegal off-road racing has occurred. Imagery made with drones and released last month by Gonzálo Pimentel, an archaeologist and president of the Fundación Desierto de Atacama, a Chilean non-governmental organisation, highlighted the accumulated damage to what he calls “the desert’s history book.” Vehicles — also including trucks from mining operations — run roughshod over the geoglyphs in Alto Barranco and other zones of the desert, scarring them with hundreds of tracks.

“When we saw the drone footage, we couldn’t believe it,” Pimentel said, noting that several key figures were now barely recognisable. The worst part, he added, is that “the damage is irreversible.”

Faced with increasing destruction of Alto Barranco’s art from off-road drivers and other encroachments, and potential damage to other desert regions of archaeological importance, activists say governments at all levels of the country are not doing enough to preserve them.

“It’s a tragedy,” said Luis Pérez Reyes, director of the Regional Museum of Iquique, who credits a love of the geoglyphs as a child with inspiring him to become an archaeologist.

The Atacama Desert receives rain only a few times a year. The intense sun and harsh conditions make plant and animal life almost non-existent. That has left the desert virtually untouched, Pimentel said: “This landscape has stayed the same for 25 million years.”

Marcela Sepúlveda, president of the Chilean Society of Archaeology, noted that big signs had been placed around archaeological zones to prevent dam-

age, meaning that drivers should be fully aware of what they’re heading into. “The geoglyphs are gigantic,” she said. “No one can claim they didn’t see them. That’s impossible.”

Pérez Reyes began raising formal complaints in 2017 about the damage to geoglyphs caused by the rallies. Since then, he and residents of Tarapacá have gathered evidence, monitoring the riders who venture too close to the ancient figures. But he said the government continued to approve major racing events.



Organisers of one large race, the Atacama Rally, denied any responsibility for the damage to Alto Barranco, which they had last raced near in 2022. Gerardo Fontaine, director of the Atacama Rally, said that all participants knew their route, were tracked by GPS and were alerted if they went off course. He added that the race organisers set the routes, which were then approved by regional authorities.

“The real issue is with drivers who ride rented motorcycles in the desert without permission,” he said. “No one says anything to them.”

After the 2022 race, Pérez Reyes filed a complaint with judicial authorities in Tarapacá that claimed the rally’s route had overlapped with archaeological sites, along with photos of racers passing through dunes near legally protected areas. Since the complaint was filed, no

one has been penalised.

The latest Atacama Rally, on Sept. 7, moved to Tierra Amarilla, which is about 600 miles from Tarapacá. In a statement sent to regional authorities a month before the event, the National Monuments Council warned that the rally route crossed 16 areas with important archaeological and palaeontological sites. The council asked the race organisers and the regional authorities to provide more information on what measures would be taken to prevent damage to those areas.

Those who damage archaeological sites in Chile can face more than five years in prison and fines equivalent to more than \$14,500, according to the Ministry of National Assets. But José Barraza, the director of cultural heritage for the Tarapacá region, said that in many cases, complaints were dismissed or investigation files were left open because of lack of evidence, as catching someone in the act is a challenge in the vastness of the desert.

“There are no license plates, no faces,” Barraza said.

The latest drone images caught the attention of Chilean federal authorities. Marcela Sandoval, Chile’s minister of national assets, said officials had visited Alto Barranco to start an investigation. However, she noted that prosecuting those responsible would pose challenges, as many of the tire tracks on the geoglyphs had been present for years.

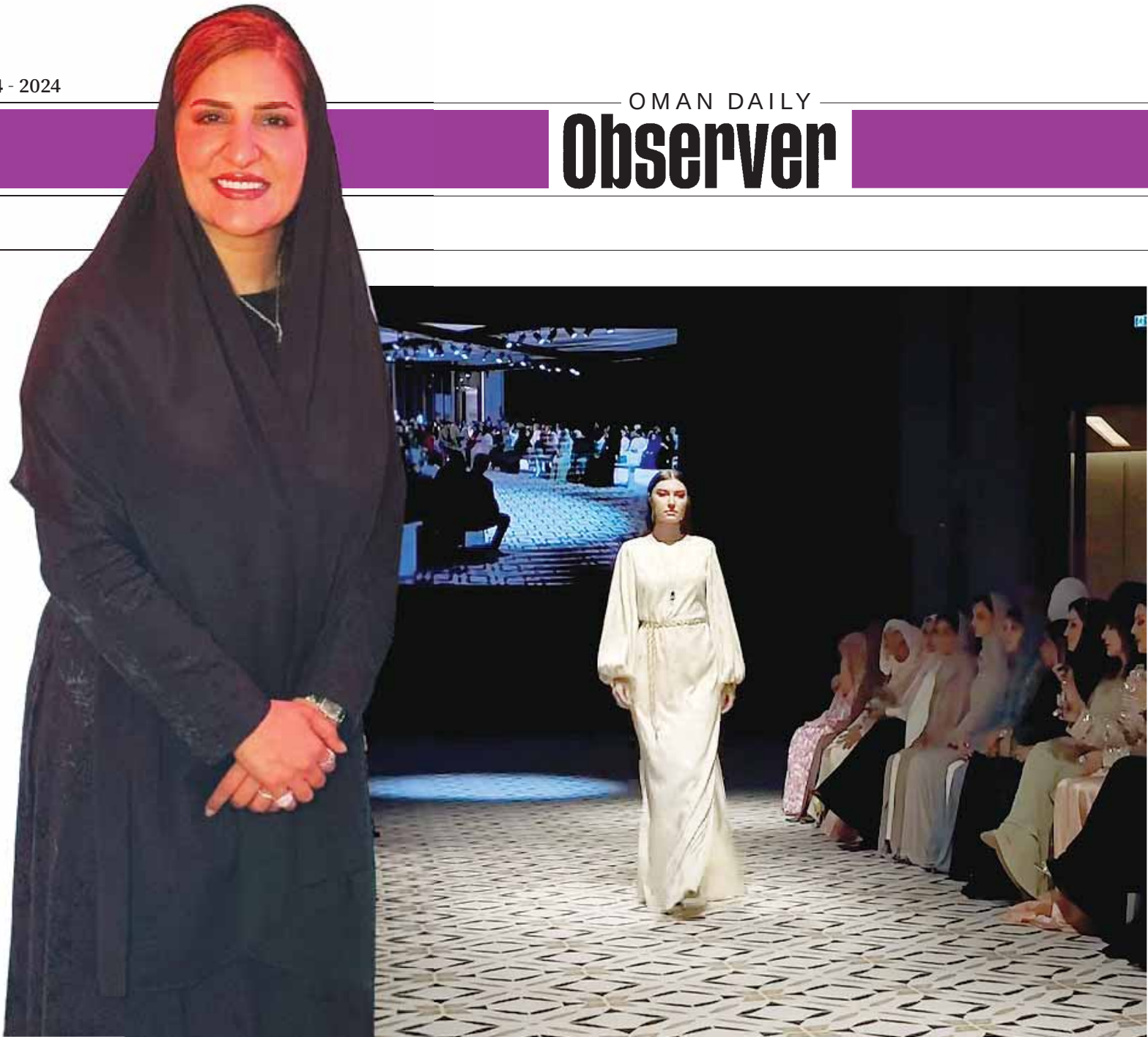
For now, the government is convening experts to develop strategies for raising awareness among desert rally enthusiasts, to protect the remaining undamaged geoglyphs and to improve signs around archaeological areas.

“The government’s responses have always been reactive rather than preventive,” Pérez Reyes said. Throughout the desert, he said, there are dozens of informal motorcycle and jeep rental businesses for racers who venture into the desert on their weekends with no supervision.

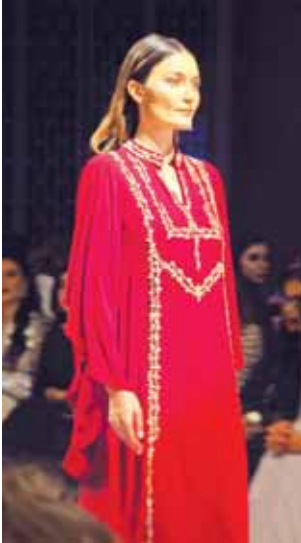
Pérez Reyes added that several of the geoglyphs that inspired his interest in archaeology as a child would soon no longer exist. But he said he believed that displaying the bleak images at his museum could help raise awareness of the enormous ancient treasure that lies in the Chilean desert dunes.

“The intention was never to do it this way,” he said, “to create a museum of ‘never again.’” —NNT

The successful event highlighted a significant moment for Oman's fashion scene, showcasing the immense talent that exists within the country and the brands that are willing to support them. One thing that everyone can appreciate about Al Raisi is that she's consistent and just like last year, it's great to see that her fire to create stunning pieces is as strong as ever.



Amal Al Raisi's 'A Postcard to Muscat' Fashion Show Captivates with Colour and Craft



BY YERU EBUEN

ON SATURDAY

night, the ballroom of the prestigious St Regis Muscat was transformed into a fashion runway as renowned Omani designer Amal al Raisi unveiled her latest collection.

The event, a celebration of elegance and craftsmanship, showcased a series of stunning pieces that reflect not only Al Raisi's creativity but also the rich heritage of Oman.

Amal al Raisi's collection, 'A Postcard to Muscat', draws inspiration from the intricate motifs and patterns that define Omani architecture and textiles. The pieces are characterised by flowing silhouettes, luxurious fabrics, and a palette that harmoniously blends rich jewel tones with delicate pastels.

Each dress, adorned with intricate embroidery and beadwork, pays homage to traditional Omani craftsmanship while embracing contemporary fashion trends. What makes this collection distinct is its ability to seamlessly meld heritage with modernity, allowing wearers to feel both rooted in tradition and stylishly avant-garde.

Al Raisi has established herself as an influential figure in the Middle Eastern fashion arena, known for her dedication to promoting Omani heritage through her designs.

Founded in 2010, her eponymous label has gained international acclaim for its exquisite attention to detail and innovative approach to traditional garments. Al Raisi's commitment to sustainability and ethical practices further cements her brand's reputation as a leader in the fashion world, making her a true trailblazer for Oman's burgeoning fashion industry.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE DRESSES

In her previous season, Al Raisi drew deep inspiration from Oman's storied maritime history — a narrative intertwined with trade routes that connected Oman with various nations. This historical context enriches her designs, notably through the incorporation of the "Sabaiya", a traditional handmade weaving technique unique to Oman. Crafted using local materials like wool and cotton, the Sabaiya features a timeless stripe pattern integral to traditional Omani attire for both men and women. In this latest collection, it is easy to see that there are still some spillovers from the previous season.

The collection still resonates with the earth tones and vivid colours that Al Raisi is renowned for — deep reds, browns and soft pastels remain integral elements, reflecting the rich colours of the Omani landscape and cultural heritage.

This year, she also went for vibrant blues and finally, she completed Oman's colours by incorporating the deep greens of its mountains.

One of the standout aspects of this season's collection is the introduction of flowy pants, a refreshing addition to Al Raisi's signature style. Over the past few seasons, there has been a significant global trend towards embracing pants in women's fashion, demonstrating that they are not just practical but also empowering pieces. Al Raisi has successfully tapped into this trend, creating stylish, flowing pants that can easily transition from day to night while cater-

ing to a diverse clientele. This evolution in her design not only showcases versatility, but also aligns with the contemporary woman's demand for both comfort and style.

The strategic use of subtle prints and the exploration of textures in this collection also add depth and intrigue to the designs. Al Raisi is steadily expanding her repertoire, creating wearable pieces that effortlessly reflect the dynamism and sophistication of modern women. The flowing silhouettes allow for movement and freedom, embodying a contemporary ethos while respecting the foundations of Omani craft.

Amidst the spectacular dresses, the show left some feeling that there was a missing element — a standout piece that could steal the spotlight and serve as a finale for the runway. While the collection was celebrated for its elegance and wearability, one couldn't help but anticipate a breathtaking dress that would wrap up the show in a crescendo of applause and admiration.

Perhaps this season, Al Raisi chose to focus on a cohesive narrative rather than one that includes a singularly dramatic centrepiece.

For fans and fashionistas alike, the allure of Amal al Raisi's collections remains undeniable, and if this season's offerings are any indication, we can expect even more exciting innovations in the next one.

THE POWER OF LOCAL FASHION

The fashion show, a showcase of what's in store for the Spring-Summer '25, attracted a diverse array of esteemed guests, including socialites, influencers and members of the media, all eager to witness the magic of Amal al Raisi's creations. The inviting atmosphere of the St Regis Muscat provided the perfect backdrop for an evening filled with glamour and style.

This elegant event wouldn't have been possible without the generous support from its sponsors, St Regis Muscat, Range Rover and Amouage. Range Rover, synonymous with luxury, showcased its latest automobile model, beautifully complementing the high-fashion presentation.

Particularly notable was Amouage's involvement, which went beyond mere sponsorship. The luxury fragrance house created a distinct activation area at the venue, drawing in guests with its signature elegance. Amouage also engaged its own media connections, offering a curated experience that included private invitations to influential personalities and journalists. This strategic activation not only enhanced the event, but also created a unique atmosphere where high fashion met high fragrance.

One of the highlights of the collaboration was the promotion of Amouage's game-changing scent, Guidance, crafted by the perfumer Quentin Bisch. This fragrance, rich with notes that evoke warmth and sophistication, served as the perfect olfactory companion to Al Raisi's collection. The scent's ability to capture the essence of Omani culture while appealing to a global audience aligns impeccably with Al Raisi's mission to promote Omani heritage through fashion.

The successful event highlighted a significant moment for Oman's fashion scene, showcasing the immense talent that exists within the country and the brands that are willing to support them. One thing that everyone can appreciate about Al Raisi is that she's consistent and just like last year, it's great to see that her fire to create stunning pieces is as strong as ever.