

HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, will on Wednesday preside over the celebration of the Women's Club for Sports and Cultural Creativity on the occasion of the Omani Women's Day. During the event, to be held at Al Bustan Palace Hotel, the logo of the club will be unveiled. HH Sayyid Theyazin had issued a decision on October 17, 2021, to launch the Women's Club for Sports and Cultural Creativity. – ONA



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BENZEMA BAGS BALLON D'OR



P13

OMAN FOOD BANK GETS BACKING FROM KEY PROPERTIES



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A WOMAN ARTIST'S TRYST WITH SHADES OF LIFE



MUSCAT

MAJLIS ASH'SHURA 4TH ANNUAL SESSION SET

Based on the Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and pursuant to Article 41 of the Law on the Council of Oman, Majlis Ash'shura will begin its fourth annual session (2022-2023) of the ninth term (2019-2023) on November 6 (Sunday). During its third annual session (2021-2022), Majlis Ash'shura convened 16 ordinary meetings, discussed five ministerial statements and approved 10 draft laws and conventions referred to it from the government. The previous session witnessed wide cooperation between the council and the government through meetings held with the ministerial coordination committee and the Council of Ministers.

STUDENT LITERARY CREATIVITY AWARD

The Omani Society for Writers and Literati, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, on Tuesday announced Literary Creativity Award for students of public and private schools and special education. The award is for two categories, the first one is for students aged 11-18 years old, while the second is for students aged 7-10 years old.

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OMAN OBSERVER

FIRST DEDICATED ENGLISH NEWS APP IN OMAN



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AFGHAN WOMEN DEMAND RIGHT TO EDUCATION

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LEFT IN LIMBO AS CLIMATE SHOCKS COST JOBS

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HM receives credentials of ambassadors

AMBASSADORS AFFIRM TO EXERT SINCERE EFFORTS TO PROMOTE RELATIONS

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

His Majesty the Sultan received credentials of the following ambassadors: Dr Idris Maya, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Dr Bashar Al Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Salah Al Din Al Hajj Mohammed Al Kando, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Gen Abdel Fattah Al Burhan, Chairman of the Transitional Sovereignty Council of the Republic of Sudan, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Mohammed Nazmul Islam, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Mohammad Abdul Hamid of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Dornath Aryal, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of

President Bidya Devi Bhandari of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Amina Ali Abdallah, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Dr William Ruto of the Republic of Kenya, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Barnabas Fodor, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Katalin Novak of Hungary, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Mohammed Nasser al Hajri, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Shaikh Nawaf Al Ahmed Al Jaber al Sabah, Emir of the State of Kuwait, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; Ahmed Lebbe Sabarullah Khan, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Ranil Wickremesinghe of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman; and Florin Marius Tacu, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Klaus Iohannis of Romania, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.



His Majesty the Sultan receiving credentials of Dr Idris Maya, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of President Dr Bashar Al Assad of the Syrian Arab Republic, accredited to the Sultanate of Oman.

Popular beach fronts to get major facelift, opportunities for SMEs

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has floated tenders for providing services and facilities at Fins beach near Qurayat in Muscat Governorate.

Speaking on the plans to upgrade facilities for tourists in the Sultanate of Oman, Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, said, "A model for facilities at beaches will be presented for investment opportunities with usufruct contracts for small and medium enterprises along the Omani coasts from Muscat to Dhofar."

Last week, Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran) launched water sports and adventure activities at Wadi Dayqah, the popular tourist destination. Work is in advanced stages for revamping the Al Haffa beach in Dhofar Governorate, and will house local and international brands to meet the needs of tourists.

This project's first phase offers a wide range of exciting water sports and adventure activities, such as donut boats, kayaks, pedal boats, stand-up pedal boats, and mountain biking.

"The water sports activities



have been recently launched at Wadi Dayqah as part of a broader development plan at the Wadi in collaboration with the ministry. With this development plan, we're leveraging Wadi Dayqah's popularity and unlocking its potential as a water sports and adventure tourist destination. By doing this, we'll be able to diversify our range of tourism products," Omran said.

Activities will be organised

in collaboration with Salmah International and managed by Husak Adventure Centre. Activities at Wadi Dayqah will be held between 12 and 6 pm, except on Mondays.

One of the keenly-awaited projects is the opening of the zipline in Musandam Governorate, which has been initiated as part of diversification plan within the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

UN official hails progress made by Omani women

NEW YORK: The United Nations congratulated Omani women on the occasion of the Omani Women's Day, celebrated every year on October 17, affirming that the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik enjoys appreciation from the international community as a peace-maker and builder of bridges for boosting regional and international stability.

Sima Bahous, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of UN Women, hailed the tangible progress made by Oman in empowering women and enhancing their status in various aspects.

The UN official said: "This day comes as a celebration of the efforts made by the Omani women in supporting the march of development in the Sultanate of Oman and an affirmation of the official commitment to support women and preserve their social, economic, political and cultural accomplishments.

"The experiences of nations proved that investing



This day comes as a celebration of the efforts made by the Omani women in supporting the march of development

SIMA BAHOUS

Under Secretary-General

in people is the best way for nation progress, economic growth and human solidarity. Empowering women in skills, knowledge and experiences adds cultural values to human wealth and boosts the society's belief on the values of justice, equity, equality and peace," she said.

Delivering a speech through video conference, the UN official noted that the Sultanate of Oman realised early that women empowerment and advancement is a principal element in the march of nations and the title of their renaissance.

TURN TO P3



AMBASSADORS PLEDGE TO PROMOTE TIES



Salah Al Din Al Hajj Mohammed Al Kando, Ambassador of the Republic of Sudan



Mohammed Nazmul Islam, Ambassador of Bangladesh



Dornath Aryal, Ambassador of Nepal



Amina Ali Abdallah, Ambassador of Kenya



Florin Marius Tacu, Ambassador of Romania



Mohammed Nasser al Hajri, Ambassador of Kuwait



Ahmed Lebbe Sabarullah Khan, Ambassador of Sri Lanka



Barnabas Fodor, Ambassador of Hungary

FROM PAGE 1

During their meetings with His Majesty the Sultan, the ambassadors conveyed greetings and best wishes of their countries' leaders to His Majesty and the Omani people.

They also expressed their great honour and delight to present their credentials before His Majesty the Sultan. They affirmed to exert sincere efforts to promote relations of their respective countries with Oman in various spheres in a manner that serves the joint interests of the Omani people and their countries' citizens.

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

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

— ONA



OSWL and MoE launch literary awards for school students

MUSCAT: The Omani Society for Writers and Literati (OSWL), in cooperation with the Ministry of Education (MoE), on Tuesday launched the Literary Creativity Award for students of public, private and special education.

The award is in two categories, the first one is for students aged 11-18 years, while the second is for students aged 7-10 years.

Students aged 11-18 can compete in poetry, literary research, literary criticism, short fiction and literary article. Students aged 7-10 years can compete in literary article, speaking, poetry recitation and reading. The Literary Creativity Award aims to boost cooperation between the Omani Society for Writers and Literati and the Ministry of



Education, as well as highlighting the importance of literary work among all segments of society, especially young students.

The award will contribute to enhancing the talents and creativity of participants and encourage literary writing among young people. It will also increase the society's role in social service. On the sidelines of the launching

ceremony, an agreement of cooperation was signed between the Omani Society for Writers and Literati and the Ministry of Education. This agreement was signed by Said Mohammed al Saqlawi, Chairman of the society's Board of Directors and Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of MoE for Education.

— ONA

Watch out for your child's friends: ROP

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Observe who your child moves with, and watch out for friends or those with whom he/she keeps contact on the phone as well as at school and outside to save them from the clutches of psychotropic substances, ROP warns parents.

Although it is a joint effort to save our children from drugs, women can play a better role towards achieving the same, an official of the drug control department at the Royal Oman Police (ROP) said.

"Saving a person from not using drugs or protecting from the menaces of drugs is a joint effort where every person around him or her has an active role. Women at home, mother, sister, wife or daughter, have better roles to play as they have better chances of observing a person's surroundings at home," the official said.

About the reasons, he said that most children get their first dose from their friends, and peer pressure to use alcohol and drugs can contribute to substance use

disorders, potentially leading to addiction. Girls are more prone to fall prey to peer pressure.

Children tend to show behaviour and make choices depending on what they believe their friends want them to do once they are driven by peer pressure. If an adolescent thinks that drinking alcohol or doing drugs will make their peers respect them more, according to studies, the chances of them trying it at least one time is high.

- To escape peer pressure:
- 1) Choose your friends wisely
 - 2) Say an emphatic 'no' when a friend offers it
 - 3) It is better to avoid such situations where you might be offered or tempted
 - 4) While attending gatherings,

bring along a friend or relative

5) Don't fail to report to elders if anyone offers drugs

To maintaining zero tolerance to drugs and psychotropic substances, Oman established the National Committee for Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances by a Ministerial Decision No 78/2022 and is chaired by the Minister of Health.

The committee, besides proposing the general national policy in narcotics and psychotropic substances control to be adopted later by the Council of Ministers, it entails the development of the prevention and treatment plans in the fight against the illegal use of narcotics and psychotropic substances and follows up on their implementation.



IF YOUR CHILDREN OR FRIENDS SHOW THESE SYMPTOMS, PLEASE ALERT HEAD OF FAMILY OR AUTHORITIES

 LESS SLEEP AT NIGHT AND FEELING SLEEPY DURING THE DAY	 MOOD SWINGS AND IRRITABILITY
 CHANGE IN PATTERN OF APPETITE	 PROBLEMS IN CONCENTRATION, THINKING, OR MEMORISING CLEARLY
 FEELING DROWSY	 SUDDEN LOSS OF WEIGHT
 PHYSICAL APPEARANCE BECOMES SHABBY	 RUNNY NOSE
 LACK OF COORDINATION AND SLURRED SPEECH	 BLOODSHOT EYES

UN hails progress made by Omani women

FROM PAGE 1

Hence, women took a prime position among the priorities of the national strategy for comprehensive development. She pointed to the keenness of Oman Vision 2040 to put the people and the society at a pivotal place by providing an appropriate environment and legislations that preserve the status of women at home and in the workplace.

The UN official confirmed that Omani women have over the past decades managed to make a distinctive presence and to effectively seize the opportunities made available to them.

She added: "The statistics show the rate of female enrolment in educational institutions in Oman has risen to 73 per cent in 2019. In the same year, women secured 40 per cent of scholarships which is an encouraging percentage and inspiring for girls and women across the Arab world and the Middle East region.

— ONA

Int'l White Cane day marked



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 18

Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, presided over Omar bin Al Khattab Institute's celebration of the International Day of the White Cane, which falls on October 15 every year. The White Cane represents great importance to the visually impaired. The celebration included: plays, singing, poetry recitation and presentation, as well as fun and educational competitions, all of which were presented by the institute's students.

Badriya al Wahaibi, Director of Omar bin Al Khattab Institute for the visually impaired, said: "The International Day of the White Cane comes as a support to the visually impaired and aims to spread awareness of their rights,

discuss their issues, educate and guide individuals on how to help the blind cross the streets. This day was chosen by the World Council for the Welfare of the Blind at their meeting held in February 1980 in Paris. The celebration of the International Day of the White Cane aims to spread awareness and culture among societies to highlight the white cane as a symbol of visual impairment, and that its holder has visual problems that reach the level of disability, but has skills to move with the help of that cane, and that the cane provides protection on the way, and with this awareness and culture among individuals, it will create the perfect environment for the blind."

Among the activities of the Omar bin Al Khattab Institute's celebration was an exhibition that includes an introductory corner at the institute to explain the

conditions for student admission to the institute, the Braille method for writing and reading, the tools and devices used to teach students with visual disabilities such as the speaking calculator and the Braille Sense machine. The exhibition also included a technical corner that showcased the skills and talents of students, such as pottery, beading, various plastic arts, and a miniature of a walk was prepared for the audience to experience the use of the white cane, and other assistive means.

Omar bin Al Khattab Institute aims to raise the blind's self-confidence, improve their skills, create a stimulating environment for students to learn, highlight their skills, develop the creativity of people with visual disabilities in dealing with various tools and create a recreational space away from the usual school atmosphere.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDER

The Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) announce to float Tender No. **TANWEER- 17/2022**

Operation Services of Rural Areas Electricity Company SCADA Control Center at Masirah Power Station in Al Sharqiya South Governorate and at Al Duqm in Al Wusta Governorate

The Conditions:

- 1- Collection of Tender:** Interested and Specialized Companies which registered with Tanweer, Tender Board and Distribution Code Review Panel (DCRP) for Electrical Works may obtain the tender documents from Procurement & Contracts Department, Rural Areas Electricity Company at Al Seeb, till the date of **27 October 2022** against a non-refundable amount of RO (50/-) for each set of documents. The fees for the tenders shall be deposited on Tanweer account 0423010783090041 – Bank Muscat and for more information please contact via email address i.e. tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om, or call us on phone number: 24250824.
- 2- Bank Guarantee:** The Tenderer should enclose original bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Rural Areas Electricity Company SAOC (Tanweer).
- 3- Offers Submission:**
 - A- Original bid bond along Cover letters shall be placed by bidders inside the red waxed Tender's envelopes as communicated to bidders by Tanweer. Tender soft copy must be serialized according to the numbers of the tender items.
 - B- Tender bids shall be provided separately on a CD Roms, along with original cover letters in each envelop. Bids and cover letters shall bear the bidder's official seal and must be signed in either blue or red ink, but not black. A true soft copy of the bids shall be provided on a CD in an inner envelope marked "Copy". Bids who do not comply with these requirements will be overlooked.
 - C- Bidders shall write the following details on the cover of CD:
 - Tender name and number.
 - Addressed it to the **Chairman of Minor Tender Committee**, Rural Areas Electricity Company.
 - Prequalification / Technical Proposal / Commercial Proposal / Bid Bond.
- 4- Submission Location:** The Completed bids in CD should be deposited in the Tender Box at Tanweer Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 12:00 PM on the date of **8 November 2022**.
- 5- Tender Price (R.O):** 5% VAT is inclusive.
- 6- Rural Areas Electricity Company** without mentioning the reason is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender and not bond to refund tender purchase fees if you are not qualified to participate the tender.

For more information, please call: **80077787**
Or visit our Website: www.tanweer.nama.om



Tanweer
P.O Box 1166, P.C. 133, Al Seeb, Sultanate of Oman
Tel: +968 24250800, Fax: +968 24250892
Info@tanweer.nama.om | www.tanweer.om





67,884

IS THE TOTAL
NUMBER OF
BLOOD DONORS
IN MOH
INSTITUTIONS

95.5%

IS THE
VOLUNTARY
BLOOD
DONATION IN 2021

14%

RISE OF THE
COLLECTED
BLOOD UNITS IN
2021 COMPARED
TO 2020

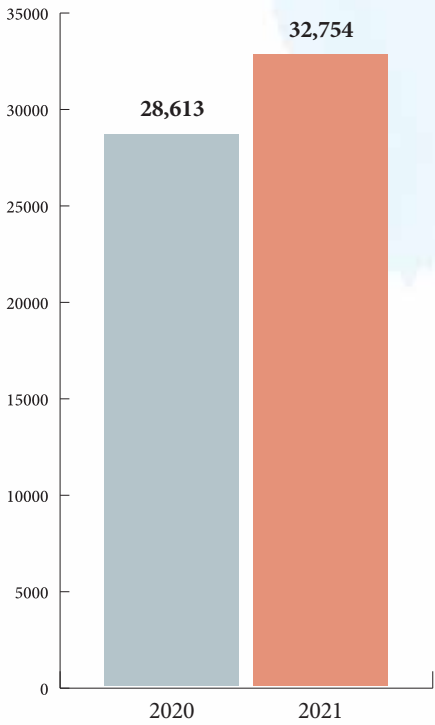
260

BLOOD
DONATION
CAMPAIGNS IN
2021

100

UNITS PER DAY
BEFORE 2020
COMPARED TO 140
UNITS PER DAY IN
2022

Collected blood units in the
Central Blood Bank



STAFF
REPORTER

MUSCAT, OCT 18

In spite of the increasing number of blood donors over the past years, the demand for blood units and its components is steadily on the rise from 10 per cent to 15 per cent annually. Before 2020, the daily requirement for blood units was not more than 100 units per day in the Central Blood Bank, but now it needs 140 units per day.

The Department of Blood Banks Services supplies safe blood and its components for health institutions. The Department is selecting the blood donor to ensure the safety and quality of blood and its components. After collecting the blood, it will be separated and preserved for distribution to the health institutions.

The Department raised the voluntary blood donation rate to 96 per cent at the level of the Central Blood Bank, in addition to increasing the number of collected blood units to 14 per cent in 2021 compared to 2020.

The Department of Blood Banks Services organises many blood donation campaigns in cooperation with different authorities. The number of blood donation campaigns is more than 300 campaigns every year, in which 260 campaigns were organised for blood donation in 2021.

The cases that require transfusion of blood or one of its components are injured in road accidents or disasters, bleeding during surgeries, malignant blood diseases, bone marrow failure, some cases of genetic blood diseases, some cancerous tumors, and some cases of childbirth.

Not all people can donate blood. Some are barred for certain periods from donating blood like persons who had undergone for transfusion of blood or one of its components for one year; persons who donated blood less than three-month ago; persons whose teeth were removed 72 hours before the donation; persons who have mouth, nose, or under skin bleeding (if it is not a medical condition); persons who had a minor operation in less than six-month before the donation; and women who had their delivery an year ago.

Those who cannot donate blood include persons infected with communicable diseases such as AIDS or all types of viral hepatitis or syphilis; patients of chronic diseases like cancer, heart diseases, epilepsy, diabetes, and other diseases that need continuous treatment; patients with blood diseases like anemia and thalassemia; and persons infected with allergic diseases such as asthma or have drug allergies.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has 13 blood banks across the Sultanate of Oman. In addition to the Central Blood Bank in Bausher, there are blood banks in hospitals like Rustaq, Suhar, Al Buraimi, Ibra, Nizwa, Ibra, Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, Sur, Salalah, Khasab, Daba and Masirah.

ONE
BLOOD
DONATION
CAN SAVE
3 LIVES



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 18

To celebrate Omani Women's Day, with a taste of 'life in the world of foreign affairs', student Rudaina al Shehhi from UTAS Shinas was one of the lucky finalists selected by the British Embassy in Muscat

UTAS STUDENT SELECTED ‘AMBASSADOR FOR A DAY’

to be the ‘Ambassador for a Day’. Ten young Omani women aged between 18 and 25 were shortlisted from across Oman. The event aimed to support women's empowerment and provide

young Omani women with the opportunity to develop leadership, diplomacy and negotiation skills. The Minister of Social Development, Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, was among the

dignitaries at the event, including ambassadors from the US, Italy, Kenya and Turkey. Other events in the day included a ‘Young Ambassadors Workshop’, followed by a ‘Women Leaders

Networking Lunch’ hosted by the British Ambassador to Oman, Bill Murray, at his residence. Lyutha al Mughairi, the first ever Omani woman to be appointed as ambassador from

Oman, joined the event virtually from London. She spoke to the young ambassadors about wome leaders and their contribution in policymaking. Kenyan Ambassador Amina Abdalla presented bouquets shipped from Kenya, to the ten aspiring young ambassadors.

Seminar on govt media and Oman Vision 2040

MUSCAT: Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit organised hosted a seminar to discuss the alignment of media messages that were published by government units with Oman Vision 2040. The event targeted the State Administrative Apparatus, represented by the vision's implementation follow-up offices and departments of communication and media.

The seminar aimed to bolster partnerships and achieve integration among visions and media messages in line with the implementation requirements of the current stage of Oman Vision 2040. The seminar also highlighted the programmes and developments of the vision.

Several introductory presentations were given during the seminar, namely on the vision and the implementation follow-up unit, as well as the efforts exerted to unify media messages about Oman Vision 2040, to name a few. — ONA

Forum for visually impaired in Nizwa

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, OCT 18

Nizwa Cultural Centre launched the Creative Forum at its premises on Sunday.

It was organised by the Association of the Blind, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate Branch, with 60 members representing the association's branches in the governorates of Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, Dhofar, North Al Batinah and Al Dhahirah.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Shaikh Rashid bin Said al Kalbani, Wali of Nizwa. The opening ceremony included a speech by Saud bin Salim al Azri, Head of the Blind Association, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate Branch.

“The Association of the Blind seeks to diversify its activities. This forum aims to develop and refine skill of the visually impaired people through training



workshops, lectures and other events.”

Ameer al Hadidi and Mohammad al Shuraiqi of The “Lane of Creativity” group presented a chanting. Then the theatre troupe members performed a play entitled 'Insight'.

This was followed by a film showing the activities and events of Al Noor

Association for the Blind, Al Dakhiliyah Branch.

Then the Wali of Nizwa inaugurated the accompanying exhibition. It included many traditional industries, handicraft products and artworks made by the association's members.

The forum will continue until October 20.

**MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY**
Advertisement No. (39/2022)

Companies specialized in the field and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender No.	E- Tender No.	Description of Tender	Tender Fee	Last Date to Collect the Tender	Tender Return Date	Grade
PRE/22/130	2022/MM/QS-74	Design & Construction of Car Parking at Bousher HTS, Lump Sum Contract (E-Tender)	25	07/11/2022	27/11/2022	First
PRE/22/140	2022/MM/QS-75	Design & Construction of Internal Roads at Ghala (E-Tender)	25	07/11/2022	27/11/2022	First
PRE/22/147	2022/MM/QS-76	Protection Works at AL Bustan Area in Wilayat Muscat (E-Tender)	25	07/11/2022	27/11/2022	Second
PRE/22/148	2022/MM/QS-77	Supply and Fixing Interlocking Tiling Under Darsait Bridge (E-Tender)	25	07/11/2022	27/11/2022	SME (Fourth)
PRE/22/081	2022/MM/QS-40 Re-Call	Technical Support Services for Oracle SUN Solaris Servers (Re-Tender-1) (E-Tender)	25	07/11/2022	27/11/2022	Excellent & First

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of abond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).
- For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200 / 24402330).

**GS Inima BARKA LLC**

Announcement of the tender TND GSI BV/09/2022 for the supply of filtration material

GS INIMA (BARKA) LLC have been awarded with the Engineering, Procurement and Construction of Barka V Desalination Project in Oman, for the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC.

Professional Omani and non-Omani companies are invited to quote for supply:

- Volcanic stone** (around 1,050 cubic meters) as per the minimum requirements in the TS.
- Silica sand** (around 600 cubic meters) as per the minimum requirements in the TS.
- Gravel** (around 454 cubic meters) as per the minimum requirements in the TS.

To participate to bidding please send e-mail to barka.v.site@inima.com confirming participation accompanied with copy of CR, copy of VAT certificate and copy of MSE card if any, within 20th October 2022 1:00 PM.

Bid closing date 25th October 2022 1:00 PM

**AL BASHAYER**

Al Bashayer Meat Co. SAOC

TENDER NOTICE

Al Bashayer Meat Co. SAOC (ABMC) invites specialized contractors to participate in our tender for the Provision of Rental Storage and Offices in Muscat Region as per the below details:

Tender No.	Tender Description	Date of Tender	Last Date for Obtaining Documents	Last Date of Tender Submission
ABMC/ITB/ 2022/015	PROVISION OF RENTAL STORAGE AND OFFICE IN MUSCAT REGION: • TOTAL EMPTY LAND AREA = 4000 – 5000 SQM • FREEZING ROOMS TOTAL AREA = 1200 SQM • OFFICES TOTAL AREA = 1200 SQM • SERVICES TOTAL AREA = 730 SQM	19/10/2022	24/10/2022	31/10/2022

- Vendor selection will be based on **“Best and Final Offer”**. Please provide the contact details of the authorized person for the final discussion.
- ABMC is not bound to select the lowest bidder.
- Interested bidders must submit the bids separately in a sealed envelope with our ref. no duly mentioned and drop them to ABMC Head Office located in Al Nahda Tower 2, 8th Floor, Office No. 4, Ghala, Muscat.
- For Communication:
 - Shaima Al Raisi - Mob. # 98527207
 - Anas Al Sadairi - Mob. # 99276518

Conference on ‘Teaching and Learning’ in November

MUSCAT: Middle East College (MEC) is organising an international conference on ‘Teaching and Learning’ from November 15 to 16 at MEC Student Hub. Digital transformation in education and employability are two points in focus in this edition of the conference.

The conference will also feature a theme on establishing a culture of Academic Integrity. It will bring together experts, practitioners and specialists in education from around the world.

The conference aims to explore new and creative ways to enhance employability, adopt the latest practices and initiatives to implement sustainable development goals, and exchange views on practices in teaching and learning.

Participants will be able to participate both on-campus and online in HyFlex mode and the accepted papers will be published in the highly visible and indexed SHS Web of Conference publication series.

**SULTANATE OF OMAN**
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of Tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
2453/2022	Proposed Dental Clinic Room at Wadi Al Jizzi Hospital For Directorate General Of Health Services Al Buraimi Governorate	31/October/2022	Before 10 am on Wednesday 16/November/2022	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board in The Second Grade	R.O 25.000 Per set
2665/2022	Buraimi Polyclinic PABX Replacement For Directorate General Of Health Services Al Buraimi Governorate	31/October/2022	Before 10 am on Tuesday 29/November/2022	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board in Excellent, First and Second Grade	R.O 25.000 Per set
2673/2022	Maintenance Works at Wadi Al Jizzi Hospital's Doctors & Nurses Accommodation For Directorate General Of Health Services Al Buraimi Governorate	31/October/2022	Before 10 am on Tuesday 29/November/2022	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board in The Second Grade	R.O 25.000 Per set

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board on the above mentioned Grade may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Tenders should be submitted on line on the given website signed and sealed. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee or a certified Cheque issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee at the Directorate General of Health Services in Al Buraimi Governorate.
- The Bank Guarantee should be submitted on line on the given E. Tendering website.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

Any Clarification, you may contact via
Telephone: 25651718/25657170
Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

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Women hold up signs showing paintings of migrants in boats at sea, as locals of the coastal city of Zarzis in southeastern Tunisia chant gather for a demonstration during a general strike. **Right:** Commercial premises are closed during a general strike in the coastal city of Zarzis in southeastern Tunisia. — AFP

Migrant deaths: Protests paralyse Tunisian town

TUNIS: A southern Tunisian coastal town was paralysed by protests on Tuesday amid growing anger over the fate of people who drowned in a migrant shipwreck last month, with some buried in unmarked graves.

The powerful UGTT labour union called a general strike in Zarzis on Tuesday, bringing to a head days of smaller protests to demand authorities do more to find missing bodies and improve living conditions.

Images showed the streets of Zarzis packed with protesters chanting anti-authority slogans

with shops and government institutions closed.

“Today the state continues to ignore us and does not even search for those drowned,” said Salim Zreidat, whose 15-year-old son Walid was among the missing.

“What has the state done for us to stop our children running? Is there employment? Nothing,” he said, adding that Walid felt he had no future in Tunisia despite being an excellent student.

As the economy has lagged and public finances run into crisis amid political upheaval, many

Amid political upheaval, many Tunisians have taken to often rickety boats to join the illegal migration route to Europe

Tunisians have taken to often rickety boats to join the illegal migration route to Europe.

Dozens have died this year in shipwrecks as boats attempted the journey from Tunisia’s

eastern coast to the Italian island of Lampedusa. Protests began in Zarzis this month after a boat believed to be carrying 18 migrants disappeared. Last week local fishermen searching for the wreck found eight bodies.

Anger increased when authorities buried the bodies in a graveyard for migrants rather than work to identify them, and were slow to search for those missing.

President Kais Saied spoke about the Zarzis protests on Monday, using a video of his meeting with Prime Minister Najla

Iraq judge quizzes tax officials over missing \$2.5 billion

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi investigative judge has questioned five senior tax officials over \$2.5 billion in public funds that have gone missing, and more arrest warrants have been issued, authorities said on Tuesday.

An internal probe by the finance ministry in oil-rich Iraq has found that the money was withdrawn from the tax authority’s account at state-owned Rafidain Bank, the news agency INA reported. Local media published a tax authority document showing the funds were withdrawn between September 2021 and August this year, transferred to the accounts of five companies using 247 cheques, and then immediately withdrawn.

The Baghdad judge summoned five tax office officials, including the director-general, his deputy and a supervisor at the finance and control department. — AFP

Afghan women protest in Kabul, demand right to education

ISLAMABAD: A group of Afghan women rallied in Kabul on Tuesday to demand the right to an education following the expulsion of female students from the Kabul University dormitory, local media reported.

Videos showed the few dozen women carrying signs reading “Education is our red line” and chanting that the world has forgotten them under the Taliban.

The peaceful protest was soon dispersed and the women were removed from the area by the Taliban, who warned them about the risk of attack.

“Once again, the Taliban prevented us from demonstrating by insulting and threatening us,” a protester can be heard in a video. “Unfortunately, the Taliban threatened us with explosion and suicide bombing.”

Last month, more than 50



Afghan women during a protest in front of Kabul University in Kabul. — AFP

students, mainly young women, were killed in an attack in Kabul that sparked demonstrations by Afghans around the world. The

Taliban broke up or suppressed protests in several provinces by force.

For example, in Kabul dozens of

female Hazara students who were planning to join a protest claimed to be poisoned in the Kabul University dormitory. — dpa

India’s IITs are bridge to the future, says minister

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Indian Union Minister for Education and Skill Development, Dharmendra Pradhan, called the IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) repositories of knowledge, experience, bridge to the future. He was speaking at the inaugural event of the IInvenTiv, where all-IITs R&D participated at the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.

It was first-ever all-IITs R&D showcase. The IITs, according to the minister, “are no more just Indian Institutes of Technology, but they have become instruments of transformation. IITs are the repositories of knowledge and experience and bridges to the future.”

The historic-first event “bore the testimony to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s mantra of ‘Jai Anusandhan’ to build an

Aatmanirbhar Bharat.”

The minister said IITs had to move beyond being just engineering colleges. “We have to stop benchmarking IITs on the basis of placement packages. IITs should redefine parameters and benchmark the number of innovations brought into the market, monetised innovations, and job creators created. He also said that technology will drive the next phase of growth and development with IT and communications technology among the front runners,” news agency ANI quoted Pradhan as saying.

He gave credit to the brilliant minds of the young talents for innovations. “Whether it is the development of Indian vaccines within a short span of time that not only benefitted Indians but millions of people across the world. It has all been possible because of brilliant minds like yours.”

DEHRADUN

Seven killed in India chopper crash

Seven people were killed on Tuesday when a helicopter bringing Hindu pilgrims back from a shrine high in the Indian Himalayas crashed in the mountains.

The pilot and all six pilgrims on board died when the chopper came down during the flight from Kedarnath temple, disaster response official Nandan Singh Rajwar said from the crash site.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, Rajwar said. Kedarnath temple, dedicated



to the god Shiva, stands at an altitude of 3,584 metres in the northern state of Uttarakhand and is thronged by pilgrims from across India in the summer, when access is possible. — AFP

KUWAIT

Kuwait’s parliament session begins

Kuwait’s crown prince, in a speech at Tuesday’s opening of parliament, urged the legislative and executive branches to focus on the country’s development and put an end to a prolonged feud.

Shaikh Meshal Al Ahmad al Sabah took over most of the ruling emir’s duties late last year and has since largely focused on key reforms.

“We hope for an end of the time of tension and escalation in the relationship between members of the legislative and



executive authorities...

There has been enough waste of painstaking efforts, precious time and squandered money,” Shaikh Meshal said in the address. — Reuters

BEIRUT

At least 60 killed in 10 days of Syria rebel clashes

More than a week of inter-rebel fighting in Syria’s Turkish-held north has killed 58 people, mostly combatants — a flareup that has allowed Al Qaeda-linked fighters to gain ground, a war monitor said.

The clashes since October 8, in a volatile area near the Turkish border, have been among the deadliest in years, killing 48 rebel fighters and 10 civilians, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

Among the 48 combatants



killed, 28 were members of the alliance led by Al Qaeda’s former Syria affiliate, according to the Britain-based war monitor, which relies on a wide network of sources inside Syria. — AFP



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In brief

PARIS



MORE FRENCH REFINERY STRIKES ON CARDS

French unions will decide later on Tuesday if they will maintain strikes at major French refineries, which could mean further fuel shortages at petrol stations across the country.

The strike has lasted three weeks already.

Tuesday's vote will decide if it will be continued or partially or completely ended, broadcaster BFMTV reported.

At least one type of fuel was sold out at about 28 per cent of the petrol stations, and several petrol stations temporarily closed altogether.

The government has already called in striking staff at several occasions to avoid shortages.

— dpa

BERLIN



GERMAN CYBERSECURITY CHIEF SACKED

The chief of Germany's main cybersecurity authority, Arne Schönbohm, got the sack on Tuesday because of his ties to a group which has been linked to Russian intelligence circles.

Schönbohm, who leads the Federal Office for Information Security (BSI), has been under fire for his connection to an association called Cyber Security Council Germany, which itself has been criticised for being linked to Russian intelligence circles.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser made the call on Tuesday.

Schönbohm had been president of the BSI since February 2016. — dpa

Russian attacks cut utilities in Ukraine



People lay flowers at a makeshift memorial for those killed after a Sukhoi Su-34 military jet crashed in the town of Yeysk in southwestern Russia. — AFP

KYIV/MYKOLAIV: Ukraine said Russia had destroyed almost a third of its power stations over the past week as Moscow stepped up a pre-winter campaign to strike infrastructure, a move the West says is a calculated attempt to disrupt and demoralise.

Missiles struck power generating facilities in a clutch of Ukrainian cities home to millions of people and several people were killed. Moscow acknowledged targeting energy plants, while Ukraine said water infrastructure had also been hit.

"The situation is critical now across the country... the whole country needs to prepare for electricity, water and heating outages," Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, told Ukrainian television.

At least one man died when a Russian missile reduced his apartment in the southern river port of Mykolaiv to rubble.

Three blasts hit port of Mykolaiv as City of Zhytomyr left without power, water. Zelensky accuses Russia of targeting civilians

"They (Russians) probably get pleasure from this," said Oleksandr, the owner of a local flower shop damaged in the attack. "They get pleasure from us feeling bad. I think they want us to bomb and shell (their) city buildings. But we won't do that to be different from them."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia was continuing to try to terrorise and kill civilians.

"Since October 10, 30 per cent of Ukraine's power stations have been destroyed, causing massive blackouts across the country," he wrote on Twitter.

Power cuts were reported in parts of Kyiv, many parts of the Zhytomyr region west of the capital and Dnipro, which, like Mykolaiv, is in the south but also far from the front line where Ukraine is pressing Russian forces occupying its southeast.

Zelensky reiterated his refusal to negotiate with Russian President Vladimir Putin whom he has accused of immorality.

"The terrorist state will not change anything for itself with such actions," he wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

"It will only confirm its destructive and murderous essence, for which it will certainly be held to account."

Putin has dismissed Zelensky as a puppet of Washington, which has given Kyiv more than \$17.5 billion in security aid.

Moscow denies deliberately targeting civilians, though it has pummelled villages, towns and cities across Ukraine. — Reuters

New Swedish prime minister appoints climate minister aged 26

STOCKHOLM: Sweden's new government named on Tuesday a 26-year-old as climate minister, the youngest person to lead a ministry in the home nation of teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg.

The nomination was among the cabinet members presented by newly elected prime minister Ulf Kristersson, who leads a right-wing coalition that is shored up by the far-right Sweden Democrats.

Romina Pourmokhtari, 26, was until now head of the Liberal party's youth wing, and has not been known to have climate as her political profile.

The young minister has in the past been an outspoken critic of Kristersson's move to closer align his party with the Sweden Democrats (SD).

"Ulf Kristersson without SD - Absolutely. Ulf Kristersson with SD - No thanks," she wrote in a post to Twitter in 2020.

Born into a family of Iranian origin in the suburbs of Stockholm, the young woman inherits the climate and environment portfolio, and beat the previous record of 27 years old for youngest minister.

Sweden is also home to teen climate activist Thunberg, who launched a massive global movement with millions of youths that has sparked a torrent of debate on the dangers of climate change.

Sweden's coalition government was announced on Friday after Kristersson



New Climate and Environment Minister, Romina Pourmokhtari

penned a deal with his partners and the nationalist and anti-immigration Sweden Democrats which pledged to support the government in exchange for policy commitments, especially on immigration and crime.

When presenting the cabinet, Kristersson also announced the creation of a new minister post for "civil defence" as the country is facing tensions with Russia.

The Sweden Democrats were the big winners in the election, and emerged as the second-largest party, trailing only the Social Democrats, who have dominated Swedish politics since the 1930s.

The significant influence of the Sweden Democrats over the four-party deal has sparked tensions within the Liberals, whose support is also essential for Kristersson's survival. — AFP

Govt forces seize 3 towns in Tigray

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia said on Tuesday its forces had seized three towns in Tigray, the latest major battleground shift in the brutal war, as the UN warned the situation was spiralling out of control with an "utterly staggering" toll on civilians.

International calls for a halt to escalating violence in Tigray have been mounting since a failed attempt by the African Union earlier this month to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table. — AFP

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT



Nama Shared Services invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
NSS/2022/7	METER DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPGRADE FOR NAMA DISTRIBUTION COMPANY	25-Oct-2022	1-Nov-2022	100/- Plus, VAT Amount (5 OMR) Total: 105 OMR (Non-Refundable)

- Interested parties may purchase the tender through the company website: (www.nama.om/ar/new-tenders) and Supplier user guide is available to be downloaded on the same page.
- Payment of the tender fees to be done online through the link available on the website. The deposit on the last day of purchasing should be before 12.00 pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through the I-supplier portal before 03.00 pm time of the Sultanate on Tuesday 1 Nov 2022.
- Each bid should be accompanied by temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers. Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered. The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at Nama Holding reception.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.

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Recall Campaign



Date of Campaign : 19/10/2022
Campaign Type : Recall Campaign
Product Description : Multiple models

Production Period	Brand	Vehicle Model	Affected VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles
Feb 04, 2020 through April 04, 2022	TOYOTA	HIGHLANDER, RAV4 LAND CRUISER	5TDLB3CH0LS000186 to JTMRW3FVXND565981	4712
	LEXUS	LX600, LX500D, NX	JTJCKDEZ5N5002159 to JTPB8CXXN4000856	350

Note : Not all vehicles in these VIN ranges are affected and/or sold in Oman.

Description:

The subject vehicles are equipped with a Vehicle Stability Control (VSC) system that is operated by a Skid Control ECU with a specific software logic. Due to an incorrect programming of the Skid Control ECU software, after a particular set of operating inputs where the driver manually turns off the VSC by the VSC in-vehicle control and the ignition is turned off and then turned back on while the brake pedal is continuously depressed, the VSC will not return to the default ON setting at the next ignition cycle. This condition can result in a noncompliance with applicable regulations in some countries. Unless these precise operating inputs are followed, VSC operation will automatically return to the default VSC ON setting at any subsequent ignition cycle. If the VSC does not default to VSC ON, a warning light will illuminate, indicating to the driver that the VSC is not activated.

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C.R 1703472

Why dismay on ageing gracefully



Dr Nisma Haris

The writer is a content creator and wellness advisor

Except for kids, no one wants to get older. For adults, the very thought of ageing in itself is scary and denied by many; the fear is enough to give goosebumps. But why this apprehension and dismay? Agreed, ageing brings with itself certain limitations but the experience that you have accumulated from all walks of life is matchless. It's the postulation that has been prevalent and instilled since ages that stirs up this for worse and ages you before ageing. Ageing lies more in our heads than our bodies. Some are of the perception that life is fun before you touch your

40s yet for others 50s is the time to wrap up. Just because some false cosmetic trends mislead you to believe you are no longer prettier or healthier? Setting this conviction to your mind that life comes in a particular age size and as you accept the haziness and monotony, you lose the essence of life and as the body follows the mind, you start to age irrespective of your biological age. The fear of ageing sprouts through many elements. Losing looks, acquiring some chronic disease such as cancer or heart problems, fear of death, unwelcoming or unloved feelings from the family or friends,

AGEING IS NOT TANTAMOUNT TO STAYING SICK ALL THE TIME BUT IT IS MORE ABOUT THE OUTLOOK TOWARD LIFE

psychological problems such as becoming a burden on other family members, or not having a secure retirement plan are some in the list why people fear ageing. Nonetheless, ageing is not tantamount to staying sick all the

time. It's more about the outlook toward life. Just because some ageing family member has been having a difficult time doesn't imply that is meant to happen to everyone. If you look intricately, you'll find people who are old but youthful, who are kindled enough to live life meaningfully. Life is a continuously evolving process. Every phase has its beauty from childhood to old age; instead of comparing these phases, it's better to be present in the moment and live that phase to the fullest. Don't limit yourself in your pursuits because societal norms tell you that so and so endeavours

are meant for said life phases. Whenever and whatever you feel like doing, go for it and let not your age be a hindrance. When you walk down this notion of crippling yourself with age measurement; you won't fear ageing anymore. You unlock new horizons for yourself, embark on new journeys that you have dreamt all your life to be on, and keep pushing yourself to break your preset boundaries. You celebrate your accomplishments, employ your valuable experiences gained and you find life is more meaningful than ever and ageing is not dreadful but graceful.

Mountainous Lesotho finds gold in trout fish farming

CLAIRE DOYEN

It's harvest time in Lejone, a small village nestling in mountains in southern Africa more than two thousand metres above sea level. The yield is not grain or fruit, but rainbow trout — the bounty from an undulating river at the foot of the peaks of Lesotho. Fishermen haul nets bulging with trout onto a floating platform. The fish are killed and put on ice, the first step on their journey to dinner tables in neighbouring South Africa. The settlement is home to one of Lesotho's two professional fish farms — pioneering ventures in the poor landlocked kingdom. Stephen Phakisi, 59, launched Katse Fish Farms with two partners in 2005. Today, he chuckles at how the trio leap into the business with meagre knowledge about some of its unknowns, including the best feed for fattening fish quickly. “For five years, it was totally uneconomical,” Phakisi says. He recalls how he once found a shoal of fish dead and belly-up in the water, while another time a full cargo of imported fingerlings died on a 16-hour drive from Cape Town. Today, the company is profitable, with a yearly output of 800 tonnes of fish, which is sold at about \$4 a kilogram. It supplies a few local restaurants, where the trout is usually pan-fried in butter for a few minutes and served with a side dish of kale and potato chips or rice. But the bulk of its production lands on the shelves of high-end supermarkets in neighbouring South Africa, where a vacuum-packed one-kilo bag can cost up to \$50. Trout farming in Lesotho has grown on the back of another of the mountain country's most famous exports: water. South Africa gets much of its water from its neighbour, which has dammed several of its waterways over the past three decades. The dams have widened riverbeds, creating inlets and basins that are ideal for trout farming. Katse Fish Farms lies more than 2,000 metres above sea level on the Malibatso River, upstream from the giant Katse Dam reservoir that supplies South Africa's capital Pretoria and the largest city, Johannesburg. Fish farming currently accounts for less than 0.1 per cent of Lesotho's \$2 billion GDP. Locals say they have always eaten salted, sun-dried freshwater fish. And young boys sell fresh catch to passing motorists. But as dam construction continues the country has the potential “to become the regional leader in aquaculture,” according to the Lesotho National Development Corporation. — AFP

As Europe piles sanctions on Russia, some sacred cows are spared



Martina Stevis-Gridneff

The writer is the Brussels bureau chief for NYT

Eight months into the war in Ukraine, and eight rounds of frantic negotiations later, Europe's sanctions against Russia run hundreds of pages long and have in many places cut to the bone. Since February, the European Union has named 1,236 people and 155 companies for sanctions, freezing their assets and blocking their access to the bloc. It has banned the trade of products in nearly 1,000 categories and hundreds of subcategories. It has put in place a near-total embargo on Russian oil. About one-third of the bloc's exports to Russia by value and two-thirds of imports have been banned. But even now some goods and sectors remain conspicuously exempted. A look at just a few items reveals the intense backroom bargaining and arm-twisting by some nations and by private industry to protect sectors they deem too valuable to give up — as well as the compromises the European Union has made to maintain consensus. The Belgians have shielded trade in Russian diamonds. The Greeks ship Russian oil unimpeded. France and several other nations still import Russian uranium for nuclear power generation. The net impact of these exemptions on the effectiveness of Europe's penalties against Russia is hard to assess, but politically, they have allowed the 27 members of the bloc to pull together an otherwise vast sanctions regime with exceptional speed and

PRESIDENT VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY CHIDING EUROPEAN NATIONS FOR CONTINUING TO PERMIT BUSINESS WITH RUSSIA, SAYING THEY ARE SKIRTING SACRIFICES

unanimity. “Ultimately, this is the price of unanimity to hold together this coalition, and in the grander scheme of things the sanctions are really working,” said Jacob Kirkegaard, a senior fellow in the Brussels office of the research group the German Marshall Fund, citing Russia's diminished access to military technology as evidence. “We would love to have everything included, diamonds and every other special interest hit, but I am of the opinion that, if sparing them is what it takes to keep everyone together, so be it,” he added. The Ukrainian government has criticised some of the exemptions,

with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy chiding European nations for continuing to permit business with Russia, saying they are skirting sacrifices. “There are people for whom the diamonds sold in Antwerp are more important than the battle we are waging. Peace is worth much more than diamonds,” Zelenskyy said to the Belgian Parliament during an address by video link in late March. The continued success of Belgium and the broad diamond sector in keeping the Russian diamond trade flowing exemplifies the sacred cows some EU nations refuse to sacrifice, even as their peers accept pain to punish the Kremlin. Exports of rough diamonds are very lucrative for Russia, and they flow to the Belgian port of Antwerp, a historically important diamond hub. The trade, worth €1.8 billion a year — about \$1.75 billion — has been shielded in consecutive rounds of the bloc's sanctions, despite being raised as a possible target soon after the Russian attack on Ukraine in late February. The Belgian government has said that it has never asked the European Commission, the EU executive body that drafts the measures, to remove diamonds from any sanctions list and that if diamonds were added, it would go along. Technically speaking, that may be true. But the latest round of penalties, adopted this month, exposed the intensive interventions when a coordination error occurred among the various services in the bloc that are involved in the technical preparation of sanctions. The incident, described to The New York Times by several diplomats involved as “farcical,” shows how the lobbying works. The diplomats spoke anonymously in order to describe freely what happened. The European Commission over the course of September prepared the latest round of sanctions and left diamonds off that list. Most exemptions have not been as clear-cut as diamonds because they have involved more complex industries or services, or affected more than one country. — *New York Times*



Diamonds being sorted at a facility operated by Alrosa, the Russian state-owned diamond company, in Mirny, Russia, on March 26, 2018. (Maxim Babenko/The New York Times)

Letters not merely about nostalgia...

It was indeed with great surprise that I received a postal letter the other day after more years than I remember having received it.

I was thrilled that I got the inland letter posted by a former colleague of mine to my old home address, a decade back!

As the custodian of the house kept the letter intact and handed it to me during my visit there, seeing the already ‘extinct species’ stirred memories that a long, long time ago it was the lifeline of our personal communication.

For a generation of mine or before, just mentioning the name post office, conjures up recollections of rooms abuzz with activities like the rat-a-tat of the telegram; the rhythmic drumbeat of rubber stamps; the smell of post-office glue and the dusty red post boxes in one corner, around which conversations would be struck and friendships re-forged.

The postal letters had a personal touch.

Writing letters was an emotional experience since it was done with love, care, and warmth.

It was the perfect opportunity to express feelings and emotions!

Without a doubt, one would admit that the old inland letters, postcards, and birthday greetings opened up a trove of memories. Stamped and postmarked, they have pursued us while moving from one town to another – whether it’s for studies or in search of a job or any other purposes!

Sadly, the generation today doesn’t like writing letters due to the advanced modes of communication.

I remember using every inch of space on postcards or letters.

A single reading of the narrative would seldom satisfy the receiver, and one would tend to read the post again and again.

I also remember my parents



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

WITHOUT A DOUBT, ONE WOULD ADMIT THAT THE OLD INLAND LETTERS, POSTCARDS, AND BIRTHDAY GREETINGS OPENED UP A TROVE OF MEMORIES. STAMPED AND POSTMARKED, THEY HAVE PURSUED US WHILE MOVING FROM ONE TOWN TO ANOTHER

showing me letters that I had sent to them during my hostel life.

My wife used to hold those letters I wrote to her during our early marriage years dear to her heart!

Leave alone the letters, the iconic red post boxes that stood splendidly at different hooks and corners of our places were once close to our hearts! Nothing feels more special than a handwritten letter!

Pathetically, the iconic postal service is slowly being relegated to the backyard, with each little advance in telecom and information technology.

In this era under the spell of the internet to sprint with the speed of 5G, along with smartphones and messaging apps, the ways of communication have seen a drastic change, especially over the last two decades with short telephonic or WhatsApp messages.

Many people have stopped taking the services of the post office and they feel that it is no longer needed. Over the decades, as the modes of communication evolved, we slowly moved from postcards, and inland letters, to phone calls, WhatsApp, emails, Instagram, video calls and an all-new version of ‘telegram’.

Now the letter is on my desk making me look back to wonder how the postal services which were once could rightly lay claim to being one of the largest, and most efficient, organisation acting as a surrogate for accepting and delivering business mail or parcels or imparting some other services in many parts of the world!

The era of e-mails and instant messages may have replaced the good old letter writing, but there is something more authentic and creative about someone pouring their heart on a crisp piece of paper.

It is still a treat to receive a letter from our kith and kin. Letters are not merely about nostalgia, there’s a lot more to them!

LIFE-SAVING DRILLS



Iraqi civil defence members ride in an inflatable boat as they take part in life-saving drills in Lake Najaf, east of the central Iraqi shrine city on Tuesday, in preparation for expected winter flooding in the nearby area. – AFP

Women on India’s farms left in limbo as climate shocks cost jobs

VARSHA TORGALKAR

Disabled mother-of-two Devanabai Dhaigude has in recent months regularly gone to bed on an empty stomach, after heavy rains flooded the cotton farm where she worked in western India. She and several other women lost their shifts in July at the farm in Beed, in Maharashtra state - where they removed weeds for Rs 150 (\$1.80) a day - after above-average monsoon rains battered the state.

Without any work, the 35-year-old, who can use only one arm, has resorted to borrowing from a local moneylender in the village of Chopadyachiwadi, as she otherwise cannot afford to buy food for her children everyday.

“Many days, I sleep without having dinner so that my two kids can have food. But how long can I provide food for them with my savings and borrowed money?” she asked, standing outside of her small house built from aluminium sheets.

“I wanted to fix the roof... as rainwater comes in. But with no work I have to postpone,” added Devanabai, who said she had been abandoned by her alcoholic husband earlier this year. She said she now has no choice but to wait for the harvest season in November in the hope of finding work on other farms.

“I will be at home until that time as no other kind of work is available,” Devanabai said. “I feel hopeless and

WHILE THREE-QUARTERS OF WORKING WOMEN IN RURAL INDIA RELY ON AGRICULTURE TO MAKE A LIVING, GOVERNMENT DATA SHOWS, VERY FEW ARE RECOGNISED AS FARMERS OR OWN FARMLAND, WHICH MEANS THEY STRUGGLE TO SECURE CREDIT OR ACCESS SUBSIDIES

helpless.” She is far from alone. Women working in agriculture across India are being squeezed by a combination of worsening climate change impacts that threaten crops and economic struggles due to the growing cost-of-living crisis and post-pandemic slowdown.

While three-quarters of working women in rural India rely on agriculture to make a living, government data shows, very few are recognised as farmers themselves or own farmland, which means they struggle to secure credit or access

government subsidies and aid programmes.

As extreme weather events such as drought, floods and heatwaves increase, the country’s poorest farm families are under growing pressure, with female farm workers often suffering the most, according to academics and activists. While men who lose work on farms can move to cities to find new jobs to provide for their families, women are often restricted by household responsibilities, said Kedar Kulkarni, an assistant professor of economics at Azim Premji

University in Bengaluru. “Women are the most vulnerable to climate change, economic recession, or failure of government policies,” said Kulkarni, who has written on the impact of extreme weather on agriculture.

“Any adaptation policy to climate change should focus on women, who are at the forefront.”

Farming accounts for nearly 15 per cent of India’s almost \$3 trillion economy and sustains half of its population. Yet as its rural agricultural workforce becomes more female-

dominated due to male migration to urban areas, erratic weather often leaves women having to deal with the fallout alone.

India was the seventh most affected country by climate change in 2019, according to the latest Global Climate Risk Index, an annual ranking from research group Germanwatch. Uneven monsoon rains and rising temperatures are fuelling fears about food production and farming livelihoods nationwide.

For example, Devanabai said she used to pick up four or five days of farm work a week before 2020, but that it had dropped to one or two days in recent years due to worsening droughts and heavier rainfall throughout the seasons, as well as hailstorms.

Saraswati Sevabhavi Sanstha, a local NGO that helps rural women, said that while farmers receive state compensation for their losses, the women like Devanabai who work for them have no such support.

“When female farm workers don’t get income, their kids drop out from school, they marry their daughters at young age, they suffer domestic violence,” said its supervisor Namdev Chopade.

“Basically, the freedom of women gets snatched and patriarchy returns slowly,” she added.

— Thomson Reuters Foundation



Farmers work in a cabbage field on the outskirts of Bangalore. – AFP file photo

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LYON

2005-2009

REAL MADRID

since 2009

FRANCE

since 2007

97 caps

37 goals

FORWARD • AGED 34

1.85 m

season 2021/2022

Club

Matches

Goals

France

10

6

MAJOR TITLES

2005201020152022

BALLON D'OR

SPANISH CHAMPIONSHIP

CLUB WORLD CUP

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

FRENCH CHAMPIONSHIP

NATIONS LEAGUE

Sources: FFF, Transfermarkt.fr

Photo AFP

AFP

ALEXIA

PUTELLAS

BARCELONA

since 2012

SPAIN

since 2013

MIDFIELDER • AGED 28

1.73 m

MAJOR TITLES

201020152022

BALLON D'OR

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

SPANISH CHAMPIONSHIP

Sources: Barcelona, soccerway.com

AFP

Benzema bags Ballon d’Or

PUTELLAS RETAINS WOMEN’S PRIZE; LEWANDOWSKI GETS GERD MUELLER TROPHY

PARIS: Karim Benzema was rewarded for his remarkable success with Real Madrid by winning the Ballon d’Or at a star-studded ceremony in Paris on Monday, while Spain’s Alexia Putellas retained the women’s prize.

Benzema, who is the first French winner of the most prestigious individual award in football since Zinedine Zidane in 1998, scored 44 goals in 46 games for his club last season as Real won the Champions League and La Liga.

Fifteen of his goals came in the Champions League, including hat-tricks in knockout wins against Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea and three more across both legs of a stunning semifinal defeat of Manchester City.

The 34-year-old, who also

won the Uefa Nations League with France, succeeds Lionel Messi with the Argentine not nominated this year after claiming the prize for the seventh time in 2021.

“The Ballon d’Or might be individual but it’s still a collective award. This is the Ballon d’Or of the people,” Benzema declared.

“Winning this trophy was always something that was in the back of my mind,” he added.

Benzema pushed Sadio Mane into second place, although the Bayern Munich and Senegal star did have his off-field work recognised as he was given a new award named after former Brazil star Socrates.

Kevin De Bruyne of Manchester City was third, with Barcelona striker Robert Lewandowski coming fourth.

PROUD OF MY JOURNEY

Winning the award, organised by France Football magazine, caps a remarkable career revival for Benzema, who was frozen out of the France team for five and a half years. He was later handed a one-year suspended prison sentence and fined 75,000 euros (\$73,848).

He returned to the national team for last year’s European Championship and will now go to the World Cup in Qatar with France next month.

“There were moments that were much more difficult for me, for example when I wasn’t with the national team, but I am really, really proud of my journey,” he added.

Benzema turns 35 on December 19, the day after the World Cup final, and is the oldest winner of the Ballon d’Or since

the very first, Stanley Matthews in 1956. The former Lyon striker is also the fifth Frenchman to win the prize, with Raymond Kopa, Michel Platini and Jean-Pierre Papin all getting their hands on the trophy before Zidane.

The award was previously based on a player’s performances over the course of the calendar year.

But the format has changed, with the prize now based on a player’s record over the last season.

PUTELLAS EYES RETURN FROM INJURY

That may have helped Putellas win the women’s award despite suffering a serious knee injury in July that saw her miss the European Championship with Spain. Instead, Putellas’s performances with Barcelona were

recognised after she top-scored in the Women’s Champions League to help the Catalans reach the final, which they lost to Lyon.

“It makes me even more annoyed to be injured, but I am very happy to be here,” Putellas said. “To retain the trophy is much harder. When I injured my knee I thought my chances of winning it had gone but in the end the jury based their decision on the whole of last season, of which I only missed one month.”

The 28-year-old edged out Beth Mead, who scored six goals for the England side that won the Euro on home soil.

Sam Kerr of Chelsea and Australia came third.

It is just the fourth time a women’s Ballon d’Or has been awarded, with Norway’s Ada Hegerberg winning the inaugural

prize in 2018 and Megan Rapinoe triumphing in 2019.

There was no ceremony in 2020 due to the pandemic, before Putellas won her first a year ago.

Her injury means she is unlikely to make it a hat-trick next year, although she hopes to play again this season.

“The knee is doing well. I just need to focus on recovering and if everything goes as I hope -- and as the doctors and my club hope -- I will be back playing this season,” she said. Barcelona and Spain midfielder Gavi won the Kopa Trophy for the best player aged under 21, while Lewandowski received the award for last season’s top goalscorer, renamed the Gerd Mueller Trophy.

Real Madrid’s Thibaut Courtois won the prize for best goalkeeper of the year. — AFP



Liverpool's Diogo Jota in action with Manchester City's Bernardo Silva. — Reuters

Portugal forward Jota ruled out of World Cup with calf injury

LONDON: Portugal's Diogo Jota will miss the World Cup after suffering a serious calf injury, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp confirmed on Tuesday.

The winger was stretchered off in the closing stages of Liverpool's 1-0 Premier League win over Manchester City on Sunday.

"Not good news about Diogo — yes he will miss the World Cup," Klopp said at a press conference ahead of Wednesday's home match against West Ham.

"(It's a) pretty serious injury in the calf muscle and now the recovery process starts. That's it pretty much.

"That is the first diagnosis, which was pretty clear, and all the rest will now follow in the next few days. It is very sad news for the boy, and for us as well of course and for Portugal."

Klopp, who said Jota would not need an operation, did not put an exact timescale on his return but is expecting the 25-year-old to be sidelined for months.

"After such a good night

at Anfield mine ended in the worst way! In the last minute one of my dreams collapsed," Jota posted on Twitter.

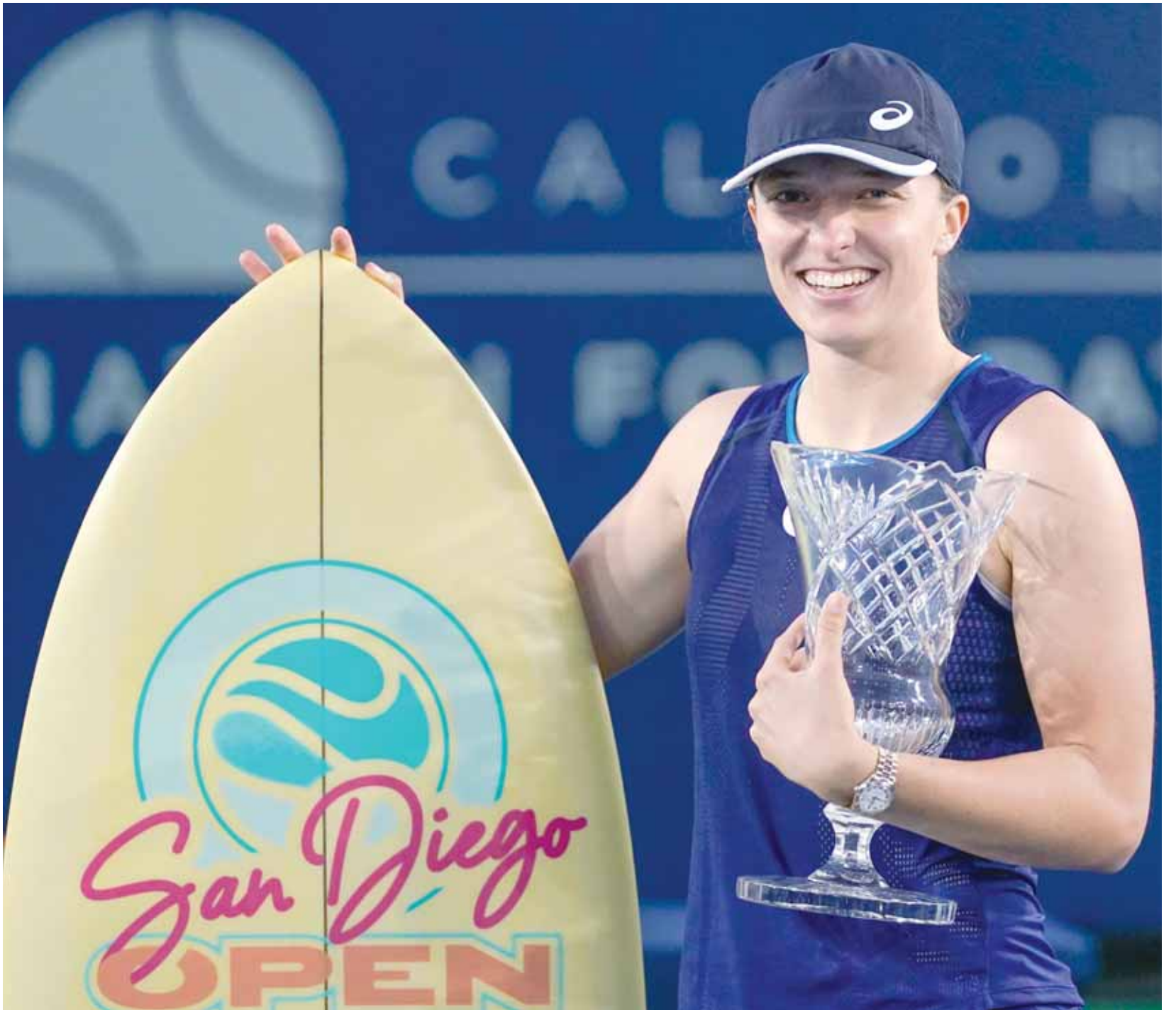
"I will be one more supporting from the outside, club and country, and fighting to be back as soon as possible."

Jota's absence adds to Liverpool's injury woes, with Luis Diaz also ruled out until after the World Cup in Qatar. Joel Matip will also miss the visit of West Ham, but Trent Alexander-Arnold and Ibrahima Konate could be fit to return to the starting line-up.

Klopp was sent off late on in an emotional encounter with City for taking his protests towards the referee's assistant too far. The German coach has so far not received a touchline ban from the Football Association and expects to take his place on the touchline on Wednesday.

"I think I will be there tomorrow because nothing happened yet," he said. "I don't think something will happen tomorrow a few hours before the game."

— AFP



Top-ranked Swiatek beats Vekic for San Diego title

SAN DIEGO: World number one Iga Swiatek captured her 11th career WTA title and her eighth of the year on Sunday by outlasting 77th-ranked Donna Vekic in the San Diego Open final.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek defeated the 26-year-old Croatian 6-3, 3-6, 6-0 for her WTA-best 64th match victory of 2022.

"It was a really tight match and pretty long," Swiatek said. "We felt the intensity for sure. At the end I wanted to be the one who played the last ball in."

Swiatek took her prior titles this year at the US and French Opens as well as Qatar, Indian Wells, Miami, Stuttgart and Rome.

The 21-year-old Polish star bounced back in her ninth championship match of the year after losing last week's final at Ostrava to Czech Barbora Krejickova.

In a rain-halted semi-final delayed to Sunday afternoon, Vekic rallied from 4-2 down in the third set when showers struck to defeat 19th-ranked American Danielle Collins, this

year's Australian Open runner-up, by 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2).

That left her only a short rest break before facing Swiatek for the title, but she tested the top-ranked star through two sets.

Swiatek broke in the sixth game and held twice to capture the first set after 40 minutes when Vekic netted a backhand.

In the second set, Vekic broke on a forehand crosscourt winner for a 4-2 lead and held twice to force a third set. It caused Swiatek to step up her form.

"I wanted to give it all, and

knowing how Donna can serve, I wanted to be more loosened up on my return games -- not think, just relax and let my instincts take over," Swiatek said.

She broke on a forehand winner to seize a 2-0 edge in the decider, broke again in the fourth game and captured the match after one hour and 47 minutes when Vekic double faulted away a last break.

Vekic was in her first WTA final since she won her third career title last October at Courmayeur, Italy. — AFP

First Gary Kirsten cricket camp in Oman a grand success

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket (OC) has been constantly working hard to ensure that the domestic coaches, young cricketers and beginners are provided top-class facilities to learn, train and improve their skills sets.

As part of OC's continued efforts, the recent maiden partnership initiative with South Africa's Gary Kirsten Cricket (GKC) Academy turned out to be a grand success.

A total of 75 players attended the five-day coaching camp that catered to grassroots players, high-performance cricketers and domestic coaches.

Evert Laubscher, Oman Cricket Academy manager, said that a total of 21 cricketers, including three Omani nationals and five girls, took part in the grassroots camp, conducted by two coaches from the GKC Academy – Ryan van Niekerk and Garreth Von Hoesslin.



He added: "Buoyed by the success of the inaugural camp, the founder of GKC and former South African great Gary Kirsten has expressed his interest to come to Oman when the second camp is held next year."

A total of 54 players took part in the high-performance camp, which included one Omani national and three girls.

Assisting the two GKC coaches were coaches from Oman Cricket – Laubscher, Mazhar Khan, Syed Amir Ali, Syed Amir Kaleem, Parviz al Balushi, Adeel Shafique, Muhammad Nadeem, Haider Ali and Desmond Berhardt.

The senior GKC coaches also conducted a three-day coach education session for the OC coaches.

The visiting GKC coach Niekerk said that "coaches session provided practical application of global coaching standards through CoachED Cricket across a variety of topics."

He added: "The high-performance camp with the local coaches was quite a useful exercise as they [domestic coaches] are now better equipped with more

refined processes which they can continue to explore in the coming months."

During the high-performance camp for cricketers, the GKC trainers worked out a schedule that was split for Test, ODI and T20 formats.

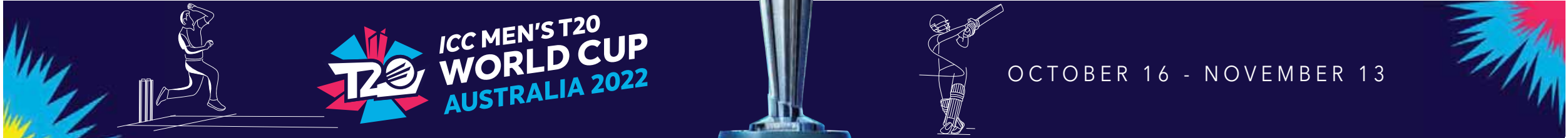
Commenting on the coaching sessions for the young cricketers of Oman, Laubscher said: "The

drill sets over three formats for the budding cricketers was a great hit and training sessions were held in outdoor and indoor conditions at the Oman Cricket Academy."

He added: "The camp was greatly welcomed by the parents of the cricketers who sent in a lot of emails applauding the initiative and are now looking for the next camp with the GKC team."

All the participants were handed a certificate of participation and a branded shirt from OC and GKC.

GKC founder and World Cup-winning coach Kirsten in a household name among cricket fans across the world. Since his retirement in 2004, the former opening batter has devoted his time running GKC, coaching international teams and franchises and tasted tremendous success, leading India to a World Cup title in 2011 and more recently as a mentor of Gujarat Titans in IPL 2022.



NETHERLANDS CLOSE IN ON SUPER 12

GEELONG: Bas de Leede took two wickets and made an unbeaten 30 as the Netherlands took a giant step towards the Twenty20 World Cup Super 12 on Tuesday with a tense five-wicket victory over giant-killing Namibia.

At a sun-soaked but near-empty Kardinia Park in Geelong the African nation were restricted to 121-6 in their 20 overs, with the Dutch using seven different bowlers to put the clamps on.

De Leede was the best of the bunch, taking 2-18, complemented by outstanding fielding. The Europeans, boosted by former South Africa and India coach Gary Kirsten on their coaching staff, were cruising at 91-1 in the 14th over in reply before Namibia took four late wickets to set up a nervous finale.

The Netherlands needed six runs off the last over, with De Leede the hero, hitting a boundary then two to secure the win with three balls left. “We lost wickets at bad times, we can’t afford to do that and we can learn from that as a team,” said De Leede.

“But the self-belief has always been there and it’s nice to win two tight games. Maybe it opens up a bit more freedom for the boys.”

It was a huge victory against a team that sent shockwaves around the cricketing world with a stunning 55-run triumph over Asian champions Sri Lanka on Sunday on day one of the World Cup in Australia.

The Netherlands beat the United Arab Emirates on the same day by three wickets and now have



two wins from two.

They have made the second stage once before, in 2014, when they topped their group and then sensationally beat England. “Never nice to be on the losing side when it’s so close,” said Namibia skipper Gerhard Erasmus.

“We put a good show in the field. With the bat, it seemed difficult for both sides but they ran better than us.”

Erasmus won the toss and chose to bat, but it looked a poor decision as Namibia slumped to 32-3 in the sixth over, struggling with their

timing. Stephan Baard and Jan Frylinck steadied the ship with a 31-run partnership before Roelof van der Merwe removed Baard for 19.

Frylinck compiled 43 before De Leede tempted him into a big hit and he was caught in the deep, then

he trapped Erasmus in the same over. Twenty-seven off the last three overs set a decent target but just seven boundaries in total was testament to the Dutch bowling.

In reply, Max O’Dowd and Vikram Singh powered to 44 without loss for the Dutch after five

overs. Singh whacked two sixes in his 39 before going for another off Bernard Scholtz and he was caught by the ropes.

Fired up, Namibia snared four more quick wickets, including O’Dowd for 35, to set up a nervy finish. — AFP



World Cup hero Binny replaces Ganguly as BCCI chief

MUMBAI: Former Test player Roger Binny was elected president of the powerful Indian cricket board on Tuesday, replacing former captain Sourav Ganguly in the role.

Jay Shah, son of Home Minister Amit Shah, was re-elected as secretary of the world’s richest cricket board. He also heads the Asian Cricket Council.

At its annual general meeting in Mumbai, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) also approved a women’s Indian Premier League, which is likely to begin in March next year, after the men’s event proved a massive hit.

Binny, a bowling all-rounder in his playing days, was part of the India team which won the

1983 World Cup in England, a victory that sparked India’s obsession with the game.

Later talking to reporters, ACC president Shah said the 2023 Asia Cup, originally scheduled in Pakistan, would be played at a neutral venue.

“We (India) can’t go there, they can’t come here. In the past also, Asia Cup has been played at a neutral venue,” he said.

Cricket tours between India and Pakistan remains suspended because of soured political relation between the neighbours.

United Arab Emirates hosted this year’s Asia Cup which was shifted out of Sri Lanka because of political unrest in the island nation. — Reuters

Sri Lanka back on track despite Meiyappan hat-trick

GEELONG: Karthik Meiyappan lit up the Twenty20 World Cup with a hat-trick on Tuesday but it was in vain as Sri Lanka crushed the United Arab Emirates to get their campaign back on track.

The Asian champions were stunned by Namibia in the tournament’s opening game on Sunday, a crushing 55-run defeat that left no room for error against the UAE.

They responded by bowling out the UAE for 73 for a convincing 79-run victory, but not before some drama.

Sri Lanka were cruising at 117-2 in Geelong when spin bowler Meiyappan derailed their plans in the 15th over, removing Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Charith Asalanka and skipper Dasun Shanaka in successive balls.

It was only the fifth hat-trick at a T20 World Cup, and the first-ever for the UAE in any T20 international.

Shanaka’s team recovered to post 152-8 with Pathum Nissanka making a gritty 74 and Meiyappan ending with 3-19.

“Really disappointed with the way we ended the innings (with the bat). We could have scored 180-190,” said Shanaka. “But it was important to get a win, we focused on a win only. He (Nissanka) was outstanding.”

Sri Lanka, the 2014 champions,



face the unbeaten Netherlands next, needing another win, while Namibia take on the winless UAE.

After being put into bat, Sri Lanka made a strong start, reaching 42 before Kusal Mendis (18) was trapped lbw by Aryan Lakra. Nissanka was joined by Dhananjaya de Silva and with the trumpets blowing from the Sri Lankan fans, they both crunched big sixes.

But their 50-run partnership came to an end with an amateurish

run-out. Nissanka drove the ball and De Silva set off, but his partner did not respond, leaving him stranded.

Nissanka brought up his eighth T20 half-century with a cover shot but then watched as Rajapaksa, Asalanka and Shanaka all fell to Meiyappan. Wanindu Hasaranga de Silva was snared by Aayan Afzal Khan four balls later as they lost four wickets for three runs. Nissanka kept calm at the other end and began swinging his bat,

before being dismissed in the final over.

SELF-BELIEF

Dushmantha Chameera quickly rattled the UAE in their reply, clean bowling Muhammad Waseem and Aryan Lakra in the space of five balls. The UAE had no answer to the pace attack, slumping to 21-4 in the sixth over and they never recovered as Sri Lanka ran riot. Chameera ended with 3-15 but hobbled off late in the game. — AFP



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Pact to establish Oman’s first hyperscale cloud region

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman will implement a second Oracle Dedicated Region Cloud@Customer to help meet national data sovereignty requirements and establish a comprehensive disaster recovery process, this was announced yesterday by Oracle.

“The Oracle Dedicated Region Cloud@Customer is at the heart of our ‘National Data Centre Programme’ that aims to implement hyperscale cloud services across all Oman government entities to optimise and modernise the government’s IT ecosystem, and offer easy to access digital government services,” said Eng Said bin Abdullah al Mandhari, Chief Executive Officer of ITHCA Group.

“The second Oracle Dedicated Region Cloud@Customer will help us build adequate disaster recovery capabilities, achieve high levels of data and business resilience, and together with the first dedicated region, we have now established Oman’s first hyperscale data centre region,” he



(Image for illustration only)

added.

Earlier this year, ITHCA (Oman Information and Communications Technology Group) implemented the first Oracle Dedicated Regin Cloud@Customer and is now live in production. With the implementation of the second Dedicated Region, the Omani

government is able to migrate its IT systems to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) while retaining physical control of its hardware and data to help meet the Sultanate of Oman’s data sovereignty requirements.

Oracle has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with ITHCA to train

and upskill Omani government executives and Omani government customers on OCI’s cloud services with live technical seminars and training labs. Oracle University’s training programme on OCI will also be offered as part of this agreement. The executives will receive OCI certifications following the successful

- ITHCA GROUP ESTABLISHES SECOND ORACLE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE DEDICATED REGION TO BOOST PUBLIC SECTOR INNOVATION AND HELP ENSURE DATA SOVEREIGNTY.
- OMAN GOVERNMENT BENEFITS FROM UPSKILLING AND GETS CERTIFIED ON ORACLE CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE

completion of the training.

“The Oman Government’s National Data Centre Programme has set forth a clear vision for building a cloud-ready centralised infrastructure that allows the government to easily scale operations, save costs, and drive innovation securely. The Oracle Dedicated Region Cloud@Customer is a complete OCI cloud region in Oman ICT’s data centre, and with a second dedicated region, the Oman government has strengthened the foundation for the growth and development of Oman’s ICT ecosystem,”said Nick

Redshaw, senior vice president – Technology Cloud, Middle East and Africa and UAE Country Leader, Oracle.

Following the implementation of the second Oracle Dedicated Region Cloud@Customer, the ITHCA Group will be able to offer all 100+ OCI cloud services as well as Oracle Fusion Cloud Applications to Oman government entities.

The Oman government will also be able to move its business-critical workloads to the cloud, enabling operational efficiency and cost savings while ensuring compliance with the Sultanate of Oman’s data sovereignty requirements. Designed for single-tenant usage, the Oman government’s Dedicated Region Cloud@Customer is a self-contained region where all data, including API operations and metadata, remain local to the region. ITHCA will also have access to the tools needed to reliably run Oracle and third-party applications, create cloud native applications, and modernise existing ones with machine learning and modern cloud services.

Oman Food Bank gets backing from key properties

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 18

Oman Food Bank, the private-led initiative to help channel surplus food to economically weaker segments of the local community, has begun attracting commitments from prominent hotels that have begun gravitating to the cause.

Last week, leading property Kempinski Hotel Muscat said it had signed an agreement with Oman Food Bank to minimise the wastage of food and help create better awareness on the importance of food management, especially within hotels.

The initiative is part of the reputable hospitality chain’s support for BE Health, a CSR

scheme that brings all of the Kempinski hotels under one corporate social responsibility vision that champions a world where health is contagious.

Kempinski Hotel Muscat’s General Manager, Carsten Wiegandt said “Through this partnership and many other similar projects that the team has been involved in, we hope to raise better awareness on how local businesses can contribute to the community that they are operating in.

Five-star hotels produce large quantities of food, especially with a property of our size and the number of outlets, there is much to be donated to people who are in need in different parts of the country.

TURN TO P15

PDO commits \$4 million in funding for social investment projects

BALQEES ALORAIMI
MUSCAT, OCT 18

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) signed on Tuesday, October 18, nine memoranda of cooperation with several parties in an official ceremony held under the auspices of Eng Badr bin Salem al Maamari, Secretary-General of the Oman Tender Board, in addition to the presence of Sayyidah Maani bint Abdullah al Busaidiyah, Director General of the Family Growth Department at the Ministry of Social Development, and Shaikh Musallam bin Ahmed al Hadari, Wali of Thamrait.

The agreements, signed at the PDO Knowledge World venue in Muscat, cover a commitment in funding support totalling \$4 million. To encourage the provision of the best medical services across the Sultanate of Oman, PDO is supporting the construction of the new Mudhi Health Centre in the Wilayat of Thamrait, which serves 40 patients per day. It is also financing the purchase of medical equipment for the Royal Hospital and Al Halaniyat Health Centre

In line with the company’s commitment to supporting the education sector in its concession

“

The signing follow the company’s well-established practices in supporting local communities by investing in sustainable development projects.

ABDULAMIR AL AJMI
PDO Director of External Affairs and Value Creation

area, the company signed an agreement to provide laboratory computers to Al Maaref and Al Kuhl schools in the wilayats of Haima and Al Jazir. More than

558 students will benefit from these computers, which will contribute to improving the quality of education.

PDO Director of External Affairs and Value Creation Abdulamir bin Abdulhussein al Ajmi said: “Today’s signings follow the company’s well-established practices in supporting local communities by investing in sustainable development projects.

This and other social investment projects arising from the partnership between the company and various government stakeholders have been endorsed by the Social Investment Committee and are a testament to the company’s dedication to supporting the prosperity of local communities.”

Other agreements include the purchase of a new bus for the Al Noor Association for the Blind and the financing of the Ibtikar Club for a childcare centre in Muscat.

To encourage the adoption of sports and healthy lifestyles in Oman, PDO s sponsoring the Himam Trail Run, which attracts more than 500 participants from 40 countries.

Furthermore, PDO will finance the renovation of the camel-racing track in Seih Al Arad in the Wilayat of Bahla, and the construction of a 1.6 km track in Hamra Duru in the Wilayat of Ibri, both of which will benefit 118 villages and more than 6,000 beneficiaries.

Apollo Hospitals Oman marks Omani Women’s Day

MUSCAT: Apollo Hospitals Oman, marked Omani Women’s Day coinciding with Breast Cancer Awareness Month by recognising the unsung heroes, the doctors from government and private healthcare sectors in the Sultanate of Oman, who have dedicated their life towards fight against Breast cancer.

The Omani women employees were recognised for their contribution and celebrated to mark the day, October 17, that was declared as Omani Women’s Day in the year 2009.

“Breast cancer is one of the leading health challenges Omani women face today. The Ministry of Health, doctors at both government and private sector, Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre, Royal Hospital and one of nation’s leading NGO — Oman Cancer Association, have been crucial in treating breast cancer patients



and spreading awareness on early detection. Carrying forward this initiative, Apollo Hospitals will be conducting a breast cancer awareness event open for public on October 29th in collaboration with OCA and free screening will be performed with mammogram,” said VT Saileshwaran, Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Oman.

Representatives from Ministry

of Health, Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre, from the private sector were felicitated.

“We have more than 30 hospitals in the private sector currently and they see thousands of patients everyday and more than eight million visits every year. We see the quantity and quality of the hospitals and the medical staff.

We need to do more on detection including illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension as well as breast and other cancers,” Dr Muhanna al Maslahi, Director General, Private Health Establishment, Ministry of Health.

“Globally female breast cancer has surpassed lung cancer as the most commonly diagnosed cancer, with an estimated 2.3 million new

cases 11.7 per cent in 2020 as per Globocan. When you are 40 is when your country needs you the most,” pointed out Dr Adil al Ajmi, Head of Breast Programme SQCCRC, explaining how cancer cases are being detected in the 40s.

Dr Taha al Lawati, Sr Consultant Onco- Plastic Breast Surgeon from Royal Hospital said that Breast cancer is the highest among all patients — Omanis and non-Omanis.

According to him, collaboration is the most important thing between government and private sectors, as breast cancer should be fought by both of us for early diagnosis as it is the key to prevention and cure breast cancer; key to success is screening and early detection of breast cancer. With early detection we reach survival rate of 99 per cent, while late diagnosis has hardly 4 per cent survival rate.”

“The Apollo team felt that

the best way to celebrate Omani Women’s Day would be to recognise the efforts of the unsung heroes in appreciation of their achievements and dedication in fight against breast cancer,” explained Debraj Sanyal, COO – Group Business Head, Apollo Hospitals Oman.

The celebration also marked the move towards establishing Breast Cancer Clinic at Apollo Super Specialty Hospital. Throughout the year, Apollo Super Specialty Hospital is offering special tests to encourage screenings for early detection to guarantee and maintain quality life.

After receiving the felicitation, in her presentation Dr Rajyashree said, “Block cancer out, prevent cancer and protect yourself from cancer. Prevent by changing your life and make it healthy by including proper diet, regular physical exercise staying fit and not obese. These are all interrelated.”

KR Eshraqa’s Stemazone inspires young minds at Oman Science Festival

MUSCAT: Khimji Ramdas (KR) Eshraqa’s Stemazone kiosk enjoyed a remarkable student turnout at the third edition of the Oman Science Festival held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC). The KR Group was the Gold sponsor of the event, which witnessed students making a beeline for Stemazone’s interactive booth, where they were acquainted with its hybrid learning experience.

Initiated by Eshraqa, the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of Khimji Ramdas, Stemazone is a sustainable educational programme that has been conceived in partnership with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth. Stemazone helps students understand the analytics of problem-solving, teamwork & collaboration, testing ideas, and creating inspirational work; while aiding them to think critically and creatively, and encouraging an element of curiosity in them.

Nailesh Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas Group stated: “Our STEAM programme aims to inspire students to imbibe a scientific bent of mind and equip them with the necessary skills required for the jobs of the future. This comes within the framework of



achieving the objectives of the national agenda set by Oman Vision 2040, when it comes to building an effective ecosystem of Omani talent by fostering scientific research, creativity, and innovation, through interactive learning sessions and workshops.”

“Education’ is one of Eshraqa’s core pillars and we will always work towards supporting and strengthening it. The Oman Science Festival is an acclaimed event, known for spreading knowledge and awareness of the field and its importance in people’s lives; as well as developing students’ thinking and refining their skills. The sheer strength in the number of children and parents swarming our booth at the festival was testimony to the exceptional turnout it has received this year”, he added.

Sohar International celebrates 2nd batch of Tomohi graduates

MUSCAT: In line with its social agenda to continuously educate, enhance, and empower national talent, Sohar International has been at the forefront of investing in youth programmes that are sustainable, relevant, and inclusive. In line with the same, the bank honoured the second batch of its Tomohi graduates — a one year internship programme that seeks to enhance Omani youth skills. Held under the auspices of Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the ceremony was held at the W Hotel recently. The event was presided over by Mohamed bin Mahfoodh al Ardhi, Chairman of Sohar International, a number of Board of Directors and executive members, staff of the bank, special



invitees, as well as the parents of the interns. The event’s proceedings began with a welcome-note by Mohamed bin Mahfoodh al Ardhi addressing the audience on this significant milestone in the lives of Tomohi Candidates; which was followed by a video highlighting Tomohi Programme journey and a keynote speech from Mutheer al Kalbani, Head of Sohar Academy.

Subsequent to this, a speech

was delivered by a graduate where she expressed her views and the benefits of Tomohi Programme, followed by a special graduation ceremony felicitating the programme’s graduates was conducted. The event also included a special session awarding the Omani innovator Sumaya al Siyabi who won first place as the first Arab woman in the Stars of Science programme.

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MUSCAT: Toyota passenger car range includes popular models that are renowned for being reliable, durable and of high quality. At Toyota, the focus has always been to deliver the finest ownership experiences and every model in the Toyota range exhibits that impressively. The Toyota passenger car range includes sedans like the all new Yaris, Corolla and Camry.

The all new Yaris adopts a powerful and elegant fastback style that embodies the Yaris’ trademark stability and reliability.

The all new Toyota Yaris promises a dynamic driving experience thanks to its four-cylinder engine that is equipped with 16-valve DOCH and dual VVT-I. The vehicle is available with 1.5-litre capacity engine, producing 105 horsepower and 138 Nm of torque with fuel consumption of 20.5 km/l.

This is paired with Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT), which simulates a seven-speed



sequential shift transmission. The Yaris’ cabin hosts a range of practical features, including an 8-inch multimedia screen with Apple CarPlay & Android Auto together with a USB port on the head unit and two ports at the rear console that enable passengers to connect external media devices.

Additional features include a four or six-speaker sound system and an automatic air conditioning system with two rear vents for extra passenger comfort.

The Corolla’s striking look is complemented by an exciting

drive personality imbued by three powertrain options. It includes a newly developed 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 HP and 20.39 Kg-m of torque which is mated to a new Direct Shift CVT transmission and a 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque, which is paired with a CVT transmission. The Corolla’s cabin is accentuated with an extensive range of features, which vary based on the trim level. Occupants also benefit from AC vents for the rear seat,

a moonroof, 4.2 or 7-inch color multi-information display (MID), 7-inch touch-screen multimedia infotainment display, rear view camera, cruise control, six-speaker sound system, and 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

The stylish Camry is available in two engine options. The 2.5 Litre engine delivers 204 HP & 243 Nm torque & 3.5L engine delivers 298 HP & 356 Nm torque. Camry is also available in the 3.5L sports edition that adds to the thrill. The Camry’s interior is stylish and impressive. The dash design has a sporty, cockpit-like feel, while treating both the driver and the front passenger to wider visibility. The exciting interior’s distinctive design offers comfort and convenience with a layer of luxury and hosts a range of advanced features. These include a panoramic moonroof, a floating 7-inch or 9-inch multimedia touch screen that comes integrated with Apple CarPlay and Android AutoTM, among others.

Alizz Islamic Bank’s SSB assesses Q3 performance

MUSCAT: In the third meeting of this year, Alizz Islamic Bank’s Shariah Supervisory Board (SSB)



discussed a variety of items including new products about which resolutions were passed and also considered a number of requests for the restructuring of corporate finance and appropriate resolutions were passed. The meeting was attended by Alizz Islamic Bank’s CEO Sulaiman al Harthy, senior executive management, the Internal Shariah Auditor, the Sharia Compliance Officer and the Shariah Audit Officer.

In addition, the meeting discussed the Q3 Shariah audit report and the Shariah compliance and Shariah risk report and appropriate resolutions were passed. Alizz Islamic Bank’s SSB also endeavours to propose innovative products and banking solutions that permanently meet the customer needs and develop strategic plans that achieve the Islamic banking sector’s growth and its development in the Sultanate of Oman.

“There is growing demand for Alizz Islamic Bank’s products as we innovate products which gain customer satisfaction by offering flexible finance options of various types. As for the Islamic banking sector, data indicates that the total assets of the Islamic banks and windows altogether grew to about RO 6.2 billion, which accounts for 15.9% of the total assets of the banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman by the end of June 2022, a 9.6% increase compared to the same period in the past year.

As for the total finance granted by the financial institutions, it grew to about RO 5.1 billion, an 11.2% increase. The Islamic banks and windows’ deposits grew to RO 4.7 billion, a 12.8% increase by the end of June 2022,” said Issa bin Salem al Riyami, the Head of Alizz Islamic Bank’s Shariah Audit & Compliance Department.

Oman's Islamic banking sector a 'systemically significant' financial services segment: CBO

STRENGTHENING ECO-SYSTEM:

Move to enable rollout of new shariah-compliant liquidity products

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 18

With a share approaching a noteworthy 16 per cent of total banking assets, Oman's rapidly growing Islamic banking sector is now deemed a "systemically significant" segment of the country's vital banking services industry, a high-level official of the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced here on Monday.

Malik bin Abdullah al Mahrooqi (pictured), Advisor at the Office of the Executive President of the CBO, affirmed the Islamic banking sector's growing importance at IFN Oman Forum 2022, a day-long conference organised by Redmoney Events in cooperation with the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

The designation of the Islamic banking sector as a "systemically significant" segment, Al Mahrooqi



said, comes on the 10th anniversary of the issuance of a circular by the CBO unveiling the Islamic Banking Regulatory Framework – a key milestone that heralded the debut of Shariah-compliant financial services in the Sultanate of Oman. "The Islamic banking and finance services sector in Oman has come a long way since then, with two full-fledged Islamic banks and

five Islamic windows," said Al Mahrooqi. "The market share of the Islamic banking sector reached 15.9 per cent of total assets of the banking sector as of June 2022. In terms of both market share and asset size, Oman has now become the 15th largest Islamic banking market in the world, out of 70 countries where Islamic banking is present.

Similarly, with the passing of the 15 percentage point in market share, Islamic banking has become a systemically significant segment of the financial sector in the Sultanate of Oman," the official stated. Listing other highlights of the sector's performance, Al Mahrooqi said loans provided by the Islamic banks and windows accounted for 19.9 per cent of

total loans of the banking industry, while Islamic deposits reached 17.9 per cent of total deposits as of June 2022. "This market share is in response to year-on-year growth of 10.9 per cent for total financing and 13.6 per cent for total deposits between June 2021 and June 2022. This asset growth is backed by a lower non-performing ratio of 1.9 per cent as of June 2022. Similarly here, profit before tax of Islamic Banking entities has shown an increase of 10.9 per cent for the first two quarters of this year."

The sector has also grown geographically as well, having expanded its presence across various governorates, according to the official. Islamic banking services are now provided via a network of around 100 branches, supplemented by onsite banking, mobile banking units, as well as online and mobile banking platforms, he said. Citing the latest Financial Stability report issued in August this year, Al Mahrooqi said the Islamic banking sector in Oman is expected to "sustain its positive trajectory

in the short to medium term". Growth will be driven by growing awareness, strong retail demand for Islamic products, supportive regulation, a strong push from Islamic windows of conventional banks, an improving operating environment, positive real GDP growth, and higher oil prices, he said.

With a view to further bolstering this outlook, the Central Bank of Oman is preparing the ground to enable Islamic banks and windows to offer Shariah-compliant liquidity products, he said.

Further support will come in the form of lender of last resort / liquidity support facility, and remuneration on deposits with the Central Bank. The overall goal is to strengthen the entire ecosystem underpinning this key sector, he noted.

"A few months ago, the Higher Shariah Supervisory Authority reviewed and approved the contract structures of these products. Now efforts are being made to complete the remaining groundwork and gradual offer these products to the market players," he added.

Oman Food Bank gets backing from key properties

FROM PAGE 13

As Oman Food Bank is also looking for additional support, we are delighted to have some of our team members volunteer as well." Earlier, Al Bustan Palace – A Ritz Carlton Hotel – joined hands with a number of city properties to host a food cart race, the proceeds from which were donated to Oman Food Bank.

Nabil al Zadjali, General Manager of Al Bustan Palace said: "Helping families in our community is a cause that is very near and dear to our hearts given our line of business. We have adopted sustainable methods to reduce and dispose food waste and firmly believe that the hospitality industry plays an integral role in championing this important cause that impacts every country around the globe. We hope that our actions will inspire

others to follow our footsteps so that zero-hunger can become a living reality."

Oman Food Bank, a charitable venture, was inaugurated last week under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources. Also on the occasion, a number of public and private sector organisations made pledges to divert surplus food to the charity. Initiatives to recycle waste food were also discussed.

Digital banking is no more optional post-Covid

VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, OCT 18

Digital transformation in all sectors, including banking, is no more optional in the post-Covid scenario, said a senior banking executive on Monday. Speaking to the *Observer*, Khalid al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa, said, "Like everyone, we also have an integrated digital strategy apart from our cooperate strategy. It is not just about automating our service, but about offering a good bank experience to clients, including helping them to transact from anywhere and anytime. We are working with a Fintech firm where clients can access our products using smart contracts. The client can go to the agency for personal and vehicle loans and they can get it approved within in few minutes. This will put us in a better position against our competitors." Al Kayed said that upgrading payment systems like e-wallets is part of our strategy and encouraged by the CBO. "We plan to introduce some products during the course of next year."

CBO has introduced a number of strategic initiatives for Fintech development in Oman. In 2020, CBO launched the Fintech Regulatory Sandbox Framework to fast-track the rollout of Fintech solutions by enabling applicants to test their proposed Fintech solutions live under CBO's oversight with any needed temporary regulatory exemptions. The CBO is also closely tracking the developments in other emerging areas and has set up task forces to study Central Bank Digital Currencies and other digital innovations to equip itself to take appropriate action as and when needed. Kayed said that the banking sector is the main pillar of the Oman economy, which showed a lot of resilience during the Covid period. "Despite internal and external challenges during Covid, banks proved to be sustainable and it



There has been steady growth in terms of Islamic banking's contribution to the GDP and we are seeing a migration from conventional to Islamic banking

KHALID AL KAYED
CEO, Bank Nizwa

is evident from the growth and profitability figures. Islamic bank got was impacted less during the pandemic due to product offers such as social financing, which really made a difference while competing with conventional banking."

He said that there has been steady growth in terms of Islamic banking's contribution to the GDP and we are seeing a migration from conventional to Islamic banking," he said.

According to CBO, the Islamic banking sector in the Sultanate of Oman, which comprises of two Islamic banks and five Islamic banking windows, has continued its double-digit growth in 2021 despite the adverse economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

As of December 2021, the total asset base of the Islamic banking sector in Oman reached RO 5.9 billion with a growth of 13.6 per cent, which corresponds to a market share of 15.2 per cent of total banking sector assets, thereby gaining systemic significance as a sector. Similarly, as of December 2021, total deposits and total financing of the sector reached RO 4.4 billion and 4.9 billion respectively, with a corresponding share of 17.2 per cent and 17.4 per cent.

PM Liz Truss struggling for support



ANDY JALIL
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The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.

AMID GROWING CALLS FOR HER TO RESIGN, LIZ TRUSS MUST LOOK AT AREAS FROM WHICH SHE CAN DERIVE SOME CREDIT AND THE JOB MARKET IS ONE SUCH PLACE.

Rarely has a new prime minister in United Kingdom faced such difficult days with ongoing economic turmoil sparked by her and ex-chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng's disastrous 'growth plan' announced in the mini-budget.

Amid growing calls for her to resign, Liz Truss must look at areas from which she can derive some credit and the job market is one such place.

The push for growth was the

focus of much of, Kwarteng's announcement last month, including the introduction of support to encourage economically inactive over-50s back into the job market, many of whom exited during the uncertainties of the pandemic.

This policy is an attempt to soothe an overheating labour market experiencing record levels of vacancies and to generally raise British labour supply.

But if Truss is committed to increasing labour supply there is another group who have a tremendous amount to offer the UK. There are 668,000 young people in the country who are known as NEET – not in education, employment or training.

This status carries with it the risk of serious economic scarring and negative long-term impacts on a young person's earning potential, job selection and even mental health.

Disadvantaged young people are twice as likely to fall into this category than their better-off peers, according to research by youth organisation Impetus, as mentioned by its senior policy advisor, Phoebe Arslanagic-Wakefield.

They just need the right support to rush forward and embrace the future. Recent research from the Prince's Trust and Learning and Work Institute shows that more than half of these young people say they are able to and want to work. The same research finds 84 per cent of NEET young people have employment or career aspirations over the next three to five years.

Despite the fact that the UK is missing out on the real contribution these young people can make to the shared economic future, they are in danger of being neglected by policymakers who may perceive the problem as intractable. The proportion of young people classified as NEET in the UK has declined by a mere 0.7 per cent in the last twenty years.

But this does not mean it is a set feature of Britain's labour market. There are, several levers available to those willing to seriously look at this problem.

For example, the introduction of a Kickstart Plus scheme, similar to the one in place during the pandemic but instead targeted at disadvantaged young people to provide a path into work. Such a scheme fits in well with

the programme of supply-side reform former chancellor was wanting to pursue, increasing labour productivity by strengthening the skills of young people.

But beyond helping thousands of young people reach their potential and building a healthier labour market, there are very sound political reasons for Truss to charge her ministers with investigating and delivering on the support needed to move young people from NEET to EET.

In recent UK elections, unprecedented age variation in voting pattern has emerged, with fewer young people voting Conservative than ever before. In 2019, only 21 per cent of those aged 18-24 voted Conservative, down from 27 per cent in 2015 and 30 per cent in 2010. In short, the Conservative Party needs to win back those young voters.

Truss has a limited amount of time to prove her gamble will pay off and bring people outside. These young people left out of the labour market are a golden opportunity for Truss to help meet the high vacancies, improving labour supply for the long-term and increasing economic participation of a generation.

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HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER

UN HAILS SUPPORT FOR PEACE IN

MUSCAT: Before His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Minister of the Agriculture and Fisheries Dr Saad bin Hamood bin Alkhatib, Chairman of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Sultan Al Mubarak bin Abdullah bin Saad bin Hamood bin Alkhatib, and Chairman of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Sultan Al Mubarak bin Abdullah bin Saad bin Hamood bin Alkhatib, took the oath of office at Al Rasad Palace on Thursday. SEE ALSO P2

NEW RO 50 BANKNOTE FROM THIS MONTH

MUSCAT: To mark the 50th anniversary of the Omani Revolution and in commemoration of the secretary of the Sultanate the Ministry of Finance, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) issued a 50 Omani banknote of new 50 Omani banknote, which will begin circulation this month. CBO will also issue new banknotes for all other denominations during the last quarter of 2020. YOM YOM

SOME PEOPLE NOT FOLLOWING SOCIAL DISTANCING

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior have issued a joint statement warning that some people are not following social distancing guidelines. The statement says that some people are still going to the market and other places without wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. It also says that some people are still going to the market and other places without wearing masks and maintaining social distancing. It also says that some people are still going to the market and other places without wearing masks and maintaining social distancing.



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A woman artist's tryst with shades of life

Before becoming the director of the Omani Fine Arts Society, Maryam al Zedjali was one of the pioneers when the art scene in the country was kickstarted thanks to the effort of the government. From her humble beginnings learning from her masters and eventually gaining international exposure, Maryam has been instrumental in encouraging other artists, especially women to embrace life in art... **P20**

22nd edition of Italian Language Week kicks off in Muscat

THE EMBASSY OF ITALY in Muscat launches the Italian Language Week, which since 2001 annually celebrates Italian language and creativity in the world, under the High Patronage of the President of the Italian Republic. The initiative is promoted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation with the support of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of University and Research and the main partners in language promotion. The Swiss government is also associated with the initiative.

The theme of the 22nd Italian Language Week edition is "Italian language and youth". «Language is in fact a tool in constant evolution and the digital age makes the change even faster, starting from the youngest part of society, the digital natives», said Federica Favi, Ambassador of Italy to the Sultanate of Oman. "This year's title - "Come Scusa? Non ti followo" (Sorry? I don't follow you) - is based on the way Italian youth is adapting the English vocabulary of social media to Italian grammar, inventing new words and expressions. The title was chosen by stu-

dents of Italian schools abroad and reflects on the one hand the ability of digital natives to express the spontaneous change of languages but also on the other hand the difficulties of mutual understanding and communication that exist between generations", she added.

This year, the week began with three intercultural workshops with the students of Italian language at Sultan Qaboos University, on Mass Communication on how Italian and Arabic languages are changing in the digital age and how Italian youth is contributing to the evolution of Italian language.

The Embassy of Italy and the Embassy of Switzerland in Muscat will also present a range of initiatives to celebrate the Week in collaboration with universities and cultural institutions of the Sultanate and to address the issues of the relationship between language and young people in Italian and Arabic together with students, writers, Omani readers and enthusiasts.

Dr Thomas Oertle, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Sultanate of Oman said: "As we celebrate language, a private open-air movie night will be hosted by the Swiss Embassy and will feature the comedy "40

& Climbing (Quarantenni in salita)", by Swiss director Bindu de Stoppani. A 2021 popular comedy on three friends rediscovering their long, lost friendship from the days of their youth while climbing the mountains in the beautiful alpine surrounding."

The week will also include a workshop for Omani and Italian children between the age 9 and 11 at Bait Al Zubair, where the children will learn the words of sustainability in Italian and Arabic, in addition to ways to make the planet greener.

The grand finale of the week will be with a special talk between the celebrated Omani author Jokha al Harthy and Giacomo Longhi, an Italian translator at Bait Al Zubair. With her successful novel she opened the doors of an Omani home to Italian readers and made the traditions and the culture of the Sultanate closer to the public. Giacomo Longhi translated the emotions and the rhythm of Jokha al Harthy into Italian, making them real.

In the framework of the Italian Language Week, talks between The Omani Italian Friendship Association "TOIFA" and Dante Alighieri Society, the most prestigious centre for Italian language learning, will take place in order to prepare the opening of an Italian language course in Muscat, making Italian language more accessible to the Omani public, stimulating mutual knowledge and supporting the growth of tourism, study and commercial flows between Italy and Oman.

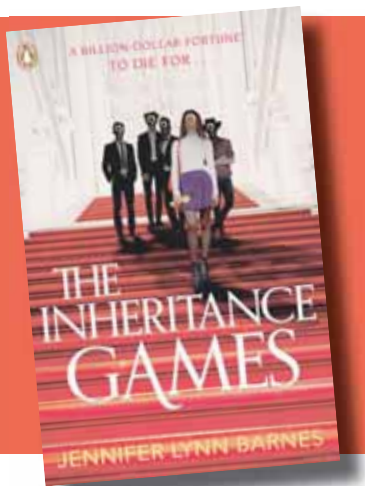


READ

THE INHERITANCE GAMES

BY JENNIFER LYNN BARNES

Avery Grambs tries to figure out why an inheritance from a stranger was bestowed upon her.



ENTERTAINMENT

US actress Julia Roberts (L) and US actor George Clooney arrive for the premiere of "Ticket to Paradise" at the Regency Village Theatre in Westwood, California. — AFP



FASHION

Students look at fabric samples during a lecture by fashion designer Takuya Morikawa at Bunka Fashion College in Tokyo. While the loss of fashion greats Kenzo Takada and Issey Miyake heralded the end of a fashion era, decades after Japanese design revolutionised Parisian catwalks in the 1970s and '80s, a new generation of designers are striving to emulate their global success. — AFP





Cranberry farmers fight climate change to protect Thanksgiving staple

AMERICAN FARMERS growing cranberries, a quintessential component of Thanksgiving feasts, have had to adapt their traditional methods to fight the effects of climate change.

The tart red berries, boiled with a heaping dose of sugar to make classic cranberry sauce, thrive only in the right environment — but climate change threatens to make conditions more unpredictable and extreme.

After a terrible 2021 season, Massachusetts farmer Billy McCaffrey is ecstatic for a bumper crop this year.

"Phenomenal, unbelievable," the 70-year-old former teacher says, surrounded up to his waist by a sea of floating berries.

His cranberry farm, south of Boston, is one of hundreds in the northeastern US state of Massachusetts — the second largest producer after midwestern Wisconsin.

"Every year is up and down... I just hope we can keep it and get paid," says McCaffrey, worrying that an unexpected hail storm could still cause disaster for him and his wife Mary.

The McCaffreys had worried that 2022 could see a repeat of the previous year, which the head of the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association (CCCCA), Brian Wick, says was "one of our worst crops in quite some time."

"The rains and the environment in the vine canopy created the perfect conditions for rot (and) fungus" the expert said.

DOUBLE WHAMMY

This year's growing season started with a drought, the exact opposite of last year, but farmers were able to use pumps and water to keep their crops alive.

That eats into their bottom line. Now this year looks like one of the biggest crops ever with a prediction of 1.9 million barrels (189 million pounds) produced in Massachusetts according to the CCCC.

Keith Mann, 54, has outfitted his large farm in Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts, with solar panels to help offset fuel costs. He has



also installed several windmills on his property and sells electricity back to the grid.

Though he's not sure the average temperatures have noticeably increased, Mann says the "weather extremes cause real troubles for us."

"We had drought all summer... Then late in the summer we had torrential downpours, (which)

caused flooding, and the flooding causes fungal infections."

"Too much rain all at once is a problem. Not enough rain most of the season was another problem. Put them together it's a double whammy," said Mann.

As for this year's Thanksgiving and those in the relative near future, Americans don't need to rush and stock up on cranberry

sauce just yet.

Farmers are adapting to the changing climate and producing new varieties to be processed by the massive Ocean Spray farm cooperative in Massachusetts.

"Thanksgiving, we get up for that. It drives us" said McCaffrey.

"You're going to have to change your technique and tweak it a little bit at a time." — **AFP**

DISCOVERY

Sound cues during sleep may help people forget memories, study says



PLAYING SOUNDS to people while they sleep could help them forget specific memories, a new study suggests.

Researchers said the method could one day be developed into a technique to help combat traumatic memories.

Past research has indicated that playing sound cues during sleep can be used to boost specific memories.

However, researchers suggest the latest study is the first to provide strong evidence the technique can also be used to help people to forget.

First author of the study, Dr Bardur Joensen, a former PhD student at the Department of Psychology, University of York, said: "Although still highly experimental at this stage, the results of our study raise the possibility that we can both increase and decrease the ability to recall specific memories by playing sound cues when an individual is asleep."



"People who have experienced trauma can suffer a wide range of distressing symptoms due to their memories of those events."

"Though still a long way off, our discovery could potentially pave the way to new techniques for weakening those memories that could be used alongside existing therapies."

In the study 29 people were asked to learn pairs of overlapping words including everyday objects, locations and famous people.

Examples of these were hammer-office and hammer-Cardi B, and Beckham-bicycle, and castle-bicycle.

Previous research found that learning a pair of words, and playing a sound associated with that pair during sleep, improved memory for the word pair when they woke up.

But this time, when the pairs of words were overlapping, and participants were played audio of one of the words, they found an increase in memory for one pair, but a decrease in memory for the other pair.

Researchers say this suggests it is possible to cause selective forgetting by playing associated sounds during sleep.

Senior author of the study, Dr Aidan Horner from the Department of Psychology at the University of York, said: "The relationship between sleep and memory is fascinating."

"We know that sleep is critical for memory processing, and our memories are typically better following a period of sleep."

"The exact mechanisms at play remain unclear, but during sleep it seems that important connections are strengthened and unimportant ones are discarded."

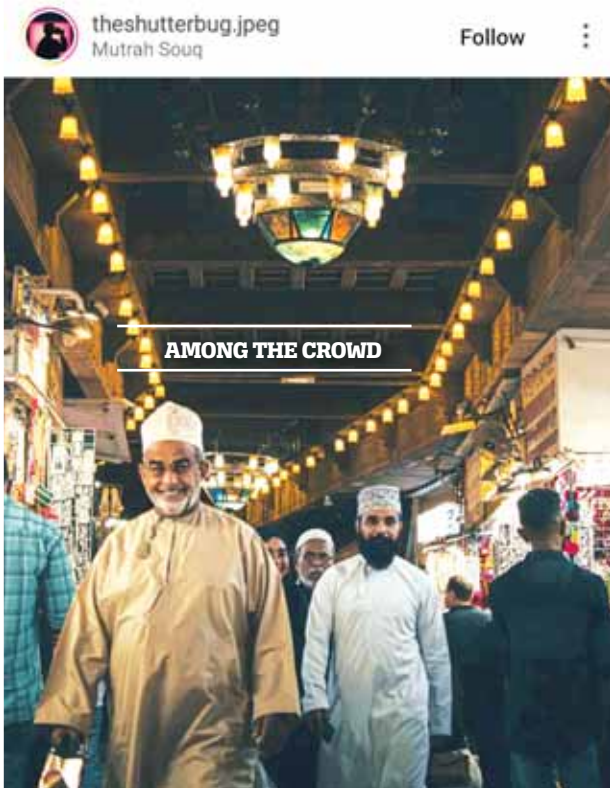
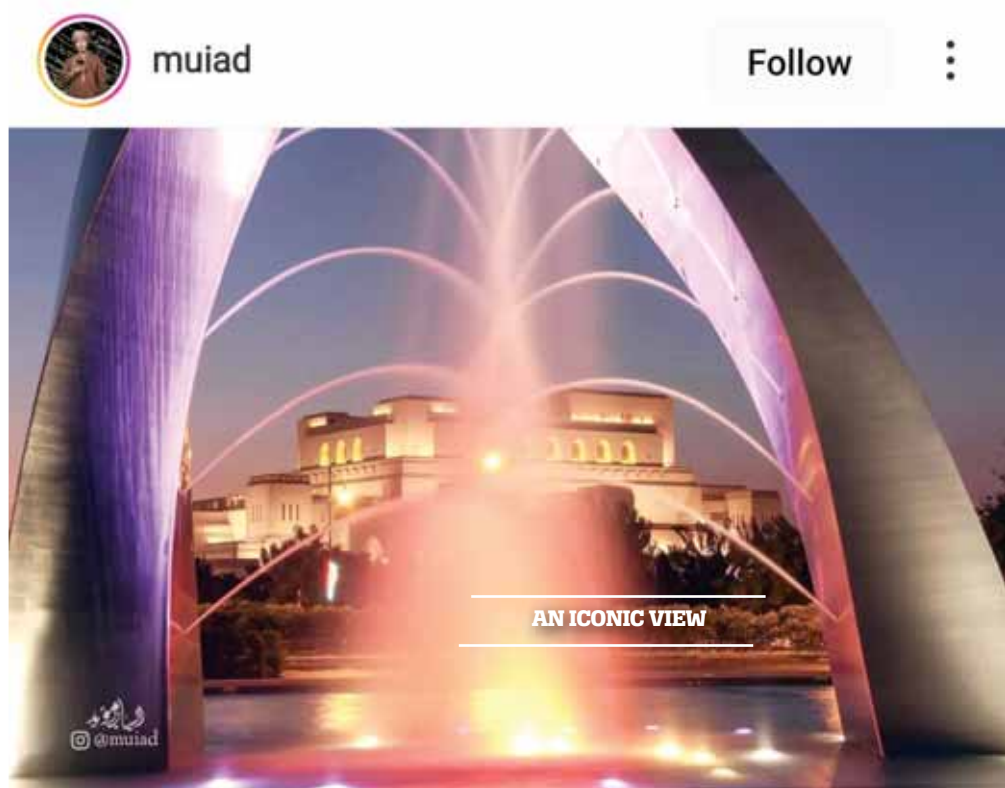
"This research raises the possibility that this process could be manipulated so that sleep could be used to help weaken painful memories."

"The next steps for our research team are to establish how these cues cause forgetting, so that we can turn the effect on and off, and whether we can use the same technique to weaken existing real-world memories." — **dpa**



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AROUND THE WORLD

ANIMAL PLANET

'Magical' pink dolphins rescued in Bolivia in push to boost species



RESCUERS USING boats and drones worked for three days last week in a lush stretch of Bolivia's Amazon rainforest to find a pair of trapped pink river dolphins, a species endangered by steady encroachment along the waterways the colourful mammals call home.

The two dolphins were found languishing in still water ponds cut off from the Bolivian Amazon's Rio Grande after they swam inland and the main channel dropped, according to Claudia Venegas, a biologist with a rescue program.

She explained that many pink dolphins lose access to the river because of their reproductive instincts.

"When the females go to give birth they seek out quieter places and so they leave the river in search of calmer backwaters," said Venegas, noting that other females will often join to help raise the infant calves and teach them to fish.



Over the past dozen years, nearly 60 trapped pink river dolphins, scientifically known as *Inia boliviensis*, have been rescued, she added.

The dolphins' rosy complexion is due to blood vessels close to their skin, though some specimens are blue or even white.

While scientists have documented just a handful of fresh-water dolphin species, the pink river dolphins are the largest, growing up to nine feet long (2.7 metres) and weighing some 300 pounds (136 kg). Believed to be semi-divine creatures by some indigenous groups, they use echolocation to navigate often murky waterways. But their populations have fallen sharply along with deforestation, according to researchers.

Sharon Deem, another member of the rescue programme, said that efforts to conserve the species point to even larger ecological goals.

"That's really one of the beauties of this project right now," she said, stressing that efforts to study and protect "this magical creature" can boost environmental sustainability for all species, including humans. — Reuters

FASHION

'A turning point': Japanese fashion after Kenzo, Miyake



AT TOKYO'S PRESTIGIOUS

Bunka Fashion College, students concentrate in silence that is broken only by the sound of scissors and sewing machines as they strive to emulate the global success of alumni like Kenzo.

The loss of greats Kenzo Takada and Issey Miyake heralds the end of a fashion era, decades after Japanese design revolutionised Parisian catwalks in the 1970s and '80s.

And the French capital remains a goal for emerging talent like Bunka graduate Takuya Morikawa, whose streetwear-inspired tailoring made its Paris Fashion Week debut two years ago.

Morikawa, 40, hopes his shows at the industry's top event will lead to "an amazing future, beyond my wildest dreams".

Before launching his label TAAKK in 2013, Morikawa spent eight years at Miyake's studio, where he worked on runway collections and the famous "Pleats Please" line, but also harvested rice and made paper to learn about traditional craft methods.

He said he was saddened by Miyake's death this summer, but inspired younger designers not to feel disheartened.

"We need to do our best to not let these designers' deaths impact the fashion world. If that happens, it means we're doing our job badly," he said.

One of the big names picking up the baton is Nigo, who shot to fame in the 1990s with his streetwear brand A Bathing Ape. The designer, who also studied at Bunka and whose real name is Tomoaki Nagao, was named artistic director at Kenzo last year, after founder Takada died of Covid-19 in 2020.

Another Japanese label enjoying international success is Sacai, founded in 1999 by Chitose Abe, who was tapped as

the first guest couture designer for Jean Paul Gaultier.

GOOSEBUMPS

Kenzo and textile visionary Miyake became hugely influential by pursuing their passion in Paris, as did haute couture trailblazer Hanae Mori, who died in August.

Left holding the torch are Yohji Yamamoto, now 79, and 80-year-old Rei Kawakubo, founder of Comme des Garçons, who shook up the fashion establishment in the early 1980s.

New challenges, including the vast range of styles now available for every taste, have made it harder for emerging designers to grab global attention, according to Bunka president Sachiko Aihara.

"The world was shocked" by avant-garde Japanese design, she said, recalling how her students began to dress in black after Yamamoto launched his first monochromatic clothing line.

"But we no longer live in an era where a designer presents a collection and everyone wears it," she said at the school, whose basement archive is packed with valuable garments that students and teachers can study.

This is because of the explosion in diverse types of clothing, "not a decline in talent", stressed Aihara, adding that it was now also essential to study business to start a competitive brand.

Designer Mariko Nakayama, who worked as a stylist in Tokyo's fashion scene for decades, also remembers "feeling goosebumps" wearing Comme des Garçons for the first time.

She agrees, however, that the industry is different now.

"Looking at Virgil Abloh for Louis Vuitton, for example, I feel that now is an era of edit," with designers making modern tweaks to classic shapes and patterns, she said at her bou-

tique in Tokyo's upscale Omotesando district.

CREATE NEW VALUES

Working in Paris, London, New York or Milan is still seen as key to succeeding for Japanese designers, said Aya Takeshima, 35, who studied at Central Saint Martins in the British capital.

Takeshima's recent show at Tokyo Fashion Week for her brand Ayame featured women wearing sheer blouses and embossed dresses, while male models donned delicate dresses.

She said she had chosen to study abroad to "learn what I needed to become an independent designer", adding that the experience had helped her understand different perspectives.

"Honestly, I think it would be difficult" to succeed internationally while only working in Japan, she said.

"In Japan, it felt like technique was drilled into you first, while ideas and concepts... were secondary", but it was the other way around in London, Takeshima explained.

Bunka college recognises these benefits and plans to offer a scholarship for studying abroad as part of its 100th-anniversary celebrations next year.

For 21-year-old Natalia Sato, a student at Bunka, Miyake and the old guard of Japanese designers "brought a great deal of Japanese and Eastern values" to the world, including techniques inspired by "delicate" traditional craftsmanship.

"I'm worried that the foundation they built might be destroyed by their passing", but "at the same time, this is a turning point" that could provide new creative opportunities, she said.

"It's a chance for me to think about how we can create new values." — AFP

LITERATURE

Sri Lankan author Shehan Karunatilaka wins 2022 Booker Prize



SRI LANKAN author Shehan Karunatilaka has won the 2022 Booker Prize with his novel "The Seven Moons Of Maali Almeida".

The writer was praised by judges for the "scope and the skill, the daring, the audacity and hilarity" of his second novel.

The book is a darkly comic murder mystery set in Colombo in 1990 during the Sri Lankan Civil War.

It follows Maali Almeida, a war photographer, as he tries to find out who killed him in seven moons.

Karunatilaka, who was born in Galle and grew up in Colombo, has said that Sri Lankans "specialise in gallows humour and make jokes in the face of crises".

"It's our coping mechanism," he said.

"To make any long list requires luck... to have a novel about Sri Lanka's chaotic past come out just when the world is watching Sri Lanka's chaotic present also requires an alignment of dark forces.

"Unlike my protagonist Maali Almeida, I don't gamble. So I don't expect to roll two more sixes, though I will scream with joy if I do."

This year marked the first time Karunatilaka was shortlisted for the award, though his 2011 debut book, "Chinaman", took home the Commonwealth Book Prize, the DSL and the Gratiaen Prize.

The 47-year-old follows fellow Sri Lankan-born author Michael Ondaatje who won the Booker in 1992 for "The English Patient", and the Golden

Booker celebrating 50 years of the prize in 2018.

British art historian Neil MacGregor, chairman of the 2022 judges, described Karunatilaka's book as "an afterlife noir that dissolves the boundaries not just of different genres, but of life and death, body and spirit, east and west".

"It's a book that takes the author on a roller coaster journey through life and death, right to what the author describes as the dark heart of the world and there the reader finds to their surprise joy, tenderness, love and loyalty," he said.

As well as MacGregor, the judging panel comprised academic and broadcaster Shahidha Bari, historian Helen Castor, novelist and critic M John Harrison and novelist, poet and professor Alain Mabanckou.

Karunatilaka was presented with the trophy by the Queen Consort.

He was also presented with £50,000 (\$56,785) by last year's winner Damon Galgut, as well as a designer-bound edition of his book.

Shortlisted authors — No Violet Bulawayo for "Glory", Percival Everett for "The Trees", Claire Keegan for "Small Things Like These", Elizabeth Strout for "Oh William!", and Alan Garner for "Treacle Walker" — received £2,500 each.

First awarded in 1969, the Booker is open to writers of any nationality whose work is written in English and published in Britain or Ireland.

— PA Media/dpa

art & life

Local Scene

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WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 19 | 2022

By Lakshmi Kothaneth

Maryam al Zedjali was a school student in 1980 when Youth Art Studio was established in the Sultanate of Oman. She heard about it, approached the studio and enrolled as a member.

"There were just 15 of us," she recollected. Today, Al Zedjali is an artist of fame who visits international art galleries to broaden her art horizon.

At the Art Studio she met Anwar Sonya, Rabat Mahmood, Suhar Foda, Yasmeen Mohammed, Ayub Malank, Hunaini brothers and Ahmed al Adawi. In the years to come, each of them left a mark in the field of art.

"I was trained by Anwar Sonya. I had no idea about colours or artistic elements. At that time, we were just depicting Omani heritage and culture. We had no idea about the international art scene or history. Later, with the introduction of workshops, and visits to international art galleries our horizons began to widen," she shared.

Everyone remembers Egyptian art teacher Dr Baba Ghashin fondly. After finishing school, Maryam got married and art took a back seat. She had to miss four opportunities that came her way to study art in Kuwait, Egypt, Italy and USA. She began to work in telecommunications in 1990 and soon had the urge to continue her studies. She took Philosophy and Psychology at Beirut University and by 1993, there was an announcement about the formation of the Omani Fine Arts Society.

Maryam took a plunge and joined OFA along with Hassan Meer, Salem al Hasheli and Yousuf al Fori.

"At that time, art was not considered that special. From 1990 to



A woman artist's tryst with shades of life



1993 art was active but everyone felt it was not necessary and people had the impression art cannot be taken as a career. For us, however, it was an amazing time — everything was supported by the government. We would work until 2 am. We felt it was a distinguished field. We started taking care of Omani women artists and encouraged artists in all the regions. The number of artists began to increase and we had soon four branches located in Muscat, Salalah, Al Buraimi and Suhar," she said.

By then, more than 1,000 artists had registered. By 1999, Maryam was keen to study art further and the Diwan supported her to complete her Master in Arts.

In 2008, she became the director of the Omani Fine Arts Society.

"We had some exciting projects such as Omani Flying Exhibition - it was held in the flights for seven destinations with 43 artists travelling to seven different destinations. And there were many such exciting projects.

I want to continue the journey and bring all my experience to benefit my country. I used to paint Omani heritage buildings, houses, doors and windows. I was keen to start a volunteer project and thus began the Imty project!" she explained.

The artistic cultural tourism project, Imty is to immortalise archaeological moments through art. The village is located in Izki, reoriented by two suburbs Al Ain and Sawad. The old mud houses with Falaj running through the village are a picturesque sight.

"Through this project, we hope that the cultural aspects of Omani tourism will be prominent and expressive from the nature of the culture and knowledge acquired by Omanis through their historical experiences, which have spun their social and artistic ethics, by presenting "Imty" as a unique tourist masterpiece and a destination worthy to be taken out to the world in a beautiful way for those interested in knowing the history and ancient civilisation of the place and the Omani human," she said.

