

P10

AL WAHAIBI SEALS
SUPERB FOURTH PLACE
AND CLASS WIN AT
OREGON TRAIL RALLY



P13

'VICIOUS PRICE
COMPETITION' CONTINUES
TO BESET OMAN'S CEMENT
INDUSTRY



P20

'ARISE'
SHOWCASES THE
BEST WORK OF 21
OMANI ARTISTS



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO CAMBODIA KING

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Norodom Sihamoni of the Kingdom of Cambodia 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 King Sihamoni. His Majesty also wished the friendly people of Cambodia further progress and prosperity.

— ONA

TEHRAN

OMAN, IRAN DISCUSS TRADE RELATIONS

The Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran held a session of talks to discuss means of boosting trade and economic relations between the two countries. The session was attended by Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Gholam Hossein Shafei, President of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture and Mohsen Zarrabi, Chairman of Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce. The two sides exchanged views on ways to promote trade relations between the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman and Iran.

DETAILS ON P5



HM receives credentials of ambassadors

AMBASSADORS CONVEY GREETINGS OF LEADERS OF THEIR COUNTRIES TO HIS MAJESTY

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received separately at Al Alam Palace on Monday credentials of a number of ambassadors of the Arab and friendly countries accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

His Majesty received credentials of the following ambassadors. Stella Kluth, Extraordinary

and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Shaiful Anuar Mohammad, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, King of Malaysia, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Veronique Aulagnon, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Emmanuel Macron of the French Republic, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

William Murray, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain

and Northern Ireland, Head of the Commonwealth, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Khalid Mohammed Abdulhal-eem, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Abdel Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Qais Saad Al Amiri, Extraor-

dinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Dr Barham Salih of the Republic of Iraq, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Ligia Maria Scherer, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Jair Bolsonaro of the Federal Republic of Brazil, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

TURN TO P3

INSIDE



LEBANON'S PM SAYS IMF TALKS PROGRESSING WELL

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TRAVELLERS HEAD TO UNITED STATES AS ENTRY BAN LIFTED

P8

WHO keeping vigil as Covid-19 far from over

KABEER YOUSUF
[@kabeeryousef](#)

Despite the fall in hospitalisations, new cases and casualties, the World Health Organization (WHO) has said that it is keeping a vigil on new cases as the pandemic is far from over.

"We remain cautious and concerned as Covid-19 is far from over in our region. We are still observing surge in cases and deaths in 10 countries this week, compared to the previous week", said Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

Speaking to the media at a regional press briefing, he added that WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region has reported almost 16.4 million confirmed Covid-19 cases. "As of November 7, we have also tragically marked the death of more than 300,000 people in our region

We are still seeing a surge in cases and deaths in 10 countries this week, compared to the previous week

DR AHMED AL MANDHARI
WHO Regional Director

since the beginning of the pandemic although the overall trend of new cases, hospitalisations and deaths have declined in the last few weeks across the region."

He observed that more lives are put at risk due to premature relaxing of Covid-19 rules, lack of adherence to precautionary measures, public health and social measures, as well as low vaccination coverage.

TURN TO P5

JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE 'MUSANDAM FORT 2021' BEGINS



An Oman-Britain military exercise, codenamed 'Musandam Fort 2021', began on Monday between Musandam Security Force of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and units of the Royal Scottish Guards in the United Kingdom. The exercise, which will run till November 11, includes a number of joint military activities and exercises. **SEE ALSO P5**

October was the third-warmest on record since 1979

ROME: Last month was the world's third warmest October since records began in 1779, the European climate change service Copernicus announced on Monday.

Researchers said that only October 2015 and 2019 were warmer – and only "marginally." Global temperatures were 0.42 degrees warmer than the reference average from 1991 to 2020.

Warmer-than-average temperatures were particularly apparent in northern Canada, northern Russia and western Antarctica. In southern and south-eastern Europe, on the other hand, it was somewhat colder than usual. Copernicus, the EU's Climate Change Service, is based in Bologna, Italy and Reading, Britain. It produces monthly reports on air temperature, sea ice and the water cycle by collating data from satellites, ships, aircraft and weather stations around the world, as well as model calculations. — dpa



GCC meet discusses economic issues

MANAMA: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 114th meeting of the GCC Financial, Economic Cooperation Committee, held here on Sunday at the level of GCC ministers of finance and economy.

The Omani side at the meeting was headed by Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance.

The meeting reviewed topics of the agenda, which included the recommendations of governors of monetary organisations and central banks and the proposals of heads and directors of tax administrations and the customs authority, among other issues related to the GCC common market.

Discussions covered ways of reaching decisions aimed to realise GCC economic rapprochement goals.

The ministers underscored the need to upgrade coordination among the working teams and committees responsible for expediting the implementation of decisions issued by the authorities concerned towards the accomplishment of economic integration.

The Financial and Economic Cooperation Committee and the Commercial Cooperation Committee held a joint meeting to study the progress made in trade agreements' negotiations between GCC states and other countries and blocs.

The Omani delegation included the Ministry of Finance's Under-Secretary and officials from the ministry and Directorate General of Customs, Royal Oman Police. — ONA

As guests surge, hotels told to follow Covid-19 protocols

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

With the easing of Covid-19 related restrictions, hotels in the Sultanate of Oman have been witnessing a surge in the number of guests, both domestic and as well as international.

It is in this context that the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) issued a warning on Monday that some hotels and tourist establishments have not been following the precautionary measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The ministry stressed hotel and tourist establishments must abide by decisions issued by this ministry and other competent authorities to prevent the spread of Covid 19, which include reducing the number of visitors at hotel facilities such as restaurants, meeting and banquet halls, and the rest of other facilities to 50 per cent of the total capacity.

It urged all establishments to follow the regulations and avoid legal action.

Earlier this year, actions were initiated against some prominent hotels, including the one in the capital, for violating the rules laid down by the Supreme Committee and the Ministry of Health.

With the holidays for National Day announced on Sunday, the popular hotel and resorts in the country are reporting good responses,



especially on the travel sites.

"We have been getting calls for booking immediately after the holidays were announced on Sunday afternoon. Some of them already confirmed their bookings," said the resort manager of a property in the Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

It may be noted that the number of hotel guests in three to five stars in the country until the end of September was 834,255, compared to 604,940 guests registered during the same period in 2020, registering an increase of 37.9 per cent, according to statistics

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism issued a warning on Monday that some hotels and tourist establishments have not been following the precautionary measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19

issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The hotel revenues until the end of September amounted to RO 59,273,000, a decrease of 11.7 per cent compared to 67,136,000 during the same period in 2020.

The occupancy rate improved to 35 per cent this year compared to 27.3 per cent in 2020.

As per the statistics, the number of Omani guests increased by 115.8 per cent to 619,194 from 286,867 in the same period last year.

Sultanate of Oman
سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التجارة والصناعة وترويج الاستثمار
Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion

Announcement No. 2 / 2021

As the end of the financial year 2021 is approaching, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion announces that the last date for receiving any financial claims related to the year 2021 is Tuesday, 7/12/2021.

Therefore, all companies, establishments and individuals dealing with the Ministry are requested to submit their financial claims to the Department of Financial Affairs before the end of receipt period.

The Ministry is not responsible for any delay in payment of any claims received after the date stated above.

www.tejarah.gov.om | [Tejarah_om](https://www.facebook.com/Tejarah_om) | 80 00 00 70

Sultanate at GCC meet on retirement, social insurance

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Civil Service Employees Pension Fund (CSEPF) and the Public Authority

for Social Insurance, on Monday participated in the 20th meeting of Heads of the GCC Civil Retirement and Social Security Agencies.

The online meeting reviewed a number of issues of joint Gulf action, such as following up the progress made on applying the Unified

System to Extend Insurance Protection and the initiative to update a comparative study of the civil retirement and social insurance systems.

INVITATION TO TENDER

Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Suppliers/Contractors for the following tender:

Tender No.	: 2021-ENG-SOW-0056
Tender Title	: PTA Cleaning Bay Dust Collection System
Scope	: Contractor to design, supply and install dust extraction system in PTA cleaning bay.
Tender No.	: 2021-ENG-SOW-0051
Tender Title	: 220 KV cable tunnel repair
Scope	: Contractor to conduct site survey, identify and repair any damage to 220kv cable tunnel as per scope.
Tender No.	: 2021-ENG-SOW-0059
Tender Title	: Fire Protection Upgrades-WTP and Fuel loading
Scope	: Specialised Fire Contractors approved by PACDA to design, supply and install Fire Protection system in WTP and Fuel loading area of power plant.

Kindly send your email and company profile to: tender@sohar-aluminium.com
For list of active tenders visit: <https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing>

Automobile fuel production rises 13pc

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's refineries recorded an increase in the production of automobile fuel until the end of September 2021 by 13%, compared to the corresponding period of 2020, according to data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Of the total production, sales of petrol (M-95) stood at 9,510,900 barrels, an increase by 16%, while its exports stood at 1,422,200 barrels, comprising a rise by 10%, compared to the corresponding period in 2020.

The production of standard grade petrol (M-91) by Omani refineries stood at 9,933,000 barrels comprising a rise by 41% till the end of September 2021, compared to the corresponding period in 2020. Domestic sales of petrol (M-91) stood at 6,379,500 barrels comprising a 10% increase, while its exports reached 3,850,300 barrels, a



rise by 41%, compared to the corresponding period in 2020.

Gas oil (diesel) output increased by 8% to 27,288,500 barrels. Domestic sales of diesel stood at 9,953,900 barrels, a drop by 1%, and its exports reached 17,382,200 barrels, an increase by 13%, compared to the corresponding period in

2020.

Jet fuel production fell by 26% to 4,354,300 barrels at the end of September 2021, compared to the corresponding period of 2020. Its domestic sales also declined by 23% to 1,077,200 barrels. Exports of aviation fuel dropped by 29% to 3,291,500 barrels.

Production of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) increased by 22% to 5,546,900 barrels until the end of September 2021. Its domestic sales also increased by 168% to 5,525,800 barrels. Of the total production, exports of LPG reached 392,200 barrels, a decline by 86%.

As far as petrochemicals are concerned, benzene production increased by 18%, compared to September 2020 to reach 165,400 metric tonnes, while its exports stood at 165,900 metric tonnes.

Output of paraxylene stood at 432,400 metric tonnes, where its exports reached 440,200 metric tonnes.

Production of polypropylene stood at 168,100 metric tonnes, comprising a rise by 1%, as its domestic sales also increased by 18% to stand at 31,700 metric tonnes. Its exports reached 121,100 metric tonnes, a decline by 2%.

— ONA



HM receives credentials of ambassadors

FROM PAGE 1

Amit Narang, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of India, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

During side meetings with His Majesty the Sultan, the ambassadors conveyed greetings of leaders of their countries along with their best wishes of good health, happiness and long life to His Majesty the Sultan. They also wished the Omani people continuous progress and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Majesty.

They also expressed their great honour and utmost delight to present their credentials before His Majesty the Sultan. They affirmed to exert their sincere efforts to promote relations of

their countries with the Sultanate of Oman in various domains in a manner that serves the joint interests of the Omani people and their countries' peoples.

His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the ambassadors, expressing his thanks for their leaders' greetings and best wishes. His Majesty affirmed to them that they will receive all support from him, the Government and the Omani people to facilitate carrying out their duties.

The credentials' presentation ceremony was attended by the Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, the Foreign Minister, the Commander of the Royal Guard of Oman, the Head of the Royal Protocols and the Military Aides to His Majesty the Sultan.

— ONA



FOR A HEALTH SYSTEM RESILIENT TO CLIMATE CHANGE

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samkuttyvp

Rising global temperatures are fuelling devastating extreme weather throughout the world, with spiralling impacts on economies and societies. The average global temperature for the past five years has been among the highest on record.

Reports predict an increasing likelihood that temperatures will temporarily breach the threshold of 1.5° Celsius above the pre-industrial era, in the next five years. Efforts to cut emissions, adapt to climate threats and deal with health problems are very often carried out separately.

According to a new multi-agency United in Science 2021 report, greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere continue at record levels, committing the planet to dangerous future warming.

The Glasgow summit — the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) — has already produced several important new pledges at national, corporate and global levels.

Rising temperatures weigh upon vulnerable populations such as the elderly and impoverished, who have suffered disproportionate **increases in heat-related hospitalisations** and deaths.

The 6th and 7th days of the summit were devoted to talking about the climate and its variables and its impact on the health system.

Remarkably, the Sultanate of Oman too has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by just 7 per cent by 2030 in addition to its commitment to significantly strengthening the health system and making it more sustainable and able to withstand climate changes.

In a recorded speech, Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health, affirmed the country's full commitment to take necessary measures to strengthen the health system and make it more resilient to climate changes and more environmentally sustainable.

"We will work to achieve several goals in accordance with a specific timetable to contribute to strengthening the health system and making it more sustainable and able to withstand

climate changes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are harmful to the environment, including related supply chains", the minister said.

The Sultanate of Oman is one of the most vulnerable countries in the Gulf to the adverse impacts of climate change and has a heightened degree of awareness and concern about global warming and its adverse impacts.

According to Dr Al Saeedi, an assessment was conducted at the level of health institutions of their tolerance to climate change and the extent to which they can adapt to climate change by 2023.

This, he said, will contribute to the development of a national plan for adaptation in the field of health to climate change by 2024, as part of the national plan for adaptation to climate change.

Other objectives of the Sultanate of Oman include the use of the assessment and the national plan for adaptation in the field of health to climate change to attract the necessary funding for the development of the health system in line with the principles of sustainability and respect for the environment.

And assessing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the health system including supply chains, revealed the minister, the Sultanate of Oman has finalised an action plan to develop an environmentally friendly health system, with low greenhouse emissions.

This, he said, includes everything related to supply chains, air pollution and human exposure to it, and the role of the health sector in reducing pollution.

The Sultanate of Oman has already embarked on serious structural reforms and transformative policies to lay the groundwork for a low carbon economy and shift to low-emission sustainable development pathways over the last five years.

The country has developed a comprehensive Vision 2040 policy to further liberalise and diversify the economy by increasing investments in tourism, financial services, and port logistics. Additionally, the National Energy Strategy established an audacious goal of generating a significant portion of electricity from renewable sources by 2030.

We will work together to contribute to strengthening the health system and making it more sustainable and able to withstand climate changes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are harmful to the environment, including related supply chains

DR AHMED BIN
MOHAMMED AL SAEEDI
Minister of Health

■ OMAN-UK DRILL 'MUSANDAM FORT 2021' BEGINS



MUSANDAM: An Oman-Britain military exercise, codenamed 'Musandam Fort 2021', began on Monday between Musandam Security Force of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO) and units of the Royal Scottish Guards in the United Kingdom (UK). The exercise, which will run till November 11, includes a number of joint military activities and exercises.



The Omani-British military exercise, held in the military exercises area in Musandam Governorate, comes in accordance with RAO Command's training programme. It also comes within the framework of exchanging expertise and military skills to achieve the desired training objectives. — **ONA**

Covid far from over: WHO

FROM PAGE 1

"We have observed the consequences of these actions in countries in Europe and Central Asia over the past weeks, which have been experiencing an increase in cases as a result. The total number of cases globally is also beginning to edge up again."

In a regional study conducted across all 22 countries, WHO has identified that only 66 per cent of respondents reported wearing a mask all or most of the time, and only 78 per cent of respondents reported often washing their hands. Only half of respondents reported keeping at least 2 metres away from people in public all or most of the time.

"This is not how we will end the pandemic. The only certain way to prevent the spread of Covid-19 is by doing it all: getting vaccinated, maintaining physical distancing, cleaning hands, avoiding crowded and closed spaces, and wearing a mask," Al Mandhari added.

The WHO has reiterated people to stay informed with the latest and correct news on Covid-19, and to not give in to fear or rumours. All the latest information about Covid-19, variants, vaccines, and other issues are available with the concerned ministries of health and WHO's websites and social media accounts.

With more than 417 million doses administered across the region, vaccinations continue to be rolled out and the WHO has set a global target to vaccinate at least 40 per cent of the population in every country by the end of 2021.

The study further revealed that as of November 3, 2021, as many



Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean.

MoH affirms commitment

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Health (MoH), confirms its full abidance by the precautionary measures for a more sustainable and robust health system.

This came in a recorded statement delivered by the Minister of Health, coinciding with the 2021 Global Conference on Health and Climate Change held online and in-person at the Glasgow Caledonian University on November 6.

The statement said that the Sultanate of Oman will work to achieve several goals according to a specific timetable towards strengthening the health system and making it more sustainable and able to withstand climate changes, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that are harmful to the environment.

as 14 countries in the region are on track to achieve this target while eight countries are still lagging, with less than 10 per cent of their populations fully vaccinated. WHO is working with ministries of health and partners to accelerate those vaccination targets.

"While there are several factors preventing countries from achieving wider vaccine rollout including inequity in access to vaccines, conflict, instability, and weak health systems, empowering communities with complete information is critical to building trust and sustaining demand for vaccines and other public health measures," he told the media.

However, the WHO observed a high level of public acceptance of Covid-19 vaccines across the region, with 80 per cent of participants in the regional survey confirming they would accept the vaccine.

WHO concluded that it needed to work with communities and their leaders to build trust and demand for vaccines by addressing any rumours, false information, concerns to ensure improving vaccination coverage.

"The importance of community engagement and participation cannot be underestimated.

By empowering and supporting communities to play an active role in decision-making in the public health response, we can find solutions that incorporate local capacity, resources, and structures, and are far more acceptable, sustainable, and culturally appropriate. This is our vision in the region to ensure "Health for All by All," Dr Ahmed al Mandhari said.

Oman, Iran discuss ways to boost trade relations



TEHRAN: The Sultanate of Oman and the Islamic Republic of Iran held here on Monday a session of talks to discuss means of boosting trade and economic relations between the two countries.

The session was attended by Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI);

Gholam Hossein Shafei, President of the Iranian Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture; and Mohsen Zarra-bi, Chairman of Iran-Oman Joint Chamber of Commerce.

The two sides exchanged views on ways to promote trade relations between the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman and Iran as well as cooperation in the field

of medical tourism.

They also reviewed the preparations to organise the first virtual exhibition between the Sultanate of Oman and Iran.

The session came on the sidelines of the 5th International Conference on Health in Islamic Countries, hosted by the Iranian capital, Tehran.

— **ONA**

Course on Algerian decorative arts

ALGERIA: A training course on decorative arts and miniatures will be organised in the Sultanate of Oman, the Directorate General of Arts and Culture in the province of Tlemcen, Algeria, announced.

The events will be held in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, as well as several academic institutions of arts in the Sultanate of Oman.

The course will benefit students of Islamic arts by exposing them to experience features of the Algerian school in this field.

Moreover, the week-long events will exhibit art paintings of the most renowned Algerian artists. In addition, a number of specialised lectures will be given. — **ONA**

NOTICE

This is to inform all concerned that Mr. Mohammed Hani Ahmed Ali Mohammed holder of Egyptian Passport No. A24999522 Resident Card No. 81133059 will be no longer working with **AIRMECH OMAN LLC** from 31.10.2021. Therefore, all the concerned are requested to stop dealing with the above named in favor of the company. If anyone is dealing with him it is at their own risk and the company will not take any responsibility hereafter. If anybody has any claim, he/she should report to the company within the next 10 working days.

AIRMECH OMAN
L.L.C.

MoU signed with Morocco on archives management

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Morocco signed here on Monday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in the fields of historical documentation and the management of documents and archives.

The MoU was signed by Dr Hamad bin Mohammed al Dhawyani, Chairman of the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA), and Dr Bahija Simou, Director of the Moroccan Royal Archives.

As per the MoU, the two sides



will cooperate in the fields of copying documents, printing and exchanging manuscripts and books, as well as preserving and repairing documents.

The two sides will also promote their cooperation in publishing cultural, literary and historical documents and organising various activities. — **ONA**

National Real Estate Development and Investments Co. (SAOG)

P.O. Box 84, Muscat-100, Sultanate of Oman - Phone: 24702133/24701454, Fax: 24703826, C.R. No. 1/02478/7

DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR THE NINE MONTH ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2021		UNAUDITED & PROVISIONAL BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2021	
		2021 RO	2020 RO
Respected shareholders,			
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present herewith the result of National Real Estate Development and Investments Co. (SAOG) for the first Nine-month period ended 30th September 2021.			
Operational Result			
The Company recorded an un-audited net loss of RO. 13,730 up to the 3rd quarter ended Sep 2021 versus (2020: RO. 12,473 loss). There was no revenue and no volume up to 30th Sep 2021.			
Finally, on behalf of the shareholders and the Board I wish to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tareq Bin Taimour for his wise leadership and guidance.			
For the Board of Directors Chairman			
NOTE: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder on request either in Arabic or English within 7 days of receipt of the request.			
		2021 RO	2020 RO
EMPLOYMENT OF FUNDS:			
Non Current Asset		7,200,000	9,383,053
Current Assets		187,148	212,362
Current Liabilities		1,088	286
Net Current Assets		186,060	212,076
		7,386,060	9,595,129
FUNDS EMPLOYED:			
Share Capital		1,762,500	1,762,500
Legal reserve		507,275	507,275
Revaluation reserve		7,637,254	7,637,254
Retained earnings		(3,600,404)	(1,691,335)
		6,306,625	8,215,694
Non-current liabilities		1,079,435	1,379,435
		7,386,060	9,595,129
UNAUDITED & PROVISIONAL PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT FOR THE PERIOD 1st JANUARY TO 30th SEPTEMBER 2021			
		2021 RO	2020 RO
Sales		-	-
Cost of Sales		-	-
Gross Profit		-	-
Other Operating Income		2,997	3,664
Expenses before Depreciation		(16,727)	(16,137)
Profit before Depreciation		(13,730)	(12,473)
Depreciation		-	-
Net profit/(loss) after Depreciation		(13,730)	(12,473)

Lebanon’s PM says IMF talks progressing well



Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati speaks at an economy conference, in Beirut, Lebanon, on Monday. – Reuters

BEIRUT: Lebanon’s Prime Minister Najib Mikati said on Monday that preliminary talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were advancing well and a revised financial recovery plan would be complete by the end of November.

“For the first time we have handed over unified financial figures,” Mikati told an economy conference in Beirut. “We hope we will have a letter of intent soon.”

Talks with the IMF that aimed to secure financial support broke down last year amid disagreements over the scale of losses in the country’s financial sector that collapsed in late 2019.

The central bank, private banks and a parliamentary committee representing major political parties argued that losses were much smaller than the roughly \$83 billion estimated by the plan, despite the IMF viewing the figures as accurate.

Mikati said the central bank was now “cooperating fully” with Lazard, the adviser that helped draw up the previous plan, adding that the updated version would be ready this month.

Economists see an IMF programme as the only way for

Lebanon to unlock international aid and begin recovering from one of the world’s worst financial crises.

The economic meltdown has translated into severe shortages of basic goods including fuel and medication.

Mikati said Lebanon was seeking to increase electricity output from a current five hours per day to between 10 and 15 hours per day by the end of the year through a series of deals with Iraq, Egypt and Jordan.

Lebanon’s ailing electricity sector constitutes a main drain on state finances, costing taxpayers more than \$40 billion since 1992 even though the state never provided round-the-clock power.

In addition to monthly shipments of 75,000 tonnes of crude oil from Iraq that provide about five hours a day of power, Mikati said Lebanon aimed to secure Egyptian gas to produce an additional four hours of power by the end of the year.

He said Jordan was willing to provide about two hours worth of power for a cost of 12 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), and work was under way on a long-term plan to secure 24/7 electricity.

— Reuters

Sudan Internet cuts complicate campaign against coup

MILITARY CHIEF MEETS ARAB LEAGUE TEAM AS KEY REBEL LEADERS REJECT COUP

KHARTOUM: Sudanese pro-democracy groups launched two days of civil disobedience and strikes in protest against last month’s military coup, although participation appeared to be limited by interruptions to Internet and phone connections.

In a sign of the potential for the coup to unravel efforts to end decades of internal conflict, armed rebel factions that signed a peace deal last year rejected the coup and called for the ending of a state of emergency.

The commander of the powerful Rapid Support Forces, who is the No 2 man in Sudan’s military, came out in support of the takeover in a midnight speech posted on Facebook.

General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan’s moves “came to correct the course of the people’s revolution, and preserve the security and stability of the country,” said General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, Burhan’s deputy on the now-dissolved Sovereign Council.

Local resistance committees and the Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), which led demonstrations in an uprising that toppled long-serving ruler Omar al Bashir in 2019, are organising a campaign of protests and barricades to try to reverse the military takeover. People were out on the streets on Sunday in the centre of the capital, Khartoum, although there was less traffic than usual, residents said.

A teachers union said security forces used tear gas at the Education Ministry building for Khartoum State to break up a sit-



Young Sudanese sit on a street barricade built overnight by demonstrators in Khartoum. – AFP

in staged to oppose any handover to military appointees. Some 87 people were arrested, it said.

In several areas in eastern Khartoum, across the river in the Ombada area of Omdurman, police also used tear gas to break up protests, witnesses said. On one major Khartoum street, security forces in civilian clothing were seen alongside police, they said.

There were protests too in the cities of Medani, Nyala and Atbara, where hundreds protested the reappointment of Bashir loyalists in local government, witnesses said.

INTERNET DISRUPTION

Some hospitals and medical staff in Khartoum were working

normally, while others were on strike.

“A number of people did not know about the call for civil disobedience because of the Internet cut,” said one resident of central Khartoum, who asked not to be identified.

Internet services have been almost completely disrupted since the October 25 coup, and phone coverage remains patchy. Daily life came to a near standstill after the takeover, but shops, roads and some banks have since reopened.

The coup halted a power-sharing arrangement between the military and civilians that had been agreed after Bashir’s overthrow and was meant to lead

to democratic elections by late 2023.

Top civilians including several ministers were detained, and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok was placed under house arrest.

Mediation efforts involving the United Nations have sought the release of detainees and a return to power sharing, but sources from the ousted government say those efforts have stalled.

Since Bashir was toppled, Sudan had been emerging from decades of isolation and internal wars. A peace agreement signed last year with rebel groups was intended to end several of those long-running conflicts.

— Reuters

Rare Golan Heights movie is highlight of Palestinian film festival

RAMALLAH: A rare film to be shot in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights proved a highlight of this year’s six-day Palestine Cinema Days festival that ended on Monday, with hundreds flocking to watch the movie that has Syria’s civil war as its backdrop.

“The Stranger” tells the story of Adnan, a resident of the Golan who feels like an outsider in his own community but finds a new sense of purpose in helping a man who arrives in the territory after being wounded in the Syrian conflict.

Director and screenwriter Ameer Fakhre Eldin said Adnan’s

experience is that of many Syrians separated from their home country in the Golan, territory that Israel captured in a 1967 war and later annexed in a move not recognised internationally. “We live (in the Golan) on the border fence with our homeland. Imagine hearing the echoes of war but not seeing the war for 10 years,” he said of the civil war.

Fakhre Eldin said that experience had prompted him to ask “who do these wars belong to... and is it a war inside of us or not?”

At the start of Palestine Cinema Days, now in its eighth year, actors and film-makers posed on the red



Palestinian director Ameer Fakhre Eldin speaks during the opening of the Palestine Cinema Days festival, in Ramallah. – Reuters

carpet outside Ramallah’s Cultural Palace in the occupied West Bank, in scenes typical of film festivals everywhere.

But unlike them, this festival is held across six cities often separated by borders and checkpoints. The films were seen in the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, Nazareth and Haifa, and audiences included members of Israel’s Arab minority who regard themselves as Palestinian citizens of Israel.

“We want to reach our audience in the different cities and towns” said festival spokesperson Khulood Badawi. “We want to give them

this opportunity to go back to the cinema and to revive cinema culture in these cities despite the obstacles that the Israeli occupation is imposing.”

Israel captured the West Bank in the 1967 conflict and cites security concerns in maintaining checkpoints across the territory.

Among other films screened at the 2021 festival was “Bread and Butter”, which documents the precarious commute, via crowded checkpoints, of Palestinians to jobs in Israel and of those without work permits who are smuggled into the country. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

TEL AVIV

Pegasus used to hack phones of rights workers

The mobile phones of six Palestinian rights workers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank were hacked using Israeli technology firm NSO Group’s Pegasus spyware, Amnesty International and Internet security watchdog Citizen Lab said on Monday.

The new findings followed NSO’s blacklisting last week by the US Commerce Department amid allegations its spyware targeted journalists, activists and officials in several countries.

NSO exports its products



under licences from Israel’s Defence Ministry and says it only sells to law enforcement and intelligence agencies.

BEIRUT

AL urges ‘detente’ between Lebanon, Gulf states

The Arab League on Monday pressed for an easing of tensions between Lebanon and Gulf Arab states over a Lebanese minister’s comments.

“We do not want this situation to continue. We want a breakthrough, a détente in this relationship,” the League’s assistant secretary general, Hossam Zaki (pictured), said in a press conference from Beirut where he is on an official visit.

“We hope the starting point



for that will begin here,” he told reporters following a meeting with Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati.

BAGHDAD

Militia group behind attack on Iraqi PM

A drone attack that targeted the Iraqi prime minister on Sunday was carried out by at least one militia group, Iraqi security officials and sources close to the militias said.

A spokesperson for one paramilitary group declined to comment immediately on the attack or on who carried it out. Other groups could not be reached immediately for comment.

Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhimy escaped unhurt from



the attack on his residence in the Iraqi capital Baghdad, which was carried out using explosives-laden drones.

In brief

KATHMANDU



RESCUERS RECOVER BODIES OF CLIMBERS LOST IN HIMALAYAS

A rescue team in Nepal has recovered the bodies of three French climbers who went missing in the Mount Everest region of the Himalayan country nearly two weeks ago, police said on Monday.

The three were attempting to climb the 22,254 feet Kantega mountain, a smaller peak near Mount Everest in the remote Solukhumbu district. They had been out of contact with the expedition organisers since October 26, when an avalanche hit the area. "A mountain rescue team has recovered the three bodies from the area," police official Tarka Raj Pandey said. "The bodies have been identified."

PHNOM PENH



AUSTRALIA PLEDGES 3 MILLION COVID VACCINES TO CAMBODIA

Australia has pledged more than three million Covid-19 vaccine doses to Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Monday, which would help the Southeast nation give booster shots to its people.

The assurance came during a visit by Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne aimed at expanding bilateral ties.

Cambodia has vaccinated 87 per cent of its more than 16 million people, one of Asia's highest inoculation rates.

"The Australian government has decided to provide Cambodia with 3,250,000 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine, of which 1 million will be delivered to Cambodia before the end of this year," Hun Sen said on his official Facebook page.

KUALA LUMPUR



THREE-QUARTERS OF MALAYSIANS DOUBLE-JABBED

Over 75 per cent of all Malaysians have received two doses of coronavirus vaccine, according to Health Ministry statistics on Monday. The number amounts to around 95 per cent of adults in the South-East Asian country, which is home to almost 33 million people and where 29,251 pandemic-related deaths and around 2.5 million cases have been reported.

Most of the deaths were reported from May to September, when Malaysian authorities imposed the longest of the country's three pandemic lockdowns.

PM VOWS TO MAKE JAPAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-LED NATION

Japan unveils \$88 bn university fund in growth strategy

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida vowed on Monday to establish an \$88 billion university fund to promote Japan as a science and technology nation as part of a growth strategy needed to distribute wealth to the wider public.

Some of the growth initiatives, like the university fund, will likely be featured in the planned stimulus package worth several tens of trillion yen that Kishida has pledged to compile around the middle of this month, government officials said.

"We want to put new capitalism into gear by carrying out what needs to be tackled right away with an economic package," Kishida said at the end of a 'new capitalism' panel meeting.

"To promote Japan as a science and technology nation, we will realise a 10-trillion-yen university fund by this fiscal year-end. We will develop clean energy by backing domestic production of storage batteries and promoting electric vehicles."

The panel, in its recommendations, called for the establishment of a separate fund aimed at backing research and development over multiple years on digital transformation and green innovation as pillars of Japan's new growth strategy.

The panel's proposals for Japan's growth strategy, which was presented at its meeting on Monday, made no mention of the scale of the stimulus and extra budget to fund it.

The proposals will lay the groundwork for Kishida's economic policy mix of pro-growth policies of former premier Shinzo Abe's "Abenomics" stimulus steps and will more directly shift wealth from companies to households.

For wealth distribution, the



Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida

panel urged revamping the tax system in a way that will make it favourable for companies, thus helping to raise pay for employees, through greater tax credit and other measures.

The proposals come as Kishida's government is considering an economic stimulus package worth more than 30 trillion yen (\$265 billion) to ease the pain from the Covid-19 pandemic, a plan which would require the issuing of new bonds, Kyodo news reported. Kishida has also pledged to put economic security among his policy priorities, including boosting the domestic output of semiconductors.

To this end, the panel called for the creation of a strong supply chain and construction of domestic chip factories with state support over the coming years.

The government is likely to subsidise up to half of Taiwan's TSMC's estimated 1-trillion-yen

(\$8.82 billion) investment for building a chip plant in Kumamoto, southern Japan, the *Nikkei* has reported.

EFFECTIVE

Some analysts questioned if that proposal would be effective.

If the government were to move ahead with the proposed cash handouts for all children, some households may simply decide to add to their savings instead of spending the money, said Takeshi Minami, chief economist at Norinchukin Research Institute.

"It's unlikely to have a big impact on the economy over the short term," Minami warned.

The government was likely seeking to include other measures in the stimulus package aimed at supporting consumption, especially in the heavy-hit service-sector, which some analysts are hoping will underpin the economy in the coming months.

— Agencies

Singapore to decide on vaccine for children aged 5 to 11

SINGAPORE: Singapore is expecting its expert committee on Covid-19 vaccines to make a recommendation on the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 shot for children aged 5 to 11 years old later this month, the country's Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said on Monday.

The city-state is considering a plan to give children one-third of the adult dosage, similar to the United States, Ong added.

About 8,000 of Singapore's cumulative 218,333 Covid-19 cases have involved children below the age of 12, with five severe infections, according to the health ministry.

Singapore, where 85 per cent of the 5.45 million population has been fully vaccinated, has been pushing to get as many inoculated as possible and live with the virus.

On Monday, the country said those who remained unvaccinated by choice

would have to foot their medical bills from next month.

The government also announced a further easing of rules for dining out, allowing up to five vaccinated individuals from the same household to eat together at restaurants. Current rules only allow up to two vaccinated persons to eat out together.

Authorities will also allow soft recorded music to be played in restaurants after having banned it for months, citing higher chances of virus transmission if people spoke loudly over the music.

Singapore will also allow quarantine-free travel for vaccinated people from its closest neighbour Malaysia, Sweden and Finland from late this month.

The country has been reporting more than 3,000 daily infections in recent weeks, most are asymptomatic or mild.

— Reuters



People entering a food centre check-in with their phones before they are allowed to dine-in in Singapore. — Reuters

Indian capital's dangerous air ruins return to school

NEW DELHI: Many students in New Delhi stayed at home on Monday rather than return to reopened schools as a toxic smog shrouded the city.

New Delhi has the worst air quality of any capital city but even by its standards the past few days have been extraordinarily bad.

Although authorities eased restrictions on schools imposed when the Covid-19 pandemic first struck India in March last year, many parents decided against sending their children back.

"The pollution in Delhi is hazardous. We as parents are afraid of sending our children to school," parent Kamlesh Sharma wrote on Twitter. For air to be deemed safe, the Air Quality Index (AQI), which has a scale of 500, should be below 50. In New Delhi on Monday evening it was 392, well into hazardous territory. That was a marginal improvement on the 451 registered last week as moderate winds helped disperse some of the pollution.

While some schools had resumed classes for higher grades, pupils aged 14 and below were allowed back for the first time on Monday as part of a staggered re-opening. But many schools reported attendance below 40 per cent on the first day back due to parents fears over the hazardous



A farmer burns straw stubble after harvesting a paddy crop in a field on the outskirts Amritsar on Monday. — AFP

air and the coronavirus risks.

"After Covid, pollution has emerged a major threat for public health particularly for children and senior citizens," Ashok Agarwal, national president, All India Parents Association, said, expressing frustration with the lack of enforcement and political will to improve Delhi's air.

Many supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party opposed a blanket ban on fire-crackers while blaming the opposition-ruled state governments of Delhi and Punjab for worsening pollution.

Environmentalists said both federal and state governments were reluctant to take tough

steps because they feared loss of support among their voters. In a letter to the federal and state authorities, the Central Pollution Control Board Chairman Tanmay Kumar regretted that they were not "taking sufficient measures to control pollution" and asked them to curb all air polluting activities.

Exposure to pollution was

causing more harm than the use of tobacco or of smoking, Randeep Guleria, Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, told India Today TV channel.

"If you have higher levels of air pollution then the chances of having more severe Covid and dying from it goes up," he said.

Airborne particles of pollution can cause cardiovascular and respiratory diseases such as lung cancer. In India, toxic air kills more than a million people annually.

The severe deterioration in air quality during the past week was caused by farmers violating a ban on stubble burning in agricultural states surrounding the capital and people ignoring a ban on fireworks to celebrate Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.

Nearly 80 per cent of families in Delhi region, with a population of about 20 million, reported ailments like headaches, problems in breathing, and runny noses due to the air pollution, according to a survey of 34,000 respondents by a private agency, Local Circles. "With in-person schools finally opening after a long period of online classes, many parents seem reluctant to send children to school in the coming weeks due to the dual risk of Covid and pollution," said Sachin Taparia, head of Local Circles. — Reuters

‘REALLY, REALLY EXCITING’ Travellers head to US as entry ban lifted

LONDON/PARIS: Travellers excited at the prospect of seeing family and friends in the United States for the first time since the pandemic started took off early on Monday from London, Paris and other cities following the lifting of US travel restrictions.

The extraordinary US travel restrictions, first imposed in early 2020, had barred access to non-US citizens travelling from 33 countries — including China, India and much of Europe — and had also restricted overland entry from Mexico and Canada.

From Monday, travellers who can show official proof of vaccination against Covid-19 and have had a recent, negative viral test can again fly to the United States.

“Really, really exciting. I mean, I was meant to go just before Covid happened, and obviously it’s been delayed this long, so it’s really exciting to finally be able to go”, Alice Keane, travelling to Miami to see her sister, said at London’s Heathrow airport.

The unprecedented travel ban, first imposed by the Trump administration, has dealt a huge blow to tourism but has also kept loved ones from attending weddings, funerals, or meeting new babies.

“I think we might just start crying”, said Bindiya Patel, who



People queue to check into Virgin Atlantic and Delta Air Lines flights at Heathrow Airport Terminal 3, following the lifting of restrictions on the entry of non-US citizens to the United States imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19, in London on Monday. — Reuters

was going to see her young nephew in New York for the first time. “We’ve been facetimeing the whole year. But, you know, to actually see (them) in person...” said her mother, Bhavna Patel, delighted about getting to meet her grandson

for the first time. Long-term rivals British Airways and Virgin Atlantic carried out a simultaneous take-off from London’s Heathrow parallel runways just before 0900 GMT. The flights are full, Virgin

Atlantic CEO Shai Weiss said, while passenger volume is expected to remain high in the coming weeks with the approach of Thanksgiving and winter holidays. ‘FINALLY!’ Travellers were equally excited

in Paris, which has also seen a huge increase in bookings. “Very happy”, Michel Valente, travelling from Paris’s Charles de Gaulle airport with his wife, relieved that he would finally see his family in the United States in

person rather than via video calls. For Paul Fuchs, it was about the chance to do some tourism again and travel to Disney World. “Finally the opportunity to go back to the US!”, he said.

Airlines, which have warned of long queues at first, will check vaccination documentation for international travellers as they already do for Covid-19 test results.

US land borders are also reopening to non-essential travel, though differing rules over coronavirus vaccines threaten to hold up some family reunions for people seeking to cross the 2,000 mile (3,200 km) border with Mexico.

The prospect of easing restrictions has also encouraged migrants to try their luck seeking US asylum, posing a new test for President Joe Biden’s administration.

At the land border crossings from Mexico and Canada, US Customs and Border Protection will ask travellers if they have been vaccinated and will spot-check some documentation.

Under-18s are exempt from the new vaccine requirements. Non-tourist travellers from nearly 50 countries with nationwide vaccination rates of less than 10% are also eligible for exemption.

— Reuters

COP26 talks wade into climate finance as poor nations count cost

GLASGOW: Governments will push for agreement on Monday on how to help the most vulnerable deal with global warming and compensate for damage already done, a test of whether developing and rich nations can end years of deadlock over cash for climate change.

At the start of the second and final week of the UN climate talks in Glasgow, ministers get down to the nitty gritty of trying to honour promises to pay for climate-linked losses and damages, and to address how to help nations adapt to the effects of climate change.

Tuvalu’s Foreign Minister, Simon Kofe, will offer a graphic demonstration of how rising sea



Former US president Barack Obama (R) waves as he walks with US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, between sessions during the COP26 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow on Monday. — AFP

levels affect his small island nation with a recorded speech to the conference dressed in a suit and tie while standing knee-deep in seawater.

“The statement juxtaposes the

COP26 setting with the real-life situations faced in Tuvalu due to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise”, said Kofe, standing at a lectern on the shores of the Pacific island. The speech will

be broadcast to the Glasgow conference on Tuesday.

Britain, which is hosting the COP26 meeting, attempted to set the pace on Monday by announcing £290 million (\$391 million) in new funding, including support for countries in the Asia Pacific to deal with the impact of global warming.

It says the money is in addition to the “billions in additional international funding” already committed by rich countries such as Denmark, Japan and the United States for adaption and resilience in vulnerable nations, many of which have experienced the worst effects of climate change.

— Reuters

Global Covid cases hit 250m, eastern Europe infections at record levels

BERLIN/MOSCOW: Global Covid-19 cases surpassed 250 million on Monday as some countries in eastern Europe experience record outbreaks, even as the Delta variant surge eases and many countries resume trade and tourism.

The daily average number of cases has fallen by 36% over the past three months, according to a Reuters analysis, but the virus is still infecting 50 million people worldwide every 90 days due to the highly transmissible Delta variant. By contrast, it took nearly a year to record the first 50 million Covid-19 cases.

Health experts are optimistic that many nations have put the worst of the pandemic behind them thanks to vaccines and natural exposure, although they caution that colder weather and upcoming holiday gatherings



People queue in front of a vaccination centre in Radeberg, eastern Germany, to get a Covid vaccination without an appointment, on Monday. — AFP

could increase cases. “We think between now and the end of 2022, this is the point where we get control over this virus... where we can significantly reduce severe disease and death”, Maria Van Kerkhove, an epidemiologist leading the World Health Organization, told Reuters on November 3.

— Reuters

KYIV

Migrant influx: Poland fears ‘major incident’

Polish authorities accused Belarus of trying to spark a major confrontation on Monday and said they had mobilised additional soldiers as footage on social media showed hundreds of migrants walking towards the Polish border.

In one video, shared by the Belarusian blogging service NEXTA, migrants carrying rucksacks and wearing winter clothing were seen walking on the side of a highway.

Other videos showed large



groups of migrants sitting by the road and being escorted by armed men dressed in khaki.

The European Union has accused Belarus of encouraging migrants from the Middle East and Africa to cross into EU countries via Belarus.

SAN JOSE

Nicaragua’s Ortega locks in another term

Daniel Ortega easily secured a fourth consecutive term as Nicaragua’s president, early results showed on Monday, after the former guerrilla fighter suppressed political rivals in a vote critics said was rigged but which won Russian recognition.

Nicaragua’s Supreme Electoral Council said that with roughly half the ballots counted, a preliminary tally gave Ortega’s Sandinista alliance about 75% of votes. The European Union rejected the results, saying



the elections “complete the conversion of Nicaragua into an autocratic regime.”

But Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov backed Ortega, saying US calls for countries not to recognize the outcome were “unacceptable.”

PARIS

Policeman survives knife attack in Cannes

A policeman survived a knife attack in the French Riviera city of Cannes on Monday. The policeman emerged from the attack unscathed, saved from serious injury or worse by his bulletproof vest, Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said. The assailant suffered life-threatening injuries after he was shot by other officers.

The Algerian national held an Italian residency permit, was in France legally and was not on a French watchlist of individuals



thought to have terrorist sympathies, the minister said.

“I think that we can today sigh with relief that, although they have been hit hard psychologically, no police officer has been injured”, Darmanin told reporters in Cannes.

US bid to tinker corals to fight climate change

CHANDAN KHANNA AND GLENN CHAPMAN

A bit of coral shimmers like gold in a US lab as part of urgent work to help the species protect itself from climate change, an effort even skeptical experts see as sadly justifiable.

Researchers in Florida are aiming to determine whether coral can be saved from rising water temperatures and acidification by transplanting stem cells from resistant varieties to those more vulnerable to climate impacts.

In other words, global warming worries have reached a point that scientists are trying to tweak some organisms’ genetics so that they might survive.

“Reefs are dying at an alarming rate and they are not able to keep up with climate change,” Nikki Traylor-Knowles, who heads a University of Miami team working on the coral, said.

“At this point, we’ve just got to try everything and see what works,” she said before nations gathered at the COP26 summit in Glasgow -- seen as a last chance to halt catastrophic climate change.

The Florida research is one of a handful of efforts backed by Revive and Restore, a non-profit based near San Francisco that sees genetic engineering as a valuable tool for conservationists working to save plants and animals from doom.

Organisms on Earth have survived in the long run by gradually evolving, or moving to places where the land, habitat or temperature are more hospitable. Climate change is altering the environment too quickly for that to work.

“We don’t have evolutionary time to help species make that kind of adaptation,” Revive co-founder Ryan Phelan said at a California conference. “We’re going to have to intervene, or we have to let it go,” she said.

The concern for coral is particularly pressing because oceans absorb more than 90 percent of the excess heat from greenhouse gas emissions, shielding land surfaces but generating huge, long-lasting marine heatwaves. — Reuters

Reefs are dying at an alarming rate and they are not able to keep up with climate change. At this point, we’ve just got to try everything and see what works

NIKKI TRAYLOR-KNOWLES
University of Miami



FOR SAFER EARTH

A member of Extinction Rebellion Red Rebel Brigade takes part in a protest, during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), in Glasgow, Scotland, Britain, on Monday.
– Reuters

Strength of the mind is you...



Lakshmi Kothaneth
lakshmiobserver@gmail.com

DO NOT LET
YOUR BODY
CONTROL YOUR
MIND, LET YOUR
MIND CONTROL
THE BODY

Waking up early morning at 5 am in the boarding school, the warden doing her best to wake us all shared a wisdom, while I was debating whether to roll under the cot or slide into a cupboard. I was only in the sixth grade. Would do anything to catch few more minutes of sleep.

The lady who was fondly called Yashodha teacher explained, “Do not let your body control your mind, let your mind control the body.”

I looked at her, listened because I still remember her words, but the mind was also doing the multitasking of whether to go under the cot or into a cupboard. For a sixth grader there is not much more to worry about other than the forgotten homework suddenly rushing into realisation when the subject teacher enters the classroom. That is when the blood drains from the head for a second and the mind gets activated to figure out the best of excuses.

Yashoda teacher went on to become a great mentor as there were many occasions for her to give us advice and tips on life. Her job was definitely not easy. There were quite a few of us with our own little personalities and

orientations as well as nationalities and backgrounds.

She, however had a knack of holding us together. But that morning, one of the first few days in the boarding school, I gave up the spots — under the cot and inside a cupboard, instead quietly followed her outdoors. It was exercise time and as we removed our footwear the dew covered sand tickled us to our wakefulness. She was not a tall and slender aerobics instructor but a sari-clad grandmotherly, but brisk and strong trainer who made me feel energetic to follow her counts eagerly. That is until the next morning when others and I again contemplated about the cot and the cupboard. But it is during these exercise sessions where I have seen some of the most beautiful scarlet sunrises. This is also where I learnt about the mind. If the body is stiff, with a strong mind set on trying and not giving up, it is possible to achieve flexibility within days. It is also where I observed mind can speak to mind that is to make decisions and change your mind even under temptations to stand back and give priority to values by letting conscience take over in important decisions.

It was only later I realised how much

of her time she had been investing on us. Her life was all about discipline and every year, come summer holidays, the seniors bid her goodbye and years later I bid goodbye too, and she looked at me and said, “When you go abroad you are not just representing your — family, you are an ambassador of your nation.”

Suddenly she had handed over responsibility. This responsibility had a way with the mind. She taught in that one sentence that there is importance to one’s existence.

Years later, the topic mind, has come back with Oman Observer Podcast named, ‘Let’s Talk Mental Health’. This week the topic has been, Food for Thought’. In the era of the pandemic where people learnt to find comfort in food and home delivery during the lockdown and at the same time went through guilt trips about bingeing and then ending up in workouts that are above the normal level and not to forget eating disorders. Dr Hamed al Sinawi, Senior Consultant Psychiatrist, explains why we develop these syndromes and how to overcome it. The podcast is on the social media platforms and is also at www.omanobserver.om.

The economy that planetary health requires



RENZO GUINTO

THE AUTHOR IS CHIEF PLANETARY HEALTH SCIENTIST AT THE SUNWAY CENTRE FOR PLANETARY HEALTH IN MALAYSIA, IS INAUGURAL DIRECTOR OF THE PLANETARY AND GLOBAL HEALTH PROGRAM AT THE ST. LUKE’S MEDICAL CENTER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE IN THE PHILIPPINES

At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, analysts and pundits spun visions of how the crisis would reshape the global economy. Many heralded the opportunity to transform our financial systems, supply chains, and ways of working. The overall message was that the post-pandemic future would be greener, healthier, and more just.

Now, almost two years after the pandemic started, excitement about creating an economic “new normal” has mostly dissipated. Apart from occasional lockdowns and mask wearing, the world has largely returned to business as usual. The fight against the pandemic repeatedly has been described as a “war,” but there have been no radical changes akin to a wartime mobilisation. On the contrary, the global

pandemic response has operated under pre-pandemic economic norms. Despite urgent appeals for a “people’s vaccine” and repeated calls for vaccine equity, the rules of the market dominated vaccine distribution, and the pharmaceutical industry has marched on, unreformed.

Likewise, policymakers continue to act as if, to paraphrase Greta Thunberg, the world is not on fire. UN Secretary-General António Guterres described the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a “code red for humanity.” Yet countries’ current Nationally Determined Contributions under the framework established by the 2015 Paris climate agreement are inadequate to achieve the Paris accord’s goal of limiting global

warming to 1.5° Celsius, relative to preindustrial levels.

The ongoing United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow is the most immediate policy lever available. But the international climate regime needs to go beyond voluntary commitments to reduce emissions and make good on rich countries’ promise to provide financial assistance to the world’s poorest and most vulnerable.

I am not an economist. I am a physician who specialises in the new field of “planetary health,” which focuses on the links between human and planetary well-being. Its core premise is straightforward: protecting and improving our health requires tackling the underlying causes of human disease and ecosystem damage simultaneously.

The economy we have today is destroying our well-being. It unleashed human ingenuity, created financial wealth, and lifted billions of people from poverty. But it also damaged ecosystems and exacerbated social inequality. During the first year of the Covid-19 crisis, more than 114 million jobs were lost, while the world’s wealthiest became \$5 trillion richer than they had been before the pandemic began. And by accelerating climate change and biodiversity loss, our current economy imperils future generations’ ability to survive and thrive. As a planetary health physician, I believe that the treatment for this disease is economic — not medical.

During this pandemic, we have witnessed a dramatic surge in the use of personal protective

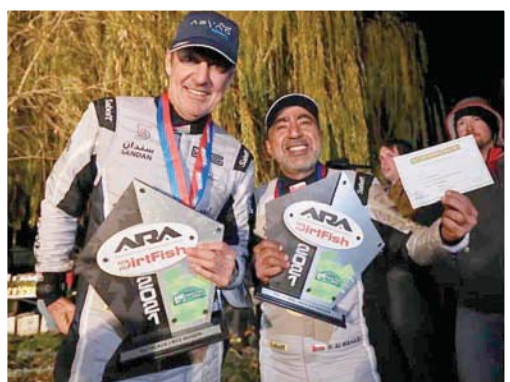
equipment (PPE) — face masks and shields, gloves, and gowns that look like astronaut suits. But to truly recover, we also need a different kind of PPE — a people- and planet-centered economy. Because climate change and other forms of ecological damage increase the likelihood of future pandemics, this PPE would not just liberate us from the current crisis. The goal established by the World Health Organization’s Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response depends on it.

A people- and planet-centered economy is one that advances the well-being of the entire Earth. It is an economy that has deep respect for the planet’s boundaries, such as the temperature limit enshrined in the Paris agreement.

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sport

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Hamed Al-Wahaibi in action in the Dufur area

AL WAHAIBI SEALS SUPERB FOURTH PLACE AND CLASS WIN AT OREGON TRAIL RALLY

DUFUR (OREGON): Omani rally driver Hamed al Wahaibi maintained his composure and managed his pace to perfection to seal a superb fourth overall and confirm the RC2 class win on his first appearance in the Oregon Trail Rally.

After setting a string of fourth fastest times behind eventual winner Brandon Semenuk, runner-up Travis Pastrana and third-placed Ken Block through Saturday's stages in the Golendale area of neighbouring Washington State, the 53-year-old and his New Zealand co-driver Tony Sircombe set several fourth fastest times again in Oregon's Dufur region on Sunday.

Despite a puncture on Sunday afternoon, he conserved the McKenna Motorsport-run Ford Fiesta R5 through the closing gravel stages to finish in a comfortable fourth overall, over 2min 50sec in front of nearest rival Javier Castro and over five and a half minutes ahead of sixth-placed Enda McCormack.

Al Wahaibi's much-vaunted class rival Kyle Tilley suffered electrical failure on Saturday. He traded some stage times with Al Wahaibi before crashing out on the 18th and final stage of the demanding three-day rally.

"I am very happy with the performance on this rally," said Al Wahaibi.

"I really enjoyed it. It was a lot of fun with a good atmosphere. I am pleased with the result. We tried to get a bit closer to the Open cars but there was no chance. The stages were completely flat all the time. I will definitely be coming back to do more rallies in the United States."

Al Wahaibi ran the Ford in the USA with logistical support from Asyad Express (an Omani delivery and logistics company) and Sandan Development LLC.



Expat women's volleyball tourney on Nov 26

MUSCAT: A volleyball tournament for expatriate women will be organised by Khalil al Balushi on November 26th at Injaz Private School, Ansab from 9 am to 4 pm.

The event will comprise 16 teams: Fox Hard, Blazers, Wild Ladies, Muscat Strikers, Phoenix, Sfo, Phil Fighters, Phil Oman, Fhiom, Elite Fighters, Muscat Hitters, MCG, Pazawai, All Star, Lady Dragon, Slashers.

The prize distribution will be done by Saada Salim al Ismaili, OOC member and women's sport expert in Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth.

Auditors Cricket Cup to kick off on Nov 12

MUSCAT: The Committee of Auditors Oman is preparing the Annual Auditors Cup 2020 for an exciting round of cricket. The Auditors cup is an eight-a-side cricket tournament held between participating audit firms and has been a tradition for last 19 years.

This eight-a-side tournament provides an opportunity to treat the firms employees and their families to a great corporate event which provides entertainment on and off the field.

The committee hopes that the cricket tournament will bring the firms together in spirit of passionate competition and mutual respect. They invite



everyone to come and see the team having fun, and to join in supporting the teams, which includes EY, Deloitte, PWC, KPMG, BDO, Moore's, Ibn Hyan and Crowe. The draw was conducted last week at Crowe office witnessed by all eight team heads.

Those interested can visit with friends and family at Al Bahri al Hail Football Ground located in Al Hail on Friday, November 12 and Saturday, November 13.

The tournament will kick start at 7.30 am on Friday and the final will be played at 3 pm on Saturday.

‘India stars put IPL before country’

NEW DELHI: Indian legend Kapil Dev accused the country’s cricket players of prioritising the cash-rich Indian Premier League over national duty, after the pre-tournament favourites were dumped out of the T20 World Cup.

“When the players prefer to play IPL over playing for the country, what can we say? I believe that every player should feel proud playing for their country,” Dev, who led India to a World Cup victory in 1983, told ABP News.

“I believe that your national team should come first and after that franchise or any other team.”

India on Sunday crashed out of the Twenty20 World Cup after New Zealand beat Afghanistan to book the second semi-final berth from Group 2.

Virat Kohli’s side, who went into the tournament as one of the favourites, thrashed Afghanistan and Scotland but it was too late after losing heavily to arch rival Pakistan and to New Zealand.

In the build-up, Indian regrouped just two days after the Indian Premier League ended on October 15 in Dubai, adding to the time that the players spent in draining Covid-19 bubble conditions.

“I am not saying don’t play cricket there (for franchises) but it is now BCCI’s responsibility to plan their cricket (schedule) better for the future,” the 62-year-old Dev said of the Indian cricket board.

“What we can learn from this defeat is to not repeat the mistakes that have been made. This is the biggest lesson.”

The Times of India daily said that preparations for the next T20 World Cup, in Australia next year, should begin immediately.

That includes infusing “fresh



“When the players prefer to play IPL over playing for the country, what can we say? I believe that every player should feel proud playing for their country

KAPIL DEV
former Indian captain

blood” into the side, such as partnering likely new T20 captain Rohit Sharma with Ruturaj Gaikwad at the top of the batting order and giving chances to Suryakumar Yadav, Harshal Patel and Deepak Chahar, the newspaper said.

The Hindustan Times reported that after their exit was sealed on Sunday, India called off a training session ahead of the final match against Namibia on Monday “as players brooded what might have been”. “India’s inability to hold their weight in knockout rounds of ICC events has been sticking out like a sore thumb. This time they have also missed the bus to reach the last four,” the newspaper said, bemoaning that India “failed to adapt and tweak their tactics according to the conditions”. — **AFP**



India’s captain Virat Kohli (R) celebrates with Jasprit Bumrah. – **AFP**

Pakistan hammer Scots, book semifinal with Australia



Pakistan’s captain Babar Azam (L) and teammate Imad Wasim celebrate after the dismissal of Scotland’s Matthew Cross. – **AFP**

SHARJAH: Pakistan captain Babar Azam and Shoaib Malik cracked blistering half-centuries as the 2009 World Twenty20 champions eased past Scotland by 72 runs on Sunday to seal top spot in Group II and set up a semi-final meeting with Australia.

Azam opted to bat first after winning the toss and led from the front with a 47-ball 66 that contained five boundaries and three sixes before Malik put the Scots to the sword with a 18-ball 54 dotted by six hits over the ropes.

Mohammad Hafeez also joined the party with a 19-ball 31 to help them reach a commanding 189-4 in their 20 overs, with 114 coming off the final eight.

“As we have seen in previous games, if you don’t lose early wickets, you have a chance of putting on a good total,” player-of-the-match Malik said.

“We were discussing in our dressing room to at least get 150 and not lose too many wickets early on. If you’re playing on a good strip, the goal is to take a

SCOREBOARD	
PAKISTAN	
M Rizwan c Cross b Tahir	15
B Azam c Munsey b Greaves	66
F Zaman c Leask b Greaves	8
M Hafeez lbw Sharif	31
S Malik (not out)	54
A Ali (not out)	5
Extras (LB-3, W-7)	10
Total (for 4 wks, 20 overs)	189
Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-59, 3-112, 4-142	
Bowling: Tahir 4-0-24-1, Wheel 2-0-20-0, Sharif 4-0-41-1, Watt 4-0-41-0, Berrington 2-0-17-0, Greaves 4-0-43-2	
SCOTLAND	
G Munsey c Rauf b Shadab	17
K Coetzer b Hasan	9
M Cross (run out)	5
R Berrington (not out)	54
D Budge b Shadab	0
M Leask b Shaheen	14
C Greaves b Rauf	4
M Watt (not out)	2
Extras (B-1, LB-1, NB-3, W-7)	12
Total (for 6 wks, 20 overs)	117
Fall of wickets: 1-23 (Coetzer), 2-36 (Cross), 3-41 (Munsey), 4-41 (Budge), 5-87 (Leask), 6-114 (Greaves)	
Bowling: Shaheen 4-0-24-1, Imad 4-0-17-0, Rauf 4-0-27-1, Hasan 4-1-33-1, Shadab 4-0-14-2	

couple of balls and start playing your game.

“On these tracks, you take six-eight balls and then start playing your game. You take all the confidence going deep in the

tournament. I’m in good form but I want to see myself be more consistent to help the team.”

The winless Scots had little reward in their final Super 12 clash in Sharjah, with spinner Chris Greaves’ two wickets — that of Azam and Fakhar Zaman — coming at the cost of 43 runs in his four overs.

Pakistan reduced Scotland to 41-4 with Shadab Khan removing dangerous opener George Munsey for 17 before bowling out Dylan Budge for a duck to lay the foundation for another convincing victory in a tournament where they have been flawless.

Richie Berrington brought up his half-century in the 18th over off Hasan Ali, smashing the paceman for a huge six along the way, but his gutsy 54 not out went in vain as Scotland managed only 117-6 in their 20 overs. Pakistan finished the group stage with five wins out of five while New Zealand finished second to book a clash with England in the semi-finals. — **Reuters**

Hammers’ win ends Liverpool’s unbeaten run in Premiership

ANDY JALIL
LONDON, NOV 8

With their excellent display in a 3-2 win, West Ham ended Liverpool’s impressive unbeaten run of 25 matches stretching over the last seven months.

Liverpool Manager, Jurgen Klopp, unhappy at the loss was critical, perhaps unfairly, about some of the decisions of the referee. Klopp said: “People will say I’m making excuses but I’m calm. You need normal decisions from a referee and he didn’t do that.”

About the first West Ham goal, Klopp said: “The first they score is a foul on the keeper. The arm goes into Alisson’s (goalkeeper) arm so how can he catch it? That makes no sense. How it cannot be a foul I don’t know. What can Alisson do? That is why the goalie is protected. If a player goes up in the air with his arm, it is an important part of the body for the keeper. This is not man marking, it’s blocking the goalkeeper.”

Klopp was also furious at Aaron Cresswell not being given a red card for his tackle on Jordan Henderson. “It’s a reckless challenge. You cannot go like that into a challenge.” On



West Ham United’s Kurt Zouma celebrates scoring their third goal. – Reuters

the game, he said: “We scored the equaliser and fully controlled the game and they only went for the counter. We needed to be more clinical, we did not take our chances.”

The Hammers took an early lead after just four minutes and that brought about the controversy that incensed Klopp. Hammer’s player Angelo Ogbonna went up to meet an in-

swinging corner kick from Pablo Fornals and so did Alisson. But the Brazilian’s palm diverted the ball into his own net. VAR check revealed no foul on the keeper.

Liverpool equalised four minutes before halftime from a dubious freekick as Mohammad Salah seemed to dive after a light brush with Declan Rice. However, it was a clever freekick from Trent Alexander-Arnold.

He tapped the ball to Salah just a yard away for Salah to stop it dead and Alexander-Arnold then curled it past Liverpool’s wall.

Halfway through the second half Hammers extended their lead after Sadio Mane lost possession and Jarrod Bowen went past three players before slipping the ball to Fornals whose left-foot shot went in from under Alisson who should have done better.

Just seven minutes later Liverpool conceded the third, again from a corner. Kurt Zouma, unmarked at the far post, headed in his first goal for the club.

Liverpool pulled a goal back with seven minutes remaining. Substitute Divock Origi, beat Craig Dawson after controlling the ball deftly from one foot to the other before turning and shooting inside the far post.

With his team third in the Premier League table, Hammers manager, David Moyes said: “We’re there on merit. You can see the quality and attitude of the players. I want us to challenge the teams in the top four, I’ve laid that challenge to the players. Liverpool have been in good form but we have resilience. Counter-attacks and corner kicks are not a bad recipe.”



Oman Stallions beat Majees in Premier Division

MUSCAT: In a low-scoring match of the Premier Division League, Oman Stallions beat Majees by 7 wickets at the Oman Cricket ground in Al Amerat on Saturday.

Batting first after winning the toss, Majees could muster only 144 in 38.1 overs with Khurram Khan the sole contributor with the bat, scoring 43 runs. Hemalkumar Tandel from Oman Stallions ripped through Majees scalping four wickets for 17 runs.

In reply, Oman Stallions knocked off the target in 39.5 overs, with Prasad Sankata scoring 54 and Pratik Shrikant giving him good company with 51.

BRIEF SCORES: Majees 144/10 in 38.1 Overs (Khurram Khan 43(50) – 4x4, 1x6 ; Hemalkumar Tandel 17(4) lost against Oman Stallions 147/3 in 39.5 Overs (Prasad Sankata 54(96) – 5x4,

Pratik Shrikant Athavale 51(83) – 1x4 ; Khawar Ali 26(1, Ahmad Fayyaz Butt 29(1) by 7 wickets.

In another Division A match played on Saturday, LC Tech pipped ABL Task by 2 wickets. Put into bat after losing the toss, ABL Task were all out for 207 in 48.5 overs with Parth Trivedi top scoring with 41 runs. Lakshmi Narayana from LC Tech took three wickets for 51.

In reply, LC Tech reached that target with three balls to spare for the loss of eight wickets. Zubair scored 70 runs, studded with seven boundaries and one six. Saud Haroon Khan from ABL Task took three for 39 runs. Zubair was adjudged the Player of the Match.

BRIEF SCORES: ABL Task 207/10 in 48.5 overs (Parth Trivedi 41(59) 4x4; Lakshmi Narayana – 51(3) lost against LC Tech 208/8 in 49.3 Overs (Zubair 4 Z 70(80) 7x4, 1x6 ; Saud Haroon Khan – 39(3) by 2 wickets.



GCC’s first in-patient Ayurveda hospital is now operational in Saham

Heralding a new era in alternative medicine in the Sultanate, a full-fledged Ayurveda hospital has opened its doors at Saham on Oman’s North Al Batinah coast – the first such integrated healthcare destination of its kind in the Arabian Gulf.

Saham Ayurvedic Hospital & Health Center LLC is nestled in an idyllic corner of North Al Batinah Governorate and is spread over 50,000 sq. metres of landscaped gardens. Anchored by an in-patient, multi-specialty hospital with 68 beds, the complex offers an extensive portfolio of authentic Ayurvedic treatments, complemented by an array of wellness therapies. It also has dedicated departments for physical medicine and rehabilitation, physiotherapy and speech therapy. From custom-made meals that perfectly align with the dietary needs of patients, to bespoke oil treatments and yoga therapies, the centre meets all the requirements of a wellness retreat.

Conceived and designed in the style of Kerala’s renowned Ayurveda wellness institutions, the Saham centre enjoys a strong affiliation with Raha Ayurveda, one of India’s most famous brands for ayurvedic treatments and integrated therapies. Raha Ayurveda operates a string of acclaimed centres across India and has established a presence internationally as well.

Although traditional in its delivery of ayurvedic care, the Saham centre is state-of-the-art in its offerings. It specialises in the treatment of all kinds of arthritis disorders, including Osteoarthritis of the knee, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Gouty Arthritis, Psoriatic Arthritis and Infectious Arthritis. Patients afflicted with Cervical and Lumbar spondylosis, Inter-

Vertebral disc prolapse and rheumatic disorders can also benefit from the centre’s specialist services.

Guests and inpatients find themselves in the professional care of a team of highly qualified doctors and consultants, who are specialists in their respective fields. They are ably assisted by experienced physiotherapists and Ayurveda therapists, as well as a full complement of nursing and support staff.

Also noteworthy are its capabilities in the treatment of diseases, ailments and disorders of high prevalence in the Sultanate. Thus, in addition to diabetic complications and sports injuries, the centre is also fully equipped to treat patients with metabolic disorders.

Wellness supplements the centre’s comprehensive offerings such as dedicated theatres for panchakarma treatments and sports fitness programmes. Mothers post-delivery and COVID recovery patients will find themselves rapidly nursed back to sound health in the hands of the centre’s well-trained staff.

As the only facility of its kind in the entire Gulf region, Saham Ayurvedic Hospital & Health Center LLC has the potential to become a regional wellness destination. Located roughly midway between Muscat and Dubai, about 200 - 220 km in either direction, the Saham facility will cater to patients and guests from Oman and the UAE, as well as the wider Gulf region. Its unique ayurvedic treatments and wellness offerings, which have become increasingly popular around the world, will position Saham as a hub for alternative medicine in the future.

The facility was conceived by the centre’s Hospital



Director, Mr. Chandrahasan Menon who has lived in the Sultanate for much of his professional life. Explaining the motivation behind this distinctive project, he commented: “Oman has been my adoptive home for over 40 years – all through which my family and I experienced unstinting warmth and affection in the country. My interest in Ayurveda was instilled by my grandfather, who was an Ayurveda practitioner. A combination of the two inspired me to set up and dedicate a world-class Ayurveda hospital to the people of this welcoming nation.”



Saham Ayurvedic Hospital & Health Center has already begun welcoming walk-in customers and inpatients from various parts of the country and abroad as well. For visitors travelling in from Muscat and other nearby locations, a satellite office located in Bait Al Reem in Al Khuwair offers consultations with prior appointments. The Muscat office is also equipped with two treatment rooms.

[For further details, email info@sahamayurhospital.com or call our health care centre on 97000533 (hospital) or 99230005 (clinic)].



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Sohar Port weighs Artificial Intelligence, drone technology to strengthen operations

TECH-DRIVEN: Sultanate of Oman’s premier commercial maritime hosts more than 3000 vessel calls each year with a gross registered tonnage of approximated 85 million

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 8

SOHAR Port represented the Sultanate of Oman’s shipping and logistics sector at Hypermotion Dubai, a unique platform which connected founders, disruptors and true innovators to discuss cutting-edge technology.

Held as part of Expo Dubai 2020, the panel discussion focused on the GCC’s emergence as a drones hub where Eng Sufyan al Maamari, Senior Engineer of Asset Management at Sohar Port and Freezone outlined the success of the Port so far with drone technology.

He was joined by Khalifa al Qama, Director of Dubai Future Labs, Dubai Future Foundation; Rabih Bou Rached, CEO, Falcon



Eye Drones (FEDS); and Michael Anger, CTO and Founder, Unisphere, in a discussion moderated by Lucy Hedges, Technology Journalist with Metro UK and BBC.

Ali al Yamani, Executive Technical Manager at SOHAR, said, “We have seen the impact that cutting-edge technology can have on our industry and drive efficiencies throughout the sector. There is important research and

trial studies being undertaken at ports around the world to discover the capabilities of drones and how it can be applied to our operations. Sohar Port hosts more than 3000 vessel calls each year with a gross registered tonnage of approximated 85 million. In order to continue growing, we need to become more digital and maximise our resources, and drone and AI technology can be a seamless solution to our operations.”

SOHAR became the first in the Sultanate of Oman to adopt drone technology as part of the Port’s essential monitoring system. Allowing real-time observation and analysis of the infrastructure, security and environmental situation across the docks, drones have proven efficient and capable of reaching areas humans cannot while offering a new perspective of the entire complex.

Additionally, the use of remote-

controlled drones offer an eagle eye view that can detect, photograph and record any damages which allows for teams to respond quickly to specific areas.

The technology even allows for algorithm-based analysis of changes to the infrastructure which leads to greater preventative maintenance and problem solving to be carried out throughout the complex.

Covering deep waters as well, underwater drones are used to inspect and perform maintenance tasks, especially in areas where it is too difficult, dangerous or undesirable to use manned solutions, such as under jetties, bridges and alongside or underneath vessels. Equipped with a camera, the small unmanned vehicles are able to send images to the quay where problems can be solved quickly and up-to-the-minute status reports can be compiled. This data-driven approach has helped SOHAR maximise efficiency and predict future maintenance through life cycle reports which also allows port engineers to plan upgrades and guard against potential service interruptions.

National competitiveness panel studies ways to boost Oman’s rankings

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 8

The National Competitiveness Committee on Monday held its third meeting of the year under the chairmanship of Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy. The meeting, attended by representatives of the public and private sectors, discussed means of cementing cooperation with parties concerned in the Sultanate of Oman and abroad with a view to raising the Sultanate of Oman’s ranking in international competitiveness indices and reports. The topics of the agenda covered the discussion of the international competitiveness book, the international federation of competitiveness boards and the Global Competitiveness Report. The meeting also reviewed the National Competitiveness Office’s guidebook and its mechanism of integrating with the departments concerned with the Sultanate of Oman and abroad. — ONA



Omani, Saudi firms ink cooperation pact on waste management, recycling

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 8

Two companies — one from the Sultanate of Oman and the other from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — have signed an agreement for joint action in the field of waste recycling and management.

Al Khedmah Recycling of the Sultanate of Oman and Saudi Arabia’s Tadweer will exchange expertise and carry out joint operations to achieve the highest possible levels of environment sanitation and natural resources protection.

Natural waste will be recycled to produce reusable

raw materials to be launched in local and external markets as recycled products — which will achieve optimum use of natural resources.

According to the agreement, Al Khedmah will be venue to the processing of hazardous and non-hazardous waste materials and for the recycling of byproducts from food industries and ‘green waste’.

The agreement will be a step forward in the two countries’ march of cooperation and commercial exchange. It will help diminish the waste of natural resources and avoid the harms of direct dumping of debris. — ONA

GROWTH-DRIVEN: Oman Cement, Raysut Cement press ahead with expansion plans

CONRAD PRABHU
[@conradprabhu](https://twitter.com/conradprabhu)

The country’s two principal cement manufacturers have again bemoaned pricing wars and product dumping as banes of an industry banking on a post-pandemic economic recovery to bolster their bottom-lines and profitability.

Oman Cement Company and Raysut Cement Company, which are both listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX), posted lower earnings for the nine months ended October 31, 2021 which they attributed to a combination of factors, including pandemic impacts, price competition, higher input costs and other market factors.

Majority state-owned Oman Cement summed up the challenges facing the industry: “The cement market in the Sultanate of Oman has



continued to witness an intense and vicious price competition between major suppliers which include local cement companies as well as cement manufacturers from neighbouring countries,” Dr Abdullah Abbas Ahmed, Chairman of the Board of Directors, said in the Directors’ report for the nine months ended October 31, 2021.

“Cement production had

to be restricted due to adverse impact on demand of our cement due to continued dumping of imported cement and clinker in local market at unreasonably low prices,” he further noted. While the company posted a 4.66 per cent increase in clinker production to 1.807 million tonnes this year, cement output declined 8.83 per cent to 1.748 million

tonnes. Revenues from cement sales for the nine-month period dipped 9.40 per cent to RO 34.414 million, down from RO 37.984 million for the corresponding period of 2020. Net profit after tax was marginally lower at RO 2.787 million this year, down from RO 2.814 million for the corresponding period of 2020.

Online participation in Oman Green Hydrogen Summit now free for students, non-corporates

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 8

The organisers of the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman (GHSO) have now opened up online access to the high-profile event, without the registration fee, to a wide segment of interested individuals with a stake in supporting a clean energy future for the Sultanate of Oman and the wider world.

GHSO, the nation's premier international forum on green energy, is set to be held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC), Muscat, from November 29 to December 1, 2021. The three-day forum, taking place in a hybrid format, has been organised by Oman-based Birba Energy Services.

Now, in an effort to enable wider access to this landmark

forum to current and future energy professionals, online attendance is free for, among others, students, academics, researchers, scientists, entrepreneurs, innovators and other individuals eager to make the most of this compelling event. This gesture has been made possible by generous funding support from a number of key sponsors and patrons of the forum, the organisers said in a press statement.

Abdullah al Harthy, Chairman — Birba Energy Services, commented: "In response to popular calls for this strategically vital national forum to be opened up to a wider audience of energy professionals, individuals from outside the corporate world can attend online without the specified registration fee. This gesture comes courtesy of sponsorship assistance provided



by our esteemed partners Oman LNG and Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) in particular, as well as OQ, Shell Development Oman, TotalEnergies and Petrofac, among others. Our sincere gratitude to all our patrons for their support."

However, to support the delivery of a high-quality event,

business leaders and corporate executives are required to pay a modest registration fee for either online or in-person attendance. Interested delegates (online or in-person) are requested to register via www.greenhydrogensummitoman.com

GHSO, held under the auspices of the Ministry

of Energy and Minerals, brings together high level representatives of energy companies, regional and international energy groupings, and energy industry thought-leaders and decision-makers from across the world.

Also taking part will be ministerial delegations from a number of countries in the Arabian Gulf, Europe and the Far East — all seeking to make common cause in the quest to accelerate the development of new, sustainable energy resources that will address pressing climate challenges as well.

The signature event attracted sponsorship support from a wide array of prestigious organisations from Sultanate of Oman and abroad.

The line-up includes Oman LNG (Host Sponsor), Petroleum Development Oman and OQ (Main Sponsors), Oman Shell, TotalEnergies and Port of Sohar (Platinum Sponsor), Petrofac (Diamond Sponsor), Siemens Energy, Salalah Free Zone (Gold Sponsor), Port of Duqm, Majis, TUV SUD, ABB, ONEIC, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Sohar Aluminium and Worley (as Silver Sponsors), and OTTCO and Linde, G Energy (as Session Sponsors).

Backing the event as Associate Partners are the International Energy Agency (IEA), the German Emirati Joint Council for Industry & Commerce (AHK), and Desert Energy (Dii). Oman Society of Petroleum Services (OPAL) and AUSDE have signed on as Supporters.

In conjunction with the Summit, a series of Masterclass Workshops focusing on key aspects of the green hydrogen economy will be held as well.

Bank Muscat installs new ATMs and CDMs at various locations

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced the installation of new ATMs and CDMs in different governorates in line with its vision to "To serve you better, everyday" and commitment to promote financial inclusion in the Sultanate of Oman.

The new devices have been installed in the following locations: Lulu Hypermarket — Ibra, Oasis Mall — Suhar, China Mall — Suhar, Mustafa Sultan Exchange — Ghala, Shell Select Filling Station near City Center Qurum, Lulu Hypermarket — Ruwi Souq, Sahnoot — Salalah, Rameez Shopping Mall — Sur, Mudhaibi Al Rudha, Bawadi Mall — Ibra, Mawaleh Fruits and Vegetables Market, Royal Guard of Oman (Halban), Hafeet border post and Al Bahja Super Market — Salalah.



The bank currently has more than 800 devices, including Automated Teller Machines (ATMs), Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs), Full Function Machines (FFMs), Statement Printers and Business Cash Deposit Machines (BCDMs), spread across the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking on the occasion, Amjad bin Iqbal al Lawati (**pictured**), Assistant General Manager — Cards and Electronic Banking, Bank Muscat, thanked customers for their strong confidence in the bank's digital

banking facilities. He said, "Bank Muscat is pleased to launch a number of new ATMs and CDMs at various important locations across the Sultanate of Oman.

The bank is committed to continuously developing and launching new solutions and features in line with modern developments and its e-channels like ATMs, CDMs and FFMs represent an important means for customers to complete their banking transactions at all times with enhanced convenience and security.

As part of its customer centric vision, the bank continuously takes feedback from its customers, conducts surveys and identifies fresh installation sites. The bank promises to keep on innovating and install new devices based on customer feedback and in line with its pioneering role in digital transformation."

VLC signs strategic leasing partnership pact with Mai Dubai

MUSCAT: Vehicle Leasing Company (VLC), Oman's leading one-stop-shop for automotive leasing and rental solutions and a subsidiary of the OTE Group, supplied Mai Dubai with Isuzu trucks as an addition to its distribution fleet.

Through a strategic leasing solution with the pioneering car leasing company, Mai Dubai, the leading bottled water brand of the Sultanate Oman and UAE, has added a new truck partner in its bid to advance and enhance its delivery services across the region.

For Mai Dubai, the deal combines two winning products to offer a comprehensive, durable and cost-competitive cargo transportation solution for the company. Isuzu trucks are known globally as a robust and versatile workhorse.

The handover ceremony of the five Isuzu trucks was attended



by senior executives from Al Ameen Ent LLC, Mai Dubai's partner in the Sultanate of Oman through Al Ameen Diamond Enterprises and OTE Group. Also gracing the event were Sudhir M, CEO, OTE Group; Rajesh Nair, Vehicle Leasing Company and R Harikumar, General Manager, Al Ameen Diamond Enterprises LLC.

Taking centrestage on the occasion was the Isuzu NPR 81H with a dry body fully covered suitable for bottled water transportation, making it the top choice for distributors of FMCG products, among other consumer goods.

The Isuzu NPR 81H, part of the immensely popular N-Series of Isuzu trucks, is a truck that works for its owners. NPR 81H trucks are highly prized in th Sultanate of Oman, as well as the wider region, for their strong performance even in areas that lack paved roads, including features that offer driver's comfort and low maintenance cost.

Drive to thrill with exciting benefits from Toyota



MUSCAT: Toyota has unveiled an exciting campaign that has a lot in store for all enthusiasts. Customers walking into any Toyota showroom stand a chance to win one of a total of four iPhone 13 phones in raffle.

Besides that, customers purchasing their favourite Toyota vehicle can benefit with service 2 years/20,000 kms, 5 years/50,000 kms (On LC200

4.6 & 5.7 models only) and 8 years/80,000 kms (On Corolla 1.8 HEV Only) (Whichever is earlier), 1 year insurance or cash gift in lieu of insurance RO 125 to RO 450. The campaign is valid until December 30, 2021. (Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Terms & Conditions apply.

Visit the showroom for exact details.

Locations: Muscat, Seeb Al Mawaleh, Maabela, Barka, Rustaq, Ibra, Sinaw, Nizwa, Buraimi, and Suhar).

Customers in the Sultanate of Oman can choose from Toyota's exciting sedan range that includes the **Yaris**: With a choice of 1.3-litre and 1.5-litre engines, the Yaris sedan delivers a

dynamic driving experience. It is equipped with 15" Alloy Wheels, Daytime Running Lights, Smart Entry & Push Button Start, Auto Air Conditioner and more.

Toyota Corolla: The popular choice of people around the world — the Toyota Corolla has been developed from a driver and passengers' point of view first. The Corolla is also available in a Hybrid option.

Toyota Camry: Sleek, stylish and powerful, the Camry has been one of the best-sellers. Equipped with a range of exciting features, technology and more, the Camry is also available in a 2.5L, 3.5L and Hybrid options.

Toyota Avalon: The Avalon is a statement of luxury. The Avalon is equipped with 3.5L V6 Engine, LED Headlamps with Adaptive Cornering Lamps, Premium Leather Seat Material, 9" Navigation System with 14 JBL

Speakers, Head Up Display, Toyota Safety Sense and more.

In the SUV range customers can choose from **C-HR**: Toyota C-HR, represents a leap forward in design, manufacturing and engineering for Toyota. The C-HR offers impressive fuel economy with 23.9 kms/L as per GSO Conformity Certificate and carries a Hybrid battery warranty of 8 Years/160,000 Kms.

Highlander: Toyota Highlander offers an impressive fuel economy of 20 kms/L (GLE Grade) & 19.3 kms/L (LTD Grade) as per GSO Conformity Certificate and comes with 8 Years/160,000 Kms Hybrid Battery Warranty.

RAV4: Toyota's sporty, and stylish RAV4 ticks all the boxes when it comes to enjoying extraordinary moments. The RAV4 includes features like 19" Alloy Wheels, LED Headlamps & DRL, Power Back Door,

Wide Moonroof, 7" TFT Multi Information Display, Wireless Charger (Qi Enabled) and more.

Fortuner: The Fortuner is equipped with 4.0L, V6 Engine, 18" Alloy Wheels, LED Projector Headlamps with DRL, Navigation System, Power & Ventilated Driver & Front Passenger Seats, Power Back Door and more.

Prado: The Prado includes 4.0L, V6 Engine, LED Headlamps & Fog Lamp, 9" Navigation System, Ventilated Front Seats, Moonroof, Airbags: Driver + Front Passenger + Curtain + Side (Front) + Knee (Driver) and more.

Land Cruiser: The Pride of the Land, the Toyota Land Cruiser is a symbol of strength, durability and reliability. Rugged yet luxurious, the Land Cruiser delivers high-end performance and advanced off-roading capabilities and safety features.



‘Vicious price competition’ continues to beset Oman’s cement industry

FROM PAGE 13

Raysut Cement Group, currently the largest manufacturer by capacity, reported a total clinker production of 2.396 million tonnes (-8 per cent) and cement output of 2.601 million tonnes (+0.4 per cent) this year. Group revenue totalled RO 72.306 million for 9M 2021, up from RO 65.239 million for the corresponding period of last year.

The uptick was driven by increased sales in the northern part of the country following the acquisition of Sohar Cement Factory. However, the Group posted a post-tax loss of RO 2.216 million this year, as against a loss of RO 10.365 million for the corresponding period of 2020. Contributing to the higher group revenue this year were a number of factors, notably record cement production in the history of the group, growth of new markets and customers, and a decision by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals to roll back an increase in gas prices for 2021.

Despite the challenges, both companies are pressing ahead with ambitious capacity expansion plans. Muscat-based Oman Cement is going ahead with the upgrade of its flagship plant at Rusayl with the addition of a new production line of 10,000 tonnes per day (tpd) of clinker capacity. It is also upgrading its existing Line-3 facility to 5,500 tpd.

“On successful commissioning of new production line, the company will review optimal options either for decommissioning or alternate utilisation of old production Lines 1 and 2, which will be depending upon relevant factors including market demand and take a decision in the best interest of optimising the productive use of its assets and resources”, the Chairman said. Salalah-based Raysut Cement said it is constructing a cement grinding unit in Duqm with a production capacity of 750,000 tonnes of cement per annum at a cost of about \$30 million.

Sohar International gets licence to open Saudi branch

MUSCAT: Sohar International Bank announced on Sunday that it has received a licence from the Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) for the opening of a full-fledged branch in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to conduct banking business in line with the regulatory requirements of the Kingdom.

The announcement came in the filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA) of the Sultanate of Oman on Monday.

Omani projects win honours at 2021 MEED Projects Awards

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 8

Eight Omani project landmarks claimed national honours at the 2021 MEED Projects Awards held in Dubai earlier this week.

Among the standout projects recognised as the National Winner for the MEED Projects Awards in 2021 is the Liwa Plastics Industrial Complex project submitted by OQ claiming the mantle for the Industrial Project of the Year and Mega Project of the Year. OQ’s submission for the OQ Salalah LPG project also claimed the national prize for the Oil and Gas Project of the Year category.

Larsen & Toubro (Oman) LLC also submitted multiple projects that won national honours, namely the Sultan Qaboos Cancer Care and Research Centre for Healthcare Project of the Year and construction of Ibri Solar Grid Station for the Power Transmission Distribution & Substation Project of the Year.

The 2021 National Winners for Oman are:

* Commercial Project of the Year: Omantel Headquarters



(SSH)
* Healthcare Project of the Year: Sultan Qaboos Cancer Care and Research Centre (Larsen & Toubro Oman LLC)
* Industrial Project of the Year: Liwa Plastic Industrial Complex project (OQ)
* Mega Project of the Year: Liwa Plastics Industrial Complex project (OQ)
* Oil and Gas Project of the Year: OQ LPG Salalah (OQ)

* Power Generation Project of the Year: Amin Solar PV Plant, Oman (Sterling and Wilson Solar Limited)
* Power transmission distribution & substation Project of the Year: Construction of Ibri Solar Grid Station (Larsen & Toubro Oman LLC)
* Road Project of the Year: Dualisation of Al Sharqiyah Expressway, Section 1,

Package 1A (Özkar İnşaat San ve Tic AŞ)
* Water Project of the Year: Salalah desalination plant (Abengoa)
“This year’s National Winners are a testament to the regional infrastructure community’s resilience, commitment to excellence and innovation. We are proud and delighted to announce nearly 60 projects have claimed national honours

across 16 categories and representing countries from across the Middle East and North Africa region. Despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the high volume of quality projects that were completed over the last 18 months are a strong indication of the region’s continued progression. These companies have re-affirmed why they are considered the bedrock of the region’s economy. Congratulations to all our national winners”, said Sonia Kerrigan, Group Commercial Director, MEED.

Each of these projects will now be reviewed against its MENA rivals for the regional honours to determine the final winners of the 2021 MEED Projects Awards in association with Mashreq at a gala awards reception taking place on December 8 in Dubai.

The awards ceremony is bringing together the leaders of the infrastructure industry from across the MENA region to celebrate their outstanding successes and contributions despite the numerous challenges faced over the last year with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Colombia oil theft surges as smuggled gasoline dries up

BOGOTA: Theft from oil pipelines in Colombia is booming as criminal gangs look to replace dwindling supplies of smuggled Venezuelan gasoline for use in the drug trade, as shown by data seen by Reuters from oil-pipeline operator Cenit and tax authorities.

Gasoline is a key component in making cocaine but there have been shortages of the fuel in Venezuela during that country’s social and economic crisis. So criminal groups in Colombia are tapping pipelines for ever more crude, which they must later refine. Colombian crime gangs also send some of that artisanal fuel to Venezuela, a reversal of historic smuggling patterns. “Now it’s switched”, Yessica Prieto, project and investigations director of Colombian energy advocacy group Crudo Transparente, said.

“It’s... Colombian mafias, or criminal groups, who are stealing Colombian crude, refining it illegally — obviously artisanally — and which crosses the border to Venezuela.”

Theft of crude in Colombia — mainly from the Cano Limon-Covenas pipeline near the Venezuelan border — hit at least a six-year high in the first half of 2021, according to data from pipeline operator Cenit, a subsidiary of Colombia’s majority state-owned oil company, Ecopetrol.

Stolen oil is processed in clandestine refineries and turned into a rudimentary gasoline known as “pategrillo” or “cricket’s



Employees work at an oil excavation pipe at Campo Rubiales field in Meta, eastern Colombia. — Reuters

foot” — so-called for its green colour — that is used in cocaine production, police and analysts said.

An average of 3,299 barrels of oil were being stolen per day in Colombia through June 30, up from 1,796 barrels per day in 2016, according to Cenit. Compared to 2020, when an average of 2,744 barrels of crude were stolen each day, oil theft in Colombia rose by a fifth during the first half of this year.

While oil theft has surged, the quantity of gasoline apprehended under suspicion of being smuggled has fallen sharply over the same period, according to data from Colombia’s DIAN tax authority. A peak of 694,894 gallons of fuel were apprehended by authorities in five provinces along the border with Venezuela during 2017.

That figure fell to 107,616 gallons by 2020, according to the DIAN. In the first half

of 2021, just 18,484 gallons of fuel were apprehended. The DIAN attributed the fall in contraband fuel to turmoil in Venezuela, where oil production and refining has fallen sharply, and the success of anti-smuggling legislation.

Venezuela’s economic crisis “has driven the flow of hydrocarbons from Colombia to Venezuela”, the DIAN said in an e-mail.

The overwhelming majority of oil theft occurs along the Cano Limon-Covenas pipeline, with 2,430 barrels of crude stolen per day during the first half of 2021. In 2020, 2,008 barrels of oil were stolen each day from the pipeline, Cenit said.

Once refined, the stolen crude is used to make coca paste, a precursor to cocaine. Leaves of coca are mixed with gasoline to extract certain plant compounds, with gallons of fuel required to make just one kilo. — Reuters

Oil gains after US infrastructure bill, plans to address prices

LONDON: Oil prices rose on Monday as positive signs for global economic growth supported the outlook for energy demand and the United States said it was weighing options to address high prices. Brent crude was up by 70 cents, or 0.9 per cent, at \$83.44 a barrel at 1255 GMT, after dropping nearly 2 per cent last week. US oil gained 80 cents, or 1 per cent, to \$82.07, having declined almost 3 per cent through Friday.

US President Joe Biden on Saturday welcomed congressional passage of a long-delayed \$1 trillion infrastructure bill, which may boost growth and demand for fuel. Further supporting prices was a decision by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies such as Russia, together known as Opec+, not to speed up their planned production increases last week.

Biden had called on Opec+ to produce more crude to dampen rising prices and on Saturday said his administration had “other tools” to deal with the higher price of oil.

US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm said on Monday that Washington was weighing its options to address high gasoline and heating prices in the United States, which some analysts say could involve tapping the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

“He wants to see added supply from all, but he’s looking at other tools that he may have and hopefully there will be an announcement or so this week.”

Adding to bullish sentiment, China’s export growth slowed in October but beat forecasts, buoyed by rising global demand ahead of the winter holiday seasons and improvements in coronavirus-hit supply chains.

— Reuters



Crude oil storage tanks are seen from above at the Cushing oil hub, in Cushing, Oklahoma. — Reuters

BHP coal deal shines light on climate tech divide

It almost requires specialist mining equipment to get to the bottom of BHP's latest deal. It agreed on Monday to sell a coking coal business for \$1.35 billion, but a rapid increase in the steelmaking ingredient's price makes it hard to ascertain its underlying worth. What's more, Stanmore Resources' comparatively small size and the aversion of banks to the fossil fuel means it's having to jump through some financing hoops. At its essence, though, the deal is a bold bet against climate technology.

The acquisition would be even riskier if thermal coal were changing hands. That's used for power generation and is solidly in the crosshairs of attendees at the United Nations climate summit in Glasgow. Coking, or metallurgical, coal, on the other hand, has come under less pressure in the fight to limit global warming as there are no working replacements for it.

Green hydrogen proponents, not least Australian billionaire Andrew "Twiggy" Forrest, are working hard to change that. He has Fortescue Metals, the miner he chairs, investing heavily in the renewable energy source, including an agreement last week with Papua New Guinea to investigate producing 2.3 million tonnes a year.

That will take years, however. Even so, not all coking coal is created equal. BHP boss Mike Henry is keeping the better-quality stuff, while selling only the lower-grade rock to Stanmore.

Assessing the risk isn't easy. Lower-quality coking coal has almost tripled in value since May, according to energy research outfit Argus, clouding Stanmore's purchase price in smog. The enterprise it's buying is either worth just shy of 7 times EBITDA for the 12 months to September 30, or 2.2 times the annualised EBITDA of the final quarter of that period.

And funding was hardly a doddle. No banks are involved, leaving Stanmore to lean on hedge funds and private equity firms — Varde Partners, Canyon Capital and Farallon Capital — to lend it \$625 million. And Stanmore's 75 per cent owner, Singapore-based Golden Energy and Resources, will stump up at least 50 per cent of the equity to pay for the rest and guarantee almost half the overall price tag.

There's precious little room for error to drive Stanmore's deal into the pits.

— Reuters

Coking, or metallurgical, coal, on the other hand, has come under less pressure in the fight to limit global warming as there are no working replacements for it



BUSINESS AS USUAL

Traders gather at the fruit market early in the morning amid smoggy conditions in Lahore, Pakistan. — AFP

What Europe's energy crunch reveals



DANIEL GROS
The author is a member of the board and a distinguished fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies

SOCIETIES THAT CANNOT ACCEPT TODAY'S ENERGY PRICES ARE UNLIKELY TO PREPARE ADEQUATELY FOR THE GREEN TRANSITION, REGARDLESS OF THEIR LONG-TERM NET-ZERO PROMISES

This month represents an important milestone in the fight against global warming — and not only because of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) currently under way in Glasgow. Although many countries announced ambitious emissions-reduction targets in the run-up to the gathering, these often extend a generation into the future, to 2050 or even 2060.

Meanwhile, governments in Europe and elsewhere face an immediate energy crisis in the form of surging gas and oil prices. And how they react to it will reveal much more than their long-term net-zero pledges do about their ability to manage the concrete challenges of the green transition.

The current energy-price spike is a classic case of an accident that was waiting to happen. Years of low prices, combined with regulatory pressure on banks to reduce their exposure to brown industries, have naturally depressed investment in fossil fuels.

A faster-than-expected rebound from the Covid-19 recession, plus somewhat colder weather in the Northern hemisphere, were then enough to drive up prices to their highest levels in a decade.

Elevated fossil-fuel prices are in principle ideal drivers of a green transition, because they make renewable energy

more competitive. But the problem is that consumers had become accustomed to low prices and are now up in arms about the sudden surge.

The phenomenon is not new. Many Central and Eastern European countries faced a similar issue when they lost access to cheap energy supplies from the Soviet Union in the early 1990s. Until then, energy prices in the region had been so low that most buildings were not adequately insulated, and heating was not even metered. The switch to market prices caused particularly acute problems for large numbers of retirees living in shoddy apartment buildings, because their pensions were suddenly lower than their heating bills.

For most economists, the solution was clear: governments should raise energy prices to market levels, and use some of the increased revenues to pay poorer households a lump sum to cover the higher cost. All the major multilateral and European institutions — including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Commission — supported this approach, and the region's governments implemented it gradually over time.

Central and Eastern Europe has not yet fully solved the problem — housing

remains less energy-efficient than in Western Europe — but most countries in the region have made substantial progress. One interesting lesson from their differing performance is that the quality of a country's governance strongly influences its rate of energy-efficiency improvement. For example, Estonia, which often tops regional governance rankings, has boosted its energy efficiency faster than some Western Balkan countries, where the quality of governance is much poorer and energy-market distortions remain.

In Bulgaria, about 33 per cent of the population report that they feel unable to keep their home adequately warm — a key element in the European Union's definition of energy poverty.

The corresponding share in Estonia is less than 3 per cent, despite the fact that winters there last much longer and the number of heating degree days is over 50 per cent higher than Bulgaria's.

Increasing energy prices gradually while providing income support to the needy seems straightforward but is hard to implement in practice. There will always be groups in society that have other valid claims for income support, and raising prices steadily over time requires careful, limited interventions in the energy market.

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Why all the inflation worries?



J BRADFORD DELONG

The writer is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Berkeley

SOME RESPECTED ECONOMISTS ARE TALKING AS IF THE US ECONOMY IS IN SERIOUS INFLATIONARY TROUBLE

In the past three years, technological advances have provided about one percentage point of warranted US real wage growth each year — admittedly, only half the rate of earlier times, but still something.

Yet, real wages are currently 4 per cent below their warranted value from adding on the underlying fundamental productivity trend to the pre-pandemic real wage Employment Cost Index (ECI) level.

Does that sound like a “high-pressure” labour market to you? Those who believe that the US labour market is in some sense “tight” point out that the ECI increased by 3.7 per cent in the year to September — well above its 3 per cent annual growth rate in the pre-pandemic years of former US president Donald Trump's administration.

But, because US consumer prices have increased by 5.4 per cent over the past year, the ECI-basis real wage has fallen by 1.7

per cent in that period. In a high-pressure economy with a tight labour market, workers would have enough bargaining power to obtain real wage increases. Nowcasting is extremely difficult, and hazardous. But the “now” that I see today is the one I forecasted two to three quarters ago. Yes, the recovering US economy, like a driver who suddenly accelerates, is leaving inflationary skid marks on the asphalt.

But, as I argued in May, these should not concern us, because “burning rubber to rejoin highway traffic is not the same thing as overheating the engine.”

The US is not currently in a situation where too much money is chasing too few goods, which would result in a surfeit of demand for labour and likely trigger an inflationary spiral. This is despite the fact that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and its associated disruptions continue to cause a substantial undersupply of labour.

Today, the US economy's overall

employment-to-population ratio is three percentage points below what we used to regard as its full-employment level. The ratios for women, African-Americans, and workers without a college degree are, respectively, five, 4.5, and four percentage points below this level.

Yet, economists whom I respect talk as if the economy is in serious inflationary trouble. Jason Furman, a former chairman of President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, thinks “the original sin was an oversized American Rescue Plan,” the \$1.9 trillion recovery package that President Joe Biden signed into law in March.

In Furman's view, it would have been better to have less aggressive policy measures and thus a slower employment and growth recovery this year, because Biden's plan “contributed to higher output but also higher prices.”

And according to the same *New York Times* report, former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers

thinks that “inflation now risks spiraling out of control.”

The inflation worriers then argue that the Covid-19 crisis has permanently damaged the supply side of the economy by causing a lot of early retirements, as well as lasting disruption to the lean-and-mean supply chains on which a good deal of productivity and prosperity had depended.

Perhaps. But similar arguments in the early 2010s, in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis, aimed to justify policies that did not put the pedal to the metal and attempt rapidly to re-employ so-called “zero-marginal-product” workers.

One consequence of this timidity was the election of Trump, whose rise was fuelled by the rage of those who thought “elites” cared more about immigrants and minorities than they did about blue-collar workers whose economic opportunities had never recovered to pre-2008 levels.

Lastly, some claim that,

regardless of whether or not the labour market is tight, inflation — whether driven by supply-side or demand-side factors — is high and salient enough that firms and households will swiftly incorporate it into their expectations.

Thus, the inflationary snake has to be scotched now, while it is small, before it grows and devours everything of value. But so far, rising inflation has not been incorporated into any of the “sticky” prices in the economy, according to the measure constructed by the Atlanta Federal Reserve.

True, the financial market's current 30-year breakeven inflation rate, at 2.35 per cent, is more than half a percentage point above where it settled in the second half of the 2010s. But today's rate is similar to that in the first half of the decade, and slightly below the level that would be consistent with the US Federal Reserve's inflation target of 2 per cent per year.

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Ali al Maashari: 99639264
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features



‘Arise’ showcases the best work of 21 Omani artists

The month-long exhibition Arise will kick off on November 10 in Bait Sarah participated by 21 of the best artists from the Omani Art Ambassadors team. The exhibition will simultaneously showcase fifty artworks in the fields of Arabic calligraphy, sculpture, drawing, photography, and others...**P20**

ENTERTAINMENT

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Conversations between the 44th president and the multiple award-winning musician on a range of topics.

It's ‘Yesterday Once More’ as Richard Carpenter recalls 1970s pop duo

MORE THAN 50 years after “We’ve Only Just Begun” and “Yesterday Once More,” Richard Carpenter is looking back on the California soft pop duo with his sister Karen that ruled the charts but got a rough ride from music critics.

Now he is telling the story his way for the first time in “Carpenters: The Musical Legacy,” a book based on hundreds of hours of interviews Richard gave to authors Mike Cidoni, Lennox, and Chris May. Crammed with photos, posters, programmes, reviews, and work sched-

ules, it is intended as the definitive story of the 1970s recording stars.

“It covers really from our childhood all the way through our years together, Karen and I, making music, and the legacy. It concentrates more on the music that we made than the personal,” said Carpenter from his home near Los Angeles that is packed with gold discs and Carpenters memorabilia.

“Many times, right from the time that Karen and I first hit with ‘Close to You,’ there was so many beyond nasty, vicious things written about

us,” said Carpenter, 75, recalling how the music press derided their mellow ballads as square at a time when rock was the dominant force.

After their breakout single “(They Long to Be) Close to You” in 1970, the Carpenters had a run of hits including “Top of the World” and “Rainy Days and Mondays,” won three Grammy Awards, and had their own TV show. They turned out 10 albums, winning fans as far afield as Japan, Norway, and Zimbabwe.

Their career came to a tragic end when Karen died in 1983 of heart failure attributed to complications from anorexia nervosa. She was 32.

Richard Carpenter, who did all the musical arrangements and harmonies, is reluctant to dwell on Karen’s death and prefers to focus on her talent.

“She just had a timeless voice, ... Karen was a natural. She didn’t have to practice, ... she just sang instantly, impeccably whether it was live or on record,” he said. “She



was my sister, she was my professional partner, and she was my best friend.”

The book will be published on November 16.

It will be followed in January by a new album, “Richard Carpenter’s Piano Songbook” in which Carpenter plays classical arrange-

ments on solo piano of some of the duo’s hits.

Carpenter, who once had dreams of being a concert pianist but hated practicing, said he was “immensely flattered” to be asked to make the record.

“My parents would have been beside themselves,” he said. — **Reuters**



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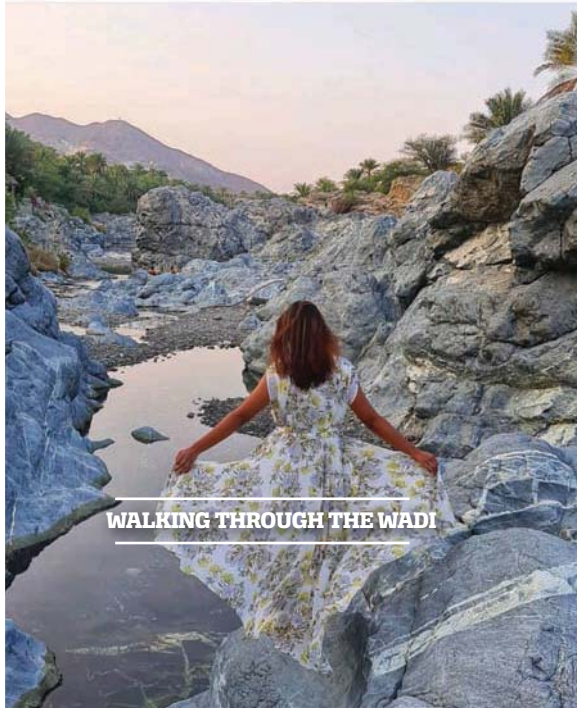
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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Netflix series 'Stranger Things' will return in summer 2022



"STRANGER THINGS" will return for a fourth series in the summer of 2022, Netflix has confirmed as the titles of the upcoming episodes were revealed.

A new teaser for the upcoming season shows Eleven (Millie Bobby Brown) and Will (Noah Schnapp) living new lives in California, where Eleven appears to be struggling to fit in.

However, in a letter she writes to Mike (Finn Wolfhard), which serves as narration for the teaser, she does not let on she is struggling, saying: "I even like school now. I have made lots of friends."

"Even so, I am ready for spring break, mostly because I get to see you. We will have the best spring break ever."

The teaser implies this might not be the case, as a montage of footage shows gunfire, explosions, a car chase and Winona Ryder's Joyce looking in horror at a sinister doll.

Among the titles of the upcoming episodes are "The Hellfire Club," "The Massacre At Hawkins Lab," "Papa" and "The Piggyback."

The new footage and information on the episodes was released on Stranger Things Day, which is marked on November 6 because that is the date in 1983 that Will Byers went missing in Hawkins, Indiana in the first episode of the first series. — PA Media/dpa

Rappers Travis Scott, Drake sued over deadly Texas concert crush

RAPPERS TRAVIS Scott and Drake have been sued for having "incited mayhem" after eight people were killed and dozens injured in a crush during a Texas concert, the law firm confirmed on Sunday.

Texas firm Thomas J Henry Law on Sunday tweeted a story published by the *Daily Mail* on the suit, confirming it had filed "one of the first lawsuits in Travis Scott Astroworld Festival tragedy."

The plaintiff is 23-year-old concertgoer Kristian Paredes, who was one of those "severely injured" at the concert on the night of November 5.

Around 50,000 people were in the audience at Houston's NRG Park when the crowd started pushing toward the stage as Scott was performing, triggering chaotic scenes.

Texas-resident Paredes, who is also suing concert organisers Live Nation and the venue, "felt an immediate push" at the front of the general admission section as Travis Scott got on stage, the complaint said.

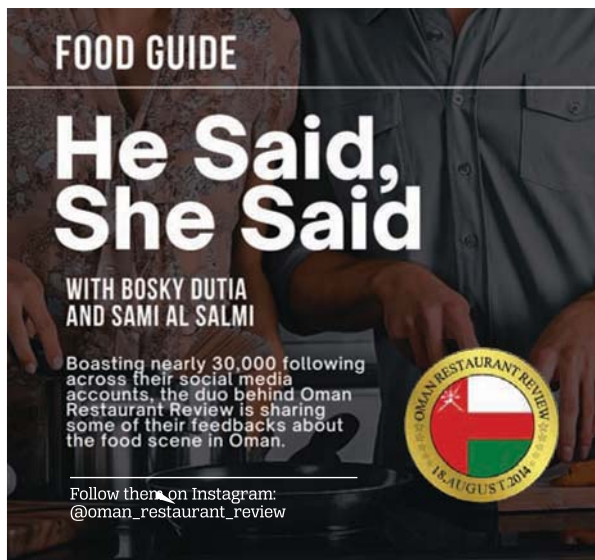
"The crowd became chaotic and a stampede began," it went on.

"Many begged security guards hired by Live Nation Entertainment for help, but were ignored."

The suit, filed in Houston's Harris County court, claims Scott "had incited mayhem and chaos at prior events" and that "defendants knew or should have known of (Scott's) prior conduct."

The suit also accuses Canadian rap superstar Drake, who joined Scott's headline set, of contributing to causing the surge toward the stage. — Reuters

FOOD REVIEW



A walk down the roads of 'Paris of the Middle East'

HE SAID: For our appetiser, we picked Hindbeh and a Falafel platter. Hindbeh is a sour cold vegetarian Mezza made of cooked Dandelion leaves tossed with roasted garlic, lemon and olive oil dressing and then topped with caramelised onions. The combination of onion, garlic and the dressing gave an extra kick to the dish. Falafel is fried patties made of ground chickpeas, herbs and special spices. The falafel was served hot with sliced tomatoes, pickled vegetables, Tahina sauce (sesame paste sauce) and freshly baked bread. The Falafel were well seasoned, crispy from outside and soft from inside. Truly one of the best Lebanese falafels in town.

SHE SAID: It was my first time trying Hindbeh, the Dandelion leaves dish was sour, earthy and everything I thought it would be. I was extremely excited to try something new. Each element came together well but I found the dish extremely sour for my tastebuds. Maybe they could serve lemon on the side while keeping it mild in the dish. The Falafel was pretty good! I'm a Falafel lover and have sampled many, these weren't dry or clammy. Just right and the Tahina served with it was perfectly tart.

HE SAID: For our mains, we chose the Shish Barak and Kabab Halabi, the Shish Barak looks very similar to ravioli but with an Arabic twist, it is made of fried ground meat-stuffed mini dumplings topped with yoghurt sauce (crushed garlic, dried mint and yoghurt) and then garnished with fried pine nuts. The dumpling tasted really good and the sauce made them even better, extra points to the dumpling size, enough for one bite. On the other hand, Kabab Halabi is minced meat kebab named after the city of Aleppo in Syria — the first people in history to make Kabab, even the word kabab came from the word Kababo in Syriac Aramaic language which means



A CUISINE STEEPED in history and geography. Like most Middle Eastern cuisines, Lebanese food is based on that of the ancient Levant, a region that includes modern-day Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine. The influence of the Levant is most obvious in the use of herbs & spices, for instance, za'atar, mint, parsley, oregano, garlic, allspice, nutmeg, and cinnamon are the most common seasonings and spices used in Lebanese dishes.

Food plays a vital role in Lebanese culture. It is one of their greatest loves, it is the key to good health, and it is central to their social and family lives.

Entering a Lebanese restaurant in any part of the world takes you back on a special journey to beautiful Lebanon. The ambience is filled with magical colours, images of stunning Lebanese sceneries, parts of their history, music, and no doubt the amazing Lebanese aromas that revive the Lebanese tradition and culture anywhere around the globe.

Such is our quest that it drove us down to test the waters of Filfil — a restaurant that serves delicious Lebanese street food. We decided to share a couple of appetisers, 2 main courses and a dessert of course.

charcoal. Very simple minced meat with basic herbs and garlic grilled to perfection, taste-wise was very good but I felt the salt was way less than it should be.

SHE SAID: Our mains were close to perfect. The Shish Barak is a signature favourite of mine, I've often eaten the Egyptian version. Meat in yoghurt, wait, let me rephrase, perfectly spiced meat in yoghurt sauce! I'm sold. Sign me up! The Kabab Halabi didn't live up to its taste due to the lack of salt. Salt tends to enhance each flavour further. However, the meat was soft and succulent.

HE SAID: For dessert, we picked the Layali Lebanon, a semolina pudding with hints of rose syrup, orange blossom and topped with bananas. We had our reservations about it because we assumed it would be heavy. Such a light dessert deserves a special mention. It was an easy, simple yet delicious dish which we ordered with black Lebanese coffee made the perfect end to a good meal.

SHE SAID: If you love an easy dessert, then this is for you! Layali Lebanon is a semolina pudding that translates to Lebanese nights. It is very popular in Lebanon hence the name but also throughout the Middle East. There are two main layers to Layali Lebanon. The first is the semolina pudding which is then topped with a layer of ashta (clotted cream). This dessert is then topped with an abundance of bananas. Lastly, it is doused in a simple syrup which is where the sweetness comes from in this dessert.

WE SAID: Great ambience, lovely attentive service and good food. All these things are difficult to come by together. We thoroughly enjoyed our food and hope to go back again, especially for that lovely dessert.

OVERALL RATING

Ambience: 4/5
Taste of food: 4/5
Presentation: 4/5
Service: 4/5
Value for money: 3.5/5

DISCLAIMER: The ORR team reviews anonymously and pays for their own meals. The opinion of the team does not reflect that of the newspaper and its editors.

ART

African artists embrace NFT's for better rewards



NIGERIAN ARTIST Abdulrahman Yusuf used to sell his work online, but in May, he was introduced to non-fungible tokens (NFTs), which he said presented "life-changing opportunities" and increased the number of coins being released. "he can sell at higher prices."

NFTs are a type of digital asset that uses the blockchain to record ownership of items such as pictures, videos, and other collectibles. Their skyrocketing popularity has baffled many, but the explosive growth shows no signs of slowing down.

And African artists like Yusuf are increasingly using NFTs, where the buyer has the status of official owner — a kind of digital bragging rights.

Yusuf, who lives in Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital, said he had sold 44 digital works on various NFT platforms since joining in May as "Arclight".



"There are life changing opportunities on NFT platforms. People who have sold their works for \$ 200 (US) wake up and see their works being sold for \$ 40,000," Yusuf, 24, said in his home studio.

The growing influence of NFTs took center stage at the annual four-day Art X Lagos Fair, West Africa's first international art fair which concluded on Sunday.

Yusuf, whose work is partly inspired by pop culture and fashion, sold a piece at the fair but did not disclose the price. His most expensive coin before the fair cost 2.2 ethereum (\$10,274), he said.

Art X Lagos founder Tokini Peterside said the 2021 fair involved a special sale of NFT in partnership with digital art market SuperRare, the first such collaboration with an African art fair.

The fair hosted NFT artists from all over Africa and its diaspora, some of whom have their works on SuperRare.

"NFTs now provide these artists with tremendous opportunities to market their work, secure their work on the blockchain, attach smart contracts to their work, which govern how work is sold and resold," said Peterside.

This year's Art X Lagos was the first full hybrid fair, combining an online and physical presence, she said. — Reuters



‘Arise’ showcases the best work of 21 Omani artists

BY STAFF REPORTER

From surreal to abstract, from still life to sculptures, Gallery Sarah will demonstrate the power of Omani artists and the development of the local art scene starting November 10 as it hosts the ‘Arise’ exhibition bringing nearly two dozen of artists under one setting.

Under the auspices of Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamoud al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, the exhibit will kick off on Wednesday at 7:00 pm and will continue until December 11, 2021.

The month-long exhibition will be participated by Omani Art Ambassadors team. Lending experience and prominence to the event, the team includes names that shaped the features of the history of fine art in the Sultanate of Oman in its various stages, such as the artist Rashid bin Abdulrahman al Balushi, winner of the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Culture, Arts and Letters for the Arts branch in 2012, and the artists Khamis, Abdullah and Saud al Hanini, who also won the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Culture, Arts and Letters for the Arts Branch for the year 2016.

Arabic calligraphy and lettering formations artists Abdul Nasser al Sayegh, Muhammad al Sayegh, Muhammad bin Mahdi al Lawati, Fahd Yamin will demonstrate the achievements and progress made by young prodigies in the said category.

In the field of sculpture, prominent young artists Khalil al Kalbani and Fayza al Wahaibi will introduce their latest masterpieces alongside

oil paintings by Abdulmajeed bin Hakim al Balushi, Muhammad al Maamari, Mazin al Maamari, Saeed al Ruwaidi, Nada bint Abdullah al Ruwaisdiyah, Maryam al Shehhi, Samia bint Salem al Gharibiyah, Laila bint Mohammed al Najar, Hajar al Harassi, Zainab al Ajmi and Laila al Jahuri.

The exhibit is within the framework of Bait Al Zubair Foundation's insight to contribute to the vitality of the artistic cultural scene of the country.

The 21 artists who are part of the Arise exhibition comes from various art school.

During the inauguration, the official artistic identity which represents the artistic group's goals and vision will also be revealed.

In total, the exhibition will simultaneously showcase fifty artworks in the fields of Arabic calligraphy, sculpture, drawing, photography and others.

The team seeks to be one of the most prominent artistic gatherings supporting the artistic movement to outline different artistic and cultural horizons and a positive role in sustainable development by supporting talents and creating the appropriate environment for intersection and interaction with local and international artistic experiences and a tangible presence in the global art field.

What distinguishes the team and the exhibit is that the team members belong to multiple generations and different artistic schools, which stimulates the interaction of experiences and expertise with each other, enriching individual experiences and developing the aesthetic and visual visions of the members. The exhibition reflects the vital artistic role in shaping the identity of Omani art.

Since the experimental estab-

lishment of the team in 2018, the team has achieved various achievements and participation in international art forums, such as their participation in the international exhibition “Artists around the World” in Turkey in Istanbul in August 2018.

Some of the team members also participated in the Second International Forum of Professional Fine Artists (Thai Rhythm) in Phuket, which was organised by D’Fuglee Galaria in January 2019.

The team won the Gold Award and the Silver Award at the Second International Forum of Professional Plastic Artists in Thailand in 2019. The team also held the second exhibition of Omani Art Ambassadors in cooperation with the Art MMH Foundation in the Republic of Austria in Vienna in July 2019.

The Covid-19 pandemic did not stop the team's international activities, but they had their virtual presence, as the team participated in the “We Are the Nature” virtual exhibition organised by the “Iran Drudi Academy of Visual Arts” in September 2021.

Recently, the team established the Fine Art Ambassadors Lounge in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in the Omani Society for Fine Arts in Muscat, which includes providing educational and training sessions in the field of drawing, letter forming, and sculpture.

The exhibition opens from 9:30 to 5:00 pm, from Sunday to Thursday, in Bait Al Nahda in Bait Al Zubair. For more information about the exhibition's activities and Sarah Gallery, you can call 22084747 or email galleriesarah@baitalzubair.com.

