

Oman, Britain hold joint drill

The Royal Army of Oman (RAO), represented by a squadron from the "Al Sahra'a" or "The Desert" Regiment of the 23rd Infantry Brigade, with the support of the Sultan of Oman's Artillery and the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) Engineering Corps, took part in the joint Oman-Britain drill "Apollo Cyber". **DETAILS ON P2**



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OMAN REVIVE ARAB CUP QUARTERFINALS HOPES



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10 COMPANIES IN RACE FOR OMAN'S FIRST-EVER PPP BASED SCHOOLS PROJECT



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EGYPT'S SMALL FARMS PLAY BIG ROLE BUT STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE



MUSCAT

HM CONGRATULATES PRESIDENT OF INDIA

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Droupadi Murmu on the occasion of being sworn in as her country's new President. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to President Droupadi in leading the Indian people towards further progress and prosperity. His Majesty also wished the relations between the two countries further development and growth. — ONA

HM GREETINGS TO MALDIVES PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih of the Republic of Maldives on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Solih. His Majesty also wished the people of the Maldives further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM CONGRATULATES ALBANIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of congratulations to President Bajram Begaj on being sworn in as the President of the Republic of Albania. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of success to President Begaj in leading the people of Albania towards further progress and prosperity. His Majesty also wished the relations between the two countries further development and growth. — ONA

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SAYYID ASAAD BIDS FAREWELL TO AMBASSADOR OF KUWAIT

On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received at his office on Monday Dr Sulaiman Abdullah al Harbi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. **DETAILS ON P2**

Turnout low as Tunisians vote in referendum

**TUNIS:** Turnout was low in Tunisia on Monday as people voted in a referendum on a controversial draft constitution that grants the president wide powers, amid a months-long political crisis in the country. Voter turnout reached 11.8 per cent by 1 pm, according to the head of the election commission Farouk Bouaskar.

Polling stations opened at 6 am (05:00 GMT) and are due to close at 10 pm. Bouaskar expected more people to head to the polls in the evening, especially young voters, the official TAP news agency reported.

The opposition has called for a boycott and accused President Kais Saied of seeking to establish an autocracy in Tunisia, once considered the sole democratic success story of the Arab Spring.

The vote comes exactly a year after Saied unseated the government and suspended parliament, part of a string of measures the opposition decried



as a "coup."

The North African country has since been in political turmoil, with the opposition staging street protests against Saied.

"We will establish a new republic... different than the one that existed in the past 10 years and even before that," Saied told state television before casting his ballot.

In March, Saied dissolved parliament, led by Islamist Ennahda movement, and later sacked dozens of judges for alleged corruption.

Saied, who took office in 2019, has defended his moves, saying they were in line with the constitution.

SEE ALSO P6

MEDICAL RESPONSE SECTOR READY TO HANDLE SITUATION

Alert as low pressure to impact from today

**MUSCAT:** The Civil Aviation Authority on Monday sounded alarm ahead of the low pressure expected to make landfall in the Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday.

Rain clouds already began overcasting skies on Monday morning, offering chances for sporadic rains ranging between 20 mm and 100 mm starting from the governorates of Muscat, North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah and extending to the governorates of North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Musandam, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi. Abdullah bin Saif al Bousafi, Meteorology Specialist at the Civil Aviation Authority, said to Oman News Agency (ONA) that, besides heavy rains, the depression is expected to cause low visibility, active winds (40-80 km/hr in speed), overthrowing of unstable objects and the overflowing of wadis, as well as rough seas — with chances of waves reaching heights of 3 to 4 metres.

Al Bousafi urged citizens and residents to take precautions, avoid crossing flooded wadis, keep an eye on children when close to wadis or inundated areas



and shun the sea during the next two days.

Meanwhile, officials at the medical response sector have affirmed the sector's preparedness to handle public health situation which might occur as a result of the low pressure which is due to make a landfall in Oman.

An action plan is in place to ensure the continuous operation of all health establishments to address the situation in the areas which might be affected.

Dr Rashid bin Hamad al Badi, Director of the Emergency Cases Centre, told ONA that the medical

response sector has instructed the health establishments in governorates concerned to keep their staff and equipment ready for prompt handling of emergency cases.

The medical response sector also cautioned the respective health establishments against probable occurrence of power cuts, disconnection in water supplies or chances that rainwater might gush into houses. The establishments were directed to activate the vaccination plan and be prepared to transfer patients whenever necessary. — ONA



AT THE TOP OF K2 MOUNTAIN

Nadhira al Harthy has scaled the top of K2, which at 8,611 metres above sea level and is the second highest mountain peak on Earth after Mount Everest. "I have climbed the second highest peak in the world, the toughest and the most dangerous. Nothing is impossible with a real will," Nadhira said in a statement. **DETAILS ON P2**

Oman displays digital resilience as cyber attacks rise

KABEER YOUSUF @kabeeryousef

As many as 12 million cyber attacks on different social media platforms were foiled in 2021, an increasing trend triggered during the Covid-19 lockdown, work from home and learning from homes.

According to an annual cybersecurity report titled

"Navigating New Frontiers," issued by Trend Micro Incorporated, a global leader in cybersecurity solutions on Monday, the growing rate of cyber attacks by malicious actors on digital infrastructures and individuals in the modern-day hybrid work environment is alarming as predators are seeking ways of attacking the domains and pose greater threat to cyber



security. The report which highlights the increasing threats organisations must address and protect against with robust

cybersecurity solutions indicates that over 4.1 million email threats were thwarted while the cyber security arm was able to break 700,607 malware attacks, and over 4.6 million URL victims' attacks in 2021.

As part of protecting remote learning and working, Smart Home Network (SHN) solutions protected devices and networks from 12,821 SHN inbound and

outbound attacks and prevented 581,119 SHN events, the report further elucidated.

"Oman's enterprises continue to display digital resilience through the challenges of unforeseen global events and have bravely faced an evolving threat landscape with increasingly sophisticated attacks," said Assad Arabi, Managing Director, Gulf Cluster for Trend Micro. **TURN TO P3**



# ASAAD BIDS FAREWELL TO AMBASSADOR OF KUWAIT

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan received at his office

today Dr Sulaiman Abdullah al Harbi, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty. The ambassador expressed his thanks to His Majesty the Sultan for the support

extended to him during his tour of duty in Oman from His Majesty, the government and the Omani people, which had enabled him to carry out his tasks. He also wished His Majesty the Sultan good health, happiness and a long life,

wishing the Sultanate of Oman further development and growth under the wise leadership of His Majesty. On his turn, HH Sayyid Asaad expressed his utmost appreciation to the ambassador for the efforts he exerted in serving the relations

between the two countries, wishing him permanent success, and the people of Kuwait further progress and prosperity. The meeting was attended by the Secretary General and the two advisers at the Office of HH Sayyid Asaad. — ONA



## Fruits and vegetables prices soar

VINOD NAIR  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

The inflation rate in the Sultanate of Oman continues to rise in June this year by 2.85 per cent on an annual basis, driven mainly by the increase in food and beverage prices by 6.09 per cent. Prices of bread (3.70 per cent), meat (8.16 per cent), fish and seafood (4.59 per cent), vegetables (6.94 per cent), and fruits (9.19 per cent). In the capital, prices of fruits went up by 8.23 per cent and 3.29 per cent in June 2022 compared to the last year. Transportation costs (4.19 per cent) increased in June this year, compared to the same period last year. The inflation rate in Muscat was 2.3 per cent during the same period in June 2022.

According to the Central Bank of Oman, its tenth issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR) said fuel inflationary pressures are mounting across the globe.

The ensuing monetary tightening may weigh on growth, especially for the sectors that are still in the recovery phase. Nevertheless, the inflation outlook in Oman remains moderate, and “as an oil exporter, rising commodity prices are so far a net positive for Oman as the higher proceeds from hydrocarbons have provided ample fiscal space to the government to counterbalance any inflationary pressures with targeted interventions to complement the impact of monetary policy actions”.

In Oman, the main components of the consumer price index are food, beverages and tobacco, transport and communication and rent, electricity, water and fuel, and clothing among others.

The inflation rate in Oman is expected to be 4.00 per cent by the end of this quarter, according to analysts’ expectations. In the long-term, the Oman Inflation rate is projected to trend around 2.50 per cent in 2023, according to analysts.

# Nadhira scales second highest peak

STAFF REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

Nadhira al Harthy conquered the summit of K2, which at 8,611m above sea level and is the second-highest mountain peak in the world after Everest, on Saturday “I have the second highest peak in the world in Pakistan, the toughest and the most dangerous. Nothing is impossible with a real will,” Nadhira tweeted.

Oman’s Embassy in Islamabad tweeted her success as well as congratulated the Omani climber. ‘Many congratulations to climber Nadhira al Harthy on her success in reaching the top of Mt K2 in Pakistan – towering over 8,611m – adding a new achievement to her record of achievements.’ Nadhira had last tweeted on July 15, saying, “Waiting for the right conditions to climb Mt K2. Thank you to all the supporters of the K2 climb trip.”

In 2019, Nadhira al Harthy became the first Omani woman to climb Mount Everest. In January 2021, she became the first Arab woman to summit Ama Dablam (22,349 feet) -- a mountain south of Everest -- while climbing alongside Qatari mountaineer Fahad Badar.

Nadhira’s life changed forever in 2017 after she met the first Omani man to climb the highest peak in the world. Khalid al Siyabi had summited Everest



seven years earlier. He was part of a group of pioneering Omanis who were telling their inspirational stories at an assembly hosted by the Ministry of Education, where she was working as the director of citizenship at the time.

That evening she made a pledge to replicate Al Siyabi’s achievement, using his mentorship as guidance. “His story, it touched me,” she told CNN Sport in an interview. “I was inspired to do something for myself [...] to challenge myself.”

Before training to climb the world’s tallest mountain, Al Harthy’s workout routine extended to going to the gym a few times a week.

She knew she had to dramatically change gears, beginning with strengthening her muscles and improving her resistance. With Al Siyabi’s help, her training schedule developed into that of a fully-fledged endurance athlete, consisting of running, hiking, rock climbing, canyoning and caving.

Her next goal is to climb one of the 14 mountain peaks across the world that stand taller than 8,000m, dubbed by Nasa as the Eight Thousanders.

She hopes that by teaching others about her experience through her newly appointed role as the general manager’s assistant for the Girl Guides of Oman,



she can lift up a new generation of young Omanis to take up endurance sports.

After conquering Ama Dablam, Nadhira has been appointed goodwill Ambassador of Nepal. Al Harthy’s appointment comes after Nepal’s Embassy in the Sultanate made a recommendation to the Government of Nepal as the Goodwill Ambassador for “Visit Nepal Year 2020.” As Goodwill Ambassador,

Nadhira will be promoting tourism between the two countries besides encouraging delivering humanitarian relief, spearheading various public programmes and becoming instrumental in enhancing mutual understanding between the two friendly nations. This is the second time that an Omani has been bestowed with the title ‘Goodwill Ambassador’.

## ■ OMAN, BRITAIN ORGANISE MILITARY DRILL



LONDON: The Royal Army of Oman (RAO), represented by a squadron from the “Al Sahara’a” or “The Desert” Regiment of the 23rd Infantry Brigade, with the support of the Sultan of Oman’s Artillery and the Sultan’s Armed Forces (SAF) Engineering Corps, took part in the joint Oman-Britain drill “Apollo Cyber”. The drill was organised in the United Kingdom (UK) from June 20 to July 24. The joint drill came within the framework of the joint military training plan regularly conducted by RAO with Arab and foreign countries. “Apollo Cyber” included several obstacles, tests and training on field weaponry and equipment.



## Meet explores UNESCO tag for two nature reserves

**MUSCAT:** Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment Authority, held a meeting on Monday with German experts from the Unesco's Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting discussed the possibility of drafting files for nominating Al Jabal Al Akhdhar Sanctuary and Jabal Samhan Sanctuary to the MAB programme. It reviewed various aspects of cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Unesco, laying emphasis on Oman's efforts in the field of environment protection.

The two sanctuaries boast vast variety in environmental and ecological systems, in addition to unique natural scenery and human, material and cultural

heritage.

MAB programme is the best means of developing national strategies for sustainable development of nature reserves. Germany has institutions with established experience in enhancing MAB nature reserves.

It combines the natural and social sciences with a view to improving human livelihoods and safeguarding natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate and environmentally sustainable.

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts 738 sites in 134 countries all over the world, including 22 transboundary sites.

— ONA

### ■ SALALAH BOOK FAIR KICKS OFF



The 12th edition of the Salalah Book Fair kicked off at the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah on Monday. The event, which will run till August 2, is organised by the Directorate General for Culture, Sports and Youth in the Governorate of Dhofar. The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar. The book fair comes within the framework of Dhofar Cultural and Sports Festival 2022. The event sees the participation of 54 publishers and bookstores from Oman and other countries. The book fair also includes several lectures, intellectual seminars and book reads, as well as poetry, art and culture sessions. — ONA

## In brief

### ■ MUSCAT

#### WORKSHOP ON DRAFTING STATE BUDGET

The Ministry of Economy on Monday organised a workshop for different government departments on drafting Budget 2023 inducted the Budget Drafting Electronic System.

Opened by Dr Nasser bin Rashid al Maawali, Ministry of Economy's Under-Secretary, the workshop was aimed at outlining the basics and prerequisites needed to be observed when government departments, authorities and establishments present their respective units' budgets for next year in line with the Circular on Drafting Budget 2023.

Featuring the updated electronic budget preparation system, the workshop was attended by more than 80 representatives of government units.

#### MOL HOSTS MEETING ON JOB ROTATION

**MUSCAT:** The Ministry of Labour held the first meeting on the applications of the System of Job Rotation among government departments in Muscat on Monday.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development. Shaikh Mohammed bin Al Waleed Al Hinai, Head of the central team tasked with the initiative, presented a visual display during which he spoke about reframing the State's Administrative Apparatus, analysing the status quo of the government sector and post-analysis requirements, as well as justifications for applying job rotation and its advantages.

## Oman displays digital resilience as cyber attacks rise

### FROM PAGE 1

"The modern-day, hybrid world has made it difficult for organisations to protect their digital environment, requiring security teams to bolster their security strategies to protect employees in and out of the office, as well as remote locations with unsecured public networks," adds Arabi.

The report states that globally Trend Micro solutions stopped over 94.2 billion threats in 2021, a 42 per cent increase in the number of detections recorded in 2020. Attacks had surged over 53 billion in the second half of 2021, blocking 41 billion threats in H1 2021.

Threat actors are getting better at exploiting human error to compromise cloud infrastructure and remote workers. Homeworkers are often prone to take more risks than those in the office, which makes phishing a greater risk.

According to the report, better readiness for security teams against emerging threats is necessary across sectors. "With these related insights, Oman seeks improvement within the movement against the threat landscape going forward," the cyber security report adds.

# STAY SAFE AS HEAVY RAINS LIKELY

### LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

Muscat experienced overcast sky on Monday indicating lingering rain, while Oman Met Office issued a second alert on heavy rains expected on Tuesday and Wednesday. Due to the heavy rains expected an impact of the low pressure system of the monsoon in India, the Civil Aviation Authority advised all to take maximum precaution during the forthcoming days by staying alert, avoiding the sea, wadis and following weather bulletins from Oman Met Office.

Places that could face the impact of the low pressure system are South Al Sharqiyah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, South Al Batinah, North Al Batinah, Musandam, Al Dhahirah and Al Buraimi governorates.

The expected rainfall, on Tuesday and Wednesday, is between 20 mm and 100 mm. Fresh winds are reported to be 20 to knots. Horizontal visibility



could reduce to 500 m. The sea state is categorised as rough along the coasts with a wave height of four meters.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority requested the public not to risk crossing wadis. CDAA also requested

the public to stay away from low lying and coastal areas during the expected rains as well as to keep away from electricity lines and lighting poles.

The National Emergency Management Committee said the emergency management

sub-committees are prepared to deal with the potential impacts of the expected rains in the governorates of Muscat, North Al Sharqiyah, Al Dakhiliyah, Al Dhahirah, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Buraimi and Musandam to enhance

its readiness for the potential impacts of the expected rains. On Monday afternoon the satellite images showed that thunder cells had formed over south of Al Sharqiyah and south of Muscat, with the extension and expansion of thunder cells over parts of South Al Batinah, Al Dakhiliyah and Al Dhahirah with rainfall of varying intensity.

The flow of clouds of different heights were recorded on the coasts of the Sea of Oman and over the South of Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates. By Monday evening the aerial images showed the activity of local clouds on the Western Al Hajar Mountains, the flow of high and medium clouds, and the activity of monsoon clouds on the coasts and mountains of Dhofar, with the continuation of drizzling.

According to the meteorologist at Oman Met Office Samayil, Al Mudhaibi, Al Suwaiq, Bahla, Al Rustaq and Dhalkout received heavy rains on Sunday.

# Plan to launch Olympic shooting clubs underscore Royal attention to youth, sports

**MUSCAT:** Basil bin Ahmed al Rowas, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth, said that His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's blessing of a decision to set up international Olympic shooting clubs for the Sultanate of Oman affirms the Royal attention accorded to the youth of Oman and sports.

"The decision seeks to safeguard this sport, which is deep-rooted in Omani society's civilisation and cultural heritage, while at the same time upgrades the sport to international spheres—so that it could be played in tandem with the laws devised by the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF)," he said. He noted that this sport is listed within the programme of Olympic Games and that Omani youth, males and females alike, now have an opportunity to excel in the sport at a global level.

Air Commodore Nasser bin Said al Saadi, Assistant Chief of



Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) for Training and Joint Drills, said that Olympic shooting figures among the loftiest sports in the world and that different countries took keen interest in

attracting all age groups to espouse them. Hence, sports complexes and shooting ranges were constructed for Olympic sports in the Sultanate of Oman where the Royal patronage of His Majesty the

Sultan, the Supreme Commander, gives impetus to the sports and has been the moving force behind the accomplishments of the country," said Al Saadi.

"Oman is thereby set to see

major transformation that serve as a springboard that will influence the performance of youth of all different age groups and contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's representation at all events," Al Saadi said.

Captain Khalid bin Ali al Maqbali, Military Sports Manager at the SAF headquarters (Secretary-General of Oman Shooting Association), said that 14 clubs will be floated initial investment bids—at a rate of one club per governorate, except the Governorate of Muscat, which will host two shooting clubs.

Priority investment is given to the inhabitants of each governorate and in case no investor takes up the bid, investment will be open for citizens from other governorates.

However, mechanisms of the clubs' construction will be announced electronically and judged in accordance with existing provisions and technical terms and conditions. — ONA



WORLD DROWNING PREVENTION DAY

# LET NOBODY DROWN

236,000

AS ONE OF THE LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH GLOBALLY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGES 1-24, AND THE THIRD LEADING CAUSE OF INJURY-RELATED DEATHS OVERALL, DROWNING TRAGICALLY CLAIMS MORE THAN 236,000 LIVES EACH YEAR

1.42 PER CENT

DROWNING CASES IN OMAN REACHED 211 OR 1.42 PER CENT OF TOTAL DEATHS AND THE AGE ADJUSTED DEATH RATE IS 4.91 PER 100,000 OF POPULATION RANKING OMAN 26 IN THE WORLD.

500

MORE THAN 500 DROWNING INCIDENTS WERE REPORTED IN OMAN IN 2021

KABEER YOUSUF  
@kabeeryousef

Reckless crossing of wadis; non-abidance of safety instructions near water bodies and beaches; and parents leaving kids unattended at swimming pools or water logged areas are major reasons behind the surging number of drowning cases in the Sultanate of Oman.

More than 500 drowning incidents were reported in Oman in 2021, a recent statistics has revealed. Speaking to the Observer, a senior official from the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) said that the water rescue teams dealt with 521 calls of drowning accidents in 2021.

“Swimming requires caution and should not be carried out in undesignated sites,” he warned,

adding that “In most cases, the victims are children as a result of negligence and lack of supervision by parents. Many of them either attempted to cross the swamps of water or were playing in the swimming pools in farms and rest houses without knowing the danger involved resulting in loss of many lives.”

According to the latest WHO data issued on World Drowning Prevention Day, such deaths in Oman reached 211 or 1.42 per cent of total deaths and the age adjusted death rate is 4.91 per 100,000 of population ranking Oman 26 in the world.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) issued a call for people around the world to “do one thing” to prevent drowning. As one of the leading causes of death globally for children and young people ages

1-24, and the third leading cause of injury-related deaths overall, drowning tragically claims more than 236,000 lives each year. To galvanise action and mark World Drowning Prevention Day, the Jet d’Eau in Geneva will be illuminated in blue this evening, accompanied by similar actions in other cities around the world.

More than 90 per cent of drowning deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, with children under the age of 5 being at highest risk. These deaths are frequently linked to daily, routine activities, such as bathing, collecting water for domestic use, travelling over water on boats or ferries, and fishing. The impacts of seasonal or extreme weather events – including monsoons – are also a frequent cause of drowning and these impacts

are largely preventable through a number of interventions.

“Every year, around the world, hundreds of thousands of people drown. Most of these deaths are preventable through evidence-based, low-cost solutions,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO. “Today, cities around the world are lighting up their monuments in blue light as a call to action for each of us to do our part to prevent drowning. Let’s put a stop to drowning.”

The CDAA statistics show an average of 400 drowning incidents were reported a year in the past mostly during rains.

“By law, crossing the wadis (valleys) and low-lying areas despite the warning is a punishable offence and can have serious repercussions,” CDAA official said.



## Indian schools secure outstanding results

STAFF REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

CBSE Board Results of 2022 have set commendable records for Indian Schools in Oman with an unprecedented number of high achievers and an impressive pass percentage, setting another benchmark of excellence in academics. This year the CBSE, India had conducted the Board examination for class X & XII in two terms and the academic performance of Indian School students have been consistently outstanding.

The Oman toppers in Class XII science stream are as follows: Pranshu Dasgupta of Indian School Al Ghubra is the Oman topper with 99.4 per cent; the second position is claimed by Rathod Smit Amitkumar from Indian School Sohar with 98.4 per cent; and the third position is shared by two students from Indian School Al Ghubra – Ishan Jabir and Keshav Balwant Deoskar – both scoring 98.2 per cent.

The Class XII commerce stream toppers are Angel Maria Tarson (Indian School Darsait) and Sujanya Sriram (Indian School Al Ghubra) both scoring 97.8 per cent. The second position is also being shared by two students scoring 97.6 per cent, Lakshmi Priyaanjani Krishnan (Indian School Al Seeb) and Ojas Golyan (Indian School Sohar). Ananya Panwar (Indian School Al Ghubra) has claimed the third position with 97.2 per cent.

The first and the second position in the Humanities stream are being claimed by

Shraavani Sastry and Caroline Judi Benhur from Indian School Al Ghubra with 98 per cent and 97.6 per cent respectively. Charlotte Carvalho of Indian School Muscat claims the third position with 97.4 per cent.

Aman Saji of Indian School Sohar is the Oman topper of Class X CBSE Board examination 2022 with a phenomenal score at 99.8 per cent. The second position is claimed by Keziah Mariam Koshy Varghese of Indian School Al Maabela at 99.6 per cent. Abhinav Sunil Prasad of Indian School Salalah claims the third position with 99.4 per cent.

Dr Sivakumar Manickam, Chairman of Board of Directors, congratulated the students who have made their alma mater and parents proud with outstanding results. He lauded the unflinching support of schools that have conducted remedial classes to aid the academically needy students and made all efforts to set a higher benchmark of success in the Board Exams.

“As a system, Indian Schools in Oman have been implementing various measures to provide academic assistance, over and above the classroom lessons while placing equal emphasis on their overall health and well-being. We shall continue to strengthen the core academics and competence of our children, and are proud to achieve higher milestones in each passing year. Congratulations to all the children, parents and their schools for their hard work and efforts,” said Dr Manickam.

## Don't spoil environment, EA urges Khareef tourists



AFRAH AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

With the advent of the Khareef season in the Governorate of Dhofar and the influx of tourists, the Environment Authority (EA) launched the environmental protection campaign to focus on the preservation and protection of the tourism sites.

Eight field teams have been formed targeting tourist areas with diverse topography. The teams carried out field visits to sensitise people about the environment by distributing leaflets and to book people who encroach green areas.

Ahmed bin Salem al Maashani, environmental systems specialist and field supervisor of the Environmental Protection Campaign, told Oman Radio: “With the advent of Khareef, the initiative seeks to educate visitors and residents about the



importance of preserving green spaces in the Governorate of Dhofar. It also seeks to raise the environmental awareness of the people and tourists and ensure an environmentally sustainable tourist season.” Al Maashani said the aim of the campaign, which began in July, was to protect the biodiversity in the governorate by preventing encroachment, logging of trees and wanton dumping of waste.

The authorities urge people to be socially responsible and conserve the environment.

The programmes, initiatives and projects of EA are in line with Oman's Vision 2040, which will positively reflect on the Sultanate of Oman's global ranking on sustainable development.

Littering in tourist sites like springs, waterfalls and mountains spoils the beauty of these places and the health of visitors. It also

affects cattle and camels which often unknowingly eat harmful waste including plastic during grazing.

One must also abide by safety measures displayed in the tourist sites and not dive into waterbodies where swimming is not allowed.

The coastal wilayats in the Dhofar Governorate, specifically from the Wilayat of Dhalkout in the west to the Wilayat of Mirbat in the east, are affected by the Khareef season as a result of the monsoon winds and the flow of clouds coming from the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

The Khareef season is characterised by its cloudy and rainy weather due to the density of clouds and the temperature dropping to less than 30 degrees Celsius in the city of Salalah, while it drops more in the high mountainous areas surrounded by fog associated with light rain.

## Entrepreneurship forum held at Al Zahra College

STAFF REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

The Zubair Enterprises Development Centre (Zubair EDC) sponsored an entrepreneurship forum at Al Zahra College for Women. The forum is organised by the college to enhance its role in supporting and fostering the culture of entrepreneurship within the Sultanate of Oman. This participation is within the framework of a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Zubair EDC and the college, to empower and motivate college students to become entrepreneurs and promote entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman by providing them with a suitable environment.

During the occasion, Said bin Salim al Sahib, Director of Zubair EDC, delivered a speech in which he stated, “Over the past years, Zubair EDC has been able to occupy a leading position in supporting small enterprises and emerging entrepreneurs. This enabled an increase in the number of Centre's members, which has exceeded 1,000, from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. This is in addition to thousands of beneficiaries from its various services, 40% of whom are female beneficiaries and business owners. Since its establishment, the Center has sought to promote a culture of entrepreneurship among Omani business owners. Through steadfast determination, the right guidance and effective support from experts, budding



entrepreneurs can achieve success and reach their desired goals. Our partnership with Al Zahra College reflects our principles and values through which we seek to support the business sector and embed the concept of entrepreneurship in Oman's youth and continuously strive towards its development.”

From his side, Dr Muslim bin Ali Al Maani, Dean of Al Zahra College for Women, said, “From the start, the college has been working on supporting its female students, refining their scientific and practical skills and preparing them to enter the labour market. This was undertaken through opportunities created from respective programmes and various initiatives. We are working to build a young generation capable of managing its own projects and have laid the foundation for launching a business incubator at Al Zahra College. This is being carried out in cooperation with the relevant authorities from the public and private sectors. We

recently signed an MoC with Zubair EDC to open several areas of collaboration between the two institutions, especially in the fields of consultancy, guidance and support to equip college graduates with the necessary skills that make them ready for the labour market.”

During the forum, Nabiha al Mandhari, Communication and Digital Marketing Specialist at Zubair EDC, presented the services and programmes provided by the Center to entrepreneurs, in order to help them develop their businesses based on scientific foundations. In addition, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority showcased its role in developing entrepreneurship in the Sultanate of Oman. The event also included a number of success stories from female entrepreneurs among college graduates.

At the end of the forum, the participating guests and students in the forum were presented with honours and were taken for a tour of the accompanying exhibition. The attendees expressed their appreciation during the tour and praised the keenness of female entrepreneurs at the college in showcasing their creative ideas and turning them into executable business projects.

The Zubair EDC provides a range of services that are summarised in consultancy, capacity building, project development opportunities, networking, partnerships and contracts, financing and financial support through a number of strategic partners from local financial institutions.



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Advertisement No. (24/2022)

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# TUNISIANS VOTE ON CONSTITUTION EXPANDING PRESIDENT’S POWER

**TUNIS:** Tunisians began voting on Monday in a referendum on a new constitution that critics of President Kais Saied fear will maul the democracy that emerged from a 2011 revolution by handing him nearly total power.

The vote is being held on the first anniversary of Saied’s ousting of an elected parliament, when he established emergency rule and began governing by fiat.

Tunisia’s divided opposition parties have called his moves a coup that risks flinging Tunisia back into the autocratic era from before the revolution.

Few people were out in the humid early morning streets, but at Rue Marseilles polling station in downtown Tunis, Illyes Moujahed was first in line, saying Saied was the only hope.

“I’m here to save Tunisia from collapse.

To save it from years of corruption and failure,” he said.

It is not clear when the results will be announced after polls close at 2100 GMT, but with little apparent enthusiasm for the vote among most Tunisians and a boycott by major parties, analysts



A woman casts her ballot at a polling station during a referendum on a new constitution in Tunis. – Reuters

expect a “yes” vote with low turnout.

Standing outside a cafe in downtown Tunis, Samir Slimane said he was not interested in voting.

“I have no hope of change. Kais Saied will not change anything,” he said.

Under Saied’s own rules for the referendum, no minimum level of participation among the 9.2 million registered voters is needed to approve the new constitution. He has only stipulated the constitution will come into effect once the final results are published, and has not said what

happens if voters reject it.

Saied has hailed his changes as the foundation of a new Tunisian republic to put the revolution back on course and end years of political sclerosis and economic stagnation.

“We will establish a new republic, not like the one of the

past 10 black years... We want a state of law.

The people will have the last word,” Saied said after voting.

## DISUNITY

However, while nearly all major political parties and civil society organisations have denounced his unilateral approach to rewriting the constitution and the legitimacy of the referendum, they have failed to build a united front.

Disunity was visible in protests against Saied in recent days. The Ennahda, the biggest party in parliament, took part in a protest on Saturday. Civil society organisations and smaller parties held one on Friday. A party that backed the pre-revolution autocracy held its own on both days.

The protests attracted only small numbers, but rallies organised by Saied supporters have also had only modest attendance and there has been little sign of excitement around the campaign.

Most Tunisians seem more focused on the dire state of the economy and rising prices.

However, the economic decline

**Analysts expect voters to back constitution expanding the president’s power on a low turnout amid opposition’s boycott**

since 2011 has left many people angry at the parties that have governed since the revolution and disillusioned with the political system they ran.

“I don’t support Saied, but I will vote ‘yes’ in the referendum because those protesting against it are the main cause of our problems for the past decade,” said Mohammed, a Tripoli resident.

Of the three parliamentary elections and two presidential elections since the revolution, the lowest turnout, of 41 per cent, was in 2019 for the chamber that Saied has dissolved.

A turnout on Monday far below that rate would further call into question the legitimacy of Saied’s new constitution and his project to remake Tunisian politics.

— Reuters

## Russia courts Africa in quest for more non-Western friends

**KAMPALA:** Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov visited Congo Republic on Monday, the second leg of an African tour aimed at strengthening Moscow’s ties with a continent that has refused to join Western condemnation and sanctions over Russia’s attack on Ukraine.

African countries, which have a tangled legacy of ties with both the West and the former Soviet Union, have largely avoided taking sides over the war in Ukraine. Many import Russian grain and, increasingly, energy too but they also buy Ukrainian grain and benefit from Western aid flows and trade ties.

Lavrov has already visited Egypt and will head from Congo to Uganda, then Ethiopia.

Africa is also being courted by the West this week, with French President Emmanuel Macron due to visit Cameroon, Benin and Guinea-Bissau and U.S. Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Mike Hammer on his way to Egypt and Ethiopia.



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Arab League Secretary General Ahmed Aboul Gheit meet in Cairo. – Reuters

In a column published in newspapers in the four countries included in his tour, Lavrov praised Africa for resisting what he called the West’s attempts to impose a unipolar world order.

“We appreciate the considered African position as to the situation in and around Ukraine,” he wrote in the column, adding that African countries had come under “unprecedented” Western

pressure to join the sanctions.

In Congo Republic, a small oil-producing former French colony north of the much larger Democratic Republic of Congo, Lavrov visited President Denis Sassou Nguesso at his residence in the town of Oyo, 400 km from the capital Brazzaville.

Sassou Nguesso has been in power since 1979, with a five-year gap from 1992 to 1997.

Lavrov was expected to hold a joint news conference with his Congolese counterpart Jean-Claude Gakosso on Monday, Russia’s foreign ministry said.

In a statement, Lavrov’s spokeswoman said this was the first visit by a Russian or Soviet foreign affairs minister to the country. She said friendly ties dated back to the Soviet era and that 8,000 Congolese citizens had studied in Russia.

## BALANCING ACT

Lavrov was expected later in Uganda, where President Yoweri Museveni has a long history of balancing strong ties with Western allies as well as friendly relations with Moscow. He has visited Russia at least twice since 2010.

In a statement announcing Lavrov’s visit, Museveni’s office said he desired “stronger bilateral relations especially in the areas of defence and security, economic and technical cooperation”.

— Reuters

## Chinese astronauts set up new lab on space station

**BEIJING:** Astronauts entered the new lab module of China’s space station for the first time on Monday, in a major step towards completing the orbital outpost by the end of the year.

The station is one of the crown jewels of Beijing’s ambitious space programme, which has landed robotic rovers on Mars and the Moon, and made China only the third nation to put humans in orbit. Once completed, Tiangong will be constantly crewed by rotating teams of three astronauts, who will conduct scientific

experiments and help test new technologies.

Wentian, the second of Tiangong’s three main sections, docked with the station’s core module Tianhe on Monday after successfully launching from southern China a day earlier, state media reported.

A few hours after docking, the three astronauts — who have been living in the core module since June — opened the hatch and entered Wentian, footage from state broadcaster CCTV showed. —AFP



China has successfully launched the second module of its space station, which is expected to be completed this year. – AFP

### SANAA

#### Flash floods kill at least eight

At least eight people were killed due to flash floods in war-devastated Yemen, local officials said on Sunday.

Flooding, caused by heavy rains, had swept away a car in the south-western province of Dhamar, killing six people who were inside it, Yemen’s rebel-controlled Saba news agency reported, quoting chief of the emergency services in the province, Nashwan al Samawi.

In Sanaa, two children were killed in a partial collapse of their



house resulting from torrential rains, a local official said, according to Saba. Heavy rains and flooding, which have lashed Sanaa and areas in the vicinity since Saturday evening,

### CALIFORNIA

#### Thousands evacuated as wildfire grows

A fierce California wildfire expanded yesterday, burning several thousand acres and forcing evacuations as tens of millions of Americans sweltered through scorching heat.

More than 2,000 firefighters backed by 17 helicopters have been deployed against the Oak Fire, which broke out on Friday near Yosemite National Park, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) said in a report.

But days after it began, the



blaze has already consumed more than 14,200 acres and remains zero per cent contained, the report said, adding that heat combined with low humidity would “hamper” efforts.

### TOKYO

#### Marauding monkeys injure 42

Local authorities in Japan’s Yamaguchi city said on Monday they are turning to tranquilliser guns to confront marauding monkeys that have injured 42 people in recent weeks.

Japanese macaques are seen commonly across large parts of the country, and are a pest in some areas, eating crops and even entering homes.

But a spate of monkey attacks in the city in western Japan has been unusual, with adults and children suffering wounds



including scratches and bites. “All of Yamaguchi city is surrounded by mountains and it’s not rare to see monkeys,” a city official from the agricultural department said, declining to give her name.



## In brief

■ WELLINGTON



### PRECAUTIONS URGED TO PREVENT FOOT AND MOUTH OUTBREAK

New Zealand on Monday urged travellers returning from Indonesia to take extra precautions and in some cases to stay away from farms for at least a week to prevent a local foot and mouth outbreak that could devastate the crucial livestock industry.

“New Zealand has never had an outbreak, and we want to do all we can to keep it that way,” Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said at her weekly news conference.

Indonesia, including popular tourist destination Bali, have recently had an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, raising the risk that the virus could reach New Zealand.

■ SINGAPORE



### CALL TO INDICT LANKA'S EXILED LEADER

An international human rights group has formally asked Singapore to indict Sri Lanka's deposed president Gotabaya Rajapaksa for crimes against humanity during his country's decades-long civil war, officials said on Monday.

Rajapaksa fled his country earlier this month after his official residence was stormed by tens of thousands of protesters infuriated by the island nation's painful economic crisis.

He later escaped to the Maldives in a military plane and travelled on to Singapore, from where he tendered his resignation.

■ BEIJING



### CITIES SWELTER UNDER RECORD HEAT

Cities across China were on red alert for heatwaves on Monday, as tens of millions of people were warned to stay indoors and record temperatures strained energy supply.

Swathes of the planet have been hit by extreme and deadly heatwaves in recent months, from Western Europe in July to India in March to April.

Scientists say the extreme weather has become more frequent due to climate change, and will likely grow more intense as global temperatures continue to rise.

China is no exception and is sweating through one of its hottest summers on record.

# Marcos Jr vows to slash poverty, rein in soaring food prices

MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr vowed on Monday to slash poverty, rein in soaring food prices and boost renewable energy, as he unveiled an ambitious blueprint for his six-year term.

In his first State of the Nation address, Marcos Jr offered a laundry list of targets, ranging from getting children back into classrooms, easing the debt burden of farmers, and expanding Internet access.

Unlike his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte, who used to frequently go off script in a stream of consciousness and threaten to kill people, Marcos Jr stuck to a prepared speech that was methodical and heavy on numbers.

After inheriting an economy ravaged by Covid-19 lockdowns and inflation, the new president expressed cautious optimism for the future -- even as the war in Ukraine and supply chain disruptions drive up food and fuel prices.

“I do not intend to diminish the risks and challenges that we face in this turbulent time in global history,” he told the audience of lawmakers, diplomats and judges.

“And yet I see sunlight filtering through these dark clouds. We have assembled the best Filipino minds to help navigate us through this time of global crisis.”

Marcos Jr spoke for 74 minutes without mentioning human



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr greets the audience during his first State of the Nation Address on Monday. – Reuters

- ◆ Philippine president eyes new jobs in tourism, modern farming
- ◆ Plans tax overhaul, better infrastructure, healthcare
- ◆ Focuses on renewable energy, to assess nuclear power

rights, corruption or peace talks with militant groups.

Instead, the 64-year-old scion focused on the economy, clean energy, agriculture, and helping poor Filipinos.

Marcos Jr vowed to more than halve the poverty rate to single digits by the end of his term and offer financial relief to many

farmers, including forgiving debts.

Renewable energy was “at the top of our climate agenda,” he said, insisting it was time to reconsider building nuclear power plants in the disaster-prone country.

He also pledged to boost agricultural productivity and bring down food prices.

“These will not be done in one day, one month or one year. But we need to start now,” he said.

### PEACEFUL PROTESTS

Marcos Jr was swept to power by a landslide in the May 9 elections, completing his family's remarkable comeback from pariahs in exile to the peak of political power. Hours before his speech, several thousand protesters marched peacefully along a major avenue to oppose his victory and criticise his first weeks in office. — AFP

## US helicopters hold live-fire drills in S Korea

SEOUL: US Army Apache attack helicopters stationed in South Korea are holding live-fire drills with guns and rockets, the US military said on Monday, as Seoul looks to boost deterrence against the nuclear-armed North.

The drills — the first such exercises since 2019 — come after a record-breaking blitz of weapons tests by Pyongyang this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

The training, which runs to July 29, is being carried out at the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex, close to the heavily-fortified Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea, the US 2nd Infantry Division said.

The drills ensure US air crews “are qualified on their Apaches, maintain their proficiency on their helicopters, and are capable of executing their mission if called upon,” a spokesperson said.

According to local reports, the US military stopped using the Rodriguez Live Fire Complex in Pocheon in 2018 due to complaints from local residents about noise and safety.

— AFP

# Droupadi Murmu sworn in as India's first tribal president

NEW DELHI: Droupadi Murmu was sworn in as India's president on Monday, making her the first person from one of the country's marginalised tribal communities to serve as head of state.

The former schoolteacher and state governor was elected to the largely ceremonial position last week with 64 per cent of the vote by members of India's parliament and state assemblies.

Murmu, who is from the Santhal tribe and was born in eastern Odisha state, paid her respects before her inauguration at a memorial dedicated to India's independence hero Mahatma Gandhi in New Delhi.

“I started my life journey from a small tribal village,” Murmu, 64, said after taking the oath of office in parliament.

“From the background I come from, it was like a dream for me to even get elementary education,” she added.

“But despite many obstacles, my resolve remained strong and I became the first daughter from my village to go to college.”

Murmu's win was considered a certainty because of the strength of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies in the parliament and state assemblies.

Analysts said the move would probably help Prime Minister Narendra Modi extend his base among the poor tribal communities ahead of his re-election bid in 2024.

“Her assuming the Presidency is a watershed moment for



India's new President Droupadi Murmu inspects an honour guard after her swearing-in ceremony, at India's presidential palace Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. – Reuters

India especially for the poor, marginalised and downtrodden,” Modi said on Twitter after Murmu's address.

### GREAT SATISFACTION

Murmu said her election would give hope to those left behind by India's recent economic growth.

“It is a matter of great satisfaction to me that those who have been deprived for centuries, who have been away from the benefits of development... are seeing their reflection in me,” she said.

India's prime minister wields executive power, but the president can send back some parliamentary bills for reconsideration and also plays a guiding role in the process of forming governments.

Murmu is the country's second woman president, after Pratibha Patil, who held the position for

five years from 2007.

She succeeds Ram Nath Kovind, the second president from the Dalit community, the bottom of the Hindu caste system.

Chinese President Xi Jinping was among the world leaders to congratulate Murmu and said he was “ready to work” with his new Indian counterpart to strengthen relations, according to Chinese state media.

Relations between the world's two most populous nations have been frosty since a deadly Himalayan military stand-off between the countries in 2020.

Both sides have since reinforced their disputed border with extra soldiers, military hardware and new infrastructure, and multiple rounds of military and diplomatic talks have failed to de-escalate tensions.

— AFP



People wade across a flooded street after heavy monsoon rainfall in Karachi. — AFP

## Pakistan's biggest city paralysed by rain

KARACHI: A weather emergency was declared in Karachi on Monday as heavier-than-usual monsoon rains continue to lash Pakistan's biggest city, flooding homes and making streets impassable.

The monsoon, which usually lasts from June to September, is essential for irrigating crops and replenishing lakes and dams across the Indian subcontinent, but also brings a wave of destruction each year.

Pakistan ranks eighth on a list of countries most vulnerable to extreme weather caused by climate change, according to the environment NGO Germwatch.

The provincial Sindh government announced a public holiday on Monday in Karachi and Hyderabad in a bid to avert flood chaos, but low-lying areas — already drenched by weeks

of heavy rain — were soon the scenes of devastation. “More rains are forecast in Karachi until tomorrow,” warned Sardar Sarfraz, director of the Met office.

The National Disaster Management Authority said at least 312 people had died since June as a result of the monsoon rains.

In Karachi, at least two people were electrocuted on Monday by power lines that fell into flooded streets — a regular cause of death in the city during the monsoon.

The heavy downpour also disrupted flights and train operations in the megacity of 15 million.

The worst floods of recent times were in 2010 — covering almost a fifth of the country's landmass — killing nearly 2,000 people and displacing 20 million.

— AFP

# The basic science of touch



Dr Nisma Haris

The writer is a content creator and wellness adviser

This has happened to all of us. There are times when all we need is a tight hug from a loved one and everything simply falls in place. Such is the power of the human touch. Beyond this euphoric feeling while shaking hands or hugging your dear ones is the deep connection that you feel while communicating with them. We are not speaking of romantic touch but day-to-day human touch that is an essence of social communication invoking vibrance and spark in any conversation. A mother snuggling her little child, a sibling’s hug, or a boss’s patting your back at work are powerful tactile tools that express the underlying emotions candidly without the need for any words.

Touching was dismantled badly in the pandemic era and still, the fear persists somewhere in between. As a consequence of pandemic protocols, all of us were deprived of this significant aspect of the human hook leaving a communication void. Shaking hands or hugging at the onset or closing of any rendezvous intensifies the purpose and goal of that meet-up. Why do you need to be touched? Since time immemorial humans have learned whenever they go through the harshest moments of their life, all they crave is touch; a hug, or someone holding them through that process. Hugging or simply holding

HUGGING OR SIMPLY HOLDING HANDS HAS A HUGE HEALING POWER BEYOND WORDS WHICH PROVIDES THAT SECURE SPACE THAT ONE NEEDS TO VENT OUT THEIR EMOTIONS

hands has a huge healing power beyond words which provides that secure space that one needs to vent out their emotions to bin off their grief. New York-based psychologist, Guy Winch Says; “For people who

have now been living without that connection for a long time, it can be incredibly difficult. I have friends and patients that I work with who have not been touched in a year. At all. Not a handshake. And they are really suffering for it. There’s something that feels very distancing and cold about not having any kind of option for an embrace, and that can leave long-lasting scars.” The basic science of touch The simplest example can be put forth is of a newborn; who when touched by his mother is embodied in an immense powerful bond between the two. Despite arriving in a world obscure to him, just being held and

cuddled signals his little brain to calm that he is in secure hands. All that little one comprehends is the language of touch. What to be heedful of before you touch Consent is the moral law that one should be practicing before touching anyone. What is the equation that you share with the other person? What is the level of comfort zone between you two? When and where to draw the line at both the giving and receiving ends? These questions should have explicit answers before making any sort of tactile connection. As, the purpose is only to provide the emotional nourishment that one needs in a dignified way.

## Why shark encounters are increasing along the US East Coast

LUCIE AUBOURG AND ISSAM AHMED

Sun lotion, insect repellant, and the Sharktivity app are this summer’s must-have beach accessories along the US East Coast as human-shark encounters increase. Ironically, conservation wins for vulnerable species might be behind the unfortunate uptick, say experts, while there might also be a link to climate as the apex predators’ prey move to new waters. Every summer, great whites move up the Atlantic coast of the United States, toward New England, their number peaking between August and October. “There’s a general increase in the population that we think is the population rebounding after being protected,” Gregory Skomal, a senior fisheries scientist for the state of Massachusetts, said. Around 300 of the animals, the world’s largest known fish, have been tagged over the years, with roughly a hundred or so passing through the waters around Cape Cod every year. The iconic movie “Jaws” was shot in this region, and the creatures are a major tourism draw, adorning baseball caps and t-shirts. On the flipside, however, there have already been temporary beach closures this year after confirmed sightings close to shore. A major part of the reason is their main prey, seals, are also rebounding thanks to increased protections. “If you have more sharks feeding close to land and you have more people swimming, the chances for those kinds of negative interactions increases,” said Skomal. Enter the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy Sharktivity app, which was developed with input from Massachusetts wildlife officials to provide information on shark sightings from researchers, safety officials, and user reports. In New York state, the governor has just announced additional surveillance patrols, including via drones and helicopters. On the tourist beaches of Long Island, half a dozen shark bites have already come to light, after three years of none at all. Here, great whites are less likely to be the culprits than other species of shark that operate in the region, in particular tiger sharks, sand tiger sharks and bull sharks. Nick Whitney, a senior scientist at the New England Aquarium, believes the increasing encounters here might be linked to the sharks’ bait fish — menhaden, also known as porgies or bunkers, recovering. — AFP

CITY DWELLERS APPROACHED THE CHALLENGE WITH A MIX OF READY-FOR-ANYTHING WHIMSY AND DEADLY SERIOUS AWARENESS THAT HEAT CAN KILL

## One day in the heat: What cooling off looks and feels like in New York

ANNE BARNARD, NATE SCHWEBER AND TÉA KVETENADZE

Parasols, paper fans, flowing dresses, floppy hats, portable neck fans. Everywhere, water: Bottles sweating beads of condensation, water guns spraying in parks and inside apartments, and fire hydrants transforming into sprinklers. These are some of the tools New Yorkers are using to work and play during the summer’s first heat wave as daily temperatures near 100 degrees. As the planet continues warming, it will only get worse in summers to come. On one long, sweltering day this past week, city dwellers approached the challenge with a mix of ready-for-anything whimsy and deadly serious awareness that heat can kill. It was a day so hot that one subway worker emerged blinking into the sun and cursed at it. So hot that swollen pavement stopped river bridges from opening for passing boats. Yet in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn, Noel Willis, a flagman at a road repair site, danced and sang as he twirled his Stop/Slow sign. “Singing keeps me cool,” said Willis, 60, stepping and swaying as the sun climbed through the late morning.

“I’m singing, I’m working, I’m happy. I like to sing to entertain the people, dance to keep the job going.” Compared to cutting sugar cane in Jamaica, where he grew up before moving to Queens, standing on blacktop in a hard hat and protective gear is not that hot, he said, singing a reggae song he had recorded under the name Noel Melody: And the girls are getting hot. Watch all the girls walk around in this and that. Around the same time in Washington Heights, two workers digging trenches for Con Edison struggled in heavy, fire-resistant gear. Work partners for seven years, they said they had noticed summers getting hotter and reminded each other to take extra breaks. But anti-idling laws rule out cranking up their truck’s air conditioner. “The past few years, it feels like it’s 90 degrees every day,” said one of the workers, Danny Monahan, 42, who was wielding a shovel. “It’s got to get done if it’s 10 degrees or 90 degrees. It’s not my favourite thing to do in the heat, but it is what is.” As fossil fuel emissions heat the planet — last summer was the hottest on record — extreme heat is a growing danger for cities. This week, parts of Europe are hitting temperatures

once expected only in deserts and the tropics, and some of those areas in turn could be uninhabitable in the coming decades. Heat is more extreme in poorer areas and deadlier for vulnerable populations, and labour advocates are calling for stronger rules to protect workers. New Yorkers with outdoor jobs or without effective cooling at home showed off their ingenuity across the five boroughs on Wednesday. For Jerome Sanford, 36, the heat layered atop another crisis: the pandemic, which he fights as a mobile Covid-19 tester. On a scorching street near Prospect Park, he yearned for a mist-spraying fan. Instead, he ducked into the cool library for breaks. Rosalyn Campbell, 63, a nanny sheltering in the library’s shadow, said she studies the movement of light as if reading a sundial, threading paths shaded by buildings to cool spots under trees and playgrounds with sprinklers. One of her charges, Siya, 9, shouted out her own solution: “Water guns and water balloons!” Ehab Salem, 46, an Egyptian immigrant, had fewer options. To capture foot traffic at the Brooklyn Museum, his halal food cart stood in direct sunlight. — *The New York Times*



Children cool off with a makeshift device on a fire hydrant in the Bronx neighbourhood of New York.

# When rains become a regular visitor



Lakshmi Kothaneth  
@lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

It is summer and everyone wants to travel. Some are already enjoying the break at various tourist destinations around the world. Then there are some of us who have thought of holding onto holiday plans and are greatly surprised with the summer weather of 2022 in the Sultanate of Oman.

The summer rains are a regular feature in the interiors of Oman due to the Al Hajr Mountains’ involvement in churning out local clouds.

To stand and watch the arrival of the clouds in Wakan village is a treat on its own. So is Al Hamra. However the rain we experience in Salalah is of course the monsoon and it has always brought in nostalgic memories of overcast skies and the drizzle.

Interestingly enough this year the monsoon from India is sending clouds to northern parts of the Sultanate of Oman.

Now people are debating that this is part of climate change.

Whatever could be the reasons for the clouds to reach here, the anticipation of rains is much high and delightful.

There is something about rains — it washes away everything and the freshness is in the air.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH THIS YEAR THE MONSOON FROM INDIA IS SENDING CLOUDS TO NORTHERN PARTS OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN. NOW PEOPLE ARE DEBATING THAT THIS IS PART OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Mountains wear a different colour and trees are brighter. Plants want to flower and wadis rage but later they hold onto water to the joy of young and old.

Everything feels like new after each rain.

When we are boggled up with the changes and surprises that are thrown at us in our lives the earth also goes through many changes and

some of it could be caused by us and some just its cycle. Our knowledge might still be limited.

But what we can do is follow safety rules and be cautious with flash floods.

Rains have always been there but why do we have to challenge a flowing water. Instead why not enjoy its beauty.

Poets want to write and drift in thoughts during rains but there are some who are put off with rains not just because they cannot move about but because it stirs up emotions within them especially sadness.

It is definitely interesting how nature has influence on us.

The changes in nature, however does have an impact generally and at times it can be a challenge. For instance, the summer is also when (palm tree) dates are going through crucial stages. Traditionally it is the glaring sun and heat that prepares the dates to be harvested.

And the next stage is where they are spread out on the ground to be dried.

The farmers probably are not looking forward to the rains and could be thinking about how to go about it.

Some find the clouds gloomy, but imagine how far they have travelled, intensified to drizzle or pour.

They are holding precious gift — water.

So let us think about harvesting rainwater and keep it to use it instead of letting it rush to sea or letting it to evaporate.

The beauty of water is that nature never wastes it. From ocean it will go up only to go through condensation process to come back to earth.

But where it will fall? There is no guarantee to that as there are wind directions to guide.

So when we get it let us keep it.

As the rain nears the birds stay silent after the initial chattering and animals become alert so let us not go helter-skelter.

Instead, let us stay calm and let the rain do their part — shower us with goodness.

Stay safe.



A DAY FOR BODY PAINTING

People participate in the the 9th annual NYC Bodypainting Day at Union Square in New York on Monday. The event is organised by Ne York-based artist Andy Golub.

– AFP

# Environmental tariffs could be a game changer



Daron Acemoglu

The writer is Professor of Economics at MIT, is co-author (with James A Robinson) of Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty and The Narrow Corridor: States, Societies, and the Fate of Liberty

Environmental tariffs may be humanity’s last hope for mitigating climate change, which is on course to become increasingly devastating if we do not curb our greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions.

The most straightforward way to confront this unprecedented global threat is through a multilateral agreement that locks in a “green transition” in all (or most) countries.

The key is to boost renewable-energy production while significantly reducing fossil-fuel consumption, a process that calls for coordinated policies on three fronts: regulation, subsidies for cleaner technologies (including renewables), and carbon taxes.

Unfortunately, this type of global agreement seems out of reach, both because the fossil-fuel industry remains politically powerful, and because some of the world’s biggest emitters – including the United States, China, and India – are not adopting the necessary policies.

Although regulation and subsidies are essential to achieve an effective energy transition, the carbon tax is the bedrock, because that is what will increase the costs of emitting carbon dioxide, methane, and other GHGs.

Several countries have already adopted such taxes, including Sweden, which has the world’s highest carbon tax (approximately \$117 per ton). But many others, including the US and China, have not followed suit.

This lack of consistency gives rise to “carbon leakage.” High-emissions activities tend to move away from countries with carbon taxes to those without.

While a country that unilaterally adopts a higher carbon tax benefits everyone (by reducing its own GHG emissions), it also unwittingly encourages others to do less. Or, as an economist would put it, one should expect that unilateral climate-mitigation policies function as “strategic substitutes” across countries:

The higher one country’s carbon tax, the less other countries will do for mitigation.

A high carbon tax creates an opportunity for “carbon arbitrage.” Since the steel industry emits 1.85 tons of carbon for every ton of steel produced, Sweden’s carbon tax increases the cost of its steel production by about \$210 per ton, which in turn makes Chinese steel imports much more attractive for steel-users and their customers.

Worse, Chinese authorities have an incentive to maintain this arrangement. Without a Chinese carbon tax, Chinese steel exports will thrive, and that will help Chinese industry, workers, and

politicians (who can claim credit for generating an economic boom).

Even if they recognise the need to combat climate change, Chinese authorities may end up doing less than they might have done without Sweden’s carbon tax.

Hence the need for environmental tariffs, which would reverse this logic by imposing a carbon tax on imports. Sweden would apply a border tax

WITHOUT RAPID REDUCTIONS IN GLOBAL GREENHOUSE-GAS EMISSIONS, THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE WILL CONTINUE TO WORSEN, POSING AN ACUTE RISK TO HUMAN CIVILISATION. IN THE ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE MULTILATERAL FRAMEWORKS, IT IS NECESSARY TO INCREASE THE COSTS OF EMISSIONS UNILATERALLY THROUGH OTHER MEANS

adjustment equivalent to the difference between its carbon tax and the carbon tax of the exporting country, multiplied by the tonnage of the CO2 emissions generated in the production of the imported products.

An environmental tariff’s most obvious benefit is that it reduces carbon leakage. By nullifying the artificial cost advantage of imports from low-carbon-tax countries, it encourages steel consumption to shift towards cleaner domestic sources or less-polluting exporters.

But an environmental tariff’s indirect effects may be even more important. Most importantly, a tariff makes climate-change mitigation policies “strategic

complements” rather than strategic substitutes; this means that Swedish carbon taxes will encourage, rather than discourage, other countries to adopt similar policies of their own.

The logic is simple. Without environmental tariffs, Sweden’s carbon tax gives Chinese steel producers an arbitrage opportunity.

But once more countries have begun to apply border adjustments on imports, the Chinese authorities will want to help China’s steel exporters clean up their operations.

Regardless of whether they do this through carbon taxes, regulations, or subsidies for clean energy, Chinese CO2 emissions will decline.

And once Chinese producers start meaningfully reducing their emissions, China’s authorities will have an incentive to introduce environmental tariffs of their own.

For the most part, what’s standing in the way of aggressive environmental tariffs are excuses and misleading arguments.

The fossil-fuel industry and major polluters, including China, are dead set against environmental tariffs and have been campaigning aggressively to block them. But this position is wholly selfish and thus should be disregarded.

A second argument is that environmental tariffs are protectionist measures, and that we should not “risk giving protectionists another opening,” as The Economist puts it.

This claim does not hold water. Because carbon tariffs level the playing field, they do not function like traditional protectionist measures. Moreover, the classic theory of trade does not imply that arbitraging domestic policies produces welfare gains – especially considering that such policies are essential for combating climate change.

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An environmental tariff’s most obvious benefit is that it reduces carbon leakage.

# sport

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## Tuchel questions Chelsea’s commitment



**FLORIDA:** Chelsea manager Thomas Tuchel said he was worried about his team’s progress and concerned by his players’ lack of commitment during their pre-season tour of the United States after they slipped to a 4-0 defeat to Arsenal in Florida on Saturday.

Gabriel Jesus, Martin Odegaard, Bukayo Saka and Albert Sambi Lokonga scored in a comfortable win at Orlando’s Camping World Stadium as Arsenal rounded off their US tour by winning all three of their matches.

“We were simply not competitive,” Tuchel told reporters. “The worrying part is that the level of commitment physically and mentally for this match was far higher for Arsenal than for us.

“It was surely not our strongest line-up. This is a part of an explanation but only a little part... I cannot guarantee we will be ready in two weeks,” he added, referring to Chelsea’s Premier League opener at Everton on August 6.

Chelsea beat Mexican side Club America and lost to Major League Soccer team Charlotte FC on penalties in their previous pre-season friendlies in the States.

“I don’t know if I ever lost a match in pre-season 4-0. I can’t remember not winning two matches in a row in pre-season,” Tuchel said. “I am superstitious but not in a way that I say bad pre-season has to mean a bad season.” Following a takeover led by Todd Boehly, Chelsea have brought in Raheem Sterling and Kalidou Koulibaly but Tuchel added the team’s pre-season results had proven him right about the need for more additions to the squad.

“Unfortunately, it proved my point and the last week proves my point,” Tuchel said. “I feel I was right when I look at the last season and at the parts of the game where we struggled and how we struggled.

“We got sanctioned and players left us, we know that some players are trying to leave us, and this is where it is. We had an urgent appeal for quality players and a huge amount of quality players.

“We’ve got two quality players - that is no doubt - but we are not competitive like this and unfortunately, we could see it today.”

Arsenal’s new Brazilian striker Jesus scored his fourth pre-season goal but was withdrawn from the match after picking up an injury. — **Reuters**

## Oman revive Arab cup quarterfinals hopes

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

Oman defeated Somalia 2-0 in the second match of the 2022 Arab Cup U-20 Championship in Abha city, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday to revive their quarter finals hopes. With this win, Oman’s junior stars netted the first three winning points in the group.

Sultan al Marzooqi gave the Sultanate of Oman a lead in the 22nd minute while Ali al Balushi struck the second goal to make it 2-0 ahead of the whistle ending for the first half. Oman’s Abdulmajeed al Balushi named as man of the match due to his top performance during the fixture. After the match, Al Balushi said the team showed top game after the defeat in the opening match. “Thanks to all my teammates for



their top game. We have prepared perfectly for this tournament and we hope to continue ahead in the championship,” he added Abdulmajeed thanked the organiser Saudi Arabian Football Federation and Union of Arab Football Associations for all the

facilities for the participating teams.

The national team, coached by Spanish David Gordo, struggled in the opener as they suffered a 1-0 defeat from African heavyweights Egypt in a tough clash on Thursday. However,

three points from the Somalia victory made Oman’s chances brighter ahead of third round matches for the group stage.

Egypt will meet Somalia on Wednesday to decide the topper. A win or draw for the Egypt team means topping the African nation for the group. The topper from each group will advance to the quarterfinal along with the next two top teams.

The national team head coach, David Grodo, began the second match against Somalia with a starting line up featuring from Mazin Saleh (goalkeeper), Said Ghaseb, Ayman al Nabhani, Salim al Abdali, Muntasir al Maawali (defenders), Ahed al Mashaiki, Nasser al Saqri, Sultan al Marzooqi, Abdulmajeed al Balushi, Khalid al Sulaimi (middle line) and Mulhim al Hadhrami (striker).

## National swimming team claims bronze medal



The national swimming team comprising of swimmers Ayman al Qasimi and Nasser al Kindi claimed the third place and bronze medal in the 5th Arab Championship for long distance swimming 5 km which is underway in Algeria with participation of 220 swimmers representing twelve countries.

## Madhursinh Jesrani gets ICC award for outstanding service

**MUSCAT:** Madhursinh Jesrani, Oman Cricket Secretary has been awarded Outstanding Service towards Growth of Cricket by the ICC.

The apex body of Cricket – announced the award for individuals who have contributed voluntarily in development of cricket in their country for more than 20 years.

Madhu Jesrani said: “I am



recognising my hard work to develop Cricket in Oman over the years. I would like to thank

thankful  
to ICC for

the all the Board of Directors , office bearers and everyone I have worked with , with a vision to take Cricket in Oman to the global standards. I look forward to contribute to the best of my capacity to develop cricket in Oman from grassroots and Oman to be one of the top cricketing nations across the globe.”

Jesrani has been one of the key persons who worked for

the development of cricket infrastructure and helped to groom national cricket

Oman Cricket’s Chairman Pankaj Khimji said, “I am delighted to hear the award for outstanding contribution to the growth of cricket in Oman awarded to Madhubhai by the ICC. He has put tireless efforts over the last 3 decades to take Oman Cricket to the global

level today. His contribution as a working member as well as a member of the Board of Directors over the years is unparalleled. I thank Madhubhai for his selfless service to Oman Cricket on behalf of the Board of Directors, office bearers and the entire cricketing fraternity in Oman.”

Jesrani has been serving Oman Cricket for the past three decades with utmost selflessness

contributing at every capacity being a member of the working committee, Board of Directors as well as the Manager for the Men’s National team.

# SAYYID LOUAY QUALIFIED FOR WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

WALEED AL JAHWARI  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

International jockey HH Sayyid Louay bin Ghalib al Said qualified for the World Endurance Championship after he came second in the German Strohn Race.

Sayyid Louay qualified for various distances to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the World Championship in coordination and cooperation with the Oman Equestrian Federation

The jockey was able to finish all four stages of the race on horse

“Elsa” in his second participation in the European Championships. He was unsuccessful in his first participation in the first race in France after his horse was injured forcing him out of that race.

The Strohn race witnessed the participation of a group of jockeys in various races in two days, during which Sayyid Louay chose to participate in the 108 km one star race in order to qualify for the competition. The race stages were for a distance of 33 km in the first stage, 33 in the second stage, 21 km in the third stage and 21 in the fourth and final stage.



## 18 teams to take part in futsal tournament



The draw for the 18th indoor football competition for the year of 2022, took place on Monday. The event is under organisation of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth. The tournament will feature participation of 18 teams representing government and private institutions. The event will start in August.



## Germany lacked top medal hopes at world athletics championship

**BERLIN:** Germany’s worst ever performance at a world athletics championship ended on the last day of competitions in Eugene, Oregon, with a gold medal that did little to improve spirits in the team.

Olympic champion Malaika Mihambo continued her dominance in the women’s long jump by soaring to a second successive World Championship gold with a final leap of 7.12 metres on Sunday.

For German athletics federation chief Juergen Kessing, however, the final overall haul of just two medals — a gold and a bronze — was just too little.

“We unfortunately did not live up to our demands,” Kessing, speaking from Eugene, told Germany’s ZDF television on Monday.

“The world title (by Mihambo) was good but it overshadows the fact that we did not have the successes we wanted and hoped for.”

Germany, who host next month’s European championships, won nine medals on home turf at the 2009 world championships in Berlin for a fourth place in the medals table. This time their two medals were only enough for 19th



Gold medalist Germany’s Malaika Mihambo poses with her national flag after the women’s long jump final during the World Athletics Championships at Hayward Field in Eugene, Oregon yesterday. — AFP

place.

Kessing said the team had not had enough world title contenders in Eugene, but there was enough talent in the youth squads for the future.

“We have to be honest,” he said. “We did not have the amount of medal contenders we had in previous years and decades. We

also had four who had to be ruled out ahead of the competition (through injury or illness). For the rest of the team the pressure was very big of course.”

“We have the framework for talent development that runs to 2028. We will try to get those built up over 2024 and until 2028 and hopefully it will be better than

Tokyo last year and Eugene this year.”

Germany won 37 medals at the Tokyo Olympics last year, their worst showing in decades at the world’s biggest multi-sports event.

Paris will host the 2024 Olympics while Los Angeles will stage the 2028 event.

— Reuters

## Italian Musetti defies odds to lift maiden title in Hamburg



Italy’s Lorenzo Musetti poses with trophy after winning the men’s singles final against Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz Garfia. — Reuters

**HAMBURG:** The emotions of lifting his maiden Tour-level trophy will be hard to forget for 20-year-old Italian Lorenzo Musetti, who overcame disrupted preparations and survived a rollercoaster ride at the ATP 500 event in Hamburg.

Musetti had lost his last six matches on the tour before the Hamburg European Open and arrived at the German port city without his bag of rackets.

Although he managed to sort out his playing gear in time for the tournament, he then suffered a bout of food poisoning.

“I arrived here... with all the strikes, one of my luggage (bags) got lost. (It was) the one with the rackets, so I was a little bit worried about how I would play,” Musetti told the ATP Tour after his victory on Sunday.

“The night before the start of the matches, I threw up all night. I had food poisoning, so I felt a little bit sick. I didn’t expect to go as far as I went, so I’m happy that my luck turned around at this tournament.”

He was on the brink of his seventh straight loss in the opening round against Serbia’s



Spain’s Carlos Alcaraz Garfia reacts during the men’s singles final against Italy’s Lorenzo Musetti. — Reuters

Dusan Lajovic but showed great resilience to save two match points before registering his first Tour-level victory since May.

Musetti was playing his first championship final on Sunday while his opponent — Spain’s 19-year-old Carlos Alcaraz — came into the contest having won all five Tour-level finals he had reached.

The Italian wasted five championship points in the second set but found the mental strength to down Alcaraz, who on Monday

became the youngest player to break into the world’s top five since Rafa Nadal in 2005, 6-4 6-7(6) 6-4 in a thriller.

“For me it’s a dream. Obviously, I always dreamed about winning a title and I didn’t have any chances before,” said Musetti, who rose to a career-high ranking of 31. “It’s the first time, so I have no words to describe how it feels.

“The emotions I had today, I will keep it in my heart and my head for a long time.”

— Reuters

Heartiest

# Congratulations

and Warm Wishes To

**His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said**

Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth

On the occasion of his graduation from  
The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, United Kingdom.

May the Almighty Bless His Highness with  
More Success and Prosperity.



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Haitham Al Said**

Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth

On the occasion of his graduation from  
the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst  
in the United Kingdom



# business

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## 10 firms in race for Oman's first-ever PPP based schools project



BUSINESS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

The Ministry of Finance has qualified 10 local and international developers in the first stage of a competitive tender for the procurement of 42 schools via the Public Private Partnership (PPP) route.

Of a total of 170 firms that submitted expressions of interest

(FoIs) in response to the tender, 14 were prequalified of which the following ten will enter the next stage of competitive bidding: Aberdeen Standard Investcorp Infrastructure Partners, Tamasuk Holding; Al Madina Real Estate; Vision International Investment Company; Galfar Engineering & Contracting; Oman Investment Corporation; Lamar

Holding; Renaissance Services; Muscat National Development & Investment (ASAAS); and Alghanim International General Trading & Contracting.

The client is the Ministry of Education which, for the first time, has invited the private sector to undertake the design, finance, construction and maintenance of a package of 42 schools under the PPP model.

## Singaporean firm inks MoU to support aquaculture industry

QASIM AL MAASHANI  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

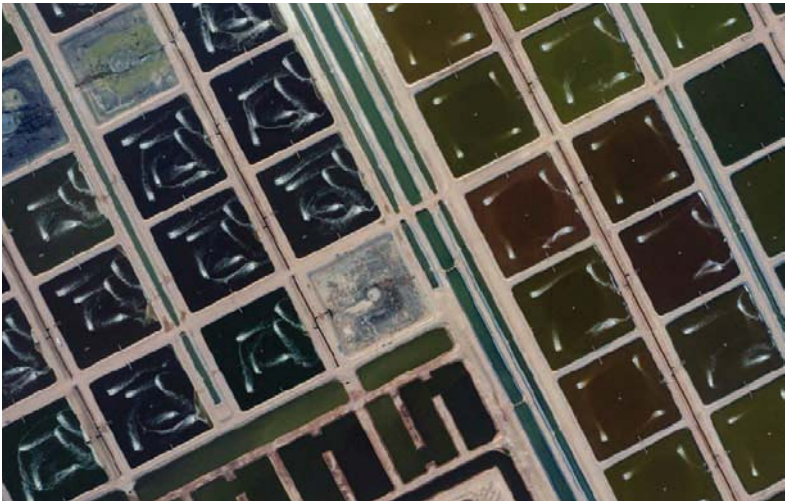
Singapore's Blue Aqua International, a global leader in shrimp farming and aquaculture technology, has announced that it has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Fisheries Development Oman (FDO) – wholly owned subsidiary of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) - to deploy Blue Aqua's shrimp farming tech across the Sultanate of Oman's aquaculture sites.

As part of the MoU, Blue Aqua will develop and expand the aquaculture sector in the Sultanate of Oman starting with a project in the city of Shinas.

The agreement formalises the mutual interaction and strengthens the existing relationship between Blue Aqua and FDO.

The collaboration will tap on Blue Aqua's expertise in shrimp farming technology for technical assistance on FDO's existing shrimp farming operations across Oman.

Fisheries Development of Oman (FDO) was established as a joint commitment between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Recourses, and Oman Investment Authority (OIA) to develop a sustainable commercial aquaculture and fishing sector in the Sultanate of Oman. As a



pioneer investor in aquaculture, FDO acts as a catalytic initiator to develop large scale projects in the sector, including the development of a commercial fishing fleet, and the operation of subsidiaries for marine fin-fish and shrimp farming.

"With a vision 'to be a world-class leader for growth and driving a sustainable fisheries future', we are pleased to collaborate with Blue Aqua International to transfer the best practices in aquaculture and its technology for enabling the growth of this business and attracting investment. This MoU with no doubt will open up a great opportunity to flourish the aquaculture in Oman," said Nabil Salim al Bimani, Group Chief Executive Officer of FDO.

FDO is also to review an investment offering into Blue

Aqua, aligning with its plans to invest in Oman's aquaculture and fisheries sector with FDO's support.

"We look forward to solidifying our efforts in sustainable aquaculture technology with the project in Oman. With FDO's support, I believe we will be able to build a successful and sustainable model for urban farming globally," said Dr Farshad Shishehchian, CEO and founder of Blue Aqua International.

Blue Aqua subsidiaries are in discussion with other prominent funds in Europe and Southeast Asia to join this round of funding. The group currently operates Singapore's largest land-based shrimp farm using its patented green technology for urban farming, contributing to Singapore's "30 by 30" food security goal.



الشركة الوطنية العمانية للهندسة والاستثمار (ش.م.ع.ع)  
Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. (S.A.O.G)

### Company Report

2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter of 2022 ended  
on 30/06/2022.

The company has posted consolidated Profit after Tax of RO 967K for the six months period ended 30 June 2022 versus RO 657 k for Q2 2021.

During the period the company was able to acquire significant projects expected to contribute to the growth of revenue and profit including the framework agreement with the Indian company ACME for the construction of the Green Hydrogen plant in Duqum, which considered to be one of its kind in Oman. The project is in two phases, phase one is 500 Megawatt and Phase two is 2500 Megawatt. As well, O&M department awarded various projects in line with the 2022 budget. E business segment also witnessed significant growth including printing of Mulkiya for ROP and other services expected to be added soon. Such expansions indicates that ONEIC is heading towards in steady steps to implement its diversification strategy. No doubt, there are various challenges impacted the results including the impact of Covid-19 impact on EPC that entailed increase of freight and materials of the ongoing projects that was awarded before the pandemic. As well, ONEIC faces difficulties in collection with specific clients, which added additional financial burdens represented in the increase of finance cost and higher interest rates. The company adopted necessary measures to mitigate such challenges and has successfully reduces its long-term loans by about 5millions and looking forward to achieving better results in the near future as planned.

The company is in process of diversifying, in line to this:

1. Implementation of E-Wallet system is progressing well;
2. Integrations with multiple major customers is progressing well, new added services are getting on boarded on ONEIC channels;
3. Strict cost cutting measures are getting implemented to improve the performance;
4. New recovery methodologies are being introduced in order to improve the collection;
5. EPC has now started focusing on green hydrogen and renewable energy which is expected to add good returns;
6. Company is successfully managing all its obligations;
7. The company has participated in multiple BOO & other new tenders and favorable results are expected in coming periods.

Your company is taking major steps in order to safe guard interest of all our shareholders and improve, to sustain positive growth, which shall play a remarkable role in companies future profits.

### Chairman

#### Note:

1. Details of Accounts are available with MSM
2. The complete Accounts will be sent by mail to any Shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request."

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### UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF INCOME FOR THE SIX MONTHS ENDED 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022

|                                      | Parent Company<br>Unaudited<br>30 <sup>th</sup> June<br>2022<br>R.O. | Audited<br>30 <sup>th</sup> June<br>2021<br>R.O. | Group<br>Unaudited<br>30 <sup>th</sup> June<br>2022<br>R.O. |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Revenue                              | 33,016,934                                                           | 29,972,733                                       | 33,016,934                                                  |
| Other Income                         | 701,264                                                              | 547,709                                          | 698,899                                                     |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                 | <b>33,718,198</b>                                                    | <b>30,520,442</b>                                | <b>33,715,833</b>                                           |
| Staff cost                           | (8,875,399)                                                          | (9,603,913)                                      | (8,953,401)                                                 |
| Operating cost                       | (21,181,861)                                                         | (17,330,230)                                     | (21,040,502)                                                |
| General and administrative expenses  | (411,502)                                                            | (397,083)                                        | (417,627)                                                   |
| Impairment loss on trade receivables | (233,791)                                                            | (175,218)                                        | (233,791)                                                   |
| Depreciation                         | (775,956)                                                            | (917,309)                                        | (776,231)                                                   |
| Finance Cost - Net                   | (1,155,809)                                                          | (1,419,008)                                      | (1,155,809)                                                 |
| <b>Profit before Tax</b>             | <b>1,083,880</b>                                                     | <b>677,681</b>                                   | <b>1,138,472</b>                                            |
| <b>Income tax expense</b>            | <b>(168,363)</b>                                                     | <b>(80,791)</b>                                  | <b>(171,718)</b>                                            |
| <b>Profit after tax</b>              | <b>915,517</b>                                                       | <b>596,890</b>                                   | <b>966,754</b>                                              |
| Basic and diluted earnings per share | 0.0065                                                               | 0.0043                                           | 0.0067                                                      |

### UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2022

|                                                                          | Parent Company<br>Unaudited<br>30 <sup>th</sup> June<br>2022<br>R.O. | Audited<br>31 <sup>st</sup> Dec<br>2021<br>R.O. | Group<br>Unaudited<br>30 <sup>th</sup> June<br>2022<br>R.O. | Audited<br>31 <sup>st</sup> Dec<br>2021<br>R.O. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                                                            |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| <b>Non-current assets:</b>                                               |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| Property, plant and equipment                                            | 17,176,546                                                           | 17,588,939                                      | 17,177,775                                                  | 17,590,443                                      |
| Investment properties                                                    | 6,968,086                                                            | 7,029,380                                       | 6,968,086                                                   | 7,029,380                                       |
| Investment in a subsidiary                                               | 300,000                                                              | 300,000                                         | -                                                           | -                                               |
| Goodwill                                                                 | -                                                                    | -                                               | 150,000                                                     | 150,000                                         |
| Contract assets                                                          | 16,823,325                                                           | 13,872,797                                      | 16,823,325                                                  | 13,872,797                                      |
| Financial asset carried at fair value through other comprehensive income | 1,133,618                                                            | 1,133,388                                       | 1,133,618                                                   | 1,133,388                                       |
| Deferred tax assets                                                      | 889,527                                                              | 882,970                                         | 889,527                                                     | 882,970                                         |
| <b>Total non-current assets</b>                                          | <b>43,291,102</b>                                                    | <b>40,807,474</b>                               | <b>43,142,331</b>                                           | <b>40,658,978</b>                               |
| <b>Current assets:</b>                                                   |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| Inventories                                                              | 404,743                                                              | 425,485                                         | 404,743                                                     | 425,485                                         |
| Debtors, prepayments and other receivables                               | 102,815,270                                                          | 99,753,675                                      | 102,804,342                                                 | 99,747,163                                      |
| Cash and bank balances                                                   | 2,209,717                                                            | 3,051,789                                       | 2,357,630                                                   | 3,145,221                                       |
| <b>Total current assets</b>                                              | <b>105,429,730</b>                                                   | <b>103,230,949</b>                              | <b>105,566,715</b>                                          | <b>103,317,869</b>                              |
| <b>Total assets</b>                                                      | <b>148,720,832</b>                                                   | <b>144,038,423</b>                              | <b>148,709,046</b>                                          | <b>143,976,847</b>                              |
| <b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>                                            |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| <b>Shareholders' equity:</b>                                             |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| Share capital                                                            | 14,000,000                                                           | 13,000,000                                      | 14,000,000                                                  | 13,000,000                                      |
| Share premium                                                            | 2,002,469                                                            | 2,002,469                                       | 2,002,469                                                   | 2,002,469                                       |
| Legal reserve                                                            | 3,197,051                                                            | 3,105,499                                       | 3,197,051                                                   | 3,105,499                                       |
| General reserve                                                          | 300,000                                                              | 300,000                                         | 300,000                                                     | 300,000                                         |
| Fair value reserve                                                       | 1,024,871                                                            | 1,024,641                                       | 1,024,871                                                   | 1,024,641                                       |
| Revaluation reserve                                                      | 3,758,512                                                            | 3,793,724                                       | 3,758,512                                                   | 3,793,724                                       |
| Retained earnings                                                        | 2,591,804                                                            | 3,376,413                                       | 2,601,496                                                   | 3,360,397                                       |
| <b>Equity attributable to owners of the Parent Company</b>               | <b>26,874,707</b>                                                    | <b>26,602,746</b>                               | <b>26,884,399</b>                                           | <b>26,586,730</b>                               |
| Non-controlling interest                                                 | -                                                                    | -                                               | 159,505                                                     | 133,976                                         |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>                                      | <b>26,874,707</b>                                                    | <b>26,602,746</b>                               | <b>27,043,904</b>                                           | <b>26,720,706</b>                               |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b>                                           |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| Deferred tax liability                                                   | 644,798                                                              | 651,011                                         | 644,798                                                     | 651,011                                         |
| Long term borrowings                                                     | 19,723,499                                                           | 15,997,267                                      | 19,723,499                                                  | 15,997,267                                      |
| End of service benefits                                                  | 1,754,707                                                            | 1,811,132                                       | 1,757,741                                                   | 1,816,575                                       |
| <b>Total non-current liabilities</b>                                     | <b>22,123,004</b>                                                    | <b>18,459,410</b>                               | <b>22,126,038</b>                                           | <b>18,464,853</b>                               |
| <b>Current liabilities:</b>                                              |                                                                      |                                                 |                                                             |                                                 |
| Current tax liability                                                    | 191,397                                                              | 355,050                                         | 194,752                                                     | 355,050                                         |
| Short term borrowings                                                    | 36,991,912                                                           | 37,479,285                                      | 36,991,912                                                  | 37,479,285                                      |
| Trade and other payables                                                 | 62,539,812                                                           | 61,141,932                                      | 62,352,440                                                  | 60,956,953                                      |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>                                         | <b>99,723,121</b>                                                    | <b>98,976,267</b>                               | <b>99,539,104</b>                                           | <b>98,791,288</b>                               |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                                                 | <b>121,846,125</b>                                                   | <b>117,435,677</b>                              | <b>121,665,142</b>                                          | <b>117,256,141</b>                              |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>                                      | <b>148,720,832</b>                                                   | <b>144,038,423</b>                              | <b>148,709,046</b>                                          | <b>143,976,847</b>                              |
| Net assets per share                                                     | 0.192                                                                | 0.205                                           | 0.192                                                       | 0.205                                           |

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## Alizz Islamic Bank wins ‘Fintech solution provider of the year’ award



MUSCAT: Under the auspices of HH Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Secretary-General of Oman’s General-Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers, Alizz Islamic Bank was granted the ‘FinTech Solution Provider Award of the Year for its IFIN Instant Goods and Auto Financing’ during the OER Live Digital Transformation Conference & Awards.

The celebration was held at the Sheraton Muscat Hotel.

The award was received by Khondkar Mohammad RakibulIslam, Executive Manager of Products Performance at Alizz Islamic Bank.

The IFIN instant finance solution has been made available for auto finance at Nissan, Toyota, Infiniti and Mazda showrooms as well as for goods such as furniture, accessories and electronics at branches of Danube Home, Enza Home, Mustafa Sultan Electronics, Sofa Land and Fahmy Furniture. Alizz Islamic Bank customers are able to avail instant finance at any of the aforementioned merchant

stores up to 120 months without the need to visit any bank branch.

The process of availing finance has been simplified into a simple 10-minute process at the store’s checkout counter, where the customer will go through an online verification process, receive an OTP on his/her mobile phone, and sign the finance contract followed by an immediate approval. The bank will purchase the goods desired by the customer from the authorised dealer and sells the same to the customer at an agreed price that is paid in instalments.

The advantage here is complete transparency because the customer knows the bank’s profit margin and instalment plan at the time of signing the contract. This arrangement allows for immediate ownership of the goods by the customer.

This instant finance service is part of the Bank’s plans to provide a wide range of customised banking solutions that meet the needs of all customers looking for fast banking solutions.

## Kenyan delegation visits Al Mazunah Free Zone

BUSINESS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

A delegation representing Kenya Ports Authority visited Al Mazunah Free Zone to explore the investment climate and get acquainted with the ongoing and future projects that are planned by the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates “Madayn” in the free zone.

The Kenyan delegation was briefed on the incentives that are offered to the investors in the free zone, which comprise customs’ exemptions, 100 per cent foreign ownership, no minimum capital requirements, and the Omanisation rate stands at 10 per cent.

Other incentives include easy access of individuals and investors to the free zone without entry visas being required for Yemenis,



facilitation of employing Yemeni workforce without work visa being required, among other advantages.

Strategically located on the border of the Sultanate and Yemen, Al Mazunah Free Zone represents the Gulf gateway for transit trade to Yemen and

Eastern Africa.

A number of projects are currently being implemented in Al Mazunah Free Zone including new road network, water tanks and network, fibre optic network, and electricity and drainage networks, in addition to the

facility building project.

The Kenyan delegation then toured Al Mazunah Free Zone and explored the customs area in the free zone including the handling operations that are managed by Al Madina Logistics Services Company.

## OAB launches Service Ambassadors Programme

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) recently introduced its Service Ambassadors Programme to enhance customers’ in-branch experience. The Service Ambassadors will be the first point of contact for customers visiting select OAB branches.

They will seek to understand customers’ banking requirements and deliver the highest quality of service to ensure customers are supported and assisted throughout their branch journey.

Highlighting the importance of the programme, Rashad al Shaikh, Head of the Retail Banking Division at OAB, said, “Fostering a customer-centric approach and a holistic experience falls under one of the



keypillars of our transformational strategy. By enhancing the quality of services extended to all of our customers, we strive to increase our opportunities for success and excellence.”

“With this in mind, we have made prudent efforts in choosing suitable talents from within the Bank to represent us as Service

Ambassadors across our branch network. They will be present within select branches as the first point of contact to support customers and are well-versed in answering any enquiries that customers may have, including those related to the Bank’s products and services, transactions and more. This step

will enrich the efficiency of the Bank’s operations and will also encourage familiarity as soon as customers enter the branch.”

The Service Ambassadors were given extensive training to help them prepare and develop their communication and customer service skills, as per global best practices.



## Oman Chamber delegation visits Duqm SEZ

BUSINESS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) hosted today a delegation of 13 members from Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, North Al Sharqiyah Branch. The visit, organised by the Chamber’s branch in Al Wusta Governorate, is aimed to familiarise the delegation with projects developed in SEZAD and meet officials form a number of companies operating in the Zone.

During the visit, the delegation was briefed on SEZAD as well as the incentives, advantages and facilities that are offered to

businesspersons and investors.

In addition, they were introduced to the different strategic projects that are already developed and others under construction. Likewise, the delegation was briefed on the package of services provided by the one-stop shop.

Ali bin Salim al Hajri, Deputy Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman of the Chamber’s branch in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, said, “Our visit to SEZAD aims to get acquainted closely with the projects and companies operating in the Zone and the developments witnessed in various fields. It is also

intended to explore the potential investments opportunities for the private sector in Al Sharqiyah Governorate and the different facilities and procedures provided in the Zone, as well as to form successful business partnerships”.

Upon the visit, the delegation commended the development march observed in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and the comprehensive package of facilities, incentives and benefits provided to investors.

It is worth mentioning that the visit included a tour to a number of projects, most notably Asyad Dry Dock Company, Port of Duqm and Karwa Motors.

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and at the heart of it all is Bronco’s exclusive Terrain Management System with GOAT Modes that is designed to help drivers better navigate any type of terrain. Up to seven driver-selectable modes are offered including Normal, Eco, Sport, Slippery and Sand, with Baja, Mud/Ruts and Rock Crawl for off-road driving.

Available segment-first Trail Toolbox gives Bronco owners a suite of exclusive technologies to elevate their off-road experience. This includes Trail Control – cruise control for low-speed trail

driving, while Trail Turn Assist tightens off-road turning radiuses through torque vectoring, and the innovative Trail One-Pedal Drive acceleration/braking control makes for more precise and confident slow-mode rock crawling. Segment-leading levels of off-road capability are possible thanks to Bronco’s available best-in-class 11.6-inch ground clearance, maximum 29-degree break over angle and 37.2-degree departure angle, plus best-in-class water fording capability of up to 33.5 inches.



# Campaign to boost domestic tourism in Sultanate of Oman

The 'In Oman' campaign includes four main packages namely 'Refresh', 'Enjoy', 'Relax' and 'Recreate'

HAMMAM AL BADI  
MUSCAT, JULY 25

Omran Group, the executive arm of the Sultanate of Oman for the development of the tourism sector, has launched the fourth edition of its tourism promotional campaign dubbed 'In Oman'.

The campaign aims to enhance domestic tourism during the summer season by encouraging citizens and residents to explore and enjoy some of Oman's best-known attractions.

The campaign features a set of packages and special offers for citizens and residents to explore the tourist destinations in the Sultanate of Oman, in addition to enjoying many experiences, recreational activities and adventures available in conjunction with stays at 21 hotels and resorts distributed in various governorates of the country.

The campaign includes four main packages: "Refresh", "Enjoy", "Relax" and "Recreate".

The offers include a "Refresh" package worth RO 30 for accommodation in the Crowne Plaza Hotel at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, City Hotel Duqm, Sohar Beach Hotel, Barceló Musannah Resort, Atana Stay Al Ashkhara,

Atana Khasab Hotel, Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve, Atana Stay Salalah Hospitality and Sifawy Boutique Hotel.

The "Enjoy" package, worth RO 45, includes accommodation at Atana Musandam Resort, Jabal Akhdar Hotel — duseitD2 Naseem Resort and Masirah Island Resort.

The "Relax" package worth RO 65 includes accommodation at the InterContinental Muscat, Crowne Plaza Duqm, Salalah Rotana Resort, Crowne Plaza Salalah, Alila Hinu Bay Hotel, and Fanar Hotel and Residences.

As for the "Recreate" package, which is valued at RO 75, includes accommodation at the W Muscat, Alila Jabal Akhdar, and Al Bustan Palace Hotel, the Ritz-Carlton.

Visitors can make hotel

reservations directly or through the campaign's website.

This year's campaign focuses on encouraging individuals, families and friends to have fun and explore unique and diverse experiences.

The four main packages have been designed that include distinct options for accommodation and hospitality services in hotel establishments and tourist resorts.

Visitors and tourists will be able to take advantage of the campaign offers that will continue until the end of September of this year.

The range of benefits and services offered in hotels and resorts contribute to creating an enjoyable tourism experience for individuals and families during the season.

## Oman seeks consultant for new wind farm projects

CONRAD PRABHU  
@conradprabhu

The Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP), the sole buyer of electricity and desalinated water capacity in the Sultanate of Oman, has floated a tender for the selection of an international adviser to provide Technical and Economic Consultancy Services linked to the planned development of wind-based Independent Power Projects (IPPs) in the country.

The selected consultant will advise OPWP — a member of Nama Group — initially on the feasibility of a number of wind farms planned for implementation in the eastern, central and southern parts of the Sultanate of Oman. In the second phase, the consultant will provide technical and economic advisory services linked to projects that are firmed up for procurement on a competitive basis.

Significantly, the tender signals the start of a new effort by OPWP to develop wind power capacity to complement the growing portfolio of solar PV-based schemes lined up for implementation in key parts of the country.

Commenting on the outlook for renewable energy development, the state-owned power procurer said: "Over the next seven years,

OPWP is committed to achieve ambitious goals to diversify the sources of electricity generation."

"New solar and wind projects are forecast to contribute almost 13 per cent of electricity production by 2025, and efficient utilisation of gas consumption will continue to improve over the planning horizon," it added in its Yearly Outlook Statement for the 2021 — 2027 timeframe.

Plans drawn up by OPWP envisage the development of an estimated 100 MW-capacity wind-based IPP at Jaalan Bani Bu Ali in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate. Two 100-metre-tall wind masts have already been installed at the proposed site for the collection of wind resource data.

In Dhofar Governorate, where Oman's first commercial scale wind farm — a 50 MW capacity system in operation at Harweel — OPWP is weighing plans for an additional Wind IPP with a capacity of around 100 MW. The new facility will be located adjacent to the existing project in Harweel.

In Duqm, on the Sultanate of Oman's southeast coast, OPWP has plans to develop a pair of wind IPPs of a combined capacity of around 360 MW. Interested bidders have until September 5, 2022 to submit their offers for the consultancy services tender.



# Food crisis — latest blow to an already-broken system



RUBY OSMAN

The writer is senior Geopolitical Researcher at the Tony Blair Institute



JACOB DELORME

The writer is a political researcher at the Tony Blair Institute

Coming on the heels of the worsening climate crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, and soaring energy prices, war in Europe was the last thing a fragile global food system needed. With up to 50 million people worldwide now on the brink of starvation, it is not just Ukrainians who are paying the price for Russian President Vladimir Putin's attack of their country.

Russia's Black Sea blockade has trapped roughly 20 million tonnes of grain in Ukrainian ports, equivalent to the annual consumption of all least-developed countries. But even if that supply is released, it will not be enough, because Putin's attack is just the latest blow to an already-broken global food system.

The world must now prepare for a food crisis that will last years, not months.

Currently the crisis is one of pricing, with the index maintained by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations soaring to a record high. But by this time next year, there may well be a food-availability crisis.

Our new report on the Ukraine war's global fallout looks at how disrupted planting seasons will

undermine Ukraine's agricultural exports, while a global fertiliser crunch, exacerbated by the conflict, will compromise many countries' ability to feed themselves.

This year's wheat harvest in Ukraine, a country that usually accounts for 10 per cent of global wheat exports, is likely to be 42 per cent lower than in 2021. Former Ukrainian agriculture minister Roman Leshchenko says that crop coverage in 2022 could be less than half pre-war levels, suggesting that the damage to next year's harvest has already been done. And when the fighting finally ends, repairing farms, soils, and storage facilities will take years.

The food-system fallout from Russia's attack does not end at Ukraine's borders. Average fertiliser prices, which surged by 80 per cent last year, have risen by a further 30 per cent since the start of 2022, owing to a combination of Russian export restrictions and Western sanctions.

Chemical fertilisers are the lifeblood of modern agriculture, credited with tripling global grain production since the 1960s and enabling the most rapid global population growth in history.

A global fertiliser crunch means

that now, more than ever, countries increasingly need to provide for themselves.

As soaring prices in the United Kingdom and the United States show, even the developed world is not immune to the global effects of the conflict. But for many countries already teetering on the edge of instability, the situation is desperate.

In Sri Lanka, where annual inflation is currently running at 54 per cent, more than 80 per cent of the population is being forced to skip meals. Similarly, hunger in the Sahel has reached record levels.

Humanitarian organisations have been affected, too. Record-high food prices and soaring transportation costs, the result of rich countries scrambling to secure non-Russian energy sources, are proving an increasingly deadly combination for the 274 million whom the UN estimates will need humanitarian aid this year.

And this is just the beginning. The 2008 and 2012 global food crises showed that food insecurity exacerbates existing problems and, in the worst cases, ignites new conflicts.

Protesters in Sri Lanka, which is struggling to import food and fuel, have forced the president to

resign, while Peruvian farmers have blocked roads and looted shops as fertiliser supplies are choked off. A new model from the Economist suggests that dozens of countries face a significant increase in "unrest events" such as conflict and political turmoil in the coming year, while many others could experience economic disruption. The international community needs to act now to prevent a vicious cycle from developing.

As World Food Programme Executive Director David Beasley says in his foreword to our report, policymakers must not allow the war in Ukraine to overwhelm millions of families trapped in a deadly struggle against hunger. In the absence of silver bullets to solve the food crisis, the world should embark on an urgent programme of damage mitigation while maintaining a long-term perspective.

In the short term, the international community must push back against Russia's blockade and work to establish safe passage and a naval escort for cargo ships carrying the 20 million tonnes of wheat stuck in Ukrainian ports.

Concerted action is also needed to discourage knee-jerk protectionism. Since Russia's attack, for example,

23 countries have restricted food exports, accounting for 17.3 per cent of total traded calories.

Here, multilateral bodies such as the World Trade Organisation should encourage major economies to coordinate and release food reserves to prevent further price increases. Governments can also address the food-pricing crisis by delivering humanitarian relief to the most vulnerable and increasing funding to humanitarian organisations struggling with soaring procurement and transportation costs.

But humanitarian relief alone will not be enough to prevent the food-pricing crisis from developing into a food-availability crisis. We need to be promoting greater self-sufficiency by encouraging developing countries to diversify their sources of imports and adopt new gene-editing technologies to boost crop yields, and by helping African countries increase their fertiliser output.

Many countries, including Mozambique, Togo, Tunisia and Nigeria, have significant untapped reserves of the raw materials needed to make their own fertilisers and reduce Africa's reliance on Russian supplies.

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# Pushing himself to reach the world's 4th highest summit

His passion for mountain climbing started in Oman having conquered the peaks of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and Jabal Shams. When he successfully summited Mount Kilimanjaro, Omani adventurer Suliman bin Hamoud al Naabi set his eyes on Mount Everest ... **P20**

# It's Never Too Late to Learn the Tango

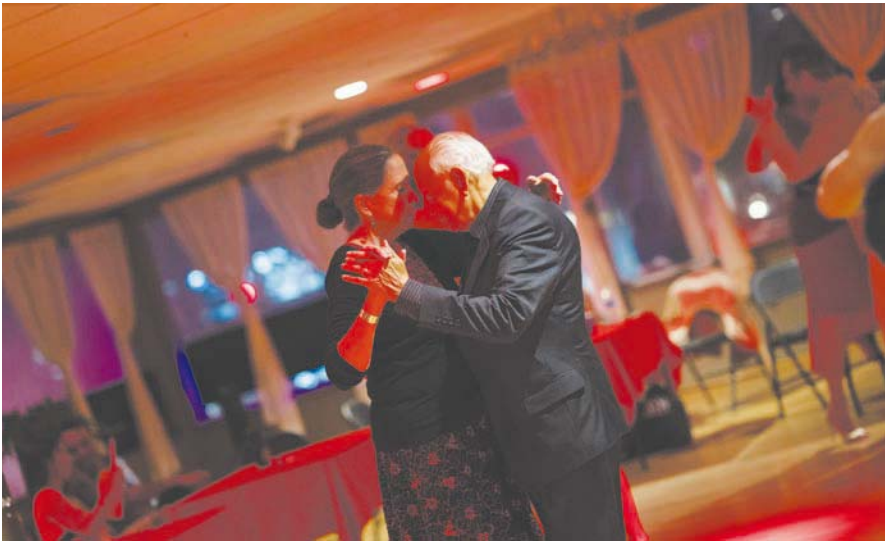
**NANCY CARDWELL HAS** made two big changes in her life. The first was quitting her job as a top-tier newspaper editor in New York to volunteer for Habitat for Humanity. The second was a bit more drastic: moving to Buenos Aires, Argentina, at the age of 62 after falling in love with tango — and a tango dancer by the name of Luis Gallardo.

Now 75, Cardwell started at *The Wall Street Journal* in 1969 and rose through the ranks to become an assistant managing editor — and the

highest-ranking woman on the masthead at the time. But in the late '80s, she was dropped from the masthead as part of a broader reshuffling of top editorial positions and found herself frustrated.

She was returning from a fishing trip in Montana in 1991 when she got off the plane at La Guardia Airport, which was sweltering and under construction. "That's it," she recalled saying to herself. "I'm out of here."

She sold her New York apartment and moved to Americus, Georgia



(population 15,000), to work for Habitat for Humanity. "You've reached the top of your profession," she remembered telling herself. "You don't have to prove anything else. If you don't want to do it anymore, don't do it."

She eventually moved back to the

East Coast, settling in Arlington, Virginia, and started a career as a freelance book editor. When she was 58, a friend invited her to a tango event; she reluctantly went along. Within six months, she was taking five tango classes a week. She celebrated her 60th birthday with a trip

to Buenos Aires, where she danced tango and practiced Spanish. She returned again and again, each trip a little longer. She would hire a "taxi dancer" — a pro tango dancer who took her to milongas (literally "ball-rooms," although now the term is synonymous with tango halls) — and stay out dancing until 3 am.

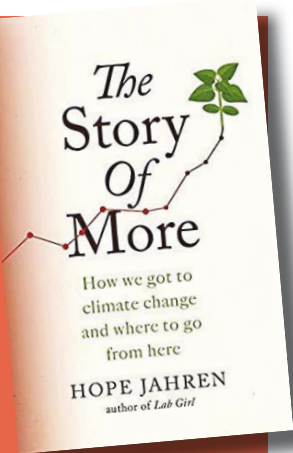
One night, she was approached by Gallardo, whom she had already noticed on the dance floor. They continued to meet and dance at various milongas until the end of her trip. He asked her to write to him (he had signed up for an email address just to correspond with her), and one day, she got a message asking when she would be coming back to Argentina. She returned in November, and they were mid-dance when he said to her, "I think you're going to be one of the great loves of my life." The next year, she moved to Argentina. They married in 2014 and now split their time between Arlington and Buenos Aires.

They still dance tango at least three times a week.

## READ

### THE STORY OF MORE

Hope Jahren's *The Story of More: How We Got to Climate Change and Where to Go from Here* investigates the connection between climate change and our global population's insatiable desire to consume. Published in 2020 by Vintage Books, *The Story of More* is part scientific study, part memoir.



## FINDING PICASSO

Spanish customs agents seized a Picasso sketch worth over 450,000 euros from a passenger who arrived at Ibiza airport without declaring the artwork, Spain's customs office said on Monday. Agents found the 1966 sketch, dubbed "Trois personnages", on July 5 in the suitcase of a man who arrived in the holiday island on a flight from Zurich, the office said in a statement. — AFP



## KENNEDY CENTER HONOREES

Film icon George Clooney and soul legend Gladys Knight are among this year's crop of Kennedy Center honorees, one of America's most prestigious arts awards. Irish rockers U2, Cuban-born American composer Tania Leon and the contemporary Christian and pop artist Amy Grant round out the 45th class, which will be feted at the centre's annual gala on December 4. — AFP



# Egypt's small farms play big role but struggle to survive



**EGYPTIAN SMALLHOLDERS GROW** nearly half of the country's crops, a lifeline role increasingly important after grain imports were stalled by war in Ukraine — but they are struggling to survive.

Despite their crucial role providing food for the North African nation's 103 million people, smallholders are cash-strapped and indebted, frequently selling their harvests at a loss.

"The farmer is dead, trampled," farmer Zakaria Aboueldahab told AFP, brewing tea on his rented plot of wheat and onions in Qalyubia, 30 kilometres (18 miles) north of Cairo.

"I'm trying to sell my onion harvest but I can't find a market," he said, the remnants of his crop scattered across the soil. "I just want to break even. I don't know how I'm going to pay rent".

His onions would sell in Egypt: but financing, marketing and infrastructure hurdles create massive gaps between supply and demand.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), small farms are the "primary producers" of food for domestic consumption in Egypt.

Farmers cultivating less than three feddans (1.2 hectares, three acres) — an area the size of a football pitch — till 35 per cent of arable land.

Yet they produce some 47 per cent of Egypt's field crops, the FAO calculates.

Larger farms focus more on exports — a dynamic that came to a head when Russia invaded Ukraine.

**PATRIOTIC DUTY**

Egypt, the world's leading importer of wheat, relied on Russia and Ukraine for 80 per cent of its imports, providing the flour for Egypt's traditional flat bread.

Ordinary Egyptians eat



bread a t almost every meal, and Egypt's wheat farmers ramped up production to 40 per cent of the country's needs.

"Without the 40 per cent of wheat that we produce domestical-ly," rural sociologist Saker al-Nour told AFP, the consequences of the war "would be much worse."

In March, C a i r o ordered farmers to grow wheat, calling the "compulsory delivery" orders a "patriotic duty."

By June, farmers had provided more than 3.5 million tonnes, according to the supply ministry, over half the domestic supply goal to August, and equal to the total amount supplied in 2021.

Compulsory crop deliveries were a pillar of president Gamal Abdel Nasser's socialist policies in the 1960s, but those policies were dropped amid the structural adjust-



ment p r o - grammes of the 1990s.

With them went the former subsidies on seeds, pesticides, and fertilisers which have steadily shrunk over the decades.

"Instantly, when things got tough, it went back to compulsory delivery, but this time without the services

that came with it," Nour said.

To encourage farmers to grow wheat, the government had previously set domestic prices higher than imports.

But the unprecedented surge in global prices undermined that.

Stronger together?

"Now I owe money to the pesticide guy, to the fertiliser guy," Aboueldahab said.

"So if someone comes along and bids a low price, what am I supposed to do?"

One solution is for smallholders to join together and harness the power of technology.

Entrepreneur Hussein Abou Bakr launched a start-up finance company called Mozare3, 'farmer' in Arabic, which offers farmers financing solutions and agronomy support.

It also helps farmers "become a bloc", in the absence of effective local cooperatives and sets prices "as a form of protection" against market fluctuations.

Nour warns smallholders have "very limited negotiating power, especially when they don't have the storage capacity for their harvest".

But with illiteracy among smallholders at 32 per cent, according to the FAO, offline village associations are necessary.

As climate change bites, Nour warns bottom-up approaches are essential.

These associations could, for example, communicate extreme weather events quickly and directly to farmers whose crops are at risk.

These tools exist, the sociologist said. "We just need to make them available to small farmers." — AFP

## ENTERTAINMENT

### First new West End theatre in 50 years to open



**A "STATE-OF-THE-ART" THEATRE** will be the first to open in London's West End in 50 years.

Soho Palace will offer unrestricted views in its 600-seat curved auditorium featuring "perfect acoustics" when it opens this autumn.

The "glamorous" theatre, which sits in the heart of a £300 million (\$360 million) regeneration project, has been more than a decade in the making, theatre owner Nica Burns told the PA news agency.

"For me, it's been a 12-year journey and I woke up this morning and I suddenly felt really overwhelmed because it's like having a 12-year-pregnancy and it's born today. It is very emotional," she said.

The theatre sits directly above Cross rail's new Elizabeth line at Tottenham Court Road station.

Burns said: "It's been a very difficult, challenging building to build because we are directly over the Elizabeth line platform and we also have the central and northern lines running under us.

"To build a modern theatre which requires silence in the auditorium, it was a real challenging build. But the acoustics in the auditorium are absolutely perfect.

"You can stand at the stage and talk quite quietly and you can hear it in the entire auditorium.

"There are no vibrations throughout the building and can't hear the trains."

Burns said a "great deal of money" was spent on putting the auditorium in a concrete box to ensure "perfect acoustics."

Speaking about the theatre's other features, she added: "You're never more than six seats in terms of rows away from the stage so in terms of audience actors relationship, it's just brilliant.

"Every seat has a perfect sight line.

"So if you bought the cheapest seat in the house, you have got a perfect view to the stage.

"There's no pillars, there's nothing to obstruct your view and you can see the whole stage and also hear everything beautifully.

"In a modern theatre you need to do that.

"With the Victorian theatres you can't change things so you've got to fix all those things on a new set."

The outside of the building features star constellations and at night "the whole building lights up like a magic box," Burns explained.

"On the inside, everywhere that the audience walks is indigo blue to match the twilight sky and with special star lights set out in the constellation — so you're always walking under the stars.

"It is a theatre, so we've brought in that feeling of being different and special."

The 67-year-old explained her inspiration for the theatre's interior design came after a trip to the ancient theatre of Epidauros in Greece as a young actress.

"I was standing centre stage on this incredible theatre and the last rays of the golden sun came through the trees and I looked up and the stars were starting to twinkle in an indigo sky.

"That theatre is still considered today to be one of the greatest theatres in the world and I stood there thinking 'this is where theatre started outside under the stars'.

"Ancient Greek classical theatre is still part of the heritage and inspiration for all the British playwrights which have made up the history of our theatre today, its our heritage.

"So when I was coming to the interior design of this theatre, I've turned it into those colours.

"All the interior decoration is a dark midnight blue, walk under the stars and the trim is a gold to mimic the sun coming in.

"The aim in theatre is to give people a special evening and make the whole evening a bit magical so the building I think is quite magical to look at and it feels very special to be in, hopefully we're going to do our best to give you a fantastic experience when you're sitting down in the auditorium."

The theatre, which also features a creatives floor with a rehearsal room, actors green room, bar and terrace, will announce its first production soon. — dpa



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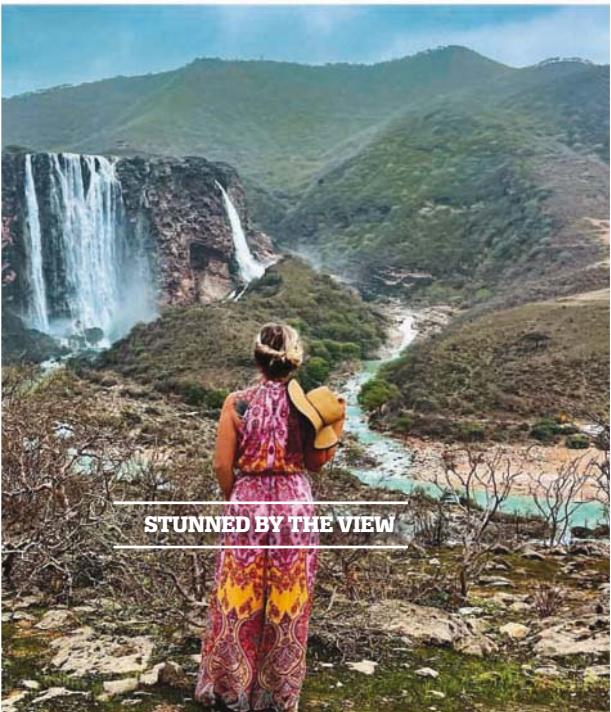


BY THE WATERFALL



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## AROUND THE WORLD

### ART

## To Illuminate History, an Artist Turns Out the Lights



**WHEN YOU FIRST** alight on the fourth floor of the New Museum, where Canadian-born, Paris-based artist Kapwani Kiwanga has her first solo museum exhibition in New York, it may take you a second to realise what's different. But start to walk around the soaring gallery of "Off-Grid" and it will dawn on you: There is no familiar electrical brightness here, only whatever light streams through distant windows.

Massimiliano Gioni, the museum's artistic director, began discussing the idea for an exhibition with Kiwanga in January 2021. It was to include a commissioned work that would be developed over the following year and a half. But from the very beginning, one thing was certain, Gioni said in a recent conversation: "Removing the lights was probably the first decision she made."

Kiwanga's photography, film, installation and sculpture are research-driven and intensely concerned with the materials she uses. This installation consists of a beaded curtain that hangs from the gallery's 24-foot ceiling, running perpendicular to a succession of tall, wedge-shaped mirrors across a long, deep purple wall — a subtle, shifting play of reflection and refraction.

Having worked in experimental film-making before becoming an artist, she has often played with ideas of transparency and opacity. But for "Cloak," the newly commissioned work, the material she chose to explore was light itself — which brings with it physical, historical, sociological and ethical dimensions.

Kiwanga's interest in light is connected to her investigations into colonial US history — in particular, 18th-century "lantern laws" in New York and other parts of New England that mandated that enslaved Black, mixed-race and Indigenous people as young as age 14 carry lanterns at night so they could be watched, and anyone without one could be arrested. Simone Browne, a scholar whose book "Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness" was a cornerstone of Kiwanga's research, considers the laws to be a precursor for more recent stop-and-frisk approaches to policing.

The history Browne traces allowed Kiwanga to "think about light and all the different ways that it's used and how it can be weaponised," she said in a recent Zoom call from Paris.

She had explored this history of forced illumination in a 2019 exhibition, "Safe Passage," at the MIT List Center, focusing on artificial light. Now, in New York, she comes at things from a perspective rooted in a new sense of place.

"I started asking, 'What is the contemporary technology that connects to those lantern laws?' And the floodlights used by the NYPD in public space, in spaces that are deemed to need more light — more surveillance — really fit in with that."

The high-intensity mobile floodlights to which Kiwanga refers were introduced in 2014 by then-Mayor Bill de Blasio to reduce crime; 150 of them were set up outside public housing developments in predominantly low-income communities of colour. The practice has been criticised by some residents for the machinery's brightness, noise and relentlessness, and was the subject of a 2021 documentary short, "Omnipresence." It continues to be used under the administration of Mayor Eric Adams, a spokesperson for the New York Police Department confirmed.

In addition to avoiding artificial illumination, Kiwanga's strategy included upending the function of one of these police floodlights — short-circuiting its usefulness as an object of surveillance. With the assistance of the New Museum, she purchased one from the same manufacturer that supplies them to the Police Department.

"What was so interesting to me was the idea of taking the aluminium from the floodlights, which is used to reflect and augment the light, and completely inverting its intended effect and making it opaque," Kiwanga said. — **NYT**

### DINING

## Pass the Chowder, and the Curry: Jamaican Chefs Add to Cape Cod's Culinary Delights



**AT THE JERK CAFE**, a storefront tucked into a strip mall in the Cape Cod village of South Yarmouth, Massachusetts, sweet-smelling smoke greets guests as soon as they open the front door. So does the cafe's proprietor, Glenroy Burke, who bounces around the wide-open kitchen stirring pots, tending the grill and plating dishes. "I don't like to be hidden in the kitchen," Burke said, who's also known as "Chef Shrimpy."

For more than three decades, Jamaican cooks and chefs have been coming to Cape Cod through the H-2B visa programme, which provides foreign workers with a pathway towards temporary nonagricultural jobs. A modest number of seasonal workers have become permanent residents or citizens. This summer, as international travel resumes and the domestic labour market remains strong, Jamaicans are again staffing kitchens of traditional Cape seafood restaurants, fine dining destinations, resorts and inns.

And with their ingredients and cooking techniques, Jamaicans are making a mark on the region's culinary identity, opening their own restaurants and enlivening the menus of established eateries from Hyannis to Provincetown. The taste of Cape Cod, long defined by Yankee seafood favourites, now includes flaky, golden patties, vibrant jerk rubbed-meats and turmeric-rich curries, humming with allspice.

"It's like a cultural exchange through food," said Byron Crooks, an H-2B visa holder from Westmoreland Parish, Jamaica, who is working as a

chef at Cape Cod Caribbean Cafe this summer. "Other people get to understand us — how we talk, how we laugh, how we have conversations through food."

### A SHARED HISTORY OF BANANAS

The number of Jamaicans working in the United States on the H-2B programme increased by 84% in the past 10 years, to 8,950 in 2021 from 4,874 in 2011, according to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services agency. Looking further back and locally, one Cape Cod-based immigration lawyer, Matthew Lee at Tocci & Lee, estimates — using data from the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce — that by the summer of 2000, 500 Jamaicans were working on the Cape, and that number increased to a high of 1,000 before the pandemic.

Burke first came to the Cape in 1997 after connecting with an H-2B recruiter in Jamaica. He had grown up in Port Antonio, Jamaica, watching his mother cook, and he eventually worked in cruise ship kitchens and at resorts. After one year as a seasonal worker, Burke received a green card and worked as a cook and marine technician in the Cape towns of Harwich and Chatham. The

economic opportunity he found on the Cape motivated him to stay and pursue his dream of opening a restaurant.

Three years after gaining US citizenship, Burke opened the Jerk Cafe in 2008. The restaurant quickly became popular for its jerk, as for sides, Chef Shrimpy's banana fritters are beloved. Used almost like a garnish, one fritter crowns each order and tastes like lightly fried morsels of sweet banana bread.

During his childhood, Burke's mother occasionally prepared these on Sundays. "When poor mothers and fathers didn't have sugar, they could crush banana and put a little flour in it so that they could create something sweet for us," he said. "I wish that she made them every day."

Bananas form the backbone of an older, shared history between Cape Cod and Jamaica. In 1870, following a chance landing in Port Antonio, a ship captain-turned-entrepreneur from Wellfleet named Lorenzo Dow Baker introduced the fruit to the United States. The wealth he accrued from this modern banana trade led him to establish hotels in both Port Antonio and Wellfleet, where he employed Jamaican workers seasonally. — **NYT**



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## Material Known as Americani

**THE FOLLOWING IS** my English translation of excerpts from "A Soldier from Oman: Memory's Nectar" by (ret.) Inspector-General Said bin Rashid al Kalbani

### THE EID NIGHT

After seeing the Eid moon, women would make harees\*, one of the most famous Omani dishes. It would be stored in khars, a big pot able to preserve the harees until morning. After eating it, men would go to the mosalla\*\*. Before prayers, children would play maraza, shooting at a particular target. The place was safe, and people, in general, paid due attention, as they expected such activities during Eid times.

Children stopped playing maraza during the prayers, after which men sang shallaat\*\*\* and children resumed their games. People would return to their homes, collect and bring as much food as they could afford and add it to the communal meal. Everybody would sit together and share the food, enjoying each other's company. After the meal, they would visit each other in their homes, pay their respect to the elders and those who were unable to come out.

People back then were just one family in their love and respect to each other.

### THE AMERICANI DRESS

Men's clothes were made of a material known as "Americani". It would be dyed with a mixture of oil and turmeric brought by the Yemenis from Socotra, as well as with the bark of the sadar tree to change its colour for camouflage during hunting. As regards women's clothes, made of aniline taken from the Azlam tree, they weren't altogether different from the ones women wear today, though the a'bayah\*\*\*\* didn't exist during that time. Women would only cover themselves with their wide, long shirt. The aniline substance

was extracted, as mentioned, from the Azlam tree, abundantly available in Miskan and in the farms of Wadi Al Kabir. The tree would be cut monthly and brewed in a pot before its branches and stalks were squeezed. It would be subsequently pounded with a stick from a palm tree (known locally as me'saaj) till the resultant substance was melted, poured into a palm made pot, known locally as masab, and then filtered.

After that a piece of cotton, (known al makhmaar), was placed over a square ditch. The liquid aniline was then poured onto it so that the water would soak through, leaving the material to dry. The dried material was divided into small squares (known foquush al neel). Upon being fully dry, it would be put in a cotton pouch (khareeta). Women used as much as they needed of the aniline; the rest would be sold in the souq(s)\*\*\*\*\* of both Ibri and Al Khabourah.

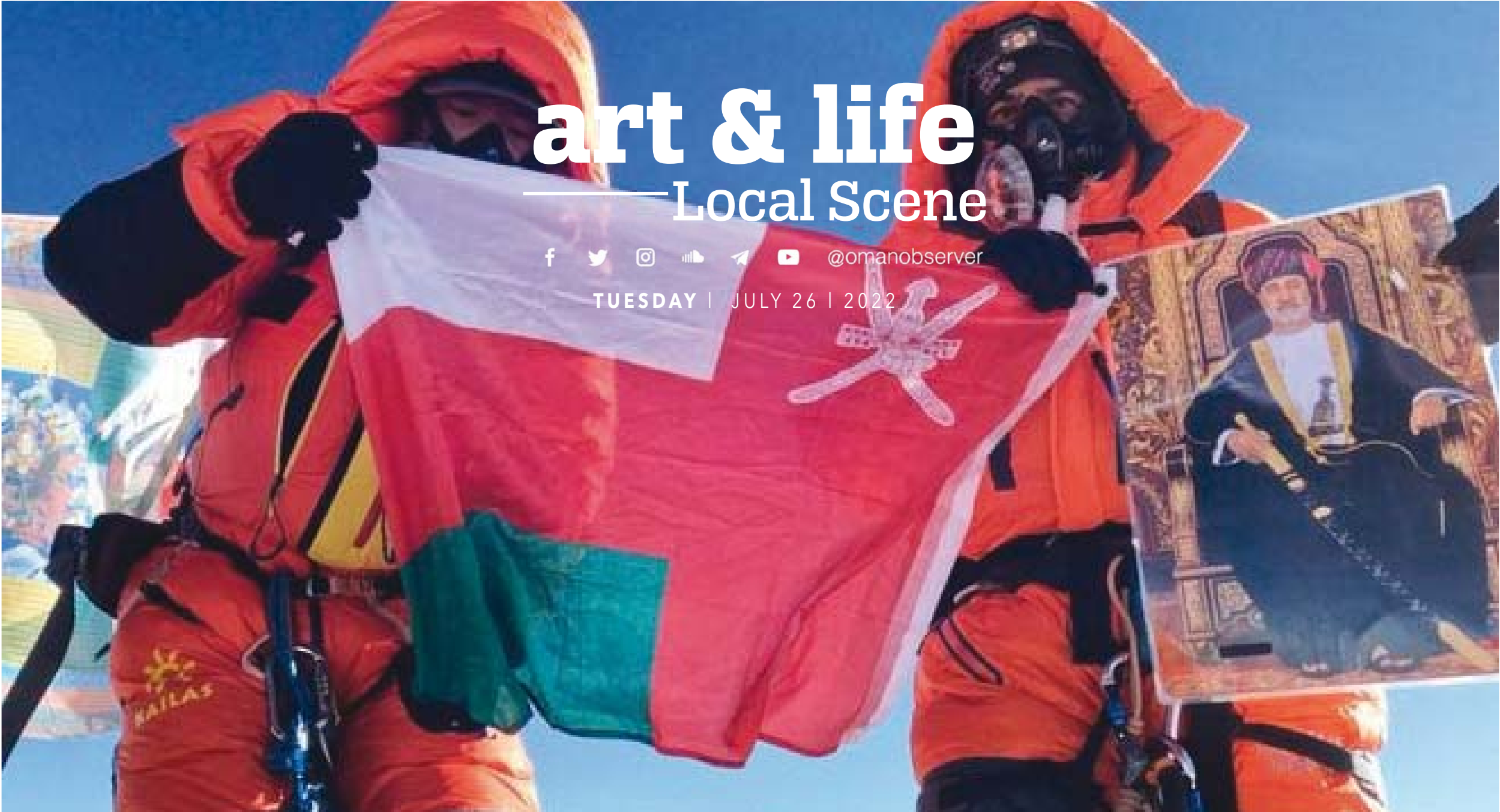
\*A local dish usually served during Eid and on different social occasions, comprising of mashed chicken or meat, seasoned with different spices (the translator).

\*\*\*"Mosalla" is, literally, the place where people perform their prayers. In the past there used to be special open places for the Eid prayers. Though the Eid prayers are usually performed in mosques nowadays, the "mosalla" tradition still continues in some parts of Oman (the translator).

\*\*\*\*Traditional songs, some associated with specific social occasions, others with specific professions. As an example for the latter, seamen would sing special songs when loading their ships, (shillat al homul) and when unloading them (shillat al naazil) (the translator).

\*\*\*\*\*The usually black veil women wear nowadays on top of their dresses in Oman and the Arabian Peninsula at large (the translator).

\*\*\*\*\*Souq is the Arabic word for "market" (the translator).



# art & life

## Local Scene

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TUESDAY | JULY 26 | 2022



# Pushing himself to reach the world's 4th highest summit

By Baraah Al Mujaini

Over the last decade, there had been many adventurers that successfully climbed the Summit of Mount Everest. Omani adventurer Sulaiman bin Hamoud al Naabi was one of them but instead of resting on his laurel, he pushed himself further by climbing the Lhotse's Summit, the 4th highest summit in the world making him the first

Omani and the second Arabian to reach both summits in the same journey. "Every adventurer has a message that they wanted to deliver. For those climbing the highest summits around the world, reaching these peaks is a feverish dream. My goal for climbing is that I wanted to set a record. I want to set many records as an Omani adventurer," Al Naabi said. Reaching the peak of Mount Everest followed after he suc-

cessfully conquered Mount Kilimanjaro in 2015. After his triumph in Africa's highest peak, he felt it was all natural to set his eyes on an even challenging adventure. "I have prepared myself adequately for climbing this summit. I was determined and persistent to climb its summit", Al Naabi shared about his Kilimanjaro journey. While he is out and about conquering different peaks around the world, Al Naabi said that all

these started when he climbed several mountains in Oman. Al Naabi shared that he has gone through the different peaks of Oman, from the beautiful canyons of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar to the towering heights of Jabal Shams even the tiring length of Wakan and Al Awabi. "The climbing experience in Oman is special, due to our distinguished environment and nature, which has helped me significantly to be well-prepared for the next climbing plans", Al Naabi shared. Al Naabi was keen on participating in international competitions and training courses to sharpen his climbing skills and broaden his knowledge in this domain. "In my opinion, the key characteristics required for this activity is to have enough confidence, endurance, concentration, patience, determination, wise decision-making, cooperation, and leadership", Al Naabi said. "There were no concerns nor fears, and that is a very critical pillar that should be taken into consideration in the pre-preparation phase. Staying positive, and excluding any negative ideas are the first step towards achieving your goals, otherwise, any fear can suspend you from starting your journey", Al Naabi said. However, Al Naabi expressed

the hardest situations he has been through, one of which was seeing the dead bodies of people, who had previously tried to climb the same summit, all along the mountain. Also, the long duration of the journey to reach both summits has taken almost 60 days. Besides, the low temperatures that have reached -40 C, and the continual harsh avalanches, "All of these risks can be avoided to a great extent by practising", Al Naabi added. The stimulus that always provokes Al Naabi to continue is remembering the message he wants to deliver, which is to make Oman's records in this field internationally recognized. The moment of the arrival at the summits was one of the most unforgettable moments for Al Naabi, as it was full of mixed feelings, pride, joy, success, and gratitude. One of the lessons he has learned was to dedicate yourself to helping others to reach with you the summit and never restrict that achievement to yourself. "I would advise anyone interested in these types of activities to train enough before stepping forward, and ensure all the safety procedures needed", Al Naabi said. Regarding Al Naabi next step is to keep practising and achieving more new records to be added to Oman's records in this field.