

Rafo personnel receive award in UK

An air crew comprising a pilot and two air navigators from the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo) received the Prince Philip Helicopter Rescue Award for rescuing 5 mountaineers from high altitudes using night-vision goggles (NVG), in the Wilayat of Nakhl in South Al Batinah Governorate. The Omani air crew were honoured by the honourable company of air pilots in the United Kingdom.



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www.omanobserver.om editor@omanobserver.om

P15

OMAN FACES US ANTI-DUMPING DUTY ON ALUMINIUM FOIL IMPORTS



P12

VERSTAPPEN HOLDS OFF HAMILTON TO DOUBLE HIS F1 LEAD



P20

OFF THE BEATEN PATH OF QURAYAT'S WADI DAYQAH



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO AUSTRIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr Alexander Van der Bellen of the Republic of Austria on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Dr Alexander. — ONA

SULTANATE ATTENDS MGI CEREMONY

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, represented the Sultanate of Oman in the launching ceremony of the Middle East Green Initiative (MGI), in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The initiative is aimed at combating climate change in the Middle East region, promoting investment and implementation of the joint environmental commitments.

FIRST PROJECT IN SINO-OMAN PARK

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) on Monday celebrated the opening of Duqm Hongtong Piping Factory, under the auspices of Eng Yahya Khamis al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing Operations of SEZAD. The first-of-its-kind factory in Oman is the first project in the Sino-Omani Industrial Park in Duqm.

DETAILS ON P13

Coordination key to serving public interest



HH Sayyid Fahd during the tour of State Council and the Majlis Ash'shura on Monday.



PHOTOS BY MOHAMED AL RASHDI

PRAISE FOR EFFORTS OF CITIZENS DURING THE RECENT CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

EFFORTS TO RESTORE NORMALCY COMMENDED BY MANY COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD

COOPERATION BETWEEN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND COUNCIL OF OMAN VITAL

THE ROLE OF THE PANEL TASKED WITH COORDINATION TO BE ACTIVATED

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, and a number of Cabinet members on Monday went on tour of the State Council and the Majlis Ash'shura. HH Sayyid Fahd was received

at the State Council's building by Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council. At the Majlis, he was received by Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of the Majlis Ash'shura. The visit comes within the context of coordination

between the Council of Ministers and Council of Oman on matters serving the public interest. During the visit, HH Sayyid Fahd commended the role of the State Council and the Majlis Ash'shura during the recent climatic conditions. He also hailed

the efforts exerted by citizens in all parts of the Sultanate of Oman as they stood by state institutions and private sector establishments in handling the situation. HH Sayyid Fahd valued the role of non-governmental organisations and charity societies

in lending help to people whose properties were damaged. These efforts and measures to restore normalcy received the commendation of many countries around the world and they highlighted the values of solidarity that distinguish Omanis. [TURN TO P2](#)



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Coordination key to serving public interest



FROM PAGE 1

HH Sayyid Fahd underscored the significance of continuous coordination between the Council of Ministers and the Council of Oman towards achieving the level of cooperation needed to implement economic and social plans and programmes.

HH Sayyid Fahd pointed out that the government places cooperation between the two institutions on top of its priorities, since the visions and the studies they draft contribute directly to the country's comprehensive development.

HH Sayyid Fahd stressed the importance of the current period which, he said, witnesses challenges that require more efforts to safeguard the country's gains, achieve further progress and intensify social awareness.

It was agreed during the meeting to activate the role of the committee tasked with coordinating between the State Council and the Majlis Ash'shura so that the panel would play a greater role in addressing the requirements of the current stage.

The chairmen and members of State Council and Majlis Ash'shura offices expressed their appreciation for the government's cooperation with them. They pledged to work more closely to enhance the country's comprehensive development under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. — ONA





OMAN ATTENDS LAUNCH OF MIDDLE EAST GREEN INITIATIVE

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, represented the Sultanate of Oman at a ceremony in Riyadh on Monday to launch the Middle East Green Initiative. The initiative aims to combat climate change in the Middle East, consolidate investment and rally efforts towards the implementation of joint environment protection obligations. — ONA

Sayyid Shihab receives
envoy of Netherlands

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, received in his office at Al Murtafaa Garrison on Monday Stella Kloth, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands appointed to the Sultanate of Oman. The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations and exchanged views on matters of common interest. — ONA

Financial stability improved: CBO

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) on Monday released the ninth issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR).

The FSR 2021 states that “The outlook for financial stability has improved with the rollout of vaccines and gradual transition to normalcy”.

While acknowledging the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the report mentions that the policy measures taken by the government and CBO to support businesses and households avoided any major set-back and supported a

rapid recovery of the economy.

Despite the heightened global uncertainty about the effectiveness of Covid-19 vaccinations and the new strains of the novel coronavirus, the outlook for the Omani economy looks positive in 2021 and 2022 due to the steady recovery in oil prices, the credible fiscal consolidation measures taken by the government, as well as the implementation of the government's large-scale vaccination programme. A survey of a cross-section of market participants and other stakeholders conducted in August

2021 revealed that the majority of the respondents showed confidence in the Omani financial system, and their optimism regarding the likelihood of an adverse event in the near future improved as compared to the previous survey.

The combined impact of the drop in oil prices and the strict precautionary measures caused nominal GDP to decline by 17 per cent in 2020. Similarly, real GDP declined by 2.8 per cent, a considerably smaller contraction than what was expected by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The persistent twin deficit along with the upward trend in public debt remained key challenges to macroeconomic stability in the Sultanate of Oman. Both domestic and external public debt increased during 2020 and the first half of 2021 to finance the elevated twin deficit. External debt continues to be the main source of deficit financing, but it also played an important role in supporting CBO's foreign reserves.

— ONA

Information Minister, IFJ official
discuss avenues of cooperation

MUSCAT: Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, received in his office here on Monday Anthony Bellanger, Secretary General of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and Al Hashimi Al Nuwairah, Adviser of the IFJ.

The meeting reviewed aspects of cooperation between the Ministry of Information and the IFJ in various areas. Al Harrasi underscored the importance of training and rehabilitating the journalists, which has a positive

impact on their professional level and the important roles they carry out.

The Minister of Information also touched on the Omani Journalists Association (OJA) hosting the General Assembly's upcoming meetings of the IFJ's 31st Congress, scheduled to be held in the Sultanate of Oman in 2022. He affirmed that the Sultanate of Oman will provide all facilities that would contribute to the success of the meetings.

The IFJ Secretary General

expressed his delight over the visit and the opportunity he got to closely view the development witnessed in the media field. He commended the OJA roles at the local and international levels, which crowned the OJA with the unanimous approval of all IFJ members to host the 31st Congress meetings. The step reflects the progress reached by the Omani media. The meeting was attended by officials from the Ministry of Information and the OJA. — ONA

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In brief

■ MUSCAT

OMAN AIR TO RESUME
MUSCAT-PARIS FLIGHTS

Oman Air will resume flights between Muscat and Paris from October 31. The flights will operate three times weekly on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, departing Muscat at 02:45 pm local time and arriving in Paris at 07:25 pm local time. Flights from Paris will depart at 09:10 pm local time and arrive in Muscat at 07:10 am local time on Monday, Thursday and Saturday. All flights are scheduled to operate with Boeing 787 Dreamliner. Oman Air will maintain its comprehensive safety programme throughout all elements of the journey.

17KG OF DRUGS SEIZED
FROM TRAFFICKERS

The Directorate-General for Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances has seized more than 17kg of drugs and 800 tablets of psychotropic substances from two drug traffickers. One of the traffickers had infiltrated into the country via the sea and concealed the drugs on a beach in Muscat. He was arrested along with the other defendant with the drugs in their possession. The Muscat Governorate Police Command, in cooperation with the Special Task Police, arrested two women of African nationality on charges of fraud, extortion and threatening. The defendants displayed indecent photos and provided low-price health club services through social media.

Officials' school visits to
ensure children's safety

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

Close on the heels of the opening of schools, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has said visits by the officials would be conducted at various schools, which are working either in hybrid or classroom modes.

The visits are planned by a joint working group comprising the Department of School and University Health at the MoH, the Directorate General of Nursing Affairs, and the Ministry of Education's Guidance and Awareness department.

The dedicated inspectors from these departments will carry out visits to the schools and colleges to ensure that they strictly adhere to the Covid-19 protocol and are constantly monitoring the children against violation of Covid rules.

They will inspect the classrooms, furniture, school clinic, environment, school cafeteria, and check personal hygiene. A supervision visit form

has been prepared for all groups that covers all areas, health and guidance services and is aimed at creating health awareness.

“This initiative of visiting the educational institutions is part of the tasks of the working group formed within the framework of continuous cooperation between the MoH and MoE,” a statement from the MoH said.

The teams conducting field visits to schools to follow up on the implementation of the precautionary measures in schools will also identify the key needs and challenges facing the implementation of school health services.

“Since students have been allowed to return to the schools, the Supreme Committee entrusted with studying scopes for a mechanism to handle developments resulting from Covid-19 pandemic, has been extra vigilant and has instructed to observe the schools and other institutions against any violation of Covid rules,” an official from the MoH added.

OMAN CONVENTION
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وزارة عمان
مركز عمان للمؤتمرات والمعارض

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

OCEC would like to invite competent and experienced companies to participate in the Tendering process for Operating and managing the kitchens at the OCEC:

Particulars	Description
Subject	Operating and managing the kitchens
Tender No.	OCEC/T/2021/15
Tender Fees Payment	Beneficiary: Oman Convention and Exhibition Center Bank: Sohar International Branch: Qurum - Sultanate of Oman Account No. 005020045872 Swift Code: BSHROMRU Finance Code: 609109900
Tender Fees (non-refundable)	OMR 25/-
Tender Document Sale Start Date	26. 10. 21
Site visit Date	1&2 November 2021
Last Clarification Date	4 November 2021
Tender Documents Closing & Sealing End Date	9 November 2021
Tender Submission	All bidders must submit their offers with the terms and conditions of the tender by sending their bids to the e-mail: caibalushi@ocec.om Finance Department P.O. Box 1659, P.C. 130, Al Athaiba, Sultanate of Oman Tel: + 968 24 233 930, Fax: + 968 24 233 801, 71194152 • OCEC is not bound to award the contract to the lowest bid or any other bidder. • Each Bidder must leave a business card with contact details for required tender communication (company name, contact name, telephone and email) • All tender communication will be emailed to this contact person and email address caibalushi@ocec.om • Each Bidder must send a copy of its relevant Ministry of Commerce and Industry registration (except for International Bidders) - Notwithstanding the specific terms in the Tender Documents.
Companies Grade	G 4 and Above
Experience	International & Local experience
Tender Document Collection	Tender documents can be obtained by e-mail after sending the electronic payment receipt during working hours: Sunday - Thursday 8:30am - 3:00pm.

Wake up to kids' SAFETY

* CHILDREN CAN EASILY GET DISTRACTED AND LOSE THEIR WAY. THE PERMANENT CONCERN AND REQUEST TO CHILDREN, "PLEASE DO NOT FALL ASLEEP IN THE BUS"

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

The request not to fall asleep during the bus ride might be reasonable, but not for kindergarten kids.

Schools have just reopened after the pandemic lockdown, and the safety of students in school buses has come up again, with Royal Oman Police charging a school bus driver and a supervisor with negligence.

There have been incidents of students being forgotten in the bus, but the rules are clear this time. Last week in Muscat, a child was left behind in the school bus unattended for hours after other students were dropped off, and the child had to be hospitalised.

This has once again kicked up the debate on who is to be blamed? Parents have once again raised concerns. The *Observer* spoke to some of the parents and members of the family with school-going children.

"I always think, what if that happened to my child? When I sign up my children in any school, I make sure to have a bus supervisor who is keen and responsible. Such accidents

happen all the time, you cannot but worry and wonder if the situation would not happen to you.

School admin is responsible as well. A register of attendance should be made and monitored daily to check absences and the missing", said Zainab al Nasser.

Mohammed bin Iqbal al Bulushi, a concerned father, said, "Children forgotten in the bus is a very serious situation. In the past, we have gone through stories of losing children because of this negligence and in other instances where children miraculously survive after the incident. Can this be called an accident? It is important to have supervisors to ensure the child safely arrives in the school compound and is later dropped off safely home."

"I wish there were two people in the bus who will take the responsibility to make sure no child is left behind. My sister has her children going to school, and everyday, she speaks to the driver everyday requesting him to ensure the children reach safely at school premises and are brought back, ensuring they enter the home. Parents are concerned that

I am not comfortable with school bus transportation. My children use personal transportation, and it gives me peace of mind. I know exactly where they have reached. In any case, I think they should take attendance before and after who is on the bus and who has not come that day. This is one major way to avoid mishaps

HUWAIDA
AL SHEIKHANI
Parent

about young drivers because of rash driving", pointed out Salma al Habsi, an observant aunt.

Many parents have also opted for private transportation for this very concern.

"I am not comfortable with school bus transportation. My children use personal transportation, and it gives me peace of mind. I know exactly where they have reached. In any case, I think they should take attendance before and after who is on the bus and who has not come that day. This is one major way to avoid mishaps", said Huwaida al Sheikhani.

Mothers are also requesting for women drivers.

"My sister goes by car and so do a lot of my school-going cousins", said Azzah al Mamari.

Parents are also requesting school authorities to have the supervisor of the bus to come out of the school bus as they drop off children in front of their home.

"Children can easily get distracted and lose their way", said a father.

And the permanent concern and request to children, "Please do not fall asleep in the bus."



O M A N I Y O U T H D A Y T O D A Y

Role of youth in nation building takes centre stage

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman will celebrate Omani Youth Day, which falls on October 26 every year. Since the outset of the renaissance, youth have been the focus of the State's attention. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik reiterated this approach at all events, the latest of which was the meeting of the Council of Ministers on October 12, 2021.

His Majesty the Sultan underscored the role of youth in the development process, noting that youth constitute the present and future of nations. In this context, His Majesty laid emphasis on the significance of establishing mechanisms and channels of communication capable of portraying the efforts made to answer the needs of development in all sectors.

His Majesty the Sultan stressed the importance of listening to youth and responding to their aspirations. For this purpose, His Majesty the Sultan instructed governors, in cooperation with the departments concerned, to hold regular meetings with youth, to take-up issues of concern to them and listen to their views in a manner that enables them to perform the role expected of them in promoting the march of nation building.

This has been a long-standing conviction expressed by His Majesty the Sultan during his Royal speech on February 23, 2020, when he said, "Youth are the wealth of a nation, its inexhaustible resource and the arms that build it. They are its present and future. We will always listen to them, and sense their needs, interests and aspirations which will definitely be accorded the attention that they deserve."

"We stand today with firm invincible will on the threshold of

a vital stage of development and nation building. It is a stage in which you all have participated in drawing out its prospects in Oman Vision 2040 and contributed to devising its economic, social and cultural goals, in a manner that embodies a clear-cut vision, great expectation towards a more prosperous future. We are all aware of the challenges imposed by the current global conditions and their implications to the region and to us, since we are part of this world, influencing it and are influenced by it.

We will also accord full attention and support to develop a comprehensive national framework of recruitment, considering it one of the fundamental pillars of the national economy."

An observer of the Omani renaissance would perceive that it has been established with youthful hands. This is evidenced by the speeches of the late Sultan Qaboos, who said that youth are the backbone of the nation. The tangible accomplishments made in every spot in the Sultanate in the north, the south, the east and the west of the country — and in the plains, the mountains, the cities and everywhere.

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, gave a speech on the occasion of Omani Youth Day during which he stressed the Sultanate of Oman's firm belief in the role of youth in carrying forward the banner of the renewable renaissance.

"The government has accorded great attention to youth since the beginning of the renaissance and empowered them to shoulder their responsibilities in the nation-building process.

Omani youth proved that



His Majesty the Sultan has underscored the role of youth in the development process, noting that youth constitute the present and future of nations. In this context, His Majesty laid emphasis on the significance of establishing mechanisms and channels of communication capable of portraying the efforts made to answer the needs of development in all sectors

they command a high sense of national responsibility. They comprehended the prerequisites of progress and proceeded to achieve it through a clear-cut vision based on partnership in promoting the renewable renaissance while at the same time interacting with the

outside world and its culture for the sake of coexistence in a climate of love and peace," HH Sayyid Theyazin said.

He added that, in pursuance of the Royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to accord full attention to youth

and empower them, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has been established as an overarching institution that accommodates the aspirations of youth, their innovations and their aspirations.

The role of youth has been underscored through their participation in formulating Oman Vision 2040, which affirms that the government depends on youth in promoting the development process. Therefore, the government embarked on developing the skills of youth and incorporated their projects and initiatives in the streamline of domestic development, keeping pace with global advancement spearheaded by the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the emergence of new economic activities.

According to Census 2020, the number of Omani youth stood at 549,969 and some of them contributed directly to the formulating Oman Vision 2040.

The vision lays the foundations of an empowered youth community whose individuals espouse innovation and take pride in their culture, values of citizenship and a decent life of sustainable welfare, health and productivity. A comprehensive, lifelong education is an inseparable part of this system through which Omani youth can develop their skills to be able to contribute to a better future in a country whose institutions enjoy a sense of flexibility and responsibility. An example of this is the fact that the media is in close contact with youth, so that it could open channels of dialogue with them.

Oman Vision 2040 underlines the need to upgrade the quality of education and develop educational programmes to enable educated youth to compete at the local and

international markets and utilise their skills to promote high levels of productivity needed for building a vibrant economy.

Oman Vision 2040 inches closer to youth everyday, not only by developing educational establishments, but also by applying international standards for modern, technical education, scientific research and innovation.

The strong bonds between academic and research institutions and the private sector played a great role in spreading awareness among individuals and society. This mandates commitment to values of performance linked to productivity, as well as the establishment of a national order to take care of talented youth and utilise their innovative ideas in the best possible manner.

Omani youth excelled on many occasions. Over the past five years, more than 1,000 youths took part in a number of activities under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. The activities included Oman Quizzes, the Youth Excellence Award, Omani Youth Day, the Omani Researcher, the Young Author.

By 2020, 360 innovation initiatives saw the participation of 67,410 youths.

More than 260 Omani researchers took part in different local programmes and competitions, among them the Falling Walls Lab, Marathon of Biodiversity Ideas, OCCI Innovation Award, programmes of transforming 4IR graduation projects into small enterprises, Smart Applications on Covid-19 Control, London Youth International Youth Science Forum and Lindau Nobel Laureates Forum.

(Pictures used are taken before the Covid pandemic period)



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

TENDERS NOTICE

The Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources
Announces the following Tenders:-

Tender No.	Description	Tender Documents Price (R.O)	Class	Last Date for Collection of Documents	Last Date for Submission of Documents
422/2021/MAFWR/HQ-49	Supply and Installation Data of Servers in Central Laboratory of Food Safety	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021
423/2021/MAFWR/HQ-50	For Provide Agricultural Services for the Tissue Culture Center at Jimah - Buhla	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021
424/2021/MAFWR/HQ-51	Management, Operation and Maintenance of Internal Government Research Farms at AL-Dakelya Governorate	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021
425/2021/MAFWR/HQ-52	For Management, Operation and Maintenance of Internal Government Research Farms at AL-Batinah	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021
426/2021/MAFWR/HQ-53	For Provide Agricultural Services of the General Directorate of Agricultural & Livestock Research	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021
427/2021/MAFWR/HQ-54	For Management, Operation and Maintenance of Government Farms and Research Stations at Dhofar Governorate	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021
428/2021/MAFWR/HQ-55	For Management, Operation and Maintenance of Internal Government Research Farms at AL-Sharqya Governorate	25/-	Specialist	Sunday 07-11-2021	Sunday 14-11-2021

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: +968 24402200 or etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om.
- Note:** Bid Submission will be online only. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system.

TENDERS COMMITTEE
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

In brief

MoHERI FUNDS 446 RESEARCH PROJECTS

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) funded 446 research projects with a total value of RO 2,300,000. The funded research projects are from 30 research and academic institutions in the public and private sectors. Moreover, research projects of self-funded Omani students abroad in 23 different academic institutions were also covered. The ministry's support of research projects aims to build the local research capacity and to find scientific solutions for local challenges in all sectors.

RNO BEGINS NAVAL DRILL 'SEA LION'

MUSCAT: The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) on Monday began the naval drill 'Assad Al Bahar' or 'Sea Lion' in Al Batinah coastal zone. The drill, which continues till October 28, sees the participation of RNO ship crews and with the support of aircraft from the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo). The drill is part of RNO's annual training plans, which aim to sustain preparedness in all fields.

SAI PARTICIPATES IN ASOSAI SEMINAR

MUSCAT: The State Audit Institution (SAI) is taking part in the 8th seminar of the Working Group on Environmental Auditing (WGEA) of the Asian Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (ASOSAI) being held via video-conferencing during October 25 and 26. During the seminar, working papers are presented on government accountability for environment and climate change auditing.



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. 45/2021

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following biddings :

Serial	Bidding No.	Bidding description	Companies targeted	Document fee	Last Date for obtaining bidding docs.	Last Date for inquiry submission	Last Date for submission
1	RE-Bidding - BB/02/2021	Car Cleaning Service for the Parking at Al-Khwar - Bousher	Riyada card holders (Specialized)	25/- OMR	15/11/2021	21/11/2021	24/11/2021
2	RE-Bidding - BB/03/2021	Rental and Operating of Cold Stores Nos. (C: B9), (B:D1) & (D:16) at the Central Market of Fruit & Vegetable	Specialized	25/- OMR	15/11/2021	21/11/2021	24/11/2021
3	RE-Bidding - BB/11/2021	Operating A Coffee Shop at Muttrah Market for Fish, Fruits & Vegetables	Specialized	25/- OMR	05/12/2021	14/12/2021	26/12/2021
4	RE-Bidding - BB/16/2021	Re-Using of Waste at Central Market for Vegetables and Fruits at Al-Mawaleh	Specialized	25/- OMR	15/11/2021	21/11/2021	24/11/2021
5	RE-Bidding - AB/17/2021	Operating Restaurant at Muttrah Market for Fish, Fruits & Vegetables	Specialized	45/- OMR	05/12/2021	14/12/2021	26/12/2021

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

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

Submitted offers must be accompanied with a bond mentioned in the tender document valid for a period not less than (90) days issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat Municipality. Bidding that do not meet the required bond **will not be accepted**. Documents must be enclosed in a plain envelope sealed with red wax (without any company information), box's locations are As follows:

Bidding at The Serial	The box's location
1-2-3-4	First floor at Directorate General of Quantity Surveying and Contracts in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait
5-6	Third floor at Directorate General of Quantity Surveying and Contracts in Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait

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

Website: www.mm.gov.om

Alarm
around
the world
after ‘coup’



From the US to Germany to the Arab league, the world reacted with alarm after an apparent coup in Sudan where armed forces detained the prime minister. The chaos follows weeks of tensions between military and civilian figures that have ruled under an uneasy power-sharing agreement since former ruler Omar al Bashir was ousted.

Sudan military
seizes power,
dissolves transitional
government



A child gestures in front of a burning road barricade during what the information ministry calls a military coup in Khartoum, Sudan, on Monday. – Reuters

UNITED STATES

The United States said it was “deeply alarmed” at reports of the military takeover. “This would contravene the Constitutional Declaration (which outlines the transition) and the democratic aspirations of the Sudanese people,” said US special envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeffrey Feltman in a statement on Twitter.

GERMANY

Germany condemned the reports, calling for an “immediate end” to the action. “The news of a new coup attempt in Sudan is troubling,” German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in a statement. “I call on everyone in Sudan responsible for security and order to continue Sudan’s transition to democracy and to respect the will of the people.”

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa said it was “deeply concerned about the apparent ongoing coup and attempts to undermine Sudan’s political transition”, calling for the immediate release of officials. “We reject and condemn any attempt at an unconstitutional change of government,” the foreign affairs ministry said in a statement.

KHARTOUM: Sudan’s military seized power in a coup on Monday, arresting members of a transitional government that was supposed to guide the country to democracy following the overthrow of long-ruling ruler Omar al Bashir in a popular uprising two years ago.

Gunfire was heard as opponents of the takeover took to the street and medics said several people had been hurt in clashes.

General Abdel Fattah al Burhan, who headed the Sovereign Council that had shared power between the military and civilians, said the council had been dissolved.

He announced a state of emergency, saying the military needed to protect the country’s safety and security.

“We guarantee the armed forces’ commitment to completing the democratic transition until we hand over to a civilian elected government,” he said, setting elections for July 2023. “What the country is going through now is a real threat and danger to the dreams of the youth and the

hopes of the nation.”

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was detained and taken to an undisclosed location after refusing to issue a statement in support of the takeover, said the information ministry, which was still apparently under the control of Hamdok’s supporters.

The ministry called Burhan’s announcement a military coup and urged resistance. It said tens of thousands of people opposed to the takeover had taken to the streets and had faced gunfire near the military headquarters in Khartoum.

At least 12 people were injured in clashes, a doctors’ committee said, without providing further details.

“We will defend democracy until the end,” said one protester, 21-year-old Iman Ahmed. “Burhan cannot deceive us. This is a military coup,” said another young man who gave his name as Saleh.

Sudan — which has a history of coups — has been on edge since a failed plot last month unleashed recriminations between military and civilian groups sharing power uneasily

following Bashir’s overthrow.

Tensions had built as a coalition of rebel groups and political parties aligned themselves with the military and called on it to dissolve the civilian government, while several cabinet ministers took part in huge protests in Khartoum and other cities against the prospect of military rule. The director of Hamdok’s office, Adam Hereika, said the military had mounted the takeover despite “positive movements” towards an agreement with Hamdok following meetings with US special envoy Jeffrey Feltman.

RAISE OUR VOICES

Joint forces from the military and from the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces were stationed in the streets of Khartoum.

The information ministry said troops had arrested civilian members of the Sovereign Council and government figures. It called on Sudanese to oppose the military attempt “to block the democratic transition”.

— Reuters



Sudanese protesters march in 60th Street in Khartoum, to denounce overnight detentions by the army of members of Sudan’s government, on Monday. – AFP

The EU called for the release of Sudan’s civilian leaders and insisted “violence and bloodshed must be avoided”. “The EU is very concerned about Sudan’s military forces reportedly putting Prime Minister (Abdalla) Hamdok under house arrest, as well as detaining other members of the civilian leadership, and we urge for their fast release,” European Commission spokeswoman Nabila Massrali told journalists.

The Arab League urged all sides to adhere to an August 2019 power-sharing deal, as it sounded alarm.

“Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit expressed deep concern over the developments in Sudan,” the pan-Arab bloc said in a statement.

African Union Commission chair Moussa Faki Mahamat on Monday called for the “immediate resumption” of dialogue between Sudan’s military and civilians after security forces detained senior figures in the country’s transitional government. “The Chairperson calls for the immediate resumption of consultations between civilians and military within the framework of the political declaration and the constitutional decree,” Faki said in a statement posted on Twitter.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), which Sudan is currently chairing, said it was “alarmed” by the events in the country, and was “following the situation very closely”. “The executive secretary strongly condemns any attempt to undermine the transitional government and urges all parties to exercise utmost restraint,” the regional African bloc said in a statement from Djibouti.

SHORT TAKES

RIYADH

Coalition says 105 fighters killed in Marib battle

The military coalition backing the government in Yemen said on Monday it had killed 105 Ansar Allah fighters in air strikes near the strategic city of Marib.

The deaths are the latest among roughly 1,700 fighters the coalition claims it has killed in strikes over the past two weeks around Marib, the internationally recognised government’s last bastion in Yemen.

The Ansar Allah rarely comments on losses, and AFP could not independently verify



the toll. “Thirteen military vehicles were destroyed and 105 fighters were killed in strikes in the past 24 hours,” the coalition said, according to the official Saudi Press Agency.

ANKARA

Turkey’s Erdogan welcomes embassies’ statement

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan “welcomed” a statement by Western embassies that they abide by a diplomatic convention not to interfere in a host country’s internal affairs, state-run Anadolu news agency reported on Monday, after Erdogan called for the expulsion of 10 ambassadors.

Erdogan said he had ordered the envoys to be declared persona non grata for seeking the release of prominent philanthropist Osman Kavala. Erdogan had



welcomed the statement, posted on Twitter by the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand and later retweeted by Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark.

GENEVA

EU urges Israel to stop settlement construction

The European Union on Monday called on Israel to halt settlement construction and not go ahead with tenders for about 1,300 new settlement homes in the occupied West Bank that were announced over the weekend.

“Settlements are illegal under international law and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of the two-State solution and a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between the parties,” a spokesperson for the EU’s executive Commission



said in a statement. The EU has consistently made clear that it will not recognise any changes to the pre-1967 borders, including with regard to Jerusalem.

In brief

■ TOKYO



JAPAN'S RULING LDP LOSES UPPER HOUSE SEAT

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida suffered an unexpected blow just days before his ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) heads into national polls, as the party lost one of two parliamentary by-elections over the weekend. The loss of an Upper House seat in Shizuoka prefecture, to an independent candidate supported by the opposition, comes as Kishida's popularity has taken a hit in opinion polls, raising the prospect his time in office could be short-lived. He has called for a "new capitalism" that would spread the benefits of growth and pushed to roll back some of the "Abenomics" policies of his former boss, Shinzo Abe.

■ YANGON



MYANMAR THREATENS TO SKIP ASEAN SUMMIT

Myanmar's junta threatened on Monday to skip an Asean summit after the bloc said the country's military chief could not attend over doubts about the government's commitment to defusing a bloody crisis.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the generals ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a February coup, triggering nationwide protests and a violent crackdown on dissent. Earlier this month the Association of Southeast Asian Nations — under international pressure to broker a diplomatic solution to the conflict — excluded junta chief Min Aung Hlaing from a forthcoming leaders' summit.

■ SEOUL



SOUTH KOREA PLOTS COURSE TO SCRAPPING COVID CURBS

South Korea unveiled on Monday a three-phase strategy to get back to normal from the coronavirus with all limits on gatherings and distancing gone by February, after it achieved a goal of vaccinating 70 per cent of its people on the weekend. The scheme begins next Monday and is due to run until February 20, by when all distancing curbs will be scrapped except for mask-wearing mandates, a government health panel said.

South Korea has been largely successful in managing the pandemic without the lockdowns and death rates seen in many other parts of the world, largely through intensive testing, tracing, distancing and masks.

China battles new Covid outbreak with eye on Winter Olympics

Delta variant-linked outbreak cases hit 100 over a week

BEIJING: Tens of thousands of people in northern China were under strict stay-at-home orders on Monday as authorities sought to stamp out a growing Covid outbreak in the run-up to the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Officials in the Chinese capital also restricted access to tourist sites and advised residents not to leave the city unless necessary, although regular transport services continued as normal.

China reported 39 new cases on Monday, bringing the tally from the latest Delta variant-linked outbreak to more than 100 cases over the past week. The numbers are extremely low compared with most places in the world, but China has pursued a zero-case strategy throughout the pandemic and authorities are determined to subdue the latest outbreak with the Winter Olympics just over 100 days away.

Several housing blocks in Beijing have been locked down, and organisers on Sunday indefinitely postponed a marathon at which 30,000 runners were expected.

Some 23,000 residents in one housing compound in Changping district have been ordered to stay indoors after nine cases were found



Commuters travel on a Beijing subway on Monday. — AFP

there in recent days, local outlet Beijing News reported.

Photos showed officials in hazmat suits standing watch outside the entrances to each apartment block, and the perimeter of the compound blocked by metal barricades.

Entry will be restricted for people who have been to places with local Covid-19 infections

in the last 14 days, Beijing's vice publicity minister said on Monday.

Speaking at a press briefing, Xu Hejian added that those who do come into the capital from affected areas must show a negative test and undergo two weeks of health monitoring.

Authorities are also restricting parks, scenic areas, cinemas, museums and other indoor venues

to 75 per cent capacity, and have closed mahjong rooms, he said.

In recent days, officials have advised people to avoid large gatherings and "unnecessary" travel out of the capital.

Northern China has accounted for the majority of recent cases, with mass testing under way in 11 provinces.

A stay-at-home lockdown

started on Monday for around 35,000 people — including tourists — in the Inner Mongolia region's Ejin county.

Health officials have warned that more infections may emerge as testing is ramped up in the coming days to fight the outbreak, which has been linked to a group of domestic tourists that travelled across China. — AFP

Climate change now worse than war for Afghan farmers

BALA MURGHAB, Afghanistan: Drought stalks the parched fields around the remote Afghan district of Bala Murghab, where climate change is proving a deadlier foe than the country's recent conflicts.

As the world watched the Taliban wage a stunning offensive that ended in the rapid collapse of the country's western-backed government, a longer-term crisis was building.

In desperate attempts to feed their families, herders have been forced to sell their livestock, farmers to flee their villages and parents to sell their daughters into marriage at ever younger ages.

"The last time I saw rain was last year, and there wasn't much", Mullah Fateh, head of the Haji Rashid Khan village in Bala Murghab.

Communities cling to life in small clusters of mud-brick homes among an endless ocean of rolling brown hills in this corner of Badghis province — where 90 per cent of the 600,000-strong population live off livestock or fields, according to humanitarian agency ACTED. "We sold sheep to buy food, others died of thirst", Fateh said.

When the first of two recent droughts hit in 2018, he had 300 sheep, but as the latest dry spell bites, he's down to 20.

On Monday, UN agencies said more than 22 million Afghans will suffer "acute food insecurity" this winter, warning the unstable



A worker harvests pomegranates at an orchard in Kandahar. — AFP

country faces one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Aid-dependent Afghanistan, which has spent decades trapped in cycles of war, has borne the sixth hardest blow from climate change, driven by greenhouse emissions such as CO2, according to a study by environmental group Germanwatch.

CO2 EMISSIONS

An Afghan lifestyle causes 0.2 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year, compared to 15 from the average American, World Bank figures show. As predicted, one of the devastating effects has been a drop in rainfall in northern

Afghanistan.

When Mullah Fateh needs to fetch water, he sends young boys and men on a day-long trip with a donkey. This year, he said, two young shepherds died of thirst in the hills. The thirst attacks not just the body, but family bonds.

This year 20 families in Haji Rashid Khan village, which has no school and no clinic, sold their very young daughters into marriage, to raise money for food.

"The rest of the children were hungry and thirsty", explained Bibi Yeleh, a mother of seven whose 15-year-old daughter is already married and whose seven-year-old will soon follow. — AFP

Russia urges West to engage with Taliban

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday urged Western countries to engage with the Taliban and for the European Union to re-open its embassy in Afghanistan, warning that the country was at risk of descending further into drug trafficking and terrorism.

The call came after Moscow last week hosted members of the regime for international talks, and the Taliban agreed to work with Russia, China and Iran on regional security.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, the Russian presidential envoy to Afghanistan, Zamir Kabulov, said the European Union would be right to re-open its mission in the country.

"European partners should not have left Afghanistan", he said, adding it was "high time" for European diplomats to

return. He called on the West to engage with the Taliban to prevent Afghanistan from sliding into chaos and warned that attempts to cut aid would be "absolutely counter-productive".

In an effort to survive, Kabulov warned, people in Afghanistan could resort to drug trafficking, terrorism and arms smuggling, pointing to "huge amount of weapons" left behind by Nato troops.

"If the West wants this, then they are on the right track", he said.

Kabulov also reiterated Russia's calls to unlock funding for the country. Billions of dollars in Afghan reserves have been frozen in the West to keep cash away from the Taliban after it captured Afghanistan in mid-August. — AFP



A Taliban fighter and his comrade pose for a photograph at the market in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Sunday. — Reuters

Greenhouse gas levels reach new record: UN

GENEVA/GLASGOW: Greenhouse gas concentrations hit a record last year and the world is “way off track” on climate goals, the UN weather agency said on Monday, showing the scale of the task facing governments scrambling to avert dangerous levels of warming.

A report by the World Meteorological Organization showed that carbon dioxide levels surged to 413.2 parts per million in 2020, rising more than the average rate over the last decade despite a temporary dip in emissions during Covid-19 lockdowns.

Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said that the current rate of increase in heat-trapping gases would result in temperature rises “far in excess” of the 1.5 degrees Celsius target of the 2015 Paris Agreement above the pre-industrial average this century. “We are way off track,” he said.

“We need to revisit our industrial, energy and transport systems and whole



way of life,” he added, calling for a “dramatic increase” in commitments at the COP26 conference beginning on Sunday.

The Scottish city of Glasgow was putting on the final touches before hosting the climate talks, which may be the world’s last best chance to cap global warming at the 1.5-2 degrees Celsius upper limit set out in the Paris Agreement.

The stakes for the planet are huge - among them the impact on economic livelihoods the world over and the future stability of the global financial system.

Saudi Arabia’s crown prince said on Saturday that the world’s top oil exporter aims to reach “net zero” emissions of greenhouse gases, mostly produced by burning fossil fuels, by 2060 - 10 years later



We need to revisit our industrial, energy and transport systems and whole way of life

PETTERI TAALAS
WMO Secretary-General

than the United States.

He also said it would double the emissions cuts it plans to achieve by 2030.

Australia’s cabinet was expected to formally adopt a target for net zero emissions by 2050 when it meets this week to review a deal reached between parties in Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s coalition government, official sources said.

The ruling coalition has been divided over how to tackle climate change, with the government maintaining that harder targets would damage the A\$2-trillion (\$1.5-trillion) economy.

In Berlin, officials from Germany and Canada were set to present a plan about how rich countries can help poorer nations finance the overhaul needed to address climate change. Wealthy countries have so far failed to deliver their 2009 pledge to provide \$100 billion per year in climate finance to poorer countries by 2020.

A Reuters poll of economists found that hitting the Paris Agreement goal of net-zero carbon emissions will require investments in a green transition worth 2 per cent to 3 per cent of world output each year until 2050, far less than the economic cost of inaction. In London, climate activists restarted their campaign of blockading major roads by disrupting traffic in the city’s financial district. — **AFP**



Uzbekistan leader scores crushing win

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan’s President Shavkat Mirziyoyev cruised to victory on Monday in an election that monitors said was “not truly competitive” despite some reforms in the authoritarian Central Asian state.

Uzbekistan’s Central Election Commission said Mirziyoyev had taken 80.1 per cent of the vote against four token opponents, according to a preliminary count. The vote was held on Sunday with no real opposition facing Mirziyoyev, who came to power in 2016 after the death of his mentor, dictator Islam Karimov, who ruled Uzbekistan for 27 years.

Mirziyoyev has been credited with launching what he calls a “New Uzbekistan” programme, ending a decades-old system of forced labour with roots in the former Soviet Union and introducing limited media freedoms.

But like Karimov, the new leader has sidestepped political reforms that would allow any alternative to his rule.

A mission led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said Sunday’s polls were “not truly competitive” and pointed to “the exclusion of opposition parties”.

“Significant procedural irregularities were noted on election day,” the mission added in a statement.

“Election legislation still has a number of deficiencies and does not yet fully comply with international standards for democratic elections.”

Elections chief Zainiddin Nizamkhodjayev insisted to reporters that the elections were held “on the basis of international standards and meet international norms”.

Before official results were announced, Russian President Vladimir Putin called the Uzbek leader and congratulated him on “a convincing victory”, the Kremlin said. Uzbek political analyst Alisher Samigzhanov said the vote was just for show.

— **AFP**

Power outages as storm drenches burn-scarred California

CALIFORNIA: A powerful storm drenched wildfire-scarred Northern California on Sunday, triggering mudslides and flooding, while heavy winds toppled utility poles and downed trees in what meteorologists called a “bomb cyclone”.

Up to 10 inches of rain were expected to wash over the West Coast, said meteorologist Marc Chenard of the Weather Prediction Center at the National Weather Service.

“It’s an atmospheric river already moving through Northern California,” he added, describing the storm as a “bomb cyclone,” an intense weather event when the barometric pressure drops quickly.

The storm follows the busiest wildfire season in California history and heightens threats of flash flooding. Much of the region is in severe, extreme or exceptional drought, as classified by the US Drought Monitor.

“Burn scars, that’s the area where the water tends to run off quicker, so that’s where the biggest flash-flood risks are,” Chenard said. “Warnings are of life-threatening flash flooding in and around the burn scars.”

Multiple mudslides were



Flood waters run through Mulberry street in Yountville, California. – **Reuters**

already reported in some of the 570,000 acres blackened by the Dixie Fire in the Sierra Nevada mountains northeast of San Francisco, the second-largest wildfire recorded in state history, he said.

The area of Central California where the 2020 Creek Fire ripped through was placed under evacuation warning status, the Fresno County Sheriff’s Office tweeted.

Emergency services issued flood warnings for areas including Marin County, just north of San Francisco, and portions of the Napa River.

Winds over 50 miles per hour gusted through San Francisco and

triggered power outages around Sacramento, where residents tweeted photographs of toppled utility poles smashing cars and blocking roadways. As much as 5 inches of rain was predicted.

Strong winds knocked over an orange truck on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge in the San Francisco Bay Area, several Twitter users reported.

Sandbags were being handed out and evacuation centres were opened in the state capital, Sacramento. The Sacramento Office of Emergency Service tweeted: “Remember — never drive through standing water! Turn around, don’t drown!”

— **Reuters**

Laschet steps down as state premier

DUSSELDORF: German conservative politician Armin Laschet, who was at one point seen as a front runner to become the country’s next chancellor, formally resigned from his office as premier of North Rhine Westphalia on Monday morning.

The 60-year-old had announced before national elections in September that he would be standing down as state premier, even if he didn’t become Germany’s next chancellor.

Laschet will remain acting state premier until he takes his seat as a member of the incoming German parliament, or Bundestag, in its inaugural session on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, North Rhine Westphalia Transport Minister Hendrik Wuest is expected to be elected the new state premier in a special session of the state parliament.

With Laschet as its candidate for chancellor, the CDU and its Bavarian allies, the Christian Social Union (CSU), achieved a historically bad result in the elections.

They lost out to the Social Democrats, whose candidate Olaf Scholz is negotiating with



two other parties to form a centre-left government after 16 years under centre-right Chancellor Angela Merkel.

The 60-year-old had earlier announced he would be standing down as state premier before the Bundestag elections, even if he didn’t become Germany’s next chancellor.

Laschet is due to remain acting state premier until he takes his seat as a member of the incoming German parliament, or Bundestag, in its inaugural session on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, North Rhine Westphalia Transport Minister Hendrik Wuest is expected to be elected the new state premier in a special session of the state parliament. — **dpa**

SHORT TAKES

ABUJA

Nearly 400 still at large after Nigeria jailbreak

Nigerian security forces recaptured 446 inmates who escaped from prison in a mass jailbreak over the weekend with nearly 400 others still at large on Monday, officials said. Heavily armed men used grenades to storm the Abolongo prison in southwest state Oyo late on Friday, the facility said, in the third mass prison outbreak this year. Nigerian Interior Minister Rauf Aregbesola said 446 had been recaptured and 392 were still at large after visiting the prison on Sunday. “The at-



tack was unconscionable,” he said. “The federal government will pursue not just those who attacked our facility, but those who have escaped lawful custody,” he added.

— **AFP**

MOSCOW

Russia’s Covid-19 cases hit record, curbs imposed

Russia reported its highest single-day Covid-19 case tally since the start of the pandemic on Monday as some regions imposed a workplace shutdown to combat a surge in infections and deaths. Faced with worsening infection rates and frustrated by the slow take-up of Russia’s Sputnik V vaccine by its own population, authorities are introducing stricter measures this week to try to slow the spread of the pandemic.

President Vladimir Putin last week declared that October 30 to



November 7 would be paid non-working days but said every region could extend that period or start it earlier depending on the epidemiological situation.

—**Reuters**

LONDON

Climate protesters restart traffic-blocking tactics

Dozens of climate activists demanding the UK government immediately insulate homes nationwide halted morning rush-hour traffic in London on Monday, ending a 10-day pause in their civil disobedience protests. Insulate Britain, a new group whose campaigners have repeatedly blocked roads and motorways in and around the capital, targeted three locations including the Canary Wharf and City of London financial districts. The activists, who want the government to insu-



late all British homes starting with social housing, began their disruptive demonstrations last month but temporarily suspended them in mid-October to give themselves and the public “a break”. — **AFP**

As Haiti instability worsens, will US policies now change?

Dessalines Day is a point of pride in Haiti, a time to commemorate the revolutionary hero who defeated Napoleon’s troops, abolished slavery and in 1804 established the first free Black republic. But this year, the October 17 holiday played out like political theatre of all the woes afflicting the nation. The acting prime minister was headed to speak at the monument marking the spot where Jean-Jacques Dessalines was assassinated just outside the capital, Port-au-Prince, but his convoy was turned back by gunfire.

In the absence of a government delegation, a police officer turned gang leader seized control of the ceremonies. Flanked by masked men with assault rifles, Jimmy Cherizier, who goes by the name “Barbecue,” strode to the monument in the white suit and collar of palace officialdom and roused the crowd.

“Today the time has come where they have the ports and the tax offices,” he shouted. Like dozens of gang bosses in Haiti, Cherizier is a product of the country’s fractious politics, and as has been the case for more than a century, those politics are deeply entwined with US policy.

Since US Marines first occupied Haiti in 1915, Washington has put its thumb on the balance of power, supporting the brutal Duvalier dictatorships dating to the 1950s and more recently propping up centre-right presidents with little popular support.

The latest round of violent upheaval in Haiti is inextricably linked to Jovenel Moise, who won the presidency in 2016 in flawed elections and then proceeded to strip away institutions, rule by decree and — even after constitutional experts said his term had expired — remain in power until he was assassinated in July.

Along the way, he enjoyed the support of both the Trump and Biden administrations.

Gangs that were connected to Moise have continued to operate with impunity, often using government vehicles; robbery, abuse and kidnapping for ransom have reached epidemic levels. Preachers have been snatched during sermons, teachers abducted from classes and buses hijacked on highways. When a magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck southern Haiti in August, killing more than 2,000 people, the rescue and recovery effort was severely constrained by the insecurity on the roads. — **dpa**

Today the time has come where they have the ports and the tax offices

JIMMY CHERIZIER



A FARMER AT WORK
This aerial photo shows a farmer drying paddy in Huaian in China’s eastern Jiangsu province, China, on Monday. — AFP

Let’s keep the flow going...



Lakshmi Kothaneth
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IT IS ONE THING TO UNDERSTAND THE TRIGGER POINTS AND THE OTHER TO UNDERSTAND WHAT TO DO NEXT

Have you ever wondered what encompasses mental health?

Is it just about a state of happiness or is it the balancing act? Is it about recognising one’s emotions and understanding where it is triggering from?

It is one thing to understand the trigger points and the other to understand what to do next. Does it always need advice from experts or can one heal on his/her own?

On our podcast at *Oman Daily Observer*, Let’s Talk Mental Health, this week the topic is grief. In fact we may not often realise this fact — our life is between happiness and grief. Grief is often through incidents we go through life and happiness at times we feel depends on others but it only when we explore deeper we realise that state of happiness is in our hands. As they say, it all depends on how we respond to situations. Why is that we trip when life throws at us something unexpected and at the same time there are others who handle it with finesse.

Dr Hamed al Sinawi, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos

University Hospital, explained how grief can be of various types — from losing a loved one, divorce or retirement. No matter what the most important factor is closure. It is closure that allows a person to move forward in life and yet at times the experiences are so strong that families are unable to go further as a unit in life. He gives insight through various case studies through the podcast.

And here are my reflections — life is a journey as they say because life cannot be stagnant. Life cannot be made of roses and is not because as the journey proceeds there are twists and turns too which are not part of the joyride. Some of whom, who have been with us from early days have had to leave and some others change because of their circumstances.

What we can do of course is accept and that gives us the mental strength to move on. This is why probably why we need to enhance our mental strength along with physical fitness.

Until now the debate continues whether physical fitness should be part

of the educational curriculum, maybe now it is time we included mental fitness too. Of course it is alright to take time to heal, as Dr Hamad says in the podcast, “Don’t let anyone hurry you up.”

The point, however is not to stay there for too long and pick yourself up because water does not stop anywhere if it can help. Its ideal destination is the ocean itself, if not back to the atmosphere or underground. If it does stay then life forms from fish to tadpoles appear.

Water comes down to earth and flows with a purpose. We too have purpose, no matter who we are and where we are from.

The aim is to find the purpose no matter what the objective is as each link no matter how small makes a difference. And if one is not able to realise one’s own purpose in life it is still not a problem it is up to others to give a helping hand. In supporting another, one realises one’s own strength.

Just like water we evolve too. We just have to trust the process and not be blocked with doubts.

High oil prices can help the environment



JEFFREY FRANKEL
The author is Professor of Capital Formation and Growth at Harvard University, previously served as a member of President Bill Clinton’s Council of Economic Advisers. He is a research associate at the US National Bureau of Economic Research

Prices of fossil fuels increased sharply in October. European prices for natural gas hit a record peak. Prices for thermal coal in China have also reached all-time highs. The price of US crude oil is above \$80 a barrel, its highest level in seven years, prompting US President Joe Biden’s administration in August to call on Opec and other major oil-exporting countries to increase production.

Although these high prices partly reflect country-specific factors, there must be some more fundamental cause. After all, as with fuel prices, indices of mineral and agricultural commodity prices have also recovered from a six-year slump, re-attaining their 2014 levels. The long-standing correlation of different commodity prices suggests a common

macroeconomic explanation. And the obvious reason why energy prices have risen in 2021 is rapid global economic growth.

But what are the environmental implications of elevated fossil-fuel prices, specifically with respect to the fight against climate change? The question is particularly salient as officials from over 200 countries prepare to gather in Glasgow for the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), where they are expected to declare their intention to achieve net-zero carbon-dioxide emissions by 2050.

On one hand, the effect of high oil, gas, and coal prices on consumers is good for the environment, because they discourage demand for fossil fuels. On the other hand, the effect of high prices on producers is bad for the environment, because they encourage supply. But today’s

higher fossil-fuel prices have so far provided a weaker-than-expected stimulus to private investment in the sector. This suggests that firms may have reached a tipping point in how seriously they take the need to combat global warming. They know a green-energy transition is coming.

Now might therefore be the right time for the United States to reconsider a carbon tax or a (largely equivalent) system of tradable emissions permits, also known as “cap and trade.” Currently, much of the revenue from higher oil and gas prices goes to foreign producers. Why not keep this revenue at home? The proceeds of the tax or permit auction could be returned as a dividend to citizens by cutting other taxes, thereby maximising the scheme’s political acceptability. The important point is that

putting a price on carbon would be by far the most efficient way to achieve the CO2-emissions reductions necessary to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.

In the US, a cap-and-trade system has been considered politically impossible since the demise in Congress of the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act in 2007 and the Waxman-Markey American Clean Energy and Security Act in 2009. But perhaps the failure earlier this month of Biden’s attempt to get a clean electricity programme through Congress offers an opening for a sensible alternative: a carbon tax.

True, the effective regulation of greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions — such as through a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade scheme — can

generate strong political resistance anywhere. Lawmakers may balk at imposing an extra operating cost on US manufacturers if so-called carbon leakage, or the relocation of carbon-intensive activities to countries with a lower carbon price, put these firms at a competitive disadvantage.

But, logically, the US is perhaps the last country that should worry about others free-riding on its climate efforts. The free-rider problem discouraging most other countries from fully implementing the 2015 Paris climate agreement is above all a fear that the US will not take strong action to cut GHG emissions (and that China’s emissions will continue to grow rapidly). If America assumes a climate leadership role, others are likely to follow.
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sport

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Al Zubair and Soucek finish second in final GT Open race

Al Zubair and Soucek in GT Open action in Spain.

BARCELONA (SPAIN): Al Faisal al Zubair and Andy Soucek secured a hard-earned second place in the final International GT Open race of a successful debut season at the Catalunya circuit in Barcelona on Sunday.

The Lechner Racing Porsche 911 GT3 R crew climbed through the field from a starting position of 10th on the grid to secure the runner-up position just 0.686 seconds behind the Inception Racing McLaren of pole winners, Nick Moss and Joe Osborne.

Their main championship rivals and series winners, Michele Beretta and Frederick Schandorff, rounded off the podium places in the Vincenzo Sospiri Racing

2021 International GT Open – final standings:

1. Frederick Schandorff (SUI)/Michele Beretta (ITA)	146pts
2. Andy Soucek (ESP)	128pts
3. Al Faisal al Zubair (OMN)	110pts
4. Baptiste Moulin (BEL)/Yuki Nemoto (JPN)	105pts
5. Ollie Millroy (GBR)/Brendan Iribe (USA)	76pts
6. Loris Spinelli (ITA)	65pts etc

Lamborghini and reached the chequered flag just under five seconds adrift. Jim Pla and Thomas Drouet finished fourth in a Mercedes AMG and Belgium's Baptiste Moulin and Japan's Yuki Nemoto rounded off the top five.

The result meant that Soucek finished outright second in the championship standings and Al Zubair was third, having missed the Hungaroring races through illness.

Al Zubair said: "What a great

way to end the season, starting in 10th place after a disappointing qualifying. But, we made it back to second place and we were really fighting for first overall. It was an amazing race. I am so proud of the whole team and the project we

created this year.

"I don't think anyone would have expected us to come and fight for wins at every race. Vice-champions and third place for myself after missing a round. I could not have asked for much

more. I am very happy about this and could not thank my family enough and the whole team. I am just looking forward to announcing my plans for next year."

Soucek had qualified the Lechner Porsche down in 10th place for the last of the season's races with a best time of 1min 44.184sec during an eight-lap stint. Inception Racing's Moss and Osborne claimed pole position with a tour of 1min 43.085sec in their McLaren 720 S GT3 and Jim Pla and Thomas Drouet were second.

Brendan Iribe and Ollie Millroy rounded off the top three places in a second McLaren.



Oman Desert Marathon to take place in November

MUSCAT: Oman's own adventure racing brand, the Oman Desert Marathon today announced a series of races to take place in November in Rimal Al Sharqiya.

Sabco Sports are pleased to announce the date for the Oman Desert Marathon, to take place on November 20, 2021. The event will feature a Kids Race, a 5 km Run, a 10 km run and a 21 km Desert Half Marathon, as well as camping options for anyone wanting to spend a weekend in the region.

The race will take place in Al Jawhurat Bidiya resort in Rimal Al Sharqiya, 2 hours outside Muscat.

The Oman Desert Marathon was postponed in 2021 due to the pandemic and will not feature the longer distances normally associated with the event, due to ongoing concerns about the impact



of Covid 19 on tourism travel into the Sultanate of Oman.

Said al Hajri, the founder and owner of the Race was keen to get the date back into the diary as the world continues to re-open and get back to normality "Whilst we will not see the longer distances raced this year, we will put on a great weekend option for people who enjoy running and who enjoy the desert. "The Oman Desert Marathon has grown in popularity over the years but had to be postponed whilst the pandemic was raging. But I look forward now to seeing many people coming to Bidiya to experience the beauty of the desert and to take part in what will be a challenging but really enjoyable race."

Tickets for the event went on

sale today — with race distances including the Half Marathon that will run through the desert. Tickets are available at <http://marathonoman.com/>

Nic Cartwright, Managing Director at Sabco Sports is pleased to be working with the team at ODM "This is an event that was conceived and created in the Sultanate of Oman.

It celebrates many of the things that are great about the country and we wanted to work with Al Hajri to make the event as big as possible. "We are partnering with a local hotel to provide great packages for people who want to come and enjoy the location for the weekend, and I know that the local population will be out in force to make it a fun weekend for runners of all abilities."



Super Afghans outclass Scotland in clinical fashion

HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, OCT 25

Afghanistan's spinners and batsmen scripted a sensational performance to outclass Scotland by 130 runs in their Group II match of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 in Sharjah on Monday.

With the bat, Najibullah Zadran (59, 34b, 5x4, 3x6) and Hazratullah Zazai (44, 30b, 3x4, 3x6) blasted away the Scottish bowlers to take Afghanistan to a might 190/4. And then the spinners took over.

Mujeeb ur Rahman (5/20) and Rashid Khan (4/9) produced a riveting display of spin to leave the Scots clueless on how to play the turning ball. With their bowling performance, Afghanistan also sent out a warning to the rest of the teams in the group as well.

SCOTLAND COLLAPSE

Scotland had started off well and were 28/0 after three overs when Mujeeb Ur Rahman bowled Kyle Coetzer for 10 and then scalped Calum Macleod for a golden duck.

Although, he missed a hat-trick, Mujeeb sent Richard Berrington packing with an in-dipper that caught him leg before wicket. Scotland had collapsed to 28/3 in four overs.

Matthew Cross was caught behind off Naveen ul Haq off the first ball as Scotland were all in sorts of trouble

at 30/4. It was 36/5 when Munsey departed for a breezy 25 as Mujeeb castled him after being hit for a six.

Mujeeb's fifth wicket was Mark Watt who was bowled as well as Scotland were hanging by the thread at 45/7. Chris Greaves, Scotland's hero in their famous win against Bangladesh, was lbw to Rashid Khan as the Scotland chase was almost over.

AFGHANISTAN OFF TO FLYER

Afghanistan were off to a flyer as the openers Hazratullah Zazai and Mohammad Shahzad went on the offensive against Scotland in the powerplay.

The Afghans scored at almost ten runs an over making full use of the fielding restrictions to take Brad Wheal and Michael Leask to the cleaners.

Zazai slammed three sixes and as many boundaries while Shahzad belted couple of boundaries and a six to take Afghanistan to a position of great strength.

The duo put on a 54-run opening partnership before Shahzad was caught by Greaves at deep mid-wicket off Sharif's bowling for 22.

Zazai was out for 44 bowled by Watt as Scotland looked to make a comeback. However, Rahmanullah Gurbaz (46, 37b 1x4 4x6) and Najibullah Zadran (59, 34b, 5x4, 3x6) smashed the Scots all over the park to power Afghanistan to a formidable 190/4 in 20 overs.

GROUP 2

POS	TEAM	PLAYED	WON	LOST	N/R	TIED	NET RR	POINTS
1	 AFGHANISTAN	1	1	0	0	0	+6.500	2
2	 PAKISTAN	1	1	0	0	0	+0.973	2
3	 NAMIBIA	0	0	0	0	0	+0.000	0
4	 NEW ZEALAND	0	0	0	0	0	+0.000	0
5	 INDIA	1	0	1	0	0	-0.973	0
6	 SCOTLAND	1	0	1	0	0	-6.500	0

Kohli denies complacency, vows to rectify mistakes

DUBAI: India captain Virat Kohli denied his team underestimated Pakistan in Sunday's high-profile Twenty20 World Cup contest and said they know what went wrong in their 10-wicket thumping by the arch-rivals.

India went into the match with a 12-0 record in World Cups against their neighbours but Pakistan snapped that streak with a 10-wicket romp at the Dubai International Stadium.

Kohli reacted with incredulity when asked if their unblemished track record made them complacent against the arch-rivals ahead of the Group Two blockbuster.

"You don't go out there to take anything lightly, especially a team like Pakistan who on their day can beat anyone in the world," Kohli, who will relinquish India's Twenty20 captaincy after the tournament told reporters.

"This is a game that has to be respected, and we are a team that definitely respects the game...

"We never take any opposition lightly. Neither do we differentiate between oppositions, that's how we play our cricket."

Put into bat, India could not really recover after Shaheen Afridi wrecked their top order.

With Pakistan captain Babar Azam and opening partner



Mohammad Rizwan smashing unbeaten half-century, the chase was a cakewalk for Pakistan who triumphed with 13 balls to spare.

"They definitely outplayed us, there's no doubt about that," Kohli said.

"You don't win by 10 wickets if you don't outplay the opposition. We did not even get any chances. They were very professional and you definitely have to give them credit.

"We tried our best to create enough pressure on them but they had the answers. There's no shame in accepting that a team played better than you."

India play their next match

against New Zealand on Sunday and Kohli felt the break would do a world of good to his side, who had a fair idea about the grey areas they needed to work on.

"We know exactly how the game went, and where it went wrong. We have absolute clarity of that," the 32-year-old said.

"That's a good thing to know where you went wrong as a team, so that we can work on it and try and correct it and move forward.

"We still have a lot of matches in this tournament and if we stick to the process we follow, we definitely feel like we can overcome these mistakes."

— Reuters

Sluggish Man United blown away by Liverpool

ANDY JALIL
MANCHESTER, OCT 24

Manchester United suffered their biggest defeat at home in 66 years since they went down 5-0 to Manchester City back in February, 1955. Once again, they conceded five goals without scoring as Liverpool showed their superiority throughout the match.

A despondent United manager, Oli Gunnar Solskjaer, said: “It’s not easy to say something. It is the darkest day I’ve had leading these players. This is the worst feeling, we feel rock-bottom. It’s the lowest I’ve been. I cannot say I’ve felt any worse. Whose responsibility? It is mine and I accept that responsibility. It is mine today and mine going forward.”

Asked if he still had the backing of the board after taking just one point from the last 12 in the Premier League, he was adamant he felt safe in the job. He said: “I’ve heard nothing else. I do believe in myself and do believe I’m getting close to what I want with the club. I’ve come too far, we have come too far as a group and are too close to give up.”

He added: “The results lately have not been good enough and brings doubt in anyone’s mind. But I have to keep strong and believe in what we’ve been doing.”

The sequence of goals was amazing. The first four came in a space of 40 minutes, all in the first half with Mohammad Salah — regarded generally at present as the best footballer in the world on current form — scoring the third and fourth and then five minutes after the break hitting his third to complete his fourth hat-trick for Liverpool. It was also his tenth consecutive game in which he had scored.

United had missed an early chance to take the lead when Bruna Fernandes shot over the bar in the fourth minute, thereafter United were in retreat. A minute



Liverpool’s Jordan Henderson in action with Manchester United’s Fred. – Reuters

later the floodgates opened with Roberto Firmino and Diogo Jota combining to find Salah who passed to Naby Keita to score.

Eight minutes later a cross-field pass from Andy Robertson, which the defence could not stop, went to Keita who found Trent Alexander-Arnold to cross and Diego Jota tapped the ball home. Then Salah began his spree. His shot was blocked at first but was not cleared and Keita was quick

“It’s not easy to say something. It is the darkest day I’ve had leading these players. This is the worst feeling, we feel rock-bottom. It’s the lowest I’ve been. I cannot say I’ve felt any worse.”

OLE GUNNER SOLSKJAER
Manchester United manager

to pass to the Egyptian who side-footed in at the far post.

United were in total disarray as half-time approached and three minutes into stoppage time, Salah left-footed inside the near post from a pass by Jota. As if they had not already done enough to humiliate United, just five minutes after the break, Salah took a superb long pass from Jordan Henderson to hit the fifth goal, completing his hat-trick and becoming the first

player to do so at Old Trafford in the Premier League.

Liverpool manager Jorgen Klopp said: “This group always wanted to write their own chapter, so this was a little chapter tonight. People will talk about it in the future, 100 per cent because it does not happen very often.” He added: “It’s an insane result. It’s special but we don’t celebrate like crazy, we have respect for the opponents.”



Red Bull driver Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium winning the Formula One United States Grand Prix at the Circuit of The Americas in Austin, Texas. – Reuters

Verstappen holds off Hamilton to double his F1 lead

AUSTIN, TEXAS: Red Bull’s Max Verstappen won the U.S. Grand Prix and doubled his Formula One championship lead to 12 points after holding off title rival Lewis Hamilton by little more than a second at Austin’s Circuit of the Americas on Sunday.

Mercedes’ seven-times world champion Hamilton staged a late charge on fresher tyres but ended up 1.333 seconds behind, with a bonus point for fastest lap.

Red Bull’s Mexican Sergio Perez finished a parched third, due to a malfunctioning water bottle, in front of a crowd of 140,000.

“I think I’ve aged about 25 years in that race,” said relieved Red Bull team boss Christian Horner. “I really didn’t think we were going to hang on.”

The win was Verstappen’s eighth of the season and one he had to sweat for, the Dutch driver starting out on pole position

but losing the lead into the first corner and then using an aggressive strategy to get it back.

Hamilton was quickest off the lights, squeezing through on the inside at turn one as Verstappen tried to close the door but then had to run wide, with plenty of overtaking going on in their wake.

The pair pulled away from the field, with Perez unable to stay with them and Verstappen chafing over the radio that he had more pace. The Dutch driver was first to pit on lap 11, as Red Bull went for the ‘undercut’ — a strategic move to close the gap and get back in front when Hamilton pitted three laps later.

“Of course we lost out in the start so we had to try and do something else. The tyre wear is quite high around this track, we went aggressive and I was not sure it was going to work but the last few laps were fun,” said Verstappen. — Reuters



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First project of Sino-Oman Industrial Park launched in Duqm

NEW MILESTONE:
Duqm SEZ marks opening of Duqm Hongtong Piping Factory

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 25

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) celebrated on Monday the opening of Duqm Hongtong Piping Factory, under the auspices of Eng Yahya bin Khamis al Zadjali, In-Charge of Managing the Operations of SEZAD.

The ceremony was attended by Su Wei, CEO of Wanfang Oman Company, the executive management of Hongtong Duqm Piping Company, Weihai Hongtong Piping, project's partner and representatives from SEZAD and the Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

The first-of-its-kind factory in Oman stands as the first project in the Sino-Omani Industrial Park in



Duqm. The factory produces non-metallic Reinforced Thermopolyethylene Pipes (RTP), which are mainly used for oil and gas industry and specifically for the collection and transfer of hydrocarbon fluids through the piping networks. At the initial stage, the factory's products will serve the local market, while afterward these Omani-made products will be promoted and supplied to other regional and international markets in Asia, Africa, America and Europe.

Built over an area of 60,000 sqm, the factory is designed

to be capable of producing around 700 km of the "4" and "6" inches Reinforced Thermopolyethylene Pipes (RTP) annually in this phase.

Dr Shao Longan, General Manager of Duqm Hongtong Piping Company, pointed out: "We are pleased to be the first in the Sultanate to bring this business, which meets the increasing demand for the Reinforced Thermopolyethylene Pipes in Oman and the region. We selected to set up the project in Duqm as a promising economic destination as well as to benefit from the

competitive advantages offered by the business environment in the Sultanate. On the other hand, this project will serve transferring and exchange technologies from China to Oman for it will drive the oil and gas industry with our products and contribute to the In-Country Value through the training and offering job opportunities."

Speaking on the occasion, Eng Yahya al Zadjali of SEZAD, stated, "This factory marks one of the main projects in the Chinese-Omani Industrial Park in Duqm, which will play a significant role in meeting

the demand for this product by the various economic projects in the zone and oil and gas companies operating in the concession areas. In addition, the project will contribute to strengthening partnership and trade relations between Omani companies and their international counterparts worldwide."

"Further, it will contribute to thriving the Sultanate's economy by attracting foreign investments to the country and promoting Duqm as a promising economic and industrial hub in the Sultanate."

Dawood bin Suleiman al Farsi, Partner and General Manager of Technical and Marketing Affairs, explained: "As a contribution to the Sultanate's In-Country Value process, the company pays a great attention towards developing locals and employing Omanis in various technical and administrative jobs, with the company currently records 17 per cent Omanisation, while it seeks to increase the rate to 30 per cent during the years 2022-2023."

Oman's OQ eyes global markets for polymer output



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 25

OQ, the Sultanate's integrated energy group, is targeting new markets for the polymer output of its multibillion dollar Liwa Plastics Industries Complex (LPIC) at Suhar. LPIC's operationalisation has boosted OQ's production capacity of polyethylene and polypropylene to 1.5 million tons per annum.

To this end, OQ is gearing up to take part in ArabPlast 2021, which will be held in Dubai from November 15-18, 2021.

The Omani state-owned energy firm will be one of the main exhibitors showcasing its product offerings in key sectors - Flexible Packaging, Rigid Packaging & Durables, and Infrastructure & Construction. With the ambitious LPIC project, OQ has pioneered the Sultanate's first production of polyethylene thereby diversifying its product portfolio to include HDPE (high-density polyethylene) and LLDPE (linear low-density polyethylene) production.

The global polymer demand is on the rise as it is a widely used petrochemical product in multitudes of applications across industrial sectors. The market size for polymers is forecasted to soar to \$750 billion by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 5.1 per cent during 2020-2025.

According to Goldstein Research, the GCC polymer industry is expected to reach 34.5 million tonnes by 2022, supporting further downstream development, while growing at a CAGR of 3 per cent.

To capitalise on the global and regional demand, OQ has undertaken an aggressive growth plan and aims to increase its polymers product portfolio by over four times.

Gilles Rochas, Vice President Performance Chemicals at OQ said, "The polymer industry has witnessed a steady increase in demand over the past year, attributed to the accelerated demand for secure food packaging solutions and products aimed at personal health and safety. The shift in consumer behaviour towards online retail and food delivery has also spurred demand. OQ aims to capitalise on this opportunity to bring to the forefront a range of durable polymer products to address the sustainability challenges brought about by rapid urbanization and growing population."

Hilal al Kharusi, Chief Executive Commercial at OQ commented, "Arabplast 2021 will prove to be momentous as it is happening as an in-person gathering post-Covid. This allows us to engage industry leaders and players as we look to a future where polymers can play an integral role in responsible consumption, be it in our customers' homes or in the industries we serve. Agility is a core attribute of our business, enabling us to respond to changing customer behaviour and demand, and to chart out a clear roadmap for the future. Combining our expertise and sharing our experiences allow us to improve our products, services, and solutions as we strive to transform raw materials into real world products and solutions."



شركة المرافق المركزية
Centralized Utilities Company

Tender Announcement

Introduction
Centralized Utilities Company LLC (herein the "Employer" or "Marafiq") inviting proposals from qualified and experienced Tenderers to undertake the project based on a Design and Build Services for the Water Tower in the Industrial Area, Duqm. The Company invites Bidders to submit their proposals as described below.

Tender Number	Tender Title	Tender Description	Tender Fees	Bid Closing Date	Bid Submission Date
CUC-000-00-000 -LE-TND-0010	Design and Build of the Water Tower in the Industrial Area, Duqm	The Contractor's scope of works will be Design and Build a Water Tower in the Industrial Area, Duqm that shall include the following: • Water Tower Compound • Water Tower Structure and Associated Piping • Power Supply • FO cable between the tower and existing connection point • Upgrade of the existing SCADA	250 OMR	11 Nov. 2021	14 Nov. 2021

Request for proposal
The RFP will be made available in electronic form only from 9:00 AM, 26 October 2021 Oman time.

Contractor Minimum Qualifications
Contractor must hold valid registration with Government Tender Board for works of this nature, and have necessary experience in Oman for similar projects as a Design and Build Contractor. We particularly encourage Contractors currently operating in Duqm area (Al Wusta Region).

Interested Contractors shall contact Marafiq via email to tender@marafiq.om with the subject heading "Design and Build of the Water Tower in the Industrial Area, Duqm" to receive further instructions related to payment of tender fee and collection of RFP Package.

P.O. Box 80 P.C. 102
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
www.marafiq.om





Maisarah announces winners at Omani Women’s Day draw

MUSCAT: Marking Omani Women’s Day with exclusive cash prizes for 10 lucky winners, Maisarah Islamic Banking Services — BankDhofar’s Islamic banking window — has announced the names of customers who won at the special prize draw.

Guaranteed for each branch, one winner per branch was granted RO 1,000 (10 winners from 10 branches) during the Omani Women’s Day special draw that took place in Al Athaiba branch on October 17.

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

Each RO 100 gives customers the chance to win cash prizes as per terms and conditions of the scheme, and winners are randomly selected by an automated system in line with the approved procedures for the prize draws.

Valid through December 31, 2021, weekly prizes of RO 100 each are also granted to three winners from each branch, with total number of 30 winners

every week. Moreover, there are exclusive prizes for children in the monthly draws where one winner per branch is awarded RO 100, with total number of 10 winners every month.

For Standard and Affluent Banking customers, there are monthly prizes of RO 500 each for one winner per branch, with total number of 10 winners every month. Meanwhile, Priority Banking Customers have the chance to win RO 2,000 each for one customer from every branch, with total number of 10 winners every month.

There are also Mid-year Grand Prizes where three lucky winners from across Maisarah branch network will win RO 1,000 in the children category, RO 5,000 in the Standard and Affluent Banking category, and RO 10,000 in the Priority Banking category. Additionally, in the Year-end Mega Prizes, three lucky winners from across Maisarah branch network will win RO 2,000 in the children category, RO 10,000 in the Standard and Affluent Banking category, and RO 100,000 in the Priority Banking category. Moreover, Maisarah recently revealed additional cash prizes with a total prize amount of RO 52,800 for 68 winners during special draws to be held in December.

MUSCAT: Oman Investment & Finance Co (Khedmah) recently collaborated with Oman Post & ASYAD Express to create a one-stop shop for customers looking to avail Oman Post & ASYAD Express’ wide range of postal or logistics services at Khedmah locations across the Sultanate.

This partnership comes as part of Khedmah’s constant efforts to provide value-added services to its clients and meet their aspirations.

Along with Khedmah’s wide array of solutions, customers can now benefit from a gamut of Oman Post & ASYAD Express services outside their working hours through a selected number of Khedmah branches.

The services include post box subscriptions, subscription fee payments, subscription renewals and sending parcels locally and internationally.

Customers can obtain these services at any of the eight Khedmah branches that are located in Muscat City Center, Muscat Grand Mall, Nesto Hypermarket Al Maabela, Liwan Asafinah Mall in Al Ghubra, Al Nawras Mall in Al Khuwair, Safer Mall Sohar, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, and Al Ashkharah.

“We strongly believe that integrating our individual efforts and working towards a common goal not only serves the interest of both parties but also provides greater value to our customers. OIFC constantly analyses the latest trends in the market to meet the dynamic needs and demands of its customers. Placing customers as a top priority, OIFC takes great pride in creating tailor-made services to suit the



varying needs of its diverse client portfolio,” said Maryam al Jenaibi, Khedmah Branch Manager of Liwan Asafinah Mall.

“Through our collaboration with Oman Post and ASYAD Express, we aspire to establish a seamless and efficient platform for clients and offer them a comprehensive mix of services under one roof. This will save them time, effort and money. Seeking to cement its leading position in the market, OIFC will continue its development drive by forming strategic partnerships with various companies that will prove beneficial for clients and also contribute to the progress of the country,” she further stated.

Through Khedmah branches,

THE SERVICES
INCLUDE POST BOX
SUBSCRIPTIONS,
SUBSCRIPTION
FEE PAYMENTS,
SUBSCRIPTION
RENEWALS AND SENDING
PARCELS LOCALLY AND
INTERNATIONALLY

to the Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI) and recharge any entertainment subscription.

These services can be availed at any of the 68 OIFC branches spread across the country, the OIFC kiosks or through its digital platforms like the website and the highly popular Khedmah phone app.

Established in 1979, OIFC is one of the leading Investment and Services Company and specialises in billing, collection & debt factoring for electricity, water and telecom services in the Sultanate.

For further information regarding these services, please contact Khedmah call centre on 24727272.

OTE leasing arm launches new outlet in Duqm SEZ

MUSCAT: Vehicle Leasing Company (VLC), the Sultanate’s leading one-stop outlet for automotive leasing and rental solutions, has commenced operations in Duqm, enabling local businesses and retail customers the opportunity to benefit from its unrivaled portfolio of products and services.

The brand new outlet was officially inaugurated on September 7 by Shaikh Badr bin Nasser al Farsi, Wali of Duqm, in the presence of Rajesh Nair, General Manager, VLC, and other dignitaries.

VLC is the vehicle leasing arm of OTE Group of Companies, a prominent Omani business house with diverse interests spanning automobiles, auto accessories, consumer electronics, vocational training services and manufacturing. The Muscat-based firm specialises in crafting customised leasing and transport solutions that offer unmatched value to customers.

With government officials, business persons and investors flocking to what is widely described as the ‘new centre of gravity’ for global industry and logistics, VLC’s newly established



presence in Duqm addresses a keenly felt void in the automotive rental and leasing space. It’s extensive suite of products caters for every conceivable automotive leasing requirement — short-term and long-term, as well as daily rentals — for corporates and individuals alike.

On hand at the newly furnished Duqm office is a team of friendly and highly experienced executives who can structure bespoke, cost-competitive and value-generating leasing solutions for clients.

Furthermore, with Duqm also emerging as a hotspot for nature and adventure travel, VLC is well-positioned to offer a wide selection of saloon cars, SUV’s, luxury coaches and other

types of vehicles to visitors and tourists flying into this coastal destination. Customers can opt to collect their vehicles of choice at Duqm Airport as soon as they alight from their aircraft.

“As the nation’s premier automotive leasing and rentals solutions provider, VLC’s geographical footprint continues to expand in sync with the Sultanate’s spatial development. Given Duqm’s prominence as the country’s next economic growth pole, we see considerable opportunity to service the complex and demanding requirements of the business and investor community operating in this part of the Sultanate of Oman,” said Sudhir M, CEO, OTE Group.

Meethaq rewards 20 winners with RO 150,000 in Hibati quarterly draw

MUSCAT: Meethaq, the pioneer of Islamic banking in the Sultanate of Oman from Bank Muscat, conducted the second quarterly draw of its 2021 Hibati savings scheme at a special event that was broadcasted on the social media accounts of the bank. Ten high-value cash prizes of RO 10,000 each and RO 5,000 each will be given away to 20 winners during the quarterly draw.

This month, 30 cash prizes of RO 1,000 are also being given away to women customers for the Omani Women’s Day draw. Meethaq’s 2021 Hibati savings scheme offers one of the largest number of prizes within Oman’s Islamic banking industry.

Amor bin Said al Amri, Senior Regional Manager, Meethaq Branches, said: “We would like to congratulate all the lucky winners in the quarterly draw. The Hibati prize scheme has been constantly updated taking into account customer feedback from across the Sultanate of Oman over the last few years. Meethaq has substantially increased the prize money



Amor bin Said al Amri

this year and the scheme now also provides more chances to win valuable prizes. We thank all our valued customers for choosing Meethaq Islamic Banking as their preferred banking choice.”

The Hibati Savings account is based on the unrestricted Mudarabah contract. The cash prizes offered under Hibati’s 2021 prize draw scheme are ‘Hiba’ (gift) from Meethaq to its customers and are paid out of the Mudarib’s/shareholders’ own sources. The cash prizes are over and above the profit share of Investment Account

Holders (IAHs) in the General Mudarabah Pool as per the declared profit sharing weightages.

Meethaq’s Hibati savings scheme rewards customers with attractive weekly, quarterly, half yearly and annual prizes. The 2021 Hibati Savings scheme also has two Grand draws including the upcoming End-of-Year draw. Four grand prizes of RO 50,000 each and one grand prize of RO 100,000 will be given away during the End-of-Year draw.

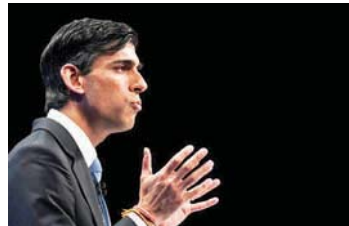
Prizes totalling over RO 1.5 million will be given away to a record number of 5,331 winners in 2021. The Hibati scheme, which was launched in 2018, has been instrumental in improving awareness for Islamic Banking in the Sultanate of Oman and has seen excellent response from customers.

It must be noted that every Meethaq product goes through the process of Sharia compliance certification by the Sharia Supervisory Board, and is created in line with the guidelines of the Central Bank of Oman.



In brief

■ LONDON



UK PLANS £6 BN PACKAGE TO BOOST HEALTH SERVICE CAPACITY

British Finance Minister Rishi Sunak's budget this week will include an extra £5.9 billion of spending for the health service over the next few years to drive down waiting lists, the finance ministry said on Sunday.

The sum comes on top of an £8 billion package announced in September to tackle backlogs built up over the Covid-19 pandemic, the finance ministry said.

The spending is aimed at increasing what is termed elective activity in the National Health Service (NHS) — such as scans and non-emergency procedures — by 30 per cent by the 2024-25 financial year.

— Reuters

■ WASHINGTON



YELLEN SAYS US IS NOT LOSING CONTROL OF INFLATION

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said that the United States was not losing control of inflation, and that she expected inflation levels to return to normal by the second half of next year.

Yellen, in an interview on CNN, said spending in President Joe Biden's domestic infrastructure and Build Back Better packages would be allocated over the next 10 years, but she did not say whether that would exacerbate inflation.

"I don't think we're about to lose control of inflation," Yellen said. — Reuters

■ NEW YORK



TESLA PULLS ITS NEW FULL SELF-DRIVING BETA DUE TO SOFTWARE 'ISSUES'

US electric car maker Tesla Inc has rolled back the latest version of its Full Self-Driving (FSD) beta software, less than a day after its release, after users complained of false collision warnings and other issues. The setback comes as Tesla is under regulatory scrutiny over the safety of its semi-autonomous driving technology, which it calls "FSD."

"Seeing some issues with 10.3, so rolling back to 10.2 temporarily", Chief Executive Elon Musk said in a Twitter post.

"Please note, this is to be expected with beta software. It is impossible to test all hardware configs in all conditions with internal QA (quality assurance), hence public beta", he said.

Tesla did not immediately respond to requests for comment outside regular US business hours.

— Reuters

Agreement signed to support financing of home solar panels

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY:
National Finance partners with Omani specialist firm Nafath Renewable Energy

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 25

As part of its efforts to encourage the use of renewable energy, National Finance, the Sultanate of Oman's largest finance company, has partnered with Nafath Renewable Energy, an Omani company specialised in renewable energy, to provide home solar power solutions.

The agreement was signed by Tariq al Farsi, Chief Executive Officer of National Finance, with Eng Abdullah al Saidi, Chief Executive Officer of Nafath Renewable Energy.

Under the agreement, Nafath Renewable Energy will provide solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for clients who are willing to install the system in their houses as part of National Finance's recently launched Green Finance product.

This product comes in line with National Finance's 'Imtidad', an independent wing for the company's sustainable initiatives, through which the company aspires to add long-lasting value to people and the environment.



"We are delighted to join hands with Nafath. It is an innovative Omani company in the renewable energy industry.

The collaboration with them reflects our commitment towards supporting the national objectives of preserving the environment and diversifying energy sources. Furthermore, we aim to contribute to the In-country value by supporting national SMEs", Tariq al Farsi commented.

Eng Abdullah al Saidi added:

UNDER THE AGREEMENT, NAFATH RENEWABLE ENERGY WILL PROVIDE SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SYSTEMS FOR CLIENTS WHO ARE WILLING TO INSTALL THE SYSTEM IN THEIR HOUSES

"The collaboration is aimed at encouraging consumers to consider solar energy to reduce their electricity consumption at home. We are proud of this strategic partnership with National Finance's green solutions which endeavour to strengthen the Sultanate's position as one of the leading countries in the solar power industry. We believe that together we can influence a positive change towards achieving Oman vision 2040."

Oman faces US anti-dumping duty on aluminium foil imports

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

The US International Trade Commission (ITC), part of whose remit is to investigate trade practices harmful to US businesses, has ruled that aluminium foil imports from the Sultanate of Oman are sold in the United States at "less than fair value" and will thus be subject to anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

The announcement came in a determination issued by the Washington DC-based agency last week. It came at the end of a roughly year-long investigation triggered by a joint petition filed by three American producers of aluminium foil claiming the imports "materially injured" their business.

Four other countries — Armenia, Brazil, Russia and Turkey — were also warned they would be subject to penal duties for their aluminium foil exports into the US.

An official of the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), which defends the country's producers and exporters against dumping and other anti-competitive market practices, said the Ministry would review and contest the determination.

The US is an important market for aluminium foil produced in the Sultanate of Oman, the biggest manufacturer being Oman Aluminium Rolling Company



(OARC), a Suhar-based plant that receives its aluminium hot metal feedstock from the nearby Sohar Aluminium smelter.

The Sultanate of Oman shipped around 13,000 tonnes of aluminium foil, valued at \$35.122 million, into the US market in 2020, up from 15,500 tonnes worth \$48.148 million a year earlier.

In 2018, shipments totalled around 8,059 tonnes valued at \$24.469 million, according to figures released by the US International Trade Commission.

"The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) today determined that US industry is materially injured by reason of imports of aluminium foil from Armenia, Brazil, the Sultanate of Oman, Russia and Turkey that the US Department of Commerce (Commerce) has determined are sold in the United States at less than fair value and subsidised by the governments of the Sultanate of Oman and Turkey", the US agency said in a press statement.

"As a result of the Commission's affirmative determinations, (the

US Department of) Commerce will issue countervailing duty orders on imports of this product from the Sultanate of Oman and Turkey and anti-dumping duty orders on imports of this product from Armenia, Brazil, the Sultanate of Oman, Russia and Turkey", it further noted.

According to experts, countervailing duties (CVDs) — also referred to anti-subsidy duties — are levies imposed under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules to offset the effect of subsidies enjoyed by exporters in the production of their goods. Anti-dumping duties, on the hand, are imposed on imports that are sold at discounts to hurt competition from local producers.

Either duty may be imposed after a lengthy investigative process by a department overseeing anti-competitive market practices.

Oman is a member of the GCC Standing Committee for Combating Harmful Practices in International Trade, a Riyadh based agency that investigates dumping and related anti-competitive practices in the Gulf region.

Turkey lira slumps to record low



ANKARA: The Turkish lira dropped to record lows on Monday after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan at the weekend ordered the expulsion of the ambassadors of 10 countries, including Germany and the United States.

The envoys had angered the president in calling for the release of Parisian-born philanthropist and activist Osman Kavala, who has been in jail since 2017 without conviction.

The Turkish currency fell to 9.80 against the dollar before rallying slightly to 9.73 after 0500 GMT, a drop of 1.3 per cent from the previous day.

The lira has fallen around 24 per cent against the dollar since the start of the year.

The currency had already suffered a terrible week after Turkey was placed under surveillance for failing to properly combat money laundering and terrorism financing, as concerns rise over monetary policy and central bank interference by Erdogan. After sacking three central bank members this month, the bank cut the policy rate from 18 per cent to 16 per cent on Thursday even as inflation surged to nearly 20 per cent in September. — AFP



Omantel deploys Ciena technology

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 25

Omantel has deployed Ciena WaveLogic 5 Extreme 800G coherent optical technology to connect data centres, submarine cable landing stations and telecom exchanges in various regions across the Sultanate of Oman in order to accommodate the rapid increase in network traffic.

Marking the first roll-out of 800Gbps wavelengths in the MENA region, this upgrade allows Omantel to support the increasing digital needs of businesses and consumers, while supporting hyperscalers' growing network demands with 400GE connectivity. This deployment underpins the Oman Vision 2040 which promotes economic diversification with a focus on technology, knowledge and innovation.

Samy al Ghassany, Chief Operating Officer at Omantel, said: "Amidst the fast digital transformation in the Sultanate of Oman, in line with the Oman Vision 2040 goals,

we are witnessing a surge in bandwidth demand. Ciena's 800G technology will help pave the way for enhanced high-speed network capabilities for our clients across the Sultanate of Oman on various domains like 5G, wholesale, cloud, ICT and IoT services. As Omantel prepares its network to handle the next generation of connectivity, we actively collaborate with partners, like Ciena, to jointly architect a scalable and programmable network foundation so we can set the scene for a more digitally connected society."

Jamie Jefferies, Vice President and General Manager, International, Ciena, added: "As Omantel navigates its journey to implement 5G and other advanced technologies, there is a need for a network that can quickly adapt to fluctuating bandwidth demands. Ciena's 800G technology not only helps Omantel prepare for the explosion of data that will come from 5G, but also drives greater network economics, reach and power efficiency."

Whether it's supply or demand, oil era heads for crunch time

Energy transition and peak demand predictions have spooked investors in oil, putting the prospect of peak production sooner than anticipated accompanied by wild price spikes.

Key climate talks are set to begin at the end of this month in Glasgow, Scotland to tackle global warming under the 2015 Paris Agreement, with fossil fuel in policy-makers' crosshairs.

But as it stands now, mobility curbs which hollowed out both spending on upstream oil projects and oil end use may already be set to permanently rein in the growth of both supply and demand.

"On current trends, global oil supply is likely to peak even earlier than demand", the research department of bank Morgan Stanley said in a note this week.

"The planet puts boundaries on the amount of carbon that can safely be emitted. Therefore, oil consumption needs to peak. However, this is such a well-telegraphed prospect that it has solicited its own counter-response already: Low investment."

Still, with most oil producers and watchdogs putting the peak to the world's thirst for oil at least several years away, demand is already veering back toward pre-pandemic levels.

The mismatch between demand for oil and other polluting fossil fuels roaring back to normal and output having lagged has helped contribute to an energy crunch in Europe and Asia, with crude prices soaring to multi-year highs.

The medium-term erosion of oil demand supposes that renewable energies like electric cars and wind power gain pace, which the International Energy Agency says needs to pick up fast in order to head off shortages and sky-high prices.

"The amount being spent on oil appears to be geared towards a world of stagnant or falling demand," the Paris-based agency said in its annual outlook this month.

"A surge in spending on clean energy transitions provides the way forward, but this needs to happen quickly or global energy markets will face a bumpy road ahead."

The IEA does not predict an immediate peak to oil supply, with producer club Opec and Russia comprising a rising share of supply in the next decade.

Opec's annual outlook last month saw global supply nearing a plateau in 2045 but no clear peak.

Despite the pitfalls to prices and supply, the IEA said current low oil and gas spending was one of the few areas aligned with its most ambitious Net Zero Emissions by 2050 (NZE) scenario in which no new fossil fuel projects should go forward.

— Reuters



EURO OR KUNA

A woman puts her signature on a signature collection list, as some ring-wing Croatian opposition parties are collecting signatures from citizens to hold a referendum on the introduction of the euro instead of the kuna, the official Croatian currency, in downtown Zagreb. Croatian government wants to introduce the euro currency in 2024, which some opposition parties oppose. — AFP

Reporting challenges in a post-pandemic economy



JAMES RAVI
Director, Crowe Oman

CHANGES IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITY CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC WILL CAUSE MANY ENTITIES TO RENEGOTIATE THE TERMS OF EXISTING CONTRACTS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Covid-19 pandemic has terribly affected life around the world, but business goes on in the midst of many disruptive trends. This includes, but is not limited to, financial market volatility, erosion of values, deteriorating credit, liquidity crunches, reduced production levels due to decreased demand, layoffs and furloughs.

In this scenario, companies will have to report on their operations, financial condition and cashflows; and those reports will have to be audited.

This has exerted enormous pressure on the business world and forced a host of challenges to financial reporting. Some significant challenges are discussed here.

A global economic downturn for many industries is a triggering event which requires impairment testing for almost all assets. One of the biggest challenges in this regard is the high level of uncertainties and the impact of the determination of the value-in-use. Particularly, projecting future cash flows is a huge challenge in times of increasing uncertainty.

Based on the significant amount of judgement required in conducting an impairment test with a high degree of uncertainty, it is imperative to go beyond the required disclosures to give financial statements users more insights and enable them to make their own assessments about future projections.

In this regard, Sensitivity Information is very useful. IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standards) only requires to disclose Sensitivity Information when reasonable possible changes in input parameters would lead to an impairment. But in times of high degree of uncertainties, disclosing "break even" can be very useful in assessing future projections.

Accounting estimates rely on an entity's judgemental assumptions, which must be based on a reasonable interpretation of conditions or events that are either known or knowable as of the measurement date. In other words, the assumptions used by an entity in its estimates must be both reasonable and supportable.

Determining what constitutes a reasonable and supportable assumption during times of economic uncertainty requires an entity to exercise professional judgment grounded in a well-controlled and supported estimation process.

A number of assumptions or estimates may be required for more than one purpose, like forecasting revenues may be relevant to impairment testing and fair value measurement.

Consistent assumptions should be used for all relevant assessments. When reporting in uncertain times, it is particularly important to provide users of financial statements with appropriate insight into the entity's resilience.

Changes in economic activity caused by the pandemic will cause many entities to renegotiate the terms of existing contracts and arrangements.

Examples include contracts with customers, compensation arrangements with employees, lease agreements, bank facilities and the terms of many financial assets and liabilities.

Entities shall need to ensure that the relevant requirements of IFRS are complied with and duly applied.

As a result of Covid-19 and its associated effects, entities need to consider whether, in their specific circumstances, they have the ability to continue as a going concern for at least, but not limited to, 12 months from the

reporting date. Management's assessment of the entity's ability to continue as a going concern involves making a judgement, at the year-end, about inherently uncertain future outcomes, events or conditions.

This will require consideration of the extent of operational disruption; potential diminished demand for products and services; contractual obligations due or anticipated within one year; potential working capital shortfalls; and access to existing sources of capital, etc.

Entities must carefully consider their unique circumstances and risk exposure when analysing how recent events may affect their financial statements, specifically disclosures that need to convey material effects of the pandemic.

The unprecedented nature of the events during the past two years with unpredictable developments results in significant uncertainties which provides a substantial challenge to financial reporting. In addition to the impact on the past results, it might even lead to reconsideration of the strategic position of many businesses and their business models, resulting in increased requirements for portfolio adjustments.

Securing access to sufficient capital, equity and debt, is crucial to maintain and strengthen the market position in this environment. Against this background, it is in the interest of business entities to provide sufficient and relevant information to their shareholders and other users of financial information.

Clear and transparent information on the pervasive effects, how management is responding to this major challenge and its consideration and assumptions regarding the uncertainties will enhance the confidence of the investors, lenders and other stakeholders.

The great supply-chain massacre



DIANE COYLE
The author is Professor of Public Policy at the University of Cambridge

IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER CURRENT WIDESPREAD PRODUCT SHORTAGES ARE MERELY A DISRUPTION OR EVIDENCE OF A GLOBAL MELTDOWN

In the period leading up to the 2008 global financial crisis, a few prescient voices warned of potentially catastrophic systemic instability.

In a famous 2005 speech, Raghuram G Rajan explicitly cautioned that although structural and technological changes meant that the financial system was theoretically diversifying risk better than ever before, it might in practice be concentrating risk. At the time, Rajan was mocked; former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers was not alone in thinking him a "Luddite."

This episode comes to mind because of the widespread shortages

emerging around the world. Markets for gas, truck drivers, carbon dioxide (extraordinarily), toys, ready-to-assemble furniture, iPhones, computer chips and much else have been affected.

Will these supply shocks prove merely a temporary disruption as the global economy recovers from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic? Or are we instead witnessing a meltdown of the global production system? And in the latter case, what would be the supply-chain equivalent of leading central banks' interventions to prevent a global financial collapse in 2008?

The parallels between today's

supply shocks and the 2008 financial shocks are striking.

Prior to each crisis, the prevailing assumption had been that decentralised markets would provide adequate resilience, whether by spreading financial risks or ensuring a diversity of alternative supplies.

In the energy sector, for example, there has been a steady shift away from national self-sufficiency towards reliance on global markets. The European Union started the "liberalisation" process in 2008, enabling new competition in gas and electricity in what was intended to be an EU-wide market. Although some

had previously expressed concerns about the implications for security of supply, policymakers pressed ahead with legislation to entrust European economies' energy imports to global markets.

But most analysts — and policymakers — failed to anticipate that the global markets for gas and many other commodities would turn out to have bottlenecks or gatekeepers.

The supposed diversification of supply resulting from liberalisation frequently seems to be illusory.

For many products, including semiconductors or CO2 (a fertiliser by-product) for food processing, supplies have become

more concentrated. And the splitting of global production chains into ever more specialised links over several decades has led to unexpectedly close correlations between supply shocks in different industries, as with fertiliser and food or semiconductors and cars.

In addition, some shortages (such as those of truck drivers and shipping containers, or gasoline in the United Kingdom) directly affect the logistics connecting the links in supply chains.

As a result, vulnerabilities have rapidly become mutually reinforcing and self-amplifying.

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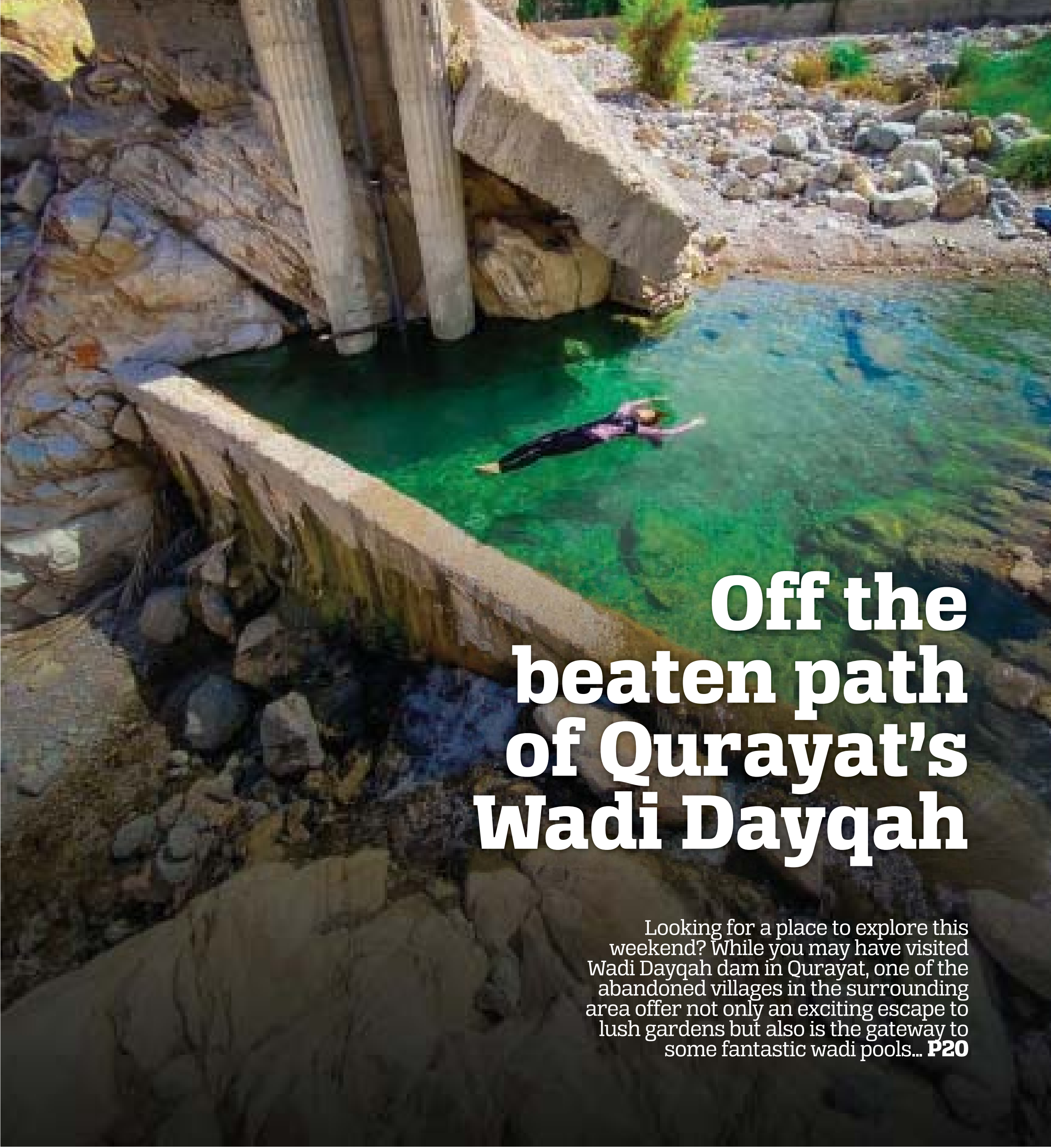
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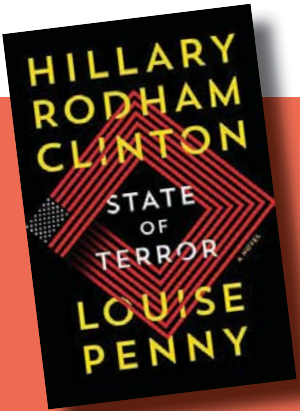


Off the beaten path of Qurayat's Wadi Dayqah

Looking for a place to explore this weekend? While you may have visited Wadi Dayqah dam in Qurayat, one of the abandoned villages in the surrounding area offer not only an exciting escape to lush gardens but also is the gateway to some fantastic wadi pools... **P20**

ART

READ



STATE OF TERROR
BY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
AND LOUISE PENNY

In the wake of the previous administration's mishandling of international affairs, the new Secretary of State Ellen Adams confronts interconnected global threats.

Picasso masterpieces sell for over \$100m at Las Vegas auction

ELEVEN PABLO PICASSO artworks have sold at auction for nearly \$110 million after spending years on display at a Las Vegas hotel. The Sotheby's auction took place at the MGM Resorts-owned Bellagio Hotel and Casino, where the pieces featured in its Picasso restaurant. The company said Saturday's sale, which exceeded its high esti-

mate with all of the works sold, would help it improve the diversity of its fine art collection. The highest price was fetched by the 1938 portrait *Femme Au BeretRouge-Orange*, which depicts Picasso's muse and lover Marie-Therese Walter, which sold for \$40.5 million following what auc-tioneers described as a "prolonged

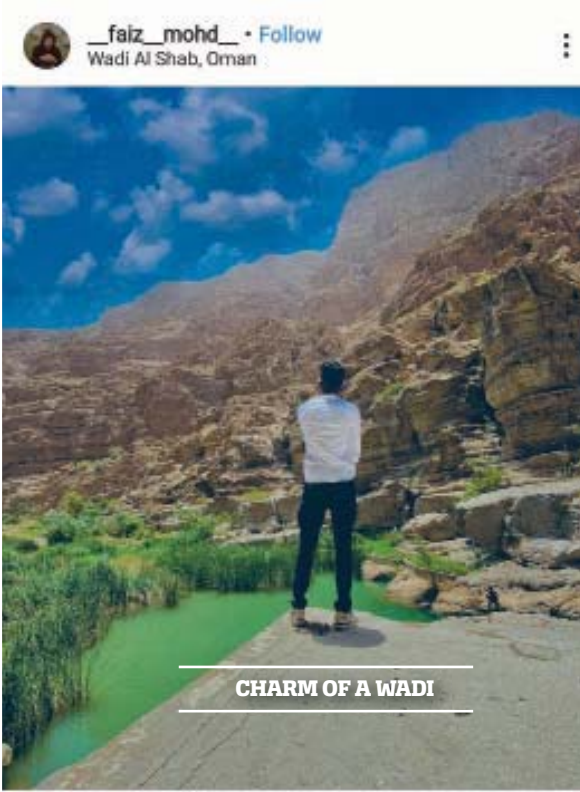
bidding battle". It exceeded its high guide price by some \$10 million. The two-metre tall *Homme Et Enfant* sold for \$24.4 million. The 1959 piece is regarded as an impor-tant example of Picasso's late career work. Included in the sale were nine paintings and two ceramic pieces bythe Spanish artist, who died in 1973, spanning some six decades, including *Nature Morte Au Panier De Fruits Et Aux Fleurs* from 1942 and *Le Dejeuner Sur L'herbe* from 1962. The Bellagio ballroom featured a recreated version of the Sotheby's auction room for the sale, which was hosted by the house's chair-man and auctioneer Oliver Barker. The MGM Resorts collection was started more than 20 years ago by US property developer and casino mogul Steve Wynn, former owner of the Bellagio. — **PA Media/dpa**





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AROUND THE WORLD

COMMUNITY

Oman-based Rubik wizard aims to break world record



BY KABEER YOUSUF

BEING BLINDFOLDED DOESN'T mean this 9-year-old boy is not able to do the things that he used to do otherwise.

The prestidigitation that he has acquired at this age is making Surya Reji of Indian School Ghobra stand out for he has been catapulted to wider attention with his skill.

He has been solving Rubik's Cube blindfolded in less than a minute against his earlier 4-minutes deadline and where he is aiming is nowhere other than the *Limca Book of World Records*.

"He showed interest in a Rubik's cube one year ago. So we got him a 3x3 Rubik's cube and taught him through YouTube. And then picked it up very fast and showed more interest in the sport and he is ambitious to carve a niche in this," say his parents, Reji Prashanth, an alumnus of ISG and Pallavi Reji.

Surya was quick to learn the algorithms behind solving the Rubik's Cube and also kept experimenting with different speedcubing methods and was able to solve 3x3 and his parents got him a 4x4 cube which he was learning. But unfortunately, it broke and he had to go back to 3x3 again. He was at ease with the 3x3 but wanted to do something different which ended him solving the Rubik's Cube blindfolded.

"He aims to break the Guinness record for solving Rubik's cube (kids-10 years) which is currently held by Li Dongyi from China in 11.84 seconds. Currently, Surya solves it in 50 seconds. In his free time, he is teaching his 4-year-old sister."

Although he was provided with all the materials and taught him initially, he finds at ease with learning by himself. He has been featured on vernacular dailies for his interest in dinosaurs when he was in Kindergarten. His remarkable memory was evident as he could identify and recollect the tough names of different species of dinosaurs.

"We would like to congratulate Surya Reji, for his remarkable talent and wish him the very best so that he develops his unique abilities and applies them creatively in the future," Papri Ghosh, Principal of the school said.

TRADITIONS

With axes and stones, women make their mark on traditional Basque rural sports



WOMEN LIFTED HEAVY stones as much as their shoulders and swung axes through the Women's Championship of Herri-Kirolak — or Basque sports — as a brand new era goals to alter attitudes within the historically male-dominated sport.

The city sq. in Mungia in northern Spain was full of spectators to cheer on the feminine opponents, who're nonetheless a comparatively uncommon sight within the occasions.

Basque sports — Herri-Korolak within the Basque language — showcase shows of energy and stamina related to the heavy guide labour historically related to rural life within the Basque Country, an area of northern Spain that borders France.

"Herri-Kirolak originate with the work of the farmhouse. In the farmhouse, men, women, girls, boys, grandfathers and grandmothers all worked. It didn't matter about age or gender. But in competitions it was always men," stated reigning stone-lifting champion Karnele Gisasola, whose father was a stone lifter.

"My grandmother, although she lifted stones



at home, never had the opportunity to compete. Things have been more difficult for us, without role-models, but now we have championships and we are progressing."

The 18 classes of traditional Basque sports take inspiration from the area's rocky terrain and farming traditions. They embrace stone lifting and dragging, wooden chopping and sawing, scything and working with milk pails.

Competitors stated that they had been inspired by

folks's response to the rising presence of women within the sport.

"I'm starting out now and people are really encouraging and pushing us forward," stated runner-up Lucia Orbe.

Orbe's coach, former stone lifting champion Felix Campos Lumbreras, was optimistic in regards to the future.

"The girls are just starting. But I don't care if it is boys or girls, the main thing is to keep things progressing". — Reuters

A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



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A Jewel in a Black Autumn

The following are translations of poems from Zahir al Ghafri's collection: "Whenever an Angel Appeared in the Fort", (Beirut: 2008):

A JEWEL IN A BLACK AUTUMN

She didn't feel the rain
On the edge of her forehead
Nor did she feel the wind
That raised the laughter's ring
A little higher
Like the ring of an angel in the forest.

She'd walk
As if in another life.

She thought only of a chair
behind the window
To rest on
And watch a man pass by
A man she can ask
To the bed of her desire
Lit by tears and flowers.
But you who pass by
At this moment
You're the victim
Dreaming of drowsiness and flower.

You who came from distant hills
In the night of despair
With two hands
Longing to swim in fancy's fountain.

You look for a jewel in a black autumn
You're the one chosen by chance
To cross the ordeal
To test the beauty sleeping there
Behind the lofty pillars of fog.

The Blaze of Signs

The desert!

It happens only there!
That's what I said.
It happens only beneath a lonely and lofty tree.
Her face shines
Luminous like a saintly halo
Or a portrait from a mirror that can't be seen.

She talks to herself
As if between us a sea's yearning
Yet the same agony!
Her talk crawls to the world's edges
On the rhythm of a magic breeze
Like a dream at midnight.

She talks about vice's flowers
In fantasy's wasteland
About the pain that leaves a trace

On doors and windows
About the secret's flash
In the face of a missing angel
About ladders circled by fire.

Is she asleep or are her eyes just closed?
I know not.
Her words flow
With all earth's signals
As if she looked for gold's glitter
In the bed of a mine.

Every sign from her head
Crowns an early and sure loss.

She calls me to her desert
Her ancestors' paradise
Surrounded by creation's lights
But I cannot.

The desert
The woman alone beneath the tree
My dreams
My dreams are enclosed by a blaze of signs.

Where the Light Fell

The one who was never
Where
The
Light fell
When you knocked the door
That wouldn't open.

In your hand is despair's flower
You who've come from afar
From the mountains whose summits blaze
With travellers' fires
As if at this evening you're the rendezvous of the Resurrection.

There
Before the doors that won't open
You stand with the rose of death in your hand.

Listen to music
It's coming from your life's garden
From the threshold of hell-fire till the last breath.

You're a different man now
For the word is your guide to the wasteland.

Where the light falls
Before doors that won't open
Let yourself be seen
While an angel baffled at the threshold
Carrying sins' rose
For your life is a lock and key
A myth and legend.

O boy
The boy who was
The boy who never was
Do you want more?



Off the beaten path of Qurayat's Wadi Dayqah

BY YERU EBUEN

Wadi Dayqah has been one of the top attractions in the Wilayat of Qurayat. I've visited it sporadically in the last five years and before Covid-19, it was so popular that most weekends, it's hard to find a spot below the dam as most families spend the whole afternoon picnicking by the falaj and pools.

While the viewpoint of the dam offers a sweeping view of the villages and the lush gardens below and the beautiful emerald water at the opposite end, I only know little about the surrounding villages.

A recent trip had opened my eyes that these villages have so much more to offer but it took going off the usual trail into abandoned homes and entering dilapidated doors to witness some of the Sultanate of Oman's amazing views.

Punching in this coordinate in Google 23°05'02.4"N 58°52'04.4"E led us into a small village of scattered homes mostly made of mud and stones. There was a small roundabout leading towards the village and a small well with a tree growing out of it was one of its indicators. A closer look would reveal a flowing falaj below the well.

At the one end of this roundabout is a mosque of which where we started our quick hike. We ventured towards an abandoned complex made out of mud and stones and is comprised of a series of rooms in different levels of disarray.

The housing complex alone was a revelation. From the rooftop, one will have a clear view of the pathway of the Wadi Dayqah as it extends further south. The rooms are empty but they still retain some of their foundations and some of the rooms have their windows bolted shut with little light streaming in through cracks on the walls.

At the far end of the complex is a door that led towards the cliff. This is where I've fallen in love with this place.

Passing through this narrow door, one will see the beautiful cliffs at the opposite end of the valley. The mountains are separated by the Wadi in the middle and the trickle of water from the dam created a series of pools that the villagers use not only for swimming and bathing but also to water their gardens.

Standing from that end and looking at the view, it was impossible to resist the call of the emerald pools below. Since there were no stairs to climb down we decided to drive down towards the wadi.

It was another 10-minute drive on an unpaved, muddy road. Since we have a small 4WD, we decided to hike the rest of the way. It was a quick 15-minute walk before we saw our first pool. The pool itself was a decently done one with the villagers creating a wall to collect the water at one end. This is where we spent the rest of the afternoon enjoying the cool water and every once in a while, enjoying the foot spa courtesy of the resident fishes.

Walking a little farther down, the pathway opens to an even bigger part of the wadi. Here, the pools are big-

ger and the water flow was faster. A few months back, people had been bringing their kayaks here to enjoy white-water rafting but it's a seasonal activity and mostly depend on how much available water there is from the dam.

"For the villagers, they get to enjoy some water activities with the dam management release the water. When they release water from the dam, it flows towards here and it is when adventurers come to enjoy the water flow", shared Ahmed al Jaabri, our trusted guide from Oman Outdoor Adventure.

"You really need to have contact from the village to enjoy some of the water activities. It's very seasonal when they release the water and the water usually do not stay long", he added.

Typical of many Oman villages, most of the farms are filled with date palms and different seasonal crops. The village itself also are just made of traditional homes and stores are located a few kilometres away.

The spot we found is definitely good for a picnic. But if you're planning to do one, make sure to bring your own supplies.

While the villagers are welcoming, it is important to remember that you are a guest to their village so be sure to observe different traditional protocols when interacting with the locals.

If you're looking for a place to explore this weekend, I highly suggest you drive to Qurayat, enjoy the dam and take the less travelled pathways towards abandoned villages. There are so many things to learn and be mesmerised by the views known only to the locals.

